

# Buddhism, Hansen's Disease, and Necrocitizenship in Modern Japan

Dr. Jessica Starling, Lewis and Clark College



Dr. Starling explores the question of where the cremated remains of those diagnosed with Hansen's disease (also known as leprosy) should be interred: in communal ossuaries at the sanatorium where they spent most of their lives, or in familial graves near their place of birth. The issue brings up the question of precisely what kind of institution the sanatorium is, as well as what kind of people Hansen's disease patients are, in society, the state, and their natal families. Dr. Starling shows how Buddhist volunteers utilize social and religious resources to ensure autonomy in life and peace in death for Hansen's disease patients, while urging family members toward a re-humanization of their diagnosed relatives.

Thursday 9/25/25, 5pm

Broyhill Auditorium, Basement of Farrell Hall