

BDK Newsletter

No. 14  
2025

# Michi - The Path -

BUKKYO DENDO KYOKAI Society for the Promotion of Buddhism



# Michi

— The Path —

## 14

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#### "Sasaeatte" Egao (Smiling Face)



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## Together We Connect. Together We Grow.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your continued understanding and support of the activities of the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK), the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism.

In 2024, we surpassed a significant milestone: the total number of The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB) copies printed has exceeded ten million. We also released a newly revised edition of the Japanese-language TTOB, the result of six years of dedicated work to ensure the text remains both accessible and relevant to contemporary readers. I take this opportunity to sincerely thank all those involved in making these achievements possible.

Looking ahead, 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of our organization. At a time when the world is facing a wave of natural disasters, violent conflicts, and increasing social division and isolation, many people are experiencing deep uncertainty and hardship.

In the spirit of this milestone year, and in accordance with the founding vision of Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, we at BDK have taken a collective step back to reflect: What should we do now to bring the wisdom of Buddhism to more people? What is being asked of us? From this reflection, we have set a new mid-term goal: “Together We Connect. Together We Grow.”

To realize this vision, we will collaborate with diverse organizations around the world, sharing the transformative power of the Buddha’s teachings with those living in these uncertain times. With strength drawn from these partnerships and a broad perspective shaped by mutual connections, we move forward with renewed determination.

With deepest gratitude,

Gassho



Seikoh-Kiyotaka Kimura  
Chairperson

Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK)  
Society for the Promotion of Buddhism

# Interview



*Vairocana Buddha (The Great Buddha/Daibutsu-sama)*

## Interview Series: In Search of “The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB)”

### TTOB Volunteers – Sharing the Dharma with Local Communities

With Special Thanks to: Rev. Kojo Morimoto (Head Priest of the Great Buddha Hall, Tōdai-ji Temple; Director of Finance, Kegon School; Financial Steward, Tōdai-ji)

Interview conducted: February 2025

Location: Tōdai-ji Temple, Head Temple of the Kegon School (Nara City, Nara Prefecture)

Interviewer: Masayuki Masuda (BDK)

Editor & Photographer: Kaoru Eguchi (BDK)



BDK has continuously carried out one of its core initiatives, which is the distribution of TTOB. In recent years, this scripture has found its way not only into hotels and inns but also into temples, medical institutions, and educational settings, and has served as a gentle and accessible introduction to Buddhist thought.

To further promote this mission, BDK invites and supports Buddhist priests across Japan to serve as TTOB Volunteers in their respective regions. As of 2025, around 100 priests are actively participating in



this initiative.

These volunteers help distribute TTOB to lodging facilities and key tourist destinations while also promoting its value on behalf of BDK. Through their efforts, they help spread awareness of Buddhist philosophy and culture to a wider audience.

For this issue, we visited Tōdai-ji Temple, headquarters of the Kegon School during preparations for the Shuni-e ceremony, an annual Buddhist ceremony at Tōdai-ji in which Buddhist priests pray for peace and well-being, and spoke with Rev. Kojo Morimoto, one of our dedicated TTOB Volunteers. Rev. Morimoto has been instrumental in helping deliver this publication to people throughout Japan.

The Great Buddha of Nara, renowned around the world, continues to inspire awe in all who see it. The surrounding city of Nara, home to long-standing inns and traditional family-run shops, has long welcomed visitors with warmth and hospitality, preserving a spirit of continuity that resonates deeply with the message of TTOB.

**Masayuki (hereafter M)** : First of all, when people think of Tōdai-ji, I believe many immediately picture the Great Buddha. Could you tell us about the teachings of the Kegon school, the origins of Tōdai-ji, and the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Great Buddha?

**Kojo (hereafter K)** : In the mid-8th century, society was rife with anxiety due to repeated outbreaks of infectious diseases, food shortages caused by famines, and frequent earthquakes. Emperor Shōmu (r. 724-749), having studied the Avatamsaka (Kegon) Sūtra, which records the Buddha's teaching that "everything is interconnected while remaining distinct," sought to guide the country in a better direction. He did this by establishing provincial temples and convents throughout the nation and by building the Great Buddha—the seated statue of Vairocana Buddha, now a National Treasure.

Tōdai-ji was originally established as the provincial temple of Yamato. It served both as a place of practice



*Rev. Morimoto in front of the Great Buddha Hall (Daibutsu-den)*



and as a center for scholarly training in Buddhist doctrine. Institutes or schools were created for the study of the six Nara schools of Buddhism, including Kegon, and later also included the Tendai and Shingon schools of the Heian period, making Tōdai-ji a center for learning where all eight schools were studied in harmony.

When building the Great Buddha, it would have been easy for the emperor, with his authority, to simply command, “We shall build a Great Buddha!” However, he believed that would only result in a lifeless statue, devoid of heart. Instead, Emperor Shōmu wished for it to be created by gathering many small contributions in what we might call a “volunteer spirit” today. He wanted people to reflect on whether or not to participate, to involve themselves with intention, and through that, the Great Buddha would be brought into being. His proclamation includes the phrase “May all living things - plants and

animals included - thrive,” and this sentiment was the central wish behind the creation of the statue.

From the outset, this spirit of “many small forces creating something great” was foundational. Records preserved at Tōdai-ji detail the entire process, listing each phase of the work, the types of labor involved, and how many people took part. Of course, some people likely contributed to multiple tasks, but the total number of participants is said to have been around 2.6 million. This is astonishing, considering Japan’s total population at the time was estimated to be around 5 to 6 million people. The proclamation also says, “a handful of grass, a handful of earth,” which shows that Emperor Shōmu believed it important for even children and the elderly, regardless of physical contribution, to form a connection to the Buddha through participation, fostering various bonds with the Great Buddha. I believe this is why he chose such inclusive wording.

**M** : So, each of those small connections became the foundation for that monumental Buddha.

**K** : Indeed. Thanks to the clarity of Emperor Shōmu’s idea, his vision was passed down through the ages. Even when Tōdai-ji was set ablaze by Taira no Shigehira (1158-1185) in the late Heian period, Priest Chōgen (1121-1206) led the efforts to rebuild it. As in the Nara period, many people lent their support, and the reconstruction was accomplished by gathering collective strength.

However, during the Sengoku period, the Daibutsu-den was again

destroyed due to conflicts involving the Matsunaga and Miyoshi clans around the Tōdai-ji area. Most of the other temple buildings were also lost. The Great Buddha itself suffered extensive damage, including the loss of its head. Later, parts of the body were restored, but the Buddha remained headless for over 100 years, with only a temporary head affixed.

The one who restored the Great Buddha was Priest Kōkei (1648-1705). He entered the temple at age 13, and it’s said that the first time he saw the statue, it happened to be raining. While he held an umbrella, the Buddha sat exposed to the elements. He thought, “How pitiful that the Great Buddha should be soaked while I am covered.” Deeply moved, he engraved that feeling in his heart and devoted himself to practice. At 37, he announced his intention to restore the Buddha and rebuild the Great Buddha Hall. Following in Emperor Shōmu’s footsteps, he traveled the countryside with a subscription scroll to gather donations and supplies, no matter how small. I believe this was possible because of the Buddhist idea of En, the concept of karmic connection.

**M** : Our “TTOB Volunteer” activities are similarly sustained thanks to the cooperation of Buddhist priests from all over Japan. Our foundation only has about twenty staff members, but the nationwide network of supportive clergy continues to grow and empowers us immensely. I feel like there’s something about this that echoes the creation of the Great Buddha (laughs).



*Rev. Morimoto chanting in front of Daibutsu-sama*





*Kagami Pond*

**K** : That's true. The reconstruction in the Kamakura period was no doubt a great challenge, but in the Edo period, things were even harder - no one alive had seen the original Buddha. Restoring something no one had seen was an unimaginable task. At first, the shogunate approved the fundraising but did not provide direct involvement, so Priest Kōkei (1648-1705) started essentially alone. But because of his extraordinary passion, within just seven and a half years, he succeeded in collecting the necessary materials and funds and completed the restoration. Put in modern terms, it was a case of a genuinely committed leader attracting ever more followers, who in turn created a larger and larger movement.

**M** : I see. Whether past or present, it's really about human connection. In our TTOB volunteer activities too, the priests who support us are deeply respected in their communities. Even those who might shy away from the word "Buddhism" will say, "If it's a book that so-and-so recommends, then I trust it," and pick up TTOB (laughs).

Especially in major Buddhist centers like Nara, there are many people with close ties to temples, and this becomes a wonderful opportunity to share Buddhist ideas. Some even offer TTOB as part of their hospitality by placing it in their guest accommodations.

**K** : It feels perfectly natural for lodgings around temples to offer TTOB. We're truly grateful for the warm support we've received.

**M** : As I walked around the city, I really sensed how close the relationships are between temples and those in the hospitality and tourism business. That must be because Tōdai-ji is so beloved by the local community!

**K** : We're incredibly thankful for that. It seems that the current relationship between lodging facilities, temples, and tourism in Nara was already established during the Edo-period reconstruction. When the Buddha was restored, Priest Kōkei held a dedication ceremony that lasted a full month to accommodate

pilgrims coming from afar. It's said that Nara, which had a population of about 20,000 at the time, saw 200,000 visitors. People were sleeping outdoors in droves, so the magistrate issued a decree asking residents to lodge travelers in their homes, and this was essentially the beginning of what we now call "Minpaku" (B&B/private lodging).

Temples and shrines nearby also saw a boom in worshippers. At Kasuga Taisha, so many offerings were made that the bottom of the offering box broke. At Kōfuku-ji, so much food was thrown to the turtles and koi in Sarusawa Pond that the surface was covered in floating wheat gluten. At Tōshōdai-ji and Yakushi-ji, special viewings drew large crowds. Even a medicinal pill sold by Saidai-ji as a souvenir for pilgrims became a massive hit.

To this day, you'll find many inns and hotels around Sarusawa Pond—likely a remnant of that time. During the month-long ceremony, even bustling towns like Osaka's Dōtonbori were said to have gone quiet. At Kuragari-tōge (a mountain



pass between Nara and Osaka), innkeepers are said to have guided pilgrims, while those coming from Kyoto benefitted from temporary ferry and porter services across the Kizugawa River. You could say this was the origin of tourism in Nara.

Returning to Priest Kōkei, he didn't lie down to sleep until the Great Buddha was complete, resting only against a pillar. On the final day of the dedication ceremony, he rested in a bed for the first time in seven and a half years. But he still faced the far greater challenge of rebuilding the Daibutsu-den itself. Eventually, through the intercession of Gojiin Ryūkō (1649-1724), he gained the support of Shōgun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709) and his mother Keishōin (1627-1705). With backing from the shogunate and various daimyō, the Daibutsu-den was finally reconstructed.

Priest Kōkei himself passed away in Edo at the age of 58 while overseeing the successful roof-raising ceremony. He never saw the completed hall. However, a special exception was made to allow his remains to be returned to Nara,

where he was laid to rest at Gokō-in on the north side of Tōdai-ji. His statue, created during the same period, is enshrined in Kōkei-dō on the west side of the Daibutsu-den, gazing upward at the hall he helped rebuild watching over it even now.

**M** : So even those not directly involved in building the Buddha contributed to the larger movement, helping boost local businesses as well. Everything is interconnected, and that clearly extends to today's tourism and hospitality businesses.

**K** : TTOB presents fundamental Buddhist principles in a way that supports modern understanding and daily life. It explains Buddhism's inclusive philosophy of caring for each other, including plants and animals, in a way that's easy to grasp.

**M** : Thank you. Currently, TTOB has been published in 46 languages and is available for free download from our official website. It's also sold at the shop inside the Great Buddha Hall at Tōdai-ji, isn't it?

**K** : Yes. As the number of international visitors to Tōdai-

ji continues to grow, our official website is now available in eight languages. TTOB is one of our recommended books for those who wish to deepen their understanding of Buddhism. I hope people from around the world will take a copy home with them.

**M** : I have also had the opportunity to accompany you and visit nearby accommodations to explain TTOB, and I felt welcomed wherever we went. In some areas, just hearing the word "Buddhism" can cause people to frown, but when we mention the name of a large temple accepted by the community, they suddenly become more receptive (laughs). In modern inns and hotels, it is often said that they don't want to place anything that would disrupt the atmosphere, even if it slightly contradicts their understanding. Since the concepts of faith and business are different, many people are reluctant to place TTOB in such establishments.

**K** : I see! At Tōdai-ji, we don't have the "danka" system, a tradition where local families support a temple financially and participate in its rituals in exchange for spiritual



## Kōjō Morimoto

Head Priest of Seiryō-in, a subsidiary temple of Tōdai-ji, and a member of the Kegon school. Born in 1968, he was ordained at the age of 15. He completed a doctoral program in Buddhist Studies at Ryukoku University Graduate School (with credits but left before graduation). He has served in various positions, including Deputy Director of Tōdaiji Library, Executive Director of Tōdai-ji Welfare Foundation, and Executive Director of Tōdai-ji Educational Foundation. He is currently the head of the Great Buddha Hall of Tōdai-ji, Chief of the Kegon school's Finance Department, and the Finance Steward of Tōdai-ji. He has participated in the Shuni-e (Omizutori Water-purification Ceremony) for 21 years (as of April 2025). He also serves as an advisory board member for the certified NPO "Otera Oyatsu Club."



services, but perhaps that is why it has helped foster connections throughout the entire community. For the general public, “Kegon School” might be a name they’ve never heard of (smiling), and through TTOB, I hope that they will have the opportunity to learn about Buddhism and incorporate it into their daily lives. Many people who stay at hotels and inns in Nara often visit temples, so they are already connected in some way. Of course, local customs play a role, but the placement fee is free, and I don’t believe there is any downside to having TTOB in accommodations. In the educational setting at Tōdai-ji Gakuen, which we operate, we don’t have a specific Buddhist studies class, but we believe it is important

for students to learn about Buddhist philosophy as part of their general education. Therefore, we distribute TTOB as reference books to students when they enter the school. I am sometimes surprised by how seriously some students read it (smiling).

**M** : That’s very encouraging. The environment surrounding Tōdai-ji evokes the teachings of the Kegon Sutra, which has been passed down through the ages, emphasizing the idea of “the interconnectedness of all things.” I hope that TTOB can also contribute to that connection. Thank you very much for today.

We had the opportunity to speak with Rev. Kōjō Morimoto, the head

priest of Seiryō-in, a temple at Tōdai-ji, who has been carrying out activities while valuing connections and mutual support with the local community. Reflecting on the history that paved the way for modern tourism, this conversation allowed us to re-recognize the wonderful connections made possible through our “TTOB Volunteer” initiative, while also prompting us to reconsider what is needed for future activities. In addition to TTOB, BDK provides free copies of other popular booklets, such as the red booklet “Guide to Buddhism,” to temples participating in the “TTOB Volunteer” program.

## Introduction of Main Facilities Using “The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB)”

Sales of “TTOB” at the Great Buddha Hall shop (behind the Great Buddha)

On busy days, several copies are sold, with many foreign tourists stopping by to purchase them.

“Lobby Library” where paperback-sized editions of the book are available, making it easy for tourists to pick up and read. Hardcover editions are placed in guest rooms.

“We would love to continue doing this as part of our hospitality unique to Nara.”

(Ms. Seiko Nakano, CEO of HOTEL Obana)



TTOB at the shop behind the Great Buddha



Ms. Nakano



TTOB at Hotel Obana





# 01 Activity “The Teaching of Buddha” Update for 2024

## 10 Million Copies Printed Since Inception

Revised Japanese Edition Published





including Prof. Yoshiro Imaeda of Kyoto University, the translation of the Dzongkha edition of TTOB was completed, and 3,000 copies were donated to Bhutan.

However, after 25 years, the Dzongkha version needed an update to reflect the changes of the times. A connection with Ven. Choten Dorji, a 2020 recipient of the “BDK Fellowship for Foreign Scholars” at Kyoto University and now active at the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan, was formed. Ven. Dorji kindly agreed to assist in the revision and distribution of the Dzongkha edition in July 2023, and the revised edition, based on the 2012 English edition of TTOB, was published. 10,000 copies were donated to Bhutan.

On April 23, 2024, a ceremony for the donation of the revised Dzongkha edition of TTOB was held at the Phendeling Hotel in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. The ceremony was graced by His Eminence Karma Langdol, Head of the Monastic

Council for Education and Research, Central Monastic Body of Bhutan and His Excellency Tsering, the Minister of Home Affairs of Bhutan. The donation of 10,000 Buddhist scriptures is unprecedented and became a topic of discussion within Bhutan, and the ceremony was even broadcast on national television.

During the ceremony, Rev. Dr. Seikoh-Kiyotaka Kimura, the chairperson of BDK, expressed the hope that these scriptures would take root in Bhutan’s rich culture and spiritual soil and contribute to the realization of the country’s vision of “the true land of happiness.” He then handed out the revised books to the distinguished guests. In his reply, His Eminence Langdol expressed gratitude to BDK, and the ceremony concluded successfully.

The 10,000 copies of the revised Dzongkha edition of TTOB will be gradually distributed to temples, educational institutions, libraries, and more, with expressions of gratitude from the people of Bhutan.



*Dr. Kimura (left) and His Eminence Ven. Langdol (right)*



*His Excellency Mr. Tsering (right)*



*Ven. Dorji (right)*





# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

## Activity 03 Publication of the BDK English Tripiṭaka Update for 2024

The BDK English Tripiṭaka Translation Project has now completed approximately 81% of the 139 texts scheduled for translation in its first phase, which is steadily progressing toward its target for completion in 2027. In fiscal year 2024, two new volumes were published as part of the series: The Madhyama Āgama (4) (completing the four-volume set) and The Dharma Garden Jewel Forest (6).

The Madhyama Āgama (4) marks the final installment in the English translation of this foundational

early Buddhist scripture, originally translated into Chinese in the late fourth century by the Sarvāstivāda monk Saṅghadeva. This volume includes thirteen fascicles covering forty-one sūtras, from “The Sūtra on Mapi” to “The Sūtra of Examples,” thereby completing the first full English translation of the Madhyama Āgama - a significant milestone.

The Dharma Garden Jewel Forest (Fayuan zhulin), compiled by the Tang dynasty scholar Daoshi, is an encyclopedic collection of Buddhist doctrine, faith, and ritual,

comprising one hundred fascicles in total. Organized into one hundred sections and 668 categories, the work contains both doctrinal commentary and illustrative narratives. To date, volumes 1 through 5 (covering fascicles 1–34) have been published. The newly released Volume 6 covers fascicles 35 through 40.



## Activity 04 “Let it Shine! Temple Bulletin Board Award 2024”

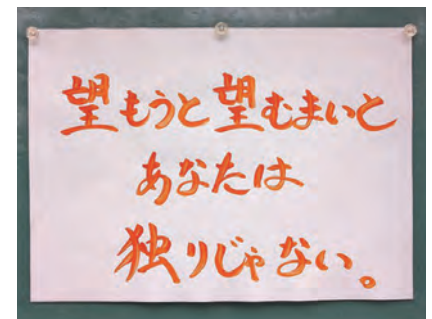
The “Let it Shine! Temple Bulletin Board Award 2024” contest was successfully held, marking the seventh edition of this popular project since its launch in 2018. During the entry period from July 1 to September 30, 2024, a total of 3,755 submissions were received via X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram.

Among the many heartfelt entries, the Grand Prize was awarded to a message from the bulletin board of Chokakuji Temple (Shinshū Ōtani-ha) in Hiroshima Prefecture: “Whether you wish for it or not, you are not alone.”

In today’s world—where issues of isolation and division are growing ever more serious—this message powerfully evokes the Buddhist teaching of dependent origination (pratītya-samutpāda),



which reminds us that no one exists independently. All beings—humans, animals, and nature—are sustained by countless unseen connections.



The full list of award-winning messages can be found on our official website.



## 05 Activity The 11th Annual Photography Competition for the BDK Calendar “A Wise Teaching A Day”

The 11th annual photography competition for the BDK calendar A Wise Teaching A Day was held this year, continuing a tradition that began in 2014. This time, the contest received 731 entries, featuring a total of 2,939 photographs.

In September 2024, the Calendar Photo Contest Selection Committee convened and selected 32 photographs - including the cover image - for the 2026 edition of the calendar. Certificates and cash prizes were awarded to the winning entrants.

The selected photos will appear in the 2026 A Wise Teaching A Day calendar and are also viewable on our official website.



## Exhibition of Winning Works from the 10th BDK Calendar “A Wise Teaching A Day” Photography Competition Held at Zuiganji, Byodoin, and Tsukiji Hongwanji

An exhibition showcasing the winning photographs from the 10th A Wise Teaching A Day Calendar Photo Contest was held at three prominent Buddhist temples in Japan: from April 12 to June 10 at the main hall of Zuiganji Temple, from June 14 to September 8 at the Byodoin Museum, and from September 13 to November 7 at the main hall of Tsukiji Hongwanji Temple.

The exhibition drew over 720,000 visitors across the three venues. Many attendees had the opportunity to engage with both the striking photography and the insightful Buddhist sayings featured in the calendar.



Exhibition at Zuiganji





## Financial Assistance and Honoring Recipients

### BDK Fellowship

BDK has established the “BDK Fellowship for Foreign Scholars” and the “BDK Fellowship for Japanese Scholars” to support individuals aspiring to pursue Buddhist studies.

### BDK Fellowship for Japanese Scholars

The BDK Fellowship for Japanese Scholars was established in 2012 with the aim of fostering young Japanese researchers who can broaden their perspectives by studying abroad and contributing to the future promotion of Buddhist scholarship.

The 12th round of fellowship recipients, for the year 2025, was concluded in October 2024 by the BDK Fellowship Committee. As of June 2025, the fellowship grants have been awarded as follows:

### The 12th Awardee (2025)

**Name** : Shiori Ijuin

**Fellowship Term** : 6 months (April–September 2025)

**Affiliation** : Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria

**Research Topic** : A Study of Ānandagarbha’s Vajrajvālodayā

**Academic Advisor** : Dr. Nina Mirnig

### The 10th Awardee (2023, ongoing)

**Name** : Keiki Nakayama

**Fellowship Term** : Third year of a 3-year term (April 2023–March 2026)

**Affiliation** : Institute for Indology and Central Asian Studies, Leipzig University, Germany

**Research Topic** : A Study of the Paryāyasaṃgrahaṇī of the Yogācārabhūmi: Yogācāra’s Interpretation of Scriptural Phrases

**Academic Advisor** : Professor Jowita Kramer



## The 11th Awardee (2024)

**Name :** Mayu Yasukawa

**Fellowship Term :** 1 year (April 2024–March 2025)

**Affiliation :** Institute for South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna, Austria

**Research Topic :** The Study on the additional part of the Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra translated by Dharmakśema

**Academic Advisor :** Assistant Professor Christopher V. Jones

## BDK Fellowship Q&As

### Reflections from a BDK Fellow: Mayu Yasukawa

#### 1 ) What inspired you to apply for the BDK Fellowship?

I had known about the BDK Fellowship for some time and hoped to apply when the right opportunity came. When my plans for studying abroad became concrete, I decided to apply. I was also encouraged by senior scholars around me who had previously received the fellowship and were able to offer helpful advice.

#### 2 ) What has been the most beneficial part of receiving the fellowship, and what are your future goals?

The most valuable benefit has been the financial support that allowed me to focus entirely on my research without financial worries. Vienna is home to a vibrant community of scholars in Indology, and I had the chance to attend numerous open lectures and workshops. These opportunities enabled me to engage not only with my specific field of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India but also with broader studies



*Ms. Yasukawa at the front right*

related to the Indian subcontinent. My advisor, Professor Jones, also provided invaluable guidance on how to structure academic presentations and write papers in English. These experiences will surely benefit my future academic presentations and publications.

#### 3 ) What do you like most or find most surprising about your life abroad?

The specialized library at the

Institute for South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Vienna is an ideal space for research. It's quiet and peaceful, housed in a small building, and stocked with the necessary books and journals. It quickly became one of my favorite places to study. The staff are also very friendly and approachable - they often engaged me in casual conversation during my visits, which I really appreciated.





# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

## BDK Fellowship for Japanese Scholars

BDK established the “BDK Fellowship for Foreign Scholars” in 1991 and aims to promote international cooperation and mutual understanding in Buddhist studies. It is intended to enable researchers to engage in advanced research on Buddhism while in Japan.

The 34th round of fellowship recipients, for the year 2025, was held in October 2024 by the BDK Fellowship Committee. As of June 2025, the following recipients have been awarded fellowships:

### The 34th Awardees (2025)

**Name** : Bo Pang

**Fellowship Term** : 1 year (April 2025–March 2026)

**Affiliation** : Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo

**Research Topic** : A Study on Jizang’s Theory of Causality in His Commentary on the Middle Treatise

**Academic Advisor** : Associate Professor Mikiyasu Yanagi

**Name** : Amina Sabyr

**Fellowship Term** : 1 year (April 2025–March 2026)

**Affiliation** : Hiroshima University

**Research Topic** : Bhāviveka’s Philosophy from the Perspective of Tibetan Thinkers: An Analysis of Introduction to Definitive and Interpretive Teachings by Jigme Tamchu Gyamtso

**Academic Advisor** : Professor Hiroshi Nemoto

### The 32nd Awardee (2023)

**Name** : Mingyuan Gao

**Fellowship Term** : 2 years (May 2023–April 2025)

**Affiliation** : Waseda University

**Research Topic** : The Concept of Vāsanā and Its Relation to Seeds

**Academic Advisor** : Professor Yoshinori Yamabe



## BDK Fellowship Q&As

### Reflections from a BDK Fellow: Mingyuan Gao

#### 1 ) What inspired you to apply for the BDK Fellowship?

Since completing my Ph.D. in 2019, I have been working to revise my dissertation for publication. However, due to my heavy teaching load at the University of Hong Kong, I struggled to secure time for new research. Around that time, Professor Yamabe expressed interest in my work and introduced me to the BDK Fellowship. As a program dedicated specifically to Buddhist studies, I believed the BDK Fellowship would offer a more specialized and supportive environment than general academic grants. I hoped that a postdoctoral opportunity in Japan would help me clarify the complex concepts of *vāsanā* and seeds in the Abhidharma and Yogācāra traditions.

#### 2 ) What has been the most beneficial part of receiving the fellowship, and what are your future goals?

Living in Japan has given me a rare chance to focus exclusively on research without administrative burdens. At Waseda University, I benefited from a wealth of academic resources and built connections with distinguished scholars. The rich traditions and environment of Japanese Buddhism also enhanced my studies. I had the opportunity to present my findings in Professor

Yamabe's class and received valuable feedback from both domestic and international researchers.

My primary goal in Japan was to complete a monograph titled *The Buddhist Concept of Vāsanā: A Genealogical Study*, which is scheduled for publication in 2025 by "Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde (WSTB)." I have also actively participated in academic events, including a workshop at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a presentation at the 75th Conference of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, an online lecture at Fudan University, and a public lecture at Waseda University. A workshop at the University of Tokyo is also in the works.

Going forward, I aim to continue my research on Abhidharma and Yogācāra at academic institutions, and to pass on the wisdom of Buddhism to the next generation. Thanks to the BDK Fellowship, I have forged meaningful ties with the Japanese academic community and look forward to continued collaboration.



*Prof. Yamabe (left) and Dr. Gao (right)*

#### 3 ) What do you like most or find most surprising about your life in Japan?

There are many things I enjoy about living in Japan: the kindness of people, the delicious food, the quiet and cleanliness of the cities, the sense of order, openness, and overall convenience. Over time, I've grown deeply attached to Tokyo.

If I had to choose one favorite aspect, it would be the natural environment—especially the city parks. Since I devoted myself to research and writing, I rarely ventured outside of my home and university. However, I learned that Japan's emphasis on *Kibun* (refreshing one's mood) is incredibly effective. On sunny days, I would take my laptop to a park and work until sunset. Spending time in nature often helped me resolve mental blocks and gain clarity in my thinking.



# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

01  
Activity

## The 58th BDK Cultural Award Ceremony Held at the BDK Center Building

October 17, 2024

On October 17, 2024, the presentation ceremony and celebratory reception for the 58th BDK Cultural Award were held on the 8th floor of the BDK Center Building, with 72 guests in attendance.



*The 58th BDK Cultural Award Recipients*

This year's recipient of the BDK Cultural Award, Professor Emeritus Paul Groner of the University of Virginia (USA), was honored for his lifelong dedication to the study of Japanese culture and Buddhism. Through his many translations, he has played a pivotal role in introducing Japanese Buddhism to the world. His efforts in mentoring young researchers in Japan were also highly praised. In his remarks, Dr. Groner expressed heartfelt gratitude, recalling memories of his esteemed mentors - Professor Stanley Weinstein of Yale University and Professor Emeritus Akira

Hirakawa of the University of Tokyo.

The Numata Innovation & Visionary Award was presented to Rev. Gakugen Yoshimizu, resident priest of Koshoin Temple of the Jodo Shu tradition. He was recognized for his socially engaged religious activities, such as night patrols to assist those living on the streets, embodying the Buddhist spirit of compassion. In his speech, Rev. Yoshimizu shared, "It is through meeting people living on the streets that I myself have grown," and he pledged to continue his dedicated efforts with even greater resolve.



*Dr. Groner*



*Rev. Yoshimizu*



## Activity 02 2024 Financial Assistance Programs

BDK provides financial assistance to individuals and organizations in Japan and abroad whose activities align with the objectives of the Foundation's public-interest mission.

For 2024, BDK received 22 applications. Following a fair and thorough review process, financial assistance was awarded to 15 applicants. For more information on BDK's Financial Assistance Program, please visit our official website: <https://www.bdk.or.jp/bdk/jyosei/jyoseikin.html>

### B. Support for BDK Affiliated Organizations

Name of Group	Project
BDK Asia	Distribution of "The Teaching of Buddha".
BDK Taiwan	Distribution of BDK publications.

### C. Support for Groups

Name of Group	Project
The Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies	Promoting international academic exchange and cultural contribution through digital initiatives.
NPO Kamakura Terakoya	Revitalizing the local community through collaboration between universities, temples/shrines, government, and civic volunteers.
Public Interest Incorporated Foundation The Nakamura Hajime Eastern Institute	Research, grant-making, recognition, and outreach activities as a public interest foundation.
NPO National Terakoya network	Terakoya network program.

### D. Support for Projects: D-1. Buddhist Spiritual/Cultural and Humanitarian Activities

Name of Group	Project
Public Interest Incorporated Foundation Zenkoku Kyokaishi Renmei (Japan Buddhist Chaplain Union)	Chaplain training programs.
Shanti Volunteer Association	Disaster preparedness and mitigation utilizing religious facilities.
"Otera to Kyokai no Oyanaki Ato" Consultation Office	Building community support networks through temples and churches to address the "life after parents" issue.
The Buddhist Society	100th Anniversary Memorial Lecture Series on Japanese Buddhism.

### D. Support for Projects: D-2. Promotion of Buddhist Academic Learning

Name of Group	Project
Ryukoku Museum	2024 Spring Special Exhibition: "The Solar Deity of the Bamiyan Buddhas and Maitreya Belief—from Gandhara to Japan."
KoPhil (Verein für Komparative Philosophie und Interdisziplinäre Bildung)	KoPhil Lecture Series: Buddhist Philosophy in Dialogue with Contemporary Sciences.
Numata Center for Buddhist Studies, University of Hamburg	Operation of Buddhist Studies courses at the Numata Center.
Hawaii Buddhist Cultural Heritage Research Association	Research, preservation, and transmission of cultural assets from Japanese Buddhist temples in Hawai'i.

### D. Support for Projects: D-3. Preservation of Buddhist Cultural Heritage

Organization Name	Project Summary
Laboratory of Conservation of Buddhist Sculpture, Graduate School of Conservation, Tokyo University of the Arts	Training project in preservation and restoration through research on Buddhist sculpture.



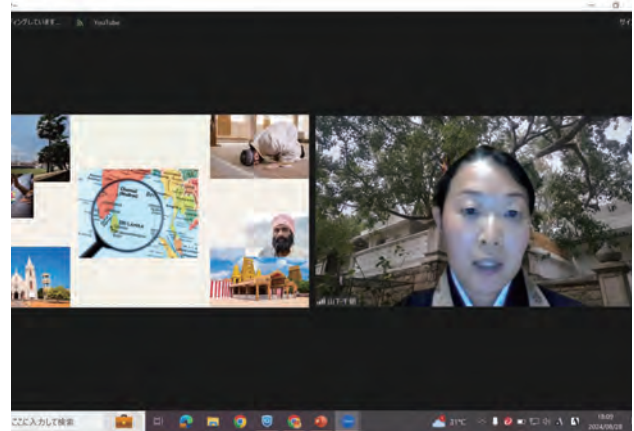
## Buddhist Lectures and Seminars

Activity  
01

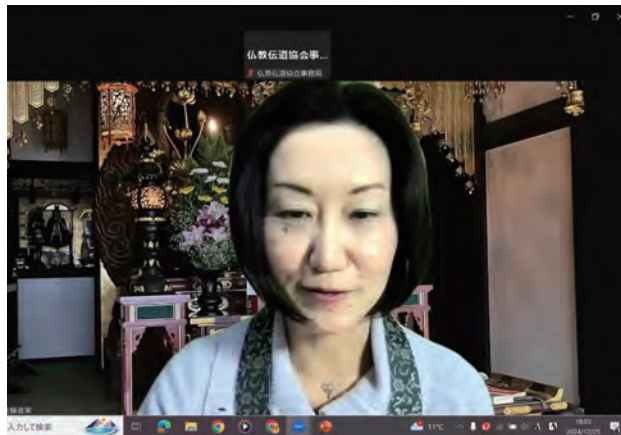
### BDK Online Station: “Weekly Dharma Talks”



Rev. Sekimori (June)



Rev. Yamashita (August)



Rev. Sato (December)



Rev. Ishida (January)

Launched in January 2021, the online Dharma talk series, “Weekly Dharma Talk Station,” has featured weekly talks from priests of various Buddhist sects, each centered on a specific theme. By March 2025, the series will celebrate its 200th episode. Viewers have

shared feedback such as, “I felt that Buddhism became something more familiar” and “It was easy to understand.”

Dharma talks that have been livestreamed are progressively uploaded to the Foundation’s

YouTube channel and have received many views. In fiscal year 2025, the series will introduce new formats and further innovations in the broadcasts.



Name listed without honorifics					
Month/Theme	Speaker	Month/Theme	Speaker	Month/Theme	Speaker
April Encounter	Etsudo Takahashi	August Conflict	Masafumi Takeda	December Oshi (Inspiration)	Yusei Harayama
	Michio Sugiura		Myosei Midorikawa		Ryota Nakamura
	Hideaki Kanda		Chisa Yamashita		Gyosen Asaskura
	Myokan Senda				Naomi Sato
May Anger	Eshun Kobayashi	September Literature	Ryoei Nanjo	January Words	Kyogyo Nanba
	Shogo Sakuraba		Shuken Watanabe		Ichiyu Ishida
	Kazunori Taiencho		Eigetsu		Kazuhide Yoshihiro
	Taijun Namiki		Washo Oyamada		Shinko Nishida
June Sound	Kengo Sekimori	October Energy	Yusho Kono	February The Body	Takuga Kato
	Akihiro Tamakoshi		Hirokazu Yoshioka		Ryuei Fujii
	Akari Miura		Ryogo Takemoto		Kodo Kosaka
	Genyu Amano		Sodo Kawamata		Kazumaro Tsukamoto
July The Sea	Yoshiyuki Takeda	November Culture	Shoto Iwata	March Shojin (Right Effort)	Chiken Kawaguchi
	Eikan Hayashima		Shojun Shimizutani		Joji Yokomizo
	Shoin Kajii		Jun Hashiramoto		Hironori Tsukada
	Jugen Ishikawa		Myoyu Yoshioka		
	Ryosho Shoji		Kyoshin Kusunoki		

## 02 Activity “Saturday★Night Buddhism” on FM Osaka A Popular Ongoing Program!

The radio show “BDK presents Saturday★Night Buddhism with Tetsuo of Warai Meshi”, broadcast every Saturday night from 12:15 to 12:30 am on FM Osaka, has entered its seventh season. Each month, a different guest, either a Buddhist priest or a well-known public figure, joins Tetsuo of the comedy duo Warai Meshi to engage in lighthearted yet insightful conversations. The show brings Buddhism closer to listeners, many of whom say this was their first introduction to the religion.

Some listeners have shared their experiences, saying things like, “A friend recommended this show to me, and I started listening. Learning about Buddhist perspectives helped me not worry so much about things at work.” Over time, listener-submitted messages for the advice

segment have become longer and more thoughtful, reflecting

a growing interest in applying Buddhist teachings to daily life.



Tetsuo and Mr. Ito



Tetsuo and Rev. Tamaoki

2024 Guest Lineup (Titles as of time of broadcast without honorifics)	
April	Yugen Yasunaga (Head Regent, Hongwanji)
May	Seiko Ito (Entertainer)
June	Yonin Koike (Managing Director, Suma-dera Temple)
July	Enon Kawatani (Musician)
August	Myoyu Tamaoki (Nurse and Buddhist Nun)
September	Kazuko Kurosawa (Comedian, Morisanchu)
October	Ryoo Fukui (Chief Priest, Kosanji Temple, Shingon Sect / Director, Otera Oyatsu Club)
November	Ichiro Furutachi (Entertainer)
December	Koji Haji (Chief Priest, Asakusa Shrine)
January	Satoshi Mukai (Comedian, Panther)
February	Issho Fujita (Soto Zen Priest)
March	Haruomi Hosono (Musician)



## 03 Activity

## 2024 BDK Hana Matsuri (Flower Festival) Held from March 22 to April 8, 2024



“7th Annual Hana Matsuri Design Contest” Display

To celebrate the birth of Buddha, BDK hosted the “Hana Matsuri” to allow the public to connect with this important Buddhist tradition. As part of the “7th Annual Hana Matsuri Design Contest” hosted by the Japan Buddhist Federation, 14 original winning artworks were displayed in the first-floor lobby of the Bukkyo Dendo Center Building. The vibrant colors and unique expressions of each piece allowed many visitors to feel the aspirations and thoughts of the artists.

Additionally, “flower seeds” provided by the Japan Buddhist

Women’s Federation, and “Sakuma Drops,” a popular Japanese brand of hard candies featuring the poster-winning design and donated by Daiwa Securities Co., Ltd., were distributed.



Special Flower Display for Hanamatsuri



Hanamatsuri Altar



## Activity 04 Studying “The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB)” for Business / Daily Life



Rev. Chiba



Rev. Ichiraku



Rev. Matsumoto



Rev. Natori

### Studying “The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB)” for Business

This monthly lecture series aims to help participants learn Buddhist principles and apply them to business management. The sessions are held

once a month on the fourth Friday at 6 pm, for a total of 10 sessions featuring Rev. Makoto Ichiraku (President of Otani University)

and Rev. Koji Chiba (President of Tohoku Fukushi University). After each lecture, a networking gathering is held with the lecturers.

### Studying “The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB)” for Daily Life

This monthly study group focuses on applying Buddhist principles to daily life. The sessions are held once a month on the fourth Tuesday at

1:30 pm, for a total of 10 sessions featuring Rev. Hogen Natori (Chief Priest of Mitsuzoin Temple, Shingon Sect) and Rev. Chiryo Matsumoto

(Former Chief Priest of Enritsuji Temple, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha). After each lecture, a tea gathering is held with the lecturers.

### Joint Seminar (Day Trip Bus Tour) for TTOB for Business and Daily Life on April 16, 2024

The group visited temples associated with the Tama region, including Kongoin Temple (Koyasan Shingon Sect) and Enritsuji Temple (Jodo Shinshu

Hongwanji-ha). Additionally, they visited Rokuya Daibutsu the Great Buddha of Rokuya (Soto Zen Sect) and Shiofune Kannon Temple (Shingon Sect Daigo School) with a

guided tour by Yutaka Yamaguchi (CEO of Suiundo Co., Ltd.). A total of 33 participants joined this fulfilling one-day event.





## 05 Activity

### The 52nd Jissen Fukyo Kenkyukai, BDK Buddhist Missionary Seminar Held at the Head Temple Minobusan Kuonji of the Nichiren Sect May 22–24, 2024



*Okunoin (Sacred Nural Hall)*



*Working Groups for Discussion*

The 52nd BDK Buddhist Missionary Seminar (BMS) was held at the Head Temple Minobusan Kuonji of the Nichiren Shu in Yamanashi Prefecture. Fourteen participants, including monks and temple staff from various Buddhist sects, gathered to deepen their study under the theme, “The Buddhist Path of Nichiren Shonin - Learning from the Daimoku (Sutra Chant).”

The opening ceremony included a “Gokyo Chodai” (ceremony of receiving the sutra) led by His Holiness Nichiyu Mochida, the head priest, who offered words of encouragement. Participants also had the opportunity to engage in chanting

practice under the guidance of Ven. Tengen Hamajima (Administrative Director of Minobusan Kuonji). The conference featured a lecture by Rev. Shincho Mochizuki (Specially Appointed Professor at Minobusan University) and a demonstration of a high-seat sermon by Rev. Jisho Toyoda (Deputy Administrative Director of Minobusan Kuonji), where participants learned about the teachings of Nichiren Shonin.

In the breakout sessions, participants actively exchanged ideas on the theme “The Future of Japanese Buddhism.” Additional activities included water rituals, attending the morning service, and a visit to the

Inner Shrine, making this a very enriching study conference.



*Suigyo (Water Purification) Practice*



# 06

Activity

## Calligraphy Performance and Puppet Show Held at Byodoin Temple June 28–29, 2024



*Calligraphy Performance by Mr. Suzuki*

Each year, during the photography exhibition at Byodoin Temple in Uji City, Kyoto, a calligraphy performance by calligrapher Mori Suzuki is held. The performance takes place twice a day, in the morning and afternoon. In the morning session, Mr. Suzuki created the characters for “Wafu Saiu” (Japanese-style light rain), and in the afternoon session, he wrote “Meiso Joki” (Clear Window, Clean Desk). His dynamic strokes on large sheets of paper greatly excited the audience. After the performance, a signing session was held where participants could have their favorite kanji written on a fan by Mr. Suzuki.



*Puppet Show by Mr. Katami*

Additionally, on the day before the calligraphy performance, children from a kindergarten in Uji City were invited to attend a puppet show by puppet performer and researcher Eimei Katami. The event

brought laughter throughout and provided a fun time for everyone.

The calligraphy performance and puppet show can be viewed on the BDK official YouTube channel.



# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

07  
Activity

## “Tibetan Medicine and Buddhism” Held at the Bukkyo Dendo Center Building June 29, 2024

A workshop was held to explore the relationship between Tibetan medicine and Buddhism.

The session featured a hands-on activity where participants made an ointment by boiling the bark of the tree known as Huangbai yellow cork tree, which is also used in traditional Chinese medicine. The instructor, a pharmacist and the only Tibetan medicine practitioner in Japan, Mr. Yasushi Ogawa, shared insights into the medicinal properties of Huangbai and its influence on modern medicine.

In the second part, Mr. Ogawa introduced his experiences studying



*Workshop by Mr. Ogawa*

in the Tibetan Buddhist cultural sphere, and participants made ointments using the Huangbai they had prepared.

Feedback from participants

highlighted the opportunity to experience making Huangbai ointment firsthand and to learn about Tibetan Buddhism, making it a valuable and insightful experience.

08  
Activity

## “Buddhism Through English” Update for 2024 Held at the Bukkyo Dendo Center Building April–December 2024 (9 sessions total)

Started in 2011, the “Buddhism Through English” lecture series has offered opportunities for people to learn about Buddhism through English for over a decade.

In 2024, three lecturers - Rev. Shojun Ogi (Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, Choshoji Temple), Dr. Lisa Grumbach (Lecturer, Ryukoku University), and Dr. Makoto Ito (Part-time Lecturer, Toyo University and Taisho University) -each gave a three-

session lecture. Together, the lectures provided an overview of the origins of Buddhism up to Japanese Buddhism. The sessions were conducted in both Japanese and English, enabling participants to deepen their understanding of Buddhism through

the English language.

The program will continue in 2025 and beyond, sharing the joy of learning Buddhism in English. (For the latest information, please visit the BDK official website or follow us on social media.)



## Special Intensive Course: “The Heart Sutra in English” Held at the Bukkyo Dendo Center Building January–March 2025 (4 sessions total)

Building on the success of the previous year’s reading seminar, the intensive course, “The Heart Sutra in English,” was held as a special edition of the “Exploring Buddhism in English” series.

Taught by Soto Zen priest Rev. Issho Fujita, the course guided participants through comparative readings of Chinese and multiple English translations of the Heart Sutra, offering rich perspectives on its interpretation.

A total of 102 participants joined the course—surpassing the



*Rev. Fujita*

attendance of the regular sessions—reflecting the unique appeal of studying Buddhist scriptures in English. This style of engaging directly with English translations

proved to be a meaningful way to explore Buddhist teachings and will continue to shape future offerings in this series.

## 09 Activity “Buddhist Yoga” Update for 2024

Now in its fourth year, the “Buddhist Yoga” class led by MOMO, a Koyasan Shingon Buddhist priest and certified Ashtanga yoga instructor who teaches over 1,000 students each month, continues to draw a wide following. Each session begins with the chanting of the Threefold Refuge, followed by a brief Dharma talk designed to be accessible even to those unfamiliar with Buddhism.



*Regular “Buddhist Yoga” Session by MOMO*

The program focuses on the Primary Series of Ashtanga Yoga, a sequence of postures performed in a specific order. While the poses gradually increase in difficulty, the program always begins with the basics, making it easy for beginners to follow. The careful guidance and spiritual atmosphere have made this a popular and well-attended offering, with many participants returning regularly.



# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

## “Special Zazen and Yoga Session” Held at Sojiji, the Soto Zen Head Temple on November 23, 2024



Special Yoga Session by Mr. Watamoto

First launched in 2016, the annual “Special Zazen and Yoga Session” offers a unique opportunity to experience yoga, Zen meditation, and Shojin Ryori (traditional Buddhist vegetarian cuisine) at Sojiji, one of the head temples of the Soto school of Zen. This year’s session once again welcomed Mr. Akira Watamoto, one of Japan’s most prominent yoga instructors.

A total of 91 participants from

across Japan gathered to explore the intersection of yoga and Buddhism. The program included yoga in the grand hall, a talk on the relationship between yoga and Buddhist teachings, zazen meditation in Shuryo (the monks’ hall), and a silent meal of Shojin Ryori following the recitation of the Five Reflections Verse. This year was especially significant, as it coincided with the 700th memorial year of Zen Master Keizan, the founder of Sojiji Temple.

10  
Activity

## Lecture Series: “Buddha’s Neighbors” (4-Part Program)

### Held at the Bukkyo Dendo Center Building

A four-part lecture series titled “Buddha’s Neighbors” was held with the aim of exploring the interreligious landscape of India, the birthplace of Buddhism. The series examined non-Buddhist religious traditions and their interactions with Buddhism. The aim of this program is to foster greater understanding of the region’s diverse religious heritage.

Each session drew approximately 100 participants, in-person and online, offering attendees the chance to deepen their knowledge of India’s religious culture from both historical and philosophical perspectives.

#### Session Summaries

(All titles and affiliations as of the time of the lectures, lecturers’ names are without honorifics)

**Session 1: Brahmanism**  
Date: September 2

**Lecturer: Takahiro Kato, Associate Professor, The University of Tokyo**

This session focused on Brahmanism, India’s oldest religious tradition and the foundational backdrop to Indian spiritual life. The lecture explored its core teachings and proposed way of living.

**Session 2: Jainism**  
Date: October 7

**Lecturer: Yutaka Kawasaki, Assistant Professor, The University of Tokyo**

Jainism emerged around the same time as Buddhism and is known for its strict renunciation practices. This session highlighted its key doctrines and both the similarities and differences with Buddhist teachings.

**Session 3: Zoroastrianism**  
Date: October 28

**Lecturer: Ken Aoki, Professor, Shizuoka University of Art and Culture**

Originating in ancient Persia, Zoroastrianism spread to northwestern





Prof. Kato



Prof. Kawasaki



Prof. Aoki



Prof. Hosaka

India around the beginning of the Common Era - coinciding with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The lecture examined its theology, history, and the process of its establishment in India.

#### Session 4: Islam

Date: December 2

Lecturer: Shunji Hosaka,  
Professor, Chuo University

The final session explored the history of Islam's arrival in India,

its development, and its influence on the decline of Indian Buddhism during the early 13th century. Special attention was given to historical accounts of conversions from Buddhism to Islam.

## 11 Activity “Symbolic Letter of Hope for 2025” Contest at Zojoji, the Chief Temple of the Jodo Buddhist Sect

Following last year's success, the “Symbolic Letter of Hope” contest was held once again, inviting participants to express their heartfelt wishes for the new year through a single kanji character. The public submission period ran from October 15 to December 15, 2024, and nearly 100 unique characters were submitted.

The selected character for 2025 was 「慈」 (ji), which expresses benevolence, compassion, and loving-kindness toward all beings.

The chosen character was unveiled on January 6, 2025, in a public ceremony held at the main plaza in front of Zojoji Temple's Main Hall. Renowned calligrapher Mr. Mori Suzuki performed a dynamic live calligraphy demonstration, using his entire body to imbue each brushstroke with care and intention. The moment his brush left the



Calligraphy Performance by Mr. Suzuki



# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

paper, the audience responded with heartfelt applause.

Rev. Yusho Watanabe, an executive official of Zojoji Temple, shared the following message: “The Buddha’s heart is said to be one of great compassion. May we all extend kindness and empathy to those

beside us.”

The calligraphy was displayed within the temple grounds until sunset on the same day, with many visitors posing for commemorative photos in front of it. The character 「慈」 will continue to be exhibited in the first-floor lobby of the Bukkyo Dendo Center Building through the end of 2025.



Mr. Suzuki

## 12 Activity “Experiencing Buddhism” Ueno and Yanaka Tour on February 8, 2025

The fifth installment of the “Experiencing Buddhism” series was held on February 8, 2025, offering participants a rich and immersive journey through the historic districts of Ueno and Yanaka in Tokyo.

The event featured visits to two significant temples: Tennoji Temple, a symbol of Yanaka, and Kan’eiji Temple, which is celebrating its 400th anniversary this year.

At Tennoji Temple, Rev. Kojun Yamaguchi, the temple’s head priest, welcomed participants into the main hall and shared stories of the temple’s deep roots in Yanaka’s history. He also provided rare insights into a sacred Buddhist statue housed behind the main altar. The group then walked to the remains of the former five-storied pagoda located within Yanaka Cemetery, where they also paid their respects at the gravesites of notable historical figures such as Eiichi Shibusawa and Yoshinobu Tokugawa—the last shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate.

At Kan’eiji Temple in nearby Ueno, participants gathered in the main



Tennoji Temple

hall, Konpon Chudo, where Rev. Gikyo Sugitani, an executive of the temple, shared the rich legacy of the temple, which once served as a major spiritual center during the Edo period. In a rare opportunity, the group was then guided into a room traditionally closed to the public believed to be the retirement quarters of Yoshinobu Tokugawa. The tour

concluded with a solemn visit to the Tokugawa family mausoleum.

Despite the winter chill, the day’s unique offerings left participants deeply moved and grateful for this meaningful encounter with Buddhist history and practice.



# 13 Elementary Course of Buddhist Lectures on “Japanese Buddhism – Learning from Scratch” Update for 2024

Activity

## Monthly Lectures Overview for 2024

Each month, this series focused on one of Japan’s major Buddhist schools, offering insights into the foundational teachings and the lives of the founding masters.

### First-Ever Nagoya Session!

For the first time, the Japanese Buddhism –Learning from Scratch” series was held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. After expanding the venue to Osaka in 2023, the 2024 sessions reached even more participants from surrounding regions. The series continued to receive positive feedback: “I now feel I understand the overall flow of Buddhist thought.” “It was very insightful to hear directly from priests of each sect - it really helped things make sense.”

Month	School	Lecturer (name listed without honorifics)
April	Tendai-shu	Jokan Ono, Head Priest, Fugen-ji Temple
May	Shingon-shu	Yonin Koike, Executive Director, Suma-dera Temple
June	Jodo-shu	Ryodo Kudo, Lecturer, Taisho University
July	Jodo Shinshu	Michio Sugiura, Head Priest, Shomyo-ji Temple
August	Ji-shu	Shoto Iwata, Head Priest, Manpuku-ji Temple
September	Rinzai-shu	Shinmyo Noda, Deputy Priest, Rinsho-ji Temple, Myoshin-ji branch)
October	Soto-shu	Zenchi Uno, Research Fellow, Soto Zen Research Center
November	Nichiren-shu	Kansho Tagai, Head Priest, Kyo-o-ji Temple



Rev. Koike (May)

## Special Session: Salvation or Enlightenment?

What does Japanese Buddhism ultimately offer - salvation or enlightenment?

To explore this profound question, a special dialogue was held between priests from the Jodo Shinshu and Soto Zen traditions. This event was part of the extended learning opportunities offered by the series.

Topics ranged from interpretations of desire and delusion to the role of priests in the modern world. The session offered a lively contrast

between sects that emphasize reliance on Amida Buddha’s compassion and those focused on personal awakening through meditation.

Feedback from attendees included the comment that

hearing priests from different traditions share their own perspectives on salvation and



Rev. Sugiura and Rev. Uno

enlightenment was refreshing and thought-provoking.”



# BDK JAPAN NEWS 2024

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Activity

## Learning Buddhism through Food: Enriching the Heart with Shojin Ryori Japanese Buddhist Vegetarian Cuisine Update for 2024



September Session



October Session



November Session



March Session

In fiscal year 2024, the “Learning Buddhism through Food: Enriching the Heart with Shojin Ryori Japanese Buddhist Vegetarian Cuisine” program was held four times, including one special session. Each session featured a collaboration between a Buddhist priest well-versed in Shojin cooking and a head chef from Japanese, Western, or Chinese culinary traditions, opening new doors to the creative possibilities of Buddhist cooking.

In each regular session, the first half began with a talk by a priest on the meaning and spirit of Shojin Ryori, followed by a live cooking demonstration of three priest-designed recipes by a professional chef. Participants enjoyed tasting the freshly prepared dishes as they learned techniques. In the latter half, the priest shared reflections on the mindful attitude toward receiving food. After a brief session of seated meditation (either traditional or chair-based), participants enjoyed a full-course meal - a creative fusion of the original recipes with professional enhancements.

This year, in response to participant

requests such as “I’d like to try a more in-depth meditation experience” and “I’d like to actually cook myself,” we introduced a special session. The first half featured a seated meditation session using traditional Zafu cushions under the guidance of a priest (with chairs available for those who preferred). After quieting the mind, participants listened to a talk on Shojin Ryori and then experienced hands-on cooking of three dishes, with direct instruction from both the priest and the chef. Participants supported one another in preparing the meal and enjoyed the freshly made dishes together.

The workshop welcomed a wide range

of participants, from their 20s to 80s, creating a warm and lively learning environment where both newcomers and experienced participants enjoyed learning side by side. The culinary creations of each chef were met with great acclaim. One participant remarked with delight, “Just a professional’s touch made it incredibly delicious!” - a sentiment shared by many who gained both enjoyment and insight from the experience.

For the latest information on the Shojin Ryori Workshop in fiscal year 2025, please visit our official website or follow us on social media.



# Workshop Schedule and Highlights

## 1st Session – September 28, 2024

(Venue: Bukkyo Dendo Center Building)

Priest: Rev. Jisho Asada

(Koyasan Shingon Shu)

Chef: Mr. Goki Sakaida

(Executive Chef, Chinese Restaurant Mita Bodaiju)



◆ Recipes: Creamy Molokheiya Soup / Shiitake & Carrot Salad / Deep-Fried Vegetables with Ginger

◆ Course Highlights: Seasonal trio appetizer plate, Steamed turnip with longan and tomato, Jasmine tea-infused dashi rice with ancient black rice fried rice ball, Dessert duo: Soy Milk Black Sesame Pudding & Candied Lotus Root Compote

## 2nd Session – October 26, 2024

(Venue: Tokyo Grand Hotel)

Priest: Rev. Koyu Inuma

(Deputy Head Priest, Fukushōji, Tendai Shu)

Chef: Mr. Takeo Matsushita

(Executive Chef, Tokyo Grand Hotel)



◆ Recipes: Sesame Fried Potatoes / Ginger Arrabbiata / Mushroom Porridge

◆ Course Highlights: Seasonal vegetable appetizers with ginger-basil dressing, Sautéed mushrooms, potatoes, and sweet potatoes, Tomato pasta using penne and reginetta, Coconut-flavored sweet bean and chestnut spring roll

## 3rd Session – November 30, 2024

(Venue: Japanese Restaurant Shisui)

Priest: Rev. Myosei Midorikawa (Tendai Shu)

Chef: Mr. Yuki Harano

(Executive Chef, Japanese Restaurant Shisui)



◆ Recipes: Sesame-Coated Fried Potatoes / Five-Color Namasu / Konjac Tempura

◆ Course Highlights: First tray: Appetizer trio including Sesame-Coated Potatoes and Five-Color Namasu, Second tray: Marinated tofu and simmered wheat gluten, Third tray: Shojin-style rice, clear soup, and three side dishes Dessert: Mont Blanc Tiramisu

## Special Session – March 8, 2025

(Venue: Bukkyo Dendo Center Building)

Priest: Rev. Chiken Kawaguchi

(Deputy Head Priest, Kōun-in, Soto Shu)

Chef: Mr. Goki Sakaida

(Executive Chef, Chinese Restaurant Mita Bodaiju)



◆ Hands-On Recipes: Pressed Tofu and Rapeseed Greens Salad, Stir-Fried Nama-Fu with Colorful Beans and Doubanjiang (as “Mock Beef”), Shojin Shumai Dumplings (served with steamed rice, soup, and dessert)





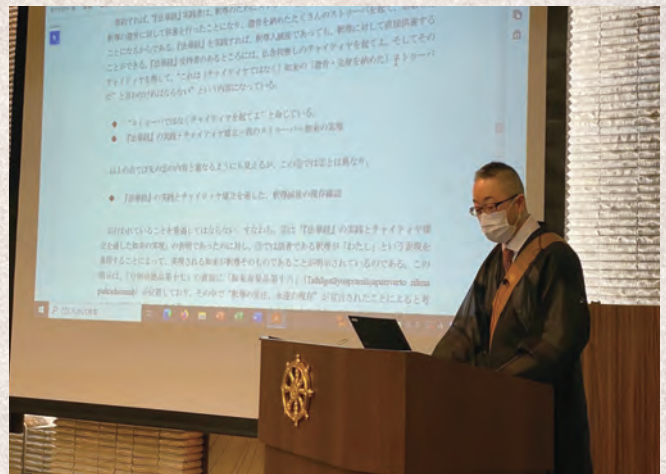
## Activity 15 2024 BDK Symposium

### The 35th BDK Symposium

“Where Is the Buddha? – Exploring Stupas, Pure Lands, and Buddha-Nature” (July 19, 2024, at Bukkyo Dendo Center Building)



Rev. Inoue



Rev. Suzuki

The 35th BDK Symposium brought together two distinguished scholars and Buddhist priests - Rev. Akira Inoue, an expert in stupa worship and a Jodo Shinshu priest, and Rev. Ryutai Suzuki, a specialist in Buddha-nature thought and a Nichiren priest - to explore the multifaceted theme: “Where is the Buddha?”

The symposium examined three core perspectives on the presence of the Buddha: the ancient Indian concept of the stupa, widely shared across early Buddhist traditions; the Pure Land teachings, which emphasize the Buddha as an external presence; and the doctrine of Buddha-nature, which regards the Buddha as residing within all beings.

Rev. Inoue opened the session with a visually rich presentation featuring numerous photographs of ancient Buddhist sites across India, offering deep insights into the development and symbolism of stupa worship. Rev. Suzuki followed with a lecture highlighting new interpretations of stupa devotion as depicted in the Lotus Sutra, incorporating recent archaeological discoveries to shed light on evolving understandings of the text.

The second half featured a dialogue between the two speakers, enriched by questions from the audience. This interactive exchange stimulated thoughtful reflection and discussion

on the relevance of these ideas in both historical and contemporary contexts.

Approximately 100 participants joined the event in person and online, engaging with the cutting edge of Buddhist scholarship and experiencing the dynamic interplay between tradition and interpretation.





## The 36th BDK Symposium

### “Good Fortune at Work! Practical Teachings from Buddhism”

(August 22, 2024, at Reference Ekihigashi Building, Hakata, Fukuoka)

The 36th BDK Symposium marked a milestone as the first-ever BDK event held on Kyushu island. The lecture featured Rev. Koji Chiba, President of Tohoku Fukushi University and instructor for the “The Teaching of Buddha for Business” program also hosted by BDK, speaking on the theme: “Good Fortune at Work! Practical Teachings from Buddhism.”

A total of 63 participants - 30 onsite and 33 online - joined the event, reflecting widespread interest in how Buddhist wisdom can be applied to

professional life.

Rev. Chiba emphasized that Buddhism teaches us how to transform negative karmic conditions, offering a path toward good fortune. Central to his message was the practice of the Four Immeasurables: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. He explained that these virtues, when practiced quietly and without seeking recognition, can lead to meaningful change in both one’s mindset and circumstances.



Rev. Chiba

The lecture was clear, accessible, and deeply resonant, providing attendees with actionable insights rooted in Buddhist philosophy for improving their daily work lives.

## The 37th BDK Symposium

### “Words That Guide Our Lives”

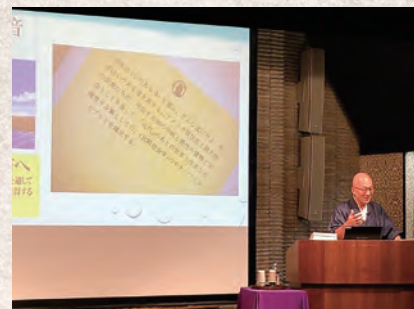
(October 5, 2024, at Bukkyo Dendo Center Building)

The 37th BDK Symposium welcomed Rev. Issho Fujita, a Soto Zen priest and one of the authors of Michishirube: Ninniku (Endurance), a publication by BDK. His lecture, titled “Words That Guide Our Lives – Sayings That Sustain Buddhist Practitioners,” drew an audience of approximately 100 participants in-person and online.

Rev. Fujita introduced profound and evocative phrases he referred to as “words that open the abyss beneath our feet,” presenting them from a fresh and often unexpected

perspective. Drawing from a rich array of sources, he explored how certain words and teachings have served as deep sources of inspiration and introspection throughout the lives of Buddhist practitioners.

He concluded the talk with this powerful reflection: “When you are earnestly engaged in self-inquiry, the right words will appear before you—even if you are not desperately searching for them. But unless the strings of your heart are kept properly tuned through daily living, you may not resonate with those



Rev. Fujita

words when they come. So rather than being overly concerned with others, I encourage you to explore your personal questions in your own way.”

The symposium offered attendees not only meaningful guidance but also a contemplative space to connect with the transformative power of Buddhist language and insight.



Take a Break



## Introducing Voices of Zen Monastics, a Special Publication Commemorating BDK's 60th Anniversary

In February 2025, BDK published *Voices of Zen Monastics*, a special edition in the Michishirube series, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the organization's founding.

This commemorative volume features selected Dharma talks from Zen monastics who have contributed to the Michishirube series over the years. Additionally, four prominent Zen teachers; Ven. Hakudo Kondo (Chief Abbot of the Obaku School), Ven. Nanrei Yokota (Chief Abbot of the Engakuji branch of the Rinzai School), Rev. Taisyu Kawano (Rinzai School, Kenchoji branch), and Rev. Shoyo Yoshimura (Soto School) have contributed brand-new Dharma talks exclusively for this publication.

Each of these four teachers explores Zen expressions through their unique perspectives, making this an ideal volume for deepening one's understanding of Zen thought and practice. Readers are invited to experience the rich and diverse world of Zen as taught in the Soto, Rinzai, and Obaku traditions.

◎This publication is available for purchase through the BDK official website's online store.







## BDK Affiliated Organization Activities

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BDK AMERICA

BDK HAWAII

BDK CANADA

BDK MEXICO

BDK SOUTH AMERICA

BDK ASIA

BDK TAIWAN

BDK THAILAND

BDK EUROPE

BDK UK

BDK POLAND



# BDK Affiliated Organization Activities

## World Map & Contact Information



### BDK EUROPE

1

EKO-Haus der Japanischen Kultur e.V.  
Brüggener Weg 6, 40547 Düsseldorf, GERMANY  
Tel: +49(211)577918-0 Fax: +49(211)577918-219  
E-mail: bdk@eko-haus.de  
<http://www.eko-haus.de>



### BDK U.K.

2

c/o Mitutoyo(UK)Ltd. Joule Road, West Point  
Business Park, Andover, Hampshire SP10 3UX U.K.  
Tel: +44 1264-353123 Fax: +44 1264-354883  
E-mail: BDK.UK@mitutoyo.co.uk



### BDK POLAND

3

c/o Mitutoyo Polska Sp.z o.o.  
ul. Graniczna 8A 54-610 Wrocław, POLAND  
Tel: +48(71)354 83 50 Fax: +48(71)354 83 55



### BDK CANADA

4

c/o Mitutoyo Canada Inc. 2121 Meadowvale Blvd.  
Mississauga, ON, CANADA L5N 5N1  
Tel: +1(905)821-6202 Fax: +1(905)821-4968  
E-mail: honjo@bdkcanada.com  
<http://www.bdkcanada.com>



### BDK AMERICA

5

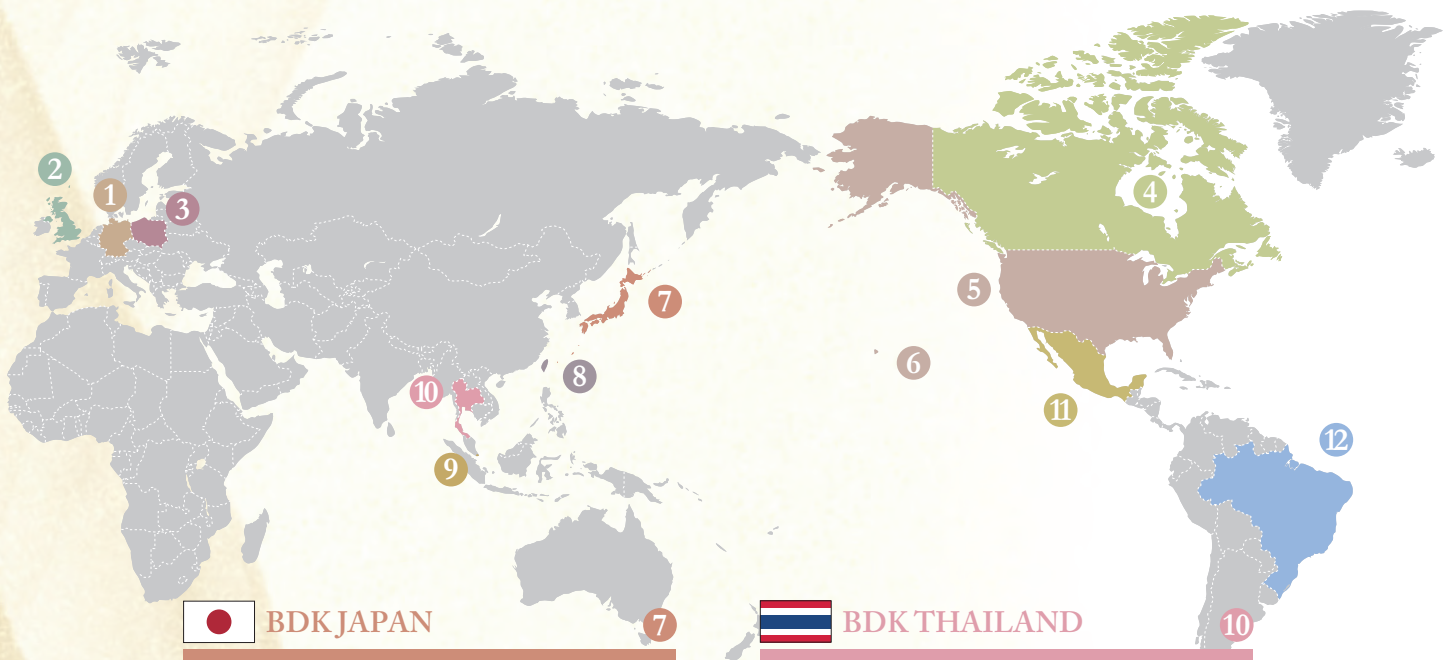
1675 School Street,  
Moraga, CA 94556 U.S.A.  
Tel: +1(925)388-0067 Fax: +1(925)388-0331  
<http://www.bdkamerica.org>



### BDK HAWAII

6

1750 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 403  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96826, U.S.A.  
Tel: +1(808)942-1511  
E-mail: bdkshi@hotmail.com  
<http://www.bdkhawaii.com>



### BDK JAPAN

7

3-14, Shiba 4-chome, Minato-ku,  
Tokyo, JAPAN 108-0014  
Tel: +81(3)3455-5851 Fax: +81(3)3798-2758  
E-mail: bdk@bdk.or.jp  
<https://www.bdk.or.jp>



### BDK TAIWAN

8

c/o Mitutoyo Taiwan Co., Ltd.  
4F., No.71, Zhouzi St., Neihu Dist.,  
Taipei City 114, TAIWAN  
Tel: +886(2)5573-5913 Fax: +886(2)8752-3267  
E-mail: bdktaiwan@yahoo.com  
<https://www.bdk.tw>



### BDK ASIA

9

c/o Mitutoyo Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd.  
24 Kallang Avenue, Mitutoyo Building,  
Singapore, 339415, SINGAPORE  
Tel: +65 6294-2211 Fax: +65 6299-6666  
E-mail: bdk@mitutoyo.com.sg  
<https://bdkasia.org>



### BDK THAILAND

10

2327, Onnut Road, Kwaeng Onnut,  
Khet Suanluang, Bangkok, 10250, Thailand  
Tel: +66-2080-3500



### BDK MEXICO

11

Protonagación Eugenia No. 17, Colonia Nápoles,  
Alcaldía Benito Juárez, CDMX, C.P.03810, MEXICO  
Tel: 52[55]3130-4610  
Email: contacto@ekocj.com  
<http://ekocj.com>



### BDK SOUTH AMERICA

12

a/c Mitutoyo Sul Americana Ltda.  
Avenida Mimes, 25 - Jardim Ermida I  
CEP: 13212-216 - Jundiaí - SP, Brasil  
Tel: +55(11)4746-5813  
E-mail: bdk@mitutoyo.com.br





*Washington Ekoji Obon Festival*

2024 was a busy year for BDK America as we continued to translate and publish Tripiṭaka texts, distribute The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB) and other books, support Ekoji temple in Washington, D.C., and administer the Numata Programs for Buddhist Studies at major universities.

We published two new texts, Nagarjuna's Treatise on the Ten Grounds, vol. 1, and the Great Cessation and Contemplation, vol. 1. Over 2,200 copies of Tripiṭaka translations were sold through Amazon.com, and there was a monthly average of 1,500 downloads of pdf versions from our website. Although Buddhist texts are difficult to read and understand, they are amazingly popular with the public.

We also distributed over 7,000 copies of TTOB with orders from the U.S. military remaining high. Of the other books published by BDK, we shipped

over 13,000 copies, and the most popular titles were Messages from the Buddha (3,745) and A Teaching a Day (5,653). In order to promote TTOB, we developed a YouTube channel featuring video presentations.

Check it out at: <https://www.youtube.com/@BDKAmerica>

Founded by Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, Ekoji Temple in Washington D.C. is affiliated with the Buddhist Churches of America and receives substantial support from BDK America. It completed major repairs and now has a commercial grade kitchen that can serve the public. Its annual Obon Festival in July is very popular in the D.C. area and the temple premises are regularly packed to capacity.

The Numata Programs in Buddhist Studies provide major support for graduate programs at universities such as Harvard, Princeton and UC Berkeley. Canadian universities

include McMaster, Toronto and McGill. Faculty coordinators of Numata Programs regularly meet at the annual conference of the American Academy of Religion, which was convened in San Diego, CA in 2024. After years of preparatory support, BDK established a new Numata Program at Yale University in May. The Numata Programs comprise the single biggest source of financial support for the graduate study of Buddhism at American and Canadian universities.

The annual Toshihide Numata Book Award is now recognized as one of the most prestigious honors a scholar can receive in the field of Buddhist Studies. An independent committee appointed by the Numata Center for Buddhist Studies at UC Berkeley selected Professor Matthew Kapstein, Professor Emeritus, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études and PSL Research University, Paris for his work, Tibetan



Manuscripts and Early Printed Books (Cornell University Press). Mr. Brian Nagata of BDK America presented the Award to Professor Kapstein at a ceremony held on November 1, 2024 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. A symposium followed Kapstein's keynote address, *The Buddhists Behind the Book*, and featured responses by Janet Gyatso (Harvard University), Trent Walker (University of Michigan) and Sangseraima Ujeed (University of Michigan).

For 2025, BDK America is developing a new Japanese Buddhism Field Study Program to encourage graduate students to study Buddhism in Japan. The program is open to graduate students from the U. S. and Canada and will enable them to visit temples, attend lectures by priests and scholars, and gain experience at important Buddhist sites. This new initiative aims at inspiring the next generation of scholars of Japanese Buddhism.



*Coordinators of Numata Programs*

BDK America thus looks forward to 2025 as another year in which we promote better understandings of Buddhism through time tested as well as new programs.

## BDK Hawaii



The year 2024 marked a major milestone for BDK Hawaii because of the sale of our old apartment building and the acquisition of a new office. In 1991, Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata and BDK Japan financed the construction of an 18-unit apartment building that provided financial support for BDK Hawaii for many years. In recent years, however, the building required major repairs, and we therefore decided to sell the building. The sale was completed in November 2024, and we acquired a new office in the Century Center building on the edge of Waikiki. Our new address is 1750 Kalakaua Ave., #403, Honolulu, HI 96826. Our telephone number and email address remain the same. A dedication ceremony was held in February 2025.

Our last board of directors meeting held in our old building took place on March 1, 2024. Our directors and advisors remain the same, with the exception of Harumi Aoki, who



*Opening Ceremony for New BDK Hawaii Office (Speech by Dr. Tanabe)*

retired in September.

We are slowly recovering from the effects of the Covid pandemic, and we managed to distribute over 1,000 copies of *The Teaching of Buddha* (TTOB) to hotels. In 2023, hotel distribution was less than 300. The total number of TTOB distributed to temples, gift shops and individuals

remains modest at 3,188.

BDK books other than TTOB continue to be popular, especially the pamphlet, *Messages From the Buddha*. *Learning the Wisdom of Enlightenment* and *Buddha is Our Teacher* were also in high demand. We distributed over 3,500 of these books, which exceeded the number



of TTOB.

Once again, we sponsored a presentation at the Hawaii Book and Music Festival. In September 2024, Christina Moon spoke about her book, *Three Years on the Great Mountain: A Memoir of Zen and Fearlessness*. This book is Moon's memoir about her training at Chozenji, a Rinzai temple in Honolulu, and it invites readers not only into the temple and its practices, but also into Moon's inner feelings and thoughts as she underwent her rigorous training.

The BDK-Fujitani Interfaith Program invited two university students to share their experiences and impressions about an ecumenical pilgrimage to Israel. Administered by Chaminade University, a Catholic



*BDK Hawaii Board of Directors Meeting*

institution in Honolulu, the BDK-Fujitani Interfaith Program continues the work of the late Yoshiaki Fujitani, the former Bishop of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, who also served as President of BDK Hawaii. BDK Hawaii works not only to promote Buddhism, but also to increase understandings of other religious traditions with

the awareness that we are all interconnected.

With the sale of our old building and the acquisition of our new office, BDK Hawaii is entering a new chapter in our work of promoting better understandings of Buddhism and better relations among the people of Hawaii.

## BDK Mexico



The year 2024 marked a significant milestone for BDK Mexico with the official establishment of EKO Publishing Division, and the successful release of our first original publication. Our bold debut project was a Spanish-language edition of the Heart Sutra (*Prajñāpāramitā-Hṛdaya Sūtra*).

The challenge was immense: how can one convey the essence of śūnyatā -“emptiness”—through language, when words alone often fall short? We approached the question from an experiential perspective, asking ourselves: Could we create a book that allows readers to feel emptiness rather than

merely read about it? This spirit of creative exploration led to a unique, sensory-driven publication, made possible through the collaboration of artists from diverse fields, including calligraphy, dance, photography, and poetry.

To reflect the experiential nature of the book, the launch event was held in the form of a live performance at Mexico's National Center for Culture and the Arts—formerly a presidential residence. One of the highlights was a stunning calligraphy demonstration by Mr. Toshiaki Iida, a 90-year-old calligrapher, who inscribed the opening lines of the Heart



*Calligraphy Demonstration by Mr. Iida*



Sutra on a massive sheet of Washi paper. The audience then joined together to carry the paper, physically experiencing the interconnectedness and mutual support the sutra teaches. Another unforgettable moment was a butoh dancer, whose body was inscribed with the entire sutra like Hoichi the Earless, expressing its spirit through movement.

In partnership with Mexico's Ministry of Culture, we also presented Kamishibai (Japanese picture storytelling) performances at national bookstores and government-sponsored events. One highlight was Buddha: The Life of

Shakyamuni, a Kamishibai created through a collaboration between Tezuka Productions and BDK. Through such performances, we shared the values of compassion and peaceful coexistence, helping to foster empathy—a vital skill in our increasingly divided world.

We also distributed approximately 5,000 copies of The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB) at universities and cultural events. Looking ahead to 2025, we plan to exhibit at two major international book fairs. Through compelling publications and creative outreach, we remain committed to sharing the heart of the Buddha's teachings and



*TTOB Distribution after the Kamishibai Event (Rev. Yokoo)*

promoting a spirit of harmony and coexistence.

## BDK South America



*August Sosensai (Rev. Landin)*

Following a long period of inactivity due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the relocation of our office from Suzano City to Jundiaí City, approximately 60 kilometers north of central São Paulo, BDK South America resumed its activities in 2024 under a new three-member

team. The primary focus has been the distribution of The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB). One of the highlights of the year was the revival of Sosensai the Festival of Ancestors at Mitutoyo South America, where BDK South America is located. This event had



*New BDK South America Members  
From left to right: Mr. Kato, Ms. Gonçalves, and Mr. Yamashita*

been suspended for several years but was relaunched in 2024. In April, a service was held with a Dharma talk by a priest from Brazil's Kinkakuji Temple, and in August, a second service was led by a teacher from Nambu Hongwanji, the South American Headquarters of the



Hongwanji tradition.

For many employees, this was their first time participating in the Festival of Ancestors, which was originally introduced to foster respect for one's forebears and to share the importance

of Buddhist values. Although rooted in Buddhist tradition, the idea of honoring family and ancestors resonated deeply with Brazilian participants, who found both comfort and connection in the Buddhist

perspective on life and remembrance. While our activities remain modest in scale, we are committed to continuing our efforts with sincerity, and we welcome the ongoing guidance and support of our community.

## BDK Taiwan



On December 2, 2024, BDK Taiwan held its General Assembly at the Grand Hotel in Taipei. The meeting included the official communication of matters from the Ministry of the Interior, which oversees nonprofit organizations, as well as a report summarizing the distribution results of The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB) over the past five years.

In accordance with our bylaws, which limit the term of the Chairperson to a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms (a total of four years), a leadership transition was required. Mr. Chang Ping-Huang, a noted calligrapher and long-serving Chairperson who also leads the Taipei Buddhist Studies Association, concluded his tenure. He was succeeded by Mr. Zhan Jun-De, General Manager of Xinglong Trading. Mr. Chang will continue to support BDK Taiwan in an advisory capacity following his retirement from the chairmanship.

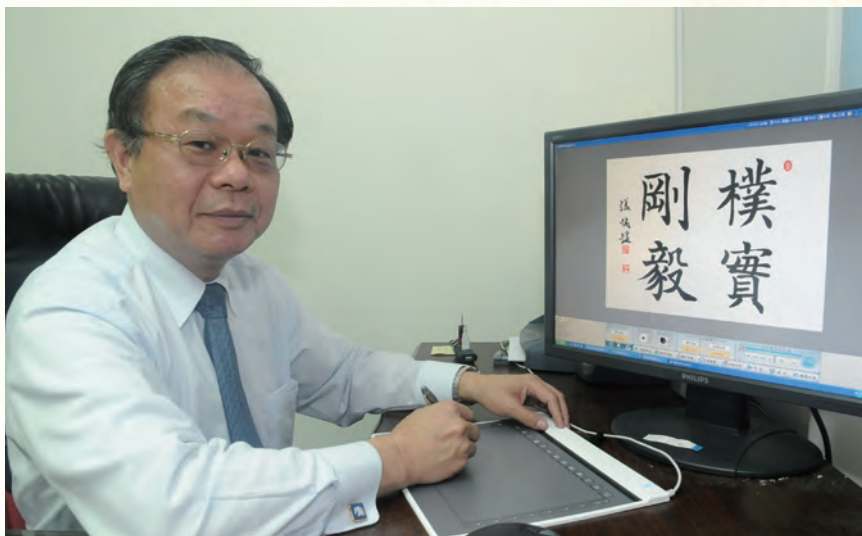
In 2024, BDK Taiwan launched a new initiative to distribute the booklet "My Path," which features a lecture in which Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, the founder of BDK, reflects on his life's journey and the inspiration behind establishing the organization. With the wish to help more people understand his aspirations and vision, we began



*Sie-Tian Temple*



*"My Path" Donated to Sie-Tian Temple*



*Mr. Chang Ping-Huang*

distributing the booklet in Chinese, English, and Japanese editions.

As a first step, 200 copies were placed at Sie-Tian Temple in Yilan County, a site dedicated to the historical Chinese figure Guan Yu from the late Han and early Three Kingdoms period. The temple welcomed the initiative and kindly displayed the booklets along with

copies of TTOB on their bookshelf for visitors to freely take home and read.

In a country where Buddhism is widely embraced and temples abound, BDK Taiwan hopes to build on this momentum by expanding the reach of "My Path" and continuing to share the heart of Buddhism with the public.



In April 2024, a delegation from BDK Japan headquarters and BDK Asia visited Thailand on a goodwill mission aimed at promoting the teachings of Buddhism and strengthening partnerships with key figures and organizations within the country.

During the visit, the delegation was warmly welcomed by Ms. Saowanee, a board member of the Thai Hotels Association. This meeting provided a meaningful opportunity to reinforce collaboration between BDK Asia and Thailand's hospitality industry. Mitutoyo Thailand, a member of the Thai Hotels Association, has been actively supporting efforts to place The Teaching of Buddha (TTOB) in hotel rooms, helping both guests and staff connect with the wisdom of Buddhism.

The delegation also visited Mahamakut Buddhist University, where they met with the Vice President and other representatives. The meeting sparked enthusiastic discussions on future cooperation in the field of Buddhist education. Since 2019, Mitutoyo Thailand has distributed copies of TTOB to graduates during the university's commencement ceremonies, offering spiritual inspiration as they embark on their paths forward.

In December 2024, BDK Asia participated in a seminar titled Capacity Building for Buddhist Educational Institutions in the Central Region, held in Ayutthaya. During the event, 496 Thai-language copies of TTOB were distributed to Buddhist monks.

This initiative supports Buddhist education by encouraging the use of TTOB as both a spiritual and

practical resource in the lives and duties of the sangha.



Mr. Sarasalin (left) at Mahamakut University



Mr. Matsuike (right) at Thai Hotel Association



Ms. Saowanee (from Thai Hotels Association in the middle) and BDK Delegation



New BDK Thailand Entrance Display





Garden Festival at EKO-Haus

As a new initiative in 2024, BDK Europe organized a “Temple Summer School” for children on August 25. Ten participants joined the event, which featured sessions on Japanese culture in a traditional Japanese-style building on the temple grounds, a Buddhist story session in the main hall, and hands-on experience ringing the temple bell. Many of the children had little prior exposure to temples, but they enjoyed a meaningful and interactive day, actively engaging in Q&A and other activities.

On September 14, BDK Europe revived the long-awaited Garden Festival for the first time since 2018, welcoming approximately

900 visitors. We had beautiful weather, and the event featured a vibrant program in the temple garden, including Taiko drum performances, songs and dances by kindergarteners, Koto and Jiuta Shamisen music, Japanese classical dance, and Naginata martial arts demonstrations. Inside the EKO-Haus, exhibitions on ikebana (flower arrangement) and calligraphy were also held, offering further cultural enrichment.

On November 23, the Hōonkō Memorial Service was held in a hybrid format. Monastics from Germany, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Japan participated in the ceremony, which included the

chanting of Shōshin Nembutsuge, a recitation of Goden-shō (The Biography of Shinran), and an English Dharma talk by Mr. Jan-Mark Nottelmann-Feil of the EKO-Haus. The service was attended online by individuals from around the world, including Japan, the United States, India, and Panama.





## Egao (Smiling Face)

We probably do not know what our ordinary face looks like.

Because we look in the mirror every day, it seems that most of us think we know at least our own faces. However, the face reflected in the mirror tends to reflect your best face. Those who have small eyes will open their eyes wider. Those who have large mouths will make their mouths smaller, unconsciously putting on their best face.

When we pose for photographs, we make a presentable face after saying “cheese.” I think that if we live every day with the face that we see in the mirror or pose for in photographs, we will not fight with others and can live with a truly good feeling.

However, the moment we leave the mirror or a camera, our faces change into frowning, disagreeable countenances.

We can well imagine how much relaxation a person’s smiling face will give to people around him/her and how beautiful he/she will appear to others! A proverb says, “Fortune comes to visit the gateway of smiles.”

Taken from “Sasaeatte” authored by the late Rev. Toshihide Numata, the second chairperson of BDK