

The Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies
presents

*The Inaugural
Leslie S. Kawamura Memorial Lecture*

with

Dr. Jonathan Silk

Leiden University

*Toward a Meaningful Academic
Study of Buddhism*

Tuesday, September 20, 2011 7:30pm
Husky Oil Great Hall, Rozsa Centre
University of Calgary

One of the key hallmarks of academic study is its - ideally - disinterested, neutral and objective standpoint. When dealing with religious traditions in particular, such distance can be hard to maintain, with the siren call of advocacy sometimes not far in the distance. Indeed, most academic programs and departments of Religious Studies began, and many remain, theological. In such a framework, how can a tradition like Buddhism be presented, rendering it meaningful to both Buddhist and non-Buddhist audiences while maintaining a neutral and disinterested academic standpoint? This presentation will consider this question, touching on the history of the field, the interaction between Asian and Western scholars and practitioners of Buddhism, and the role of practices such as meditation.

Jonathan A. Silk is Professor in the Study of Buddhism at Leiden University. He is the author of four books including *Riven by Lust: Incest and Schism in Indian Buddhist Legend and Historiography* (Honolulu 2008) and *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism* (New York 2008), as well as over 40 articles, primarily on Indian Buddhism.

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