

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Jewel Heart Presents: "Buddhism and the Beats" with Professor Roger Jackson
A Unique Exploration of Eastern Spirituality and American Counterculture**

Ann Arbor, MI - Jewel Heart, the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center founded by the late [Gelek Rinpoche](#), is proud to announce an exceptional online program, "**Buddhism and the Beats**," led by distinguished scholar Roger Jackson, Ph.D on Saturday, September 14, 10:00am -1:00pm ET. This three hour program offers a rare opportunity to delve into the profound impact of Buddhism on the Beat Generation and its enduring influence on American spirituality and literature.

Marking the 70th anniversary of [Jack Kerouac](#)'s deep engagement with Buddhism, this program explores the cultural phenomenon of "[Beat Buddhism](#)" and its lasting literary and spiritual legacy. Professor Roger Jackson will guide participants through the intricate web of connections between Eastern philosophy and the American countercultural movement of the 1950s and 60s.

The program uniquely focuses on seven key Beat authors: **Jack Kerouac, Philip Whalen, Gary Snyder, Diane di Prima, Bob Kaufman, Joanne Kyger, and Allen Ginsberg**. By examining their lives and works, participants will gain insight into how these writers integrated Buddhist concepts into their art, creating a distinctive American spiritual and literary tradition.

A special focus will be given to [Allen Ginsberg](#)'s relationship with **Gelek Rinpoche**, which began in 1989 and lasted until Ginsberg's death in 1997. This connection, recently highlighted in the Tibet House exhibition "**Transforming Minds**," exemplifies the deep and lasting impact of Tibetan Buddhism on American cultural figures. The program will also touch on the work of non-western and post-Beat authors like **Nanao Sakaki, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and Anne Waldman**, providing a broader context for understanding the Beats' influence on North American Buddhism.

"This workshop offers a comprehensive look at how the Beats' engagement with Buddhism shaped both American literature and the landscape of Western spirituality," says Professor Jackson. "We'll explore how their interpretation of Buddhist ideas continues to resonate in contemporary culture and spiritual practices."

The artistic legacy of the Beats extends far beyond literature, influencing music, visual arts, and popular culture. Their work paved the way for the counterculture of the 1960s and continues to inspire new generations of artists and spiritual seekers. The Beat Generation writers played a pivotal role in introducing and popularizing Buddhism in America during the mid-20th century. Key figures like Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, and Allen Ginsberg incorporated Buddhist concepts into their writing, blending them with American transcendentalist traditions and countercultural ideals. They found in Buddhism's expansive worldview an antidote to the restrictive social norms of 1950s America. The Beats adapted Buddhist ideas to the American landscape, forging a unique brand of "mountain mysticism" that resonated with their quest for spiritual and creative freedom. Their works, such as Kerouac's "**The Dharma Bums**," exposed a wider audience to Buddhist concepts, often presented in a jazzy, vernacular style that made these ideas more accessible to the American public. While initially criticized by some as dilettantes, the Beats' engagement with Buddhism has endured, and their role in transmitting Buddhist ideas to the West is now recognized as significant. Their exploration of Buddhist philosophy not only influenced their writing but also contributed to the broader cultural shift that paved the way for the more widespread adoption of Buddhist practices in America in the following decades.

Roger Jackson brings a wealth of expertise to this program. He is Professor Emeritus of Asian Studies and Religion at Carleton College, where he taught courses on Hinduism, Buddhism, and Asian religions for over 30 years. His academic journey includes a B.A. from Wesleyan University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Jackson's scholarly focus encompasses Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, particularly Mahāyāna philosophy and meditation traditions. He has authored, edited, or translated over a dozen books and numerous articles on various aspects of Buddhism. His most recent works include "Mind Seeing Mind: Mahāmudrā and

the Geluk Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism" (2019) and "Rebirth: A Guide to Mind, Karma, and Cosmos in the Buddhist World" (2022).

In addition to this program, we are pleased to announce that H.E. Demo Rinpoche, the current spiritual director of Jewel Heart, will be leading a two-day teaching on the recitation of the 35 Buddhas at Tibet House US in New York. This seminar, scheduled for October 5 & 6, 2024, offers a unique opportunity to explore a powerful Mahayana purification practice.

"Buddhism and the Beats" will be offered as online via zoom with the option for registrants to also stream later, allowing participants from around the world to join this exploration of a pivotal moment in the transmission of Buddhist ideas to the West.

For registration and more information, please visit: <https://www.jewelheart.org/events/roger-jackson-buddhism-and-the-beats-2024/>

Don't miss this unique opportunity to deepen your understanding of Buddhism's journey into American culture and the enduring legacy of the Beat Generation, guided by one of the foremost scholars in the field.

For scholarship inquiries, please contact Debbie Burr at debbie@jewelheart.org.

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