

**Guest Article:
Richard K. Payne**

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In this issue of *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, I'm happy to introduce a new feature, Guest Articles. In this section of the journal we highlight the work of scholars who have made significant contributions to the field of Buddhist studies. I can think of no better scholar to commence our first issue than Dr. Richard K. Payne, Yehan Numata Professor of Japanese Buddhist Studies, under whose editorial leadership *Pacific World* has grown into one of the highest quality academic journals of Buddhist studies.

Completing his PhD at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, CA in the 1980s, he worked with Mark Juergensmeyer, Wendy Donager, Lewis Lancaster, Frits Staal, and Michel Strickmann. After completing his dissertation, he went on to adjunct at various Bay Area colleges and universities, including the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS). After several years of adjuncting and working as an administrative assistant to the dean, in 1994 Payne became dean at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, a position he held until 2016 as he began preparing for retirement from a very productive career. He was instrumental in developing the curriculum at IBS, including a well rounded academic program for future scholars as well as a chaplaincy program. In addition to his work as dean, he served as a mentor for graduate students in Buddhist studies and allied fields across IBS and GTU.¹

Payne has contributed a large and significant body of scholarship to the fields of Buddhist studies, religious studies, and Japanese religion. While his dissertation focuses on the Shingon fire ritual (Payne having trained as a Shingon priest in the process), his many articles, chapters,

1. Gesshin Claire Greenwood, "Dr. Richard Payne Retiring from IBS," <https://www.shin-ibs.edu/dr-richard-payne-retiring-from-ibs/>.

and books not only explore ritual studies more broadly, but include a host of other topics, such as Buddhism and economics, methodologies in Buddhist studies and religious studies, secularism and Buddhism, Buddhist modernism, and American religion. His work has been published in the journals *Religion*, *Journal of Global Buddhism*, *Religious Studies Review*, *Philosophy East and West*, *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, *Journal of Ritual Studies*, and *Monumenta Nipponica*, to name a few. His books include *Language in the Buddhist Tantra of Japan* as well as many edited volumes, including *Buddhism Under Capitalism*, *Secularizing Buddhism*, and *Pure Lands in Asian Texts and Contexts* and are complemented by a host of chapters that appear in multi-author volumes, such as “Hiding in Plain Sight: The Invisibility of the Shingon Mission to the United States” and “Pure Land or Pure Mind?: Locus of Awakening and American Popular Religious Culture.”²

In 1925 a group of Japanese American students at the University of California in Berkeley conceived of the idea of a bimonthly magazine dedicated to fostering cultural awareness and understanding between Japan and the United States, as well as propagating Buddhism. The group was headed by Yehan Numata, who would go on to found the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism) in 1965. The magazine lasted for just four years due to financial constraints. It would not be until 1982 that *Pacific World* would be revived, nearly sixty years later, as a project of the Institute of Buddhist Studies under the editorial leadership of Kenryu T. Tsuji, the first North American-born bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America. Funded by Yehan Numata, the journal produced scholarship on the Jōdo Shinshū tradition. In 1985, the journal produced a second series that commenced with

2. Richard K. Payne, *Language in the Buddhist Tantra of Japan: Indic Roots of Mantra* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2018); Richard K. Payne and Fabio Rambelli, eds., *Buddhism Under Capitalism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023); Richard K. Payne, ed., *Secularizing Buddhism: New Perspectives on a Dynamic Tradition* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2021); Richard K. Payne and George T. Halkias, eds., *Pure Lands in Asian Texts and Contexts: An Anthology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019); Richard K. Payne, “Hiding in Plain Sight: The Invisibility of the Shingon Mission to the United States,” in *Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization*, ed. Linda Learman (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 101–122; Richard K. Payne, “Pure Land or Pure Mind?: Locus of Awakening and American Popular Religious Culture,” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 16 (2015): 16–32.

the affiliation of the Institute of Buddhist Studies with the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA, as the first non-Christian school in the consortium under the leadership of Bishop Seigen Yamaoka, who took over the role of editor-in-chief for *Pacific World*. By 1987 the editorial team included editor-in-chief Alfred Bloom and managing editor Kenneth Tanaka, with the addition of an editorial board that included scholars in the field of Buddhist studies at various universities. Richard K. Payne became the book reviews editor the same year, later becoming managing editor. During this period the journal took on the more formal layout of a professional academic serial and, in keeping with the ministerial training at the IBS, its articles included not just Jōdo Shinshū scholarship but sociological reflections on the development of various forms of Buddhism in the US and academic topics across all Buddhist traditions. Over the next ten years, the journal produced quality scholarship in step with the strength of scholarship being cultivated at the Institute of Buddhist Studies under Payne's guidance.

The third series commenced in 1999 under the editorial leadership of Payne as chief editor. Together with David Matsumoto and Eisho Nasu managing its production, the journal's academic rigor and breadth increased considerably, with articles from scholars across the field of Buddhist studies. "As the editor-in-chief of the *Pacific World* journal and principal editor of the Pure Land Buddhist Studies Series and Contemporary Issues in Buddhist Studies," Matsumoto recently noted of Payne, "he single-handedly established a world-class publication program at IBS."³ In his final years as chief editor, Payne established a blind peer review process that would shape *Pacific World* into one of the leading academic journals in the field of Buddhist studies for scholarship on Jōdo Shinshū, Shingon and tantric Buddhism, and the Buddhist tradition writ large.

It is with profound appreciation for his leadership and scholarship that I introduce his article, "Buddhist Economics, and the Economics of Buddhism."

3. Greenwood, "Dr. Richard Payne Retiring from IBS."

