

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**Department of Cultural and Religious Studies**  
**CURE 2112 Myth, Symbol and Ritual**

神話、符號及儀式

2023-24 2<sup>nd</sup> Term

Lecture Room: LSK 306

Lecture Time: Mon 2:30-05:15

(Lecture: 14:30 – 16:15; Tutorial 16.30 – 17:15)

Lecture: Dr. SIK Fa Ren (釋法忍博士)

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### **1. Course Description**

Human Beings are not only tool-making animals, but also meaning-making beings. This course explores students to understand how symbols related to sacred are constructed; how these symbols are connected to events and myths; and they give meaning to different domains of human life and are woven into lifecycle, family life; society and politics; and how can interpret them.

### **2. Learning outcomes**

Upon completing the course, students should be able to:

- understand the culturally informed and diverse human imaginations of the sacred in different social contexts;
- understand the theoretical approach to the study of myth, symbol and ritual in the field of religious studies;
- to identify the meaning behind religious symbols, myths, and rituals;
- evaluate the culturally-based beliefs and practices in regards to other cultures and paradigms of religious thought;
- think creatively about religious meaning in the contemporary world.

### **Course Work and Assessment Ratio**

1 Tutorial : 35%

2 Term Paper : 65%

### **Tutorial and Presentation:**

- 1) 5-6 students a group. Each group has 40 minutes for presentation.
- 2) All students must attend all tutorial sections and join the discussion.

*\*Guidelines for the coursework will be provided in due course.*

### **Criteria for Marking the Term Paper :**

1. Good and correct understanding of the idea given in the lectures;
2. Clear, logical and rational presentation of your ideas and thoughts;
3. Personal input with in-depth analysis;
4. Show that you have read at least three papers (powerpoints or notes of lectures are not counted) in your paper either in your footnotes or endnotes and list them at the end.

Papers should be handed in both hard and soft copy via VeriGuide before 11.55 pm on 22 April (Mon), 2023. Late submission will be penalized: 10 marks will be deducted for one day of late submission. Submission after 10 days will be given a zero mark.

### **3. Course schedule with bibliography:**

**Week 1 (8 Jan) Topic: Course introduction**

**Week 2 (15 Jan) Topic: Signs and Symbols**

#### **Readings:**

James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*, Chapter 4, p. 53-73.

**Week 3 (22 Jan) Topic: Myth**

#### **Readings:**

James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Introduction to Religion*, Chapter 4, p. 53-73.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. "The Structural Study of Myth." *Structural Anthropology*. Trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, 1965. 206-31. Print.

列維·斯特勞斯·克洛德。張祖建譯。〈神話的結構〉。《結構人類學 I》。北京：中國人民大學，2006。189-213。

**Week 4 (29 Jan) Topic: Sacred and Profane**

#### **Readings:**

\*米爾恰·伊利亞德(2022)《神聖的顯現：比較宗教、聖俗辯證，與人類永恆的企盼》

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.

Fromm, Eric (1950) Chapter 3 of *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press). PP. 21-64.

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

### **Week 5 (5 Feb) Topic: Topic: Importance of Ritual & Current studies of 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.

### **Week 6 (10 Feb) 1. What is ritual? 2. 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.

Fromm, Eric (1950) Chapter 3 of *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press). PP. 21-64.

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

### **Week 7 (12 Feb) Chinese New Year Holiday**

### **Week 8 (19 Feb) Topic: Ritual Functions**

#### **Readings:**

\*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.

**Week 9 (26 Feb) Topic: Theoretical basis of Ritual (1) Doctrine, Cosmology, 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).

**Week 10: Reading Week**

**Week 11: (11 Mar): Topic: Theoretical basis of Buddhist ritual (2) — Motivation of Joining Ritual**

**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.

**Week 12 (18 Mar) Topic: Shame and Guilt, 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.

Douglas, Mary. "Introduction" and "Secular Defilement." In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo*, 1-7, 36-50. New York: Routledge, 2002.

**Week 13 (25 Mar) Souls, Ghosts, Death, and Death Ritual (1)**

**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.

#### **Week 14 (1 April): Easter Holiday**

#### **Week 15 (8 April): Souls, Ghosts, Death, and Death Ritual (2) 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.

#### **Week 16 (15 April): The Search for New Meaning**

##### **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.

Rebecca L. Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, chapter, p.230-258.

#### **Lecture Twelve (21 April): Course Revision**

\*Recommended readings

##### **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-

- (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).