

THE LANGUAGE OF BUDDHIST TEXTS
EAJ 389 Class No. 16896
Spring 2010

Class Time and Location: TTh 2:45–4:05 in SS 131

Instructor: Mark Blum

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ERes login: vac

Textbooks:

Required: Any good dictionary of Chinese characters with traditional forms.

Recommended (if you can afford it; neither at campus bookstore):

A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms compiled by William Soothill and Lewis Hodous, 1937. Copyright expired; now sold by Routledge Curzon for \$53 in paper, or from Taiwan by various publishers as 中英佛學辭典. Digitized version also available.

A Dictionary of Japanese Buddhist Terms by Hisao Inagaki. Nagata Bunshodo. Kyoto publisher, sold on Amazon for \$124.

Prerequisites:

One prior course in Buddhist thought is required for this course. This may be any of the courses taught on Buddhism at this university in East Asian Studies, Religious Studies, or Philosophy.

Students who do not meet the prerequisite requirement may be admitted only with permission of the instructor, and this will require additional reading. Without a grounding in basic Buddhist doctrine, a student will be seriously handicapped. The course will be taught in English and the readings will be in Classical Chinese, Classical Japanese, Modern Japanese, and English.

Knowledge of these languages is not required, but some familiarity will enhance the learning experience.

Course Description:

This course will read in detail core chapters from four Buddhist scriptures and one historical essay that have had a profound influence on Buddhism in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam:

1) *Diamond Sūtra* 金剛般若經 (金剛般若经 · 金剛般若經) *Jīngāng bānrùo jīng/Kongō hannya kyō* (*Vajracchedika prajñāpāramitāsūtra*). Kumārajīva translation. Taishō text no. 235, 8:748.

2) *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* 維摩經 (维摩经 · 維摩經) *Wéimó jīng/Yuimagyō*. Kumārajīva translation. Taishō text no. 475, 14:537.

3) *The Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* 大般涅槃經 (大般涅槃经) *Da bānnièpán jīng/Dai hatsunehan gyō*. Dharmakṣema translation. Taishō text no. 374, 12: 365.

4) *The Awakening of Faith* 起信論 (起信论 · 起信論) *Qǐxìn lùn/Kishinron*. Attributed to Aśvaghōṣa. Paramārtha translation. Taishō text no. 1666, 32:575.

5) *Contemplation of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* 佛說觀無量壽佛經(佛说观无量寿佛经 · 仏説観無量寿仏経) *Fóshuō guān wúliàngshòufó jīng/Bussetsu kan muryōjubutsu kyō*. Taishō text no. 365, 12:340.

6) *Essentials of the Eight Traditions* 八宗綱要 *Bāzōng gāngyào/Hasshū kōyō*. By Gyōnen. Dai nihon bukkyō zensho text no. 102 (Suzuki edition, 1973), 29:11.

The first three texts were written in Sanskrit in India and translated into Chinese in the early fourth century, the other three were written in the Chinese language directly. The fifth text was written Central Asia, and the sixth was written in Japan. All are studied today as scriptures of major importance in China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore.

The format will be that of a reading seminar. We will read each passage in Classical Chinese, formal modern Japanese, and English. Students should follow the languages they know, but it is not required to know either of the Asian languages. We will then discuss in some detail syntax, vocabulary, and the ideas communicated in each passage. Emphasis will be on seeing how Buddhist doctrine is communicated through special vocabulary, and that the Chinese characters chosen for this purpose are often common, everyday characters but with completely different meaning in this context. It is therefore imperative to do the assigned readings before class and to attend all classes, as each meeting will be concentrated and cannot be repeated.

Grading:

Assessment will be based on three areas of performance: class preparation and participation, a critical research paper of 10-15 pages, and a final exam based on readings and class discussions. As this is a “second-tier” course with a prerequisite, the research paper should reflect a fairly detailed look into the Buddhist topic of your choice, using multiple sources, and with a proper bibliography and footnotes or endnotes as necessary for citation and/or explanation.

Class preparation and participation:	30%
Research Paper	40%
Final	30%

Grading is not on a curve, and each student's language ability will be taken into consideration in the calculation of grades. Those with no training or knowledge of Chinese or Japanese will not be expected to have access to the same sources for their research paper. Those who have the ability to read Chinese and/or Japanese to the level of making use of primary or secondary sources will be expected to do so. Grades will follow a strict percentage scale: 92-100 = A, 90-91 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 83-87 = B; 80-81 = B-; 78-79 = C+; 73-77 = C; 70-71 = C-; 68-69 = D+; 63-67 = D; 60-61 = D-; 0-59 = E. A grade of “Incomplete” will not be considered except in cases of extreme emergencies (death in the family, extreme illness) and will require some sort of documentation. Merely not completing one's work is not grounds for receiving an Incomplete grade. Please do not hesitate to come see me about any problems concerning the lectures, readings, grades, attendance, or your ability to complete the required work. If you anticipate a potential problem, you must come see me **in advance**.

Class Schedule

	Date	Topic	Preparation
1	1.21	Distribution of Syllabus, course outline	
2	1.26	History of Buddhist texts in China (lecture)	
3	1.28	<i>Diamond Sutra: ritual beginning, Subhūti raises a question</i>	<i>Diamond Sutra</i> chs. 1-2.
4	2.2	<i>Diamond Sutra: No one attains enlightenment</i>	<i>Diamond Sutra</i> ch. 3
5	2.4	<i>Diamond Sutra: Non-abiding, non-characteristics of a buddha</i>	<i>Diamond Sutra</i> chs. 4-5
6	2.9	<i>Vimalakīrti Sutra: goddess reading 1</i>	<i>Vimalakīrti Sutra</i> ch. 7
7	2.11	<i>Vimalakīrti Sutra: goddess reading 2</i>	<i>Vimalakīrti Sutra</i> ch. 7
	2.16	Holiday – No Class	
8	2.18	<i>Vimalakīrti Sutra: goddess reading 3</i>	<i>Vimalakīrti Sutra</i> ch. 7
9	2.23	<i>Nirvāṇa Sutra: what is buddha-nature 1</i>	<i>Nirvana Sutra 1</i>
10	2.25	<i>Nirvāṇa Sutra: what is buddha-nature 1</i>	<i>Nirvana Sutra 1</i>
11	3.2	<i>Nirvāṇa Sutra: what is buddha-nature 2</i>	<i>Nirvana Sutra 2</i>
12	3.4	<i>Nirvāṇa Sutra: what is buddha-nature 2</i>	<i>Nirvana Sutra 2</i>
13	3.9	<i>Awakening of Faith: Original Enlightenment & Actualized Enlightenment</i>	<i>Awakening of Faith</i>
14	3.11	<i>Awakening of Faith: Non-enlightenment</i>	<i>Awakening of Faith</i>
15	3.16	Research Paper Session	Research topic write-up.
16	3.18	<i>Contemplation Sutra: Patricide myth of Ajātaśatru & Bimbisāra</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 1</i>
17	3.23	<i>Contemplation Sutra: Patricide myth of Ajātaśatru & Bimbisāra</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 1</i>
18	3.25	<i>Contemplation Sutra: Queen Vaidehi shown vision of Pure Land</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 1</i>
	3.30	Holiday – No Class	
	4.1	Holiday – No Class	
19	4.6	<i>Contemplation Sutra: meditation #5—visualization of virtues of the eight lakes</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 1</i>
20	4.8	Research Paper Outline Due	
21	4.13	<i>Contemplation Sutra: 9 grades of beings born in Buddha's Pure Land</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 2</i>
22	4.15	<i>Contemplation Sutra: 9 grades of beings born in Buddha's Pure Land</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 2</i>
23	4.20	<i>Contemplation Sutra: recitation of the Buddha's name</i>	<i>Contemplation Sutra 3</i>
24	4.22	<i>Essentials of the Eight Traditions: Tendai (Tientai) school part 1</i>	<i>Eight Schools 1</i>
25	4.27	<i>Essentials of the Eight Traditions: Tendai (Tientai) school part 2</i>	<i>Eight Schools 2</i>
26	4.29	<i>Essentials of the Eight Traditions: Zen & Jōdo schools. Research Paper Due</i>	<i>Eight Schools 3</i>

27	5.4	Review Session	
	5.6*	10:30AM-12:30PM Final Exam	