

Fall '08
Syllabus for Buddhist Art, Theory & Development
History of Art 670:

Instructor:

John C. Huntington, Professor
Office: 231 Hayes Hall (I may be in the Archive 225)
Hours: approximately TBA
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Text

John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel. *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art*. Chicago and Columbus, Serindia and The Columbus Museum of Art 2003

Unfortunately, on closed reserve in the Fine Arts Library only

Course Description & Objectives:

Description:

Buddhist art from India, China, and Japan has long graced many western museums throughout the world. More recently, works from the other Buddhist regions of the world have also become popular as well. However, except for a very few specialists, they are primarily admired for their exquisite beauty and exotic or some imagined “mystical” quality. The course will provide both a religious setting and cultural context for several of the major types of Buddhist art. The emphasis of the course work, readings, and assignments will be on providing the student with understanding of the History of Buddhism the evolution of its soteriological methodologies, and the both the historical continuities discrete role that art lays in the religion.

Catalog Description:

The course will provide both a religious setting and cultural context for several of the major types of Buddhist art. Emphasis will be placed on a holistic understanding of Art in primarily religious context and to a lesser degree, societal, and cultural understanding.

The course has three objectives

1. To provide an historical overview, free of discipline based biases, Euro-American cultural condescension, and sectarian viewpoints.
2. To provide a description of the literature of Buddhism and how it informs the arts for the following:
 - A. Shravaka yana (pejoratively known as Hina yana) Methodologies
 - B. Mahayana Methodologies
 - 1) Bodhisattvayana including Madhyamika and Paradise

- 2) Tantrayana including Yoga Tantra, Carya Yoga Tantra, and Annutata Yoga Tantra
- C. To illustrate by specific examples how the art connected with of each of these methodologies informs the practice of both the ritual specialist and the laity.

Method of Instruction:

Primarily, slide-lecture and discussion techniques will be used in the course. Although there will be numerous “no slide” days or days in which the “slides” will consist of didactic graphics. These will usually be posted on the Huntington Archive web site. Invariably, some individuals wish to discuss the ideas in this course in more detail than the usual class format allows. The students are always welcome in my office for further discussion of any topic.

Student responsibilities:

- 1) To compile a keyboarded and printed out notebook of class notes. This is to include any handouts and other materials from the courses and may include other materials from the recommended text, the website and other sources of the student’s choosing.
- 2) Attendance is also mandatory. Three unexcused absences and there will be a one full point reduction from the earned grade, i.e., A to B and so on. (This is not my first choice, but recent experience has demonstrated that enforcement of attendance is necessary to protect some students from their own lassitudness which resulted in much lowered grades.)
- 3) There will be two *open* notebook exams, a one-hour midterm, and a two-hour final. You may use the notebook that you have compiled but you may not use the recommended text.

Grading:

- 1) Notebook: the notebook will be examined briefly the week before the midterm and the week before the final. It will be graded in the usual manner A-E, and the combined grades will amount to 25% of the course grade or 12.5% for each examination. Failure to turn in an appropriate notebook, i.e., keyboarded and printed will result in two unfortunate situations. a) You will lose the percentage of the grade for the notebook and, b) you will not be permitted to use notes of any kind for the exam. (Bad Idea)
- 2) The Midterm grade is 35% of the course grade
- 3) the final is 40% of the course grade.

While this may seem rather mechanical, it is not. I reserve the right to adjust any grade in any direction as far as I choose because of whatever circumstances I perceive as pertinent. What does that mean? Generally, it means that I tend to reduce the numerical penalty for poor performance at the midterm and reward significantly improved performance for the final.

While there are rare exceptions in which I will change a grade in a negative direction (obviously wild guessing that does not a few correct answers etc.), it is generally to the individual's benefit when I do make such changes.

Fair warning:

If you do it right, the notebook is a lot of work (if you do not do it right your grade will almost certainly reflect that). If you do not keep up with it for the entire quarter, starting with week one, you will not succeed in the course. Every year that I have taught this course, some individuals have attempted to skimp, skip, or "cram" the notebook into the last few days before it is due. It does not work! And, the grades of the individuals who try such tactics demonstrate that with great clarity. You **MUST** designate one or two days each week as "notebook days" or there *will* be difficulties.

Statement of Departmental Policies:

Images for Study: The images for this class will be available for online study. Simply go to the Huntington Archive Homepage (<http://huntingtonarchive.osu.edu>) go to "Projects" and under Projects go to [Asian Art History Course Support](#) (OSU students only.)

Students with disabilities: Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me to discuss your specific needs. I usually rely on the Office of Disability Services to verify the need for accommodation and to help develop accommodation strategies. Students with disabilities who have not previously contacted the Office of Disability Services are encouraged to do so, by looking at their website (<http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu>) and calling them for an appointment.

Academic misconduct: OSU professors are required by their contracts to report suspected cases of academic misconduct to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. (The University's rules on academic misconduct can be found on the web at <http://acs.ohio-state.edu/offices/oa/procedures/1.0.html>)

The most common form of misconduct is plagiarism. Remember that any time you use the ideas or the statements of someone else, you must acknowledge that source in a citation. This includes material that you found on the web. The University provides guidelines for research on the web at <http://gateway.lib.ohio-state.edu/tutor>.

Course Syllabus (Based on an 18-lecture quarter. Occasionally scheduling sets up a 17-lecture quarter or other events occur that limit the course to less than 18 lectures. Adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis)

Note: this is a handout heavy course be sure that you get everything!

Week 00 (no kidding, this week does not count in the ten weeks)

- 01a) Introduction to the course
- 01b) Geography of Buddhism
- 01c) Precursors of Buddhism in the Indus Civilization

Week 01

02) *Upanishadic* thought and the *Atharvaveda*
Readings: None

03) Introductions to Buddhism
A) Buddhist Presuppositions
B) Brief overview of Buddhism
Readings: CoB, pp. 19-22

Week 02

- 04) The life of Siddhartha Gotama and his becoming the Buddha Shakyamuni
Readings: CoB, pp. 55-65
JCH "Sowing the Seeds of the Lotus: A Journey to the Great Pilgrimage Sites of Buddhism," part I [Lumbin^a and Bodhgayâ], in *Orientalism*, vol. 16, no. 11 (Nov. 1985), pp. 46-61; part II [Râpatana M@gadâva], in *Orientalism*, vol. 17, no. 2 (Feb. 1986), pp. 28-43; part III [Îrâvasti and Sâkâsya], in *Orientalism*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Mar. 1986), pp. 32-46; part IV [Vaiâali and Râjag@ha], in *Orientalism*, vol. 17, no. 6 (Jul. 1986), pp. 28-40; part V [Kuâinagara, Appendices and Notes], in *Orientalism*, vol. 17, no. 9 (Sept. 1986), pp. 46-58.
- 05) The early history of Buddhist thought
A) The Euro-American view
B) The Japanese academic view
C) Various Sectarian views
D) Archaeological evidence (and/or lack thereof)
1) Life Locations
2) Gum Bahal

Readings:

JCH & Chaya Chandrasekhar "Buddhist Monasteries in Southern Asia," in William M. Johnston, ed., *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*: two vols., Chicago and London, Fitzroy and Dearborn publishers, 2000. I:55-66;

Week 03

06) Ashoka Maurya, his conversion and patronage of Buddhism

A) The archaeological Legacy

1) Kalinga inscription

2) Upagupta and the imperial pilgrimage

3) Lumbini Inscription

4) Sarnath and other pillars and the inscriptions

B) Mahinda in Sri Lanka

C) Chaurnati in Nepal

Readings: None

07) Buddhism of the Vaipulya Sutras

A) Saddharmapundarika (lotus)

B) Vimalakirti Nirdeśha

C) Lankavatara

D) Gandhavyuha

Readings: Probably none (its pretty simple stuff)

Week 04

08) The great Mahayana Philosophers

A) The root text: The *Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 verses* or the *Astasashrika Prajnaparamita Sutra*

B) The *Ten Stages* [of bodhisattva attainment] *Teaching* or *Dadhsbhunika sutra*

C) Nagarjuna's commentary the *Mula madhyama karika*

D) The Yogachara teachings of Vasubhandu

Readings: CoB pp. 119-132

09) Mount Meru and the Bhavana systems

Readings: CoB pp. 66-118

10) Early representations of the Mother of Buddhas and the implications for early Buddhism

Readings: JCH Article in Progress (I hope)

11) Yogic imaginings (bhavana) and the notion of heavens (svarga) in popular Buddhism

- A) History of the conception of heaven in South Asia
 - 1) Dual gods of the Trayastrimsha and Brahmaloaka paradises
 - 2) Maitreya's Tushita paradise
 - 3) Aksobhya's heaven of Abhirati
 - 4) Amitabha's Land of Bliss Sulkhavati
 - 5) Vairochana's None Above Akanishta

Readings: (for both 11 & 12)

JCH "The Iconography and Iconology of Maitreya Images in Gandhara," in *Journal of Central Asia*, vol. VII:1 (July 1984), pp. 133-179.

JCH A Gandhāran Image of Amitābha's Sukhāvata^a, in *Annali del 'Istituto oriental di Napoli*, vol 40 (New Series, vol. XXX) (1980), pp. 651-672.

JCH A Re-examination of a Kaniška Period Tetradrachm Coin Type with an Image of Mitrāgo/Maitreya on the Reverse (Göbl 793.1) and a Brief Notice on the Importance of the Inscription Relative to Bactro-Gandhāran Buddhist Iconography of the Period. *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 16:2 (1993).

Week 06

12) Pureland developments in East Asia

Readings: None

13) Midterm (No lecture)

Readings: your own notebook

Week 07

14) Heaven worlds of the Tantric systems

- A) Potolaka Avalokiteshvara
- B) Khadiravani Tara
- C) Akanishtha of the Adi Buddhas
- D) Pure-land of the Dakinis
- E) Copper Mountain of Padmasambhava

Readings:

15) The divisions of Yoga Tantra

- A) Kriya
- B) Yoga
- C) Yogachara
- D) Annutara
 - 1) Male
 - 2) Female
 - 3) Nondual

Readings: CoB pp. 422-423

Week 08

16) Tantric transformations and the Vajrasattva meditation
Readings: CoB pp. 208-229

17) The Chakrasamvara Meditations.
Readings: CoB pp. 230-251

Week 09

18) The Chakrasamvara Meditations continued

Nov. Day before Thanksgiving (No Class)

Week 10.

19) The Chakrasamvara Meditations continued

20) Notebook completion and general review.

Finals Week:

The time and place will be provided by the university scheduling office for each quarter and will announced in class and listed in the actual class syllabus.

The final is “open notebook” but I must have reviewed your notebook before you can use it in the exam NO EXCEPTIONS!

Readings: review the “Notebook” and “Grading” sections of the introduction to the course

Bibliography

Your readings in The Circle of Bliss catalog constitute all of the readings for the course.

However, the extensive bibliography in that volume is a current as any anywhere. Please refer to it for individual interests.