



The Workshop

Listening to the Buddhists in Our Backyard

Haruka So, Lesley Tan, Loulou Sloss, Melissa
Damasceno, Olivia Yang, and Taylor Dunn



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Land and Lineage Acknowledgment

To read the full acknowledgement, visit plumvillage.org/key-practice-texts/the-five-earth-touchings/



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LISTENING TO THE BUDDHISTS IN OUR BACKYARD

Melissa Damasceno, Taylor Dunn, Loulou Sloss,
Haruka So, Lesley Tan, Olivia Yang

Opening

Land and Lineage Acknowledgment
Introducing Our Project

Presentation

Temple Visits
Conversations with Scholars
Creating Meaningful Work
Reflections

Gallery Walk and Booths

Buddhist Pedagogy
Engaged Buddhism
Merit Economy
Language as Cultural Maintenance
Youth Groups

Coming Back Together

Group Discussion
Closing

Introductions

Taylor, Melissa, Haruka, Lesley, Olivia, and Loulou



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The Workshop

Made possible by the Tang Institute at Phillips Academy



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Project Roadmap

Initial Research

See, Think, Wonder
Assigned readings



Week 1

Week 2



Visiting Temples

Observation, engagement

Work time

Research, interviews,
revisits, processing

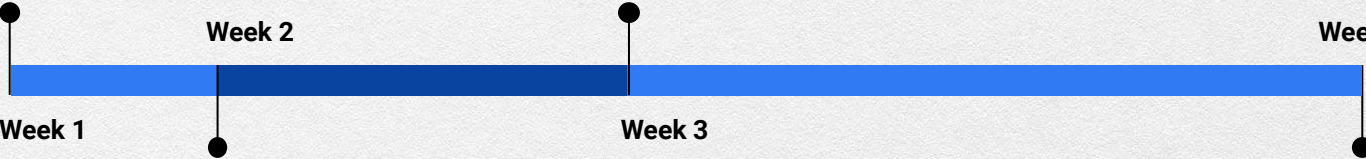


Week 3

Week 9



Online Conference and
In-person Symposium



01

Temple Visits



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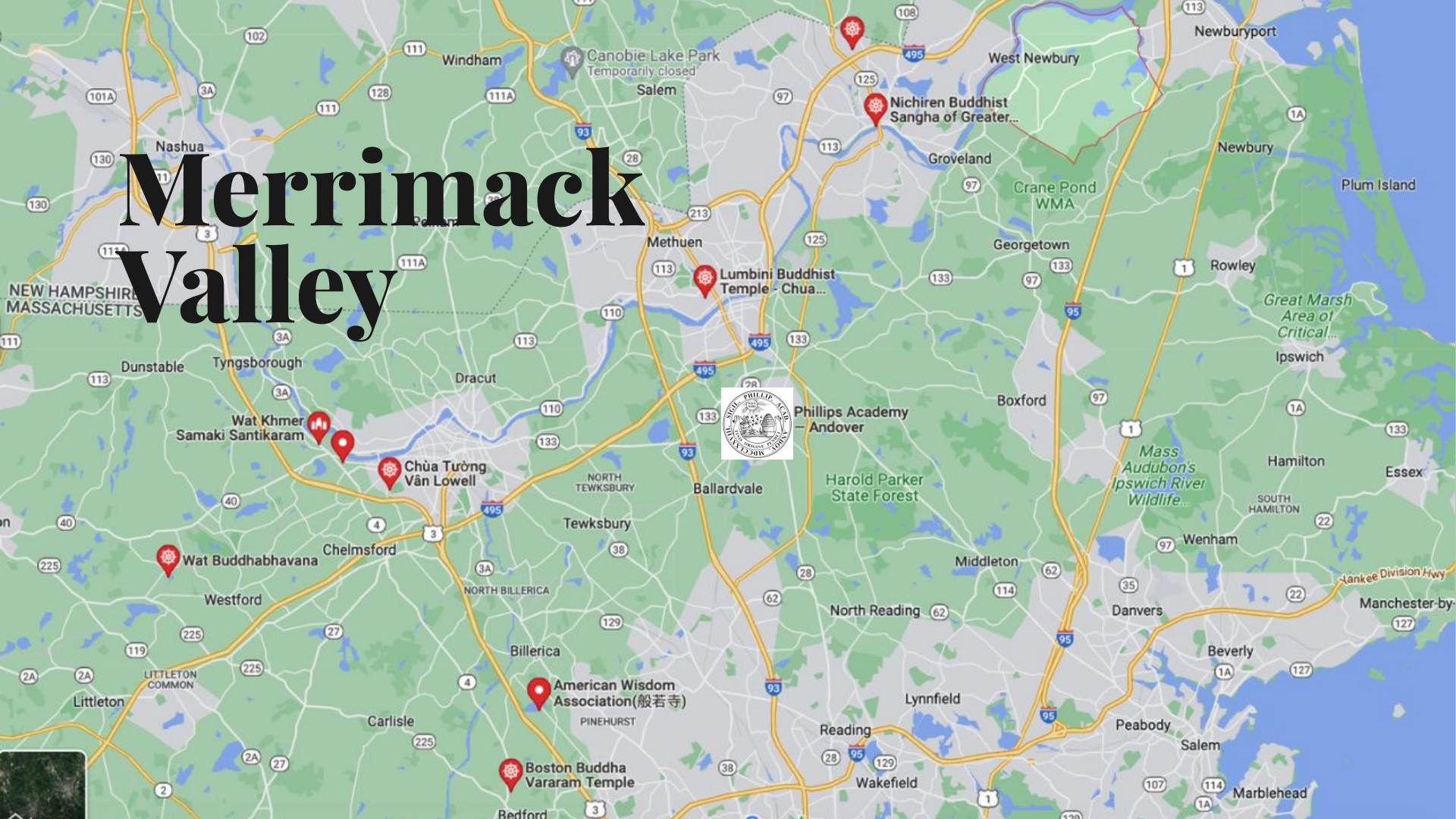


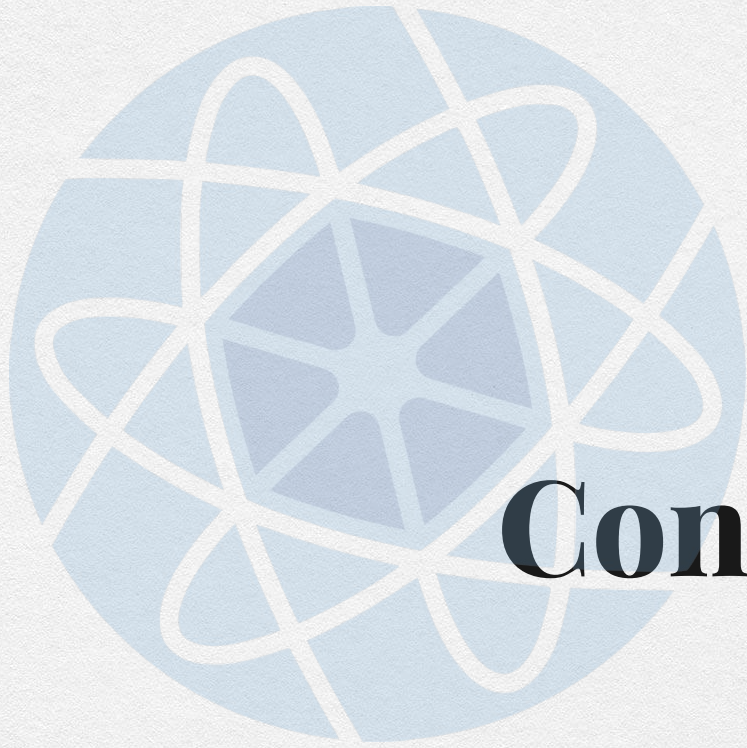
Practice

**See,
Think,
Wonder**



Merrimack Valley





02

**Conversations with
Scholars**

Chenxing Han

Author of *Be the Refuge: Raising the Voices of Asian American Buddhists*

Mentorship through the L2BB project

Co-designed our learning plan

Accompanied us on temple visits

Offered insights

Gave feedback on our work



Dr. Trent Walker

Preliminary research in Merrimack Valley
Temples

Author of *Framing the Sacred: Cambodian
Buddhist Painting*

Translation (over Facetime!) at Wat
Samaki Santikararam

*Story and Song: Learning and Living with
Buddhist Chant* led by Trent and
Chenxing at the Barre Center for
Buddhist Studies



Robert Forrant, Ph.D.

Distinguished University Professor at
UMass Lowell, Co-Director, Senior
Research Fellow

Research and Author of *Ethnicity in Lowell*

Insight on interview practices

Involvement in Lowell community,
building connections

Adaptive, experiential educator



Professor Sarah Jacoby, PA '92

Author of *Motherhood Is More Than a Metaphor*

Discussed family dynamics in American Buddhist spaces

Insight into different areas of contemporary Buddhist Studies

Spoke about Buddhist Pedagogy in Academia



Prof. Diana Eck and Ms. Ellie Pierce

Prof. Eck founded the Pluralism Project at Harvard Divinity School

Ms. Pierce is a former student of the project and now a research director

Offered advice on interviewing at religious institutions



Dr. Tham Tran

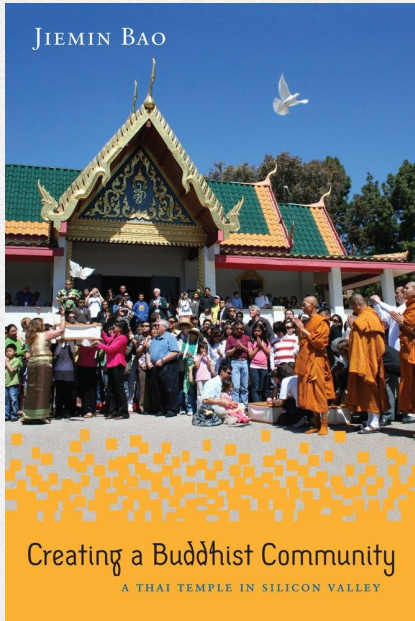
Introduction to Buddhism

Extensive interviews about youth groups
and the temple community

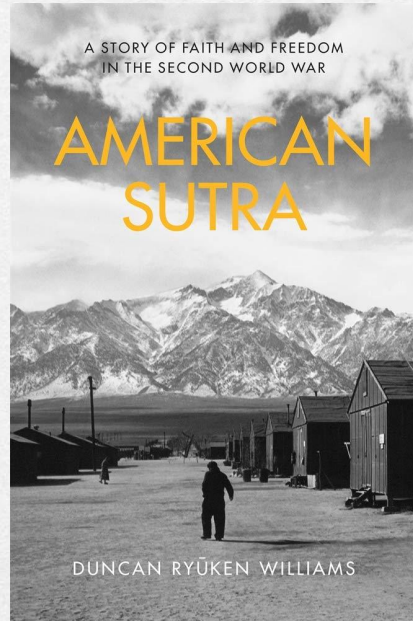
Doctorate research on *Ethnic Identity
among Second-Generation Vietnamese
American Adolescents*



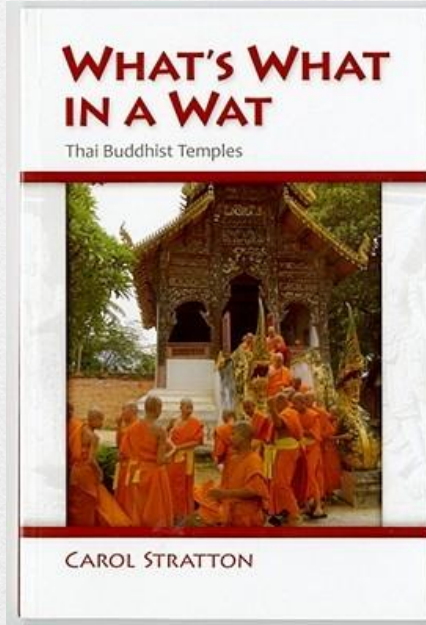
Other Scholars



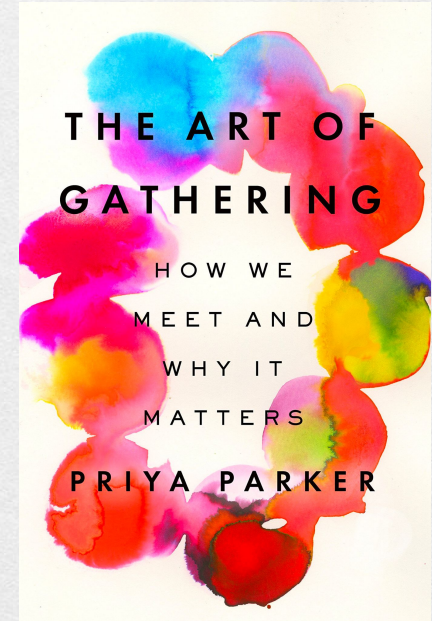
Jiemin Bao



Duncan Williams



Carol Stratton



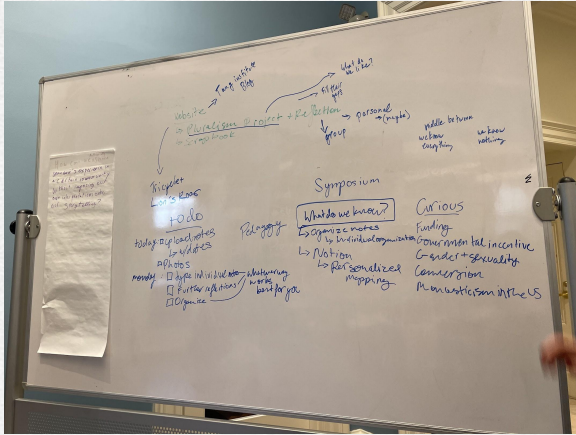
Priya Parker

03

**Creating
Meaningful
work**



Reflecting + Documenting



Discussion in the Tang Institute

Taylor's notebook: learning to mindmap

Thurs Mar 31

- Nibbana Cafe ♥ Romanic
- we've been hands-on all day all week
- talking w/ grad students helped us think about how we ask questions + how we respect
- present our learnings
- "how did you come to the us" → changing our conversation
- what we've unlearned
- disclaimer / context
- master texts / models
- removing ourselves from the story?
- scholars or lab rats?
- generosity
- what lessons we have we learned
- ★ what does the pluralism project do?
- what structures already exist?
- contribute to the Pluralism Project
- what did we miss?
- connect with existing structures

mental health practices of Buddhism

gender roles in Buddhist practice

"modern art" gloves

adaptation of Buddhism in American culture

scholarly examples

what does excellent work look like?

weekend practice

India → Asia

Pluralism project

planting 100 seeds "tublings"

continue reflecting

Discussion of Boston Buddha Var...

Mar 27, 2022

16:23 -1:07:46



Discussion of American Wisdom As...

Mar 26, 2022

51:13

After (Car ride) American Wisdom A...

Mar 26, 2022

14:07

Audio recordings from post-visit discussions

Meaningful Work: Authentic Audiences



**Buddhistdoor
Global Blogs**



**Tang Institute
Blogs**



**Pluralism
Project Profiles**



**Individual
Research**

Individual Research Topics

Mel: Engaged
Buddhism in
Praxis

Olivia: Buddhist
Pedagogy

Loulou: Khmer
Language + Cultural
Maintenance

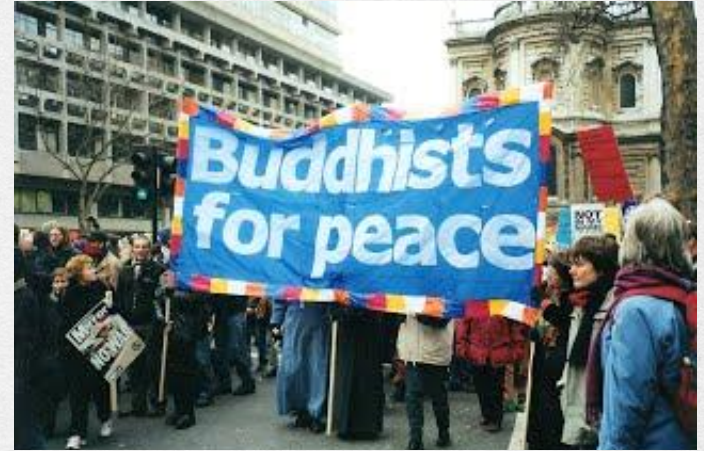
Taylor: Dana and
Merit Economy

Lesley: Agency in
Young Asian
American Buddhists

Haruka: Self
Discovery in
Buddhist Storytelling

Mel: Engaged Buddhism in Praxis: Applications in the Merrimack Valley and Beyond

Socially engaged Buddhism brings Buddhist teachings into larger political and societal narratives. I looked into how it manifests in American communities, focusing on temple programs and initiatives.



Lumbini Buddhist Temple

Olivia

Can I leave this class and 'feel better'?

Reimagining learning as a practice of giving to the self and to one's community is daunting, especially when structures of learning capitalize on competition. But to become aware of a pulsing, breathing, living community and network of support may in fact enhance each of our abilities to learn.

From a pedagogical standpoint, nurturing student creativity and problem-solving ability is a homage to Hanh's discussions of interdependence. In fact, scholar Bell Hooks points to both the pedagogical work of Freire and the engaged Buddhist teachings of Hanh to explore strategies of "hope" and "peace" in the classroom.



Taylor: The Merit Economy: Dana in a Capitalist Society

Thinking about how we engaged with concepts of Merit and Dana at the temples, I researched the fundamental social structure of merit in Buddhist cultures, and specifically how it has been adapted to the United States' capitalist economy.



Cambridge Insight Meditation Center



Lumbini Buddhist Temple



Boston Buddhavararam Temple

Lesley: Agency in Buddhist Identification Amongst Asian American Youth

In what ways do Asian American youth immersed in Buddhism have or don't have agency in choosing their religious beliefs?

- Factors that hinder agency
- Factors that promote agency



5/7: Visit to Chùa Tường Vân Lowell Youth Group Program

Haruka: Development and Discovery of the Self, the Collective, and the Buddhist Path through Story-telling & Recitation

How do Asian American youths learn about themselves in relationship with Buddhism through team and communal settings?

- 1) Recitation of Buddhist stories at Chua Tuong Van Lowell
- 2) Recitation of Asian-American Buddhist narratives at Young Buddhist Editorial



O4 Reflections



Themes that stuck with us

**Communal
Learning**

**Civic
Engagement**

**Learning and
the Beyond**

**See, Think,
Wonder Strategy**

**Generosity
and Dana**

**Embracing
Not Knowing**

Gallery Walk

A gallery of Buddhist statues and offerings. The central focus is a large, reclining Buddha statue (Uddiyana Buddha) resting on a golden base. Behind it, a smaller seated Buddha statue is flanked by two standing Buddha statues. The entire arrangement is adorned with numerous colorful flowers, including yellow and white chrysanthemums, and pink lotus flowers. Behind the statues are several colorful, circular mandala-like decorations. The background features glass display cases filled with books and framed pictures. The floor is covered with a patterned rug.

Group Reflection



Shu Hui
Huanas

陳宏

陳馬惜云

張夢溪

Brandon Xie

Sophia Xie

吳濤兴

Thank you for attending.



林文喜

陳宏

朱宗波

張昇

施杰

刘心彬

孫秉鼎

湯建洲

