

A Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on the Body

St. Ottilien, 27 June – 1 July 2024

Program

Thu, 27 June

18.45 – 19.30: *Dinner*

19.45-21.00: (1) Introduction to the Topic

Andreas Nehring (Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany)

Elizabeth Harris (Birmingham, UK)

Chair: Perry Schmidt-Leukel (Münster, Germany)

Fri, 28 June

08.00 – 8.45: *Breakfast*

09.00 – 10.30: (2) Body and Ecology

Michael von Brueck (Linz, Austria)

David Loy (Boulder, USA)

Chair: Martin Roetting (Salzburg, Austria)

10.50 – 12.20: (3) The Frailty/Impermanence of the Body

Perry Schmidt-Leukel (Muenster, Germany)

Shodhin Geiman (Valparaiso, USA)

Chair: Mathias Schneider (Muenster, Germany)

12.30 – 13.15: *Lunch*

14.30 – 15.00: *Coffee and Cake*

15.15 – 16.45: (4) Bodily Existence and Social Relations

Claudia Jahnel (Bochum, Germany)

Werner Vogd (Witten-Herdecke, Germany)

Chair: Jude Lal Fernando (Dublin, Ireland)

17.00 – 18.30: Open Presentations I (Sections 1, 2, 3)

18.45 – 19.30: *Dinner*

Sat, 29 June

08.00 – 8.45: *Breakfast*

09.00 – 10.30: (5) Body and Gender

Kajsa Ahlstrand (Upsala, Sweden)

Carola Roloff (Hamburg, Germany)

Chair: Janet Williams (Yorkshire, UK)

10.50 – 12.20: (6) Body and Sexuality

Sybille Fritsch-Oppermann (Hannover, Petershagen, Germany)
Amy Paris Langenberg (Florida, USA)

Chair: Anissa Strommer (Vienna, Austria)

12.30 – 13.15: *Lunch*

14.00: *Tour to Kloster Andechs*

18.45 – 19.30: *Dinner*

Sun, 30 June

08.00 – 8.45: *Breakfast*

09.00 – 10.30: (7) Body and Mind

Fabian Völker (Vienna, Austria)
Raquel Bouso (Barcelona, Spain)

Chair: Kurt Krammer (Salzburg, Austria)

10.50 – 12.20: (8) Body and Contemplation, Prayer and Ritual

Peter Tyler (London, UK)
Markus Rüschi (Muenster, Germany)

Chair: John O'Grady (Dublin, Ireland)

12.30 – 13.15: *Lunch*

14.30 – 15.00: *Coffee and Cake*

15.00 – 16.30: (9) Embodiment and Transcendence

Thomas Cattoi (Berkeley, USA)
Ruben L.F. Habito (Dallas, USA)

Chair: Sarah Pieslinger (Salzburg, Austria)

16.45 – 18.15: Open Presentations II (Sections 4, 5)

18.45 – 19.30: *Dinner*

19.30: Closure of the conference

Martin Roetting, Perry Schmidt-Leukel

Spiritual Offers (Friday – Sunday):

07.30 – 08.00: Meditation

20.00 – 20.30: Benedictine Compline (Church of Monastery)

Mon, 1 July: 08.00 – 8.45: *Breakfast, Departures*

Speakers

Andreas Nehring is Professor for Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen and director of a Center of Advanced Studies on “Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices in a Global Perspective”. He has been visiting Professor at The University of Salzburg, in Tanzania, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Myanmar. His fields of research are: Theories of Religious and Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Theologies, Transcultural Processes of Exchange and Communication between Europe and India, History of Missions, Mindfulness and the Reception of Buddhist Concepts in the West.

Elizabeth Harris is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. Before she retired, she was an Associate Professor in Religious Studies, with a specialism in Buddhist Studies, at Liverpool Hope University, United Kingdom. She is currently the President of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies and was a former President of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies. Her research interests are Theravada Buddhism, religion and conflict, religion and gender and interreligious studies. Her publications include: *Theravada Buddhism and the British encounter: religious, missionary and colonial experience in nineteenth century Sri Lanka* (Routledge 2006) and *Religion, Space and Conflict in Sri Lanka: colonial and postcolonial contexts* (Routledge 2008). She is currently co-writing a biography of the one of the first British people to become a Buddhist monk - Allan Bennett/Ven. Ananda Metteyya.

Michael von Brück is Professor of Comparative Religion. Until 2014 he was Head of the Interfaculty Program in Religious Studies at the University of Munich and since 2015 he is Honorary Prof. of Comparative Religion at the Catholic Univ. of Linz (Austria). He is a Member of Doctoral Program in Buddhist Studies, Univ. of Munich, was 5 years Visiting Prof. in Madras (India), Visiting Prof. at several American and Asian Universities, and a member of different academic institutions worldwide. He publishes widely in the fields of Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue.

David Loy is Professor of Comparative Philosophy (now retired) and a teacher in the Sanbo Zen tradition of Japanese Buddhism. His many books include *Nonduality, Lack and Transcendence*, and most recently *Ecodharma: Buddhist Teachings for the Ecological Crisis*. He is especially interested in the encounter between Buddhism and modernity. He offers retreats and workshops nationally and internationally, usually focusing on the social and ecological implications of Buddhist teachings. More at: www.davidloy.org

Perry Schmidt-Leukel is Senior Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology at the University of Muenster. Before, he taught at the Universities of Munich, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Glasgow. His research focusses on religious pluralism, inter-faith relations, Buddhist-Christian dialogue and interreligious theology. He has published more than 30 books and received various awards. In 2015 he presented the prestigious Gifford-Lectures at the University of Glasgow. Currently, he is president of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies.

Shodhin K. Geiman is Senior Research Professor in Philosophy and Theology at Valparaiso University and Abbot of the Chicago Zen Center in Evanston, IL. His recent work includes a challenge to the assumptions of Engaged Buddhism (*Alone in a World of Wounds: A Dharmic Response to the Ills of Sentient Beings*, Cascade, 2022) and a comparative study of the *nīvaraṇas* in the early Buddhist tradition and the *logismoi* in the work of Evagrius of Pontus (*Obstacles to Stillness: Thoughts, Hindrances, and Self-Surrender in Evagrius and the Buddha*, Fortress, 2023). He ordained in 2010 and was sanctioned a teacher of the Dharma in 2021

Claudia Jahnel is Professor for Intercultural Theology and the Body at the Ruhr-Universität in Bochum. Among her research interests is the interdisciplinary, intercultural and intersectional study of the body and its transgression of social boundaries in the dynamic field of late modern transcultural spirituality. Her approach navigates at the crossroads of discourse theory, phenomenology (Leibphänomenologie), practice theory, intersectional and postcolonial theory. She has published widely on body concepts in African theologies, the body in “black theology”, the “Pentecostal body”, and a body sensitive ecology.

Werner Vogd is Professor of Sociology at the University of Witten/Herdecke with main research interests in systems theory, body-oriented phenomenology, embodiment. His doctoral thesis was on "Radical Constructivism and Theravada Buddhism". Among his current research projects is a six-year study on Buddhism in the West (researching six schools from Zen, Tibetan and Theravada Buddhism). Among his recent publications (co-authored with Jonathan Harth) is: *Die Praxis der Leere. Zur Verkörperung buddhistischer Lehren in Erleben, Reflexion und Lehrer-Schüler-Beziehung* (2015).

Kajsa Ahlstrand is Professor of Theology, Church and Mission Studies, World Christianity and Interreligious studies at Uppsala University, Sweden. Her research focusses on various forms of interfaith relations and on the question of how Christian groups and thinkers relate to religious diversity. She has also researched the religious change processes that contradict fundamentalism and has interested in the phenomenon of religious multilingualism, especially in relation to Buddhism and Christianity.

Carola Roloff is Visiting Professor for Buddhist Studies at the Academy of World Religions of the University of Hamburg since 2018. She studied Tibetology and Classical Indology, focusing on Buddhist Studies at the Asia-Africa-Institute of the University of Hamburg (M.A. 2003, PhD in 2009). Her current focus in research and teaching is “Buddhism and Dialogue in Modern Societies.” Other research topics include gender-religion interactions in Buddhism and their significance in social dialogue processes. She is also a Tibetan Buddhist nun known as Ven. Jampa Tsedroen.

Sybille C. Fritsch-Oppermann is a Protestant minister and an independent scholar of intercultural philosophy, encounter between religion and natural science and Buddhist-Christian studies. She is now living and working in Hanover and Petershagen (Germany) as a writer (lyrics and prose) and teaches part time at Technical University Clausthal and at The University of Applied Sciences for Intercultural Theology (FIT) Hermannsburg. She received her PhD in Religious Studies/Mission Studies at the University of Heidelberg.

Amy Paris Langenberg is Professor of Religious Studies at Eckerd College, Florida. She specializes in the study of gender and sexuality in pre-modern South Asian Buddhism and contemporary Buddhist feminisms. She is the author of “Birth in Buddhism: the Suffering Fetus and Female Freedom”, published by Routledge in 2017. Her current research focuses on sexual abuse in contemporary North American convert Buddhism, a collaborative project with Ann Gleig (University of Central Florida) that will result in a co-written study to be published with Yale University Press.

Fabian Völker is Lecturer (Post-doc University Assistant) at the Department of Intercultural Philosophy of Religion at the University of Vienna (Austria) and member of the research centre "Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society". He is specialized in transcendental, intercultural and interreligious philosophy with an emphasis on Hinduism and Buddhism. In 2020 he published a detailed study of the work of David Loy (Philosophie der Nondualität).

Raquel Bouso is Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities at UPF and Vice-rector for Culture and Communication at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, Spain. Besides various articles, she has published *El zen* (Catalan, 2008; Spanish, 2012), coedited *Cross-Currents and Confluences* (2009), *La filosofía japonesa en sus textos*, with J. W. Heisig, T. P. Kasulis, and J. C. Maraldo (2016), and *Tetsugaku Companion to Ueda Shizuteru: Language, Experience, and Zen*, with A. Loughnane and R. Müller (2022). Her research interests include intercultural philosophy, aesthetics and religion, East Asian religions and thought, particularly Japanese Zen Buddhism, and the Kyoto School.

Peter Tyler is Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spirituality and Director of the Centre for Initiatives in Spirituality and Reconciliation (InSpiRe) at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, London. He has had a long interest in the Christian mystical tradition and has written extensively on the subject, his most recent books being *The Living Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Bloomsbury 2023) and *John of the Cross: Carmel, Desire and Transformation* (Routledge, forthcoming). As a practising psychotherapist he is particularly interested in how the Buddhist and Christian traditions can be of relevance to heal the souls of contemporary people. This work was well demonstrated in his 2018 book *Christian Mindfulness: Theology and Practice* (SCM).

Markus Rüschi is Junior Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Muenster (Germany). Before, He studied and taught at the Ryukoku University and the Kyoto Women’s University in Japan. He is specialised in Buddhist Studies, Philosophy of Religion, and Aesthetics of Religion with an emphasis on Japanese Buddhism (particularly Jōdo Shin and Tendai Buddhism). He published a monograph on the hagiographies of the Japanese monk Shinran (Iudicium 2019) and several articles on Buddhist philosophy, literature, and ritual space in Buddhism.

Thomas Cattoi is Associate Professor of Christology and Cultures at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University and the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. His research and writing focus on early Christian theology, Eastern Orthodox thought, and interreligious dialogue, focusing on Buddhist-Christian dialogue and the Tibetan tradition. Since 2015, he has served as co-editor of the journal *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, and has recently co-edited the *Handbook of Buddhist-Christian Studies* (Routledge) and the volume *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and World Religions* (Brill). He is also the author of

Seeking Wisdom, Pursuing Compassion: A Philokalic commentary to Tsong kha pa's 'Great Treatise'" (Brill)

Ruben L.F. Habito is Professor of Interfaith Studies and Director of Spiritual Formation at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. Before that he was Associate Professor of Buddhist Philosophy at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. He is currently Vice-President and President-elect of the American Theological Society. He was President of the (North American-based) Society for Buddhist Christian Studies, and served on its Board for many years. Guiding Teacher at Maria Kannon Zen Center in Dallas, Texas, he is the author of *Be Still and Know: Zen and the Bible* (Orbis), *Healing Breath: Zen for Buddhists and Christians in a Wounded World* (Wisdom), and many other titles in English and Japanese.