

RELI 427

ADVANCED STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS

PART 1

"The Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*"

**SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS AND
RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

28 February – 14 October, 2011

RELI 427

ADVANCED STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS

PART 1

"The Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra*"

Instructor: Michael Radich
ph (463)9477
michael.radich@vuw.ac.nz
HU 216

When and where: Thursday 2:10- 4:00pm, EA 026
Course dates: 28 February to 3 June 2011
Teaching dates: 28 February to 1 May 2011
Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 1 May 2011
Withdrawal dates: Information on withdrawals and refunds is at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

The first part of this course is taught by Dr Michael Radich and runs from 28 February to 2 July 2011.

The second part of this course is taught by Professor Paul Morris and runs from 11 July to 14 October 2011

Course Aims The aim of this half of the course is to examine a major Mahayana Buddhist *sūtra* (scripture) entitled the *Mah ā parinirv ā ṇa s ū tra*, and the relation of the text to key dimensions of the rise of Mahayana Buddhism. Students will be provided with a copy of the only existing English translation of this major primary text, and several seminar sessions will focus on the close reading of portions of it, which will be selected by consultation between the course co-ordinator and the students. We will also aim to get a good representative sense of the state of the relevant scholarly literatures in the study of this text, and the problem of the rise of the Mahayana. In discussion and in independent essay work for elevation, students will be strongly encouraged to critically examine the state of the field in both respects, to identify gaps, and to work creatively to find their own ways to approach problems in Buddhist studies.

Assessment for the whole course is by means of two written assignments and two class presentations. **Part 1** of the course will be assessed on **one essay of 5000 words worth 50% of the total mark**. Like all Honours work, for the first half of the year this essay has a final due date of **Friday June 24 2011**.

At Honours level, your research work is guided, and our intention is that you will take advantage of the detailed feedback we provide on essays when first submitted, to substantially rework and improve them where possible. I will therefore require that you discuss with me a research topic and provide a draft bibliography before the beginning of **Week 7 (by Friday April 8)**. I will also require that you give me your best attempt at a finished version of the essay, for possible reworking where I think it admits of further improvement thereafter, by **Week 11 (i.e. by Friday May 27)**.

The deadline structure is thus:

Friday April 8	Research topic and draft bibliography
Friday May 27	Your best polished draft of the essay
Friday June 24	Final deadline for all Honours work for part one of the course programme-wide

Failure to meet any of these deadlines will be reported to the Honours Coordinator.

**The final deadline for handing in work for assessment for the first part of the course is
24 June 2011**

The final date for all Honours work to be handed in for assessment is 28 October 2011

Course delivery The course will be delivered as a mixture of mini-lecture style teaching from the course coordinator, and round-table discussion driven by the students. Some classes will consist mainly of group exercises in close reading of the primary text. The first two-three weeks of the course will be more lecture-style, to bring students up to speed with background knowledge necessary to coming to grips with the topic of the course. In later weeks, the format will shift more to discussion or seminar style

Course content The course will cover the following basic areas (roughly in order of presentation): 1) background in basic Buddhist concepts and relevant historical considerations; 2) the content and context of the Mahaparinirvana sutra itself; 3) the rise of the Mahayana and the current scholarly theories on that question. The course will also include sessions focusing on the close reading of the primary text, and those sessions will aim to stimulate students to consider the reading strategies necessary for interpreting classical sacred texts of this nature, and develop an appropriate set of skills.

Learning objectives Students passing this course should be able to present an original research essay on a topic related to the course content, which demonstrates independent research skills, close-reading skills, critical analysis, and the elaboration of an original argument, all at a level appropriate to Honours work.

Attendance at all seminar sessions is an integral part of the course. Please make sure you attend every week, or, in cases where absence is truly unavoidable, that you contact the course coordinator in advance.

Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences):

The total expected workload for this course is 300 hours spread evenly over the whole year.

Mandatory course requirements The mandatory requirements for this course are the submission of two essays and 2 seminar presentations, one of each in each part of the course respectively.

Required text There is no set textbook for both parts of the course. Readings shall be available via Blackboard or copies may be provided by the Religious Studies Programme at a student's request at cost.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea.

Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

Where to Find more Detailed Information

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx See Section C

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic

Class representatives: Class representatives are elected in the first week or two of the term. They are supported by the VUW Students' Association, and have a variety of roles, including assistance with grievances and student feedback to staff and VUWSA. Contact details for your class rep will be listed on the Religious Studies notice board.

Student Learning Support Services: A range of workshops, drop-ins and other assistance is provided by SLSS, covering such things as study techniques, essay writing, exam preparation and note taking skills. They are at 14 Kelburn Parade, tel: 463 5999

Evaluation: This course will be evaluated by UTDC.

READINGS

The following reading list is a guide only. The course coordinator reserves the possibility of changing readings on the basis of student interest, especially in the latter part of the course (after the mid-trimester break).

UNIT ONE: Background

Week One (week of 28 February): Intro and background

First meeting; distribution of readings; introduction to the course.

Week Two (week of 7 March): Background (cont.): review of key Buddhist doctrines and history

Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. 1-34; 133-162; 250-252.

Radich, Michael. "涅槃經 Ch. Niepan jing. Nirvāṇa Sūtra." s.v. *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*. <http://buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>

Week Three (week of 14 March): Overview of the primary text (MPNS)

The MPNS, in Yamamoto's translation, will be divided up between the class (max 25 pages per student per week). Students will summarise their assigned portion in class and in a written outline. At the end of Week Four, written outlines will be collated to produce a summary of the full text, and this will be circulated as a shared resource.

Yamamoto, Kosho, trans. *The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra*. Revised by Tony Page. http://lirs.ru/do/Mahaparinirvana_Sutra,Yamamoto,Page,2007.pdf. Accessed 25 February 2009.

Week Four (week of 21 March): Overview of the primary text (MPNS) (cont.)

Yamamoto, MPNS, cont.

Week Five (week of 28 March): Secondary literature round table (1)

"The state of [English language] scholarship on the MPNS"

Students will each be responsible for reading one or two items in the secondary literature, and presenting a concise, critical summary to the class.

Walshe, Maurice, trans. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995. DN 16, *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, 231-277. (Radich presenting)

Chen, Jinhua. "The Indian Buddhist Missionary Dharmakṣema (385-433): A New Dating of his Arrival in Guzang and of his Translations." *T'oung Pao* 90 (2004): 215-263.

Hodge, Stephen. "On the Eschatology of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and Related Matters." Lecture held at University of London, SOAS, Spring 2006. <http://www.nirvanasutra.net/historicalbackground2.htm>. Accessed June 20 2009.

Hodge, Stephen. "Textual History of the MPNS." <http://www.nirvanasutra.net/historicalbackground.htm>. Accessed June 3 2009.

Karashima, Seishi. "Who Were the *Ichchantikas*?" *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology* (2007): 67-80.

Lai, Whalen. "The *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and its Earliest Interpreters in China: Two Prefaces by Tao-lang and Tao-sheng." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102 no. 1 (1982): 99-105.

Lai, Whalen. "Sinitic Speculations on Buddha-Nature: The Nirvāṇa School (420-589)." *Philosophy East and West* 32, no. 2 (1982), 135-149.

Liu, Ming-Wood. "The Doctrine of the Buddha-Nature in the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra", *JIABS* 5, no. 2 (1982): 63-94.

Liu, Ming-Wood. "The Problem of the *Ichhāntika* in the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra", *JIABS* 7, no. 1 (1984): 57-82.

Mather, Richard B. "The Impact of the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* in China." In *Literature of Belief, Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, edited by Neal E. Lambert, 155-173. Salt Lake City, Ut: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1981.

Radich, Michael. *How Ajātaśatru Was Reformed: The Domestication of "Ajase" and Stories in Buddhist History* (unpublished). Ch. 3, 4, Appendix 4, 5.

Sasaki, Shizuka. "The *Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra* and the Origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies (Nagoya)* 26, nos. 1-2 (1999): 189-197.

Shimoda Masahiro 下田正弘. *Nehangyō no kenkyū: Daijōkyōten no kenkyū hōhō shiron* 涅槃經の研究—大乘教典の研究 方法試論. Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1997. English synopsis, 3-42(L).

Shimoda, Masahiro. "The Relationship Between the Mahāyāna *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and the Mahāsāṃghika." *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 42, no. 2 (1994): 22-27(L).

Suzuki, Takayasu. "Mutual Influence among the Mahāyāna Sūtras concerning Sarvalokapriyadarśana." *IBK* 47, no. 2 (1999), 10-14(L).

Suzuki, Takayasu. "The Recompilation of the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* under the Influence of the *Mahāmeḡhasūtra*." *IBK* 39, no. 2 (2001): 34-38.

Takasaki Jikidō. "The *Tathāgatagarbha* Theory in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*." *IBK* 19, no. 2 (1971): 1024-1015 (1-10).

Week Six (week of 4 April): Secondary literature round table (2)

Some themes related to the MPNS

Braarvig, Jens. "The Buddhist Hell: An Early Instance of the Idea?" *Numen* 56, no. 2-3 (2009): 254-281.

Braarvig, Jens. "Memory and Eloquence of Bodhisattvas." *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 8, no. 1 (1985): 17-29.

Cole, Alan. *Text as Father: Paternal Seductions in Early Mahayana Buddhist Literature*. California: University of California Press, 2007.

Drewes, D.D. "Mahayana Sutras and Their Preachers: Rethinking the Nature of a Religious Tradition." PhD. diss., University of Virginia, 2006.

Demiéville, Paul. *Buddhism and Healing: Demiéville's Article "Byō" from Hōbōgin*. Translated by Mark Tatz. Lanham: University Press of America, 1985.

Drewes, David. "Re-visiting the Phrase 'sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet' and the Mahāyāna Cult of the Book." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 101-143.

Kinnard, Jacob N. "On Buddhist 'Bibliolaters': Representing and Worshipping the Book in Medieval Indian Buddhism." *Eastern Buddhist* 34, no. 2 (2002): 94-116.

MacQueen, Graeme. "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism (I)." *Religion* 11 (1981): 303-319.

MacQueen, Graeme. "Inspired Speech in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism (II)." *Religion* 12 (1981): 49-65.

Nance, R. F. "Indian Buddhist preachers inside and outside the sutras." *Religion Compass* 2 (2008): 1-26.

Overbey, R. "Memory, Rhetoric and Education in the *Great Lamp of the Darma Dhāraṇī Scripture*." PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010.

Radich, Michael. "Immortal Buddhas and Their Indestructible Embodiments: The Advent of the Concept of *Vajrakāya*." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (forthcoming).

Schopen, Gregory. "The Phrase 'sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet' in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 17, nos. 3-4 (1975): 147-181.

Skilton, Andrew. "State or Statement? *Samādhi* in Some Early Mahāyāna Sūtras." *The Eastern Buddhist* 34, no. 2 (2002): 51-93.

Strong, John S. "The Buddha's Funeral." In *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, edited by Bryan J. Ceuvas and Jacqueline I. Stone, 32-59. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.

Teiser, Stephen. "Having Once Died and Returned to Life: Representations of Hell in Medieval China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48, no 2 (1988): 433-464.

Friday April 8

Research topic and draft bibliography due

Week Seven (week of 11 April): Close reading (1)

Students will each choose a particular theme to pursue through the MPNS as a whole, and prepare presentations on their findings about the treatment of that theme in the text, using the searchable digital pdf of Yamamoto's translation as a research tool in the process.

Week Eight (week of 2 May): Secondary literature round table (3)

The early Mahāyāna

Readings to be selected from the following:

Allon, Mark and Richard Salomon. "New Evidence for Mahayana in Early Gandhāra." *The Eastern Buddhist* 41, no. 1 (2010): 1-22.

Anālayo. *The Genesis of the Bodhisattva Ideal*. Hamburg University Buddhist Studies 1. Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, 2010.

Aramaki Noritoshi. "Towards a New Working Hypothesis on the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism." *The Eastern Buddhist* 35, nos. 1/2 (2003): 203-218.

Bechert, Heinz. "Notes on the Formation of Buddhist Sects and the Origins of Mahāyāna." In *German Scholars on India: Contributions to Indian Studies*, ed. Cultural Department of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, New Delhi, vol. 1, 6-18. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1973.

Boucher, Daniel. *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna: A Study and Translation of the Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā-sūtra*. Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008.

Cohen, Richard S. "Discontented Categories: Hinayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. 1 (1995): 1-25.

Cousins, L. S. "Sākiyabhikkhu/Sakyabhikkhu/Śākyabhikṣu: A Mistaken Link to the Mahāyāna?" *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 23 (2003): 1-27.

Dessein, Bart. "The Mahāsāmghikas and the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism: Evidence Provided in the *Abhidharmamahāvibhāṣāśāstra*." *The Eastern Buddhist* 41, nos. 1/2 (2009): 25-61.

Fronsdal, Gil. "The Dawn of the Bodhisattva Path." PhD, Stanford University, 1998.

Gombrich, Richard. "How the Mahāyāna Began." In *The Buddhist Forum*, edited by Tadeusz Skorupski (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990), 21-30.

Gombrich, Richard, "Organized Bodhisattvas: A Blind Alley in Buddhist Historiography", in Paul Harrison and Gregory Schopen, eds., *Sūryacandrāya: Studies in Honor of Akira Yuyama On the Occasion of His 65th Birthday* (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica-et-Tibetica-Verl., 1998), 43-57.

Harrison, Paul. "Searching for the Origins of the Mahāyāna: What Are We Looking for?" *The Eastern Buddhist* 28, no. 1 (1995): 48-69.

Harrison, Paul. "Mediums and Messages: Reflections on the Production of Mahāyāna Sūtras." *The Eastern Buddhist* 35, nos. 1/2 (2003): 115-151.

Harrison, Paul. "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-Image and Identity among Followers of the Early Mahāyāna." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 10, no. 2 (1987): 67-89.

Hirakawa, Akira. "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relationship to the Worship of St ū pas." *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 22 (1963): 57-106.

Karashima Seishi. "Who Composed the Lotus Sutra? Antagonism between Wilderness and Village Monks." *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University* 4 (2001): 143-179.

Lamotte, Étienne. "Sur la formation du Mahāyāna." In *Asiatica: Festschrift Friedrich Weller*, ed. Johannes Schubert and Ulrich Schneider, 377-396. Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1954.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr. "Authority and Orality in the Mahāyāna." *Numen* 42 (1995): 21-47.

Murakami Shinkan. "Early Buddhist Openness and Mahāyāna Buddhism." *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism* 27 (2008): 109-147.

Nattier, Jan. *A Few Good Men: The Bodhisattva Path according to The Inquiry of Ugra (Ugraparipṛcchā)*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003.

Osto, Doug. Unpublished article?

Ray, Reginald. *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Rhi, Jihyung. "Early Mahāyāna and Gandhāran Buddhism: An Assessment of the Visual Evidence." *The Eastern Buddhist* 35, nos. 1/2 (2003): 152-202.

Ruegg, David Seyfort. "Aspects of the Investigation of the (Earlier) Indian Mahāyāna." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27 (2004): 3-62.

Sasaki Shizuka. "A Study on the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism." *The Eastern Buddhist* 30, no. 1 (1997): 79-113.

Sasaki Shizuka. "A Basic Approach for Research on the Origins of Mahāyāna Buddhism." *Acta Asiatica* 96 (2009): 25-46.

Schopen, Gregory. "The Inscription on the Kuśan Image of Amitabha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 10, no. 2 (1987): 99-134.

Schopen, Gregory. "Mahāyāna in Indian Inscriptions." *Indo Iranian Journal* 21 (1979): 1-19. Reprinted with stylistic changes in Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers*, 247-277. Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Schopen, Gregory. "The Mahāyāna and the Middle Period in Indian Buddhism: Through a Chinese Looking-glass." *The Eastern Buddhist* 32, no. 2 (2000): 1-25. Reprinted with stylistic changes in Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers*, 3-24. Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Schopen, Gregory. "Two Problems in the History of Indian Buddhism: The Layman/Monk Distinction and the Doctrine of the Transference of Merit." *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 10 (1985): 9-47.

Shimoda Masahiro. "The State of Research on Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Mahāyāna as Seen in Developments in the Study of Mahāyāna Sūtras." *Acta Asiatica* 96 (2009): 1-23.

Silk, Jonathan. "What, If Anything, is Mahāyāna Buddhism? Problems of Definition and Classifications." *Numen* 49 (2002): 355-405.

Skilling, Peter. "Unsettling Boundaries: Verses Shared by Śrāvaka and Mahāyāna Texts." *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies* 9 (2005): 99-112.

Vetter, Tillman. "Once Again on the Origin of Mahāyāna Buddhism." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudasiens* 45 (2001): 59-90.

Week Nine (week of 9 May): Close reading (2)

Students will each choose one passage in the MPNS (usually 1-3 pages long), and prepare a close reading of that passage. Class time will be spent working together through as many passages as we have time for. The course coordinator will present a sample passage with parallels elsewhere in Buddhist literature, as an example of the kinds of relations that obtain between MPNS and other texts (and, by extension, between texts in Buddhist literature as a whole), and what can be learnt from such patterns of relation about compositional processes.

Week Ten (week of 16 May): Secondary literature round table (4)/ OR Close reading (3)

Depending upon what class members feel is most useful to the ongoing development of their essay work at this stage in the trimester, this week will comprise **either**:

(1) Another week of presentations on secondary literature, to continue on the work of Weeks Six and Eight (readings to be selected from the list given above under those weeks);
or

(2) Another week of close readings, to continue the work of Weeks Seven and Nine.

Week Eleven (week of 23 May): Essay presentations

Student presentations on essays.

Friday May 27	Your best polished draft of essay due
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Week Twelve (week of 30 May)

Summary of the course. No readings.