

Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies

NEWSLETTER

No. 34 - Fall, 2004

THE 2004 MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Session I: "Dealing with Illness: Buddhist and Christian Resources"

Friday, November 19, 2004,
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center
Room 006, 4:00-6:30 pm

Session II: "Promoting Healing: Buddhist and Christian Resources"

Saturday, November 20, 2004
Marriott Rivercenter, Conference Room 12
9:00-11:30 am
Business Meeting, 11:30-12:00 noon

For some time, discussions have been held on how to move the annual sessions away from being paper sessions to alternate forms of presentation and engagement. Several years ago, the annual meeting centered on short reflections on practices, inviting more personal reflection and exchange within the group. The program committee is calling for a similar format for this year's meeting.

Call for Short Reflections:

"Dealing with Illness, Promoting Healing:
Drawing on Buddhist and Christian Resources"

Format: For each session, three people representing Buddhist perspectives and three representing Christian perspective will each give a short set of reflections to spark discussion. These will not be formal papers as in recent years, but rather a focused set of questions, stories, personal insights, or religious principles to generate group discussion. The schedule would be:

Friday:

4:00pm session opens

4:05 three Christian reflections,
7-8 mins each
4:35 group discussion
5:15 three Buddhist reflections
7-8 mins each
5:40 group discussion
6:25 moderator closing
6:30 session ends

For Saturday, the schedule will be similar but slightly more condensed so we have time for our business meeting.

Possible Topics:

- the role of prayer and meditation in working with illness or healing
- religious rituals or attitudes that promote or hinder healing
- role models from religious traditions that offer modes of healing
- religious attitudes toward death and how they affect illness and healing
- limits and capacities of religion to affect physical health
- particular religious challenges of chronic illness

Discussion goal: maximum participation and reflection in the group as a whole, stimulated by the thoughtfully prepared inquiry of the reflectors.

To submit a topic: Prepare a one-page summary of your main points, indicating whether you will be drawing on Buddhist or Christian perspectives. This should represent a limited inquiry or concern that draws on scholarly or personal experience and raises issues relevant to both Buddhists and Christians. Choose a topic which can be addressed thoughtfully in 7-8 minutes. Your reflections, if typed as a paper, would be no longer than 5 doublespaced pages. Presenters will be invited based on fit with the topic and potential for group discussion. Please submit by October 20th.

Send to: Stephanie Kaza, vice-president and program chair, SBCS skaza@uvm.edu

THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE:

"HEAR THE CRIES OF THE WORLD"

Loyola Marymount University,

Los Angeles, California

Dates: June 3-8, 2005

From perspectives arising within bruising prison life to brilliant stage drama, participants in the Seventh International Buddhist-Christian Conference will be invited to be touched and to touch the realities of our suffering world. While we may not be actually "on the streets" or behind bars, the realities of such "cries" will be heard--through performances, speakers, working groups, and panels (see call for proposals below), in the daily conversations over coffee or lunch, and in the silence of meditation practices. We will come together in Los Angeles, in this time of such suffering, to really listen to the cries, our cries, our neighbors' cries, our enemies' cries. We cannot know what will arise from our dialogue, for dialogue is always an open-ended affair. But we gather to listen...and to respond.

We will be welcomed with a spectacular opening event--a dance drama entitled *From Prince to Buddha: A Journey of Enlightenment*, choreographed by Viji Prakash for her Shakti Dance Company. The performance looks back to traditional Indian dance with a deep reverence for the life of the Buddha, in order to bring fresh insight to the classic story of Prince Siddhartha. It had a sell-out premiere last year at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and will debut in New York at Carnegie Hall later this year. The cost of this performance will be included in the overall cost of the conference.

The Conference will feature four evening plenary sessions with invited speakers on the following themes:

- 1) *Voices of America: Healing a Wounded Nation*
Jan Chozen Bays Roshi; others TBA.
- 2) *Voices from Behind Bars: The Forgotten Population*
Fleet Maull, Zen Peacemaker Order; others TBA
- 3) *Voices from Asia: The Struggle for Liberation and Humanization*
Speakers TBA

4) *The Politics of Compassion: We the People Can Make a Difference*

Diana Winston, Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement; others TBA

In addition to the ongoing schedule of working groups, panel discussions, and individual paper sessions, there will be opportunities for participation in various forms of meditative practice and/or ritual in the morning before breakfast and early evening before dinner, to be led by spiritual leaders and teachers of various Buddhist and Christian traditions.

With Los Angeles being one of the most religiously diverse cities in the world, there will be opportunities to visit religious sites in the area, and meet with leaders and members of different Buddhist and Christian communities.

Lodging and meals will be available at the Loyola Marymount University campus, as well as at area hotels in Los Angeles. Registration fees and costs for lodging and meals for those staying in campus are as follows: The conference fee is US \$250; The fee does not include room and board, but does include all local transportation costs for the conference. Dorm rates, per night are:

Shared room in an apartment, shared bath: \$20

Private room in an apartment, shared bath: \$40

Private apartment: \$80

Additional one-time fees include \$1 for OneCard (key to the room) and \$6 for linens

A meal plan is available at the following rates:

\$28 per day for each full day (breakfast, lunch and dinner)

\$14 for Friday dinner

\$10 for Wednesday Breakfast

There are local restaurants within walking distance of the LMU campus as well.

Call for Proposals:

Working Groups, Full Panels, and Individual Papers

The Society for Buddhist Christian Studies has appointed a Program Committee to prepare for the Seventh International Buddhist Christian Conference, to be held at the Loyola Marymount University campus, Los Angeles, California, from June 3-8, 2005. The

over-all theme will be: "Hear the Cries of the World: Buddhism and Christianity in Dialogue Toward Global Healing."

The Program Committee welcomes proposals for:

*Working Groups, scheduled to meet in three successive morning sessions for two hours each, addressing a specific theme or issue, with one or two coordinators and five or more core-group members.

*Full panels, to be presented in one two-hour session, on a specific theme, with a moderator, three to four speakers, and one or two respondents.

*Individual papers on a specific topic related to an issue or issues in Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

Proposals for Working Groups on themes such as Religion and Ecology, Human Rights and Social Justice, Women and Religion, Toward a Global Ethic, Practice Across Traditions, Catholic-Buddhist Relations, Religious Responses to Violence, Religion and Globalization, or other relevant themes, are welcomed. Working group proposals should include the title or theme of the Working Group, a short 200-300 word description of the goal(s) of the Working Group, and the names and contact addresses (including phone, fax, and email) of the coordinator(s) and at least five other core-group members.

Proposals for Full Panels addressing specific themes, including issues in doctrine and theory, ritual, religious practice, methodology, and others, are encouraged. Full panel proposals should include the title of the panel, a short 100-200 word description of the theme and intent of the panel, and the names and contact addresses of the moderator, three or four panel members, and respondent(s).

Individual paper proposals on various themes, including doctrinal, ritual, practical, ethical and other issues relevant to Buddhist-Christian dialogue are also encouraged.

Proposals should be sent preferably by email to LA2004@mkzc.org, with a copy to rhabito@mail.smu.edu, OR else by postal mail c/o Prof. Ruben Habito, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75225, USA.

Deadline for submission of proposals is set at January 31, 2005, but early submissions are encouraged.

JAPAN SOCIETY FOR BUDDHIST CHRISTIAN STUDIES

James W. Heisig

Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

The twenty-third annual meeting of the Japan Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies was held at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya from 20 to 22 July 2004 on the theme "The Thought of Ueda Shizuteru." Prof. Ueda presented an overview of his life work and engaged in extended discussion with the more than fifty members in attendance. In addition, papers were presented by Yagi Seiichi ("A Semiotics of Basho Theory: A Reply to Critics on the Application of the Semiotics)," Matsuoka Yukako ("A Buddhist Christian Perspective on 'Being in the Twofold World of Basho'"), and Hashimoto Hiroaki ("The Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue in Tauler in the Light of the Acceptance of Eckhart in Japan"). The proceedings of the conference are being edited at the Nanzan Institute for publication in the 2005 issue of the Society's journal *Tozai shukyo kenkyu*. Information on the Society and back issues of its proceedings are available on-line at <http://www.nanzan-u.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN/activities/>.

FUTURE EVENTS

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION: DWELLING IN THE LIGHT:

An Advent Retreat,
with Father Laurence Freeman, OSB.

Sunday, December 12, 1:00-9:30 PM, Upper Noyes Hall, Andover Newton Theological School.

Come join Fr. Laurence Freeman, world renowned expert on the history and practice of contemplative prayer, for a day of quiet in the midst of a busy season! Laurence Freeman is a Benedictine monk and director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, an international network of meditation centers and meditation groups around the world. As spiritual guide for this community, he continues the work of his

mentor, Fr. John Main, in practicing, teaching and promoting the contemplative tradition.

Fr. Laurence is involved in interreligious dialogue and led the Way of Peace dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Laurence Freeman is editor of John Main's works and is also author of *Light Within*, *The Selfless Self*, *A Short Span of Days*, *Christian Meditation*, *Your Daily Practice*, *Web of Silence* and *Jesus the Teacher Within*. He has produced many tapes and authored many articles.

The program will include a simple dinner. Fee: \$40; \$20 for students, seniors, and unemployed. This retreat is co-sponsored by The Empty Bell, Andover Newton Theological School, and the RUAH Spirituality Institute. Please contact ruahspirit@yahoo.com with questions and comments. Phone: 617-277-0036

CONVERSION AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

6th Conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies

June 10-13, 2005, St. Ottilien (near Munich)

Registration information, including cost and accommodations, along with travel information can be found at www.buddhist-christian-studies.org.

Friday, June 10

16.30-18.00 Arrivals, Registrations
18.00 Evening Prayer (Optional)
18.30 Dinner
19.30-21.00 Introduction to St. Ottilien and the Inter-Monastic Dialogue, Josef Götz OSB

Saturday, June 11

08.00 Breakfast
09.00-11.00 Conversions from Buddhism to Christianity and from Christianity to Buddhism:
- in Korea, Thomas Timpte OSB and Rev. Jinwol
- in Sri Lanka, Elizabeth Harris
- in Germany, Klaus Bitter
11.00 Podium and discussion
12.15 Lunch

14.30-16.00 Student Presentations I
16.30-18.00 Workshops on personal experiences of 'conversion' and 'identity'
18.00 Evening Prayer, Church (Optional)
18.30 Dinner
19.30-21.00 Boundaries of Religious Identity, Jørgen Skov Sørensen and Kaisa Ahlstrand

Sunday, June 12

08.00 Breakfast
09.15 Worship (Christian Eucharist, meditation, recreation...)
10.30 "Truth or Self-Discovery? The Case of Paul Williams", Perry Schmidt-Leukel and José Cabezon
12.15 Lunch
14.30-16.00 Student Presentations II
16.30-18.00 "On Double Belonging" Ruben Habito and Yukiko Matsuoka
18.30 Dinner
19.30-21.00 "A Theology of Multiple Religious Identity", Michael von Brück

Mon, June 13

8.00 Breakfast
09.00-10.30 "Evolving Religious Identities in Europe" Podium discussion
11.00-12.15 Planning
12.15 Lunch

2003 SILENCE AND AWARENESS RETREATS

A Retreat Experience in Christian Insight Meditation featuring the Teachings of Carmelite Mystic St. John of the Cross and Insight (Vipassana) Meditation Instruction and Practice

July 1-10, Benedictine Center, St. Paul MN
August 12-21, Mt. Carmel Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario

This retreat, based on the teachings of St. John of the Cross and vipassana (insight) meditation, comes from Theravadin Buddhism and Christian Carmelite

spirituality. Each day offers Eucharist, an integrative conference, group meditation sittings, and walking practice. Also offered is Communal Reconciliation once and several question and answer sessions. Interviews are available daily for consultation, instruction, reconciliation, and guidance. Meditation instructions are given twice daily. Retreatants do not interact during the retreat to foster deep stillness and awareness. This retreat is for all levels of practice. Experiences are sometimes intense, but the method manages this, and individuals “open” to different experiences as their capacity for them grows. No previous meditation experience needed to attend. Practitioners of many traditions find this practice helpful.

Vipassana meditation is a good way to empty out roles, voluntary experiences, and the other “trappings” of ordinary daily life to be available to God. It is an excellent help in being receptive to the purification and self-knowledge that St. John of the Cross taught as necessary for spiritual growth and to eventually “see” God.

For more information, contact Mary Jo Meadow, Resources for Ecumenical Spirituality, PO Box 85, Forest Lake, MN 55025. 651-464-7489 or resecum@msn.com

RESOURCES FOR BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER

Editor’s Note: Resources listed have not been reviewed; listing does not imply endorsement, but rather serves only as an announcement.

Ramona Kauth & Elizabeth J Harris (eds.), *Meeting Buddhists* (2004), 300 pp, ISBN 1 877372 23 X, published by Christians Aware, 2 Saxby Street, Leicester LE2 0ND, England (e-mail: barbarabutler@christiansaware.co.uk; <<http://www.christiansaware.co.uk>>, £11.50 plus postage

This illustrated resource, edited jointly by a Buddhist and a Christian, is directed at Christians who would like to meet Buddhists and understand something of Buddhism. It contains eight sections: The History of

Buddhism; The Buddha; The Dharma; The Sangha; Places and Symbols; Practice; Buddhism and Women; Christian Approaches to Buddhism. Except for the last section, the contributors are Buddhists or specialists in Buddhist Studies. It is part of a series of books published by Christians Aware to foster interfaith understanding and encounter.

Harold Kasimow, Linda Keenan & John Keenan, eds. *Beside Still Waters: Jews, Christians, and the Way of the Buddha*. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003).

This book has fourteen chapters--seven chapters by Jews and seven by Christians, all of whom have been influenced by Buddhism with most choosing to continue identifying with their root tradition. Robert Jonas, one of the contributors, says it's a unique approach to the Buddhist Christian dialogue, with essays that are both informative and creatively written.

InterfaithNews.Net--www.interfaithnews.net gives a self-description of “positive spiritual, religious, and interfaith news for the international community.” A quick look at its site shows a wide spectrum of issues related to religious pluralism and interfaith cooperation and concern, often related to very current international affairs.

INN was founded in 2002 by Joel Beversluis, late of CoNexus Multifaith Media, and Stephen Fuqua of Daystar Productions. The intent was to create a useful repository for interfaith news and stories on the Internet. With the support of the United Religions Initiative and the North American Interfaith Network, INN was launched in August of 2002. After the death of Mr. Beversluis, Mr. Fuqua became editor of the site. INN is always looking for volunteer editors and writers, Please contact editor@interfaithnews.net if you are interested in working with INN in some fashion.

SBCS WEBSITE ADDRESS:

<http://www.humboldt.edu/~sbcs/>

MEMBERSHIP

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER

The *Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies Newsletter* is published two times annually: in the spring and the fall. Please write to the Editor whenever you wish to share information with our readers. The deadline for the spring issue is March 1. The deadline for the fall issue is September 1. Your

contributions ensure the continued existence of our newsletter. Send any items (preferably email) to:

Harry L. Wells
Department of Religious Studies
Humboldt State University
Arcata, CA 95521-8299
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To enroll as a member of the Society for Buddhist Christian Studies, send your name and address to:

CSSR Executive Office
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, IN 46393-6493

Enclose a check for \$45.00 (\$25.00 for students or senior citizens) payable to CSSR, indicating it is for membership in SBCS. 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. These dues will entitle you to receive the CSSR *Bulletin* as well as our Society's *Newsletter* and our annual journal, *Buddhist-Christian Studies*.