



INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

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✿ *IBS Numata Lecture Series* ✿

# “Transcendence of the Body in Kukai's Shingon Buddhism”

by

**Prof. David Gardiner**

Religion Department, Colorado College



The ninth-century founder of the Japanese Shingon School, Kukai, created a unique system for classifying schools of Buddhism based on a theory about the particular Buddha Body that was the source of the teaching. His classification sets Shingon apart because of its purported reliance on the "highest" Buddha Body -- the Dharmakaya -- for the teachings and practices of the school. Thus in Kukai's mind the "esoteric" Shingon school transcends all other types of Buddhist teaching. However Kukai's writings employ various meanings of "transcendence" such that the term possesses both positive and negative connotations. In his lecture Prof. Gardiner will show how this ambiguity plays out in some of Kukai's texts, and how to read Kukai as arguing for a kind of transcendence within what might otherwise be understood as an immanent view of the body in religious practice.

**Tuesday, May 8, 2007**

**6:30pm – 8:30pm**

at

**GTU Library (The Dinner Board Room)  
2400 Ridge Road, Berkeley, CA 94709**