

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 2005, 3 credits
Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:15, Rm. 1651 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 distinctive from the Mahayana and the Tibetan ones. Despite Westernization and secularization since the nineteenth century, this religious tradition remains strong among nearly 150 million people today. We cannot understand the peoples and cultures of the region 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 Theravada Buddhism as a “civic” religion and its dynamism in the cultures of those countries. The main subjects of the course are: 1) a history of Theravada Buddhism and its coming to Southeast Asia; 2) basic tenets of Buddhism, and Theravada Buddhism as a civic religion in popular culture; 3) Buddhist political culture in history; 4) the transition during the colonial and “modernizing” period in the 19th century; 5) Buddhism in the age of modern nations and economies. The focus is on Thailand and Burma, the major parts of the region’s history and religious developments.

Class: Two 75-min lectures weekly

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11 and 2:30-3:30, or by appointment. 5211 Humanities, 263-8931
<twinicha@wisc.edu>

Exams: Three take-home exams (30-30-40). See exam schedule in this syllabus.

Required Textbooks: (available at the 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.
- Armstrong, Karen. Buddha, Penguin 2004.
- The History 438 Reader - available at the Humanities Copy Center, Rm. 1650 Humanities.

All weekly readings are either in the required books or in the History 438 Reader or available on-line. All textbooks and the Reader are also available in the Reserves. (Some readings this year can also be found in the Readers of History 438 of previous years – check in the Reserves as well.) Many journal articles (marked @) are accessible on-line via the library databases, therefore NOT included in the Reader.

INTRODUCTIONS

- WEEK 1 (Jan 18)** The course: objectives, exams, assignments, etc.
(Jan 20) Intro to Buddhism (video: “Buddhism: Footprint of the Buddha”)
- Armstrong, Karen. Buddha.

THE BUDDHA AND EARLY HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

- WEEK 2 (Jan 25)** The Buddha: his biography or the mythical story of his life
- Armstrong, Karen. Buddha. (The whole book should be finished by this week)
(Jan 27) 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.

BUDDHISM: BASIC TENETS AND IDEAS

- WEEK 3 (Feb 1)** The Four Noble Truth, Nirvana
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 46-58, 88-101.
- Armstrong, Karen. Buddha. 98-121, and in various places about Nibbana
(Feb 3) Karma and merit
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 31-34, 39-45, 102-115
- Falk, Nancy. “Exemplary Donors of the Pali Tradition” in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation: a study in Buddhist Ethics, ed. Russell Sizemore and Donald Swearer, 124-143.
- Keyes, Charles, “Merit Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism,” in Karma: an Anthropological Inquiry. 261-286.

THE SANGHA (MONASTIC ORDER)

- WEEK 4 (Feb 8)** Monks and monastic life, the *sangha* organization
- 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.
(Feb 10) Female monks and Buddhist “nuns”
- 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.

BUDDHISM AS A CIVIC RELIGION IN POPULAR CULTURE

- WEEK 5 (Feb 15)** Cosmology and social hierarchy
*****First take-home exam questions. Due in one week.*****
(Feb 17) “Syncretic Buddhism”, monks and magic
(video: Cambodians in America)
- Kirsch, A, Thomas. “Complexity in the Thai Religious System,” Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 241-266 @
- Tambiah, S.J., Buddhism and Spirit Cults in North-East Thailand, chap 15, pp.263-284.
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 113-123
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. (Chapter 1). 5-61.
- Tannenbaum, Nicola. “Tattoos: Invulnerability and Power in Shan Ideology”, American Ethnologist, 14:4 (Nov. 1987): 693-711 @

BUDDHISM COMING TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEEK 6 (Feb 22) Intro to Southeast Asia, and its history in brief

- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 65-112, 126-157, 259-269.

*****First take-home exam dues Feb 22, deadline, 12:30 p.m.*****

(Feb 24) Mahayana and Theravada to Southeast Asia

- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 73-87.

- Swearer, Donald, "Buddhism in Southeast Asia", in Mark Cummings ed. Buddhism and Asian History, 1989. 107-120.

WEEK 7 (Mar 1) Theravada Buddhism to Southeast Asia (cont.)

- Than Tun, "Religion in Burma 1000-1300" in Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, ed. Paul Strachan. 23-45

- Swearer, Donald. "A Myth, Legend and History in the Northern Thai Chronicles", The Journal of the Siam Society, vol. 62, pt 1 (Jan 1974): 67-88

- Swearer, Donald and Sommai Premchit, "The Relation Between the Religious and Political Orders in Northern Thailand (14th-16th centuries)" in Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma. 20-33.

SACRED SOCIETY, MORALIST POLITY

(Mar 3) Human World in Cosmographic Context

- Reynolds, Frank E. Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Buddhist Cosmology. 19-37.

- Aung-Thwin, Michael. "Heaven, Earth, and the Supernatural World: Dimensions of the Exemplary Center in Burmese History", and Donald Swearer, "The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center" in City as Sacred Center, ed. Diana L. Eck, 88-113.

WEEK 8 (Mar 8) Buddhist Polity (1): the ideology -- merit and power

- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. pp. 64-95 .

(Mar 10) Buddhist Polity (2): 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

- Swearer, Donald and Sommai Premchit, "The Relation Between the Religious and Political Orders in Northern Thailand (14th-16th centuries)" in Religion and Legitimation of Power 20-33.

WEEK 9 (Mar 15) 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. 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 17) Buddhist millennialism and peasant rebellion

- Keyes, Charles F. "Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society," Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 283-302 @

*****Second take-home exam questions given. Due Mar 31.*****

WEEK 10 (Mar 22, 24) Spring Recess

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

WEEK 11 (Mar 29) Colonialism and politicized Buddhism in the 19th c. Burma
(Mar 31) 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

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

WEEK 12 (Apr 5) **No class. TW's important business**

(Apr 7) 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 @

WEEK 13 (Apr 12) 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 @

BUDDHISM AND MODERN NATIONS

(Apr 14) Modernization and the changing roles of monks

Video: "Thailand: Minidragon" (1994)

- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. pp. 299-323.

- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia, 107-146.

- Charles Keyes, "Moral Authority of the Sangha and Modernity in Thailand: Sexual Scandals, Sectarian Dissent, and Political Resistance", in Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium, 1999, pp.121-47.

WEEK 14 (Apr 19) 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. @

- Taylor, J.L. "Buddhist Revitalization, Modernization, and Social change in Contemporary Thailand" SOJOURN 8:1 (1993): 62-91.

(Apr 21) The radical Buddhists

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

- Donald Swearer. "Sulak Sivaraksa's Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society", Crossroad, 6, 2 (1991): 17-57.

- WEEK 15 (Apr 26)** Buddhism and tragic revolution in Cambodia
- 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.
- (Apr 28)** Buddhism in Burma under the military regimes and in Laos after revolution
- 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.

- WEEK 16 (May 3)** Final remarks and *Final take-home exam questions*.
(May 5) (If necessary).

Final take-home exam: instructions to be given in the May 3 class.
(There is NO sit-in exam as scheduled in the Timetable.)

MATERIALS IN THE READER FOR HISTORY 438/ SPRING 2005
(Cross-listed with Langasia 438 and Relig St 438)

Week 2

- Reynolds, Frank E. and Regina T. Clifford, "Theravada Buddhism", in The Encyclopedia of Religion, vol. 14, 1987. 469-475.

Week 3

- Falk, Nancy. "Exemplary Donors of the Pali Tradition" in Ethics, Wealth, and Salvation: a study in Buddhist Ethics, ed. Russell Sizemore and Donald Swearer, 124-143.

- Keyes, Charles, "Merit Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism," in Karma: an Anthropological Inquiry. 261-286.

Week 4

- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. Cambridge University Press, 2000. 88-97, 203-206.

- Tambiah, S.J. The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets. Cambridge University Press, 1984. 53-77.

- Kowanami, Hiroko, "Theravadin Religious Women" in Frank E. Reynolds ed., The Life of Buddhism, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. 85-95

- Jordt, Ingrid. "Bhikkhuni, Thilashin, Mae-chii: Women Who Renounce the World in Burma", Crossroads, vol. 4, no.1, (Fall 1988): 31-39

Week 5

- Tambiah, S.J., Buddhism and Spirit Cults on Northeast Thailand, Cambridge U P, chap 15, pp.263-284.

Week 6

- Swearer, Donald, "Buddhism in Southeast Asia", in Mark Cummings ed. Buddhism and Asian History, 1989. 107-120.

Week 7

- Than Tun, "Religion in Burma 1000-1300" in Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, ed. Paul Strachan. 23-45

- Swearer, Donald. "A Myth, Legend and History in the Northern Thai Chronicles", The Journal of the Siam Society, vol. 62, pt 1 (Jan 1974): 67-88

- Swearer, Donald and Sommai Premchit, "The Relation Between the Religious and Political Orders in Northern Thailand (14th-16th centuries)" in Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma. 20-33.

- Reynolds, Frank E. Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Buddhist Cosmology. 19-37.

- Aung-Thwin, Michael. "Heaven, Earth, and the Supernatural World: Dimensions of the Exemplary Center in Burmese History", and Donald Swearer, "The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center" in City as Sacred Center, ed. Diana L. Eck, 88-113.

Week 8

- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. Cambridge University Press, 2000. 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. ed. Lorraine Gesick. Yale Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1983. 45-86.

Week 9

- Reynolds, Frank E, "The Holy Emerald Jewel: Buddhist Symbolism and Political Legitimation in Thailand and Laos," in ed. Bardwell Smith. Religion and Legitimation of Power. Anima

Press, 1977. 175-193.

- Schober, Juliane., "A Tooth Relic and the legitimation of Power" in Frank E. Reynolds ed., The Life of Buddhism, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. 45-59.

- Mendelsohn, E. Michael. Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership. Ithaca, Cornell U. Press, 1975. 31-65.

- Keyes, Charles F. "Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society," Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 283-302.

Week 11

Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution. The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1965. 110-179

Week 12

- Excerpts from Alabaster, Henry, trans. The Modern Buddhist, Being the Views of a Siamese Minister of State on His Own and Other Religions, London, 1870. pp. 8-11, 24-29, 34-37, 82-85, 90-91.

Week 13

- Kirsch, A. Thomas. "Modernizing Implications of Nineteenth Century Reforms in Thai Sangha," in Bardwell L. Smith, ed. Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma, Anima press, 1978. 52-65.

- Charles Keyes, "Moral Authority of the Sangha and Modernity in Thailand: Sexual Scandals, Sectarian Dissent, and Political Resistance", in Socially Engaged Buddhism for the New Millennium, 1999, pp.121-47.

Week 14

- Taylor, J.L. "Buddhist Revitalization, Modernization, and Social change in Contemporary Thailand" SOJOURN 8:1 (1993): 62-91.

- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. Cambridge University Press, 2000. 109-113, 118-122, 215-225.

- Donald Swearer, "Sulak Sivaraksa's Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society" Crossroad, 6,2 (1991): 17-57.

Week 15

- 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. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994. 43-73.

- Stuart-Fox, Martin and Rod Bucknell. "Politicization of Buddhist Sangha in Laos" Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 13:1 (1982): 60-80.

A Document for exam

- City Slave (pseu.) "The Spirits of the Yellow Leaves." Unpublished translated paper.