

Upcoming Workshop: Introduction to Visualization Meditation.

An eight-week workshop introducing the fundamentals of Tibetan meditation practices. Participants will learn sitting postures, breathing techniques, yoga exercises, and visualization meditation.

Combining meditation practices and the view provides an insight into how the mind works, and allows practitioners to experience the true nature of the mind, and bodhicitta. Through this journey on the right path, the mind and body will naturally balance itself. Ultimately, students will learn how to integrate these easy and practical meditation techniques into their everyday life to live a healthy and stress-free life.

March 7 – May 2, 2009

10:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Cost is free.

To register, visit www.vbatoronto.org

Lotus Sutra Lecture Series

Dr. Henry Shiu did a ten-week lecture series on the Lotus Sutra, an important Buddhist scripture, which predates the Christian gospels, on the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism. Dr. Shiu skillfully guided the students, being their first time, on how to approach and read a Buddhist scripture. He stressed the importance of reading beyond the text to understand the deeper meaning and intention of the parables and not to take it literally, as these scriptures were written 2,000 years ago. He also used stories and current events to illustrate the theme and key teachings which made it easier for the students to understand. The scripture (roadmap) combined with the meditation practice (instructions) sets the right direction to wisdom or bodhicitta.

This first dharma series provided a forum for in-depth discussions and set the tone for future lectures.

Resource Centre

The resource library is open and contains a collection of books on various topics on Tibetan Buddhism in English and Chinese. Members are welcome to browse and read at the centre or sign the books out. The library also accepts donated new and used books.



Social Events:

By Jenny Tang

Christmas Potluck Lunch

Micheline transformed this year's annual Christmas potluck lunch into a very festive ambience. The red tablecloths, poinsettias and glistening Christmas decorations, brought out the warmth in an unseasonably cold December. Everyone shared delicious food and surprisingly, the male chefs scored well in their culinary skills. It was a great time to catch up with stories and news.



The Saturday morning students surprised Ed and Jenny with a thoughtful gift, a book on the world's most beautiful hiking trails, which will be handy in planning future trips. To show their appreciation they also presented a basket of goodies to Eva for the centre.



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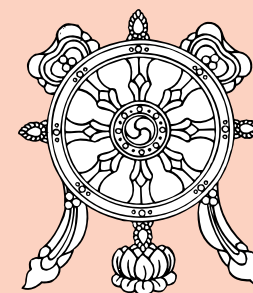
Master Tam's Interview with
the Chinese Media

NEEDED

Volunteers for the newsletter,
Vajrayana Quarterly

Ideas for social events

If you are interested,
please contact Jenny at
jenny.tang@vbatoronto.org



Vajrayana Quarterly

Editor's Letter

This is one of my favourite times of the year. It's this time of year when everyone in our diverse nation celebrates their own traditions. Celebrations bring the sharing of food, and the breaking of bread together, which represents harmony. It's a way of bonding, learning about someone else, meeting new people and having good conversations. We at the Vajrayana Buddhism Association tend to do a lot of sharing. Between potlucks, picnics, hiking, Dr. Henry Shiu's lecture on the Lotus Sutra, the General Meditation Classes, and the Preliminary Practices, there was an abundance of food and ideas to share in 2008. I'm sure those discussions will continue through the upcoming year.

This is also the time of year when thoughts turn to the year ahead. For the first time I'm not approaching the year with apprehension. I'm energized by the opportunities that 2009 may bring. This year, instead of making resolutions that I know I'll break within three months, I will stay with my true self and continue with the things that are important to me, family, friends, meditating, writing, bowling and dancing. I'm looking forward to continuing my journey through meditation and the activities at the centre. In this issue Dr. Henry Shiu writes about multiculturalism and Buddhism in Canada, read an interview with Master Tam by the Chinese media, and the date and time of the March Introduction to Meditation Workshop is noted in the newsletter. If you know of anyone who can benefit from this workshop, please let them know about it.

Happy New Year and all the best for 2009 and in the year of the Ox.

Sheila Teixeira

Multiculturalism and Buddhism in Canada Dr. Henry Shiu



History is not without a sense of irony. It has been widely assumed that the policy of multiculturalism in Canada has contributed to the increasing religious diversity, and hence to the surge of the Buddhist population after 1971 when the Act of Multiculturalism was implemented. While it is true that the mushroom springing of Buddhists in Canada after the 1970s can be attributed to the change in Canadian immigration law, in 1967, when restrictions on Asian immigration to Canada were lifted, and the policy of multiculturalism adopted, it was also the hostile, racial and discriminative attitude towards Japanese Canadians, or Nikkei Kanadajin, when they were forced by the Canadian government to resettle in Eastern Canada (from 1942) after war was declared on Japan in December 1941, that brought Buddhism across the continent. Before the 1970s, the scene of Buddhism in Canada is painted chiefly with the Japanese in the foreground: it was the Japanese

who built the first Buddhist temple, named The Japanese Buddhist Temple, in Vancouver in 1905, and it was also the Japanese Jōdo Shinshū Buddhists who built the first Buddhist Churches in the provinces east of B.C., Alberta in 1929, Toronto in the 1940s, Manitoba in the 1950s, and Québec in the 1960s. Until 1965, the only Buddhist group in Toronto was the Toronto Buddhist Church, and as late as 1970, only two Buddhist groups were to found in Montréal, one following the Japanese tradition and the other the Chinese. Indeed, Chinese immigrants represent the other force that brought Buddhism from British Columbia to the eastern part of Canada as early as the late 1880s. These early Chinese immigrants were chiefly miners and railway workers who were responsible for the construction

of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia. However, after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian government banned the immigration of Chinese to Canada. Living with resentment in British Columbia, Chinese settlers began moving eastward and some took with them their Buddhist faith. Essentially, while Buddhism came from Asia to the West, its transmission on Canadian soil actually went gradually from the West coast to the East. By 1970s, Buddhism had already established roots throughout Canada. Ironically, before Buddhism benefited from the policy of multiculturalism for its rapid growth after the seventies, it was actually the racial discriminatory attitude towards the Asians that helped carry Buddhism across Canada from coast to coast.



Media Release: from Ningbo, China - January 1, 2009

Master Tam – A Pioneer of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism Studies



On December 24 and 25 of 2008, Master Tam was interviewed by the Chinese Media for his outstanding contribution to the State Institute of Renmin University of China. In the conference, Master Tam, a visiting professor to Renmin University of China and the academic consultant of Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Association, talked about the integration and tolerance in Chinese culture. Buddhism was known to play

a major role in the traditional Chinese Culture since its transmission to China (as early as the seventh century CE). He believes that it was important for Buddhist scholars and in need for more scholars to conduct research and focus studies on the two main types of Buddhism: Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism as there were recent findings on the ancient literature found in Dunhuang (along the Silk Road), in particular relating to the transmission of Zen Buddhism in the region.



The very first “Centre for Sino-Tibetan Buddhism Studies” was established in June 22, 2008 at the Renmin University of China. Master Tam is very excited that the centre was now opened to many other universities in China such as Zhejiang University and Beijing University, and students were highly interested in the program. He hopes that the centre will provide a venue for more people to learn about Chinese culture and Buddhism in the future. The media was very pleased to interview Master Tam for his extraordinary works and his leadership role in the Sino-Tibetan Buddhism Studies. He has sparked an interest for traditional Chinese culture for the next generation and has truly inspired the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist scholars alike.

