

**REL220 Fall 2002 Final Essay**  
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**Due 11/29 (automatic extension available to 12/5)**

Our understanding of Buddhism depends on what kinds of sources we use to learn about it, for every source describes Buddhism from a certain perspective. For instance, if we learn about Buddhism by reading philosophy, we may think it is only concerned with enlightenment. If we learn about the lives of revered holy figures such as the Dalai Lama, Ananda Maitreya (elderly monk in *Footprint of the Buddha*), or Gandhi in the case of Hinduism, we are presented with the ideals of a tradition that only a few can attempt to attain. In movies such as *The Cup* we see a very different vision of what it is to be a monk than we do in either ancient Buddhist texts or the lives of holy figures (Again, think of the movie *Earth* for Hinduism). You will reflect upon such different views of Buddhist life in the final essay by writing on the following three points:

1. Describe the Buddhist life of the Dalai Lama.
2. Describe the Buddhist life of the monks in *The Cup*.
3. Compare the view of Buddhist life as presented in the biography of the Dalai Lama and *The Cup* by exploring the following question: The Dalai Lama always describes himself as “a simple Buddhist monk.” What does it mean to be a simple Buddhist monk according to; 1) classical Buddhist thought (See Keown, especially pages 10-11, 105-106), 2) the biography of the Dalai Lama, and 3) Khyentse Norbu’s movie, *The Cup*.

You might also want to consider the different viewpoints on Buddhist life presented in *Footprint of the Buddha* by Ananda Maitreya, the young forest dwelling monk interviewed at the end of that documentary, or the lay Buddhists visiting the shaman.

*The Cup*, *The Dalai Lama: Soul of Tibet*, and *Footprint of the Buddha* are both on reserve at Gorgas Library, in the Music Library on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Please review the movies and consult the handouts I have provided to write your papers.

All **essays** should be four pages in length and must follow the conventions of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Use the following book for reference: *A Pocket Style Manual: Third Edition*. Diana Hacker. Bedford/St. Martin’s, Boston. 2000. This is the style manual used in English Composition (ENG101). You should own a copy of this manual. Essays must conform to the following conventions: typed; double-spaced in a standard 12pt font; 1-inch margins on white paper; page numbers; your name and the name of the class on the top of the first page; stapled. (See *A Pocket Style Manual*, pp. 138-140). All quoted material must be clearly referenced according to MLA style (see *A Pocket Style Manual*, p. 123).

You are free to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your essay, though this is not required. If you have a strong interest in a topic relating to the assignments in the course, please provide me with a brief summary of your proposed topic and I will in most cases try to accommodate you.