

Undergraduate Courses offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies
ELECTIVES / INTER-FACULTY ELECTIVES
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)
BSTC 2004 **Chinese Buddhism and Ritual** (6 Credits)

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:

Students are required to read the relevant papers before coming to the lecture so that they can participate in our lively discussion. The final examination is based on one essay, one presentation and lecture participation.

Presentation is arranged. Each group has about 15 minutes to give a presentation. This requires students' critical thinking on the related topics and informed participation. This is the key for the success of the course.

Also, students are going to write a term paper of about 2500 to 3000 words on one of topics discussed in lectures, or students may choose your own topic related to the course (in this case, make sure you discuss with me beforehand). Students are expected to attend all lectures on time without being late.

100% coursework, including:

- (i) 70%: a short essay with 2,500-3,000 words
- (ii) 30%: a presentation (each group with 15 minutes duration)

Criteria for marking essay:

1. Good and correct understanding of the Buddhist teaching given in the lectures,
2. Clear, logical and rational presentation of your ideas and thoughts,
3. Show that you have read at least three papers in your essay either in your footnotes or endnotes and list them at the end.

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.

Bell, Catharine (1992) *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford University Press, USA), pp. 1-89.

Fromm, Eric (1950) *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

------(1971) *Man for himself, an inquiry into the psychology of ethics* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul)

James, William (1985) *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (US: Harvard University Press) pp.38-133.

Pettazzoni, Raffaele (Jan. 1937), 'Confession of Sins and the Classics', *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 30, pp. 1-14.

Rappaport, Roy A. (1999), Chapter 5 of *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Tambiah, S. Jeyaraja (1985), "A Performative Approach to Ritual", in *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp.123-166.

----- (Jun. 1968), 'The Magical Power of Words', *Man*, vol. 3, pp. 175-208.

Lecture Three

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

Readings:

Alexander, Bobby C. (1997), "Ritual and Current Studies of Ritual: overview". In Stephen D. Glazier (ed.): *Anthropology of Religion: A Hand Book*, (London: Greenwood Press), pp.139-160.

McRae, John R. (May, 1995), 'Buddhism', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 54 (2), pp. 354-71.

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.

Sadakata, Akira (1997), *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Tokyo: Kosei).

Naranda (1980), *The Buddha and His Teachings*, Singapore, Chapter (27); pp.43-44.

Laumakis, Stephen J. (2008), Chapter 5 of *An introduction to Buddhist philosophy* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press).

Lecture Five

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

Readings:

Walsh, Michael J. (2007), 'The Economics of Salvation: Toward a Theory of Exchange in Chinese Buddhism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Advance*, pp. 353-82.

Xueyu (2003), 'Merit Transfer and Life after Death in Buddhism', *Ching Feng*, New Series 4.1, pp. 29-50.

Lecture Six: Ritual of Liberating the Living animals

Readings:

*Smith J. F. H. (1999), "Liberating animals in Ming-Qing China: Buddhist inspiration and elite imagination" in *The Journal of Asian studies*, vol. 58, No.1, pp. 51-84.

Emmerick, R.E. (2001), Chapter 4 of *The Sutra of Golden Light: being a translation of the Suvarṇabhāṣottamasūtra* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 3rd (rev.) ed.)

Lecture Seven: Reading Week

Lecture Eight: Confessional Ritual

Readings:

*Yo, Hsiang-Chou. (2001), "Chinese Buddhist Confessional Rituals: Their Origin and Spiritual Implications" in Kalupahana, David J. edited. 2001. *Buddhist thought and ritual* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), pp.173-86.

Lecture Nine: 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.

*Welch, Holmes (1973), *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900-1950* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press), pp. 179-206.

Lecture Ten: Ritual for Saving the Flaming-mouth Hungry Ghosts

Readings:

*Teiser, Stephen F. (1988), *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp.168-208.

Orzech, Charles (1996), "Saving the Burning-Mouth Hungry Ghost," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed. *Religions of China in Practice* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), pp. 278-83.

Lecture Eleven: Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings (1)

Readings:

*Stevenson, Daniel B. (2001), 'Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of Shuilu fahui, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land', in Marsha Weidner (ed.), *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), pp.30-70.

Lecture Twelve: Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings (2)

Readings:

*Stevenson, Daniel B. (2001), 'Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of Shuilu fahui, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land', in Marsha Weidner (ed.), *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), pp.30-70.

Further Reading:

Alexander, Bobby C. (1997), "Ritual and Current Studies of Ritual: overview". In Stephen D. Glazier (ed.): *Anthropology of Religion: A Hand Book*, (London: Greenwood Press), pp.139-160.

Alexander, Jeffrey C. and Colomy, Paul (1985), 'Toward Neofunctionalism', *Sociological Theory* 3, pp. 11-23.

Bell, Catherine (May, 1988), 'Ritualization of Texts and Textualization of Ritual in the Codification of Taoist Liturgy', *History of Religions*, 27 (4), pp. 366-92.

--- (Jan., 1989), 'Ritual, Changes, and Changing Rituals', *Worship*, 63, pp.31-41.

--- (1992), *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press).

--- (1997), *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford university Press).

Berkwitz, Stephen C. (ed.) (2006), *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (Santa Barbara (US): ABC-CLIO).

- Bernard, H. Russell (1988), *Research Method in Cultural Anthropology* (Newbury Park, California: SAGE Publication).
- Brook, Timothy (1993), *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press).
- (Dec., 1989), 'Funerary Ritual and the Building of Lineages in Late Imperial China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 49 (2), pp. 465-99.
- Cave, Roderick (1998), *Chinese Paper Offerings* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press).
- Chappell, David W. (ed.) (1987), *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press).
- Chen, Kenneth K. S. (1964), *Buddhism in China, a historical survey* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press).
- (1968), 'Filial Piety in Chinese Buddhism', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 28, pp. 81-97.
- (1973), *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press).
- Chen, Pi-yen (2002), 'The Contemporary Practice of the Chinese Buddhist Daily Service: Two Case Studies of the Traditional in the Post-traditional World', *Ethnomusicology*, 46, pp.226-50.
- Davis, Edward L. (2001), *Society and the supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press).
- Durkheim, Emile (1915), *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology* (London: G. Allen & Unwin).
- Eberhard, Wolfram (1967), *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Ebrey, Patricia (Apr., 1990), 'Cremation in Sung China', *The American Historical Review*, 95 (2), pp. 406-28.
- Eliade, Mircea (1961), *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harper and Row).
- Gates, Hill (Jul., 1987), 'Money for the Gods', *Modern China*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Symposium on Hegemony and Chinese Folk Ideologies, Part II, pp. 259-77.
- Geertz, Clifford (1999), 'From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding', in McCutcheon Russell T. (ed.), *The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion* (London, New York: Cassell), pp.50-63.
- Ghose, Lynken (2007), 'Karma and the Possibility of Purification: An Ethical and Psychological Analysis of the Doctrine of Karma in Buddhism', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 35 (2), pp. 259-90.
- Gregory, Peter N. and Daniel A. Getz, (ed.) (1999), *Buddhism in the Sung* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press).
- Holt, John C. (Jun. 1981), 'Assisting the Dead by Venerating the Living: Merit Transfer in the Early Buddhist Tradition', *Numen*, Vol. 28, Fasc. 1, pp. 1-28.
- Huang Chi-chiang (July, 1998), "Consecrating the Buddha: Legend, Lore, and History of the Imperial Relic-Veneration Ritual in the T'ang Dynasty" in *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* vol.11, pp.483-533.

- Jones, Charles B. (2003), "Foundations of Ethics and Practice in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism" in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* v.10.
- 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).
- Kwong, Chungwah (2002), *The Public Role of Religion in Post-Colonial Hong Kong: An Historical Overview of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity* (Asian Thought and Culture, 53; New York: Peter Lang).
- Liebenthal, Walter (1952), 'The Immortality of the Soul in Chinese Thought', *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 8, No. 1/2, pp. 327-97.
- Makransky, John (2000), 'Buddhist Views on Ritual Practice: Mahāyāna Buddhist Ritual and Ethical Activity in the World', *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, vol. 20, pp. 54-59.
- Overmyer, Daniel L. (June 1990), 'Buddhism in the Trenches: Attitudes Toward Popular Religion in Chinese Scriptures Found at Tun-Huang', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 50, pp. 197-222.
- Pang, Duane (1977), 'The P'u-tu Ritual: A Celebration of the Chinese Community of Honolulu', *Buddhist and Taoist Studies*, vol. 1, pp.95-122.
- Rappaport, Roy A. (1999), *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Reader, Ian and Tanabe, George J. (1998), *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu University of Hawai'i Press).
- Reader, Ian (2005), *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press).
- Sadakata, Akira (1997), *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Tokyo: Kosei).
- Smith, Bardwell L. (Sep., 1968), 'Toward a Buddhist Anthropology: The Problem of the Secular', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Advance*, 36 (3), pp. 203-16.
- Stephen C. Berkwitz (ed.), *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (Santa Barbara (US): ABC-CLIO).
- Strickmann, Michel (2002), *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
- Tambiah, Stanley J. (Jun. 1968), 'The Magical Power of Words', *Man*, vol. 3, pp. 175-208.
- (1973), 'Buddhism and This-Worldly Activity', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 7 (1), pp. 1-20.
- Teiser, Stephen F. (Aug., 1986), 'Ghosts and Ancestors in Medieval Chinese Religion: The Yü-lan-p'en Festival as Mortuary Ritual', *History of Religions*, 26 (1), pp. 47-67.
- (Dec., 1988), '“Having Once Died and Returned to Life”: Representations of Hell in Medieval China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 48 (2), pp. 433-64.
- Ter Haar, Barend J. (1998), *Ritual and Mythology of the Chinese Triads: Creating an Identity* (Leiden: EJ Brill).
- Tong, Chee Kiong (2004), *Chinese Death Rituals in Singapore* (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon).
- 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.
- Turner, Victor (1969), *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.).
- Van Gennep, Arnold (1960), *Rite of Passage* (London: Routledge & Paul).

- Watson, James L. and Rawski, Evelyn S. (ed.) (1988), *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Welch, Holmes (1968), *Buddhist Revival in China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
- (1973), *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900-1950* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press).
- (Apr. - Jun., 1965), 'The Reinterpretation of Chinese Buddhism', *The China Quarterly*, 22, pp. 143-53.
- Weller, Robert P. (1987), *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press).
- (Feb, 1985), 'Bandits, Beggars, and Ghosts: The Failure of State Control over Religious Interpretation in Taiwan', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 12, pp. 46-61.
- Wilson, Bryan and Dobbelaere, Karel (1994), *A Time to Chant: Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon).
- Woodhead, Linda, et al. (2001), *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations* (London: Routledge).
- Wu, Cheng-han (1988), 'Temple Fairs in Late Imperial China', Ph. D. dissertation (Princeton University).
- Yu, Chun-fang (1981), *The renewal of Buddhism in China* (New York: Columbia University Press).

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Journal of Buddhist Ethics. Free. This is a web based academic journal for free distribution.
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<http://www.globalbuddhism.org/dig.html>

Western Buddhist Review. Free. It contains good academic papers for download.
<http://www.westernbuddhistreview.com/>

Buddhist Studies Review. HKU Library. Published twice a year by the UK Association for Buddhist Studies, started form 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](#)

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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>. 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>

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