



We are pleased to announce the next Friends of the Kern Institute lecture:

The *dohada* Motif in Ancient Biographies of the Buddha

by dr. Dmitry Komissarov, Gonda fellow at IAS, Leiden

Date : Monday, February 26, 2024

Time : 15.30h

Venue : Leiden University, Matthias de Vrieshof 3, room 1.04 (Verbarium). The lecture will be followed by **drinks** in the basement of Matthias de Vrieshof 3.



Siddharta Birth

Abstract

Dohada is a Sanskrit and Prakrit term for unusual desires of a pregnant woman. Such desires were a popular motif in ancient Indian narrative literature. It can also be found in ancient biographies of the Buddha. Queen Māyā, pregnant with a Bodhisattva, suddenly expressed a desire to go to the park, and there she gave birth to her son. In different texts, this motive takes on different forms. The whims of the pregnant queen are sometimes presented in the form of a list in which the desire to take a walk in the park is mentioned side by side with the intention to perform dharmic deeds. In this lecture I will try to show how the motif developed in the Buddha's biographies and how the desire to go to the park can be associated with the intention to follow the Dharma.

Dmitry Komissarov graduated from the Russian State Humanitarian University in Moscow in 2008 with a master degree in Indian Philology. At the same university in 2012, he defended his dissertation on



"Lalitavistara as an example of Buddhist hagiography." Currently he teaches Sanskrit, Pāli and Buddhist literature at the Higher School of Economics (Moscow); he is also the head of the bachelor's programme "Languages and Literatures of India". His research interests include Buddhist hagiography, Buddhist canonical and narrative literature, and Sanskrit medieval comedies. For the last few months, Dmitrii has been working in Leiden as a J. Gonda fellow, researching the influence

of the medieval Indian comedy tradition on the biographies of Buddha.