

## Introductory Note

**Mark Unno**

University of Oregon

BEGINNING WITH 2004, the Center for Humanities, Religion, and Science at Ryukoku University of Japan; the Institute of Buddhist Studies; and the University of Oregon have been the central collaborators on research into the field of Buddhism and psychotherapy. Of these three institutions, the biggest driving force has been the Center for Humanities, Religion, and Science at Ryukoku University and its current director, Professor Naoki Nabeshima—recipient of three consecutive Twenty-First Century Center of Excellence grants from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology—and the largest contributor in terms of funding and resources. Also key have been the Institute of Buddhist Studies and its dean, Dr. Richard Payne, and various units within the University of Oregon including the Department of Religious Studies, the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, and the Oregon Humanities Center. In addition, the Institute for Philosophy & Religion, Boston University, and the then director, Dr. David Eckel, have also been instrumental in our collaboration as the host of the first of three international conferences held biannually from 2004 to 2008, the second and third conferences having been held at the University of Oregon and Ryukoku University, respectively.

From these efforts, three edited volumes have been published: *Buddhism and Psychotherapy across Cultures: Theories and Practices*, edited by Mark Unno (2006); *Shi to ai: inochi e no fukai rikai wo motomete* (Death and Life: In Search of a Deeper Understanding), edited by Naoki Nabeshima (2007); and *Kokoro no yamai to shūkyōsei: fukai keichō* (Psychopathology and Religiousness: Deep Listening), edited by Osamu Kuramitsu, Naoki Nabeshima, Yasunobu Okada, and Mark Unno (2008). Currently, two further volumes are planned, one each in English and Japanese. For

the forthcoming volume in English, we will be drawing upon papers presented at the previous two conferences in 2006 and 2008.

However, rather than include all papers from these two conferences in the upcoming volume, we have decided to publish a select number in the present issue of *Pacific World*. These include Hogen Bays' essay on silence, Takanori Sugioka's exposition on the dialectic of the three vows as found in the thought of Shinran, Veena Howard's on Gandhi and Buddhism, Naoki Nabeshima's examination of the story of Ajātaśatru from a Shin Buddhist perspective, and Marie Yoshida's analysis of family systems theory in light of the story of Ajātaśatru. All of these papers were part of the University of Oregon conference in 2006 except for that of Takanori Sugioka, which was presented in Kyoto in 2008.

The first three, by Bays, Sugioka, and Howard, do not directly address current methods and issues in clinical psychotherapy. However, they were very significant for the interdisciplinary elucidation they brought to our conference efforts, providing key points of reference and comparison from the perspectives of Zen Buddhist practice, Shin Buddhist thought, and Buddhism and Hinduism in the context of the work of Gandhi as spiritual and socio-political healer.

The last two essays provide in-depth examinations of the story of Prince Ajātaśatru involving his regicide of his own father as well as imprisonment of his mother. Through the work of Japanese clinicians Heisaku Kosawa and Keigo Okonogi, this episode, a cornerstone of Shin Buddhism, has also become integral to the narratives of Japanese psychiatry and psychotherapy. Nabeshima and Yoshida's studies further our understanding of the significance of this story in Buddhist and family therapy contexts. These two papers, we felt, would be most illuminating for the readers of *Pacific World*.

Our critical, interdisciplinary inquiry has brought to light what has turned out to be the complex intersection of multiple Buddhisms and psychotherapies, the fruits of which will be borne out more fully in our upcoming edited volumes. However, the selection of essays presented here stand on their own for the contributions they have made to our ongoing investigations.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Dr. Richard Payne and Natalie Quli of the Institute of Buddhist Studies for all of their expert editorial work on this selection of papers.