

# Vajrayana Quarterly

VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO

Vajrayana Buddhism Association of Toronto 705 Middlefield Road, 2nd Floor Toronto, Ontario M1V 5H5 416-332-8701 www.vbatoronto.org

Copyright 2011 © Vajrayana Buddhism Association of Toronto. All rights reserved.

## A Start of a Beautiful Friendship

In April, Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche, along with some of his disciples, took time out of his circuit of lectures in North America to visit Master Tam at his residence in York Region. Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche is the Abbot of Thubten Chokor Ling Monastery in Golok, Tibet. Even though he is Tibetan, he speaks mandarin well and they spent the day in lively discussion. They share the same intense passion for their Buddhist work and compassion for the welfare of society. Henry Shiu welcomed Hungkar Rinpoche with a Khatas (scarves), an auspicious offering of friendship Tibetan-style, and Master Tam took him on a tour of the meditation centres. He showed him the antique thangka and beads handed down by his teacher Dudjom Rinpoche as well as explained the history and gave an account of our sacred "nectar pills". Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche was overwhelmed by the thousands of Buddhist books lining the walls of Master Tam's library and office and couldn't resist the temptation of picking up and reading Master Tam's books. He was amazed with Master Tam's large volume of published books and discussed ways of how they can work together to spread the teaching. It was a very meaningful day and the honourable guests were treated to a healthy vegetarian meal.



Henry presented khata to Hungkar Rinpoche.



Master Tam, Hungkar Rinpoche and other visitors.



Master Tam showed Hungkar Rinpoche the antique thangka.



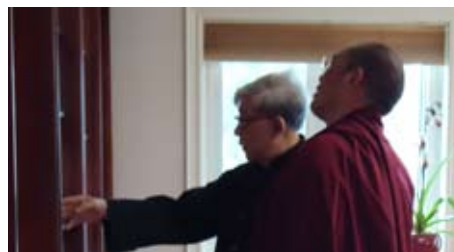
Master Tam explained the history of our nectar pills to Hungkar Rinpoche.



Afternoon tea and leisurely chat in the solarium.



Master Tam showed his beads from Dudjom Rinpoche to Hungkar Rinpoche.



Master Tam showed his published books to Hungkar Rinpoche.



Discussing publication.



Hungkar Rinpoche visited our Scarborough centre.



A traditional Tibetan farewell.

## Meditation/Prayers For Peace

Every year, on the weekend before Chinese New Year, there is a meditation and prayers for peace and blessing. Master Tam foresaw many big catastrophes, both natural and man-made, resulting in world wide suffering and misery in 2011. Through his compassion he selected

a Heruka meditation for purification of karma to reduce suffering. He says, never underestimate the power of the mind. Collectively the mind can perform the unthinkable. Like a drop of black ink in the ocean, the drop will diffuse into the water but it has the capability to affect the nature of the ocean. Despite these

disasters, it's by no means the end of the world as widely predicted but a strong warning it's time to stop the destruction of our environment and living beings. In response to Master Tam's action call, a large turnout of family and friends came to pray for a better world.

## You Asked...

*Does the heart chakra exist and is it linked to vitality?*

There is not a physical heart chakra anywhere in the body. You can dissect your body but still won't find a heart chakra. Even though it doesn't exist, its manifestation has its function. Just like we created the latitude and longitude lines on the world map as a grid system. Though imaginary, it plays an important role in determining the time zone and varied climate of different parts of the world. With both latitude and longitude lines, it can give specific locations on earth.

In Buddhism, we establish symbols and concepts to give meaning to the symbols congruent with the teaching. These symbols do not exist in reality but we create them to use in meditation like heart chakras, mandalas, channels and the blue sky. By following and practising the teaching, we will realize the vitality and the functioning aspect of Buddha-Nature (the ultimate nature of the mind).

### This Issue:

**Meditation/Prayers for Peace**

**You asked us.....**

**Master Tam's birthday celebration** by Tahay

**Baby shower** by Jenny Tang

**Master Tam's meeting with a Rinpoche**

**Updates from Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Association**

**As Is** by Sheila Horne

## Master Tam's 76th Birthday *by Tahay Balkissoon*

Celebrating a birthday is always a joyous occasion, but celebrating a guru's birthday is joyous and auspicious. Once again, we marked Master Tam's birthday with a three day celebration, attended by disciples from here in Toronto, as well as a number of disciples from abroad.

A meditation ceremony on the afternoon of Thursday, May 19th, got the celebrations under way. The disciples congregated at the meditation center by 12:30pm dressed in shades of reds and bright colors in time to welcome Master Tam. As usual, the centre was beautifully decorated with flowers and Tibetan/Chinese festive ornaments, all in shades of reds. The Buddha of Longevity meditation was performed by Master Tam and the mood set with the sounds of tinkling bells, drum beats, and crashing cymbals. Each disciple made an offering of their most precious jewels, (symbolic representations) and received blessings and empowerments from Master Tam. After the meditation, Master Tam blew out the candles on his birthday cake, everyone mingled and shared the blessed goodies and birthday cake.

Next, the party moved on to the Regal 16 restaurant, for an evening of music, dancing and, of course, lots of good food. The disciples from Toronto sang a beautiful rendition of a Chinese

folk song "Bright Moon", and an adapted song "Taking Refuge" conducted by Boon Thye, who also sang two wonderful solo songs. It was a magnificent treat—if he puts out a CD, I want one. Another terrific performance was Bonnie's dancing. Words are inadequate to describe her dancing; you just have to be there to enjoy it for yourself. Mark Teixeira entertained us with his guitar playing, performing a number with a very young disciple Sing Yu, also known as J.J. Then, the newly formed dancers, *The Shimmy Shakers* did two routines, a disco to the tune "Celebration," led by Sheila Teixeira, and a Bollywood dance choreographed by Shinder Bance. Judging from the applause, the audience enjoyed them immensely – we certainly had a lot of fun dancing.

We were very fortunate to have Nicole play the violin. The choir *Bandjazz*, sang "I Can See Clearly Now," incorporating the "Blue Sky" concept into the celebrations. The Hawaiian disciples sang "We are the World", and invited the rest of the disciples to join them on stage.

As usual, we enjoyed an abundance of delicious food and by the end of the evening, we were all stuffed. The celebrations continued on Friday and Saturday, with more music, dancing and singing. I enjoyed it all very much and I am sure everyone else did too—especially the birthday boy, I hope.

In closing, on behalf of the English Toronto disciples, I would like to thank Master Tam for all the teachings he has bestowed on us. ***"May the Teachings spread far and wide"***.



## Baby Shower



There has been a lot of excitement at the centre recently, as we waited for the arrival of the first baby for Xiao Ling and Boon Thye. It's not often that we have expectant mothers at the centre, so we decided to surprise Xiao with a baby shower on June 4th. She was thrilled with the gift bag filled with baby clothes and a blue teddy bear, the balloon decorations and black forest shower cake. Thanks to Linda for being a savvy shopper and Boon Thye for not spoiling the surprise. A week later, Xiao and Boon welcomed a healthy, bouncing baby boy weighing 8 lbs 8 oz who came earlier than expected. Both mom and baby are doing well.

## As Is... *by Sheila Horne*

One afternoon, what started out as a chat with my neighbours about the events on our street turned to a realization for me. During the conversation, one of the neighbours asked if I still fed that "stray cat." At first I thought a new cat had made our street its home over the winter. It soon came clear they meant my cat. I have to admit I felt offended at my beautiful Afferton being called a stray and made sure they understood that he's tagged, he has a home, many beds and he's part of our will. To me Afferton is beautiful, loving, gentle and intelligent. To one of my neighbours he's a stray. To the other neighbour he's arrogant. To the mice and birds he's a killer. Afferton is all those things because of us. Or is he?

## Success Stories from The Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Association (STBSA)

The Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Association (STBSA) in partnership with Renmin University of China Language Institute and the Western History Research Center of Tibetan Buddhism established a Research Institute in Tibetan Buddhist Studies in June 2008. This world class university has always been committed to developing an international academic perspective, be familiar with international academic research trends, to maintain international academic competitiveness and dialogue within the international academic community.

For the last 3 years, Master Tam, founder of STBSA, has been teaching Buddhism to university students from the Beijing area at Renmin University via video-

conference. He also asked them to learn ancient Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, English and another language like French or German or Japanese which is helpful in future Buddhist research work. After years of hard work and learning, 10 of the 48 students have been awarded full scholarship and placements at prestigious universities such as Bonn University, University of Munich, Harvard University, French National Academy of Sciences, Kyushu University and University of Chicago to further their studies in various focus of Buddhist studies, Central and East Asian studies, at the Master and PH.D level. They have also been approved by the Central Government to go abroad which is no easy feat.

Prof. Shen, dean of Chinese classics at Renmin University, gave an update of the STBSA partnership and shared the success achievements of the students at Master Tam's birthday. He and the students thanked everyone for their continuous contribution and support over the last 3 years.

The Trust Fund from the Sino Tibetan Buddhist Studies Association established by Master Tam is to nurture these students in their studies and research in Buddhist Studies, These students can later assist Master Tam in furthering the translation, research and publishing in Buddhist Studies. Donations to this trust fund are greatly appreciated to continue this compassionate work to benefit sentient beings.