Undergraduate Course offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2019-20

ELECTIVE COURSE
(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 10 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) 75%: a short essay with 2,500-3,000 words
(ii) 15%: a presentation (each group with 10 minutes duration)
(iii) 10%: Class Participation

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.

General expectations of student performance at the various grades:

About Plagiarism:

Please be aware of plagiarism. For details, please refer to
http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism

Course schedule with bibliography:
Lecture One (3rd Sep.)
Topic: Course introduction

Lecture Two (10th Sep)
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. 3-93.


------------------


Lecture Three (17th Sep)

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

**Readings:**


Lecture Four (24th Sep)

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.


Lecture Five (1st Oct) Public Holiday

Lecture Six (8th Oct)

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

**Readings:**


Lecture Seven (15th Oct): Reading Week
Lecture Eight (22nd Oct): Confessional Ritual

Readings:

Lecture Nine (29th Oct.): 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 Ten (5th Nov.): Ritual for Saving the Flaming-mouth Hungry Ghosts

Readings:

Lecture Eleven (12th Nov): Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings (1)

Readings:

Lecture Twelve (19th Nov.): Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings (2)

Readings:

Lecture Thirteen (26th Nov.): Course Revision

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


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.


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).


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/


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

Website Recourses
JSTOR The Scholarly Journal Archive. This Archive needs subscription, so use it through HKU Electronic Recourses. 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.


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

(Last updated: July 23, 2019)