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RELS 232.01: Introduction to Buddhism

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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)

Course Website: <http://www.cas.umt.edu/religious/Medbud>

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.

Policy on Make-up Exams: Make-up exams will be given only for unavoidable and excusable absence (illness, etc. *C*not over-sleeping, late return from week-end trip, alien abduction, etc.), and only if you contact me *p*rior 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 will be a one-half hour oral exam in my office.

The *final exam* for this course is scheduled in the *Course Schedule* for **Friday, Dec. 21st (8:00-10:00am)**. Please be understand clearly that you cannot pass the course if you are not present for 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.

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 of Additional Readings: available from UC Bookstore (ask if none are on the shelf)

Photocopied binder of last year's lecture slides (optional and available after the 1st week of classes)

Optional Course on Buddhist Meditation: Students who wish to may also enroll concurrently in RS 233: Traditions of Buddhist Meditation (3 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 beginning dates.**

RS 233.01: Monday 3:10-5:00 GBB LO4----- Begins Sept. 10

RS 233.02: Wednesday 3:10-5:00 GBB LO4 -----Begins Sept. 12

RS 233.03: Thursday 3:40-5::30 GBB LO4-----Begins Sept. 13

RS 233 is open only to students currently or previously enrolled in this course (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

- 1 Sept. 5 *''Introduction'' to *Entering the Stream*, ed. by Samuel Bercholz and & Sherab Chodzin Kohn

* "Everyone Has a View"

*"Basic Teachings" and "The Buddha's Teaching" by Bhikkhu Bodhi from *Entering the Stream*

* AApproaches to Buddhism@ & AEssence of the Dharma@

2 Sept. 7 **Life of the Buddha*, "Birth and Early Years" & "Struggle for Enlightenment"

3 Sept. 10 Carrithers: *The Buddha*: Chaps. 1 & 2

4 Sept. 12 Carrithers: *The Buddha*: Chapt. 3

*"Words of the Buddha"—the *Dhammapada* from *Entering the Stream*

*"Metta Sutta" from *Entering the Stream*

5 Sept. 14 Carrithers: *The Buddha*: Chapt. 4

*Selected Texts: "Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dharma" & "Parable of the Piece of Cloth"

*"Where Buddhism Begins and Why It Begins There?," "The Problem of Desire," & "Desire for the Eternal"

Sangharakshita: *Guide*, AThe 'Goal' of Nirvana@ & AEnlightenment@

6 Sept. 17 *"The Kalama Sutta"; (at the end of the *Life of the Buddha* reading assigned above for lecture 2)

"Carrithers: *The Buddha*: Chapt. 5

7 Sept. 19 Video Documentary: "Footprint of the Buddha"

*"Moral Conduct, Concentration and Wisdom" by S.N. Goenka from *Entering the Stream*

Sangharakshita: *Guide to the Buddhist Path*, AWord of the Buddha@ & AWrong View, Right View, and Perfect View@

8 Sept. 21 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 1-23 Note Glossary of Terms at end of volume

9 Sept. 24 Sangharakshita: *Guide to the Buddhist Path*, AArchetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha@

Sept. 26 First Exam

II. THREE HISTORICAL PHASES OF BUDDHISM

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

- 10 Sept. 28 Review: *The Buddha*, pp. 66–78
Sangharakshita: *Guide, A Wheel of Life and Spiral Path, @ & A Six Realms @* —
bring to class
*“The Vicious Circle of Samsara & the Path to Enlightenment (Diagram)” —
bring to class

- 11 Oct. 1 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*Twelve Links*@ & A*Stopping the Wheel*@—bring FacPac to class
- 12 Oct. 3 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*The Spiral Path*@—bring PacPac to class
- 13 Oct. 5 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*The Criterion of Ethics*,@ A*Five Precepts*,@ *Principle of Non-Violence*@ & A*Principle of Non-Exploitation*@
*''Buddhist Precepts''—Diagram
- 14 Oct. 8 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*Contentment*,@ A*Levels of Communication*@ & A*awareness*@
- 15 Oct. 10 *Goldstein & Kornfield: "Why Meditate"
*The Practice of Recollection''
Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*The Four Brahma-viharas*@ & A*The Dhyanas*''
- 16 Oct. 12 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*Three Characteristics of Existence*@
Review *Guide*, pp. 88b-89a (2nd ed: 82b-83a) on "Who or what is reborn?"
- 17 Oct. 15 *''Freud and Dr. Buddha"
''The Greening of the Self''

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

- 18 Oct. 17 *''The Teachings of the Great Vehicle''
*''Beginnings of Mahayana Buddhism in India''
Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 129-158
- 19 Oct. 19 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 159-182; 195-202
- 20 Oct. 22 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, A*The Bodhicitta*@ A*How the Bodhicitta Arises*@ & A*Enlightenment, Eternity & Time*''

*"Flawless Purity: A Dialogue with the Laywomen Gangottara"

- 21 Oct. 24 Thich Nhat Hanh: *Heart of Understanding*, vii-29
- 22 Oct. 26 Thich Nhat Hanh: *Heart of Understanding*, 31-54
- 23 Oct. 29 *"*Heart Sutra & Commentary*"
- 24 Oct. 31 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 25-54
- 25 Nov. 2 *"*Mandala of the Five Buddhas*" (diagram)
Sangharakshita: *Guide, A*The Symbolism of the Five Buddhas@ & A*Five Wisdoms*@
Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 52-53, 57-67
- 26 Nov. 5 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 69-126

Second Exam: Nov. 7

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

27 Nov. 9

*"The Tantra and Vajrayana Buddhism" & "The End of Buddhism in India"

Nov. 12 Veteran's Day Holiday—no class

28 Nov. 14 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 205-218 & 229-240

29 Nov. 16 *"Death and Dying in Tibetan Buddhism" 25pp

30 Nov. 19 *"The Twentieth Century" 29pp

*"Faces of the Dalai Lama"

Nov. 21-25 *****Thanksgiving Holiday*****

31 Nov. 26 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, "Forward" & "Introduction," pp. 1-33; Note Glossary at the end.

32 Nov. 28 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp. 35-71

33 Nov. 30 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp 73-105

*"Exchanging Oneself for Others"

34 Dec. 3 Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp. 107-144

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

35 Dec. 5 * "East and West: The Central Region" & "The Restless Pioneers"

36 Dec. 7 * "Sangharakshita: Adaptation"

**"The Great Conversion: Dr. Ambedkar and the Buddhist Revival" by Christopher Queen*

- 37 Dec.10 * *"Satipatthana: Mindful Awareness"*
 * *Gary Snyder: "Buddhism & Planetary Culture"*
 Review: **Johanna Macy: "The Greening of the Self" assigned for lecture 17*
- 38 Dec. 12 * *"Nhat Hanh: Engagement"*
 * *"The Edicts of Ashoka"*
- 39 Dec. 14 *Conclusion and Review for Final*

FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM: Friday, Dec. 21st, 8:00am-10am (meet in our usual classroom)