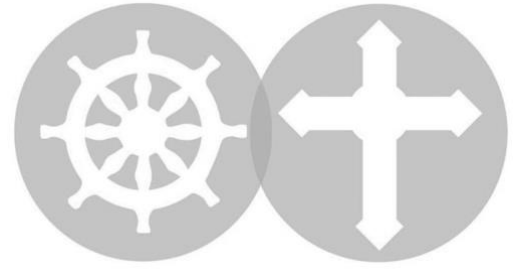


Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies



Vol. 64

Fall 2019

News of the Society

In this Newsletter

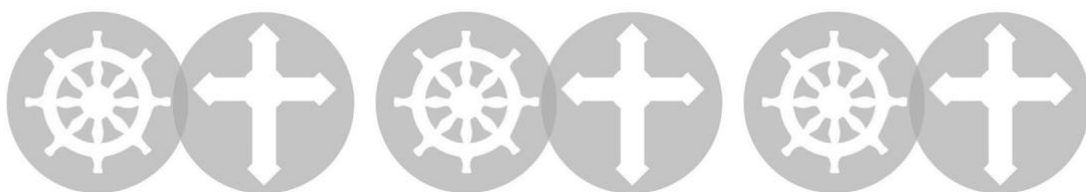
The Annual Meeting next month is an opportunity to meet, to reconnect, and to share our work. This year's meeting is in San Diego, and there will be:

- Board and Member Meetings
- Two SBCS panels (Buddhist and Christian Resources for Addressing Sexual Violence, Buddhist-Christian Dual Practice and Belonging)

In this newsletter also find:

- A report from the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies
- A tribute for Gene Reeves
- Announcement of the Streng Award
- Information on an upcoming WCC Consultation
- Naropa University's Opening the Heart: A Compassion Training and Dialogue Program
- An announcement on some lectures by John Makransky
- A note on the Newsletter Editor transition

Jonathan A. Seitz, SBCS Newsletter Editor



2019 Annual Meeting

November 22-23, 2019
San Diego, CA

Friday, November 22, 2019; 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Hilton Bayfront Hotel Aqua 307

Theme: Buddhist and Christian Resources for Addressing Sexual Violence

Buddhist and Christian communities have faced serious challenges regarding sexual misconduct in recent years. This session will discuss various aspects of these situations and will explore resources from the Buddhist and Christian traditions for responding constructively and preventing future abuse.

Leo D. Lefebure, presiding

Presenters:

John Sheveland, Gonzaga University

Amy Langenberg, Eckerd College

Laura Schmidt Roberts, Fresno Pacific University

Wakoh Shannon Hickey, Hospice by the Bay, Larkspur, CA (Notre Dame of Maryland University)

Cristina Lledo Gomez, Charles Sturt University

Pamela Ayo Yetunde, United Theological

Seminary of the Twin Cities

Saturday, November 23, 2019; 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Hilton Bayfront Hotel Cobalt 501B

Theme: Buddhist-Christian Dual Practice and Belonging

Some persons practice and belong to both the Buddhist and Christian traditions, while others pose critical questions about this dual engagement. From a variety of perspectives this session will explore the many issues involved in dual practice and belonging to the Buddhist and Christian traditions.

Thomas Cattoi, presiding

Presenters:

Ruben Habito, Southern Methodist University

Miriam Levering, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Duane Bidwell, Claremont School of Theology

James Ishmael Ford, Unitarian Universalist Church of Anaheim and Empty Moon Zen Network

Respondent: Catherine Cornille, Boston College

Business Meeting 11:30 a.m.-noon

Meeting of the Board of the

Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

November 22, 2019

Morning Session, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.:

Hilton Bayfront Hotel Sapphire 400A

Afternoon Session 12:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Hilton Bayfront Hotel Indigo 202A

Our annual meeting typically includes a Board Meeting, two panels, a member meeting, and often some related panels. For more information see the AAR Online Program Book.



Japan Society

The Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies
The Report on the 38th Annual Meeting in 2019

Kunihiko Terasawa

Associate Professor of Religion at Wartburg College

kunihiko.terasawa@wartburg.edu

The 2019 annual conference of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies was held on August 5-7 at the Palace Side Hotel, Kyoto. Four presentations were given on the theme of “Seiichi

Yagi's Thought." Seiichi Yagi is a well-known New Testament scholar, as well as a Buddhist-Christian dialogue scholar in Japan and the world. This year, fortunately, Dr. Seiichi Yagi himself came to the conference and presented his own thoughts.

August 5

"My Research: My Path and Its Comprehensive Understanding" by Seiichi Yagi

Commentator: Eiko Hanaoka

Yagi explained his last book, *The Way for Creative Emptiness*. As a New Testament scholar, Yagi has explored what is the real message of the New Testament and what Jesus tried to tell us beyond theological doctrines. Yagi eventually found that 'direct experience' of activities of God in the self, communities, and the universe must precede from any theological interpretation through languages. God works as the field of the integration of self, human relationships, communities, and the universe beyond ego-centric attachment to substance. As the foundation of the field of integration, God is *Creative Emptiness*. This provides a new insight for the basis of dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism.

"Yagi's Thought/Philosophy of Religion/Theology until now and future: From the viewpoint of Caring" by Masashi Torii, Lecturer of Rikkyō Graduate School and Kitazato Nursing School

Commentator: Yoshio Tsuruoka

Torii has been writing his doctorate dissertation about Yagi. Torii attempts to apply Yagi's view of God as the field of integration and the Front Structure of "I" and "Thou" relationship to the practice of caring in the health care field as presented by Milton Mayeroff.

August 6

"Yagi's Philosophy of Religion – From the view of Zen and Pure Land" by Nobuo Sugawara

Commentator: Yoshio Tsuruoka

Sugawara is a retired Asahi Newspaper journalist and a licensed teacher of True Pure Land Buddhism. Sugawara compared Yagi's philosophy with Pure Land faith and Zen. Sugawara listed Yagi's writings linking with his inner journey in chronological order. Finally Sugawara exposed the significance of humor and *upaya* (skillful means) among Christianity, Pure Land, and Zen based on Yagi's philosophy of *Creative Emptiness*.

"Creative Emptiness and Pluralistic Integrity" by Yutaka Tanaka, Emeritus Professor of Sophia University

Commentator: Seungchul Kim

Takana related Yagi's philosophy of "Activities" of God with his own research based on Whitehead's process theology and Oka Kiyoshi of mathematics as Perfecting Perfection of God (self-surpassing perfection) rather than Perfected Perfection of God.

August 7

Reflection of Each Attendee and Discussion

All attendees shared their reflections on Yagi's philosophy of integration with one another and how to apply it to each field.



May 27, 2019

TRIBUTE FOR GENE REEVES

Dr. Gene Reeves, longtime Treasurer of the Society, died on May 8 at his home in Chicago, cared for by his loving wife Yayoi. Here is a tribute to him by dear friend A. Charles Muller, Professor at Buddhist Culture Resource Center of Musashino University in Tokyo.

At Gene's passing, my first inclination was that of trying to help put together a proper, full, formal obituary. But when I began to consider the full scope of his long career, his diverse involvements with so many different groups and organizations (not to mention his full career at the University of Chicago before I met him), I felt that it would be rather beyond my means at the moment to try to put together a full account. Beyond his well-known deep involvement in the Risshō Kōsei Kai, he was an early and consistent support of the AAR (later on, especially in the Buddhist-Christian Studies Unit), and one of the central motivating figures in organizing conferences for the study of lay Buddhism.

My own friendship with Gene began soon after my 1994 arrival to Tokyo for my first academic teaching position. Actually, it was at the AAR (around '95 or '96) that we first met, and we had an instant bonding factor in our both being American expatriate scholars in Tokyo. Gene had been in Tokyo since 1990, and had recently retired from his position at Tsukuba University to take an important position in leading the Risshō Kōsei Kai into the direction of international scholarship. Gene very much wanted to establish an English-language Buddhist study group in Tokyo. We talked about it a couple of times, and then when Ken Tanaka arrived to Tokyo in 1997, the idea gelled, and we began to hold monthly meetings hosted by Gene and his angel of a wife, Yayoi, who prepared delicious dishes for our members every month.

The Tokyo Buddhist Discussion group [BDG] as it came to be known, held study sessions at Gene's apartment in Nakano on a monthly basis from then on. For many Westerners, it was nothing less than an intellectual oasis, as it allowed us a chance for paper presentations and rich discussions in the distinct North American style in which we had been trained. Gene delightfully led the challenges to the presentations, but we all joined in. We all learned a lot, and made many good friends. It was a great chance to get together for we local regulars (continuing to present from the earliest days are Ken, me, Joe O'Leary, and Hiroshi Kanno) as well as all of the young scholars and visiting researchers who came and went during this period. Gene formed a community.

My friendship with Gene grew deep, such that we began to room together at the AAR, a tradition we continued for the greater part of a decade. I used to look forward to coming back to the room after a full day of sessions, meals, and whatever, and chat about what had transpired during the day. Gene was always traveling around the world, getting involved in new organizations, making friends, with his central driving force being the *Lotus Sutra*, the scripture that brought him to Japan and inspired his bodhisattva outlook. With the support of the Risshō Kōsei Kai, Gene established the annual *Lotus Sutra* seminar (which continues to the present), each year gathering specialists from all areas of Buddhist Studies and beyond, including Theologians, Confucians, and philosophers of every stripe to discuss this rich and enduring text. In 2008, Gene achieved a long-term goal of producing his own rendering of the sutra, titled *The Lotus Sutra: A Contemporary Translation of a Buddhist Classic* (Wisdom, 2008). This was followed by the 2010 publication (also by Wisdom) of *The Stories of the Lotus Sutra*.

Through his involvement with the *Lotus Sutra*, Gene had also gradually developed relationships within the world of Buddhist Studies in China, and this would lead him to eventually return to the academic world at Renmin University (around

2010, if I recall correctly), where he taught for a few years before finally retiring. After returning to Tokyo, Gene and Yayoi also spent much time at his home in Chicago. It was during this time after the Renmin stint that Gene's back troubles began to become more serious, and it became gradually more difficult for him to get around. Eventually he became limited to using a wheelchair, but still made it to the AAR and the 2017 IABS in Toronto.

During his time these past six months staying in St. Luke's Hospital and Keisatsu Hospital in Nakano my wife and I went to visit him (and Yayoi) several times. He never complained about his condition. Rather, he would strike up an academic discussion, and try his best to draw me into a debate over some doctrinal point or other. There would be occasions when other visitors were waiting to see him, and no matter how tired he was, he always showed his happy bodhisattva face. Gene loved being with people, and he loved intellectual interaction. We were lucky to have caught him once more, just a couple of days before he left Japan for his final trip to Chicago. He was cheerful as always, not giving the slightest hint of the seriousness of his condition.

We will miss him.

A. Charles Muller, Professor
Buddhist Culture Research Center
Musashino University



WCC Consultation

Board member Hsiao-Lan Hu shared the following announcement, with permission, from the World Council of Churches:

A CONSULTATION on 'DIALOGUE AND LIBERATION'

Co-organised by the CWM and the WCC, October 22-25, Nairobi, Kenya

The Council for World Mission and The World Council of Churches intend to organize an interreligious consultation on Dialogue and Liberation, from the 22-25 October in Nairobi, Kenya.

The consultation intends to explore possibilities for intertwining interreligious dialogue and 'theologies' of liberation so that interreligious engagement can be reinvented as 'dialogue of and for life' in contexts where the scourge of capitalism and ethno-nationalism has been death dealing.

The aim of the consultation is to bring together about 30 Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim scholars/activists to imagine the possibilities that a dialogue of and for liberation could open up for addressing crucial issues of our times....

The consultation will seek to discern the process of developing 'A Common Word for the Uncommon Good'. Some of the questions that the initial consultation will tackle could include:

- What are the opportunities and obstacles inherent in developing an interreligious theology of liberation?
- What are some of the intersections (eg religion and politics, race and gender) to which attention needs to be paid in order to fruitfully interlink interreligious dialogue and liberation theology?
- What are the promises or problems inherent in this interlinking of liberation and interreligious dialogue?

□ How can this project be envisaged to contribute to the fostering of interreligious solidarities in a world in which discrimination on the basis of religious identities is on the rise?

□ How will this project recast the agenda of Interreligious Dialogue from the perspective of communities that have been victimized by religious powers and sources?

□ How can this project be shaped in a way that it will be relevant to religious practitioners, academics, activists and secular institutions?

□ What needs to be done to ensure that this project is truly interreligious, intergenerational, gender just and global in participation and ownership?

Excerpted from WCC-CWM Announcement



Opening the Heart: A Compassion Training and Dialogue Program

Nalanda Events Center, Naropa University,
Boulder, Colorado--February 14-16, 2020

Roshi Joan Halifax, Rev. Mark Unno, and
Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown

*Sponsored by Naropa's Wisdom Traditions
Department and Center for the Advancement of
Contemplative Education: The Compassion
Initiative and Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai Foundation*

Throughout Buddhist history, the compassion teachings and practices have been foundational for many lineages and cultures. Each lineage, however, offers distinctive perspectives and meditations to deepen compassion. This meditation and dialogue weekend brings the Zen, Jodo-Shinshu, and Tibetan traditions together with

practical training in compassion. In addition, the three renowned teachers join in an historic conversation about how we can open the heart and meet the suffering of our world. Available for 1 credit.

Faculty:

- Rev. Mark Unno - Jodo Shin-Shu priest and engaged Buddhist leader, and professor of Religious Studies from the University of Oregon
- Roshi Joan Halifax - Zen teacher, specializing in training in compassion and innovative practices drawn from science and psychology.
- Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown - Tibetan Buddhist traditions of lovingkindness and tonglen practices from the Compassion Initiative at Naropa University

For more information, contact jsb@naropa.edu.



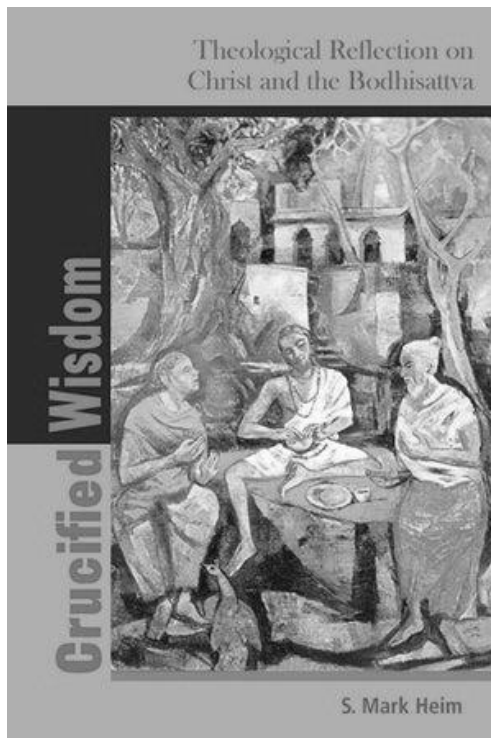
Lectures on Guided Meditation

John Makransky wrote to share a series of talks and guided meditations that he offered at Rangjung Yeshe Institute, the International Centre for Buddhist Studies in Nepal, which is part of Kathmandu University. The talks and meditations he gave “enter participants into theory and meditative practice for cultivating more sustaining and more inclusive care, compassion, and wisdom.”

<https://foundationforactivecompassion.org/media/read/lama-john-makransky-teaches-workshop-at-ranjung-yeshe-institute/>



Streng Prize 2019



The winner of the 2019 Frederick Streng Book Award for excellence in Buddhist-Christian Studies is Mark Heim, for his work *Crucified Wisdom: Theological Reflection on Christ and the Bodhisattva* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018). We will present Dr. Heim with the award at our Business Meeting on November 23.

Fordham University Press describes the book:

“This work provides the first systematic discussion of the Bodhisattva path and its importance for constructive Christian theology. *Crucified Wisdom* examines specific Buddhist traditions, texts, and practices not as phenomena whose existence requires an apologetic justification but as wells of tested wisdom that invite theological insight. With the increasing participation of Christians in Buddhist practice, many are seeking a deeper understanding of the way the teachings of the two traditions might interface. Christ and the Bodhisattva are often compared superficially in Buddhist-Christian discussion. This text combines a rich exposition of the Bodhisattva path, using Śāntideva’s classic work the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and subsequent Tibetan

commentators, with detailed reflection on its implications for Christian faith and practice.

Author S. Mark Heim lays out root tensions constituted by basic Buddhist teachings on the one hand, and Christian teachings on the other, and the ways in which the Bodhisattva or Christ embody and resolve the resulting paradoxes in their respective traditions. An important contribution to the field of comparative theology in general and to the area of Buddhist-Christian studies in particular, *Crucified Wisdom* proposes that Christian theology can take direct instruction from Mahāyāna Buddhism in two respects: deepening its understanding of our creaturely nature through no-self insights, and revising its vision of divine immanence in dialogue with teachings of emptiness. Heim argues that Christians may affirm the importance of novelty in history, the enduring significance of human persons, and the Trinitarian reality of God, even as they learn to value less familiar, nondual dimensions of Christ’s incarnation, human redemption, and the divine life.

Crucified Wisdom focuses on questions of reconciliation and atonement in Christian theology and explores the varying interpretations of the crucifixion of Jesus in Buddhist-Christian discussion. The Bodhisattva path is central for major contemporary Buddhist voices such as the Dalai Lama and Thích Nhất Hạnh, who figure prominently as conversation partners in the text. This work will be of particular value for those interested in “dual belonging” in connection to these traditions.”



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.

Newsletter Editor Transition

Since Fall 2011 I have been the Newsletter editor for SBCS and also have edited the Journal's News and Views section. I started this in my second year back in Taiwan and with infant twins (they are now in third grade). I am grateful for these 8+ years and the chance to learn more about Buddhist Christian Studies in the US and around the world. Highlights included annual meetings and field trips, the chance to learn about conferences taking

place around the world, and the joy of watching the field go in new directions. I am grateful to Sandra Kunz for the initial introduction to SBCS and for her annual meeting minutes, to the SBCS officers and board members over these years, and to the journal editors, especially Carol Anderson and Thomas Cattoi, with whom I have worked so productively. Early on the Newsletter went entirely digital and was joined later by other new media efforts (revised website, facebook page). The newsletter remains primarily a clearinghouse for scholars and organizations interested in contributing to this broader discussion.

John Becker is slated to begin as our new editor. He teaches at in the Department of Theological Studies & Asian and Asian American Studies at Loyola Marymount University in LA. I am grateful to him for his service and hope he has many years ahead as newsletter editor.

Respectfully submitted,
Jonathan A. Seitz



Membership & Website

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

Visit our 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 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 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

Editor: Jonathan A. Seitz
jaseitz@gmail.com