

Yaroslav Komarovski, Ph.D.

Professor of Religious Studies
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AREA

Tibetan Buddhism, Buddhist Studies, Buddhist Philosophy, Asian Religions, Religious Studies, Asian Cultures

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Professor of Religious Studies (Department of Classics and Religious Studies). University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2020 –
Associate Professor of Religious Studies (Department of Classics and Religious Studies). University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2014 – 2020
Visiting Professor, Advanced Classical Tibetan (Rangjung Yeshe Institute). Kathmandu University. Nepal	2018
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies (Department of Classics and Religious Studies). University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2009 – 2014
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in East Asian Religions (Religious Studies Program). Washington University in St. Louis	2008 – 2009
Visiting Assistant Professor, Advanced Colloquial Tibetan (South Asia Summer Language Institute). University of Wisconsin–Madison	2008
Visiting Assistant Professor (Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia). University of Wisconsin–Madison	2007 – 2008
Instructor in Religious Studies (Department of Religious Studies). University of Virginia	2005 – 2007
Visiting Instructor of Religion (Religion Department). Washington and Lee University	2004 – 2005
Instructor (Department of Religious Studies). University of Virginia	2003 – 2004

FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

NEH Summer Institute “Contemporary Asias: Pluralities Beyond Areas” Fellowship. East-West Center. Honolulu, HI	2025
NEH Summer Institute “The Imagination and Imaginal Worlds in the Mirror of Buddhism” Fellowship. Mangalam Research Center. Berkeley, CA	2022
Certificate of Completion of Summer Institute for Online Teaching. Center for Transformative Teaching. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2020
NEH Summer Institute “Self-Knowledge in Eastern and Western Philosophies” Fellowship. College of Charleston. Charleston, SC	2018
Certificate of Recognition for Contributions to Students. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2017
Global Gateway Faculty Associate Grant. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2015 – 2016
Peer Review Project. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2011 – 2012
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in East Asian Religions. Washington University in St. Louis	2008 – 2009

EDUCATION

Academic education

Ph.D.	Religious Studies. University of Virginia	2007
M.A.	Religious Studies. University of Virginia	2003
Certificate	Advanced Japanese Program. Beloit College	2002
B.A.	Psychology. International Academy of Psychology, Russia	1999
Certificate	Six-years Prajñāpāramitā Philosophy Program. Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, India	1996

Tibetan Buddhist studies and research

Research on tantric systems of the Sakya tradition.	2011
Dzongsar Monastery. Derge, Tibet	
Research on the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and Indian Buddhist texts.	1998 – 2000
Dzongsar Institute for Advanced Buddhist Studies and Research, India	
Research on philosophical and contemplative systems of the Nyingma tradition.	1998 – 2000
Palyul Chokhor Ling, India	
Research on contemplative systems and tantric rituals of the Nyingma tradition.	1999
Pankang Rito, India	
Study of Buddhist epistemology, logic, debates, and philosophical writings of the Geluk tradition. Institute of Buddhist Dialectics, India	1990 – 1996
Study of tantric systems and rituals of the Geluk tradition. Kirti Monastery, India	1990 – 1995

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Books

Is Reality Beyond Good and Evil? Tibetan Buddhist Inquiry into the Ultimate Virtue. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2024.

Radiant Emptiness: Three Seminal Works by the Golden Paṇḍita Shakya Chokden. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Tibetan Buddhism and Mystical Experience. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Visions of Unity: The Golden Paṇḍita Shakya Chokden's New Interpretation of Yogācāra and Madhyamaka. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2011.

Articles and book chapters

“From Mind Only to Buddha Only: Shakya Chokden’s Interpretation of Tathāgatagarbha in Tantric Philosophy and Practice.” *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*, vol. 6 (2024): 34-59.

“Weaving Maṇḍalas with Jñāna: Shakya Chokden’s Yogācāra-Based Approach to the Practice of Guhyasamāja Tantra.” *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*, vol. 6 (2024): 60-89.

“Where ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Literature’ Converge: Exploring Tibetan Buddhist Writings about Reality.” In *Buddhist Literature as Philosophy, Buddhist Philosophy as Literature*, ed. Stepien, Rafal, 285-308. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2020.

“There are no Dharmas Apart from the Dharma-Sphere’: Shakya Chokden’s Interpretation of the Dharma-Sphere.” In *The Other Emptiness: Rethinking the Zhentong Buddhist Discourse in Tibet*, ed. Mathes, Klaus-Dieter and Michael R. Sheehy, 171-196. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2019.

“Śākya Chokden.” In *The Treasury of Lives: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Tibet, Inner Asia, and the Himalaya*, 2017. <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Shakya-Chokden/6351>

- “‘If Apprehending Occurs, It is not the View’: Sakya Thinkers on the Madhyamaka View of Freedom from Proliferations.” *Critical Review for Buddhist Studies*, vol. 20 (2016): 139-170.
- “From the Three Natures to the Two Natures: On a Fluid Approach to the Two Versions of Other-Emptiness from 15th Century Tibet.” *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*, vol. 2 (2016): 78-113.
- “Shakya Chokden’s History of Madhyamaka Thought in Tibet.” In *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, ed. Schaeffer, Kurtis R., Matthew T. Kapstein, and Gray Tuttle, 373-380. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- “Buddhist Contributions to the Question of (Un)mediated Mystical Experience.” *Sophia*, vol. 51, no. 1 (2012): 87-115.
- “Shakya Chokden’s Interpretation of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*: ‘Contemplative’ or ‘Dialectical’?” *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 38, no. 4 (2010): 441-452.
- “Encountering Ineffability—Counting Ineffability: On Divergent Verbalizations of the Ineffable in 15th Century Tibet.” *Acta Tibetica et Buddhica*, vol. 1 (2008): 1-15.
- “Reburying the Treasure—Maintaining the Continuity: Two Texts by Śākya Mchog Ldan on the Buddha-Essence.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 34, no. 6 (2006): 521-570.

NON-PEER-REVIEWED ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Books

Three Texts on Madhyamaka by Shakya Chokden. Dharamsala, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2000.

Books chapters

“It is (Almost) All Imagined: Philosophical and Contemplative Dimensions of Imagination in Buddhism.” Forthcoming in *The Imagination and Imaginal Worlds in the Mirror of Buddhism*, eds. Meyers, Karin and Hugh Joswick. Berkeley, CA: Mangalam Press, 2025.

Encyclopedia articles

“Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507).” In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2023.
<https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/biographical/sakya-mchog-ldan-1428-1507/v-1>

Book reviews

“Review of Kenneth Liberman, *Dialectical Practice in Tibetan Philosophical Culture: An Ethnomethodological Inquiry into Formal Reasoning*.” *Sophia*, vol. 48, no. 4 (2009): 513-515.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- “Buddhism in the Absence of Religion.” Presented at the 23rd International Association for the History of Religions World Congress in Kraków, Poland, 2025.
- “Contemplating Conceptual Networks: Interconnectedness of Buddhist Meditation and Buddhist Models of the Mind, Body, and Reality.” Presented at the 20th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Leipzig, Germany, 2025.
- “Imagining the Real: Imagination in Buddhist Tantric Practice.” Presented at the 72nd Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2023.
- “Imagination in the Buddhist World.” Presented at the 71st Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs, University of Kansas, 2022.
- “Shakya Chokden on Tathāgatagarbha in the Tantric Practice of the Two Stages.” Presented at the 16th Seminar of International Association of Tibetan Studies in Prague, Czech Republic, 2022.
- “Self-Emptiness/Other-Emptiness Distinction in the Tantric Context.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Diego, 2019.
- “Why Pointing at the Moon in the First Place? How Positive Articulations of Reality Affect Its Non-conceptual Realization.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in Boston, MA, 2017.

- “Buddhist Philosophy and Contemplation: In Search for the Common Ground.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Antonio, 2016.
- “‘If Apprehending Occurs, It is not the View’: Sakya Thinkers on the Madhyamaka View of Freedom from Proliferations.” Presented at the Intensive Workshop on the Madhyamaka Thought in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism at the Geumgang Center for Buddhist Studies, Geumgang University, South Korea, 2016.
- “Where ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Literature’ Converge: Exploring Tibetan Buddhist Writings on Reality.” Presented at the American Comparative Literature Association, Harvard University, Cambridge, 2016.
- “Teaching Buddhism at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion regional conference in Omaha, 2015.
- “How Virtuous is the Ultimate Virtue? Conflicting Buddhist Interpretations of the Virtuous Dimension of Ultimate Reality.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Diego, 2014.
- “Tibetan Sectarian Polemics and Internalized Polemics in Contemplative Contexts.” Presented at the 17th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Vienna, Austria, 2014.
- “Seeing as Possessing: Shakya Chokden’s Combined Developmental-Discovery Model of the Buddhist Path.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in Chicago, 2012.
- “Shifting Levels of Reality: Dialetheism, Parameterization, Both, or Neither?” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Francisco, 2011.
- “What do Mahāyāna Thinkers have to Say about Ineffability?” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Francisco, 2011.
- “Does the Self-Cognizing Ultimate Cognize Itself? Some Issues in the Other-Emptiness Theories of Self-Cognition.” Presented at the 16th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Taipei, Taiwan, 2011.
- “Reading Nāgārjuna through Dharmakīrti: Some Issues.” Presented at the Madhyamaka and Methodology: the Symposium about Buddhist Theory and Method at Smith College, Northampton, 2010.
- “Is It a New Gzhan stong or the Good Old Yogācāra? On the ‘Fluid’ Version of Other-Emptiness from 15th Century Tibet.” Presented at the 12th Seminar of International Association of Tibetan Studies in Vancouver, Canada, 2010.
- “Buddhist Contributions to the Question of (Un)mediated Mystical Experience.” Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy in New York, 2009.
- “Building Bridges and Burning Bridges: On the Question of Transition from Conceptual to Non-Conceptual Understanding of Reality.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in Chicago, 2008.
- “Shakya Chokden’s Interpretation of the *Ratnagotravibhāga*: ‘Contemplative’ or ‘Dialectical’?” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in Chicago, 2008.
- “Competing Compatibilities: Ratnākaraśānti, Mipam, Chödrak Gyamtso, and Shakya Chokden on the Issue of Compatibility of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra.” Presented at the 16th Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Atlanta, 2008.
- “Encountering Ineffability—Counting Ineffability: On Divergent Verbalizations of the Ineffable in 15th Century Tibet.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in San Diego, 2007.
- “Slicing the Pie Alternatively: Śākya Mchog Ldan on Divisions of the Mahāyāna Systems.” Presented at the American Academy of Religion conference in Washington, DC, 2006.

EDITORIAL WORK

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| Guest Editor for the Special Issue of the <i>Journal of Contemplative Studies</i> | 2023 – 2025 |
| “Philosophy and Contemplation in Tantric Buddhism” | |
| Guest Editor for the Special Issue of the <i>Religions</i> journal | 2023 – 2024 |
| “The Relationship between Buddhist Worldviews and Contemplative Practices” | |

INVITED LECTURES

“Śākya Chokden’s Unique Views on Buddha-Nature.” Tsadra Foundation, NY.	2021
“What everyone should know about Buddhism.” For “Neighbors” Arabic Studies program talk series sponsored by DISC (digital Islamic studies shared curriculum/Mellon Foundation/University of Michigan), Department of Modern Languages, Classics and Religious Studies, and the Honors program at UNL.	2021
“When Philosophy becomes Practice: Exploring the Relationship between Buddhist Models of Reality and Contemplation.” Rangjung Yeshe Institute. Kathmandu, Nepal	2018
“Ultimate + Virtue = Ultimate Virtue? Tibetan Thinkers Debate the Possibility of Virtuous Ultimate Reality.” University of Wisconsin. Madison, WI	2017
“Japanese Buddhism.” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for senior citizens. Lincoln, NE	2017
“Buddhist Approaches to Enlightenment: Lessons from Dunhuang.” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for senior citizens. Lincoln, NE	2016
“Some Thoughts on Thought Transcendence in Mahāyāna Buddhism.” Presented at the Transcendence in Mysticism and Music Symposium. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2012
“Japanese Religions.” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute for senior citizens. Lincoln, NE.	2011
“Buddhist Approaches to Enlightenment: Lessons from Dunhuang.” Thompson Forum on Global Issues. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2010
“Reconsidering Yogācāra and Madhyamaka.” University of Chicago	2009
“Shakya Chokden: Intellectual Portrait of the 15 th Century Tibetan Yogācāra Thinker.” Emory University	2008
“Buddhist Perspectives on Death and Dying.” St. Bartholomew Church. Richmond, VA	2007
“Shakya Chokden’s Interpretation of Mahāyāna Systems.” University of Virginia	2006

COURSES TAUGHT

Courses taught at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln

RELG108 World Religions; RELG118 Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism; RELG180/HIST180 Culture, Religion, and Society in Asia; RELG201 Yoga, Tantra, Zen; RELG/HIST218 History of Buddhism; RELG230 Tibetan Buddhism; RELG335 Buddhist Scriptures; RELG345 Buddhist Meditation; RELG350 Issues in the Theory and Study of Religion; RELG351 Death, Immortality, and Transcendence in Asian Religions; RELG355 Buddhist Thought; RELG398/MODL398 Japanese Religions and Popular Culture (Study Abroad Program); RELG399 Independent Study (American Buddhism; Tibetan language)

Courses taught at other universities

Asian Religions; Introduction to Buddhism; Buddhist Traditions; Survey of Tibetan Buddhism; Buddhist Thought; Ritual in Buddhist Life; Pro-seminar in Buddhist Thought; Tibetan Buddhist Culture; Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Tantra: History, Thought, and Practice; Buddhist Paths to Enlightenment; Buddhist Perspectives on Dying, Death, and Transcendence; Buddhist Doctrine and Practice: the Mahāyāna Tradition; Buddhism; Stages of the Buddhist Path: the Tibetan Perspective; Buddhist Thought and Practice; Issues in the Theory and Study of Religion; Directed Study; Independent Research for Major; Intensive Introductory Tibetan II; Literary Tibetan III and IV; Advanced Classical Tibetan; Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Semester Modern Tibetan

SERVICE

Academic service

ACE Coordinator. Department of Classics and Religious Studies	2021 –
Executive Committee. Department of Classics and Religious Studies	2019 –
Reappointment Committee	2019 –
College of Arts and Sciences Research Advisory Committee. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2018 – 2020

Academic Rights and Responsibilities Panel. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2017 – 2021
Committee on Committees. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2016 – 2022
Kawasaki Reading Room for Japanese Studies Advisory Board. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2013 –
Academic Standards Committee. University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2012 – 2014, 2016 – 2018
Religious Studies Undergraduate Advisor. Department of Classics and Religious Studies	2012 – 2015
Speakers Committee. Department of Classics and Religious Studies	2010 – 2016

Professional service

Organizer of a panel “Teaching Religions – Known, Lesser Known, and Unknown – in the Great Plains.” American Academy of Religion regional conference in Omaha, NE	2015
Editorial Board member, <i>Journal of Buddhist Philosophy</i>	2010 –
Reviewer for the Title VIII program applications for the U.S. Department of State grants	2009
The Outbound Programs Office at American Councils for International Education: ACTR/ACCELS	
Co-organizer of and principal speaker for the forum: “Death and Beyond: Religious Perspectives East and West.” University of Nebraska–Lincoln	2010
Organizer of a panel “Buddhist Philosophical and Contemplative Perspectives.” American Academy of Religion conference in Chicago	2008

Public Service

Organizer of and speaker at the weekly lecture series in Buddhist Studies for the Lincoln Community. Outreach program run by the Department of Classics and Religious Studies.	2010 – 2011
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PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

International Association of Buddhist Studies
 International Association of Tibetan Studies
 International Association for the History of Religions
 American Academy of Religion

LANGUAGES

Tibetan	fluent spoken, written, and reading ability
Sanskrit	advanced reading ability
Japanese	advanced spoken and reading ability
Vietnamese	rudimentary spoken and reading ability
Russian	native language

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Austria, Cambodia, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Laos, Liechtenstein, Myanmar, Nepal, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Tibet, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam