

Religious Studies 330
THE BUDDHA AND BUDDHISM
Spring 2002

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Office Hours: Mon. 3:30-5:00 pm; Tues. 8:30-10:00 am; or by appointment

Required Books: Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*
de Bary, ed., *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China, and Japan*
Carrithers, *The Buddha*
Seager, *Buddhism in America* OR Prebish and Tanaka, eds., *The Faces of Buddhism in America*
Reynolds and Carbine, eds., *The Life of Buddhism*
Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*

Purpose and Scope of the Course:

Religious Studies 330 aims to introduce you to Buddhist religious traditions--their origins in India; their basic doctrines, practices, and institutions; the broad outlines of their history in Asia; their transplantation to America; and their recent and contemporary expressions in various settings in Asia and America. Buddhism is a religion whose historical, geographical, and demographic sweep is vast. Obviously in a single semester's course it is necessary to be selective about what can and cannot be covered. We will thus focus on Buddhism in India and in the contemporary Indianized societies of Sri Lanka and Thailand, in China, in Japan, in America, and very briefly in Tibet, thus virtually ignoring, for example, Buddhism in Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, though in their own ways Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian Buddhism are sophisticated and historically significant expressions of the tradition.

This course is paired with Sociology 388 Asians in America, providing students who take both courses the opportunity to study in greater depth Buddhism in America and its relationship to larger issues of Asian American identity, community, and ethnicity. While Buddhism originated, developed, and flourished for a number of centuries in India, in time it spread well beyond its area of origin, first to Sri Lanka and later to China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, the societies of southeast Asia, and more recently to the western hemisphere. Buddhism is the great missionary religion of Indian origin, a religion that ultimately died out in India, only to be re-introduced in twentieth-century India as both an immigrant tradition of refugees from Tibet and as a religious alternative attractive to certain groups of ex-untouchables in their protest against caste Hinduism. If Buddhism is India's greatest export, it is also the great import tradition of China (at least before Marxism), a society not typically given to borrowing from abroad. And from China Buddhism reached Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, already "sinified" as part of a larger Chinese cultural paradigm imported into these societies at the time of their formation as distinctive "civilizations." Indeed, Buddhism is a major religious tradition in all contemporary Southeast and East Asian countries except those with either Muslim (Indonesia, Malaysia) or Christian (Philippines) religious majorities.

As a result of immigration from Asia to America as well as conversion of non-Asian Americans to Buddhism, a wide variety of Buddhist communities exists in southern California. Also in the last 50 years Buddhism has left its imprint on American intellectual and literary life, one example of which is a recent book of essays we will read by the poet and environmentalist Gary Snyder. We will take advantage of our proximity to Buddhist centers for field trips, both for the class as a whole and for small group projects. Pairing with the course on Asians in America will result in a joint field research project and a joint field trip to the Hsi Lai Buddhist Temple in Hacienda Heights.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance at class meetings, and at any field trips/lectures/films scheduled outside of normal class hours. Three “cost-free” absences will be permitted; each absence beyond three will result in the final grade for the course being lowered one notch (e.g., from A to A- for the fourth absence, from A- to B+ for the fifth, etc.).
2. Completion of assigned reading as scheduled and participation in class discussion on that reading.
3. Three formal papers, typically about 5 pp., due as scheduled
4. A small group (four members) project involving field research on a Buddhist center and an in-class report on it.
5. A journal kept in a separate notebook for recording reactions to readings, films, field trips, etc. as specified by the instructor
6. Occasional quizzes on assigned reading

Grading:

Three grading options are available: 1) a letter grade (i.e., A+, A, A-, B+, etc.); 2) credit-no credit; or 3) a letter of evaluation.

Course grades will be determined as follows: 20% on each of the first two formal papers; 30% on the final paper; 15% on the group project; and 15% on class participation, the journal, quizzes, etc.

Course Schedule and Assigned Readings:

Wk. 1 - Feb. 7 (Th) - Introduction

Wk. 2 - Feb. 12 (T) - The World of Early Buddhist Thought
Rahula, pp. 91-138

Feb. 14 (Th) - The Life of the Buddha
Rahula, pp. xv-xvi (The Buddha)
de Bary, pp. 55-72 (chap. 2)
Carrithers, preface and pp.1-11 (chap. 1)

Wk. 3 - Feb. 19 (T) - Buddhism in America: General Considerations
Seager, pp. ix-xviii (intro), 3-11 (chap.1), 33-47 (chap. 4)

or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 1-10 (intro), 183-195 (chap. 10)

Feb. 21 (Th) - Historical Context of Early Buddhism
de Bary, pp. 3-9, 44-54
Carrithers, pp. 12-98 (chaps. 2-5)

Wk. 4 - Feb. 26 (T) - Buddhist Doctrine: General Considerations
Rahula, pp. 1-15 (chap. 1), 92-94
de Bary, pp. xv-xxii (intro), 9-17

Feb. 28 (Th) - Theravada Buddhism
Seager, pp. 136-157 (chap. 9)
or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 147-161 (chap. 8)
Reynolds and Carbine, pp. 35-43 (chap. 2), 61-69 (chap. 4), 85-95 (chap. 6), 179-193 (chap. 13)

Wk. 5 - Mar. 5 (T) - Buddhist Doctrine: Karma and Rebirth
Rahula, pp. 16-34 (chaps. 2-3), 95-97
de Bary, pp. 24-25
first paper due

Mar. 7 (Th) - Theravada Buddhism
Reynolds and Carbine, pp. 45-59 (chap. 3) 123-135 (chap. 9),
161-176 (chap. 12)
film: "Footprint of the Buddha"

Wk. 6 - Mar. 12 (T) - Conditionality, Impermanence, and Anatta
Rahula, pp. 51-66 (chap. 6)
de Bary, pp. 17-24

Mar. 14 (Th) - Nirvana, Meditation, and the Path
Rahula, pp. 35-50 (chaps. 4-5), 67-75 (chap. 7), 109-119
de Bary, 25-44

Wk. 7 - Mar. 19 (T) - Group Field Project Reports

Mar. 21 (Th) - Group Field Project Reports

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Wk. 8 - Apr. 2 (T) - The Rise of Mahayana Buddhism in India; From India to China
de Bary, pp. 73-109 (chap. 3), 125-138 (chap. 5)

Apr. 4 (Th) - field trip to Hsi Lai Temple, Hacienda Heights, 11 am-3 pm
Seager, pp. 158-181 (chap. 10)

- or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 13-30 (chap. 1)
- Wk. 9 - Apr. 9 (T) - Chinese Buddhism
de Bary, pp. 139-150, 197-201, 207-211, 231-251
- Apr. 11 (Th) - Chinese Buddhism
Reynolds and Carbine, pp. 139-148 (chap. 10)
film: "A Question of Balance"
- Wk. 10 - Apr. 16 (T) - Buddhism in Japan
de Bary, pp. 255-286 (chaps. 8-9), 287-295
Reynolds and Carbine, pp. 23-32 (chap. 1), 195-206 (chap. 14)
- Apr. 18 (Th) - Japanese Pure Land Buddhism
de Bary, pp. 314-344 (chap. 11)
Seager, pp. 51-69 (chap. 5)
or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 31-47 (chap. 2)
second paper due
- Wk. 11 - Apr. 23 (T) - Nichiren Buddhism
deBary, pp. 345-354 (chap. 12)
Seager, pp. 70-89 (chap. 6)
or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 79-97 (chap. 4)
- Apr. 25 (Th) - Zen
de Bary, pp. 355-398 (chap. 13)
Reynolds and Carbine, pp. 73-83 (chap. 5), 209-220 (chap. 15)
- Wk. 12 - Apr. 30 (T) - Zen/An American Buddhist Thinker
Seager, pp. 90-112 (chap. 7)
or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 49-78 (chap. 3)
Snyder, pp. 3-24, 97-115, 144-154
- May 2 (Th) - Japanese Buddhism/An American Buddhist Thinker
Snyder, pp. 78-96, 175-185
film: "Land of the Disappearing Buddha"
- Wk. 13 - May 7 (T) - Tibetan Buddhism
de Bary, pp. 110-118
Reynolds and Carbine, pp. 109-120 (chap. 8), 151-159 (chap. 11)
Seager, pp. 113-135 (chap. 8)
or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 99-115 (chap. 5)
- May 9 (Th) - Whither Buddhism in America?
Seager, pp. 185-248 (chaps. 11-14)
or Prebish and Tanaka, pp. 163-180 (chap. 9), 196-206

(chap. 11), 238-252 (chap. 14), 266-298 (chap. 16,
epilogue)

Wk. 14 - May 14 (T) - A Global Religion

film: "The Trials of Telo Rinpoche"

Thursday, May 16, final paper due by 10:30 am in Platner 114