

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IASBS SHIN BUDDHIST STUDIES

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国際真宗学会

GREETINGS FROM THE JAPAN DISTRICT

By Rev. Masumi Kikuchi-Taniji, Kyoto, Japan

My Life as a Minister: Japan, Germany and Canada

When I recall my life, it seems filled with colorful experiences in Japan, Germany and Canada as a minister. These engagements have deepened my understanding of the Nembutsu teaching from different perspectives and they are all grateful memories. I was born and raised as a minister's daughter at Genkoji temple in Hyogo, Japan. My parents had four daughters and one son. We were nourished by an environment filled with the Nembutsu, and naturally, we all received Tokudo at a young age. However, my younger brother suddenly passed away in a traffic accident at the age of 19. The time after the tragedy proved to be very difficult for my family, however, it was an important lesson regarding the fragile nature of our lives. Through this experience, the existence of the Pure Land became real for me and it opened my inner-eyes.

I dreamed of becoming a Kaikyoshi (overseas minister) since I was 18. Though I had heard that the Kaikyoshi's life is very hard, especially for women, I thought that becoming a Kaikyoshi would enable me to live a life of gratitude. However, I received very little support, and because it was impossible to become a female Kaikyoshi from Japan at that time, I had to wait 13 years before my dream came true. During that time, I gained many experiences, including working at Nishi Hongwanji, studying Shin Buddhism under Rev. Kakehashi and other teachers. I also had the opportunity to receive a scholarship at Ekoji, Dusseldorf in Germany after learning the German language intensively for two years. I observed the European Shin-Sangha and I was quite moved by how they had encountered the Nembutsu teaching and lived with enthusiasm in a predominantly Christian society. I also recognized their problems (e.g. each Sangha's isolation, a lack of the educational support for the Sangha leaders) I hope they may resolve these issues in the future.

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PURE LAND JOURNAL

The IASBS annually publishes *The Pure Land: Journal of Pure Land Buddhism* (ISSN 0911-7660), an academic journal in English that contains research articles, essays, translations, and book reviews. Subscriptions to the Journal are available through [membership in the IASBS](#). All the past volumes of the Journal are currently hosted online by the American Theological Association Series. Members, please login to the [IASBS homepage](#) to view and download copies of the *Pure Land*.

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IASBS

SUGGESTED READING



NEW THESIS - Tradition and Modernity in the Transformation of Tibetan Buddhism

By Dr Paul Weeks

Macro Pallis and Lama Govinda are two well known names in popular Buddhist writings, and both these figures feature as part of a new thesis which addresses aspects of the Western reception of Tibetan Buddhism, and some of the factors at play in modern re-interpretations of traditional Tibetan doctrines and practices. This thesis takes account of recent scholarship and explores the model of "Buddhist modernism" proposed by David McMahan and others. Moreover, it sketches the religious matrix of pre-modern Tibet and the historical encounter between Tibet and the West before considering McMahan's thesis in some detail. Attention then turns to two Europeans who travelled extensively in Tibet before the Chinese invasion: Marco Pallis and Lama Anagarika Govinda, each of whom became committed Buddhist practitioners. Both had wide-ranging experience of pre-modern Tibet but came to strikingly different interpretations of Tibetan Buddhist doctrine and practice in the modern world. This thesis argues that while Govinda greatly contributed to the popularisation of Tibetan Buddhism in the West, Pallis' comparatively neglected work is more valuable because it provides a necessary corrective to some of the more extreme manifestations of Buddhist modernism. Highly recommended.

Thesis pdf FREELY available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/1959.9/323680>

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When I was 31, finally I was able to become a Kaikyoshi in Canada in 2002. But I faced many challenges which came from the difference of language and culture. Besides, as a first female minister at Canadian temples, I faced extra challenges as well. At the first assigned temple, which had two ministers, the majority of members requested that the funeral and memorial services be administered by an experienced male Japanese Canadian minister whom the people knew well. It was a natural matter. However, when some members did not request specifically, I conducted the funeral or memorial services and sometimes I recognized their disappointment. The female ministers' chanting voices are different from men and some people may have felt it unusual. I felt always sorry when I faced with such situations. Despite these issues, I really enjoyed being a Kaikyoshi with the temple members.

Fortunately, through my weekly Dharma talks and casual conversations, members became my Dharma friends and gratefully supported me. I loved being a Kaikyoshi, however, sadly I had to return to Japan due to several gynecological diseases with strong pain that came from hard work in cold weather after six years.

In Canada, I recognized that Kaikyoshi have been facing difficulties in propagating the Nembutsu Teaching in the context of contemporary Western society. I feel it has become necessary to discuss re-constructing those many issues caused by English translation and cultural diversity. I have personally experienced these challenges, and in an attempt to resolve them, I am now conducting doctoral research on the "Westernization of Jodo Shinshu in North America". For instance, while I served in Canada, I found the tendencies of general/Theravada Buddhist ethics and Protestantism had permeated into the temples. One source of these tendencies originally came from the *Vade Mecum* (the first English Shin service book written by Rev. Hunt and his wife, and published in Hawaii, 1924). *Vade Mecum* contains a protestant ritual format and Theravada teachings which came from the Hunt's religious background. The influence of *Vade Mecum* still remains among the temples of North America and Hawaii, and it is perhaps a fact that in order to propagate Shin Buddhism in a Christian society over a century, that those tendencies might have been necessary.

Through visiting American temples recently as part of my research, I had the opportunity to view the archives of the *American Shin Buddhist* - spanning over a hundred year history - and interviewing many wonderful Kaikyoshi. I witnessed their tireless efforts and work. These ministers try to emphasize a Shin Buddhism that distances itself from the more overtly general/Theravada Buddhist ethic and Christian terminology, moreover, some ministers publish new American Shin Buddhist service books at each temple. Though I have heard from them that creating an "American/Canadian Jodo Shinshu" is challenging, I found their enthusiasm is filled with Amida's boundless compassion.

I now reside in a small temple in Kyoto with my husband and one year old son. I teach Buddhism at Kyoto Women's university - from which I graduated - and it nourishes me like many of my previous experiences. My life has shown me that there are lessons to be learnt from those Shin Buddhist adherents who live outside Japan, and who offer different perspectives. My dream is to share how wonderful these people are, and the work they do, and to become a bridge between Japan and foreign countries for the remainder of my life.

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Journal Update

The Pure Land: Journal of Pure Land Buddhism

By Dr Scott A. Mitchell, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, CA

The editorial staff of the Pure Land Journal has been working diligently over the past six months to prepare the next volume, due to be distributed in November 2015. We should have the following volume prepared for publication in mid-2016, and have a plan in place to bring the publication back up to date in the near future.

Please contact Scott Mitchell with any questions.

Scott Mitchell scott@shin-ibs.edu

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General Meeting of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies

August 9, 2015
Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, California
(Noting only the approved decisions)

1. IASBS Website: Jessica Main and Mark Blum will create a new website and take the responsibility of overseeing its operations. At the outset, the following needs to be set up:

A) Design and mount an entirely new and workable website based on current coding norms

B) Import the raw data to the website so that it can be accessed regardless of browser or operating system.

C) Store the website and its data on a server here in the US or in a data farm somewhere controlled by the web design company.

D) Pay for a yearly maintenance contract.

There will, however, be no changes in the location of the headquarters as will continue to be located in Kyoto.

新しい学会HPを設置し、北アメリカ地区が管理する。只、本部の場所や運営に変更はない。

2. Treasurer's Report: Please see attached the report below by Takami Inoue. The current balance is 3,206,745 yen (approximately U.S.\$26,723 at 120 yen = \$1.00) 会計レポートは上記の通りである。

3. The Pure Land Journal: The publications of future issues are being planned as follows:

A) No. 26 will be a biennial "double issue," and we're still on pace to have it published in November 2015.

B) No. 27 will be a single-year issue and we hope to have that one printed mid-2016.

C) Subsequent volumes will be biennial, and we hope to be caught up by No. 30 or 31, printing issues in the off-years from the biennial meetings.

学会誌の第26号は2年分で2015年11月に発行。27号は、2016年の半ばに発行予定。その後の各号は2年分となり、第30または第31までには、今までの発行の遅れを解消する。

4. 2017 Biennial Conference: It will be held at Musashino University in Tokyo. The dates will soon be provided but will likely be held in July, 2017. For the following conference in 2019, we are actively negotiating with Dharma Drum College in Taiwan to be hosted on their campus.

次回の大会は、武蔵野大学の主催となる。(2017年7月を予定) その後の2019年は、台湾での開催が考慮されている。

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Treasurer's Report : 2013-2015 (May 24, 2013 – Aug 3, 2015)

Prepared by Takami Inoue

I. Cash balance at the beginning of the period	
	<u>2,760,746 yen</u>
II. Income received during the period	
1. Interest	
225+228+230+255	938 yen
2. Membership fees from Japan district	
(2013)	310,500 yen
(2014)	339,300 yen

Total	<u>650,738 yen</u>
III. Expenses paid during the period	
Head Quarter expenses	
1. Part-time labour costs	
(2013)	60,000 yen
(2014)	50,000 yen
(2015, advance)	50,000 yen
2. IASBS website monthly fees	
(2013)	30,159 yen
(2013)	14,580 yen

Total	<u>204,739 yen</u>
IV. Cash balance carried forward to the next account	
	<u>3,206,745 yen</u>

Auditor Esho Sasaki (original copy: signed)

*1. Income in US dollar during the period	
ATLAS Royalty payment	\$ 4,165.45
NAD membership fees (90% of \$ 2,480)	
	\$ 2,232.00
*2. Expenses in US dollar during the period:	
Subsidy for the IASBS conference in Vancouver	\$ 1,000.00
AAR 2013 Reception (IASBS)	\$ 1,000.00
Pure Land Journal production costs	?

Overview of the International Association Shin Buddhist Studies 17th Biennial Meeting

By Dr Scott A. Mitchell, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, CA

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) was honored to host the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (IASBS) 17th Biennial Meeting, held over the weekend of August 7-9, at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. Panelists came primarily from North American and Japanese universities as well as Brazil, Taiwan, and Europe. Approximately 100 registrants and guests attended the three-day conference.

The IASBS is the world's only scholarly and professional organization dedicated solely to the study of Shin and Pure Land Buddhism. Founded in 1982 by a group of Jodo Shinshu scholars in Japan, the organization today has nearly four hundred members in six districts across the globe. The Biennial Meetings serve as the primary means by which members gather, share their ongoing research, and foster community among Shin and Pure Land scholars, thinkers, and teachers.

The theme of the 17th Biennial Meeting was "Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism." Forty papers and a keynote lecture were delivered on such topics as: ongoing clinical and pastoral work among Shin Buddhist priests in Japan; Vietnamese-American Pure Land Buddhists in Nebraska; gender, identity, the body and ritual in Shin Buddhist thought and practice; the cultural transformations and adaptations of Pure Land Buddhism in new historical contexts; modern Japanese Shin Buddhist subjectivities from multiple perspectives, both Hongwanji's, and historically. In his keynote lecture, "So distant and yet so close: contemporary reflections on the hope of a limitless light," Prof. Luis Gómez, University of Michigan, emeritus, discussed the importance of hope within the narratives of Pure Land Buddhism. Panelists came primarily from North American and Japanese universities as well as Brazil, Taiwan, and Europe. Approximately 100 registrants and guests attended the three-day conference.

On the evening of August 7, Prof. Lewis Lancaster, University of California, Berkeley, emeritus, was awarded the Second Annual IBS President's Award in recognition of his decades of support for the Institute of Buddhist Studies. When he began the Buddhist Studies group at the University of California, Prof. Lancaster was aided and supported by the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and the already existing Institute of Buddhist Studies, and he has been a long-time supporter of the Institute's programs.

On Sunday August 9, the conference concluded with a special screening of *Buddhism After the Tsunami: The Souls of Zen, 3/11 Japan Edition*, an important documentary about the Japanese Buddhist response to the triple-disasters of March 2011. Director Tim Graf joined a post-film discussion from Germany via Skype.

We would like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the staff and volunteers from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, the Jodo Shinshu Center, the BCA Center for Buddhist Education and the Berkeley Buddhist Temple who worked tirelessly throughout the week to ensure that all conference participants were well cared for and welcomed into our community. It is this sense of collaboration and mutual support that gives me a deep sense of hope in the long-term growth of Shinran's teachings in the West.