CO-DIRECTOR MESSAGE

This year saw the introduction of two new programs in the Center. The first is a two-year postdoctoral fellowship which we will offer every other year. Choosing from a large pool of qualified candidates (testament to the strength of the field), we awarded the first postdoc to Dr. Alexandra Kaloyanides. Formerly the managing editor of Tricycle, Alex comes to us from Yale where she specialized in both Buddhist Studies and American religion. She has already secured a job in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina to begin upon completion of her postdoc with us. While at Stanford, in addition to teaching two courses (this year she will offer a course on Buddhist modernism), Alex plans to prepare her dissertation, “Heathens, Baptists, Buddhists: The American Missionary Encounter with Burmese Buddhism, 1813-1905,” for publication, and to begin work on a study of the rise of the modern insight meditation movement.

The second new program is an annual graduate student conference in Buddhist studies. Again, we had excellent proposals to choose from and settled on the topic “Buddhist Ritual: Theory and Practice.” Preparations for this conference are just getting under way. This is in addition to the graduate student conference organized by students in the Department of Religious Studies to be held in October entitled “Exploring Other Worlds: Constructing, Locating, and Navigating Imagined Religious Space” which will include a strong Buddhist component. It is, moreover, our turn to host the biannual conference for graduate students in Buddhist Studies programs in California. Preparations for this conference have just begun.

In addition to these new programs, we also introduced this year an annual award for best undergraduate essay on Buddhism. This year’s award went to Zac Whittington for his essay “Zen and the Art of the Startup,” written as part of the course “Exploring Buddhism.”

The main task for the coming year will be to fill a position at the Assistant Professor level in Japanese Buddhism. We just advertised the position, with a deadline in October, and hope to have a new face in place by this time next year. In the coming year we will experiment with a new format for at least some of the speakers in the TT & WF Chao Distinguished Buddhist Practitioner Lecture series, moving towards a less formal on-stage interview followed by Q & A. One of the goals of this series is to begin to collect materials for an oral history of Buddhism in the last decades of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first by speaking with leading Buddhists about their experiences promoting Buddhism in different parts of the world. As in the case of other events sponsored by the Center (last year we hosted over twenty, including both formal academic talks, presentations by distinguished practitioners, photography and film showings), when given approval by the speaker, these talks will be recorded and available for streaming via our website.

Congratulations are due to two of our PhD students, Nick Witkowski and Heawon Choi, who received their PhD degrees this year, successfully defending their dissertations, Nick’s entitled “The Ascetic Lifestyle in the Indian Buddhist Monastic Community: A Study of the Dhūtagunaga Precepts in the Vinaya Tradition,” and Heawon’s “The Wandering Sage: Zhi Dun’s (314-366) Life and Thought in Multiple Contexts.”

Finally, this year we added to our team program specialist Tatana Deogirikar who has been a major new creative force in the Center, responsible for website and poster design as well as a wide range of accounting and administrative duties.

John Kieschnick
Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Professor, Religious Studies
Stephen Teiser led the Hwei-Tai Seminar this year, April 11–12. Teiser focused on the close reading of several liturgies for healing discovered among the Chinese manuscripts at Dunhuang. These ritual texts constituted one technique used for treating sickness in the medieval Chinese world. Like other Buddhist liturgies from Dunhuang, they were composed in Chinese rather than being translated from Indic originals. Their literary style consists largely of parallel prose (駢儷文), and in diction and grammar they are also indebted to indigenous language. Nevertheless their literary form and content also contain elements deriving from the broader Indian Buddhist world.

During his visit, Teiser also gave a talk entitled “The Origins of Dunhuang Manuscripts.”

We were delighted to have Robert E. Buswell, Jr. give the prestigious Evans-Wentz Lecture this year. Buswell dispelled the notion that Korean Buddhism was a mere derivative of its antecedent traditions. Korean Buddhists were able to be in close contact with their brethren across East Asia and beyond throughout much of the pre-modern period because they used literary Chinese as the lingua franca of learned communication.

Buswell emphasized the fact that Koreans made seminal contributions themselves to Buddhist thought, practice, and ritual. Buddhism did not just flow from China to Korea and Japan, but rather the flow of the religion was multi-directional in East Asia. The Koreans made connections with Buddhists across the continent, brought the dharma home to the peninsula, and ultimately made Buddhism their own.

Buswell gave several examples of Korean innovations. Korean Buddhists adopted the topoi of Buddhist literature such as trips to the Dragon King’s Palace for obtain rare scriptures, thus describing themselves in terms of mainstream continental Buddhist beliefs. They also transplanted universal Buddhist cosmology onto local geography by remapping the local landscape, making the local geography universal. The Buddhistization of the Korean landscape made sacred pilgrimages possible on the Korean peninsula itself without having to travel to India or China. Korea was now a Buddhaland itself. Furthermore, through monks’ accounts of their travels to all realms of the Buddhist world, the celestial, terrestrial, and the subterranean, Koreans became part of the larger tradition, homogenous in time and space. The separation of Korea from the mainstream of Buddhism is thus broken down.

In addition, Korean participation in pilgrimage shows that they were also an established Buddhist culture and a crucial part of the Buddhist world. Their contribution to the Buddhist tradition would not have been possible without creating strong and enduring connections between the Korean peninsula and the continent.
Dying to Give: Buddhism and Cadaver Donations for Medical Education in Modern Taiwan

Julia Huang

C. Julia Huang, Professor of Anthropology at the National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, joined us as our Visiting Scholar for 2014–2015. She is well known for her book, Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement (Harvard University Press, 2009). At Stanford, she is continuing her research on the Buddhist Tzu Chi (literally “compassion relief”) Movement and is working on a fascinating phenomenon, namely cadaver donations in the context of Tzu Chi’s mission in modern Taiwan. We asked her to speak on her current research.

Huang gave a thought-provoking talk, which had wide ramifications regarding views of the human body for both scholars and the community at large. Since Tzu Chi founded its first medical school in 1994 and its hospitals throughout Taiwan, the number of donors for “whole body donations” for medical education has increased remarkably, from one in 1995 to over 36,000 in 2015. This thriving movement of cadaver donation for medical education was called “a surge of cadavers” by the Wall Street Journal in 2009.

As one of the largest Chinese Buddhist charities in the world, Tzu Chi has branches in over 42 countries and is well known for its disaster relief work around the world. Rapidly increasing cadaver donations from both followers and non-followers has once more thrust the organization into the limelight. Huang examines this growing trend in Taiwan, tracing the Buddhist doctrinal basis of the practice of donating one’s body, Tzu Chi’s justifications for propagating such an act, and the support of the medical profession for it.

Huang discussed Tzu Chi’s redefinition of personhood in terms of the bodhisattva. Any person can become a bodhisattva in this world by following the path of the 6 perfections, namely charity, morality, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom. Personhood begins with giving or charity. It is this cultivation of the perfection of charity that is given most attention by the group. This concept of charity is extended beyond the usual acts of giving one’s time through volunteering and giving money through donation to giving one’s bone marrow or organs to those in need, and finally to giving one’s body to medical science to advance the field. Such an act of charity is defined as more than an act of giving but rather a practice or pursuit to attain the mind of equanimity.

Tzu Chi founder Cheng Yen’s description of the body is that “a person has the right to usage of his or her body but not ownership of it.” She also relies on the Buddhist scripture, the Sutra of Innumerable Meanings, that described the virtues of the Buddha’s sacrifices and his charity. The Buddha is known for giving all to sentient beings as alms, including his body. Thus donating one’s body for the advancement of medical science is not seen as a novel act of charity, but rather an act of selflessness and compassion for the benefit of others rooted in the Buddhist tradition.

Tzu Chi coined the term “silent teacher” and uses the term to address cadavers as “corpse teacher.” In death and in the giving of one’s body to medical education, an ordinary

(continued on page 19)
As a professor of Buddhist Studies and a dharma teacher, Jimmy Yu effectively straddles two worlds. We asked him to speak about his experience as a disciple and the first attendant to Chan Master Sheng Yen, a role that he took on for 25 years.

Yu first spoke about the life and practice of Master Sheng Yen, starting with his novice years in China, followed by service in the National Army in Taiwan, graduate student days in Japan, abbot years in Taiwan, sojourn in New York as founder of the Chan Meditation Center in Queens, New York and the Dharma Drum Retreat Center at Pine Bush, New York, and finally his years as leader of the community at Dharma Drum Mountain in Taiwan. He said that Master Sheng Yen’s lifelong mission was to restructure Chinese Buddhism to preserve the richness of Chinese orthodoxy.

Yu then recounted his first meeting with his master. He was eleven years old at the time and his family had just moved to New York from Taiwan. At the time, he was engrossed in kungfu movies, in particular those featuring Shaolin monks. When he met Master Sheng Yen, he asked the Master whether he knew kungfu. Shen Yen’s response was, “Sure. I can walk up the wall, across the ceiling, and down the other side. If you come to the meditation retreat, I will teach you.” Yu humorously and fondly recalled that even though he started going to the meditation retreats with the Master and has not stopped meditating, he never learned to walk across the ceiling.

From that first encounter with the Master to the time he left for college, Master Sheng Yen saw Yu grow up. After college Yu decided to become a monk and also became the Master’s first attendant. He traveled with Sheng Yen and learned from him but did not go through the typical formal monastic training. Aside from being an attendant, Yu took on multiple responsibilities and handled PR, publication, and translation. Over the years he understood the Master’s wishes and mission to promote orthodox Chinese Buddhism.

1989 was around the time he saw the shift of his Master’s orientation from standing outside of Chan to observe and analyze the whole of Chinese Buddhism to stepping into the Chan tradition to organize the rest of Chinese Buddhism. Master Sheng Yen drew up a doctrinal classification chart, and from the perspective of Chan he saw all forms of Buddhism in terms of a hierarchy. He viewed Chan as the culmination and fulfillment of all forms of Buddhism. This move culminated in 2006 when he created a new school of Chinese Buddhism, the Dharma Drum Buddhist Mountain Organization.

Yu himself disrobed in 2000. Receiving his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Princeton University in 2008, he began teaching Buddhism and East Asian Buddhism academically as an Assistant Professor at Florida State. However, despite the demands on his time due to his role as a professor and a scholar, he keeps his other hat on and continues to teach the dharma, to lead meditation retreats, and train Buddhist teachers. In 2009, he founded the Tallahassee Chan Center in Florida, which he leads in addition to teaching for the Western Dharma Teaching training course at the Chan Meditation Center in New York and the Dharma Drum lineage.

At the end of his talk, Yu attribute all his learning and what he is today to his Master. He said that from his Master he learned how to be a person, how to be a scholar, how to be grateful, and even how to cook. He has always attempted to strike a balance between the multiple worlds of academia, dharma groups, and family life.

**TT & WF CHAO DISTINGUISHED BUDDHIST PRACTITIONER LECTURES**

**Seeds from an Ancient Tree: Cultivating Buddhist Monastic Life in the West**

**VENERABLE AJAHN AMARO**

At our request, Venerable Ajahn Amaro graciously shared his own spiritual journey, how he left the lifestyle of what he calls a “hippie anarchist” and came be interested in Buddhism. He began his spiritual practice, entered the Thai forest monastic tradition, and subsequently became the abbot of Amaravati Monastery in the UK, one of the largest Buddhist monastic communities outside Asia. At the center of Ajahn Amaro’s spiritual inquiry was the question “How can we be free? How can we get past all the restrictions and limitations of daily life?” We can write our own scripts rather than follow the scripts given by family, mentors, or society. Upon turning 21, he decided it was time to write his own script, left England for Asia, and ended up practicing in a forest monastery in Thailand. Thus he embarked on his spiritual path. His account was full of good humor, interesting anecdotes, and inspiring achievements.

Ajahn Amaro came to realize that through spiritual training one can see the true nature of things and find real happiness. He says that one cannot look for freedom where freedom is not. One has to look for freedom where it can be found. It is not through breaking rules or defying social conventions or getting things one likes and desires. Freedom can be found through the quality of wisdom and through understanding conventions and the limits of our body and of society. We can live with limits but can be free once we understand. Freedom or refuge is within oneself. It is not by physical seclusion but rather by internal seclusion that one is free. Thus no matter where you are, you can be at peace.

When asked about the future prospects for Amaravati Monastery or for Buddhism, Ajahn Amaro concluded by saying, “the development of the dharma and spreading of Buddhism is not in moving forward, moving backward, nor standing still. It is about practicing and living Buddhism. That is how the dharma is spread, that place of non-abiding.”
In the summer of 2016 the Getty Museum, in partnership with the Dunhuang Academy, will feature the first major U.S. exhibition on the Buddhist grottoes of Dunhuang, located at the Chinese end of the Silk Road. Mimi Gardner Gates, Director Emerita of the Seattle Art Museum and an art historian, spoke to us about the opportunities and challenges of exhibiting Buddhist cave temples and their art.

One of the first questions is how the curators can stage an exhibition when the art work won’t travel. The Getty will borrow 40 pieces of Dunhuang art work from three museums in Europe on the condition that they do not show each painting for longer than two months. This entails changing out the paintings during the exhibition. Another challenge the curators face is how to create an exhibition that is informative and compelling, that sparks curiosity and conveys Buddhist spirituality. Addressing this challenge starts with the tram which takes visitors from the lower parking lots to the top of the hill where the Getty museum is located. How can the interior and the exterior of the tram space be used to create a Buddhist mood and to make the Buddhist experience come alive? How can the exhibition itself convey the Buddhist experience without oversimplifying Buddhism, its deities, teachings, and practices?

The museum is planning to build structured tents to house three replica caves (namely caves 275, 285 and 320) at full scale on the lower plaza. Historical artistic techniques will be used to create the work. Contrary to Western negative views of replicas, replication is seen as important and useful in Chinese culture and in Buddhist practice. The replica caves will offer an immersive experience of sacred space. They will convey the physicality of the caves in a way that could not be done by a virtual reality space.

Whereas the physical experience of sacred space can be replicated, what about the spiritual experience? In the caves at the Dunhuang grottos, worshippers encountered the divine by engaging with the sight, sound, and smell of the divine. This issue is still being worked out. One aspect of the plans is to replicate the monumentality of the Buddha by exhibiting the image of his parinirvana to scale and including copies of the paintings of the mourners, the chief disciples of the Buddha, on the enclosure of the replica. Again the artists will use historical artistic techniques to recreate this image of the reclining Buddha.

Moving from the intersection of spirituality and artistic practice, the museum also addresses the aspect of materiality, of the survival, conservation, and preservation of such art. The Getty Conservation Institute has been working on the preservation and conservation of such art work with the Dunhuang Academy for the past twenty-five years. This collaborative project will also be addressed in the exhibition to educate the public.

Gates concluded the talk by outlining the broader issues of the exhibition that the Getty Museum and the Dunhuang Academy want to address. First, they aim to offer multiple complementary experiences of the Mogao Grottoes to the public. Second, they want to create a Buddhist and art-historical context for reinvesting spiritual meaning in objects. Third, they hope to advance scholarship and Dunhuang Studies in the U.S. And finally, they seek to promote the preservation of the fragile world of cultural heritage sites such as the Buddhist Grottoes of Dunhuang.

This fascinating presentation whetted our appetite for the upcoming exhibition at the Getty. Some of us are already planning a trip to Los Angeles next summer! ☑
On May 7 Brent E. Huffman talked about the making of his documentary, “Saving Mes Aynak.” The film documents the efforts of an international team of experts and archaeologists as they race against time to save a 2,000-year old archaeology site in Afghanistan threatened by a copper mine being built by a Chinese company. Mes Aynak is located in the Logar province and is comprised of an ancient 500,000 square meters Buddhist city on top of an even older Bronze age site. Experts say that discoveries at Mes Aynak have the potential to redefine the history of Afghanistan and the history of Buddhism itself. So far only 10% of Mes Aynak has been excavated.

In 2004, the Chinese government invested about three billion US dollars in Afghanistan’s untapped copper reserve, which is deemed the second largest in the world, with a worth estimated at about $100 billion. The film investigates the heated debate between cultural preservation and economic opportunity. The cash-strapped Afghan government signed away the rights to the mine allowing the Chinese government-owned company to mine the copper. To make matters worse, the Chinese company plans to mine the copper using the cheapest and most environmentally destructive method, completely demolishing the archaeological site and the entire mountain range. The company plans to turn the site into an open pit mine in 2015.

Huffman said that the film is really the story of Afghan archaeologists fighting against all the odds by going against the Taliban, the Chinese mining company, and the bureaucracy of their own country in order to attempt to save the cultural heritage of Afghanistan. Moved by the documentary, the audience asked Huffman question after question following the screening. Members of the audience were concerned by the impending destruction of Mes Aynak and were most supportive of the archeological efforts to save the important cultural site. Many questioned why more international pressure is not being brought to bear on the Afghan and Chinese governments and why the Afghan archaeologists are not receiving more support from outside the country.

His Holiness the 17th Karmapa visited Stanford in March. During his visit, he asked for a private meeting with our Co-Director, Paul Harrison, to discuss the digitization of the Tibetan Kangyur. Under His Holiness’s direction, a large team of learned monks have been digitizing the Lithang or J’ang sa tham Kangyur. The khenpos have been inputting and ensuring data quality, while software engineers have been designing the database and applications to make access to that data most useful for scholars. His Holiness asked Paul for suggestions for improvements or for additional functionality that scholars would find useful. His Holiness and Paul shared a passion for canonical research, and their discussion ran to almost two hours as a result. Our Center also hosted a small private farewell reception for His Holiness. His Holiness spoke to us and said that he hopes to continue meeting to explore the possibilities of working together because he believes that collaboration between scholars of Buddhist studies and leaders of Buddhist communities will bring forth strong positive results for Buddhism in the future.
STUDENT REFLECTIONS
GRACE RAMSWICK

After spending part of the Summer of 2014 studying Mandarin at Peking University in Beijing, I was offered the chance to return to China in December 2014 for twelve days of lectures, seminars, and conferences at the foot of Emei Shan in Sichuan. This impressive array of events was co-organized by the Chinese Academy of Buddhist Studies (CABS), the Emeishan Academy of Buddhist Studies (at Dafo Chansi on Mount Emei), the Center for the Research on Buddhist Texts and Arts at Peking University, the Institute of Religious Studies and Institute for the Studies of Chinese Folklore Cultures at Sichuan University, and the Buddhist Studies Forum at University of British Columbia, and was graciously hosted by the monastic community at Dafo Chansi (Great Buddha Chan Monastery). The proceedings were framed around three four-part seminars taught by scholars with diverse approaches to the study of Buddhism in China. Professor Imre Galambos (Cambridge) and Professor Stephen Teiser (Princeton) each gave a series of lectures that began by revisiting the circumstances surrounding the 1900 discovery of the so-called “library cave” at Dunhuang and the subsequent sale of many thousands of the manuscripts housed therein to European explorer-scholars. Both professors presented some of their current, more specialized, research on just a small number of these manuscripts. Perhaps more importantly, however, both Professor Galambos and Professor Teiser took time to call attention to the need for ongoing reflection on the questions of why are scholars inclined (and disinclined) to ask about the cave itself, the materials it once held, and the ever-shifting Buddhist communities that created and used it. As a student interested primarily in Indic Buddhist literature and issues surrounding other manuscript discoveries to the west of Dunhuang, I was excited and pleased by the wider applicability of the points they (and others) raised during these discussions.

The series of seminars given by Professor Barend ter Haar (Oxford) outlined his meticulous research on the development of Lord Guan (Guan Yu) veneration, and in sum provided a fascinating portrait of these little-studied regional religious networks of both the distant and not-so-distant past. His talks evidenced a persistent concern with methodology in the practice of cultural history, and his insightful comments on the challenges specific to the study of religious communities gave many of us (especially those with impending dissertation projects) much food for thought. Countless other presentations, delivered in Chinese, Japanese, and English by established scholars and graduate students alike, filled these twelve days. I was grateful for the occasion, as part of the International Young Scholar Conference on Buddhism and East Asian Cultures, to speak about my recent foray into just one chapter of the massive Huayan Jing (Avalokiteshvara Sutra) and to discuss some of the Indic/Central Asian materials to which it is related. The diverse backgrounds of the participants made for a truly unique and edifying stay—one that was made even more enjoyable by the opportunity to explore the ancient city of Dunhuang and the subsequent sale of many thousands of the manuscripts housed therein to European explorer-scholars. Both professors presented some of their current, more specialized, research on just a small number of these manuscripts. Perhaps more importantly, however, both Professor Galambos and Professor Teiser took time to call attention to the need for ongoing reflection on the questions of why are scholars inclined (and disinclined) to ask about the cave itself, the materials it once held, and the ever-shifting Buddhist communities that created and used it. As a student interested primarily in Indic Buddhist literature and issues surrounding other manuscript discoveries to the west of Dunhuang, I was excited and pleased by the wider applicability of the points they (and others) raised during these discussions.

JASON PROTASS

Digital Humanities (DH) research continues to grow as an important part of Buddhist studies. This year as a dissertation fellow of the ACLS – Robert H N Ho Family Foundation, I had the opportunity to continue my ongoing project to study the Song dynasty (960-1279) Lamp Records (denglu 燈錄).

The five Lamp Records of the Song dynasty were written approximately every sixty years. Each records the sayings and doings of Chan masters. The Lamp Records are important sources of the sermons and dialogues that constitute the canon of Chan lore. Every sermon and dialogue is attributed to a Chan master, and the Lamp Records organize these masters by place in a lineage. Taken all together, these lineages of masters form a large family tree and represent the empire-wide network of people from the large Chan clan.

My project digitally records the lineages found in the five Lamp Records in such a manner that each generation from every branch of the Chan genealogy can be represented on a map. After I created this GIS database, I use the ArcGIS software provided by Stanford University and I can now display the distribution of Chan lineages across the Song.

The GIS database is dynamic and not a static map. I can use Arc GIS to call upon my database to illustrate a single lineage across time, or to show all the Chan lineages from a given moment.

I presented an earlier version of this project at the Institute of History and Philology, at Academia Sinica, in 2014. This year, I presented my work together with critical reflections in Chicago at AAS 2015. At the mensal meeting of the AAS I talked about the importance of a humanist approach to digital projects, and introduced a hermeneutic that moves between “distant reading” and “close reading.” This dynamic is intended to bring together the best of DH and traditional scholarship. Distant reading allows the GIS maps to reveal patterns embedded within the text. These patterns can suggest places in the text that will reward closer scrutiny. Then, performing classical close reading and analysis of the text can corroborate and nuance the patterns at first seen from a distance. This hermeneutic facilitates a critical understanding of the digital project that does not flatten the nuances and contexts of the original text. I look forward to making advances in my future research.
As I reflect upon it, it is truly by force of dependent causality that I found my way into Stanford as a PhD student in the fall of 2014, after spending seven years in Shanghai, two years in Cambridge, and one year in Tucson. Like the banal saying, “The sea of learning is endless,” I did feel from time to time that I was at sea, drifting between institutions and programs. However, for a change of scenery, I saw the lighthouse that commanded my attention, and I encountered a sheeny sailing ship that invites me to climb abroad. Newly embarked, I have been enjoying every minute of it, sheltered by both the Department of Religious Studies and the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford.

And to my delight, at Stanford I have found an invaluable cohort of fellow students that will accompany me through most of my journey.

The past year has moved with a springy step, full of unforgettable conferences, workshops, lectures and other events, many of which were sponsored by the Ho Center. Gratefully, I consider myself as one of the luckiest students of Buddhism, blessed with the opportunities to be in touch with so many esteemed scholars and practitioners. Now I can easily see how both the students and the local community have benefited greatly from these Ho Center events. The experience has broadened our horizons and made us mindful of the diversity and vitality of both modern Buddhism and Buddhist studies.

For example, the introduction to Gāndhārī class, funded by the Center and attended by students in our program, was one of the many exciting courses that I took. Not only did it familiarize us with an important canonical language, but also made it possible for us to look closely into the process of retrieving texts from ancient manuscripts. In addition, this course enabled me, along with several other Ho Center students, to attend a Gāndhārī workshop held at the University of Washington and brought together by Professor Harrison and Professor Salomon.

The past year was also a year of recalibration. I became surer of my future direction—Tantric Buddhism in Dunhuang—and more committed to it. Tantric Buddhism, as the dernier cri of Indian Buddhism, comes full circle by approaching the perennial problems of purity, death and desire from drastically different angles. I have been enjoying reading Dunhuang Buddhist documents, which contain many surprises waiting for discovery and interpretation, as evidenced by the latest Hwei Tai Seminar sponsored by the Center. I plan to take one or two modern language courses in the summer and further work on a paper for the Annual Meeting of the AAR under the guidance of Professor Kieschnick. I hope that about this time next year I will be able to visit Dunhuang for the first time and see the caves and wall paintings firsthand. As my Stanford experience unfolds, I am prepared to find out more about the Buddhist community around me in the Bay Area, as well as the far-removed Dunhuang Buddhist world. 😊

I completed my PhD at the Stanford program in Buddhist Studies in June of this year. Immediately after graduating, I began a 2 year post-doctoral research fellowship at Tokyo University. The post-doctoral fellowship is awarded by the JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), an organ of the Japanese Ministry of Education. My home at Tokyo University is the Institute for Advanced Asian Studies (東洋文化研究所). This is one of the oldest research institutes in Japan and was founded by the Japanese government for the study of Asian societies through a variety of disciplines. As the Institute’s orientation is multidisciplinary, I share the building not only with academics in Buddhist Studies but also in politics, economics, and sociology. I am fortunate to have colleagues not only at the Institute for Advanced Asian Studies, but in the Departments of Indian Philosophy and Indian Buddhism at Tokyo University as well. Though I have just begun my stint here, I have already been enjoying academic exchanges with a variety of intellectuals from across a range of research interests, both in Buddhist Studies and in disciplines further afield. I feel very fortunate to have so many colleagues in my own field (and related fields) with whom I can discuss the several academic projects in which I will be engaged over the next few years. The first big project is the publication of my dissertation as a book. Second, I am engaged in an ongoing dialogue with several scholars here with the intention of producing joint work on the subject of medieval Indian Buddhism. Finally, I am in the planning stages of several lectures I will be giving at Tokyo University on the subject of Buddhist monastic law codes. The faculty and students at Tokyo University have been very welcoming. I look forward to a productive stay during my time here. 😊
Alexandra Kaloyanides completed her doctoral work at Yale University this past May, where she trained in the study of Asian religions and American religious history. Her dissertation, “Baptizing Buddhists: The Nineteenth-Century American Missionary Encounter with Burmese Buddhism,” explores the ways that religions are understood through cultural encounter. Alex is currently embarking on a new project that builds on her graduate research, a study of the Modern Insight Movement. In 2017, after her fellowship at Stanford, Alex will head to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to begin a position as assistant professor of Buddhism.

Yu-Chen Li, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at National Cheng Chi University in Taiwan, was a visiting scholar at our Center this year. She is a leading scholar in the study of Chinese Buddhist nuns. She is known for her book on The Buddhist Nuns in the Tang Dynasty, where she analyzed gender controversies in the biographies of Chinese Buddhist nuns during the domestication process. At Stanford, she turned to her next project on Chinese Buddhist lay women, focusing on two Buddhist biographies of lay women: The Biographies of Good Women (善女人傳), edited by Peng Jiqing (彭際清, 1740—1796), and the Biographies of Good Women Reborn in the Pure Land, edited by Lady Fanfu in 1997. At the end of her stay, she gave a talk for our Center on her current research, where she discussed the content of the two aforementioned biographies and their religious implications, entitled, “Recording Women’s Lives, Honoring Women, or Prescribing Gender Roles for Upper-Class Women?” —On the One and Only Collection of Biographies of Buddhist Lay Women.”

THE BEST UNDERGRADUATE PAPER ON BUDDHISM FOR THE 2014-15 ACADEMIC YEAR:
Zen and the Art of the Startup
ZAK WHITTINGTON, SENIOR, POLITICAL SCIENCE

This paper addresses the question of whether Silicon Valley can benefit from Zen Buddhist ideology in a meaningful way. It finds that while most “Zen” services in the area are currently commercialized perversions of Buddhism, there is realistic hope for deeper interaction. There exists both a promising philosophical groundwork and a documented historical precedent for a deeper ideological marriage of Zen Buddhism and Silicon Valley culture.

NEW STAFF

STEPHANIE LEE, FINANCE ASSOCIATE

We are thrilled that Stephanie Lee will join us in mid-September as our finance associate. Stephanie has a M.B.A. from the Wharton School of Business and an Associate Degree in Graphic Design from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. She worked as an equity research analyst and a senior consultant in industry for a number of years before joining Stanford’s Center for East Asian Studies as a communications and events coordinator from 2007-2012. After taking a few years off to pursue her own interests, she has decided to return to Stanford to join our Buddhist Studies team. A warm welcome to Stephanie!

(continued from page 6)

Dying to Give: Buddhism and Cadaver Donations for Medical Education in Modern Taiwan

person is turned into an esteemed teacher of doctors and medical students. Their status is elevated in the act of cadaver donation. Tsu Chi has created an elaborate process with strict procedures and rituals for the receiving and final disposal of the body which encompasses stages of greeting, addressing, housing, treating, honoring and commemorating, thanksgiving and memorializing, and finally disposing of the body. Each stage is highly performative in that both Buddhist and medical rites are combined to show proper respect and treatment of the cadaver. Videos documenting each stage are available to donors’ families at the end of the long process. At each stage of the treatment of a corpse, the family members of the deceased are kept informed. The medical team along with the huge Tsu Chi staff and volunteers develop relationships with family members since it may take up to several years from the receipt of the corpse to its use in medical education and its final disposal.

At the Tsu Chi hospitals, the medical doctors, nurses, students, and staff also participate in the Buddhist rites for the “silent teacher.” They are grateful for the learning opportunity and accordingly show their appreciation. The families of the silent teachers are first-hand witnesses to the fact that the bodies of their loved ones are treated with respect and care. They are reassured that the bodies are in good hands and will be restored. The extent to which the medical team shows respect to the cadavers is unlike other professional teams elsewhere: they will sew back each cadaver until it is “as whole as possible” and dress it, so that the whole body is not only carefully put back together but covered by clothing in its entirety, even when there are parts missing. Huang showed a video of this procedure from the Tsu Chi website which was worth a thousand words.

Huang’s choice of the expression “dying to give” is particularly fitting for this phenomenon. On the one hand, people have to die in order to perform the ultimate act of charity—that of donating one’s body for the benefit of others, in this case for medical education. One hopes that through this act of giving, the medical profession can come up with a cure for the illness from which one suffered. On the other hand, people are “eager to give” their bodies to perfect their cultivation of charity. This is evidenced by some refusing treatments that will make them ineligible to become cadaver donors. We may wonder at the motivation and attraction of such a practice. It has to do with turning a useless and unworthy body into a useful and worthy body, and by that act being transformed from an ordinary being into a bodhisattva.
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