

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

Lecturer: Dr. SIK Fa Ren

B.A, M.Phil. (CUHK), PhD (Lancaster University)

Time: TBC

Meeting Venue: TBC

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 doctrines and practices simultaneously.

Assessment Ratio

100% coursework

<u>Content</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Date</u>
Quiz 1	30%	TBC
Quiz 2	30%	TBC
Term paper	40%	TBC

Further notes:

1. Teaching will be delivered in face-to-face mode; students are required to go through the assigned readings before joining each lecture so that they can participate in class discussion and raise their own question.
2. The quiz is in multiple-choice format. **Please DO NOT miss it**, as no make-up quiz will be arranged.
3. Term paper (2500-3000 words) on one of the topics discussed in lectures, or you may choose your own topics related to the course (in this case, make sure you discuss with the lecturer beforehand). To write this paper, you must consult at least three different academic publications (lecture power points or notes are not counted).
4. Use any citation style you are familiar with but be consistent and provide page numbers. Your essay must be single line spacing with a font size of 12 and should be submitted through 'Turnitin' on the Moodle by the deadline. The acceptable maximum AI and similarity rate is 10%, excluding footnotes / endnotes and reference list / bibliography. Substantial marks will be deducted if AI and similarity rate is over 10%.
5. The grading principles are as follows: B-range grades are for basically good writing, including, clear structure, logical and rational presentation of your ideas and thoughts; generally correct understanding of Buddhist teachings, readability in language, acceptable technical matters (e.g. a title page, reference, and other conventions). The A-range grades are for writing that is excellent in all the above aspects.
6. There will be penalty for late submissions: 1) submission within the first 7 days after the deadline will result in a deduction of one sub-grade (e.g. A-> A-); 2) after the 8th day following the deadline, the deduction will be a full grade (e.g. A-> B); 3) any submission made two weeks after the deadline will only receive a passing grade.
7. Faculty Grade Expectations: https://arts.hku.hk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/grade_expectations.pdf
8. Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The University upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and any student found plagiarizing is liable to disciplinary action in addition to failing the assessment concerned. Please read the following webpage on "plagiarism" for details:

<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>

Course schedule with bibliography:

Lecture 1 : Course introduction

Lecture 2 : What is ritual? Power of ritual

Readings:

~~*Harvey, Peter~~ (1990), Chapter 8 of *An Introduction to Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press), pp.170-195.

*Bell, Catharine (1992) *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford University Press, USA), pp. 3-93.

James, William (1985) *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (US: Harvard University Press) pp.53-76.

Lecture 3: Ritual Functions

Readings:

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.

Lecture 4 : 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 5: 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.32-46.

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

Naranda (1980), *The Buddha and His Teachings*, Singapore, Chapter (27); pp.436-453.

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

Lecture 6: 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 7: 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 8 : Death 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.
- Kwong, Chun Wah. 2002. *The Public Role of Religion in Post-colonial Hong Kong: An Historical Overview of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity* (Peter Lang: New York).
- Leong, Herry. 2001. *Ritual Implements, Tools & Objects of Chinese Buddhism* (Yuan Kuang Buddhist Publications: Taiwan).

Lecture 9 : 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.
- Sik Hin Hung and Sik Fa Ren. 2016. 'A Case Study of the Decline of the Buddhist Funeral Ritual, the Guangdong Yuqie Yankou'. *Contemporary Buddhism*: 1–22

Lecture 10: Buddhist Rituals for Saving All Sentient Beings

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.
- Hun, Yeow Lye. 2003. *Feeding Ghosts: A study of the Yuqie Yankou Rite*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Virginia.
- Chan, Yiu Kwan. 2008a. 'Popular Buddhist Ritual in Contemporary Hong Kong: Shuilu Fahui, a Buddhist Rite for Saving All Sentient Beings of Water and Land'. Lancaster University.

*Recommended readings

Further Reading

- Alexander, Bobby C. (1997), "Ritual and Current Studies of Ritual: overview". In Stephen D. Glazier (ed.): *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*, (London: Greenwood Press), pp.139-160.
- 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).
- 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).
- (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.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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).
- 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: Routledge Curzon).
- 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).
- 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).
- Chan, Yiu Kwan (2008), 'Popular Buddhist Ritual in Contemporary Hong Kong: Shuilu Fahui, a Buddhist Rite for Saving All Sentient Beings of Water and Land'. Lancaster University.
- Kwong, Chun Wah (2002), *The Public Role of Religion in Post-colonial Hong Kong : An Historical Overview of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity* (Peter Lang: New York).
- Leong, Herry (2001) *Ritual Implements, Tools & Objects of Chinese Buddhism* (Yuan Kuang Buddhist Publications: Taiwan).
- Hun, Yeow Lye (2003), *Feeding Ghosts: A study of the Yuqie Yankou Rite*. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Virginia
- Sik Hin Hung and Sik Fa Ren (2016), 'A Case Study of the Decline of the Buddhist Funeral Ritual, the Guangdong Yuqie Yankou'. *Contemporary Buddhism*: 1–22.

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/>

Journal of Global Buddhism. Free. This is a web based academic journal for free distribution. <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

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.

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>