BSTC 2004 Chinese Buddhism and Ritual (6 Credits)

Offering semester: 1st
Instructor: Dr. SIK Fa Ren (faren@hku.hk)
Office: Rm. 4.12, The Jockey Club Tower
Time: 10:30am-12:20pm, 1st Semester (Every TUE)
Venue: CPD LG.08 Centennial Campus

Course Description
From the very early period and throughout the entire Buddhist history, the Buddhist traditions have adopted indigenous rituals and practices, and devised a great variety of their own rituals. This course provides an introduction to Buddhist ritual practice in Chinese Buddhism from the perspectives of their psychological, religious and spiritual significant. We will begin by exploring several theories and research methods of ritual adopted in anthropology and religious studies. Having studied the theoretical basis of ritual studies, students will further study the doctrinal, mythic and other dimensions of Buddhist practice, examine the structural patterns of various rituals, survey the different categories of ceremonies, and analyse the most important groups of rituals.

Focus of study will be the effort of ritual experiences on individual enlightenment, effect of ritual, and the expression of participants’ understanding of Buddhist teaching. As a comparative approach to Buddhist rituals, the course will use related myths, texts, and video record of ritual. Rituals including the recitation of sutras (scriptures) and mantras, funeral ritual, ritual of liberation of living animals, and the ritual of saving all sentient beings from water and land (shuilu fahui) are examined in some detail. Fieldwork studies may also be conducted. Students therefore can personally witness how Hong Kong Buddhists perform these kinds of rituals.

Objective
In addition to becoming acquainted with the major categories of Chinese Buddhist rituals, students would know more about how Buddhists express their belief through actual practice. From this learning approach, students would gain both knowledge of Buddhist doctrine and practice simultaneously.

Assessment ratio
100% coursework, including:
1. 60% short essay with 2,500-3,000 words
2. 30% book presentation. Each student has five minutes
3. 10% Participation
4.
Course schedule with bibliography

Lecture One
Topic: **Course introduction**

Lecture Two
Topic: **1. What is ritual?**
**2. Power of Ritual**

**Readings:**
Harvey, Peter (1990), Chapter 8 of *An Introduction to Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press), pp.171-195.
--------------------------(1971) *Man for himself, an inquiry into the psychology of ethics* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul)

Lecture Three
Topic: **Current studies of Buddhism and ritual**

**Readings:**

Lecture Four
Topic: **Theoretical basis of Buddhist ritual (1) — Buddhist Cosmology, Concepts of Karma and Rebirth**

**Readings:**
Harvey, Peter (1990), Chapter 2 of *An Introduction to Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press), pp.33-46.
Naranda (1980), *The Buddha and His Teachings*, Singapore, Chapter (27); pp.43-44.

Lecture Five
Topic: Theoretical basis of Buddhist ritual (2) — Merit Making and Transference

Readings:

Lecture Six
Topic: Ritual of Liberating the Living animals

Readings:

Reading Week

Lecture Seven
Topic: Confessional Ritual

Readings:

Lecture Eight
Topic: Funeral Ritual of Chinese Buddhism

Readings:
Jing Yin (2006), “Death from the Buddhist View: Knowing the Unknown” in Chan, Cecilia Lai Wan and Chow, Amy Yin Man (ed.), Death, Dying and Bereavement - A Hong Kong Chinese Experience (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), pp.93-104.

Lecture Nine
Topic: Ritual for Saving the Flaming-mouth Hungry Ghosts

Readings:


Lecture Ten
Topic: **Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings (1)**

**Readings:**

Lecture Eleven
Topic: **Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings (2)**

**Readings:**

Class Presentation

Further Reading


Prip-Möller, Johannes (1967), *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries: Their Plan and Its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press).


Stephen C. Berkwitz (ed.), *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (Santa Barbara (US): ABC-CLIO).


Tong, Chee Kiong and Kong, Lily (Sep., 2000), 'Religion and modernity: ritual transformations and the reconstruction of space and time', *Social & Cultural Geography*, pp. 29 - 44.


3) E-Journals

*Journal of Buddhist Ethics.* Free. This is a web based academic journal for free distribution. Web address: [http://www.jbe.gold.ac.uk/](http://www.jbe.gold.ac.uk/)

*Journal of Global Buddhism.* Free. This is a web based academic journal for free distribution. [http://www.globalbuddhism.org/dig.html](http://www.globalbuddhism.org/dig.html)


*Buddhist Studies Review.* HKU Library. Published twice a year by the UK Association for Buddhist Studies, started from 1984. S 294.3 B927 S9

*The Eastern Buddhist.* HKU Library. Published twice a year by the Eastern Buddhist Society in Kyoto. Japan, started from 1965. S 294.3 E13 B9

*Contemporary Buddhism.* HKU Library. Published twice a year, Richmond, England: Curzon, c2000- S 294.3 C761 B

Website Recourses

JSTOR *The Scholarly Journal Archive.* This *Archive* needs subscription, so *use it through HKU Electronic Recourses.* [http://www.jstor.org/jstor](http://www.jstor.org/jstor)

*NII Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator.* Mostly Free. The National Institute of Informatics (Japan) has incorporated approximately 2.8 million full text articles (PDF) in NII-ELS, from *1,000 published academic journals.* Currently NII has obtained permission of *271 academic societies.* NII-ELS also provides full text (PDF) of *Research Bulletins of Japanese universities.*
All of the full text articles incorporated in NII-ELS are available through CiNii along with bibliographical information on other academic papers.

**Taisho Edition of Chinese Tripitaka.** Free. If you can read classical Chinese and wish to refer to the original Chinese texts, please visit [http://www.cbeta.org/index.htm](http://www.cbeta.org/index.htm). This website includes volumes 1-55 & 85 of *Taisho Edition of Chinese Tripitaka*.

**Digital Sanskrit Buddhist Canon.** Free for download and reading from The University of The West website: [http://www.uwest.edu/sanskritcanon/index.html](http://www.uwest.edu/sanskritcanon/index.html)