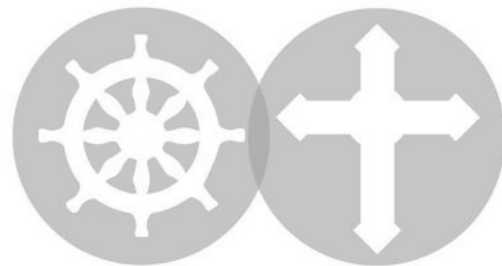


Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies



Vol. 58

Fall 2016

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 Antonio, and there are:

- Board and Member Meetings
- Two panels we are hosting (“Honoring Jim Fredericks,” “Is Spirituality Intrinsicly Communal”)
- Two related panels (by the Journal for Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology, and by the Comparative Studies in Religion Section and Contemplative Studies Group)
- An opportunity to gather for a meal on Friday night

In this newsletter also find

- Short summaries of AAR panels and meeting times and locations
- A notice of the most recent Japan Society meeting and topic
- A call for papers from European Network
- Announcement of our Streng Prize winner
- Contents of our most recent Journal, which should hit members' mailboxes by the end of the year

Jonathan A. Seitz, SBCS Newsletter Editor



2016 Annual Meeting

San Antonio, TX

Board Meeting, Friday 9-3:30pm

El Mirador C West at the Hilton Palacio del Rio

This is our annual organizational meeting to discuss and plan. There is also a business meeting Saturday at 11:30 open to all members.

Friday evening we are planning a dinner at 7pm. Please RSVP to Kristen Largen: klargen@ltsq.edu

Related Panel

Friday - 2:00 PM-3:15 PM

Convention Center-006D (River Level)

The journal for [Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology](#) features the following panels on dynamics of change and transformation within the fields of interreligious studies and intercultural theology.

Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Seminary of the Southwest

Torah and the Engaged Commentator:
Transformations in Theology and Practice

Jagbir Jhutti-Johal, University of Birmingham
Lived Religion in Sikh Studies: Interfaith Marriages

André van der Braak, VU University, Amsterdam
Buddhist-Christian Belonging and the Nature of Religious Belonging

Pim Valkenberg, Catholic University of America
How Has My Engagement with the Religion of Islam – or Rather, with Muslims and Muslim Theologies – Influenced My Interpretation of My Own Catholic Tradition?

Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Panel 1

Theme: Is Spirituality Intrinsically Communal?
Spirituality and Revolutionary Love

Alice Keefe, University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, Presiding

Friday - 4:00 PM-6:30 PM

Hilton Palacio del Rio-La Vista A (Conference Center - 22nd Level)

Spiritual practices have been an important part of both Buddhism and Christianity since their inception. In the 21st century United States context, many people have a strong interest in spirituality—including many who are not a part of any organized religion. Today, the categories of “spirituality” and “spiritual practices” have been expanded significantly, and in many cases left to the interpretation of the individual. In such an environment, it is helpful to interrogate the concept of spiritual practice from both Christian and Buddhist perspectives, asking specifically to what degree spirituality is or should be inherently communal vs. individual in orientation. Responses to that question also will consider the relationship of spirituality to revolutionary love as it bears on the communal vs. individual dimensions of spiritual development and embodiment in the world.

Panelists:

Elizabeth Monson, Harvard University
Daijaku Judith Kinst, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Graduate Theological Union
Charlotte Radler, Loyola Marymount University
Kristin Johnston Largen, Gettysburg Seminary

Responding:

John Makransky, Boston College

Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Panel 2

Theme: Honoring Jim Fredericks, Pioneer in Buddhist-Christian Studies

Michelle Voss Roberts, Wake Forest University, Presiding

Saturday - 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Hilton Palacio del Rio-La Condesa (Mezzanine Level)

Jim Fredericks has had extraordinary influence in the fields of Buddhist-Christian Studies and Comparative Theology. This panel examines Fredericks' influence in a number of different venues, and celebrates his pioneering work. His friendship with Masao Abe and many other

Buddhists has influenced his views on the importance of interreligious friendship. This led to his critique of theology of religions and his own approach to comparative theology, as well as understanding interreligious dialogue as solidarity. His book, *Faith Among Faiths: Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions* (Paulist Press, 2001) won the Frederick J. Streng Book Award in 2002.

The SBCS business meeting begins at 11:30 am.

Panelists:

Francis X. Clooney, Harvard University
 Hugh Nicholson, Loyola University, Chicago
 Karen Enriquez, Xavier University
 Ruben L. F. Habito, Southern Methodist University

Responding:

James Fredericks, Loyola Marymount University

Books under Discussion

Comparative Studies in Religion Section and Contemplative Studies Group

Theme: Reflections on Louis Komjathy's (ed.) *Contemplative Literature* (SUNY Press, 2015)
 Andrew O. Fort, Texas Christian University, Presiding
 Sunday - 5:00 PM-6:30 PM
 Grand Hyatt-Texas E (4th Level)

In recent years, the emerging field of Contemplative Studies has achieved a new level of maturity. One manifestation of this development is the appearance of Louis Komjathy's edited volume titled *Contemplative Literature: A Comparative Sourcebook on Meditation and Contemplative Prayer* (SUNY Press, 2015), an anthology unprecedented in its scope, depth, and sophistication. After two extensive chapters by Komjathy situating the field, the text uses an array of experts to survey and contextualize a wide variety of classical and modern expressions of contemplative literature, including discussions of both theory and practice. While there is much to praise, one might also ask which traditions, approaches, and critical analyses have been left out or not done justice? How does this book relate to studies in comparative mysticism or in modern science? How might it be used in the classroom? The panelists represent, and will respond from, a variety of traditions and

theoretical perspectives, including comparative religious studies, comparative theology, critical subjectivity, and interreligious dialogue. After their brief presentations, there will be questions from and discussion with the audience.

Panelists:

Francis X. Clooney, Harvard University
 Ruben L. F. Habito, Southern Methodist University
 Anne C. Klein, Rice University
 Jeffrey J. Kripal, Rice University

Responding:

Louis Komjathy, University of San Diego



Japan Society Conference Report

Japan Society for Buddhist–Christian Studies
 Report on the 2016 Annual Meeting

HANAOKA Eiko

Osaka Prefecture University, Prof. emerita

The 2016 annual conference of the Japan Society for Buddhist–Christian Studies was held at the Palace Side Hotel in Kyoto on 5-7 August. Four lectures were given on the theme of “the world of Pure Land Buddhism.”

Lectures

“Nembutsu-samadhi (念仏三昧) in Shinran’s Pure Land Buddhism,” by Takeda Ryūsei (commentator: Hanaoka Eiko).

Discussed the difference and identity between the absolute truth and the worldly truth, the relation between religious teacher and his disciple, and the related Buddhist terminology.

”Shinran understood by Nishida Kitarō: The Logic of the Field and Shinran’s Thought of Merit-Transference (回向),” by Hase Shotō (commentator: Mori Tetsurō).

Discussed the logic of contradictory self-identity as contrarv self-identity between

the absolute as Buddhahood and the individual, and the idea of merit-transference in Shinran.

On the Relation between “The Three Hearts and Minds of the Buddha and the vows by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (本願)—Honen, Shinran, and Ippen,” by Takemura Makio (commentator: Tanaka Yutaka).

Discussed the oneness of *shiseishin* (至誠心)、*shinjin* (深心) and *ekō-hotsuganshin* (回向発願心) in the *Kanmuryōju-sutra* (Sutra of [the Buddha of] Eternal life; 觀無量壽經), and *shishin* (至心), *shingyō* (信樂) and *yokushō* (欲生) in Shinran.

“The Wisdom of Faith in Shinran and the Establishment of Subjectivity: Re-investigation on the Similarity between Pure Land Buddhism and Christianity,” by Kenneth Tanaka (commentator: Watanabe Manabu).

Discussed the problems of self-awareness in religion confronted with substantial authoritative understanding of religion.



European Network for Buddhist-Christian Studies (ENBCS) 12th Conference

**Meditation in Buddhist-Christian Encounter:
A Critical Analysis**
29 June – 3 July, 2017

**To be held at the Abbey of Montserrat, near
Barcelona, Spain**

CALL FOR PAPERS

The theme of the 12th ENBCS conference is: Meditation in Buddhist-Christian Encounter. The focus will be on critical analysis rather than the sharing of experience, although all ENBCS conferences have an experiential dimension. Invited speakers will address five themes from Buddhist and Christian perspectives: the place of meditation in Buddhism and Christianity from a

critical historical perspective; Buddhist-Christian encounter and the Zen tradition; the hesychastic tradition and Buddhist meditation; Mindfulness and Buddhist-Christian encounter; meditation and action in Buddhist-Christian encounter. Speakers include: Nicholas Allen SSF (Glasshampton Monastery), Karl Baier (University of Vienna), Elizabeth Harris (Liverpool Hope University), John Makransky (Boston College), Robert Sharf (University of California, Berkeley) and Elizabete Taivane (University of Latvia).

Papers from postgraduate research students and experienced researchers are invited for parallel sessions on Sunday morning and Sunday evening. The Network places great importance on giving postgraduate research students the opportunity to share their research and gain feedback. It also welcomes papers from experienced academics working within Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Proposals need not be on the theme of the conference but should relate to Buddhist-Christian Studies. Each paper will be allocated 30 minutes: 20-25 minutes for the paper followed by discussion. Proposals should include: your name, address and academic position/affiliation (if you have one); title of paper; a synopsis of the content of the paper that demonstrates its relevance to Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Proposals for the consideration of the Network's Management Committee should be e-mailed to Dr Elizabeth Harris, President of the Network, by February 28th 2017:
ejharris170@btinternet.com

Further details about the conference programme and registration details are available on the Network's website: <http://www.buddhist-christian-studies.org>



Call for an International Award on Interreligious Dialogue /

World Encounter in Ávila July 2017

1. Please find attached the call for an International Award on Interreligious Dialogue, celebrating its second edition, and which this year focuses on a specific topic: Buddhism and Teresian Mysticism. It is open to all students, scholars, researchers, etc. who would like to present a research paper or study on the subject area of the award (see website below).

2. The second initiative is a World Encounter that is scheduled to be held in the city of Ávila (Spain) at the end of July 2017. The Encounter has a very specific focus that is of great interest for interreligious dialogue: Meditation and Contemplation, pathways to peace, from the perspective of Theravāda Buddhism and Christian spirituality of Teresa of Jesus. The conference will have two official languages, English and Spanish, and is open to any interested parties. The encounter will also be posted on-line, so that people can register and follow it live or at some other time.

Information on both initiatives may be found at:

<http://www.mistica.es/>

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2016 Streng Award Winner: *The Prophet and the Bodhisattva*

Charles R. Strain, *The Prophet and the Bodhisattva: Daniel Berrigan, Thich Nhat Hanh,*

and the Ethics of Peace and Justice (Wipf and Stock, Eugene, Oregon, 2014)

Charles R. Strain is Professor of Religious Studies at DePaul University, and has published a variety of monographs and articles on practical theology and engaged spirituality. In this theoretically rich account of two approaches to peace and justice, Strain combines a very personal concern for how to effectively transform our institutions, and thereby our planet, with a thorough investigation into the profound nature of some of our most pressing problems with a nuanced evaluation of specific Christian and Buddhist resources available for the tasks. Much more than a story about two men and their powerful ideas, Strain's book is a moral cry out for good work that employs modern exemplars of two (actually very) compatible traditions as templates for forging new models for dynamic social change via the praxis of "just peacemaking." This phrase is Strain's solution, a sort of "middle way" approach, which he describes as follows: "[R]ather than pitting pacifism and just war theory over and against one another, [just peacemaking] seeks a common ground in actual practices of peace building." (188-89) His book is an impassioned plea for workable paradigms to address, in particular, the problems of empire (especially American) and of environmental crisis. Strain sees these two issues as grounded in what he calls an overarching matrix. He demonstrates how useful – indeed how essential – the wisdom embodied in the life of these two men is for healing our planet and moving toward more just communities.

The book offers extensive and beautiful details of the lives of Daniel Berrigan (1921-2016) and Thich Nhat Hanh (1926-), two of the past century's greatest activists for peace and justice, one Christian and one Buddhist, both monks. They came to know one another during the Vietnam War. In Strain's words: "The crucible of war tempered the characters of both... and gave definitive shape to each man's life as a moral agent." (2) They coauthored the 1975 book, *The Raft is Not the Shore: Conversations toward A Buddhist-Christian Awareness*, and since have each authored dozens of influential volumes. Strain begins the with stories about Daniel Berrigan: from his childhood on a farm during the Depression, walking behind father and plow, thinking, "The whole world must be like this... pregnant with new life": becoming a Jesuit priest

in 1952; burning draft cards in 1968 and going to prison (one of the Catonsville Nine); cofounding the Plowshares Movement with his brother Philip in 1980 to protest nuclear weaponry, and much more. Similarly for Thich Nhat Hanh: becoming a young monk in Vietnam; leaving his country because his peace activism endangered his life; establishing the Order of Interbeing for both monastic and lay Buddhists in 1966; being nominated for the Nobel Peace prize by Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1967 (no prize given that year); cofounding the Plum Village meditation community in France in 1980 (with branches in New York, California, and Mississippi), and much more. Both men have been prolific authors and speakers, proponents of interfaith dialog and action, peace activists par excellence and wonderful poets.

A prodigious commitment to theory undergirds the book's presentations. Strain's beautiful citing of biblical theologian Walter Brueggeman's work on "prophetic imagination," with its emphasis on the subversive and transformative power of *grieving one another's suffering*, and an equal emphasis on the healing power of holding *visions of hope* for the future, is a steady and skillfully employed theme throughout. So also his attention to philosopher Paul Ricoeur's theories of *metaphorical thinking*, which serve as a forceful lens for focusing on the language of Christian scripture, the imagination of alternative futures and the marvelous poems both of Berrigan and Nhat Hanh. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum's "capability theory" of justice supports Strain's complex discussion of compassion and justice on local, national and global levels, including presentations of both classical Buddhist and Christian views and a broad spectrum of contemporary theories. Rabbi Abraham Heschel's profound work on the Hebrew prophets also deservedly receives keen attention, and Strain further engages richly with two contemporary critics of "empire building," Andrew Bacevich and John Dominic Crossan. Bacevich is a self-described "conservative Catholic," a retired Army Colonel, and a professor of international relations and history who has written multiple books critical of the excesses of U.S. imperial reach. Crossan is a popular author of books on the historical Jesus and Christianity, whose *God and Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now* and

other works support well Strain's arguments for a subversive, non-violent Christian vision.

No one vision dominates this book. Strain acknowledges as a spiritual practitioner his own deep indebtedness to the Buddhist bodhisattva ideal, while simultaneously honoring his Christian roots. With reference to the imperial and environmental crises that plague our world and constitute the backbone of urgency in the book, his balanced question is to "ask what kinds of virtue the prophet and the bodhisattva nurture for those of us confined in the belly of the beast." (170) His pluralism remains firm: "[T]he underlying assumption of this book... is that no single moral vision and praxis, however classic, is adequate to the complexities and ambiguities I will address." (171)

To conclude, here are a few quotes that summarize well Strain's aim for this important book:

"This book puts to test two assumptions, first that the 'prophet' and the 'bodhisattva' are two distinct forms of religious and ethical practice, and, second, that these are complementary forms of practice that need each other." (8)

"...[C]an we incorporate the prophetic critique of the idolatry of the nation state in Berrigan's ethics of resistance and Thich Nhat Hanh's injunction not to cling to any ideology into these profoundly moral appraisals of America's role in the world?" (11)

"I ask what sort of praxis might flow from reflections on the prophet and the bodhisattva for those who are involved, as I am, as professionals working within highly developed institutions." (13)

The book's Conclusion, "Crossing Boundaries and Living on the Edge," is an extended exploration of this last quote. In it, Strain offers something of a response to what he described as Daniel Berrigan's pregnant silence when Strain explained to him, some years ago, that he saw his own academic vocation as operating to help transform the system from within. Compromise or not, his final apology for practicing institutional subversion within an institution would seem a very honest account of what is, realistically, the best that many of us can do. Strain claims neither to be a prophet nor a bodhisattva, but only to be inspired by both. He writes, "This book *is* about

my practice.” (10) Reading it opens our eyes to our own practice(s), and to the richness we have the potential to embody.

David Gardiner, Colorado College

To Nominate a book for the Streng Prize

The book must have been published within the last five years. 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), 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.

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Buddhist-Christian Studies 2016

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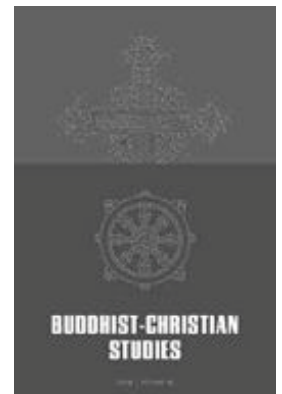
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Rita Gross on TIES THAT BIND: MATERNAL IMAGERY AND DISCOURSE IN INDIAN BUDDHISM. *By Reiko Ohnuma*. Oxford University Press, 2012. FAMILY MATTERS IN INDIAN BUDDHIST

MONASTICISM. *By Shayne Clark.* University of Hawaii Press, 2014. FAMILY IN BUDDHISM. *Edited by Liz Wilson.* State University of New York, 2013. LITTLE BUDDHAS: CHILDREN AND CHILDHOODS IN BUDDHIST TEXTS AND TRADITIONS. *Edited by Vanessa R. Sasson.* Oxford University Press, 2013.

Thomas Cattoi on BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE AS THEOLOGICAL EXCHANGE: AN ORTHODOX CONTRIBUTION TO COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY. *By Ernest M. Valea.* Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2015.

Amos Yong, BUDDHIST AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO THE KOWTOW PROBLEM IN CHINA. *By Eric Reinders.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015.

Wakoh Hickey on THE WAY OF TENDERNESS: AWAKENING THROUGH RACE, SEXUALITY AND GENDER. *By Zenju Earthlyn Manuel.* Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2015.

Joe Wiinikka-Lydon on THE PROPHET AND THE BODHISATTVA: DANIEL BERRIGAN, THICH NHAT HANH, AND THE ETHICS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE. *By Charles R. Strain.* Eugene, OR. Wipf and Stock, 2014.

Paul Knitter on BUDDHOLOGIE UND CHRISTOLOGIE: UNTERWEGS ZU EINER KOLLABORATIVEN THEOLOGIE. (Salzburger Theologische Studien: Interkulturell 14) *By John D'Arcy May.* Innsbruck-Vienna: Tyrolia Verlag, 2014.

Peter D. Hershock on RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? BUDDHIST ADVICE FOR FLOURISHING WITH RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY. *By Rita Gross.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014.

Amos Yong, review essay on the work of Catherine Cornille.

Sid Brown, Book Review Editor, sbrown@sewanee.edu

The 2016 issue is out and should be in mailboxes next month. To receive the journal, update your membership or subscribe.

The Journal Editors normally receive submissions until October 1 for the subsequent year.



Membership & Website

If you haven't renewed for 2016, please do so now. Membership includes our newsletters, our journal, and other benefits. [You can renew via our website.](#)

Visit the new site:

<http://www.society-buddhist-christian-studies.org/>

Check out our Facebook page and give it a like—it is becoming our best way to communicate news:
<https://www.facebook.com/BuddhistChristianStudies/>

We also will begin using a general email for mailings, RSVPs, and other announcements:
societybuddhistchristianstudy@gmail.com

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.

SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST- CHRISTIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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