

## FEATURED PROJECT : ENGAGING DIGITAL TIBET



Engaging Digital Tibet is defining innovative ways for students to work with Tibetan source materials and participate directly in Tibetan historical scholarship. This website created by CCNMTL and Gray Tuttle, assistant professor of Modern Tibetan Studies at Columbia University, allows students to analyze and annotate ancient Tibetan artifacts in an online space that is shared with classmates, future students of Tibetan culture, and the public.

A central component of Engaging Digital Tibet is its searchable digital repository containing Tibetan artifacts contributed from the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, the Rubin Museum of Art, the Himalayan Art Resources organization, Columbia's C. V. Starr East Asian Library, and Professor Tuttle's personal collection. These artifacts date back to the 15th century and include a variety of antique tapestries, masks, tools, and religious relics. Students in Professor Tuttle's courses interact with the digital repository in individual workspaces on the website where they are assigned the task of creating 'object biographies'—narratives that focus on the object as a means to explore the time, place, and people who participated in the creation of Tibetan culture.

Engaging Digital Tibet's customized mapping functions allow students to pan and zoom in on each image to study the significance of particular object elements. Using online annotation tools, students then create in-depth explanations of an object's noted characteristics, which are compiled in object biographies and published into the site's public library. Resources and tools in Engaging Digital Tibet are also available to professors and students beyond Columbia University who are using material culture to teach and learn about history, anthropology, religion, or art history.

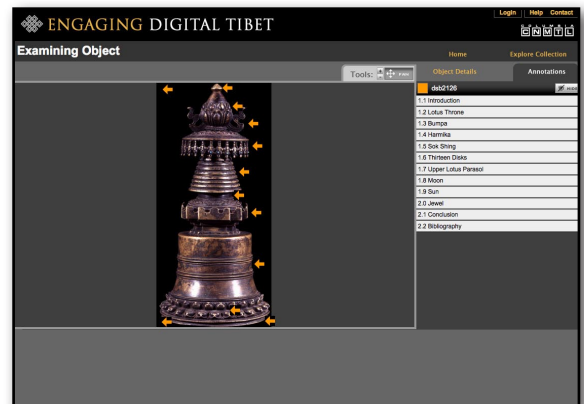
Engaging Digital Tibet is a project within CCNMTL's Digital Bridges Initiative, which aims to bring students into exemplary engagements with digital collections. The project serves as a model for new modes of collaboration between professors, librarians, museum curators, and university students. Through an array of emerging online communication tools, digitized resources, resource sharing, and an innovative pedagogy building upon demonstrated classroom success, Engaging Digital Tibet fosters the creation of a common culture of academic exploration and collaboration—unlocking, in the process, greater potential within rich archives for serious academic study.



The site contains an advanced, searchable repository of Tibetan objects, as well as unique features for creating and sharing descriptive annotations about the objects.



This Shakyamuni Buddha tapestry appears in Engaging Digital Tibet's collection and was provided by the Rubin Museum of Art.



Students insert object annotations that describe various details of the Vajrabhairava tapestry.