

Call for Proposals

This Group invites individual paper, papers session, or roundtable proposals for a variety of topics:

- Visualization as text and icon
- Lived tantra, including autobiographies and biographies
- Magic in the tantra
- Pragmatic ritual
- Tantra beyond South Asia
- Subtle bodies
- Tantric cosmologies and sacred space
- Coinscribing the body in space in Tantra
- Bhakti views of tantra
- For a cosponsored session with the [Contemplative Studies Group](#) , contemplative studies and tantra
- For a cosponsored session with the [North American Hinduism Group](#) , the transmission of Hindu tantra to North America

The Group is also open to other sessions or individual papers that members may wish to submit.

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, and 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?

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Method of Submission

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