

SYLLABUS: Interlinked – Buddhist Study Center 46th Annual Summer Session

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams, Professor of Religion, Univ. Southern California

Day 1] Interlinked: The Foundations of American Buddhism

We'll explore the early history of American Buddhism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as established in Hawaii and the continental U.S. by Asian immigrants and early converts. During the 2500-year history of Buddhism, the religion has adapted to each new cultural zone every time it has migrated whilst offering new perspectives, practices, and communal formations to each religious landscape. How was American Buddhism formed during its first several decades?

Day 1 Readings

1. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Tomoe Moriya, "Introduction: Dislocation and Relocations of Issei Buddhists in the Americas" in *Issei Buddhism in America*. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Tomoe Moriya, eds. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010, introduction.

2. Noriko Asato, "The Japanese Language School Controversy in Hawaii." in *Issei Buddhism in America*. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Tomoe Moriya, eds. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010, pp. 45-64.

3. Thomas Tweed, "Night-Stand Buddhists and Other Creatures: Sympathizers, Adherents, and the Study of Religion" in *American Buddhism*. Duncan Ryuken Williams and Christopher Queen, eds. New York: Routledge, 1998, chapter 5

Day 2] Interlinked: Buddhism in Hawaii during WWII

When Buddhist priests were the first to be rounded up by the FBI in the aftermath of the Pearl Harbor attack in December 1941, Buddhism had been a part of the American religious landscape for over half a century. Yet the government, the media, and the general public often viewed Buddhism and persons of Asian heritage with suspicion as if Buddhism was a threat to national identity and national security. We'll explore how Buddhism on the Hawaiian islands endured and persisted during WWII after martial law was declared.

Day 2 Readings

4a. Duncan Ryuken Williams, *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019, prologue, Cpt. 1, Cpt. 2.

Day 3] Interlinked: Religious Freedom and Buddhism during WWII

After Executive Order 9066 was issued by President Roosevelt and all persons of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast were forcibly removed from their homes into large-scale confinement sites in the interior during WWII, how did people turn to their faith to orient them to find a semblance of normalcy and freedom in the midst of incarceration? The Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom are just words on a piece of paper unless these principles are activated and enacted by individuals and communities. How was Buddhism practiced behind barbed wire surrounded by armed guards?

Day 3 Readings

4b. Duncan Ryuken Williams, *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019, Cpt. 4, Cpt. 5, Cpt. 6, Cpt. 7

Day 4] Interlinked: American Buddhism and Ecology

Global climate change is one of the greatest existential threats to humanity in the 21st century. We will explore how Buddhism can offer an ecological perspective, environmentally-oriented practices, and new understandings of Sangha/community to live in a sustainable manner. There are global efforts by Buddhists, though in this session, we will focus on what American Buddhists have contributed to these efforts.

Day 4 Readings

5. Gary Snyder, Mountains Hidden in Mountains: Dogen Zenji and the Mind of Ecology, in Shohaku Okumura, *The Mountains and Waters Sutra*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018, (pp. 237-250)

6. Stephanie Kaza, *To Save All Beings: Buddhist Environmental Activism*, in *Engaged Buddhism in the West*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000, (pp. 159-183)

Day 5] Interlinked: Buddhist Social Engagement in 2020 (Tsuru for Solidarity Crane Folding)

We'll focus on issues of immigration and diversity in this session about socially-engaged Buddhism in the year 2020. Especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, what can Buddhists do to maintain resiliency and perspective in enacting wisdom and compassion in an increasingly interconnected world? To support the efforts of the Japanese American organization Tsuru for Solidarity that works to support immigrants who are being excluded from America due to their race or religion, we will be engaged in a paper (origami) crane folding exercise this session.

Day 5 Readings

7. Duncan Ryuken Williams, "Making Paper Cranes Fly: A Report from Fort Sill, Oklahoma" (2019) - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ba3e3df1516ba05fbbe1801/t/5d43e10993affd00012292f0/1564729734827/Duncan+Ryuken+Williams+July+20+Fort+Sill+Report-v0802.pdf>

8. Duncan Ryuken Williams – Interview with Ashok Mukpo XXX (ACLU) in Tricycle magazine (Summer 2020) - <https://tricycle.org/magazine/tsuru-for-solidarity/>

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