

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.