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Selected Topics in  
East Asian Buddhism

NEH/ASDP Summer 2018 Institute

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# Purpose of project

- Religious Studies focused course advancing study of Buddhism at UNF
- Interdisciplinary methodologies
- Flexible and changeable to students' and my interests
- Can be organized geographically or topically, to varying levels of focus
  - Ex. Focus on China, focus on Pure Land across East Asia, etc.
- Modules that can be exchanged across different iterations
- NOT text centered: material culture and practice over philosophy
- Audience: students who have taken either Introduction to Buddhism or another East Asian focused philosophy, RS, or history course

# First Draft: Site-specific course + study abroad

**China:** Yungang Caves, Xi'an,  
Mt. Emei, Guilin, Hangzhou,  
Beijing

**Korea:** Yellow Dragon Monastery,  
Seokguram Grotto, Seoul

**Japan:** Nara, Mt. Koya, Kyoto



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# Second Draft: Women and Gender in East Asian Buddhism

- “What about the women?”
- Women’s experiences as “holographic” entry point into study
- 15 weeks
  - 2 weeks of introduction and theory
    - Feminist theory and study of religion
    - Historical and ethnographic methods
  - 6 weeks of history
    - 2 weeks each for China, Korea, and Japan
    - Selections from Mitchell and Jacoby
  - 6 weeks of contemporary study
    - 2 weeks each for China, Korea, and Japan
  - Final week for presentations/papers



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# Student learning objectives

After completing the course, successful students should be able to:

- Describe the formulative history of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Buddhist traditions;
- Identify some of the benefits, challenges, and theoretical perspectives that are related to focusing on women in the study of religion;
- Articulate some of the complex issues surrounding women and Buddhist practice in contemporary East Asia;
- Demonstrate an increased sophistication in their writing about Buddhism; and
- Ruminates on issues and ideas from the readings and class discussion.

# China

- Historical Perspective: Selections from
  - Grace Schireson, *Zen Women*
  - Nancy Schuster, “Striking a Balance: Women and Images of Women in Early Chinese Buddhism”
  - Beata Grant, *Daughters of Emptiness*
  - Kate Lingley, “Lady Yuchi in the First Person: Patronage, History, and Voice in the Guyang Cave”
  - Kathryn Tsai, *Lives of the Nuns*
- Contemporary Buddhism: Selections from
  - Elise Anne Devido, *Taiwan’s Buddhist Nuns*
  - Yuan Yuan, “Chinese Buddhist Nuns in the Twentieth Century: A Case Study in Wuhan”

# Korea

- Historical Perspective: Selections from
  - Cho Eun-su, “Female Buddhist Practice in Korea”
  - Heung-sik Heo, “Two Female Masters of Two Eras: Differences and Commonalities in Roles”
  - John Jorgensen, “Marginalized and Silenced: Buddhist Nuns of the Choson Period”
  - Clark W. Sorensen, “The Myth of Princess Pari and the Self Image of Korean Women”
- Contemporary Buddhism: Selections from
  - Jin Park, “Gendered Response to Modernity: Kim Iryop and Buddhism”
  - Pori Park, “The Establishment of Buddhist Nunneries in Contemporary Korea”
  - Martine Bachelor, *Women in Korean Zen: Lives and Practices*
  - Im Kwon Taek’s *Come Come Come Upwards* (film)



# Japan

- Historical Perspective: Selections from
  - Barbara Ruch, *Engendering Faith*
  - Lori Meeks, *Hokkeji and the Reemergence of Female Monastic Orders in Premodern Japan*
  - James Dobbins, *Letters of the Nun Eshinni*
  - Grace Schireson, *Zen Women*
- Contemporary Buddhism: Selections from
  - Paula Kane Robinson Arai
  - Noriko Kawahashi, “Jizoku (Priests’ Wives) in Soto Zen Buddhism”
  - Jessica Starling, “Neither Nun nor Laywoman: The Good Wives and Wise Mothers of Jodo Shinshu Temples”
  - Matthew Mitchell, “...Takatsukasa Seigyoku, Current Abbess of Zenkoji’s Daihongan Convent”



# Women and Buddhism

- Lotus Sutra excerpts
- Vimalakirti Sutra excerpts
- Guanyin! Blood pool hell
  
- Zenshin Florence Caplow, *The Hidden Lamp*
- Caitlin Griffiths, *Tracing the Itinerant Path: Jishu Nuns of Medieval Japan*
- Ellison Banks Findley, *Women's Buddhism, Buddhism's Women*
- Diana Paul, *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in the Mahayana Tradition*
- Christine Toomey, *In Search of Buddha's Daughters*
- Rita Gross, *Buddhism beyond Gender: Liberation from Attachment to Identity; Buddhism After Patriarchy*
- [Bibliography of works on women and gender in Buddhism](#)

# With gratitude to

- NEH and ASDP
- UNF
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