

# Society for Buddhist- Christian Studies



Vol. 54

Fall 2014

## *News of the Society*

### **In this Newsletter**

The Annual Meeting next month is an opportunity to meet, to reconnect, and to share our work. This year's meeting is in San Diego, and there are both Board and Member Meetings.

In this newsletter find short summaries of AAR panels and meeting times and locations. Also find descriptions of the Japan Society's recent conference and of an Ignatian Buddhist-Christian Retreat, and announcements about prizes and awards.

We also welcome new co-editors to the Society's Journal, *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Thomas Cattoi and Carol Anderson.

As always, this is an excellent time to renew memberships. Copies of this newsletter will be posted to our facebook page and website.

Jonathan A. Seitz, SBCS Newsletter Editor,  
October 2014

### **2014 SBCS Annual Meeting**

Concurrent with AAR/SBL  
San Diego November 22-25

#### **Board Meeting Friday Nov. 21**

9AM-3:30PM

Omni Hotel Gallery (P21-100 and P21-201)

SBCS's Board will gather for its annual meeting. Please send any reports, announcements, or requests to current president, Alice Keefe ([akeefe@uwsp.edu](mailto:akeefe@uwsp.edu)). Last year's discussions included plans for the Journal, updating of web content, and possibilities for future conferences.

We typically gather for a dinner or special event Friday night. Contact a Board member or the president if you would like to participate.



## SBCS Panel 1: Liberation Theology and Engaged Buddhism: Challenging Each Other, Learning from Each Other

Friday November 21, 2014, 4:00PM to 6:30PM,  
Gallery Room 3B, Omni Hotel

“Liberation Theology” here includes any form of interpreting the Christian message that addresses the needs of the world by seeking to transform the structures of the world. “Engaged Buddhism” seeks non-violently to address social problems and needs on the basis of Buddhist thought and practice. Everyone on this panel is acquainted, to a reasonable degree, with both perspectives, and is exploring ways that Christian and Buddhist social analyses pose challenges to each other, while also providing new opportunities to learn from each other. Does each tradition have limitations that it does not see clearly enough until viewed from the point of view of the other tradition? Does each have strengths from which the other should learn? Panel presenters will each speak to a selection of topics under that rubric.

**President:** Kristin Largen, Lutheran Theological Seminary

### Panelists:

Karen Enriquez, Xavier University, Cincinnati  
Sallie King, James Madison University  
Paul Knitter, Emeritus Professor, Union Theological Seminary  
John Makransky, Boston College

**Respondent:** Ruben Habito, Perkins School of Theology, SMU

## SBCS Panel 2: Old Buddhist Texts: New Womanist Thought

Sunday Nov. 23, 8:30AM to 11:30AM  
Miramar Room at the Marriott Marquis & Marina

Reading together in community in friendship has been the focus of the *Buddhist Resources for Womanist Reflection* gatherings between scholars in Buddhist Studies and Womanist Religious Thought since 2009. Together, these scholars have engaged

in interreligious critical conversation and dialogue about the contributions that each field makes to the other on issues of justice, peace, and compassion when reading Buddhist texts from Sri Lanka, Tibet, and Japan. The Womanist scholars on this panel will share reflections on their engagement with particular Buddhist texts, showing how a Womanist lens can freshly illumine aspects of Buddhism and how Buddhism can provide new resources for Womanist reflection.

**President:** Deborah Buchanan, Lane College

### Panelists:

Carolyn Medine, University of Georgia  
Melanie L. Harris, Texas Christian University  
Tracey Hucks, Haverford College  
Keri Day, Brite Divinity School  
Linda Thomas, Lutheran School of theology at Chicago

**Respondent:** Charles Hallisey, Harvard Divinity School

## Members' Meeting

Immediately after this panel, from 11AM to 11:30 AM, the Buddhist-Christian Studies Society will convene its annual members meeting in the same room.



## Japan Society Conference

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

Palace Side Hotel, Kyoto

August 6–8, 2014

Eiko Hanaoka (Professor emerita )  
Osaka Prefecture University

Four lectures were given with the theme “Religion and Science”:

1. “Brain Science and Christian Thought—  
Concerning Human Understanding”  
Professor Sadamichi Ashina
2. “Commonness and Differences between Science  
and Buddhism”  
Professor Shizuka Sasaki
3. “Brain Science and Kokoro (= Heart and Mind)”  
Professor Paul Swanson
4. “The Mediation between Religion and Science  
— Self-building Theory in Keiji Nishitani”  
Postgraduate student Satoru Hamada

The Japan Society website is available in English [here](#); it produces a journal [also](#).



## Retreat Report

### Using *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* as a basis for a Buddhist-Christian Retreat

Len Tischler, University of Scranton

Andre Delbecq, Santa Clara University

#### ORIGIN OF THE RETREAT

Jesuit (Catholic) universities have struggled to preserve their religious world-view and to pass it on to their students, faculty and staff. Given that most faculty and administrators at these universities are lay people and many are not Catholic, the universities depend largely on their campus mission/ministry offices for this purpose. One of the primary methods of sharing their world-view has been to provide retreats for students.

The retreats are introspective with a religious and Jesuit orientation. Most student retreats are conducted over a weekend, some over a full week. Most Jesuit universities get fewer than ten percent

of their students to attend one retreat in their four years on campus. Far fewer students attend more than one retreat. These schools also attempt to encourage faculty and staff to attend similar retreats and participation in these retreats is similarly modest.

Retreats have been a primary tool for the formation of Jesuit priests. Their formation program includes taking at least two retreats of twenty eight to thirty days each. These retreats use the *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* a specific pattern of reflective meditation and introspection over twenty eight days that leads to greater clarity about one's life. The *Spiritual Exercises* are deeply theistic and are focused on the person of Jesus.

Jesuit universities have an increasing number of non-Catholics and non-Christians. For most Christians, shorter retreats or spiritually directed meditations based on the *Exercises* and undertaken over a number of weeks (referred to as the 19<sup>th</sup> annotation form) are the preferred form. However, there have been limited resources for juxtaposing the Ignatian *Exercises* with non-Christian traditions.

With the above in mind, the authors<sup>i</sup> designed a three day retreat that follows the pattern and purpose of the *Exercises* for a Christian, but which presents in parallel meditations and reflections from the Buddhist tradition. This allows Ignatian perspectives on the unfolding spiritual journey and Buddhist wisdom to be shared between Christians and Buddhists. To test our design, a first retreat was undertaken by spiritually mature adults with some experience with the interface between Buddhism and Christianity.

#### THE RETREAT

The *Spiritual Exercises* are published with contemporary commentary in a number of books. Originally written in the early 1500s, they have been re-written or interpreted for modern times. Often both the original commentary by Ignatius and a contemporary interpretation are provided. Since our retreat was only three days the essence of each section of the *Exercises* was summarized in a page or so. With the help of three Buddhist teachers<sup>ii</sup> we then spent the better part of a year meditating with the Ignatian passages and then searching from a variety of Buddhist writings passages that spoke to a

similar spiritual challenge within the Buddhist world-view. A manuscript<sup>iii</sup> was created comprised of six sections, each section containing a summary of the essence of a section from the *Exercises* followed by the related Buddhist writings. Original art work related to both traditions was prepared by a talented Zen artist.

For the initial retreat we chose people who had a deep background in both traditions with approximately an equal number of Buddhists and Catholics. Since our focus was Jesuit universities, we chose mostly academics but there were also two executives. Participants were asked to read the manuscript containing the reflections from the *Exercises* and Buddhist wisdom before the retreat so that they would be familiar with the content. Catholics and some Buddhists also read the *Exercises* in full. There were twelve participants.

The retreat was structured into six parts. Each part began with two thirty minute meditations, one on the Ignatian *Exercises* in the corner with the Ignatius icon, the other on the Buddhist quotes in the corner with the Buddha icon, in either order. Following the meditations we engaged in a two hour dialog session, sharing our experiences in our meditations. The discussion was focused on inner experiences (insights, learnings, etc.) that emerged during the two meditations and how they might relate to our lives and professional challenges. Thus we had three-hour sessions each morning and each afternoon of the three days.

A large room was used for the retreat arranged as follows (see pictures below): chairs were put in a circle at the center of the room to be used for our shared dialog sessions. Half as many chairs were also set up--each in semi-circles in two opposite corners of the room. One corner was for meditation stimulated by the *Exercises* and had a bust of Ignatius and a candle. The other corner was for meditation on the Buddhist reflections and had bust of the Buddha and a candle. Both corners were lightly embellished with small plants. Otherwise the room had no decorations; this reduced distractions. We had a cart with coffee, teas, and light snacks in the room at all times available to participants when moving between meditations or between a meditation and a dialog session. There was a one and a half hour lunch break and evenings were free. Most participants went to lunch and dinner together.



THE RESULTS

At the end of the third day participants were asked to reflect on the retreat profound for them. Each saw more ties than they had been aware of between

Catholic and Buddhist ways of knowing and being in the world, and that the parallel entry into meditation across the two traditions stimulated unique insights that would not have occurred by reflecting through the lens of a single tradition. Although each felt they had deepened as a person they also felt that they had been able to create a religiously plural community deeply sensitive and appreciative of the richness of the alternate tradition. Each also noted that they felt exhausted at the end of each day; six hours of such deep work, but also the need for a special attentive listening to capture nuances from a less familiar tradition, took a lot of energy.

To obtain a copy of the manual for this Catholic-Buddhist retreat email the first author at [len.tischler@scranton.edu](mailto:len.tischler@scranton.edu).

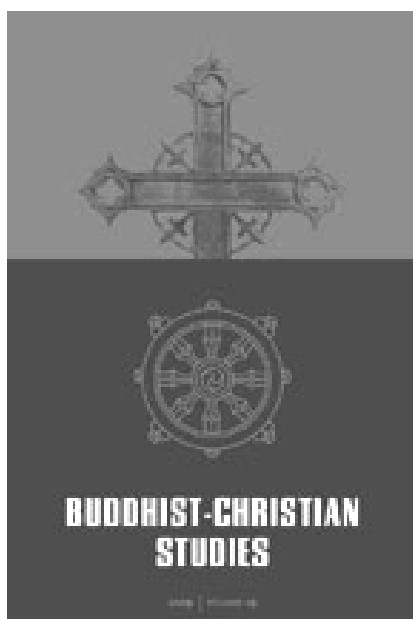
Notes:

<sup>i</sup>Sarita Tamayo-Moraga, Bo Tep, and Juan Velasco were co-designers of the retreat and co-authors of the manuscript for the retreat.

<sup>ii</sup>Sarita Tamayo-Moraga, Bo Tep, and Juan Velasco

<sup>iii</sup>Andre L. Delbecq, Sarita Tamayo-Moraga, Bo Tep, Len Tischler, and Juan Velasco, *Ignatius and the Buddha in Conversation: A Resource for a Religiously Plural Dialog* (Self-Published, 2014).

## ***Buddhist-Christian Studies***



## **A Thank You to BCS interim co-editors Terry Muck and Rita Gross**

Alice Keefe

President, Society for Buddhist Christian Studies

A special thank you is in order for Terry Muck and Rita Gross for their service as interim co-editors of our 2014 issue of *Buddhist Christian Studies*. On short notice, Terry and Rita graciously stepped in last January to bring our 2014 issue to completion after our previous editorial team, Wakoh Shannon Hickey and Denise Yarbrough, had to resign due to extenuating circumstances. As many readers of this newsletter know, Terry and Rita had already served for ten years as journal co-editors and had happily retired from those responsibilities, but were willing to put on their editorial hats again to ensure that we would have an excellent 2014 issue of *BCS*. Readers of this forthcoming issue of *BCS* will be particularly pleased to note the inclusion of several published papers from the International Buddhist-Christian Conference held at Union Theological Seminary in 2013. SBCS is tremendously grateful to Rita and Terry for their excellent service in bringing us the 2014 issue of *BCS*, despite short notice and a very tight deadline.

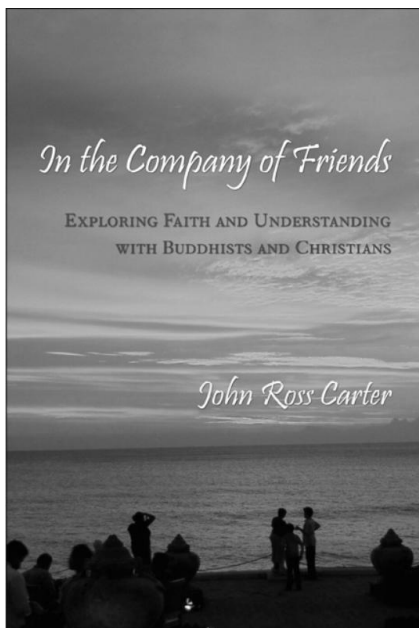
## **New Editors**

We are also happy to announce that Thomas Cattoi and Carol Anderson have agreed to serve as our new editorial team for *BCS*, pending board approval at our annual board meeting in San Diego. Thomas Cattoi is Associate Professor of Christology and Cultures at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. Carol Anderson is Professor of Religion at Kalamazoo College, Michigan. Thomas and Carol, with their complimentary specializations in Christianity and Buddhism, promise to be a great editorial team. We are confident that their work will ensure that *Buddhist Christian Studies* will remain the premier journal for scholarship in this field for many years to come.



## 2014 Streng Award Winner: *In the Company of Friends*

John Ross Carter, *In the Company of Friends: Exploring Faith and Understanding with Buddhists and Christians* (SUNY Press, 2012) has been selected as the winner of the 2014 Streng Book Award. This award is given annually by the Society for Buddhist Christian Studies in member of Frederick J. Streng, who was one of the scholars that founded the society.



## 2015 Streng Award Call for Nominations

The Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies is now receiving nominations for the 2013 Frederick Streng Book Award for Excellence in Buddhist-Christian Studies. Nominations must be received by Dec. 31, 2014. The winner will be announced at the annual meeting of the Society.

The criteria for nominating and making the award are:

1. The subject matter of the book should be inspired by and relevant to Buddhist-Christian

- relations, but subject matter is not narrowly limited to books on dialogue or to books that are half on Christianity and half on Buddhism.
2. The scholarship must be original and the writing clear. The book must make an important contribution to issues relevant to the context of Buddhist-Christian dialogue.
3. Books can be considered for nomination within five years of their publication date (i.e. the 2015 award must be for a book published in 2010 or later).

Nominations can be made by any person other than the author(s) or editor(s), using the [downloadable nomination form](#) or the [online form](#).

The completed form may be sent electronically to Abraham Vélez de Cea ([abraham.velez@eku.edu](mailto:abraham.velez@eku.edu)), who will respond to all nominations.

Self-nominations are not permitted. Publishers of books must be willing to supply review copies to members of the committee for evaluation in order for the book to be considered.



## Society for Buddhist Christian Studies Graduate Student Essay Winner

This year's SBCS Graduate Essay Award winner is Christopher Emory-Moore. Christopher is a PhD student at the University of Waterloo, and he will join us at the AAR to offer a brief talk drawn from his winning essay, "Clear and Uncreated: The Experience of Inner Light in Gelug-pa Tantrism and Byzantine Hesychasm." You are very much invited to join us for Christopher's talk at 6:15 on Friday November 21, in Gallery Room 3B of the Omni Hotel, immediately following that evening's SBCS panel session on Liberation Theology and Engaged Buddhism.

Submissions for the Essay Award are typically due in early June.

**MEMBERSHIP IN THE SBCS**

To enroll as a member of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, complete the on-line form on our website <http://society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/appform.html> or send your name, address, and membership fee to:

Enclose a check for \$45.00 (\$10.00 for students, \$25 for senior citizens) payable to "Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies." The Society cannot accept foreign currency or personal checks from foreign countries unless drawn on a U.S. bank. International money orders in U.S. dollars are acceptable.

Members receive the Society's *Newsletter* and our annual journal *Buddhist-Christian Studies*.

**CONTRIBUTE A REPORT TO THE NEWSLETTER**

The *Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Newsletter* is published twice annually: in the spring and the fall. Please contact the Editor to share information with our readers. The deadline for the fall issue is September 1.

In addition to reports on our annual meeting (concurrent with the American Academy of Religion) and calls for the Frederick Streng Book Award for Excellence in Buddhist-Christian Studies and for the Graduate Student Essay Prize, the *Newsletter* also publishes information on conferences, retreats, lectures, and other events. We welcome obituaries or reports on major figures in the field of Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Your contributions ensure the continued existence of our newsletter. Submissions may be edited for clarity and length. Send items to Jonathan Seitz [jaseitz@gmail.com](mailto:jaseitz@gmail.com).

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**SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN STUDIES  
NEWSLETTER**

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