



## BSC Summer Session 2022

Held In-person and via Zoom

### *Jōdo Shinshū and the Making of American Buddhism* *Is Shin Buddhism the foundation of American Buddhism?*



**Dr. Scott Mitchell**, author of *Mid-Century Modern Buddhism*, examines Buddhism in the United States before, during, and after World War II, when Nisei Jodo Shinshu Buddhists reacted to the trauma of racial and religious discrimination by laying claim to an American identity inclusive of their religious identity. In the pages of temple-supported magazines, such as the *Berkeley Bussei*, Nisei argued that Buddhism was both what made them good Americans but also what they had to contribute to America, a rational and scientific religion of peace.



**Dr. Mitchell** is the current Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. He is a scholar of Buddhism in the West, Pure Land Buddhism, and Buddhist Modernism. He has taught classes on “American Buddhism” and “Buddhism and Popular Culture” for the past fifteen years.

**June 20-24, 2022      6 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

(Times are Hawaii Standard Time)

**Monday, June 20, 2022**

6-8 pm Opening Service and Lecture: “The Buddhist Movement in America”

**Tuesday, June 21, 2022**

6-8 pm Lecture: “Buddhist Modernism, Shin Modernism”

**Wednesday, June 22, 2022**

6-8 pm Lecture: “The Nisei Problem”

**Thursday, June 23, 2022**

6-8 pm Lecture: “Transpacific Buddhist Crossing”

**Friday, June 24, 2022**

6-8 pm Closing Service and Lecture: “The Foundations of American Buddhism”

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**Free Registration Required** (in-person space limited)

Use this link: <http://bit.ly/bscsummersession2022>

Or contact the BSC Office at (808) 973-6555

For more information, select this link: <https://bschawaii.org>, or contact the Buddhist Study Center  
**Suggested tax-deductible donation, 5 sessions \$50, single sessions \$10. Checks made out to HHMH.**

Direct questions to: **Buddhist Study Center, 1436 University Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822**  
**Phone: (808) 973-6555, fax: (808)973-6551, e-mail: [bscassist@honpahi.org](mailto:bscassist@honpahi.org)**



In this series of lectures, I will draw on the research for my forthcoming book, *Mid-Century Modern Buddhism*. The book is about Buddhism in the United States before, during, and after World War II, when Nisei Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists reacted to the trauma of racial and religious discrimination by laying claim to an American identity inclusive of their religious identity. In the pages of temple-supported magazines such as the *Berkeley Bussei*, Nisei argued that Buddhism was both what made them good Americans but also what they had to contribute to America, a rational and scientific religion of peace. And whereas this rhetorical work was often done in the *Bussei*, my research also looks at the behind-the-scenes work that made these publications possible. The *Bussei* was one among many publication projects that were part of educational and propagational programs embedded within Japanese American Buddhist communities and connected via national and transnational networks that shaped and allowed for the spread of Buddhism for generations to come.

In making communities, in starting magazines and publication projects, in hosting scholars and conventions, in organizing translation and scholarly projects, Nisei Buddhists built religious infrastructure. Without this infrastructure,

the Buddhist modernists, Beat poets, and white converts who are usually credited with popularizing Buddhism in the later twentieth century would not have had places to publish their ideas and communities in which to learn Buddhist practice. Religious infrastructure is a necessary precondition for the spread and popularization of Buddhism; and in the case of the United States, this infrastructure was first built by immigrants and their children, by Japanese American Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists.

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## Dr. Scott Mitchell

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Dr. Mitchell is the author or co-author of a number of books:

*Buddhism in America: Global Religion, Local Contexts* (2016)

*Buddhism Beyond Borders*, co-edited with Natalie Quli (2015)

*Oxford Handbook on American Buddhism*, co-edited with Ann Gleig (forthcoming)

His next book, *Mid-Century Modern Buddhism*, focuses on the Berkeley Bussei and the origins of American Buddhism in the Japanese American Jodo Shinshu community. It will be published by Oxford University Press in 2023.



## Recommended preparation

1. *Buddhism in America*, especially part one, Scott Mitchell
2. *American Sutra*, by Duncan Ryūken Williams
3. *Issei Buddhists in the Americas*, edited by Duncan Williams and Tomoe Moriya, especially the essays by Lori Pierce and Tomoe Moriya
4. *Immigrants to the Pure Land*, by Michihiro Ama
5. Video: Mid-Century Modern: Jōdo Shinshū and the Making of American Buddhism  
(<https://buddhism.arts.ubc.ca/2021/04/07/video-mid-century-modern-jodo-shinshu-and-the-making-of-american-buddhism-with-qa/>)



## BSC Summer Session

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**Buddhist Study Center (BSC)**

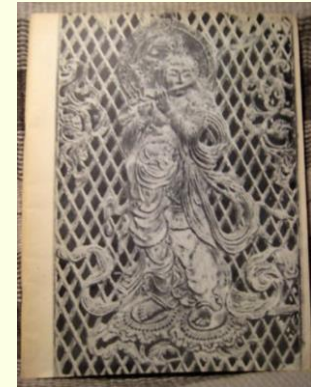
1436 University Avenue

Honolulu, HI 96822

**48th Annual  
Buddhist Study Center**

**In-Person & Online  
Summer Session**

**“Jōdo Shinshū and  
the Making of  
American Buddhism”  
Dr. Scott Mitchell**



**Monday - Friday  
June 20-24, 2022**

**6-8pm HST**

(9-11pm PST)

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