

Tibetan Material History HSEA 4725

Gray Tuttle

Spring 2013 Day/Time: Tuesday 2:10pm-4:00pm Location: Kent Hall 405

Office hours: Tuesday 4-5pm, 913 SIPA

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Historians of material culture argue that restricting our studies to textual sources limits our ability to understand the past experiences of the majority of people. They have developed methods and theories for "reading" objects to access the past. One of the most important techniques for this approach is the writing of "object biographies," which will play an important role in this course. As we explore the incredibly rich Tibetan material resources of New York City's museums, students will have the opportunity to encounter first hand objects from Tibet's past. While the class as a whole will survey a wide variety of materials--from swords & armor to Buddhist images & ritual implements, from rugs & clothes to jewelry & charms—students will select one or two objects as the subject of their object biographies. There will also be opportunities to explore the process and motivations for building collections and displaying Tibetan material culture.

Throughout the class, students will be contributing ideas and materials to a new website designed with the assistance of the Columbia Center for New Media Teaching and Learning (CCNMTL), with initial funding from the Rubin Foundation. These assignments should lend themselves to wiki-style entries, fully illustrated with free images available on the web (at such sites as www.thl.org and www.tibetart.com for instance), and marked up using the CCNMTL's Teaching and Learning with Digital Images: The Image Annotation Tool and MediaThread, as well as video clips of pertinent objects being used in context.

Requirements and Grading

As the space in museum viewing rooms is limited, this class enrollment will be limited to nine students. One page applications stating a student's interest and background (if any) will be accepted to assist the professor in making a decision about who will be admitted.

There are no other prerequisites. Some of the visits to museums will last longer than the allotted time for the class, due to travel time, though you will not have to spend longer than 2 hours at any one museum, so please be sure your afternoon is free after this class (no other classes at 4 pm or sports activities that would interfere with your attendance). Two visits will be on Thursdays, due to museum closings on Tuesdays.

1. Your web and in-class discussion will count toward 20% of the final grade. By 10pm Monday, you are expected to register your reactions and questions (around 150 words) to the week's readings on Courseworks, even on the days before site visits.
2. The first phase of object biography, object selection, (20%) is due 1/28 (see syllabus), and the first written component is due 3/6. 1000 words (3-4pp), plus attached image(s)
3. The second phase of object biography, or report on a particular collector or area museum (20%): topic description must be submitted to me by 3/23; updated version is due April 2. Around 1200-1500 words (4-5pages), not including attached image(s), videos.
4. Student presentations (10%), to demonstrate progress toward final project, April 30.
5. The Final Project (30%) individual/team object biography using MediaThread, May 17.

General Expectations:

- As participation is such a key component of the class, attendance at all classes is expected.
- Your written work for the class should be entirely your own (see Columbia guidelines for academic integrity) with careful citation of all sources according to an accepted Manual of Style (Chicago, MLA).

Disability Support

Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to see the instructors as soon as possible. Also, stop by the Office of Disability Services to register for support services.

Useful reference works:

- Emil Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet: illustrated by literary documents and objects of religious worship : with an account of the Buddhist systems preceding it in India*. Leipzig: Brockhaus; London: Trübner, 1863. 403pp. On his brother's travels, the basis of his book see: <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/pageviewer?frames=1&coll=moa&view=50&root=%2Fmoa%2Fnora%2Fnora0117%2F&tif=00489.TIF&cite=http%3A%2F%2Fcdl.library.cornell.edu%2Fcgi-bin%2Fmoa%2Fmoa-cgi%3Fnotisid%3DABQ7578-0117-25>
- Resource: Getty-Gods of Northern Buddhism.pdf https://collab.itc.virginia.edu/access/content/group/d8ac40d7-fa62-43b6-0052-5e01a79eb090/Getty_Gods%20of%20Northern%20Buddhism.pdf
- William Woodville Rockhill. *Notes on the ethnology of Tibet. Based on the collections in the United States National Museum*. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1895 From the Report of the U.S. National Museum for 1893, p. 665-747, with plates 1-52.
- L. Austine Waddell. *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism, with its mystic cults, symbolism and mythology, and in its relation to Indian Buddhism*. London, W. H. Allen & Co., 1895. 598 pp.
- G. A. Combe. *A Tibetan on Tibet: Being the Travels and Observations of Mr. Paul Sherap (Dorje Zodpa) of Tachienlu; with an Introductory Chapter on Buddhism and a Concluding Chapter on the Devil Dance*. London, T.F. Unwin [1926]. Travels: 22-35; 155-178. Topical survey of Tibet: 36-154.
- Bell, Charles, *People of Tibet*, Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1928.
- Robert B. Ekvall. *Religious observances in Tibet: patterns and function*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press [1964].
- Marion Duncan *Customs and Superstitions of Tibetans* 1964.
- Namkhai Norbu ; translated by Maria Simmons. *Journey among the Tibetan nomads : an account of a remote civilization [Byang 'brog lam yig]*. Dharamsala, H.P. : Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 1997 [1983].

Class Schedule

Class 1 (1/22) Tibetan Material Culture Introduced

Introduction to the class

1st Assignment (due 1/28): Start to collect images and select a particular object to focus your first research on an object biography, by visiting the websites of the two main museums we will work with this semester, the Rubin Museum of Art & the American Museum of Natural History.

1) The Rubin Museum of Art has two viewing "portals": a) a limited collection of 111 objects, through GoogleArt: <http://www.googleartproject.com/collection/rubin-museum-of-art/>

b) the full collection of images: <http://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=179>

2) The American Museum of Natural History also displays low resolution images of their full collection at: <http://anthro.amnh.org/anthro.html> (select Asian Ethnographic Collection, then select "Tibet" from the list of countries/cultures above the map [leave "all" in the "culture" category on left], hit "search" and it should yield 2,233 objects). Select an object of interest to pursue for Object Biography paper (send link of object to me for approval).

For a more limited selection of objects, you can also browse Collection highlights at <http://anthro.amnh.org/> such as: Tibetan Medical Paintings & (though these are not Tibet specific): Buddha Objects, and the Laufer Expedition (1901-1904) (esp. pages 89-92, for Tibetan thanka painted in China).

Class 2 (1/29) The Object & Ways of Looking

- Heller 1999. "Tibetan History & Religion" in Reynolds, *From the Sacred Realm*, 23-46.
- Abe 1995. "Inside the Wonder House: Buddhist Art and the West," In Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*, 63-69. (6pp)
- Lopez 1998, "The Art," *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*. 135-155. (21 pp)
- Ulrich 2001. "Prologue" and "Introduction," *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*. 3-40, (38 pp.)
- Ko 2001. "Introduction," *Every Step a Lotus: Shoes for Bound Feet*, 9-19 (6 pp text).
- Suggested Reading:
 - Ulrich 2001. Ch 3: "Hannah Barnard's Cupboard," *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth*. 108-41, (34 pp.)
 - Schlereth 1985. "Introduction," *Material Culture: A Research Guide*. 1-18.
- Further Reading:
 - Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as process," *In The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*, Appadurai, ed. Cambridge UP, 64-91. Essay that launched object biographies.
 - Prown 1988. "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory & Method," *American Material Culture 1600-1800*, 17-37.

Class 3 NO CLASS TUESDAY (2/7) Visit 1: Rubin Museum of Art

NOTE: MUSEUM VISIT IS SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, FEB 7th. meet at ticket counter 2:30pm

- Gyatso, "In the Sacred Realm," in Reynolds 1999. *From the Sacred Realm*, 171-179, see also "Symbols," 254-261. (9 pp text)
- Linrothe, "Protection, Benefaction, and Transformation," in *Demonic Divine*, 3-43. (41pp)
- Jackson, David & Janice. *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods & Materials*, 1997. Preparation of the surface, 15-25; Composition 25-45; Brushes, 111-128; Pigments, 75-91. (65p)

- *For paper: Visit website of Himalaya Art Resources <http://www.himalayanart.org/> to find object(s) similar or related to the one selected for the Object Biography paper.
- Further Reading:
 - Jackson, David. 1996. *A History of Tibetan Painting: The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions*.
 - Gyatso, "In the Sacred Realm," in Reynolds 1999. *From the Sacred Realm*, 179-249, provides good illustrations, with commentary, of the iconography discussed by Jackson, David & Janice. *Tibetan Thangka Painting in Composition* chapter.

Class 4 (2/12) Ritual Objects & Buddhist Images

- Hoskins 1998. "Introduction," *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*, 1-24. (25pp)
- Kieschnick 2003. "Introduction" & "The Rosary," *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*. 1-23, 116-138. (47 pp)
- Sharf 2001, "Introduction," *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, 1-18.
- Martin 1999, "The Vajra and Bell" & "Phurpas", in Reynolds. *From the Sacred Realm*, 133-144. 163-169 (12 pp text; 7 pp images)
- Suggested Reading:
 - Richard Canzio. "On the Way of Playing the Drums and Cymbals among the Sakyas"; In *Tibetan Studies in honour of Hugh Richardson*. pp. 67-72. 6pp.
 - Lo Bue 1996. "Tibetan Literature on Art" in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Cabezon and Jackson, eds. 470-484 (9pp) Available on-line at www.THL.org

Class 5 (2/19) Museum Collections, Collecting and Collectors

- Clare Harris. *The Museum on the Roof of the World* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012: Chapter 2 "The Younghusband Mission and Tibetan Art"
- Ira Jacknis. "Franz Boas and Exhibits." in *Objects and Others: essays on museums and material culture* / edited by George W. Stocking, Jr. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985. "Introduction & Conclusion" optional reading.
- Tony Bennett. "The Exhibitory Complex" In *Representing the nation: A reader : histories, heritage and museums*. Edited by David Boswell and Jessica Evans. 332-336. 4pp.
- Clifford 1997. "Museums as Contact Zones." from *Routes*, 435-457. 33pp.
- Further Reading: Carrington, Michael. "Officers, gentlemen and thieves: the looting of monasteries during the 1903/4 Younghusband mission to Tibet." *Modern Asian Studies* (Cambridge, England) 37, pt.1 (Feb 2003) 81-109. 27pp; articles from *Museum Anthropology* and *American Anthropologist* on museum collection building, Franz Boas, etc.

Assignment: Select another object to write an object biography about (see Engaging Digital Tibet site for ideas: <http://digitaltibet.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/>), or select alternative topic for related paper (for instance you could write about a specific museum collection or museum collector). Send me the description of object/topic about which you plan to write (by 3/23), for approval.

Class 6 (2/26) Objects of Daily Life: Jewelry & Amulets, Seals & Counting Pouches

The C.V. Starr East Asian Library is the owner of a collection of traditional Tibetan writing and accounting implements, blockprints and books. These include not only bamboo pens and ink, but also characteristically Tibetan items such as handmade paper, a practice board and wooden message boards. Among the more unusual objects is a piece of mouth glue-- a substance moistened by placing it in the mouth, and used for assembling sheets of paper--as well as a system of porcelain shards, stones, pits, sticks, and beans used for calculations.

- McDaniel 2000, "Tibetan Nomad Festivals," *Ornament* 23:4, 48-53. 6 pp.
- Clarke 2004. *Jewellery of Tibet and the Himalayas*. Why was jewellery worn? 15-26; Symbolism, Folklore, and Beliefs, 27-34; Metals, Gemstones, Corals, and Pearls, 35-41, Craftsmen and their Work, 42-50. 36pp (see also illustration plates, 44p)
- Ebbinghouse & Winsten 1988, "Tibetan dZi (gZi) beads," *Tibet Journal* 13:1, 38-56. 18p
- See also: Skorupski; preface by Kværne 1983. *Tibetan amulets*.

Class 7 (3/5) Visit 2: American Museum of Natural History meet at south entrance at 2:30

- Reynolds 1999. "Tibetan Everyday Life," *From the Sacred Realm*, 47-60 (14pp text)
- Glassie 1999, "History" in *Material Culture*.
- Bendor 1994, "Inside Tibetan Images" *Arts of Asia*, 24, 102-109. (7pp)
- Reynolds, Heller, Gyatso 1986. "Sculpture: Selection, Fabrication, Finishing & Consecration." *The Newark Museum Tibetan Collection: Vol. III Sculpture and Painting*, 45-59. (9 pp text)
- Pema Dorjee 1996. "Preparation of the Tsha Tsha," *Stupa and Its Technology: A Tibeto-Buddhist Perspective*, 30-35. (4 pp text)
- Further reading: John Huntington 1975. *The Phur-pa, Tibetan Ritual Daggers*.

*****3/6 Mid-term paper: 1st phase of object biography due*****

Class 8 (3/12) Presentations on 1st phase of object biography

*****No Class (3/19) Spring Break*****

Assignment: 3/23 Select another object/aspect to write an object biography about (see Himalayan Art Resources or Education Loan Collection list at Newark Museum for ideas), or select alternative topic for second paper (for instance you could write about a specific museum collection or museum collector). Send me the object/topic about which you plan to write, for approval.

Class 9 (3/26) Textiles, Performance Costumes & Rugs

- Three examples of "object biography"-like essays, though all more contemporary than the historically grounded work for which we will be aiming:
- Harris, Christina. 2007. "Mediators in the Transnational Marketplace: Wholesalers of Tibetan Ceremonial Scarves and the Marketing of Meaning," *History and Society in Central and Inner Asia*, M. Gervers, U. Bulag and G. Long (eds), 163-180. (18pp)
- O'Neill, Tom. 1999. "The Lives of the Tibeto-Nepalese Carpet," *Journal of Material Culture*. 4: 21-38. (18pp)
- Donald Lopez. 1997. "A Prayer Flag for Tara," In *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Edited by Donald Lopez. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 548-552. (5pp.)
- Schremf 1997. "From 'Devil Dances' to 'World Healing': Some Representations, Perspectives and Innovations of Contemporary Tibetan Ritual Dances." *Tibetan Culture in Diaspora, Papers for the 7th PIATS, Graz 1995*. 91-102. (11pp)
- Fromaget. "Lhamo," In *Cho-yang*. 321-325. 5 pp.
- Ahmed 2002. "Introduction," "Preparation of the Fibre," "The snam-bu," *Living Fabric*. 11-30, 69-90, 101-128. (67pp with lots of images)
- Suggested Reading:
 - Kuløy, Hallvard. *Tibetan Rugs*. Bangkok : White Orchid Press, 1985.
 - Denwood, Philip. *The Tibetan Carpet*. Westminster: Aris and Phillips, 1974.
 - Hoetzlein 1991 "Sacred Ritual Dance," In *Cho-yang*. 314-320. 7pp.
 - G. A. Combe. "The Devil Dance at Tachienlu (Dartsendo), *A Tibetan on Tibet: Being the Travels and Observations of Mr. Paul Sherap (Dorje Zodpa) of Tachienlu; with an Introductory Chapter on Buddhism and a Concluding Chapter on the Devil Dance*. London, T.F. Unwin [1926]. 179-199. (21 pp)
 - Newark Museum. *Catalogue of the Tibetan collection and other Lamaist articles in the Newark Museum: textiles, rugs, needlework, costumes, jewelry*. vol. 5. 1961.

*****4/2 Second Phase of Object Biography (or alternative topic) due*****

Class 10 NO CLASS TUESDAY (4/2) Visit 4: Newark Museum on 4/4

NOTE: THURSDAY Museum VISIT (meet at Museum at 3pm?)

- Reynolds 1999. "The Tibetan Holdings at The Newark Museum," *From the Sacred Realm*, 11-22 (12 pp text)
- Carte. "Notice of Amulets in use by the Trans-Himalayan Boodhists, with remarks by Csomo de Körös." *Journal of the Asian Society of Bengal*. Vol. IX, Part II, p. 904
- Amy Heller 1990. "Tibetan Documents in the Newark Museum," *Orientalisms*, April 1990. In *Art of Tibet: Selected Articles from Orientalisms 1981-1997*. Hong Kong: Orientalisms Magazine. 1998. 92-99. 3pp text.
- Rinchen Lhamo 1985 [1st edition: 1926], *We Tibetans*. Chapter Five. Dress. 25pp.*
- Suggested Reading: Valrae Reynolds, "From a Lost World: Tibetan Costumes and Textiles," *Orientalisms*, March 1981. In *Art of Tibet: Selected Articles from Orientalisms 1981-1997*. 1998. 4-20. 5 pp text
- Beringen & Rene 2006. *The art of silver jewellery: from the minorities of China, the Golden Triangle, Mongolia and Tibet*. 195-235 (12 pp text, 28 of images)

Class 12 (4/8) Technology of the Body: Clothing & Furniture

- Reynolds 1999. *From the Sacred Realm*, 81-132, 144-163 (29 pp text, 20 pp images)
- David Kamansky, Corona & Corona, Gluckman, Lobzang Tsetan with Kernell. 2004. *Wooden wonders: Tibetan furniture in secular and religious life*. Introduction, 13-61; 71-87; 143-158 (80pp).
- Suggested reading: Chris Buckley 2005. *Tibetan furniture*. Forms & Uses, 13-49; Themes and Decorations, 49-95. See also Amazon.com reviews.

Class 7 (4/16) Tibetan Arms and Armor

- LaRocca; with Clarke; Heller; Jamspal. 2006. *Warriors of the Himalayas: rediscovering the arms and armor of Tibet*. Introduction, 3-50. (46pp)
- Glassie 1999, "Material Culture," in *Material Culture*, (read up to page 66).
- Russell 1991 "The metal and wood crafts of Tibet," In *Cho-yang*. 302-313. 11pp.
- Rhodes. "The Development of Currency in Tibet," and Ronge & Ronge, "Casting Tibetan Bells." In *Tibetan Studies in honour of High Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar of Tibetan Studies, Oxford 1979*. 261-276. 17pp.

Class 8 (4/23) Visit 3: Metropolitan Museum of Art

- Before site visit, explore the "Himalayan warriors" exhibit website:
- http://www.metmuseum.org/special/Warriors_of_the_Himalayas/arms_and_armor_more.asp#3 & timeline: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/08/ssh/ht08ssh.htm>
- LaRocca; with Clarke; Heller; Jamspal. 2006. *Himalayan warriors: rediscovering the arms and armor of Tibet*. 126-251: Exhibition notes with images.
- Elverskog, An Early Seventeenth-Century Tibeto-Mongolian Ceremonial Staff, JIATS: www.thdl.org
- Suggested Reading:
 - Elverskog, *Things and the Qing*, Inner Asia. (PDF online)

*****Baruch College-Rubin Museum of Art Project Conference April 24-25, 2013**

Class 14 (4/30) Student Presentations

Final project/paper: due last day of exam period (5/17)