

## Simon Fraser University, British Columbia

Paul Crowe

In the absence of a department dedicated to Asian Studies or Religious Studies, courses related to Buddhism are taught exclusively through the interdisciplinary and text-focused Department of Humanities and its Asia-Canada Program. Presently, two individuals provide this instruction: Michael Newton, a long term sessional instructor, and Paul Crowe who directs the David Lam Centre at SFU and teaches for the Department of Humanities and the Asia-Canada Program.

Two Buddhism-related courses were offered during the last two semesters:

Michael Newton taught a third-year course, *ASC 300: Asians and North Americans in Public Discourse: Popular Romance with Asian Warriors and Buddhist Monks*. In the context of discussion that reflected on orientalism, foundational myths, transnationalism and globalism the class examined the relationship of Buddhism and martial arts in Asia and then proceeded to consider how this relationship has been constructed in the west through the second half of the twentieth century to the present.

Paul Crowe led a fourth-year Asia-Canada seminar, *ASC 400: Asian Religions in British Columbia*, using the book of the same name edited by Larry DeVries, Don Baker and Daniel Overmyer and published through UBC Press in 2010. Three other chapter authors gave talks in the seminar: Cam Van Thi Phan a Vietnamese Buddhist nun and doctoral student in Asian Studies at UBC spoke about developments subsequent to the writing of her chapter on Vietnamese Buddhism in BC; the subject of Thai and Lao Buddhism was addressed by James Placzek of Langara College and Larry DeVries provided insights concerning various South Asian religious communities on the Lower Mainland. Students visited religious sites in teams of two or three and provided field reports for their fellow students through discussion, video and photographic presentations.

Based on work at the Gold Buddha Monastery in late December 2009 Paul Crowe recently submitted a chapter titled “Amitābha’s Birthday and the Liberation of Life” for a forthcoming book which is part of an introductory series aimed at university students with the intention of shedding light on the fieldwork experience. John Harding is editing the

volume titled *Studying Buddhism in Practice* (New York: Routledge) and Hillary Rodrigues (University of Lethbridge) is the series editor. Crowe also presented a paper titled “Dhārma on the Move: Authenticity and Adaptation” at the Tung Lin Kok Yuen sponsored conference, *Buddhism and Diaspora*, hosted at the University of Toronto at Scarborough in May 2010. The paper, currently being expanded for publication, examines tensions between claims to identity and orthodoxy in relationship to radically shifting immigration demographics and the newly emerging Conservative Party language framing expectations of integration voiced by Minister Jason Kenny and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Crowe has recently completed an article that provides a brief historical outline of Universal Buddhist Temple; founded in 1968, it is the oldest functioning Chinese Buddhist temple in BC.

The David Lam Centre at SFU hosted a public forum that addressed the resurgence of religion in the People’s Republic of China and, given the spike in immigration from the PRC to British Columbia during the past ten years, considered the local implications. The forum included a screening of an independent Canadian documentary filmed in China, *The Gods Come Home*. The director-producer, Christopher Sumpton, Ven. Heng Cang Shr of Gold Buddha Monastery, Emeritus Professor Daniel Overmyer (UBC Asian Studies) and Paul Crowe comprised a panel that provided reflections on the film and the situation in BC and responded to questions from the audience.