


HONS 175.01 Approaches to Religions in India & Tibet
Honors Seminar Room 200 @ 4:00-5:15 pm Fall 2018

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Dept. of Religious Studies

Office: RELS building @ 4 Glebe Street, room 101
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to two Asian religious traditions, Hinduism & Buddhism, and how they have shaped Indian and Tibetan culture. We will survey forms of social organization (e.g. the caste system, the religious roles of women, monastic life), and the practices and beliefs of Hindus & Buddhists, including their origin myths, rites of passage, and their moral values. The course is designed around major conceptual themes: discerning between illusion and reality; journeys in search of spiritual experience; death and the afterlife; religion, gender, and sexuality; monasticism, asceticism, and the hermit's life; and the effects of colonialism and modernity on religions. In particular we will examine the religious and political reforms of Mahatma Gandhi and the Dalai Lama, two of the most important leaders of the last century. The non-violent ideals of Gandhi and the Dalai Lama present us with an alternative to our modern consumer-oriented technological culture, where people seek what they are programmed to seek. This course will help you become more informed and critical of how the news media represents other religions and their role in different societies, rather than be passive consumers of the media. You will learn to really "**Think Different**," as the Apple ™ advertising campaign once put it (see p. 8 below).

We will read excerpts from the classical scriptures of Hindu and Buddhist traditions, in addition to scholarly articles, short stories, excerpts from autobiographies, and a religious novel set in India. One of the fun things about this course is that we get to do some "traveling" to India and Tibet through documentary and feature films. These films illustrate how religious ideas and practices are woven into many aspects of social life in India and Tibet. You should consider these films as "texts," for their content and their ethical messages will be covered on exams.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

- To expand and enrich your knowledge of religions beyond your own experience;
- To gain empathy for the enduring visions and values that have shaped Indian and Tibetan culture;
- To observe the consequences of intolerance that are justified by religion, and discover creative methods of non-violent resistance;
- To make what is strange seem familiar and what is familiar seem strange;
- To formulate an argument and express it concisely in a short essay.

This course also satisfies the **General Education Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted and valued in various expressions of human culture
2. Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments

These two Gen. Ed. learning outcomes will be assessed on the **4th essay question**, a four-page essay on the Dalai Lama's early life as represented in his autobiography and in the film *Kundun* (12.5% of grade)

There are **3 Required Texts** available at the CofC Barnes & Noble Bookstore:

- 1) U. R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man* Oxford University Press (\$14.95)
- 2) M. K. Gandhi, *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* Dover Ed. 1983. (\$14.95)
- 3) Tenzin Gyatso, *Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*, Harper Pub. (\$16)

There are also required **E-Readings** online **ER#1-25**: scholarly articles, short stories, and selections from sacred scriptures in pdf available on **OAKS** under **HONS 175**, which registered students can access after they login to **MyCharleston** (<http://my.cofc.edu>). **Please print out each article** and bring it to class.

Grading Scale:	A	96-93	(4.0)	B-	82-80	(2.7)	D+	69-67	(1.3)	
	A-	92-90	(3.7)	C+	79-77	(2.3)	D	66-63	(1.0)	
	B+	89-87	(3.3)	C	76-73	(2.0)	D-	62-60	(.70)	
	A+	100-97	(4.0)	B	86-83	(3.0)	C-	72-70	(1.7)	F

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Course Requirements and Resources

There is no course prerequisite for this class or any knowledge presumed about Asian cultures and religions, but it does require the desire to read challenging and unusual reading material and to engage in conversation about these readings. The following points identify these expectations more explicitly.

- **Completion of required reading assignments prior to lecture**

It is strongly recommended that you read the **entire** assignment **before** we discuss the topic in class.

This will help you understand the lectures and participate actively in class discussion, and you can then go back and study specific readings in more detail and review your class notes before a quiz or exam.

When there is an assignment from an E-Reading on OAKS you should **bring it to class with you**.

- **Participation in class discussions and regular attendance (10%)**

Whatever you get out of this course is directly related to how much you put into it. Asking questions, raising concerns, and offering your own ideas during class discussions are a valuable part of this course.

Please come to class with ideas and questions that can help our class engage in meaningful discussion.

Attendance records will be kept for each class. There will be **3** allowed absences; **4** or more absences will negatively affect your grade. After **8 absences**, you will be dropped from the class and earn a **WA grade** for excessive absences. If you have excused absences (e.g. for illness) please contact the Absence Memo Office (67 George Street) to document the reason for your absence. You are responsible for making up any absences; please get any notes on missed lectures from a classmate.

- **Two Quizzes and Weekly Reflection Cards (25%)**

There will be two quizzes (on **9/17** and **11/7**, each worth **5%**) and weekly homework assignments (**15%**). Every class marked with a **RC# due** you must bring to class a thoughtful, written reflection and/or critical question related to the assigned reading for that week. It should be written on a 3x5 card and be based on a topic or issue that you have found puzzling, thought provoking, or interesting. Questions should not simply ask for factual information but raise questions of interpretation, while your reflections should explore significant issues or express concerns about the topic that are important to you.

- **Three short essays of 2 pages each, and one essay of 4 pages (30%)**

The two-page essays will be based on: 1) the short story "The Indian Life" (worth **5%** due on **9/3**); 2) the short novel *Samskara* (**7.5%** due on **10/1**); 3) the life of the Buddha (**5%** due on **10/22**); and a four-page comparison of the Dalai Lama's autobiography with M. Scorsese's epic biographical film *Kundun* (**12.5%** due on **11/19**). These essays will require that you analyze the text (and film) closely, formulate an interpretation, and express it concisely. The essays are due in class on the day when we will discuss the assigned topic so **late essays are not accepted**.

- **Midterm Exam on October 15 (15%) and Final Exam on December 12 (20%)**

Exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, explanation of scriptural passages, and short essay.

The final exam is not comprehensive but it covers the material from the second half of the semester.

Review sheets will be provided beforehand. If you miss an exam and provide a documented excuse, I do give makeup tests, but they are harder than the original tests. An unexcused missed exam counts as a **0**.

- **Academic Integrity and the Honor Code**

There is a **zero-tolerance policy** toward plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty in this course. This means that anyone caught taking credit for work that is not his or her own, or cheating in any other way, will receive a failing grade for the entire course. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a **XF** in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty.

- **Class Resources**

I encourage you to utilize the **Center for Student Learning's** (CSL) academic support services for assistance in study strategies and course content. They offer tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills appointments, and workshops. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost.

For more information on the Center for Student Learning, see: <http://csl.cofc.edu>

SNAP students: If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodation, please present a letter to me from the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester.

For more information on the SNAP program see: <http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu>

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Lecture Topics and Reading Schedule

The following abbreviations will be used in listing the required reading: selections from the electronic readings (ER) on OAKS are numbered sequentially. For a complete list of the sources on OAKS for the assigned electronic readings (ER#1-25), see below p. 6.

Introduction: What is “Religion?” How do we study it in a secular school?

- 8/22 Organization of this Course and Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion
- 8/27 The Social Construction of Reality & the Role of Religion: *The Truman Show* as Myth (ER#1-3: Thinking about Being a Student of Religion; The Meaning of *The Truman Show*; The Sacred Rac) **RC#1 due** Clips from the film *The Truman Show* (1998)

The Classical Hindu Worldview: Dreams, Illusions, and Reality

- 8/29 Getting Inside the Heads of Hindus: The Hunter and the Sage (ER#4-5: Vedanta & Other Scholars’ Myths) **RC#2 due**
- 9/3 Exploring Dreams, Illusions, Yoga, and Reality in “The Indian Life” (ER#6: The Indian Life) **Essay #1 on “The Indian Life” due in class**

The Hindu Social World: Caste and Gender Hierarchies

- 9/5 The Order of the Hindu Universe: Dharma and Caste (ER#7-8: Hindu Ways of Being Religious; & selections from Hindu scriptures: That You Are; Creation of the Caste System; Four Castes; Stages of Life for a Twice-Born Man) **RC#3 due**
- 9/10 Caste as Institution: The Inner Experience of Hierarchy, Purity and Pollution (ER#9: The Hierarchical Man)
- 9/12 The Position of Hindu Women in a Patriarchal Society (ER#10: Indian Women: Traditional and Modern) **RC#4 due** Documentary: *Saheri’s Choice*

Hindu Marriage & Death Ceremonies; the lives of Hindu Wives & Widows

- 9/17 Hindu Rites of Passage: Marrying and Burying (ER #11-12: The Dynamics of Hinduism; Scriptural selections on Marriage; How to Perform a Funeral Sacrifice) **In-class quiz on Hinduism in India**
- 9/19 Purity and Pollution in a Brahmin Village: Rite for a Dead Man (*Samskara*, pp. 1-40) **RC#5 due**
- 9/24 Hindu wives and widows in novel and in film (*Samskara*, pp. 41-55; ER#13: The Politics of Melodrama in *Water*) Clips from *Water*, pt. I (dir. by Deepa Mehta, 2006)
- 9/26 Living with the Dead (*Samskara*, pp. 59-76) **RC#6 due** Clips from *Water*, pt. II
- 10/1 Interpreting *Samskara* (*Samskara*, pp. 79-118) **Essay#2 on *Samskara* due in class!**

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Gandhi's Autobiographical Narrative: His Experiments with Truth

- 10/3 Gandhi's First "Experiments with Truth"
(Gandhi's *Autobiography*, pp. vii-27; 453-4) **RC#7 due**
- 10/8 Gandhi's Reformed Hinduism: Chastity, Caste Reform, and Non-Violence
(Gandhi's *Autobiography*, pp. 59-61; 179-185; 235-245; 295-303; 354-358)
Documentary: *Gandhi, Pilgrim of Peace*
- 10/10 Gandhi's Principles of Non-Violent Resistance and Universal Welfare
(ER #14: M.K. Gandhi: India's 'Great Soul') **RC#8 due**
Clips from *Gandhi* (1982, Ben Kingsley as Gandhi)
- 10/15 **Midterm Exam in class**

Buddhist Beginnings in India: Retracing the Footsteps of the Buddha

- 10/17 The Story of the Buddha: Birth to Enlightenment
(ER#16: The Early Life of the Buddha) **RC#9 due**
- 10/22 The Mission of the Buddha: Teachings and the Monastic Community
(ER#17: The Legend of the Buddha Shakyamuni) **Essay#3 on Buddha's life due in class**

Buddhism Comes to Tibet, "The Land of Snows"

- 10/24 Buddhist Cosmology and the Myth of Tibet's Founding Father
(ER#18: Tibet: Introduction) **RC#10 due**
- 10/29 Tibetan Buddhist Monasticism and the Search for a Spiritual Monarch
(ER#19: The First Step...Coming Back)
Documentary: *The Reincarnation of Khensur Rinpoche*
- 10/31 The Origins and History of the Dalai Lama Institution
(ER #20: Tibet's Buddhist Background...the Fourteen Dalai Lamas) **RC#11 due**

11/5 **Fall Break!**

- 11/7 The Role of Oracles in Tibetan Religion and Politics
(Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile*, pp. 209-220) **RC#12 due**
In-class Quiz on Indian and Tibetan Buddhism

Life of the 14th Dalai Lama in Tibet

- 11/12 Who is the Dalai Lama? How was He Discovered?
(*Freedom in Exile*, pp. xiii-48)
- 11/14 The Chinese Invasion and Occupation of Tibet
(*Freedom in Exile*, pp. 49-81) **RC#13 due**
Film clips: *Kundun* (dir. by Martin Scorsese, 1997)
- 11/19 The Exodus
(*Freedom in Exile*, pp. 123-143) **Essay #4 due in class** Film clips: *Kundun*

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11/21 **Skip School: Give Thanks, Eat Turkey, Sleep and Dream of Tibet**

11/26 The Dalai Lama's Vision of a Future Tibet
(*Freedom in Exile*, pp. 194-208; ER #21: Dalai Lama's Nobel Prize Speech)
Documentary: *Compassion in Exile*

Full Circle: Illusion and Reality from the Himalayas to Hollywood

11/28 The Dalai Lama Comes to Hollywood
(ER #23-4: The Dalai Lama Comes to Hollywood...Tinseltown Tulkus;
also Lama in the Hood...On Retreat with Pema Jones Rinpoche) **RC#14 due**

12/3 Virtual Tibet: Searching for Shangri-la from the Himalayas to Hollywood
(ER #25: My Tibet and Ours...Illusion and Reality) **RC#15 due**
Documentary: *Dreams of Tibet* (PBS Frontline, 1997)

Final Exam Schedule

12/12 Final Exam from 4-7 pm (final exams cannot be taken before this time!)

Web Resources for the Virtual Pilgrim

Interested in learning more about the topics & places that we've explored? Check out these sites for a virtual visit!

- **India WWW Virtual Library:** webhead.com/WWWVL/India/india2.html
- **Gandhi's Official Website:** <http://web.mahatma.org.in/>
- **Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual library:** www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-TibetanStudies.html
- **The Wheel of Life:** www.angelfire.com/yt/fairtibet/whexpl.html#
- **Tibetan Buddhism, including State Oracle:** www.tibet.com/Buddhism/index.html
- **Buddhist Studies WWW Virtual Library:** <http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Buddhism.html>
- Buddhist Peace Fellowship: www.bpf.org/
- **Dalai Lama's Official Website:** www.tibet.com/DL/index.html

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RELS 115 OAKS Articles: A Bibliography of Sources

Use this information in your bibliography when you cite these sources in any of your **essays** due in class.

1. Gary E. Kessler, "Thinking about Being a Student of Religion" from *Studying Religion*, 3rd edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008, pp. 1-13.
2. Ken Sanes, "The Meaning of *The Truman Show*" 6 pp. Used with the author's permission from <http://www.transparencynow.com/truman.htm>
3. Patricia Hughes, "The Sacred Rac," *Focusing on Global Poverty and Development*, ed. by Jayne C. Millar (Washington D.C. Overseas Development Council, 1974), p. 357-8.
4. "Vedanta" and "Shankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*," from *Ways of Being Religious* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000), pp. 143-145.
5. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, "Other Scholars' Myths: The Hunter and the Sage" from *Other Peoples' Myths: The Cave of Echoes* New York: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 7-24.
6. Herman Hesse, "The Indian Life," from *Magister Ludi* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.), pp. 468-502.
7. Gary E. Kessler, "Hindu Ways of Being Religious," from *Ways of Being Religious* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000), pp. 103-111.
8. "That You Are, The Creation of the Caste System, The Four Castes, Stages of Life for a Twice-Born Man and The Life of Woman" from *Anthology of World Scriptures*, ed. by Robert E. Van Voorst, 3rd Edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2000), pp. 36-38, 40-44.
9. Sudhir Kakar and Katharina Kakar, "The Hierarchical Man" and "The Inner Experience of Caste" from *The Indians: Portrait of a People* (Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009), pp. 7-40.
10. Sudhir Kakar and Katharina Kakar, "Indian Women: Traditional and Modern" from *The Indians: Portrait of a People* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2009), pp. 41-70.
11. David M. Knipe, "The Dynamics of Hinduism" from *Hinduism: Experiments in the Sacred* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco), pp. 119-128.
12. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty ed., "Marriage 5.3-5.3.4" and "How to Perform a Funeral Sacrifice 5.5.4-5.5.5" *Textual Sources for the Study of Hinduism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 101-105; 125-129.
13. Fincina Hopgood, "The Politics of Melodrama in Deepa Mehta's 'Water'" in *Metro Magazine* Issue 149 (Autumn 2006), pp. 142-147.
14. Stephen Hay, "M. K. Gandhi: India's 'Great Soul,'" *Sources of Indian Tradition*, 2nd ed., Vol. 2, (New York: Columbia U. P., 1988), pp. 247-274.
15. Nothing to read!
16. Zeff Bjerken, "The Early Life of the Buddha."
17. Edward Conze, "The Legend of the Buddha Shakyamuni," *Buddhist Scriptures* (New York: Penguin Books, 1959), pp. 34-66.
18. Thupten Jigme Norbu and Colin Turnbull, "Introduction" and "The Legend of the Beginning" from *Tibet* (New York: Simon and Schuster, pp. 7-32.
19. Vicki Mackenzie, "The First Step" and "Coming Back" from *Reborn in the West: The Reincarnation Masters* (New York: Marlowe and Company, 1996), pp. 1-10; 88-102.
20. Glenn Mullin, "Tibet's Buddhist Background" to *Mystical Verses of a Mad Dalai Lama*, pp. 3-19.
21. Dalai Lama, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech" (Oslo: University Aula, December 10, 1989), available online.
22. Nothing to read!
23. Orville Schell, "The Dalai Lama Comes to Hollywood" & "Tinseltown Tulkus" from *Virtual Tibet: Searching for Shangri-la from the Himalayas to Hollywood* (New York: H. Holt, 2000), pp. 42-74.
24. Chris Helms interviews Pema Jones Rinpoche, "Lama in the Hood" and "On Retreat with Pema Jones Rinpoche," *CyberSangha: The Buddhist Alternative Journal* (Spring 1996, and Winter/Spring 1997). Available on-line at: www.newciv.org/CyberSangha/Sneak.htm and www.newciv.org/CyberSangha/helms97.htm
25. Orville Schell, "My Tibet and Ours" and "Illusion and Reality" from *Virtual Tibet: Searching for Shangri-la from the Himalayas to Hollywood* (New York: Henry Holt, 2000), pp. 3-12, 205-221

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Important Terms for the Study of Religion in Indian & Tibetan Society

These are technical terms that you must know in order to do well on the exams and quizzes. Keep this list handy as you read the assignments, and write down their definitions and meanings. This list is provisional and subject to change.

Analytic terms used in the Academic Study of Religion

Theology, Insider's vs. Outsider's perspectives on religion, empathy, bracketing
Social construction of reality, religion as legitimation, hierarchy, myth/sacred narrative, rite of passage
Hinduism as "sponge" and "incurable collector," asceticism, hierarchy, social stratification
Filial devotion, nepotism, psychological projection, patriarchal/patrilineal/patrilocal,
Hindutva/Hindu fundamentalism, misogyny, rite of passage, liminal state, Theosophy, ecumenicism
Charismatic authority, hagiography, cosmology, cultural assimilation, modernism
Spiritual materialism, sectarianism, ecumenicism, interfaith dialogue, theocracy, Orientalism

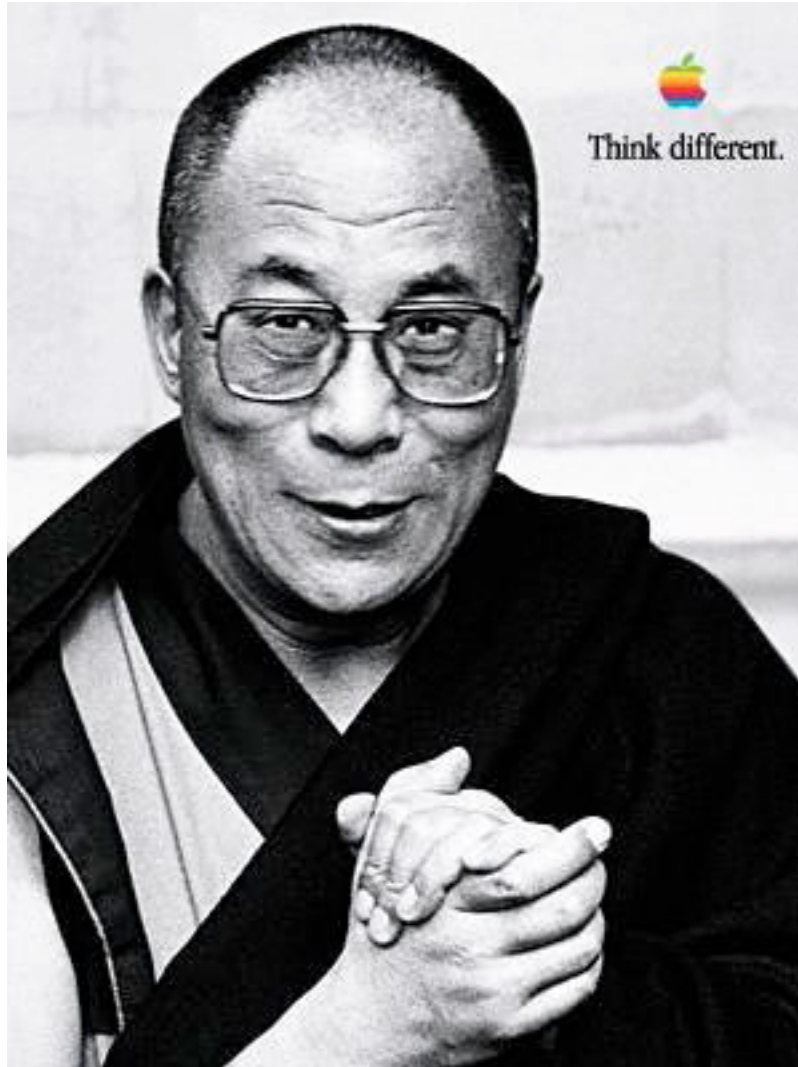
Hinduism: For help on the Hindu terms below, consult the "Notes" at the end of *Samskara*.

Upanishad, guru, reincarnation, samsara, karma, maya, yoga, moksha, Brahman, Atman
Hindu/Hinduism, *Vedas*, Sanskrit, caste (*varna* and *jati*), 4 Classes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra
Twice-born castes, *homo hierarchicus*, joint vs. nuclear family, Dalit/Untouchable/Harijan
Purity vs. dirty, daughter discrimination, *Laws of Manu*, arranged vs. love marriages, *jodi*
Kamasutra, sati, Four Stages & Four Aims of Life, Brahmacharya, sannyasin
Deepa Mehta, Varanasi, widow ashram, Holi festival, dowry, "kitchen accidents"
Samskara, mantra, initiation, sacred thread, funeral pyre, shraddha rite, acharya, food taboos
Gandhi, Kasturbha, purdah, Theosophy, Mahatma, fasting vows, *Bhagavad Gita*, karma-yoga
Satyagraha, vows, ashram, ahimsa, spinning wheel, Harijan, home rule (*sva-rajya*)

Buddhism in India and Tibet

Shakyamuni, Siddhartha, Gautama, Buddha, bodhisattva, Bodh Gaya, shramana, *Buddhacarita*
3 Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha), 3 Marks of Existence, Middle Way, 4 Noble Truths
No-self (an-Atman), Sangha as Field of Merit, Hindu vs. Buddhism Dharma, 6 Rebirth Realms
Wheel of Life, hell/purgatory, Chenrezi, bodhisattva, monkey & ogress, Thupten Jigme Norbu
Tulku, Rinpoche, Lama, reincarnation vs. rebirth, Khensur Rinpoche, ordination, Dharamsala
Dalai Lama, "god-king," Kundun, Potala, Lhasa, the "Great Fifth," long-life prayer, Regent
Nechung Oracle, spirit medium, Dorje Drakden, trance state, Supermundane vs. Mundane deities
Norbulingka, enthronement ceremony, 17 Point Agreement, 5 Point Peace Plan, Zone of Ahimsa
Nobel Prize Acceptance speech, *Compassion in Exile*, Shangri la/Shambhala, Kalacakra Initiation
"Virtual Tibet," Tinseltown Tulkus, Steven Seagal, Richard Gere, CyberSangha, Pema Jones
Dreams of Tibet, Orville Schell, Jamyang Norbu, Panchen Lama,

Terms to Avoid: supernatural, superstition, primitive, idolatry, devil worship



Why would Apple choose the 14th Dalai Lama for their “Think Different” advertising campaign? What thoughts come to mind when you see this picture of the Dalai Lama? What might the multi-colored apple icon mean? Why might some Tibetans have taken offense at this advertisement?

A Poem Attributed to the 6th Dalai Lama (1683-1706):

The Serpent-demon behind me is fierce
Terrifying or not—I don’t mind!
I have made up my mind to pluck
The sweet apple hanging before me!

Tibetan text for the poem:
rgyab kyi klu bdud btsan po
‘jigs dang mi ‘jigs mi ‘dug
mdun gyi ka ra ku shu
‘thogs su dgos pa byas song

What might the “serpent demon” and the “sweet apple” represent?