

University of Wisconsin-Madison/ Department of History
HISTORY 438 BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY
(Also cross-listed as **LANGASIA 438** and **RELIG ST 438**)

Spring 2002

***Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:15, Rm. 1641 the George Mosse Humanities Building
Thongchai Winichakul***

For more than a thousand years, the mainland Southeast Asia (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand today) have been the homeland of Theravada Buddhism, an “order” of Buddhism different from the Mahayana and the Tibetan ones. Despite Westernization and secularization since the nineteenth century, this religious tradition remains strong among nearly 200 million people today. To learn and understand the people and culture of the mainland Southeast Asia, we cannot do without understanding their strong religious tradition.

The course is NOT for a study of the philosophy or tenets of Theravada Buddhism. Rather, it is a cultural history focusing on the significance of Theravada Buddhism in the cultures of those countries, and its modern dynamism. The main subjects of the course are: 1) a history of Theravada Buddhism and its coming to Southeast Asia; 2) basic tenets, popular beliefs, and the monastic order; 3) the historical significance of Buddhism in political culture; 4) the transition during the colonial period in the 19th century; 5) modern nations and economies and their effects on Buddhism. The focus is on Thailand and Burma, the major parts of the region’s history and religious development.

Class: Two 75-min lectures weekly. ***Credits*** 3

Office Hours: Tue 1:00-3:00 p.m. or by appointment.

5211 Humanities

Ph. 263-8931

Email: twinicha@facstaff.wisc.edu

Exams: Two mid-term take-home exams, and one final (30-30-40). Schedules in this syllabus.

Required Textbooks: (available at University Book Store)

- Keyes, Charles. The Golden Peninsula: Culture and Adaptation in Mainland Southeast Asia. University of Hawaii Press, 1997.
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism :A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 1996.
- The History 438 Reader - available at the Humanities Copy Center, Rm. 1650 Humanities.

Recommended Books: (available at University Book Store)

- Kamala Tiyavanich, Forest Recollections: Wandering Monks in Twentieth Century Thailand, University of Hawaii Press 1997.
- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

All weekly readings are in the required books or in the History 438 Reader. They are also available in the Reserves Collections. (Some materials in the Reader this year can also be found in the Readers of History 438 of previous years – check in the Reserves as well.)

INTRODUCTIONS to the course, Southeast Asia, and Buddhism,

- WEEK 1** (Jan 22) The course: objectives, exams, assignments, etc.
(Jan 24) Southeast Asia: introduction
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 65-112, 126-157, 259-269.

- WEEK 2** (Jan 29) Intro to Buddhism (video: "Buddhism: Footprint of the Buddha")
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 65-112, 126-157, 259-269.
(Jan 31) The Buddha: biography or the myth of his life
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 16-30.

EARLY HISTORY OF BUDDHISM COMING TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

- WEEK 3** (Feb 5) Two major "orders" (*nikaya*): Mahayana & Hinayana (Theravada)
- Reynolds, Frank E. and Regina T. Clifford, "Theravada Buddhism", in Encyclopedia of Religion, vol. 14. 469-475.
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 59-72.
(Feb 7) Theravada Buddhism to Southeast Asia (6th - 12th c.)
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 73-87.
- Swearer, Donald. "Buddhism in Southeast Asia" in Buddhism and Asian History. 107-120.

BASIC TENETS AND IDEAS

- WEEK 4** (Feb 12) The Four Noble Truth, Nirvana
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 46-58, 88-101.
(Feb 14) Karma and merit
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 31-34, 39-45, 102-115
- Keyes, Charles, "Merit Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism," in Karma: an Anthropological Inquiry. 261-286.

POPULAR BUDDHISM

- WEEK 5** (Feb 19) Cosmology and social hierarchy
- Reynolds, Frank E. Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Buddhist Cosmology. 19-37.
(Feb 21) "Syncretic Buddhism"
- Kirsch, A, Thomas. "Complexity in the Thai Religious System," Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 241-266.
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 113-125
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. (Chapter 1). 5-61.

- WEEK 6** (Feb 26) Rituals, magic, festivals (video: Cambodians in America)
- Terwiel, B.J. Monks and Magic. 72-96.

THE SANGHA (MONASTIC ORDER)

- (Feb 28) Monks, monastic life, organization, and network
- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, 88-97, 203-206.
- Tambiah, S.J. The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets. 53-77.

******First take-home exam questions. Due in one week. ******

- WEEK 7 (Mar 5)** The sangha organization and network (cont.)
(Mar 7) Female monks and Buddhist “nuns”
- Sponberg, Alan. “Attitudes Toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism”, in Cobezon, Jose Ignacio, ed. Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender. 3-36.
 - Kowanami, Hiroko. “Theravadin Religious Women” in The Life of Buddhism, 85-95
 - Jordt, Ingrid. “Bhikkhuni, Thilashin, Mae-chii: Women Who Renounce the World in Burma”, Crossroads, vol. 4, no.1, (Fall 1988): 31-39.

*****First take-home exam deadline, 12:30 p.m.*****

BUDDHIST POLITY

- WEEK 8 (Mar 12)** Merit and power
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. pp. 64-95 .
 - (Mar 14)** Buddhist kingship and state (13th-18th c.)
 - Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, 113-118.
 - Aung-Thwin, Michael “Divinity, Spirit and Human: Conceptions of Classical Burmese Kingship” in Centers, Symbols and Hierarchy: Essays on Classical States in Southeast Asia. 45-86

- WEEK 9 (Mar 19)** Buddhism and legitimation of power
- Reynolds, Frank E. “The Holy Emerald Jewel: Buddhist Symbolism and Political Legitimation in Thailand and Laos” in Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma. 175-193.
 - Schober, Juliane “A Tooth Relic and the Legitimation of Power” in The Life of Buddhism 45-59
 - Mendelsohn, E. Michael. Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership. 31-65.
 - (Mar 21)** Buddhist millennialism and peasant rebellion
 - Keyes, Charles F. “Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society,” Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 283-302.

- WEEK 10 (Mar 26, 27)** Spring Recess

COLONIAL TRANSITION (19th to early 20th c.)

- WEEK 11 (Apr 2)** Colonialism and politicized Buddhism in the 19th c. Burma
(Apr 4) Buddhist anti-colonial movement in Burma (late 19th-early 20th c.)
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 259-299
 - Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution. 110-179

- WEEK 12 (Apr 9)** Modern Buddhism in the 19th c. Siam
- Excerpts from Alabaster, Henry. The Modern Buddhist, Being the Views of a Siamese Minister of State on His Own and Other Religions (c. 1870).
 - Reynolds, Craig J. “Buddhist Cosmography in Thai History, With Special Reference to Nineteenth Century Culture Change,” Journal of Asian Studies 35 (1976): 203-220

- (Apr 11)** The *sangha* and nation-building in Siam (late 19th to early 20th c.)
- Kirsch, A. Thomas. “Modernizing Implications of Nineteenth Century Reforms in Thai Sangha,” in Religion and Legitimation of Power. 52-65

- Keyes, Charles F. "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand," Journal of Asian Studies. 30 (1971): 551-568

******Second take-home exam questions. Due in one week.******

BUDDHISM AND MODERN NATIONS

WEEK 13 (Apr 16) Southeast Asia today(video: "Thailand: Minidragon")
(Apr 18) Modernization and the changing roles of monks

- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. pp. 299-323.
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia, 107-146.
- Taylor, J.L. "Buddhist Revitalization, Modernization, and Social change in Contemporary Thailand" SOJOURN 8:1 (1993): 62-91.

******Second take-home exam deadline, 12:30 p.m.******

WEEK 14 (Apr 23) The bourgeoisie and new sects in Thailand

- Suwanna Satha-Anand, "Religious Movements in Contemporary Thailand," Asian Survey 30 (Apr 1990): 395-408.
- Zehner, Edwin. "Reform Symbolism of a Thai Middle-Class Sect: the Growth and Appeal of the Thammakai Movement", Journal of Southeast Asian Studies 21:2 (1990): 402-426.

(Apr 25) Buddhism, gender and sex trade: a debate

- Khin Thitsa. Providence and Prostitution: Image and Reality for Women in Buddhist Thailand. 1-24.
- Kirsch, A. Thomas. "Buddhism, Sex-role and Thai Economy" in Women of Southeast Asia. 16-41.
- Keyes, Charles F. "Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk: Buddhist Notions of Female Gender in Rural Thailand," American Ethnologist 11 (1984): 223-241.

WEEK 15 (Apr 30) "Radical Conservatives" or the Buddhist radicalism

- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, 109-113, 118-122, 215-225.

(May 2) Buddhism after revolutions

- Matthews, Bruce. "Buddhism Under a Military Regime", Asian Survey, 33 (Apr 1993): 408-423.
- Stuart-Fox, Martin and Rod Bucknell. "Politicization of Buddhist Sangha in Laos" Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 13:1 (1982): 60-80.
- Keyes, Charles F. "Communist Revolution and the Buddhist Past in Cambodia" in Asian Visions of Authority: Religion and Modern States of East and Southeast Asia. 43-73.

WEEK 16 (May 7) Final remarks.

******Final take-home exam questions. Due May 14, 4:45 p.m.******

(There is NO sit-in exam as scheduled on May 14. The instruction for the return of your final exam answers will be given in the class on May 7.)