

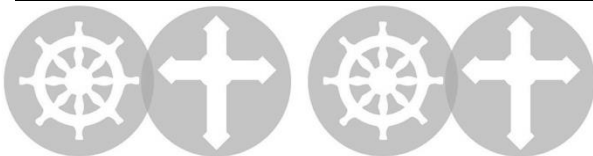
News of the Society

Greetings from the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies! The Spring, as with 2020 in general, has been very unusual and challenging, and we hope you are all staying safe during these volatile times. (Check out our [website](#), [blog](#), or [facebook](#) page).



In this issue please find:

- SBCS Public Statement – President, Leo Lefebure, and Vice President, Mark Unno
- Information about the Annual Meeting of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies
- Information about the European Network Conference (Postponed to July 2022)
- Laudatory Note: Dr. Kristin Johnston Largen
- Streng award info
- Membership, contribution, and other contact info



**SBCS Public Statement
September 24, 2020**

Dear Members of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies and All Colleagues:

This year, 2020, has not been an easy year, to say the least. We have had the Global Pandemic, Black Lives Matter and social justice issues that have spread in the US but also globally, one of the most intense election cycles in American history, the Conflagration in the West Coast of the US which has consumed an unprecedented six million acres and is growing, and the passing of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who for many was not just a great Supreme Court justice for the US, but an inspirational figure around the world. Of course, there are many other issues internationally.

First, our profound gratitude goes out to all of the healthcare care workers, firefighters, first

responders, and others who have worked tirelessly around the clock to save lives, tend to those who are ill, and have lost their homes. These workers have often done so at great sacrifice, including the ultimate sacrifice, their very lives. Our hearts go out to all of those who have suffered great loss.

Second, we stand for true inclusivity and with Black Lives Matter. As the family of George Floyd pleaded at his memorial in Houston, Texas, we should all come from love, not from hatred and violence. Justice and Love do not conflict with each other: there is no true love without justice, and no true justice without love, no boundless compassion without karmic responsibility, and no true taking of karmic responsibility without the awareness of limitless compassion.

Third, there is no question that for many of us, the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is a profound loss. However, we can keep a few things in mind: Thanks to RBG and others, we have shoulders to stand on. She worked tirelessly until virtually her last breath – she could be considered a true bodhisattva, a true

follower of God. If she can do it, then we can be inspired to do it.

Finally, all of this reminds us that Buddhist-Christian interreligious dialogue is about how we come together, overcoming divides, creating bridges to understanding, and working together to better the lives of others and our own.

We thank you for your commitment, all of the work that you do, and we look forward to a brighter future because of this.

With deepest appreciation,
Leo Lefebure, President
Mark Unno, Vice President



The Annual Meeting of the Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

Dear Colleagues,
Because of the extraordinary health crisis we are in, SBCS will not meet in person this year for our annual conference. Instead we will present the two sessions of our annual conference online in collaboration with Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs. The link to register for these sessions can be found below and will be available on our website and that of the Berkley Center.

I would like to thank our vice president, Mark Unno, for his leadership in organizing these sessions, as well as all who have cooperated with him in the planning process. I would also like to thank Ruth Gopin, the events manager of the Berkley Center, and her colleagues for their wonderful cooperation.

To RSVP for this event, visit the official conference page (<https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/events/buddhist-christian-perspectives-on-contemplative-practices-and-religious->

[belonging](#)). Please share this information with all who may be interested in joining us online.

Palms together,
Leo Lefebure

Our program will be as follows:
SBCS Annual Conference

Dec. 1, 4:00 -6:00 PM US Eastern Time
SESSION I (Paper Session Format)
Contemplative Practices and Religious Experiences: Buddhist-Christian Perspectives

Description:

Contemplative practices and religious experiences are at the core of much of religious life in both Buddhist and Christian religious life. Yet, they are often overlooked in the academic study of these religions and in religious studies generally. First, contemplative practices are often subsumed under the rubric of "ritual practices," where the ritual forms are often emphasized at the expense of two facets of contemplative practices:

- 1) the subjective dimensions including the content of religious experiences, and
- 2) the spontaneity, dynamism, and fluidity often associated with contemplative practices.

Instead, contemplative practices are often reduced to the overdetermined terms of a rigid set of predetermined actions. Second, contemplative practices are often understood in relative isolation from society and the religious forces of social transformation. In this panel, four presenters examine these overlooked dimensions of contemplative practices such as Buddhist meditation and Christian contemplation within a dialogical and comparative framework of religious experience in interreligious perspective.

Presenters:
Paula Arai parai@lsu.edu;
Louisiana State University

Peter Feldmeier
peter.feldmeier@utoledo.edu;
 University of Toledo
 Kevin Hunt frkevinh@gmail.com;
 Trappist Monastery, St. Joseph's Abbey

Kristin Largen klargen@uls.edu;
 United Lutheran Seminary

Ruben Habito - Chair rhabito@mail.smu.edu;
 Southern Methodist University

Dec 2, 10:00-11:30 AM US Eastern Time
 SESSION II (Roundtable Format)
 Natal and Convert Christians and Buddhists

In examining the membership of religious communities, a large percentage are natal in character, often belonging to the same institution for many decades, sometimes centuries. Yet, religious institutions cannot be sustained without the influx of new converts. Some communities are predominantly natal in their demographics, others are predominantly convert. While studies of either natal or convert populations are widespread, the similarities and differences between natal and convert religious belonging have not received sufficient attention. Furthermore, there are often different dynamics among the natal and convert populations within the same church, temple, or community. By examining the diverse patterns of religious life in terms of religious ideals, praxes, and social organization in Buddhist-Christian dialogical context, one can gain new insights into the specific challenges faced by, and the strengths and weakness of, natal versus convert religious belonging and the interaction between these demographics.

Introduction:
 Karen Enriquez Karen.Enriquez@lmu.edu
 Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

Panelists:
 Jane Iwamura janei@uwest.edu;
 University of the West

Carolyn Medine medine@uga.edu;
 University of Georgia

Natalie Quli natalie@shin-ibs.edu;
 Institute of Buddhist Studies, Graduate
 Theological Union

Abraham Velez Abraham.Velez@eku.edu;
 Eastern Kentucky University
 André van der Braak a.vander.braak@vu.nl;
 Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Mark Unno – Chair munno@uoregon.edu
 University of Oregon (Chair/panelist)

Dec 2, 11:30 -12:00 PM US Eastern Time
 Annual Business meeting



**13th Conference of the European Network of
 Buddhist-Christian Studies (in Cooperation
 with the University of Salzburg):**

**EURO-BUDDHISM AND THE ROLE OF
 CHRISTIANITY**

Salzburg, Austria - July 1-5, 2021

*****Update*****

**Due to the global pandemic, the ENBCS
 conference has been moved to July 2022.
 What follows is the original schedule.
 For the most up-to-date information,
 please [click here](#).**

Since the late 19th / early 20th century
 Buddhism began to be practiced in Europe and
 was often presented by its European followers
 as a persuasive alternative to Christianity which
 had come under heavy attack from various

sides. Buddhism in Europe was less a result of missionary activities from Asian countries but arose, to a significant extent, out of the propagation by Europeans who studied Buddhism through various literary sources. However, European Buddhists sought connections to Asian countries from a comparatively early stage onwards, and organizations such as the Mahābodhi Society came to play an important role. Tensions between Buddhism and Christianity in the West's Asian colonies and the critique of Christianity in the West had their reciprocal impact on each other.

Whereas in the early days of European Buddhism the focus was predominantly on Theravāda, after the Second World War Western interest shifted to Japanese Zen-Buddhism and, somewhat later, to Tibetan Buddhism. Increasingly also other forms of Buddhism (such as Pure Land or Nichiren Buddhism) became present in Europe. Immigrants from Asian countries such as Thailand and

Vietnam brought along their local forms of Buddhism and established their own centers. While some of these immigrant communities kept largely to themselves, other forms of Asian Buddhism, as for example "Inter-Being", opened their home traditions and adopted distinctly European and even Christian elements. Today, then, Buddhism in Europe exists in a large variety of forms and with different degrees of individual belonging and/or commitment. Nowhere in Asia are so many different types of Buddhisms present in one particular society as is now the case in a number of European countries.

Thursday, July 1 20:00-21:30

Opening of the conference
- Welcome Address (Perry Schmidt-Leukel)

"Buddhism between Idealization, Disillusion, and Reality" (Rupert Getthin)

Friday, July 2 09.00 – 12.30

I. The Beginnings of Buddhism in Europe and the Role of Christianity

- Case Study 1: Beginnings of Buddhism and Zen in Spain and the Role of Catholicism (Francisco Díez de Velasco)
- Case Study 2: Divide and Rule: Strategic Encounters Between a Hippie Buddhist Lama and a Christian Counter-Cult Leader in the Early Phase of Practiced Buddhism in Denmark (Jørn Borup)

15.00 – 18.30:

II. Diversity and Unity of Buddhisms in Europe Today

- An Overview (Jamie Cresswell)
- A Perspective from Austria (Kurt Krammer)

20.00 – 21.30

Open Presentations I

- 3 parallel sessions

Saturday, July 3 09.00 – 12.30

III. The Challenge of Secularism

- Secularism as a European Phenomenon (Lieven Boeve)
- Secularized Buddhism (Inken Prohl)

Sunday, July 4 09.00 – 12.30

IV. Gender Justice as a Challenge to Buddhism and Christianity

- A Buddhist Perspective (Carola Roloff)
- A Christian Perspective (Natalie Watson)

15.00 – 18.30

V. Buddhist-Christian Hybridities

- Christian Elements in the Practice of the Order of Interbeing (Ursula Baatz)
- Hybrid Spiritual Identities (Martin Rötting)

19.45 – 21.15

Open Presentations II

- 3 parallel sessions

21.15 – 21.45

Conclusion of the Conference

Conference participants interested in giving a short presentation (15-20 mins) in the field of "Buddhist-Christian relations" or "Buddhism in the West" are invited to send an abstract to Perry Schmidt-Leukel (perrysl@uni-muenster.de) by February 28, 2021.

Perry Schmidt-Leukel, ENBCS-President



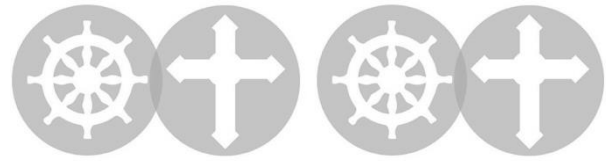
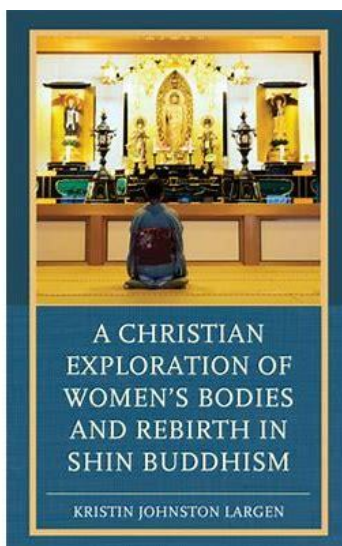
Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of all of us in SBCS, I extend our heartiest congratulations and best wishes to our past president, Kristin Johnston Largen, on being chosen to serve as the next President of Wartburg Theological Seminary. We know from our experience of her leadership that she brings many gifts to this position. We wish her much success and joy in this important role.

I would also like to congratulate Kristin on the publication of her new book, *A Christian Exploration of Women's Bodies and Rebirth in Shin Buddhism* (Lexington Books). This is a very significant contribution, which I strongly recommend to all!

Palms together,

Leo Lefebure



Membership



If you haven't renewed for 2020, please do so now. Membership includes our newsletters, our journal, and other benefits. [You can renew via our website.](#)

Some of you have asked about how membership works. Here is a brief Question & Answer

What are current dues?

Dues range from \$10 for students to \$25 for Adjunct Professors, Independent Scholars, and Assistant Professors and \$45 for Associate and Full Professors.

What are the terms of membership?

You may join or renew at any point during the calendar year, although it is more convenient to join at the start. Membership is for the current year (2020), but regardless of when you join you receive the same benefits for that year.

What is included in annual membership?

Membership includes an annual print copy of *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, inclusion on our email list (two e-newsletters), and voting rights in member meetings.

How does membership contribute to broader Buddhist-Christian cooperation?

Our dues support a variety of recent efforts. We have worked to make the Journal more easily available, have added to our webpage (for instance, it includes the last 12+ years of

newsletters), and continue to work on ways to connect scholars.

Website, Facebook, Blog

Our blog is up and can be found on the website, and we are now doing monthly entries. If you'd like to contribute an entry write to us and we will happily include it.

Our website is:

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

Check out our Facebook page and give it a like:

<https://www.facebook.com/BuddhistChristianStudies/>

To Nominate a book for the Streng Award

The book must have been published within the last five years. Nominations can be made by any person using the [online form](#). The completed form may be sent electronically to Massimo Rondolino, (mrondoli@carrollu.edu), who will respond to all nominations.

Nominations are now welcomed. 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.

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 Spring issue is March 15.

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 and reports on major figures in the field of Buddhist-Christian Studies.

We are always grateful for information, news, or other submissions that members and others can share with the Society. Submissions may be edited for clarity and length. Send items to newsletter editor John.Becker@lyon.edu.



**SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST-
CHRISTIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER**

Editor: John Becker
John.becker@lyon.edu