

**1. Title: “From heaven to the ends of the Earth”: Vietnamese Buddhism, Modernity and Globalization**

2. Co-conveners: Alexander Soucy (Professor and Chair, Saint Mary's University, Halifax Canada) and Sara Swenson (Doctoral candidate, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York):  
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3. Description:

The twentieth century's challenges of colonialism, war, diaspora, the rise of Marxism, and the spread of Modernism, have brought about extraordinary reconceptualizations of Buddhism in Vietnam. From twice hosting World Wesak Day (a festival which appears unrecognized in Vietnam a century ago), to initiating the international Engaged Buddhism movement, Buddhism in Vietnam has been restructured as part of a unified World Religion. Buddhist reformers since the 1920s have actively sought to remake Vietnamese Buddhism so that it fits more squarely into the parameters of the Western category of religion, differentiating Buddhist orthodoxy from localized beliefs and practices labeled as "superstitions"; placing the historical Buddha more squarely as the central focus of Buddhism; or calling for Buddhist activist involvement in the problems of this world. While initial modernization efforts were largely isolated to small groups of urban elites, their ideas have, over time, born fruit and influenced Buddhism across the country. Today we continue to see the impact, even acceleration, of their ideas in the social engagement of local temples and transnational Vietnamese organizations, in the recent popularization of a neo-Zen movement that stresses a globally recognized Buddhist orthodoxy while invoking a Vietnamese nationalist sentiment of tradition, and in the ways that Buddhism has been reconstituted overseas. This panel will look at some of the ways that globalization, transnationalism, and Modernity have shaped the way that Vietnamese Buddhism is being practiced today.

4. Single session (4 presenters)

5. No discussant