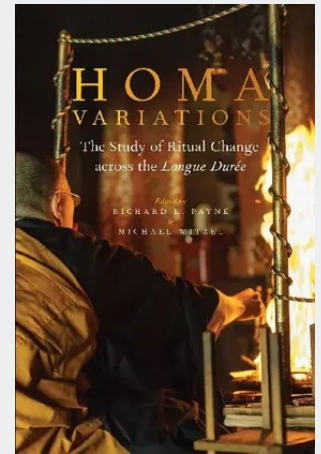


Homa Variations

The Study of Ritual Change Across the Longue Durée

The practice of making votive offerings into fire dates from the earliest periods of human history, and is found in many different religious cultures. Throughout the tantric world, this kind of ritual offering practice is known as the homa. With roots in Vedic and Zoroastrian rituals, the tantric homa developed in early medieval India. Since that time it has been transmitted to Central and East Asia by tantric Buddhist practitioners. Today, Hindu forms are also being practiced outside of India as well. Despite this historical and cultural range, the homa retains an identifiable unity of symbolism and ritual form. The essays collected in Homa Variations provide detailed studies of a variety of homa forms, providing an understanding of the history of the homa from its inception up to its use in the present. At the same time, the authors cover a wide range of religious cultures, from India and Nepal to Tibet, China, and Japan. The theoretical focus of the collection is the study of ritual change over long periods of time, and across the boundaries of religious cultures. The identifiable unity of the homa allows for an almost unique opportunity to examine ritual change from such a broad perspective.

Found in many different religious cultures, the practice of making votive offerings into fire dates back to the earliest periods of human history. Throughout the tantric world, this kind of ritual offering practice is known as the homa. With roots in Vedic and Zoroastrian rituals, the tantric homa was formed in early medieval India. Since that time tantric Buddhist practitioners transmitted it to East and Central Asia, and more recently to Europe and the Americas. Today, Hindu forms of the homa are being practiced outside of India as well. Despite this historical and cultural range, the homa retains an identifiable unity of symbolism and ritual form. Homa Variations is the first volume to provide a series of detailed studies of a variety of homa forms. This collection of essays provides an understanding of the history of the homa from its inception up to its use in the present. The book also covers homa practice throughout a wide range of religious cultures, from India and Nepal to Tibet, China, and Japan. The theoretical focus of the collection is the study of ritual change over long periods of time, and across the boundaries of religious cultures. The identifiable unity of the homa allows for an almost unique opportunity to examine ritual change with such a broad perspective.



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