

HRRS-1596

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THERAVĀDA BUDDHIST TRADITIONS

Spring 2016 Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Quli

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This course will survey the traditions of Buddhism commonly referred to as Theravāda, with reference to their doctrine, development, and concrete localizations throughout South and Southeast Asia, as well as the contemporary West. We will also interrogate the shifting representations of these traditions that emerge in their interface with modernity. The course will incorporate both foundational primary texts and representative secondary scholarship in an attempt to broadly chart the living and historical dimensions of these traditions and the terms of their contemporary study. Auditors with faculty permission.

Format

Weekly readings with short lectures and seminar discussion; 10–12 page project (choice of book reviews, research paper, or field trip review; see last page of syllabus).

Grading

66% participation, 33% final paper

Required Texts

Bodhi, Bhikkhu, ed. *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*. Wisdom Publications, 2005.

Crosby, Kate. *Theravāda Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity, and Identity*. Wiley, 2013.

Tilakaratne, Asanga. *Theravāda Buddhism: View of the Elders*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012.

Supplementary Readings

Electronic copies to be provided by the instructor. These are marked with an asterisk () in the syllabus.*

Berkwitz, Stephen C. "Buddhism in Sri Lanka: Practice, Protest, and Preservation." In *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Stephen C. Berkwitz. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.

Cadge, Wendy. "History of Theravāda Buddhism in America." In *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Cadge, Wendy, and Sangdhanoo, Sidhorn. "Thai Buddhism in America: An Historical and Contemporary Overview." *Contemporary Buddhism* 6, no. 1 (2005).

Collins, Steven. "On the Very Idea of the Pāli Canon." *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990).

- Fronsdal, Gil. "Insight Meditation in the United States," in *The Faces of Buddhism in America*, eds. Charles Prebish and Kenneth Tanaka. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Harvey, Peter. "The Conditioned Co-Arising of Mental and Bodily Processes within Life and Between Lives." In *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*, ed. Stephen Emmanuel. Malden, MA: Wiley, 2013.
- Harvey, Peter. "Early Buddhist Teachings: Rebirth and Karma." In *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teaching, History, and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Harvey, Peter. "Theravāda Abhidhamma as a Guide to Mindful Exploration of Mental Qualities." *Middle Way* (Aug. 2012).
- Kloetzi, Randy. *Buddhist Cosmology, From Single World System to Pure Land: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.
- McDaniel, Justin. "Buddhism in Thailand: Negotiating the Modern Age." In *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Stephen C. Berkwitz. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- McDaniel, Justin. "Laos." In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003.
- Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu. *The Life of the Buddha: According to the Pali Canon*. Onalaska, WA: BPS Pariyatti, 1992.
- Piyadassi Thera. *Dependent Origination*. Kandy: BPS, 2008.
- Schober, Julianne. "Buddhism in Burma: Engagement with Modernity." In *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Stephen C. Berkwitz. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.
- Skilton, Andrew. *A Concise History of Buddhism*. Birmingham, UK: Windhorse, 2001 (repr.).
- Thompson, Ashley. "Buddhism in Cambodia: Rupture and Continuity." In *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Stephen C. Berkwitz. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Readings listed for each session should be completed before arriving for class.

Week 1 Introduction

Introductions

Week 2 Doctrine I

Tilakaratne, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chaps. 1 and 2: “The Beginning of Buddhism” and “The Triple Gem”
Bodhi, *In the Buddha’s Words*, chap. II: “The Bringer of Light”

*Ñāṇamoli, *Life of the Buddha*, chaps. 1 and 2: “The Birth and the Early Years” and “The Struggle for Enlightenment”

Week 3 Doctrine II

Crosby, chap. 1: “The Buddha and Buddhahood”

Tilakaratne, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chaps. 3 and 4: “The Basic Teachings of the Buddha” and “Karma and Its Results”

*Ñāṇamoli, *Life of the Buddha*, chap. 3: “After the Enlightenment”

Week 4 Doctrine III

*Piyadassi, *Dependent Origination*

*Harvey, “The Conditioned Co-Arising of Mental and Bodily Processes within Life and between Lives”
Reread Bodhi, pp. 67–69, “(3) The Ancient City”

Week 5 Cosmology and Worldview

*Kloetzi, *Buddhist Cosmology*, chaps. 1 and 2: “Buddhist Philosophy and the Major Moments of Cosmology” and “The Cakravāla or Single World System”

*Harvey, “Early Buddhist Teachings: Rebirth and Karma”

Bodhi, *In the Buddha’s Words*, chaps. V and X: “The Way to a Fortunate Rebirth” and “The Planes of Realization”

Week 6 From India to Lanka: Mahāvihāra Origins

Tilakaratne, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 6: “The Traditional Theravada World”

*Berkwitz, “Buddhism in Sri Lanka: Practice, Protest, and Preservation”

*Skilton, *Concise History of Buddhism*, chaps. 19 and 20: “Buddhism in Sri Lanka” and “Buddhism in Southeast Asia”

Week 7 Southeast Asia: Modernity and Traditions

Students will discuss ideas for papers.

*Thompson, “Buddhism in Cambodia: Rupture and Continuity”

*Schober, “Buddhism in Burma: Engagement with Modernity”

*McDaniel, “Buddhism in Thailand: Negotiating the Modern Age”

*McDaniel, “Laos”

Week 8 Reading Week

No class.

Week 9 Literature and Textual Culture

*Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*, chaps. 6 and 9, “The Councils” and “The Tipiṭaka: The Mainstream Buddhist Canon”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 3: “Literature, Languages, and Conveying the Dhamma”

*Collins, “On the Very Idea of the Pāli Canon”

Week 10 More Theravāda Texts

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap 4: “The Jātaka”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 7: “Abhidhamma”

*Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism*, chap. 10, “The Abhidhamma”

*Harvey, “Theravāda Abhidhamma as a Guide to Mindful Exploration of Mental Qualities”

Week 11 Buddhist Practice

Tilakaratne, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 7, “The Traditional Theravada Practice”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 2: “Buddha Worship”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 5: “The Good Buddhist”

Week 12 Meditation, “New” and “Old”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 6, “Meditation”

Bodhi, *In the Buddha’s Words*, chap. VIII: “Mastering the Mind”

Guest Lecturer: Meditation

Week 13 Theravāda in the U.S.: Transformations

*Fronsdal, “Insight Meditation in the United States”

*Cadge, “History of Theravāda Buddhism in America”

*Cadge and Sangdhanoo, “Thai Buddhism in America: An Historical and Contemporary Overview”

Week 14 Monasticism and the Women’s Order

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 8: “Monks, Monasteries, and Their Positions in Society”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 9: “Women in Monasticism”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 10: “Women in Theravada Literature and Society”

Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, chap. 11: “Feminist Readings of Gender-Related Symbols”

Week 15 Final papers due

Research Paper Option

10–12 pages of original research in an area of interest to you. Full citations with bibliography of works cited or referenced.

Book Review Option

Review 2 books, 10–12 pages total. Many academic works by monastic scholars and practitioners are available online for free. Possibilities (discuss proposed books with instructor):

- *Mindfulness in Plain English* by Ven. Henepola Gunaratana
- *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* by Nyanaponika Thera
- *What the Buddha Taught* by Walpola Rahula
- *The Dhammapadam: A Translation* by Thanissaro Bhikkhu
- *Burma's Mass Lay Meditation Movement* by Ingrid Jordt
- *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America* by Wendy Cadge

Field Trip Option

Your description and commentary, 10–12 pages total. Possibilities:

- Sunday Brunch/Merit-Making
Note: This is a Buddhist TEMPLE, not a food joint. Food is just your entrée into the temple activities inside. Be respectful to the community.

Wat Mongkolrataram (Berkeley Thai Temple)

1911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94703

Phone (510) 849-3419

Brunch Sundays, 10am–2pm

- Dhamma Tuesday/Meditation and Dhamma studies. Open to all.

Wat Buddhansorn (Fremont Thai Temple)

36054 Niles Blvd., Fremont, CA 94536

Phone: (510) 790-2294 or (510) 790-2294

<http://www.watbuddha.org>

Tuesdays, 7pm–9pm

- Event of your choice, check Website for many options:

Insight Meditation Center

108 Birch Street Redwood City, CA 94062

(650) 599-3456

<http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/>