

Editorial

It is with a deep sense of humility that we offer you this inaugural issue of *Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies*. It is hoped that the journal fills an important hiatus in Canadian Buddhist studies.

‘Canadian Buddhism’ has thus far not had an independent life of its own, overshadowed as it has been by American Buddhism, and understandably so. Following the discovery of Buddhism, as religion, by thinkers like Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson by the 1850’s, the US has had an involvement in Buddhist scholarship at least since the 1890’s when Ernest Francisco Fenollosa and William Sturgis Bigelow began to study Mahayana Buddhism formally, continuing regular contact with Japan. Today, a century later, several US universities offer programs and courses relating to Buddhism and Buddhist studies, producing a wide pool of Buddhologists and other related academics. The birth of Buddhist institutions of higher learning, such as Naropa in Boulder, Colorado, the University of the West in Los Angeles and Dharma Realm University in Burlingame, both in California, speaks to how the academic study of Buddhism has matured in the US.

By contrast, Canada is new to Buddhism, even though its recorded history dates back a century, to 1905, an event recently marked with a 10-day celebration in Toronto (see www.nalandacollege.ca for details). While several Canadian universities do offer courses in Buddhism, fewer are those that offer a Program of Studies, and indeed an academic at a recent conference on Buddhism was able to list all (or most) of the academics in Buddhist studies in Canada on a serviette! There could perhaps be no better symbolism of the state of the academic study of Canadian Buddhism than the professor’s unconscious act of throwing the serviette into the garbage bin after wiping his hands! The message resonated loud and clear when the point was made that anyone wanting to meet Buddhologists would go to the American Academy of Religion Conferences.

CJBS hopes to serve as a forum / convention floor where academics may come together to forge intellectual links by sharing their research and insights. But, going beyond academic tradition, we hope that it will serve as a spiritual forum as well, facilitating personal growth within the academy. This would explain the tripartite division along which the material in the CJBS will be organized: *pariyatti* (theory), *paṭipatti* (praxis) and *paṭivedha* (insight), to use a traditional Buddhist organizational principle (see next page for an elucidation).

But “Why a Journal of *Canadian Buddhism*?” in this day and age of internationalism, a colleague wondered at the launch of CJBS. While knowledge respects no boundaries, practicality dictates that it must. “Be a lamp unto yourself” advises the Buddha. And so, if Canadians don’t look after their academic stock, who else would? Thus, it is to foster as well the study of Buddhism within the academy in Canada that the CJBS has been launched.

We hope you’ll make CJBS your own, and help it grow with your critiques, papers, book reviews, personal experiences as practitioners, and your ideas about the growth of the journal, and of course, subscriptions.

Wishing you the best in health and happiness!

Sukhī hotu!