

University of Toronto

Christoph Emmrich (Chennai, Feb. 15, 2012)

In 2011 the main themes and defining events in Buddhism at the University of Toronto were Vinaya Studies, the politics of Cambodian Buddhism, innovative student workshops and one departure.

The University's Numata programme invited Charlene Makely (Reed College) who spoke on "natural" disasters and national mourning in China's Tibet. In the same lecture series Christian Wedemeyer (University of Chicago) shared with us his insights into the fantasies of the tribal in the elaboration of the antinomian in Buddhist Tantric literature and later in the year Tōru Funayama (Kyoto University) told us about Kamalaśīla's views on yogic perception and its significance for the bodhisattva path. The reading groups of the Numata Programme and the Hindu Studies Colloquium joined hands in inviting Anne Monius (Harvard) to discuss commentary and reading communities in medieval Tamil Buddhism on the basis of her book "A Place for Buddhism". The Numata Reading Group further hosted Albert Welter (University of Winnipeg), who came to talk about his work on *Yulu* encounter dialogues and Michelle Wang (Georgetown University) who was part of a discussion on her research dealing with changing ritual and visual concepts of the *maṇḍala* in Tang China.

The annual Numata conference in April, hosted by Shayne Clarke this year, had the academic world's top *vinaya* specialists travel to Toronto to present the most recent research on "Buddhist Nuns in India." While being representative of the ongoing focus on the *Mūlasarvastivāda-vinaya*, the meeting also identified some new emerging sub-fields such as South India, visuality and ownership. Gregory Schopen (UCLA) opened the event with a public keynote lecture titled "The Limited Reach of Buddhist Religious Doctrine: Debt, Slavery, and Who Could Become a Buddhist Nun (or Monk) in Early India" to a large interested public. In a similarly subversive fashion Oskar von Hinüber (University of Freiburg) introduced "Women Who Did Not Become Nuns in Early Buddhism," while Hiraoka Satoshi asked whether Yaśodharā became a nun, Shayne Clarke (McMaster University) pointed out a lack of inner coherence in the Tibetan nuns' *vinaya*, Yonezawa Yoshiyasu (Taishō University) gave a closer look at the editing of the *Bhikṣuṇī-vibhaṅga* section of the *Vinayasūtra*, Petra Kieffer-Pülz (Univ. Halle-Wittenberg) presented

sources giving us a better idea what the status of South Indian nuns may have been like, while Jinah Kim (Vanderbilt University) showed us reflections of nuns in medieval visual culture. Jason Neelis (Wilfried Laurier University) talked about women's ownership in monasteries, Gregory Schopen gave us good reasons to rethink the legal persona of the nun as an urban figure, Tsampa Tsedroen (University of Hamburg) reminded us of the foundation stories of the nun's order in their Tibetan versions and Yao Fumi (Tokyo University) narrated the curious story of a nun ordained by a messenger. The conference was concluded by talks on the *bhikṣuṇī pārājikas* by Sasaki Shizuka (Hanazono University), on "possible misunderstandings of the *brahmacāryopasthānasamvṛiti* requirement for female ordination in the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*" by Kishino Ryōji and by a comparative view on Buddhist and Jain nuns in early medieval India by Mati Jyvasjarvi (Harvard University).

This year's Tung Lin Kok Yuen Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus has been Professor Emeritus Ian Harris (University of Cumbria), well-known for his work on the history of Cambodian Buddhism and more recently on the role of Buddhism in the years of Khmer Rouge rule, on which he spoke in one of his Toronto lectures. Mona Schrempf (University of Berlin) visited the Department for the Study of Religion to hold courses on Tibetan medicine and ritual.

Among the workshops offered by the University of Toronto were a film and workshop series on documentary film in Tibet and Burma titled "New Voices, New Visions," organized by Frances Garrett in February, during which film students from China and Burma were joined by filmmaker Lindsey Morrison and Burma scholar Patrick Pranke (University of Kentucky). The other was the first University of Toronto Buddhist Studies Research Workshop in which University of Toronto faculty and graduate students shared and discussed results of their recent work.

Finally, in 2011 Juhn Ahn, till then Assistant Professor of East Asian Buddhism at the Department for the Study of Religion, left the University of Toronto and joined the University of Michigan where he now teaches Buddhism and Korean Studies. His position has been re-advertised as one in Chinese Buddhism and is waiting to be filled.