

SHINSHU CENTER OF AMERICA (HIGASHI HONGANJI)
SPECIAL ONLINE LECTURE



***The Role of the Teacher in
Zen and Jodo Shinshu
On Teachers as Buddhas and
Ordinary Human Beings***

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Saturday, June 27, 2020

1:00–2:30 pm (EST), 12:00–1:30 pm (CST), 10:00–11:30 am (PST)

Online Registration required to receive the Zoom link (limited space):

<https://forms.gle/L5bnpR4hCYTBwWtm7>

Registration is free—donations gratefully accepted. Checks payable to:
Shinshu Center of America, 505 E. 3rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90013.



At first glance, Zen and Jōdo Shinshū would appear to have very different ideas about how disciples should view their masters: where the Chinese Zen master Linji famously told his students, “If you meet a buddha, kill the buddha; if you meet a patriarch, kill the patriarch,” Shinran told his followers that his practice consisted in nothing other than entrusting himself to the words of his revered teacher. Japanese philosopher Keta Masako argues that underneath the surface, Zen and Jōdo Shinshū share an understanding of the most excellent Buddhist teachers as always also ordinary human beings. This presentation introduces Keta and explores some of her work, focusing on her discussion of the role of the teacher and the aim of the student in Zen and Jōdo Shinshū. It offers some reflection on the significance of Keta’s argument in terms of how we might understand the idea of “taking refuge.” And finally it suggests some implications Keta’s analysis might have for thinking about the challenging question of the power invested in the figure of the teacher in contemporary American Buddhist communities.

About the Lecturer

Melissa Anne-Marie Curley is an assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University, where she teaches courses on Buddhism, Japanese religions, comparative sacred texts, and religion and popular culture. Her first book, *Pure Land, Real World: Modern Buddhism, Japanese Leftists, and the Utopian Imagination*, was published by the University of Hawai‘i Press. She is currently at work on a project on American Buddhist footways.

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