

Buddhist Studies in Canada

Brock University, Ontario

Michael Berman

Brock University offers courses that involve Buddhist studies on a regular basis. In the Philosophy Department, Dr. Berman will offer the graduate course “Merleau-Ponty and Nagarjuna” in the fall of 2010, and Dr. Chan will be teaching the undergraduate courses “Introduction to Chinese Philosophy” in the Fall of 2010, and “Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Buddhist Thought” and the graduate course “Yogacara and Phenomenology” in the Winter of 2011.

The Liberal Arts program offers during the academic year the undergraduate course “Religions of the World”, and this course has a section devoted specifically to Buddhism.

Buddhist Studies in Canada

McGill University, Quebec

Victor Sogen Hori

In the past year, Prof. Lara Braitstein, the professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism at McGill University, organized an international conference, “Buddhism and Islam: Encounters, Histories, Dialogue, Representation”, held May 29 and 30. This very successful conference was co-sponsored by the Faculty of Religious Studies and the Institute for Islamic Studies of McGill University, with financial support from the Numata Foundation.

Professor Victor Hori was away on leave of absence from June to December, appointed the 2009 Roche Professor of Inter-Religious Research at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya Japan. During this period, he continued research on his current project, “Little Jade: Language and Experience in Zen.”

Professor Hiroko Kawanami of Lancaster University in the U.K. was the 2009 Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies. She taught a course on “Buddhism in Southeast Asia: Sangha and State” and gave several public lectures including “The Powerful and Powerless Charisma: Buddhist monks in Myanmar” for the Department of East Asian Studies and “Buddhism in Context: Social Justice and Political Action in Myanmar” for the Faculty of Religious Studies.

On 3 October 2009, the Dalai Lama visited McGill University to give a talk on education and ethics in today’s world, addressing an audience of education students from six Quebec universities. The context for the Dalai Lama’s visit was that the Province of Quebec had in 2008 implemented a new non-sectarian program on ethics and religious culture in the elementary and secondary schools.

In the first week of November, the American Academy of Religion held its annual meeting in Montreal bringing almost 5000 religion scholars to the city. For the conference, Victor Hori organized panels on “Buddhism in the West: A Canadian Focus” and “Buddhism in Quebec.”

PhD candidate Melissa Curley finished her degree and was immediately hired as assistant professor in the department of religious studies at the University of Iowa. PhD candidate Jessica Main was hired at the University of British Columbia as the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation Chair on Buddhism and Contemporary Society.

Buddhist Studies in Canada

Simon Fraser University, British Columbia

Paul Crowe

At Simon Fraser University, regular faculty and lecturers who teach courses related to Asian culture and history are spread out across several departments including Humanities, Sociology and Anthropology, History, Archeology, World Literature, English, Communications, Political Science, and the School for International Studies. Over the past twenty years the David See-Chai Lam Centre for International Communication has also played a pivotal role in supporting Asia-related scholarship, conferences, and publication at SFU. While SFU supports a diverse range of scholarship on Asia-related topics, there is no single Asian Studies department that houses them, and presently there is no centre for the study of religious traditions.

The only avenue consistently open to students wishing to study Buddhism is through the Department of Humanities and its associated Asia-Canada program. The Department of Humanities brings together scholars of varied interests and disciplinary training and affiliations that share a common interest in exploring major questions in the humanist tradition, allowing students sustained critical engagement with “Great Texts.” Thus, courses on Buddhism are taught alongside those considering, for example, Art and Literature of the Italian Renaissance, Carolingian civilization, classical Greek mythology, continental philosophy, and cultural critique.

Recently the department introduced a *Certificate in Religious Studies*, which permits Humanities majors to add a concentration in that field of study. Each year a second-year Introduction to Religious Studies is offered and the syllabus includes the study of a Buddhist text. Students taking the Certificate are encouraged to study religion from an interdisciplinary perspective and are free to focus on Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist or Literati (“Confucian”) traditions, or may take a broader thematic approach. While the Program draws on support from Humanities, History, Asia-Canada program and other departments, its location within the Department of Humanities means that considerable focus remains on textual study.

Presently I am the only full-time faculty member who teaches courses on Buddhism though we are very fortunate to have had consistent sessional support from Michael Newton who is also an ordained Zen Buddhist priest with the experience and background in the study of Buddhist literature. Both of us teach for the Humanities Department and its Asia-Canada program, and most years, at least one course with a Buddhist focus is offered.

Currently, the two principal Humanities courses in which Buddhist texts are studied are *HUM 204 Great Religious Texts: Asia* and *HUM 331 Studies in Asian Religions*. In the former, a mix of texts are included. And my practice has been to include four per term, allowing roughly three weeks with each text, and ample time in seminars for the twenty-four students to engage in lengthy and detailed analysis and discussion. The last time this course was offered, it included the *Diamond Sutra*, *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, the *Zhuangzi*, and the Ming dynasty Chinese folk novel *Seven Taoist Masters* (*Qizhen zhuan* 七真傳).

In *HUM 331 Studies in Asian Religions*, my approach has been to provide a historical overview of major developments beginning in India, including two weeks on Vedic texts with a view to demonstrating some of the continuities and tensions between the pre-Buddhist forms of religion and the earliest teachings associated with the Buddha. We then look at the movement of Buddhism into China and consider its reception by the Chinese during the later Han period. Subsequent doctrinal developments that followed are examined through reading texts associated with Huayan, Tiantai, Pureland and Chan. A lecture portion of each seminar helps situate the texts and their compilers within their socio-political contexts taking care to emphasize the provisional and fundamentally heuristic nature of the “schools” approach.

Alternately, this third-year course takes a broader look at religion in a region with Buddhism, representing one feature of the landscape. This term, for example, students in Michael’s course titled “Influence of the Japanese Landscape” read a number of influential religious texts of Japan that have shaped the religious landscape locally, but with an influence beyond Japan. The field considered extends from Buddhism to Confucian, Shinto and New religious movements and to the “little traditions” of shamanism, various folk beliefs and practices, and martial arts.

The Department of Humanities also offers courses on “Great Cities” which can provide opportunities to examine the lives of Buddhists in a very specific location. The most recent example was a course titled *Kyoto-The Heart of Japan*. In this course, Buddhism was explored as part of the cultural fabric of the city in, for example art, architecture, drama, gardens and the tea ceremony.

Both of us worked on chapters for the forthcoming *Asian Religions in British Columbia* (Daniel L. Overmyer, Don Baker and Larry DeVries, eds., UBC Press) that involved extensive interview work. One result of this has been the development of a diverse network of community contacts that can enrich the textual work done in the classroom. We make efforts to combine textual and general historical work with the provision of opportunities for students to interact with practitioners, either through

invitations to speak at SFU or by taking students to Buddhist centres around the Lower Mainland. Thus, the texts students study in the classroom are linked to the daily lives of practitioners, whether they be ordained monks, nuns or priests or lay leaders in their respective institutions.

Another avenue open to students in their third or fourth undergraduate year is through special topics courses in which the student and a faculty member determine a research focus for the term. The student is assigned the task of producing a single substantial research paper that grows out of extended one on one discussions. The readings are taken from a Bibliography compiled by the student with direction and advice from the faculty member. The last project I supervised dealt with recent scholarship in Buddhist ethics, anchored by the work of Damien Keown and Peter Harvey. The student, who was from Thailand, wanted to explore the basis in the Theravadin traditions for active efforts directed at social justice, combined with a critique of modern consumer economics.

Beyond these courses, our Asia-Canada program includes introductions at the first and second year levels to Asian histories and cultures. Religion is dealt with as part of these comprehensive introductions. In ASC 200, discussion of Buddhism and religion can occur in the context of examining politics, medicine, art and literature.

SFU has a large number of students with an Asian heritage and, specifically from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and more recently, the People's Republic of China. This makes it possible at the third-year level to read Buddhist texts in both Chinese and English. Many students cannot read Chinese and rely on the English versions of texts, but this has presented opportunities for some very fruitful discussions around the question of translation. As students with differing language backgrounds read the texts, they have an opportunity to talk with each other about the varying ways in which the texts are understood. Students gain first-hand appreciation for the kind of challenges facing translators of classical texts.

We hope that with the continued high level of interest in these courses (they are chronically full), and support for the Certificate in Religious Studies, we may be able to develop Buddhist studies further at SFU as an important part of a developing program in the study of religions that may one day culminate in a major.

Other future possibilities may include interdisciplinary work with SFU faculty in Psychology and Education who are examining the potential of contemplative practice in clinical applications and in the area of educational psychology. These kinds of investigations are currently developing in other North American universities such as Brown University's *Contemplative Studies Initiative* and the multidisciplinary *New Science of Virtues* project

recently initiated at the University of Chicago. Consciousness research in the field of neuroscience has been ongoing through the Stanford School of Medicine's *Project Compassion* and at the W.M. Keck Laboratory for Functional Brain Imaging and Behavior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the direction by Richard J. Davidson.

Buddhist Studies in Canada

University of British Columbia, British Columbia

Jessica L. Main

Prospective students will find that Buddhism can be studied with a variety of disciplinary approaches and within a variety of historical periods at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Buddhist Studies at UBC is pursued by faculty members located in several departments who teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The centre of the constellation of teaching on Buddhism is the Department of Asian Studies. I briefly introduce faculty who specialize in Buddhism, faculty whose teaching and research includes Buddhism, and end with overview of undergraduate and graduate courses available at UBC.

Faculty

Faculty specializing in Buddhism. There are two faculty positions at UBC in Buddhist Studies. The first is held by Jinhua Chen, the Canada Research Chair in East Asian Religions (Department of Asian Studies). Chen arrived at UBC in 2001 and specializes in the textual and historical study of early Chan and Esoteric Buddhism, especially its relation to the state and kingship. Although his research focuses mainly on early medieval China, he also examines the Japanese context.

The second faculty position is held by Jessica Main, the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation Chair in Buddhism and Contemporary Society (jointly appointed in the Department of Asian Studies and Institute of Asian Research). Main arrived at UBC in 2009 and researches Buddhist ethics and normative discourses surrounding individuals, groups, sects, and societies in the modern and contemporary period in Asia (stretching from the mid-19th century to the present day). Her primary focus is on Shin Buddhism in 20th century Japan. Jessica Main is the director of the Buddhism and Contemporary Society Program, and both the Program and the Chair were established in 2006 when The Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation and its president, Robert Ho, presented UBC with a \$4 million dollar gift. Like the Chair, the Program is shared between the Department of Asian Studies and the Institute of Asian Research.

The Buddhism and Contemporary Society Program sponsors undergraduate and graduate teaching about Buddhism at UBC, brings in a variety of visiting speakers as part of the TLKY lecture series, holds workshops and conferences on issues of contemporary relevance, and supports student research on the contemporary state of Buddhism in Asia and abroad. The Program has also supported visiting scholars. Ian Harris, a well-known

scholar of modern Cambodian Buddhism, and Gustaaf Houtman, specialist in modern Burmese Buddhism and editor of *Anthropology Today*, were able to join the UBC community for a short time. Recently, as part of its mission of community outreach, the Program has begun to connect with local Buddhist communities, sharing information about events in the Vancouver and Lower Mainland areas (See the Program website <http://www.iar.ubc.ca/programs/buddhismandcontemporarysocietyprogram.aspx>).

Nam-lin Hur, from the Department of Asian Studies, has studied Buddhism in early modern Japan and Korea extensively. One of his current research projects focuses on the relation of the periodic exhibition of icons and religious culture in early modern Japan.

Faculty whose research includes Buddhism. Additionally, many other faculty at UBC incorporate Buddhism into their research and teaching: Donald L. Baker (Asian Studies) covers Korean religious and cultural history, Timothy Brook (History) has worked on Buddhism in Early Modern and Modern China, Tsering Shakya (Canada Research Chair in Religion and Contemporary Society in Asia, Institute of Asian Research) examines religious policy in Asia and covers Tibetan Buddhism, Joy Dixon (History) has approached Western Buddhism through the lenses of sexuality, gender, and modernity, Francesca L. Harlow (Asian Studies) examines Buddhism as part of Indian history and historical geography, Hsingyuan Tsao (Art History), covers Buddhism as an aspect of Chinese art history, Katherine Hacker (Art History) examines history of art, ritual, and performance in South Asia, Tamaki Maeda (Art History) specializes in modern period transnational and transcultural arts in China and Japan and covers Buddhism as part of Chinese and Japanese art history, and lastly, Leo Shin (History) covers Buddhism as part of Chinese history.

Courses

Undergraduate training. The centre of the constellation of teaching on Buddhism is the Department of Asian Studies. Many undergraduate courses that focus on, or include, Buddhism, may be taken as part of an undergraduate major or minor in Asian Studies. Asian Studies is also working to increase the number of courses offered in Buddhism and Asian Religions. In coming years, there will be additional courses covering, for example, both *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Other departments such as History and Art History offer courses that cover topics in Buddhism. In recent years, the following courses have been offered:

Undergraduate courses that focus on Buddhism

- Introduction to Buddhism (Jessica Main, ASIA 250)

- Buddhism in China (Jinhua Chen, ASIA 382)
- Special Topics in Buddhist Studies (ASIA 450)

Undergraduate courses that include Buddhism

- Religions of the World (Linda Christensen, RELG 100)
- Cultural Foundations of East Asia (Nam-Lin Hur, ASIA 200)
- Cultural Foundations of South Asia (Francesca Harlow, ASIA 208)
- Cultural Foundations of Southeast Asia (Tineke Hellwig, ASIA 209)
- Aspects of Asian Art (Hsingyuan Tsao, ARTH 251)
- Aspects of Asian Architecture (Katherine Hacker, ARTH 253)
- Premodern Japan (Nam-lin Hur / Peter Nosco, ASIA 314)
- Early Modern Japan (Nam-lin Hur, ASIA 315)
- Premodern India (Francesca Harlow, ASIA 318)
- Historic India: Images, Temples, and the Construction of India Art History (Katherine Hacker, ARTH 352)
- Nepal and Tibet: Art, Ritual and Performance (Katherine Hacker, ARTH 353)
- The Making of Early China: From Archaeology to History (Hsingyuan Tsao, ARTH 358)
- The Rise of Literati Painting in China: 1100 – 1700 (Hsingyuan Tsao, ARTH 360)
- Narrative Painting in Japan, 7th-13th century (Tamaki Maeda, ARTH 366)
- Foundations of Chinese Thought (Edward Slingerland, ASIA 371)
- History of Korean Thought (Don Baker, ASIA 377)
- Philosophical Wisdom of Early India (Sanjay Kumar, ASIA 378)
- Common Religious Traditions in China (ASIA 383)
- Japanese Religions (Peter Nosco, ASIA 387)

- Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Jain Philosophers in Interaction (ASIA 388)
- Classical Hindu, Buddhist and Jain Myths and Legends in Translation (Adheesh Sathaye, ASIA 398)
- The Interaction of Science, Religion, and Philosophy in East Asia (Don Baker, ASIA 405)
- Seminar in the Art of India and Southeast Asia (Katherine Hacker, ARTH 455)
- Culture and Society in Late Imperial China (Leo Shin, HIST 479)
- Inventing Asian Religions in the West/East Encounter (Harjot Oberoi, ASIA 485)

Over the past few years, Professor Jinhua Chen has helped organized a joint summer program in Buddhism: the “UBC-TCU-RUC Summer program in Buddhist Studies” (a cooperative venture between The University of British Columbia, Tzu-Chi University (慈濟大學), and Renmin University of China in Beijing (中國人民大學)). Hopefully, this kind of exposure to specialists in Buddhism from all over the world for participating students will continue into the future.

Graduate training. Asian Studies offers Master of Arts and Ph.D. degrees that include “Korean, East Asian Buddhism, South East Asian and South Asian culture, including literature, linguistics, pre-modern history, religion and philosophy” (See the department website <http://www.asia.ubc.ca>). Advanced language training in Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Indonesian, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese is available, as well as courses on source materials and research methods in Classical Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies, and Korean Studies. Graduate courses that have dealt with Buddhism in recent years include:

- Monastic Hagio-Biographical Writings in Medieval East Asia (Jinhua Chen, ASIA 510)
- Buddhist and Taoist texts in Chinese; Reading and Research Methods (Jinhua Chen, ASIA 511)
- Topics in the Social History of Japanese Religions (Nam-lin Hur, ASIA 525)
- Problems of Modernization in Eastern and Southern Asia (Don Baker, ASIA 561)
- New Religious Movements of East Asia (Don Baker, ASIA 577)

For coverage of Buddhism, religion, and modern Asia see also the following courses in the nearby Institute of Asian Research:

- Buddhism, Violence, and the State in Modern and Contemporary Asia (Jessica Main, IAR 515B)
- Religion and Public Policy (Tsering Shakya, IAR 515B)

For students interested in contemporary Buddhism in Asia and policy studies, it is possible to take a one-year Master's degree (Master's of Asia Pacific Policy Studies) with this focus. This degree is well-suited to students interested in public sector or NGO work after graduation.

Many units at UBC support interdisciplinary graduate degrees and co-supervising with other units. Students interested in such programs are considered on a case-by-case basis. Students apply through a single, primary department, and identify potential co-supervisors in other departments.

Buddhist Studies in Canada

University of Toronto, Ontario (2006-2009)

Christoph Emmrich

The three years between 2006 and 2009 have seen some of the most dramatic and promising changes in the shape of the academic study of Buddhism in the history of the University of Toronto. The areas these changes occurred in were those of faculty, students and endowments.

Two new tenure stream buddhologists were hired in 2006: Juhn Ahn, who carries a PhD from UC Berkeley and specializes on Chinese and Japanese Chan and Zen Buddhism, working on the “Zen illness” and relations between doctrinal history and the conceptualization of health; and the author of this short note, who did his doctoral work at the University of Heidelberg and whose fields are *Pāli* philology and *Theravāda* texts on time as well as Buddhist childhood rituals among the Newars and monastic networks between Nepal and Burma. With their work in the fields of East Asian Buddhism on the one hand and South and Southeast Asian Buddhism on the other, these two hires jointly made by the Department and Centre for the Study of Religion, the Department of East Asian Studies and the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga, complemented the previously established exclusive focus on Tibetan Buddhism so far represented by Frances Garrett who had joined UofT in 2003 and has been working on Tibetan medicine and embryology. Additionally in 2007, the Buddhist Studies map at the Centre for the Study of Religion was expanded to include Central Asia through the teaching appointment of UC Berkeley PhD candidate Amanda Goodman, who explores Silk Route Buddhist lineage history based on sources from Dunhuang.

In addition to the quadrupling of faculty numbers the introduction of both an undergraduate major / specialist and a graduate programme in Buddhist Studies led to the second direction of growth in our field, which is that of attracting a large and strong community of students over the last three years. A commitment to language instruction managed to establish both Sanskrit and Tibetan, in addition to Chinese, as Buddhist languages regularly taught at several levels. Students with strong language backgrounds are currently working, among others, on projects as diverse such as Tibetan kingship, Chinese mountain cults, “mistranslations” in Buddhist Middle-Indic, Mongolian historiography and Buddhist medicine and palliative care. Since 2007 research on topics such as the latter can be additionally conducted within the framework of the new minor programme “Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health” introduced and led by Tony

Toneatto at the Department of Psychiatry and Public Health Sciences of UofT. The hosting of the “North American Graduate Student Conference in Buddhist Studies” in April 2010 at UofT speaks of the confidence and vitality of a growing community of young researchers here.

Although already an institution where the activities made possible by the generous endowment granted by the *Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai* (BDK) have been taking place for about twenty years, UofT saw the Yehan Numata Programme in Buddhist Studies, in which UofT joins hands with McMaster University and its own young and strong Buddhist Studies faculty, emerge energized by the recent developments, hosting not only a rich lecture series with affiliated reading groups, but also a number of conferences such as on the direction of Buddhist Studies as a field in 2007, the deployment of occult technologies in Buddhism in 2008 and Buddhist training in Japan in 2009. This wealth was augmented over the past three years by two additional major donations: one in 2006 of CAD 4 million from Tung Lin Kok Yuen, Hong Kong, to UofT Scarborough, where Buddhist Studies courses have been taught by Henry Shiu, sponsoring a visiting professor, a lecture programme and regular conferences, including one on Buddhist visual cultures and one in 2010 on Buddhist diasporas; the other a pledge of CAD 1.8 million made in 2009 by the Buddhist Education Foundation for Canada to New College and the programme “Buddhism, Psychology and Mental Health”.

The fact that most of UofT’s faculty involved in Buddhist Studies are still heading towards tenure and will be able to make even stronger contributions to publishing and institution building in the years to come, the growing numbers of those interested in Buddhism enrolled in Buddhist Studies programmes or attending events both academic and of general interest and the breathtaking financial support received for the diverse activities promoting Buddhist Studies at UofT is an encouraging sign that Buddhist Studies at UofT and in Canada has at the point in time in which these lines are being written only begun to grow.

Buddhist Studies in Canada

University of Victoria, British Columbia

Martin T Adam

It's an exciting time for students with an interest in Buddhist Studies at the University of Victoria. Last term saw the successful introduction of a new Pacific and Asian Studies course on Buddhism: PAAS 493: Seminar in Buddhism. The course text was the Digha Nikaya. This semester there is another new course: PAAS 306: Indo-Tibetan Religious Traditions, which is, of course, focused on Buddhism. So Buddhist Studies is growing at UVIC. As well, the new major in Religious Studies is scheduled to come on stream in September of 2010; so the prospects look good for new courses on Buddhism in the coming years.

A Public lecture is also scheduled for Jan 26: "What Does Thinking Have to Do with It? An 8th-Century Buddhist Debate and Its Avatars", by Tom Tillemans, University of Lausanne.

Buddhist Studies International

Academic Conference, in association with the UN Day of Vesak 2552, Bangkok, Thailand, May 4-6, 2009

Sponsored by the Mahaculalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), this is the 6th year the event has been celebrated, since the declaration by the UN of Vesak as an International Day (see www.icundv.com for details). ‘Celebration’, however, only partly characterizes the event. For while there were opening and closing ceremonies associated with the event that celebrates the triple event of the Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbana of the Buddha, what makes the event of academic interest is that a whole day was devoted exclusively to scholarly deliberation.

Under the theme ‘Buddhist Approach[es] to [the] Global Crisis’, over 70 papers were presented with the participation of a hundred or so scholars, Asian and Western. The Conference was organized at the main campus of MCU in Ayuthya, along five panels as follows:

1. Buddhist Approach to the Environmental Crisis;
2. Buddhist Approach to the Economic Crisis;
3. Buddhist Approach to the Political Crisis and Peace Development;
4. Common Buddhist Text Project; and
5. Buddhist E-resources and Network.

The workshop session on the International Association of Buddhist Universities was intended to strengthen this one-year old organization, unique in that it is the one and only body that brings institutions around the world engaged in the academic study of Buddhism.

What was encouraging was that the breadth of the Panels was matched by an in-depth deliberation, each Panel taking a whole day with several presentations.

The Report on each Panel at the Plenary held in UN office in Bangkok the following day allowed all the delegates to get a sense of all the deliberations, and hear the recommendations, followed by questions from the floor with responses from the Reporting Panel.

But it was not all talk and no action. Indeed there were tangible outcomes.

One was setting up, at the end of the deliberations of the ‘One text project’, a committee of experts, drawn from the Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions, to develop a single source book that could be available to anyone who wants to get a sense of what constitutes Buddhism. Once published, it would be available at hotels and other public places internationally.

The Panel on the Environment had even a more tangible outcome. Thanks to some homework done in preparation, it was able to come up with a declaration regarding climate change, circulated among the delegates for signature via e-mail a day or two following the conclusion of the event.

A question from the floor at the Plenary raised the issue of striking a committee to develop an alternative Buddhist model in Economic, Political and Managerial Development, in response to a suggestion made by Hon Moragoda, Minister of Tourism of Sri Lanka, that the Conference explore it.

If this serves as an example of how our intellectual and academic land may be watered by the insights of practical politics, the three outcomes outlined above provide a wonderful examples of socially engaged Buddhism.

Of course, there was the usual camaraderie among the delegates, renewing old friendships and making new ones, but the significance of the event goes beyond that. And it is twofold. The first was that perhaps for the first time in the history of Buddhist scholarship, scholars of both the East and the West came to share their wisdom. In the past while there have been conferences and seminars on topics such as the ones listed above, they have been, generally speaking, limited to western scholars talking to western scholars and Eastern scholars to Eastern ones. But here we find that bridge gapped. Another related significance is that among the scholars were both laity and the ordained sangha.

An additional related significance of the at the UNDV conference is that another traditional divide came to be bridged – that between religious practice and scholarship. The issue of the keeping the lines sharply clear and separate between academic study and religious practice is one that has plagued the academy in the west, and the east, most likely in imitation of the west. But here at the conference, the ordained being as qualified academically, and many with training in the west, and holding academic positions in universities, there appeared no compromising of academic standards, both the lay professoriate – most if not all also being Buddhist practitioners, and the sangha professoriate speaking in a common idiom of scholarship.

Perhaps, it may be worth noting, that the possibility of the lay and the sangha academic coming together in intellectual deliberation, without

compromising the quality of each – academic objectivity and living the religious life, is something that can take place only in the context of Buddhism. They both draw upon the Buddha's invitation to 'come and see' (*ehi passika*) and for 'personal verification' (*paccattam veditabbo*). The last word in this phrase *viññuhi* 'by the wise' may give a hint as to why Buddhist practice need not compromise academic objectivity. It can only be done by the wise, Buddha's teachings generating such wisdom in the practitioners.

The one failure in the opinion of this writer is that meditation found no official space in the entire 3-day program, with more than lavish presentation of ritual.