

*USC Shinso Ito Center for
Japanese Religions and Culture*

**Saturday, November 3, 2018
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**

**East Asian Seminar Room (110C)
Doheny Memorial Library, USC**



THE STUDY OF THE STUDY OF RITUAL IN TANTRIC RITUAL IN TANTRIC BUDDHISM

Tantric Buddhism is largely informed by doctrines continuous with those of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and indeed there is no sharp line between the two, but the relation should be seen as extending over a large transitional zone. The more unique contribution of tantra is what has been called its “ritual technology.” Even here, most of the specific practices identified with tantric Buddhism are found in the Mahāyāna or even earlier. Some indeed, are effectively pan-Indian. Given the tendency to privilege doctrine in religious studies anyway, why should we care about ritual practices that are not so special after all? This workshop will explore the issues of how Buddhism is constructed as an

object of study, the privileging of doctrine and “Buddhist philosophy,” the place of cult in Buddhist praxis, how ritual practices change over time, and methodological issues in the study of ritual and the formation of theoretical understandings of it.

Richard K. Payne. Yehan Numata Professor of Japanese Buddhist Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley; Ph.D. in the History and Phenomenology of Religion, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. Dissertation fieldwork on the Shingon (眞言) tradition in Kōyasan and Kyoto in the early 1980s included training and ordination as a Shingon priest (ācārya, ajari 阿闍梨). His dissertation on the fire ritual (homa, goma 護摩) grounds continuing research on tantric ritual studies, including the volume *Homa Variations: The Study of Ritual Change Across the Longue Durée*, jointly edited with Michael Witzel (Oxford University Press, 2015). He is chair of the editorial committees for the Pure Land Buddhist Studies series (University of Hawai‘i Press), and for *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, and is also Editor-in-Chief for *Oxford Bibliographies/Buddhism*, and Co-Editor-in-Chief for *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Religion/Buddhism*.

Refreshments will be provided | RSVP ON OUR WEBSITE DORNSIFE.USC.EDU/CJRC

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