

SXSW「サウス・バイ・サウス・ウェスト」2018 曹洞宗僧侶の公式セッション報告
The Official Session Report of Soto Zen Monk - SXSW 2018 Austin Texas

On March 9th and 10th, Rev. Gyoikei Yokoyama, secretary at the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office in Los Angeles, Rev. Yuji Ito (Assistant Director) and Rev. Taiga Ito from the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center in San Francisco, and Rev. Shumyo Kojima chief priest at from Zenshuji Soto Mission in Los Angeles, participated in the SXSW 2018. SXSW, hosted in Austin, Texas, is renowned as one of the world's largest festivals of music, film and technology.

SXSW is known to many as the event where Twitter and Airbnb started to attain worldwide recognition. Over 70,000 innovators from the cutting-edge technology companies and investors from 95 different countries in the world participate in this event. We now have over 1500 Japanese participating in SXSW as well.

This year, for the first time the Japanese government joined the Interactive session of SXSW, where innovators from around the world shared their views and ideas through official sessions.



At the official session on March 9th, Mr. Yasushi Ishiai from Panasonic moderated the session, while Mr. Nagamitsu Kawai, Mayor of the Eiheiiji town, Fukui Prefecture, and Associate Professor Keiko Ihara of the Keio University Graduate School of Media Design gave presentations.



After Mr. Ishiai reported on the project of autonomous vehicles development currently being conducted by Panasonic Corporation, Mr. Kawai, shared the reality of the aging and declining population of Eiheiiji and the voice of the city's residents in response to this project, reflecting their high expectations and a sense of hope in the future of their community. Professor Ihara then shared her views on the manned vehicles and how driving and human capabilities are interrelated from the perspective of a professional racer. Finally, Rev. Yokoyama talked about the significance of technological innovations in creating good harmony and balance between humans and technologies; his views reflected the principles of Soto Zen and the lifestyle at Eiheiiji monastery, where such a lifestyle has been maintained for over 800 years.

On March 10th, another session on the theme of “the next industrial revolution” was held by the team from the METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry). The discussion in this session center around the ways in which our economy and society can continue in a self-sustainable and harmonious way, transcending the current state of the world economy that has been expanding its influence indiscriminately. The Japanese government presented its grand vision of how to reconstruct the way the world runs.

Mr. Yasuhiro Maeda, MITI Deputy Director-General, Commerce and Information Policy Bureau commented that Soto Zen is expected to share its views and teachings for the way of balanced economic and social harmony between human beings.

Also, there were opportunities to practice zazen at Apamada Zen Center and Austin Zen Center (AZC) with the support of the Japan-America Society of Austin (JASGA) where the local American practitioners and SXSW participants from Japan shared the experience of Zen together.

Mr. Hough Forest, the Director of the SXSW Interactive Festival spoke about the importance of Zen in the context of encountering the new at the opening ceremony.

Zen has become such a common term spread around the world and seems yet to be further spread to all corners of the world.

(Japanese Report: https://www.sotozen-net.or.jp/syumucyo/20180404_2.html)

(Reported by Rev. Gyoikei Yokoyama (Secretary) from Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office)