SABBATICAL REPORT

Douglas K. Mikkelson, Professor
Department of History, Social Sciences Division
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Hawai‘i at Hilo.

Date Range of Sabbatical Leave: January 2014–June 2015

Planned Objectives and Activities:

1) Complete journal article and submit for publication.
2) Continue research on new book on Shakespeare.
3) Review and revise first draft of book manuscript.

Degree Objectives Were Met:

2) Completed about three-quarters of research on Shakespeare book.
3) Did not have time to work on this project—see below.

Summary of contributions:

1) Publication of article: this is a continuation of a thread of research in my primary area of expertise, namely that of the Zen Master Dōgen and his relationship to Western philosophical and religious history. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of my work in this area, it has had influence in multiple fields and has been cited in journals, featured on websites, and so forth. Since my publication history began at UH Hilo, it means that this institution is affixed to all my work. My reputation in the field is reflected in various ways—invitations to serve as a reader, a book reviewer, an outside reader at major graduate institutions, and so forth.
2) Book on Shakespeare: this is a huge project that, when completed, will hopefully be an important reference work for Shakespeare’s history plays, and prove significant in addressing an aspect of these plays that has hitherto received little attention.

Greatest Accomplishment and Greatest Challenge:
My greatest accomplishment was publishing the article. Studies of Buddhist ethics are heavily weighted towards South Asia, so my ongoing work on the history of ethics in East Asia, as well as its relationship to Western philosophical and religious traditions, contributes to an area deserving of broader attention.

My greatest challenge was the significant amount of time lost due to outside circumstances. I had to take two trips during the sabbatical to deal with family matters.

A Few Points of Advice About Sabbaticals:

Try to arrange a sabbatical when you are least likely to lose valuable time due to other matters. Potential distractions that may seem minor when you begin the sabbatical may not turn out that way as the clock ticks away. Also, draw up what you want to accomplish, and then cut it in half. I realize in retrospect that I put too much on the agenda. For example, I realized about a month into the Shakespeare project that I needed to expand the focus, and of course this meant more research—I estimate about fifty percent more than what I originally planned to undertake. Finally, don’t lose the opportunity to accomplish some things that you did not plan at the onset. During the sabbatical I came across some materials that I realized would be useful for teaching some of my classes. I felt that I had to pursue it right away rather than take the risks involved in putting it aside for “later” (like other priorities preventing you from ever getting to it). I considered doing this time well spent.