



Rafal Felbur

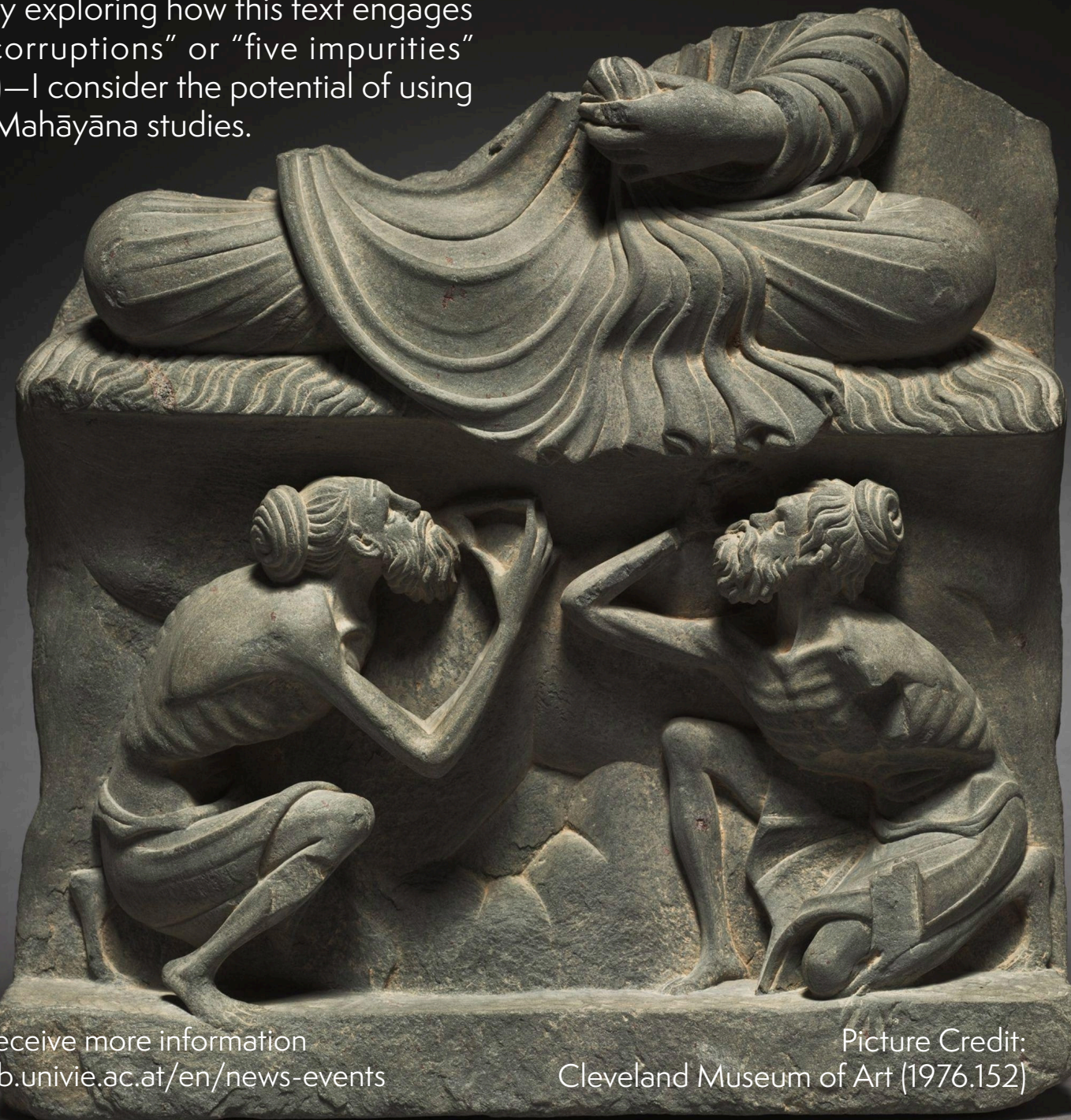
Centre for Transcultural Studies, Heidelberg University

What, if Anything, Can We Learn from “Forgotten” Mahāyāna Sūtras?

A Case Study of the “Five Corruptions” in the **Sūrata-sūtra*

From approximately the turn of the millenium up to roughly 600 CE, the fecund soil of Indian Buddhism gave rise to several hundreds of “Mahāyāna sūtras.” Given the enormity of this textual corpus, it is not surprising that still only a small portion of it has undergone careful examination. The texts that have garnered attention so far have been mainly those felt to resonate with Western philosophical sensibilities; those especially salient in living Buddhist traditions, mainly in Japan; and those for which there happens to be surviving Sanskrit evidence. Most of the others still await their turn.

In this talk, I highlight one of these “forgotten” Mahāyāna sūtras, a mid-length text titled **Sūrata-sūtra*, surviving in Chinese (*Xulai jing* 須賴經 [T. 329]) and Tibetan (*Des pas zhus pa* [D71]) translations. By exploring how this text engages with one specific concept—that of “five corruptions” or “five impurities” (*pañcaśāya*, Cn. 五濁, Tib. *sn̄yigs ma lnga*)—I consider the potential of using such minor texts to address major themes in Mahāyāna studies.



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Seminar Room 1

of the Department of South Asian,
Tibetan and Buddhist Studies,
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