

## **The Opposite of Buddhism: European Colonialism and Interpretation**

*Eisel Mazard*

### *Abstract*

*The legacy of European scholarship is burdened with distorting biases; conversely, the "canon" of this scholarship is increasingly available in digital formats, instantly accessible, and used throughout Asia (even within Buddhist monasteries) and incorporated into (seemingly) indigenous versions of Buddhist texts.*

*The formative influence of Imperialism, Christianity, Theosophy and Aryan race theory in early European (mis-)interpretations of Theravada Buddhism continues to have implications for the current generation of scholars --both in Asia and in Europe. This lecture broaches some of the outstanding problems of interpretation in the European tradition, tracing out a few patterns over a period of centuries, with some distortions originating in European colonialism but continuing to have salience to debates about the content of Buddhist philosophy that are ongoing (in Asia and Europe) today.*