

Undergraduate Courses offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2024-2025
ELECTIVE COURSE
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)

BSTC2010 Buddhist art of Asia (6 credits)

Course Description

Visual art has always played a key role in delivering the message of the Buddha throughout the long history of Buddhism. During the process of its dissemination, various forms of visual art were created with symbolic meanings to facilitate and enhance the practice of Buddhist ritual and meditation. Therefore, when Buddhism was transmitted to China from the Eastern Han dynasty onwards, not only did it influence the religious belief of Chinese people, it also had great impact on the development of Chinese art, culture and science. This course will study and examine Chinese Buddhist art from historical and cultural perspectives to explore its origin, evolution and influence. The transmission of Buddhism as well as its transformations will also be studied through the investigation of the various art treasures found along the Silk Road. A study of religious monuments, archaeological artefacts, and art and sculpture from the area would reveal to us the fascinating story of the development of Buddhism from India to Central Asia, China, South and Southeast Asia, and eventually to Korea and Japan.

Offering Semester	1 st Semester
Lecturer	Dr. TSUI Chung-hui
Office	C0407, 4/F, Jockey Club Tower, Centre of Buddhist Studies
Tel	3917-5018
Email	chunghui@hku.hk
Day of the week	Friday
Time	15:30-17:20
Assessment	100% coursework
Class Venue	CPD-3.04

Objectives

Students are expected to obtain a general knowledge of Buddhist art through a broad understanding of the cultural context as well as the historical and geographical framework of major Buddhist sites. By the end of the course, students will be able to describe and explain the functions and meanings of fundamental Buddhist doctrine through major masterpieces of Buddhist art.

Assessment ratio

The final examination is based on one essay, quiz, one presentation and lecture participation.

100% coursework, including :

- (1) 50 % short essay with 2,500-3,000 words (deadline before Dec.1, 2024)
- (2) 10 % one short quiz during mid-semester (on Oct.25,2024)
- (3) 25 % presentation, each student has three to five minutes. (on Dec. 6, 2024)
- (4) 15 % class participation

Faculty Grade Expectations: http://arts.hku.hk/grade_expectations.pdf

Course Outline (tentative)

1. Sep.6 : Introduction : origin and formation of Buddhist Art
2. Sep.13 : Early Buddhist Art and Architecture in India (stupas, stories of the Buddha, visual narratives)
3. Sep.20 : Buddhist Art in India (the monastery, chaitya-griha and cave temples)
4. Sep.27 : The Silk Road & Buddhist art in Central Asia
5. Oct.4 : Buddhist Caves in Xinjiang
6. Oct.25 : Buddhist art in Sri Lanka (& mid-term Quiz)
7. Nov.1 : Art and iconography of the Buddha, Bodhisattva and other deities
8. Nov.8 : Buddhist art in South East Asia (I) Indonesia & Cambodia
9. Nov.15 : Buddhist art in South East Asia (II) Thailand, Burma
10. Nov.22: Buddhist art in Korea
11. Nov.29 : Buddhist art in Japan
12. Dec.6 : Presentation

Required Readings

Baker, Janet, *The Flowering of a foreign faith: new studies in Chinese Buddhist art*, New Delhi : Marg Publication, 1998. [704.948943 F64](#)

Fisher, Robert E. *Buddhist Art and Architecture*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993. [704.948943 F53](#)

Foucher, A. (Alfred), **The beginnings of Buddhist art and other essays in Indian and Central-Asian archaeology**, London : Humphrey Milford, 1917. [[X 704.948943 F7 b](#) c.2](e-book is also available from HKU library)

Leidy, Denise Patry, ***The art of Buddhism : an introduction to its history and meaning***, Boston : Shambhala, 2008. [704.948943 L52 a](#)

Tucker, Jonathan, *The Silk Road: Art and History*, Chap.1-10. [LB 915.16 T88](#)

Whitfield, Roderick, *Cave Temples of Dunhuang: art and history of the silk road*, The

British Library Press, London.951.45 W595 c

W. Zwalf, "The Buddha Image," in *Buddhism: Art and Faith*, edited by W. Zwalf (London: British Museum, 1985): 91-103.704.94894309 B9

Li, Yuqun. 李裕群. *Buddhist Caves in China 中国石窟寺*. Beijing: Kexue chubanshe 北京: 科学出版社, 2022.

Suggested Readings

Anne Farrer and Roderick Whitfield, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese Art from the Silk Route*, London: British Museum, 1990.709.21 W59

Annette L. Juliano: "Buddhist Art in Northwest China", in Annette L. Juliano and Judith A.Lerner: *Monks and Merchants—Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China*.951.4 J94 m

Benjamin Rowland, *The evolution of the Buddha image*, New York : the Asian Society, 1976, 704.948943 A8

Davidson, J. Leroy. *The Lotus Sutra in Chinese Art: A Study in Buddhist Art to the Year 1000*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1954. X 704.948943 D2

Dehejia, Vidya. *Early Buddhist Rock Temples*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972. X 722.404 D3

Frances Wood, *The Silk Road: Two Thousand Years in the Heart of Asia* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 2003). Chap.5LB 958 W87

Hallade, Madeleine, *The Gandhara Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art*;

Nehru, L, *The Origins of Gandhara Style*.[XLB 709.24 H18]

Hayashi Ryoichi, *The Silk Road and the Shoso-in*, New York :Weatherhill, 1975. 708.95218 H42

Kim, Lena, *Tradition and Transformation in Korean Buddhist Sculpture*, in "Arts of Korea", pp.251-294; XLB 709.23 K4

Mc Arthur, Meher. *Reading Buddhist Art: An Illustrated Guide to Buddhist Signs and Symbols*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2002.704.948943 M1

Mason, Penelope, *History of Japanese art*, Upper Saddle River, N.J. : Pearson Prentice Hall, c2005 . pp.33-146; 709.22 M41

Nagasawa, Kazutoshi 長沢和俊, 法顯伝：訳註・解説：北宋本・南宋本・高麗大蔵経本・石山寺本四種影印とその比較研究, 東京: 雄山閣, 1996

Nehru, Lolita. [Origins of the Gandhāran Style : A Study of Contributory Influences.](#)

Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Okazaki, Joji. *Pure land Buddhist painting. Compare and Contrast Images with selected Dunhuang.* Tokyo : Kodansha, 1977. [753.202 O4](#)

Portal, Jane, *Korea: Art and Archaeology*, pp. 42-107. London : Published for The Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Press, c2000. [709.23 P8](#)

Rajeshwari Ghose, *Kizil on the silk road : crossroads of commerce & meeting of minds.* Mumbai : Marg Publications on behalf of National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2008. [LB 915.16 K62](#)

Roderick Witfield and Anne Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas– Chinese Art from the Silk Road.* pp. 138-192. [709.21 W59](#)

Sponberg, Alan. *Maitreya, the Future Buddha.* Ed. Hardacre, Helen. N.Y. Cambridge University Press, 1988. [294.3421 M2](#)

Washizuka, Hiromitsu, *Transmitting the forms of divinity: early Buddhist art from Korea and Japan*, pp.18-139; New York : Japan Society, c2003. [704.948943 W31](#)

Zürcher, E. (Erik) , *The Buddhist conquest of China : the spread and adaptation of Buddhism in early medieval China*, Leiden : Brill, 2007. [[294.30951 Z9](#)] (E-resources: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/hkulibrary/docDetail.action?docID=10271043>)

Internet Resources :

1. *Database for Buddhist Cave Temples in China* 中國石窟數據庫

<http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/china-caves/>

2. *Digital Silk Road Project* : <http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/index.html.en>

3. E-Dunhuang : <https://www.e-dunhuang.com/>

4. **IDP International Dunhuang Project**

http://idp.bl.uk/database/database_search.a4d

5. **The Huntington Digital Library**

<https://hdl.huntington.org/>

(Very useful Buddhist art database for studying Buddhist art and iconography.)

6. Buddhist dictionaries :

(1) *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms.* Free for download. Edited by William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous. All the entries are in classical Chinese and the explanation is in English. You can download the entire dictionary from the following website for your private use:

<http://www.hm.tyg.jp/~acmuller/soothill/soothill-hodous.html>

- (2) *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, eds., Charles Muller. Free for online checkup. This is an internet based dictionary similar to *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, by Soothill and Hodous, but has much more entries. If you know the Chinese Buddhist technical terms, but do not know how to translate it into English, please visit Muller's DDB website address: <http://www.acmuller.net/ddb/> Users can access the search function with the user ID of "guest" (case-sensitive, no quotes), leaving the password area blank allowing 20 searches in a 24 hour period. To search Sanskrit and other terms containing diacritics, type in the term in simple ascii.
- (3) 《佛光大辭典》線上查詢 **Free for online search** for Chinese Buddhist Terms explained in traditional Chinese <http://sql.fgs.org.tw/webfbd/>

7. Encyclopaedias

Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, eds., Robert E. Buswell, Jr., Ed. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003. 982 pp. 2 vols. This encyclopedia describes the Buddhist world view, basic teachings and practices of Buddhism, as well as its different schools and sects. This *Encyclopedia* needs subscription, so *use it through HKU Electronic Recourses*.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The University upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and any student found plagiarizing is liable to disciplinary action in addition to failing the assessment concerned. Please read the following webpage on "plagiarism" for details:

<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>