

Caley Charles Smith
Young Harris College
Directeur d'études invité à
École Pratique des Hautes Études – PSL

Journée d'Études Védiques et
Pāṇinéennes, Paris, 12.06.2019

Performative similarity in the Buddhist and Vedic tradition
Abstract

In this talk I shall attempt to show some remarkable similarities between the Vedic and the Buddhist recitational tradition. I will claim that Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra, that is the Lotus Sūtra, reveals a conceptualization of recitation as a practice which transforms the self in order to place it within a lineage. Further, I argue that the notion of recitation in the Lotus Sūtra is better understood from the perspective of Vedic poetic impersonation, in which the performer recites texts from the perspective of an imagined original speaker. In the Vedic material we find certain formal mechanisms which also appear in the Buddhist material, suggesting shared ideas about the purpose and function of recitation.