

Call for Proposals

This Group invites panel and individual paper proposals for a variety of topics. Themes proposed for the 2012 meeting, with contact members of the steering committee identified in parentheses are below. Please contact listed organizers if you wish to take part in any proposed session. Suggested themes are:

- Tantra performance and art — Jeffrey Stephen Lidke, Berry College, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Tantra and cognitive science — Glen Heyes, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Tantra and literature — John Nemece, University of Virginia, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Tantra outside of India — Richard K. Payne, Institute of Buddhist Studies, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Textual and ethnographic studies of tantra — Loriliai Biernacki, University of Colorado, Boulder, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Tantra and ritual studies — Sthaneshwar Timalsina, San Diego State University, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Indian Hindu and Buddhist tantric identity, — David Mellins, Columbia University, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

- Comparative tantras — Michael Slouber, University of California, Berkeley, This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

We welcome proposals on other topics as well.

Mission

This Group brings together scholars who utilize a range of methodological and theoretical perspectives in their studies of the complex religious, social, and cultural phenomena known collectively as Tantra. “Tantra” refers to a range of esoteric religious traditions that developed in India and were disseminated throughout Asia during the first millennium CE. These diverse traditions have used mental and bodily disciplines, devotional and ritual practices, gendered cosmologies, and have created elaborate artistic as well as sociopolitical systems. The collective study of Tantra has led to several important conclusions:

- The demonstrated diversity of Tantric practices and ideologies demands a plurality of methods, theories, and interpretative strategies by scholars
- These richly varied Tantric traditions became, by the twelfth century CE, central to many Asian religious and sociopolitical systems, including those of India, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, Cambodia, Japan, and China

- Various traditional Asian forms of Tantra have been brought to the Western world since the early twentieth century and are undergoing a vital process of reinterpretation and appropriation

Our goal is to provide a venue for scholars of different areas of Tantric studies to collaborate across traditional boundaries of religious traditions (e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism), present-day nation-states, geography (e.g., India, Tibet, China, Japan), and academic disciplines (e.g., history of religions, anthropology, art history, linguistics, sociology). We seek to be a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary enterprise. Tantra as a set of practices — a religious technology — and as a set of doctrines explaining, justifying, and rationalizing those practices in fact exists across religious, national, and geographical boundaries. For example, an adequate understanding of Japanese Tantric Buddhist practice and doctrine requires not only locating it in an East Asian Buddhist context, but also in an Indian and South Asian context where the juxtaposition of Buddhist and Hindu Tantras can fruitfully reveal aspects that might otherwise remain obscured. Similarly, by setting Buddhist materials in relation to Hindu traditions, both of which might otherwise be seen either as uniquely Hindu or Buddhist, will be highlighted as part of a broader, shared Tantric discourse. This Group will also allow scholars to present new methodologies for the study of Tantra, and help to bridge more traditional academic approaches, such as textual-based and fieldwork-based studies. We seek to further the study of Tantra as a global, transnational phenomena, and as an important new religious movement. Finally, the Group will also explore new perspectives for studies of gender, power, identity, and sexuality that are so germane to modern religious scholarship.

Anonymity of Review Process

Proposer names are **visible** to Chairs but **anonymous** to steering committee members.

Questions?

Loriliai Biernacki

University of Colorado, Boulder

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Sthaneshwar Timalina
San Diego State University

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Method of Submission

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