

# Tessa J. BARTHOLOMEUSZ LECTURE SERIES 2015



Friday  
**April 10<sup>th</sup>**

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**4:30-6:30 pm**

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**Dodd Hall  
Auditorium**

## HOW BUDDHISM BECAME A RELIGION



**Prof. Jason Ananda Josephson**  
**Associate Professor and Chair**  
**Department of Religion**  
**Williams College**

One might imagine that by the seventeenth century at the latest, Europe would have discovered Buddhism. But it took more than five hundred years of exploring and even colonizing what we now call the “Buddhist world” before anything even resembling a modern concept of Buddhism appeared on the European horizon. Similarly, Buddhists on the other side of this encounter experienced centuries of Christian mission without every requiring a second-order category of “religion.” This talk will look at the process by which “Buddhism” was constructed as a “religion” by showing: (1) how an encounter with “Buddhism” produced the contemporary Euro-American concept of “religion” and (2) how an encounter with the Western notion of “religion,” then in flux, caused the construction of contemporary Japanese “Buddhism.”

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