HRHS 1518

Buddhist Traditions of East Asia

Spring 2016
Course times: Tuesdays, 2:10PM-5:PM
Location: JSC 131
Course Level: Introductory (Units: 3.0)
Instructor: Bruno Galasek, bgalasek@gmail.com

Course Description

This course constitutes the second part of the yearlong introduction to Buddhist traditions in South- and East Asia. It introduces the traditions transmitted to East Asia from India via Central Asia and the Buddhist schools and forms of Buddhism that subsequently develop in China, Korea, and Japan. This introductory survey will cover the history of the transmission of Buddhism to East Asia, the development of distinctly East Asian forms of Buddhism and their key doctrines, and introduce some of the protagonists of this transmission. An emphasis will be on reading samples in class of the most important foundational texts of East Asian Buddhist traditions in English translation followed by discussion.

Learning Outcomes:

- Acquisition of knowledge of the main Buddhist traditions that developed in China and through the course readings and active class participation
- Ability to describe major Buddhist traditions, differentiate their similarities and differences (continuities and discontinuities), and present and discuss Buddhist doctrinal content and ideas against the background of their historical developments-
- Familiarity with original specimens (in English translation) of East Asian Buddhist literature and with some important Buddhist terminology.

Course format: Lecture/Seminar

Required textbooks:

Note: Ideally I would like to use one textbook (+ additional readings) throughout the course: McRae, John. *East Asian Buddhism: A Survey*. London: Routledge, 2006. Unfortunately, this book is
Currently unavailable (out of print). In the case that the new edition or reprint will not be available by the start of the spring semester, we will stick to the following syllabus and continue to use the Introductions that you have already purchased for the first half of the course:


**Further Textbooks:**


**Primary sources (in English translation):**

Samples of many primary sources that we will be reading can be found in Wm Theodore de Bary’s *Sources of Chinese/Japanese tradition* (see bibliography below!) Other sources than the one’s listed here will be made available to course-participants either electronically or as hard-copies during the semester.

**Grading & Course Requirements**

**Course Requirements**

1. Weekly Reading assignments and class participation; as a minimum requirement, please read through the chapters of the textbooks for each week and note questions and/or topics for discussion. Your questions, comments, and discussion topics contribute to the quality of the class and your learning experience.
2. Classroom attendance. You have a lot of obligations during term, but please keep in mind that missing more than two classes can affect your grade.
4. Students may be asked to prepare one short in-class presentation on topics of their choice.

**Grading**

- 50% Term paper
- 15% Attendance
- 15% Short presentation in class
- 20% Site Visit Paper

**Term Paper: Due May 20, 2016**
For the **term paper** choose any topic within Buddhist studies that is relevant to this course’s topic: Buddhist Traditions of East Asia. You are free to explore and research an aspect of Buddhism of your liking/interest in the fields of Buddhist history, doctrine, ritual, meditation practice, or institutional history through the secondary, scholarly literature or in a primary source (Chinese, Korean, Japanese). Details: 12-15 pages; include a bibliography; papers must adhere to Turabian style citation (see Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. 2015. *A pocket style manual*. Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s). **Topics of the proposed paper are to be submitted for approval after reading week either by email or in person.**

**Midterm Paper: Site Visit Reflection Paper. (Due in Week).**
The **reflection paper** (2-4 pages) is meant as a short, reflective essay that captures your personal experience of a Buddhist ritual, short retreat, temple visit, interview with a Buddhist priest, etc. If you practice a certain Buddhist tradition, please choose a tradition different from your own. A list of possible institutions to visit will be provided upon request (but also please check in with the instructor if you already have a site in mind that you would like to visit this semester!) In your essay, reflect on the differences (from the tradition you are familiar with or what we have studied in class) and on the idea of an “essence” of Buddhism pervading all Buddhist traditions. You may also wish to dwell a little on the question of how the *buddhadharma* you learned from the course readings relates to the lived reality of the practitioners, the institution or organization you plan to visit. Ideally, the first page or so of your essay presents what in anthropology is called ‘participant observation’, if what you plan is visiting a Buddhist ritual, ceremony, meditation session in a temple, etc. (For inspirations, see, e.g., Clifford Geertz: “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture”. In: *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. 3-30, might still be a good inspiration for that).

**Course Schedule**

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**Part 1: Buddhism in China**

**Week 1 (February 2, 2016):** Orientation & Introduction; Buddhism in Central Asia and the Silk Road. Film.

**Week 2**: Buddhism comes to China. An Shigao, the Eastern Han and China’s first encounters with (Central Asian) Buddhism.

**Week 3**: (1) Between the fall of the Han dynasty and the “Golden Age”: Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian interactions. (2) Transition: Confucian critiques, canon formation and new translations (Kumārajīva, etc.)
Additional Readings: De Bary 1999: Part II (excerpts, TBA)

**Week 4**: The “Golden Age” of Dharma: The development of the schools of Chinese Buddhism (zong) in the Sui-Tang Era.

**Week 5**: Chinese Buddhist schools: The Tiantai school and the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra (the 'Lotus Sutra').

**Week 6**: The Huayan school and the Avatamsaka Sūtra.

March 20-26: Spring recess – No class!

- Submission of the topic of your Term Paper due in Week 7 -

**Week 7**: The Chan school

- Midterm Paper due -
Week 8: The Jingtu or Pure Land school  

Week 9: Later developments from the Tang Dynasty to modernity  

**Part 2: Buddhism in Korea**  
Week 10: The Advent of Buddhism in Korea and Buddhism during the Silla Dynasty  

Week 11: Buddhism during the Goryeo Dynasty and later developments up to modernity  

**Part 3: Buddhism in Japan**  
Week 12: Introduction; Buddhism during the Nara Period  
Additional Readings: De Bary 2001: 40-62, and ch. 5

Week 13: (Esoteric) Buddhism(s) in the Heian Period: Tendai and Shingon  
Additional Readings: De Bary 2001: chs. 6, 7.

Week 14: Kamakura Period: Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren Buddhism  

- Final Paper submission due -

Week 15 (May 20, 2015): Developments from the Muromachi Period to Modernity  
Bibliography

General reference works in addition to the required textbooks listed above (Harvey, Gethin, Poceski):

**Primary sources in English translation** (I give the first edition. Newer editions may exist and are of course fine to use):


**Secondary sources:**