

**FSP 114-03, 04**  
**Buddhism and Hinduism,**  
**Common Roots, Debates, and Shared Heritage**  
**Professor Xinru Liu**

Fall 2013

FSP 114-03, TF 12:30-1:50 SSB 232  
FSP 114-04, TF 2:00-3:20 SSB 232  
Office: Social Science Building 203  
Office Phone: 771 2934 (Tuesday and Friday only)  
Email: [liux@tcnj.edu](mailto:liux@tcnj.edu)  
Offices Hours: Tuesday, Friday, 3:30 -5 by appointment

Most Hindus nowadays do not relate to Buddhism, and most Buddhists live outside the homeland of Buddha and thus know little about Hinduism. Historically, however, Buddhists and Brahmanists (predecessors of Hindus) argued with each other for more than a thousand years in South Asia. Though they disagree on many issues, their debates were carried out on the same theoretical platform, and together they created a common cosmology, and they shared similar concepts of time, space, life and death. While engaging in vehement debates, theologians of both sides borrowed ideas from each other. The rich cultural heritage of both religions, including a huge amount of literature and art works, not only shaped the way of thinking in South Asia, but also contributed to world literature and art. This seminar examines the historical conditions within which these two world views emerged and developed in South Asia, and it explores their impact on peoples outside South Asia.

From around 1500 BCE, the people in north India worshipped many gods and sacrificed large numbers of cows and horses to them. As the thinkers of the society, Brahman priests, when performing the sacrifices, sang hymns praising the gods. Historians call this form of the religion Brahmanism. When north Indian entered the age of cities, agriculture and states during the middle of the first millennium BCE, some Brahmans began to question the validity of animal sacrifice and even the existence of the gods. Other thinkers such as Buddha challenged the mainstream and provided a totally different interpretation of the universe, life, and the drastically changing society. Buddhism then became the most prominent religion in South Asia for several hundred years until Brahmanism revived in the form of Hinduism. Hinduism continued its arguments with Buddhism, but organized its institutions in the same way as did Buddhism. During the first couple of centuries of the Common Era, Buddhism had also gone through major transformations and spread out of South Asia. Towards the end of the first millennium CE, when Buddhism was still flourishing in many regions of Asia, it gradually declined in its Indian homeland. By this time, Buddhism and Hinduism were so similar to each other that Buddhist lay followers did not really miss the departure of their religious leaders.

In this class we will read epics, fables, stories, a biography of Buddha, passages from canonical books. From stories of humans, gods, monkeys, jackals, elephants etc. we will try to figure out why various Asian peoples think the way they do. There will be a lot of fun but also intensive reading. You will encounter many strange names and obscure words. Eventually, you will see a fascinating world of ideas and have a better understanding of the way of life of Buddhists and Hindus.

## **Books to purchase:**

*Ramayana*, translated and abridged by William Buck, University of California Press, 1976. CN: PS3552.U335 R3

Richman, Paula, ed., *Many Ramayanas*, Delhi: Oxford University Press 1994.

ISBN: 0-19 563518 3

*Five Discourses on Worldly Wisdom*, by Vishnu Sharman, translated by Patrick Olivelle, New York University Press, 2006, ISBN 0-8174-6208-5

*Jataka Tales*, ed. Francis & Thomas, Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2002, ISBN: 81-7224-096-1 (This book is not available in the bookstore. If you cannot obtain it from other sources, please look for it from the “Resources” on the SOCS website of this course.

## **Grading:**

1. Class participation: 20%, based on active, prepared participation in class discussions of assigned readings and other class activities, and in-class essays. Every student, during each class meeting, should come prepared to make a 3 to 5 minute oral presentation, and should also be prepared to actively participate in class discussions. Students are not necessarily marked during each class for their presentation and participation in the discussion, but a failure to make an adequate contribution in this regard will be taken into account in the assessment of the final participation grade.

2. Weekly reaction essays: 50%. The essays, typed, 300-350 words each, should be handed in class on schedule, and they should be deposited in the Drop Box on the SOCS website for final assessment. All grades of the essays will accumulate into the final grade. Continuous improvement in writing as shown in the weekly essays will have positive impact on the grade. All essays should be handed in at class time, unless otherwise indicated. Lateness will result in a lower grade.

3. Final group research project: 15%. Students form groups of two to carry out research and present to the class (5%). Each one will write a 5-7 page paper on the topic (10%). The project should choose from the following line of research: Match at least 3 sets of stories from Buddhist and Hindu traditions, and explain the roots and morals of the same or similar stories from the different traditions.

4. Final Examination: 15%

### **Grading scale:**

A	above 95%
A-	above 92%
B+	above 90%
B	above 87%
B-	above 80%
C+	above 75%
C	above 70%
C-	above 65%
D	above 60%

## **Writing Standards and Support:**

- Written work should be typed, double-spaced on 8.5x 11” white paper. Only use 12 pt. font.

- Use a spell-check program and /or dictionary. Make use of reference and style guides offered online through the Writing Site, which includes reference and style guides, citation guides, and writing tips.

See: <http://owl.department.tcnj.edu>

- For weekly essays it is sufficient to use parenthetical citations. Cite the author's name and page number(s) in parentheses where you make your citation. Example (Richman 20-21).

- The Humanities and Social Sciences Tutoring Services, located in Roscoe West Hall 101, is an excellent place to get support and feedback on your written work. Tutoring appointments could be made through [www.tcnj.edu/%7Etutoring/humanities/index.html](http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Etutoring/humanities/index.html), or call 771-3325.

**Check the college website of Academic Integrity:**

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>

**Check the college website of office of Differing Ability Services:**

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~wellness/disability/>

### **College Attendance Policy**

Every student is expected to participate in each of his/her courses through regular attendance at lecture and laboratory sessions. It is further expected that every student will be present, on time, and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin. At the first class meeting of a semester, instructors are expected to distribute in writing the attendance policies which apply to their courses. While attendance itself is not used as a criterion for academic evaluations, grading is frequently based on participation in class discussion, laboratory work, performance, studio practice, field experience, or other activities which may take place during class sessions. If these areas for evaluation make class attendance essential, the student may be penalized for failure to perform satisfactorily in the required activities. Students who must miss classes due to participation in a field trip, athletic event, or other official college function should arrange with their instructors for such class absences well in advance. The Office of Academic Affairs will verify, upon request, the dates of and participation in such college functions. In every instance, however, the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for make-up work.

**Using electronic devices such as laptop computers and cell phones in the classroom or going out classroom to answer calls or messages will cause deduction of your participation grades.**

**Class schedule:**

Week 1 (Aug. 27, 30)

1. Introduction: Buddhism and Hinduism
2. Time of the Upanishad and Buddha

Readings: passages from *Upanishad(Jargi)*, *Gautama*, *Buddhist Genesis* (SOCS)

Week 2 (Sept. 6, 10)

1. Ramayana, the epic of India
2. Rama story

Reading: *Ramayana*

Week 3 (Sept. 13, 17)

1. Is Rama a historical person?
2. Position Rama in Hindu tradition

Reading *Ramayana*

Week 4 (Sept. 20, 24)

1. Rama in Buddhist and Jain traditions
2. Reading: *Many Ramayanas*

Week 5 (Sept. 27, Oct. 1)

1. Other characters in Rama stories
2. Buddha the wise man of Shakya people

Reading: Ashoka's Edicts (SOCS), *Jataka Tales*

Week 6 (Oct. 4, 8)

1. Ashoka's Buddha
2. Buddha the prince, Buddha the god

Reading: "Buddhist Ideology" (SOCS)

Week 7 (Oct. 11, 15)

1. Buddhas and bodhisattvas
2. Buddhism and the Silk Road

Reading: "Buddhism in Kushan India" (in the file of "Buddhist Ideology", SOCS)

Week 8 (Oct. 18, 22)

1. What is Hinduism, who are the Hindus?
2. Classical Sanskrit literature

Reading: *Five Discourses on Worldly Wisdom*

Week 9 (Oct. 25, Nov. 1)

1. Bhakti movements
2. Vernacular literature

Reading: *Five Discourses on Worldly Wisdom*

Week 10 (Nov. 5, 8)

1. Comparing stories from the *Panchatantra* and the *Jatakas*

2. Why Buddhism declined in India?

Reading: *Five Discourses on Worldly Wisdom, Jataka Tales*

Week 11 (Nov. 12, 15)

1. Now again, what is Hinduism, who are Hindus?

2. Buddhism in the world

Reading: "Spread of Buddhism," (SOCS)

Week 12 (Nov. 19, 22)

Presentation of final papers

Week 13 (Nov. 26, Dec.3)

Presentation of final papers

Week 14 (Dec. 6)

Review for the final exam

Final Examination