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Fall 9-1-2000

### RELS 232.01: Introduction to Buddhism

Alan Sponberg

*University of Montana - Missoula*

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# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

**Instructor:** Alan Sponberg <sponberg@selway.umt.edu>  
Office: Rm. 150, Liberal Arts Bldg.  
Hours: MF 10:10-11:00am  
Tue 11-12, or by apt. (ph: 243-2803)

**Teaching Assistant:** Bodhipaksa  
Office: 724 Eddie, Basement Rm. 5  
Hours: TTR. 2:00-3:00  
Or by apt. (ph. 243-2074)  
<bodhipaksa@msn.com>

**Course Requirements:** Attendance, reading, 2 mid-term essay-question exams (Oct. 6 and Nov. 8), and a **comprehensive** essay-question final exam. Note also that the nature of this course makes it very important that you attend class regularly and that you keep up with the assigned reading (60-75 pg/week), a number of which may need to be read more than once due to the unfamiliar nature the subject. Please do *not* take the course if you will not be able to do this.

The **final exam** is scheduled for **Tuesday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> (8:00-10:00am)** as indicated in the *Course Schedule*. You cannot pass this course if you miss the final exam, which means you must take special care to make your holiday travel plans accordingly. If you neglect to make your reservations early enough to get a flight that allows you to take the final exam., it will not be possible to schedule a make-up exam.

**Policy on Make-up Exams:** Make-up exams will be given only for unavoidable and excusable absence (illness, etc.—*not* over-sleeping, late return from week-end trip, alien abduction, etc.), and only if you contact me *prior* to the scheduled time of the exam. My voice mail is available 24-hours/day at 406-243-2803. With prior approval, the usual make-up assignment for a missed exam is to write a 10-page paper.

**Books to purchase at the Bookstore** (Library copies are on reserve at Mansfield Library)

Michael Carrithers: *The Buddha*

Sangharakshita: *Guide to the Buddhist Path*

Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas* (We will be reading approximately one-half of this book)

Thich Nhat Hanh: *The Heart of Understanding*

Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*

Faculty Pack: available from UC Bookstore (ask if none are on the shelf)

**Optional Course on Buddhist Meditation:** Students who wish to may enroll concurrently in RS 233 (2 cr. hr.); note that RELS 233 is not a requirement for taking this course, RS 232, though it will definitely add to your experience and understanding of Buddhism. **Note the room changes and also the beginning dates.**

RS 233. 01: Monday 3:10-5:00 GBB L13—**Begins Sept. 11**

RS 233.02: Tuesday 3:40-5:30 GBB L13 —**Begins Sept. 12**

RS 233.03: Thursday 3:40-5:30 GBB L13—**Begins Sept. 14**

RS 233 is open only to students currently or previously enrolled in RS 232.

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## Schedule of Readings

Readings should be *completed* by the date indicated.

\*Asterisk indicates item is in the FacPac

### I. THE BUDDHA

- Sept. 6 Introduction
- Sept. 8 \*Sangharakshita: *The Three Jewels*, "Approaches to Buddhism" & "Essence of the Dharma"  
Carrithers: *The Buddha*: 1-28
- Sept. 11 \*Nanamoli: *Life of the Buddha*, "Birth and Early Years" & "Struggle for Enlightenment" 33pp
- Sept. 13 Carrithers: *The Buddha*: 29-52
- Sept. 15 Carrithers: *The Buddha*: 53-78 "The Awakening"
- Sept. 18 \*Nanamoli: *Life of the Buddha*, "The Kalama Sutta"  
"Carrithers: *The Buddha*: 79-98
- Sept. 20 Video Documentary: "Footprint of the Buddha"  
\*Subhuti: "Everyone Has a View"  
Sangharakshita: *Guide to the Buddhist Path*, "Word of the Buddha" & "Wrong View, Right View, an Perfect View"
- Sept. 22 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 1-23 Note Glossary of Terms at end of volume
- Sept. 25 Sangharakshita: *Guide to the Buddhist Path*, "Archetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha"

Optional Practice Exam: Tues., Sept. 26, 5:30pm---place to be announced

### II. THREE HISTORICAL PHASES OF BUDDHISM

#### A. PHASE ONE: EARLY CONSERVATIVE BUDDHISM—Focusing on the Developmental Dimension

- Sept. 27 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "Wheel of Life and Spiral Path," & "Six Realms"—bring to class  
\*"The Vicious Circle of Samsara & the Path to Enlightenment (Diagram)"—bring to class
- Sept. 29 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "Twelve Links" & "Stopping the Wheel"—bring FacPac to class

- Oct. 2 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Spiral Path"—bring PacPac to class
- Oct. 4 \*Selected Texts: "Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dharma" & "Parable of the Piece of Cloth"  
 \*\*"Where Buddhism Begins & Why it Begins There," "The Problem of Desire" & "Desire for the Eternal"  
 Review: *The Buddha*, pp. 66-78  
 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The 'Goal' of Nirvana" & "Enlightenment"

**Optional Review Session: Wednesday, Oct. 4th, 4pm, place to be announced**

**First Exam: Oct. 6**

- Oct. 9 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Criterion of Ethics," "Five Precepts," Principle of Non-Violence" & "Principle of Non-Exploitation"
- Oct. 11 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "Contentment," "Levels of Communication" & "Awareness"
- Oct. 13 \*Goldstein & Kornfield: "Why Meditate"  
 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Four Brahma-viharas" & "The Dhyanas"
- Oct. 16 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "Three Characteristics of Existence"  
 Review *Guide*, pp. 88b-89a (2nd ed: 82b-83a) on "Who or what is reborn?"  
 \*Epstein: "Freud and Dr. Buddha"  
 \*Joanna Macy: "The Greening of the Self"\* {10pp, *Prajna*: self;

**B. Phase Two: MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM—Focusing on the Relational Dimension of Buddhahood**

- Oct. 18 \*"Beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India"  
 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 129-158
- Oct. 20 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 159-182; 195-202
- Oct. 23 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Bodhicitta" "How the Bodhicitta Arises" & "Enlightenment, Eternity & Time"
- Oct. 25 Thich Nhat Hanh: *Heart of Understanding*, vii-29
- Oct. 27 Thich Nhat Hanh: *Heart of Understanding*, 31-54
- Oct. 30 \*"*Heart Sutra* & Commentary"
- Nov. 1 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 25-54
- Nov. 3 \*"*Mandala of the Five Buddhas*" (diagram)  
 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Symbolism of the Five Buddhas" & "Five Wisdoms"  
 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 52-53, 57-67
- Nov. 6 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 69-126

**Optional Review Session Nov. 7th, 5:30, place to be announced**

**Second Exam: Nov. 8**

Nov. 10 Veteran's Day Holiday—no class

**C. PHASE THREE: ZEN, PURE LAND & VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM—Focusing on the Technical Dimension of Buddhahood**

Nov. 13 \*Sthiramati: "The Tantra and Vajrayāna Buddhism" & "The End of Buddhism in India"

Nov. 15 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 205-218 & 229-240

Nov. 17 \*"Death and Dying in Tibetan Buddhism" by John Powers

Nov. 20 \*"Faces of the Dalai Lama" by Glenn Mullin

Nov. 22-24 \*\*\*\*Thanksgiving Holiday\*\*\*\*

Nov. 27 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, "Forward" & "Introduction," pp. 1-52; Note Glossary at the end.

Nov. 29 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp. 52-105

Dec. 1 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp 106-144

**III. BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN WORLD—A Fourth Phase???**

Dec. 4 \*Fields: "East and West: The Central Region"

Dec. 6 \*Fields: "The Restless Pioneers"

Dec. 8 \*Batchelor: "Sangharakshita: Adaptation"  
\*"The Great Conversion: Dr. Ambedkar and the Buddhist Revival" by Christopher Queen

Dec. 11 \*Batchelor: "Satipatthana: Mindful Awareness"  
\*Gary Snyder: "Buddhism & Planetary Culture"  
Review: \*Johanna Macy: "The Greening of the Self"

Dec. 13 \*Batchelor: "Nhat Hanh: Engagement"

Dec. 15 Conclusion and Review for Final

**Optional Review for Final Exam: Dec 15<sup>th</sup> — 4:10pm, place to be announced**

**FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM: Tues., Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:00am-10am (meet in our usual classroom)**