



# Tibetan Buddhism in Literature & Film

RLST 3550, Spring 2017  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30 - 1:45 pm  
Hellems 141

Professor Holly Gayley | Office Hours 2 – 3 pm on Thursdays or by appt | Humanities 290

TA Joshua Shelton | Office Hours 11am – 12pm Tuesdays | Humanities 216  
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How have Tibetans understood and practiced Buddhism at different times and places? In what ways have Tibetan religious lives been depicted? This course explores Tibetan Buddhism through literature and film, including sacred biographies, writings by historical and contemporary authors on the Buddhist path, and films that provide a visual window into Tibetan life worlds. Throughout the semester, we pay special attention to different kinds of Tibetan journeys: moving through the life cycle, treading the Buddhist path of self-cultivation, embarking on meditation in solitary retreat, traversing from death to rebirth in the *bardo* or intermediate state, and traveling on pilgrimage and into exile.

## REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance and participation in class discussion are required parts of this course (10% of final grade).
- Weekly quizzes on D2L about the readings and films, due Mondays by midnight (10% of final grade).
- Reflection of 3-5 pages, due on 2/21 (10% of final grade).
- Two Papers of 6-8 pages each, due on 3/21 and 4/25 respectively (30% of final grade each, 60% total).
- Collaborative project on Tibetan pilgrimage, presentations in last week of semester (10% of final grade).

## I. LIFE AMONG TIBETAN COMMUNITIES

1/17 & 19      INTRO TO TIBETAN LIFE WORLDS  
Read: *Tibetan Diary*, Chapters 1-3

1/24 & 26      GENERATIONAL CHANGE, Read: *Tibetan Diary*, Chapters 4-7  
Watch (online at home): *Himalaya*, 1999 film by Eric Valli

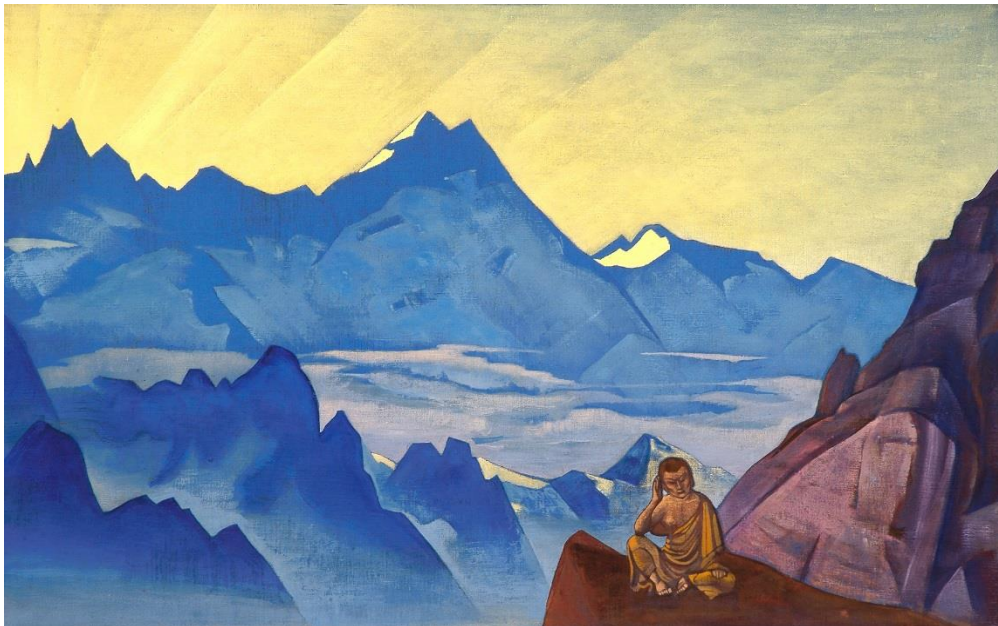
1/31 & 2/2 DEATH & DYING, Read: *Tibetan Diary*, Chapters 8-10  
"An Old Nun Tells Her Story," in *Song of the Snow Lion* (PDF on D2L)

## II. DEATH & REINCARNATION

2/7 & 9 KARMA & BARDO, Read: *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Commentary 1-15, Translation 33-40)  
Dawa Drolma, *Delog: Journey to the Realms beyond Death* (PDF on D2L)

2/14 & 16 TANTRIC DEITIES, Read: *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Commentary 24-29, Translation 57-71)  
Donald Lopez, "The Book" in *Prisoners of Shangri-la* (PDF on D2L)

Reflection | Four Reminders (due on 2/21)



2/21 & 23 REINCARNATION, Read: *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Translation 72-94)  
Watch (online at home): *The Unmistaken Child*

## III. JOURNEY TO LIBERATION

2/28 & 3/2 TANTRA IN EARLY TIBET, Read: *The Life of Milarepa*, Intro and Chapters 1-3  
Watch (online at home): *Milarepa*, 2006 film by Neten Chokling

3/7 & 9 GURU-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP, Read: *The Life of Milarepa*, Chapters 4-7  
Selections from *Buddha's Lions* (PDF on D2L)

3/14 & 16 SOLITARY RETREAT, Read: *The Life of Milarepa*, Chapters 8-12  
Selected Songs of Milarepa from *The Rain of Wisdom* (PDF on D2L)

Paper #1 | Buddhist Path of Liberation (due on 3/21)

## IV. COMPASSION

3/21 & 23 COMPASSION, Read: *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, Part II, Chapter 2, 195-222 (PDF on D2L)  
Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millennium*, Chapter 5 (PDF on D2L)

March 27-31 | Spring Break, No Class

4/4 & 6 BODHICITTA, Read: *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*, Part II, Chapter 2, 222-261 (PDF on D2L)  
Pema Chödrön, Chapters 1 & 2 in *Tonglen: The Path of Transformation* (PDF on D2L)



## V. CULTURAL SURVIVAL & EXILE

4/11 & 13 MEMORIES OF PRE-1950 TIBET, Read: Ama Adhe, *The Voice that Remembers*, Chapters 1-6  
Watch: *Kundun*, 1997 film by Martin Scorsese

4/18 & 20 SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION, Read: Ama Adhe, *The Voice that Remembers*, Chapters 7-11  
Laurie McMillan, "New Age Namthars, Tibetan Autobiographies in English" (PDF on D2L)  
Find a oral account to retell in class: <http://www.tibetoralhistory.org/>

Paper #2 | Buddhist Path of Liberation (due on 4/25)

4/25 & 27

LIBERALIZATION, Read: Ama Adhe, *The Voice that Remembers*, Chapters 12-15

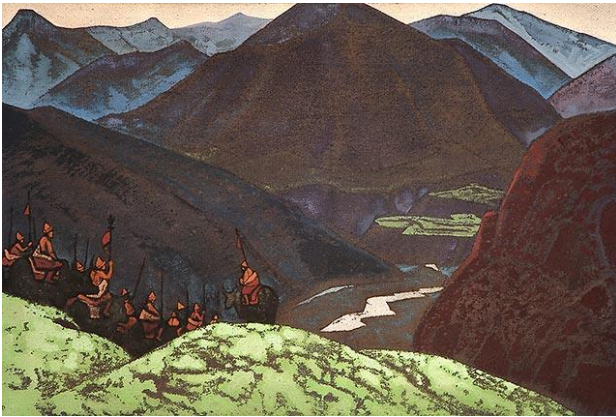
Watch (online at home): *Windhorse*, 1998 film by Paul Wagner

Dhondup Gyal, "Waterfall of Youth" (handout in class)

5/2 & 4

PILGRIMAGE IN TIBET, Read: Toni Huber, "Rethinking Tibetan Pilgrimage Practice" (PDF on D2L)

Student Presentations | Collaborative Final Project: Virtual Pilgrimage to Tibet



**Required Reading (to purchase):**

Geoff Childs, *Tibetan Diary: From Birth to Death and Beyond in a Himalayan Valley of Nepal*

Trungpa and Freemantle (trans.), *Tibetan Book of the Dead*

Andrew Quintman (trans.), *The Life of Milarepa*

Ama Adhe, *The Voice that Remembers*

**Course Policies:**

**HONOR CODE:** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. See: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-honor-code-policy>

**DISABILITIES:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Center for Community N200, and <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please let the Professor know as soon as possible if you anticipate any scheduling conflicts.

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT:** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, and gender. For more information, see: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior>.

It is disrespectful to leave class early unless you have spoken to the professor in advance.

*Paintings by Nicolas Roerich, Courtesy of the Roerich Museum in New York City.*