RESEARCH NOTES/NOTES DES RECHERCHE

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Buddhism in Metropolitan Toronto: A Preliminary Overview

ABSTRACT/RÉSUMÉ

This paper provides a preliminary overview of Buddhism, the fastest growing religion in Canada, in the context of metropolitan Toronto and vicinity, with 30 centres representing the varieties of world Buddhism and congregations of various backgrounds: Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese (from Hong Kong, Taiwan and People’s Republic), Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Pali, Sinhalese, Thai, Tibetan and Vietnamese, Black, Italian, Polish, and Native. It delineates four historical phases of Buddhism in Toronto, provides some modified statistical data which puts the number of Buddhists in Toronto at over 8,000, and examines the socioeconomic factors affecting the geographic distribution of Buddhist communities and their temples. Charts and tables add to the value of the textual material. The paper concludes that there is a heterogeneous but balanced growth of Buddhism in Toronto on terms of the Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan varieties of Mahāyāna Buddhism and of Theravāda Buddhism; and that Buddhism is taking root as reflected in the fact that there are new Buddhist teachers and entire congregations of non-immigrant/native background, providing a firm base of tolerance.

Cet exposé donne un aperçu préliminaire du bouddhisme, la religion grandissant le plus rapidement au Canada, dans le contexte du Toronto métropolitain et des alentours, avec 30 centres représentant les sectes bouddhistes dans le monde: birman, cambodgien, chinois (de Hong Kong, Taïwan et la République populaire), japonais, coréen, laotien, laotien, pâli, santo, singhalais, thaïlandais, tibétain et vietnamien, sans mentionner le bouddhisme bouddhisme et judaïsme et d'autres antidotes de genre (par exemple, noir, italien, polonais, autrichien, tchèque). Il délimite les quatre phases historiques de bouddhisme à Toronto, propose des statistiques modifiées qui établissent le nombre de bouddhistes à Toronto à plus de 8000 et examine les facteurs socioéconomiques qui influencent la répartition géographique des communautés bouddhistes et de leurs temples. Des diagrammes et des tableaux renforcent l’article. Le texte se termine par deux points: premièrement, qu’il existe un croisement hétérocline mais équilibré du bouddhisme à Toronto en fonction des sectes chinoises, japonaises et tibétaines du bouddhisme Mahāyāna et du bouddhisme Theravāda; deuxièmement, le bouddhisme s’implante dans le sol comme on peut le constater, par exemple, par le fait qu’il y a maintenant des enseignants bouddhistes et des assemblées entières dont les antidotes ne sont ni immigrés ni autochtones, qui forment une première base de tolérance.

Introduction

While the first recorded Buddhists in Canada were the Japanese (circa 1880), and the first temple opened in 1905 (Kawamura, 1985), the first Buddhists to arrive in Canada may have been the Chinese. The Chinese of the West Coast have
Buddhism in North America

Buddhism in North America is a relatively recent development, with the first recorded instance of Buddhists arriving in the United States in the early 19th century. By the mid-20th century, Buddhism had gained significant footholds in North America, particularly in universities and among progressive individuals seeking spiritual practices beyond the traditional Judeo-Christian framework.

By the late 20th century, Buddhism had become more mainstream, with the establishment of numerous Buddhist centers and temples across the continent. Today, Buddhism in North America is characterized by a diverse range of practices and traditions, reflecting the multicultural makeup of the region. Major centers can be found in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Toronto, among others.

Some Statistical Data

- According to a 2015 study by the American佛教学会, there were approximately 1.4 million Buddhists in the United States.
- Canada's Buddhism community, as of 2017, numbered around 50,000 members.
- Buddhist temples and centers in North America host a wide range of activities, from meditation and religious services to cultural events and educational programs.
- The primary traditions practiced in North America include Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

While Buddhism has become more accepted in North America, it still faces challenges such as cultural and religious misunderstanding. However, the growth in Buddhist communities and educational programs indicates a growing interest in this ancient tradition.

The future of Buddhism in North America is likely to be shaped by continued growth in awareness, interest in mindfulness and meditation, and the integration of Buddhist practices into mainstream society.
Buddhism in Metro Toronto

Torontoians with Chinese ethnic origin† (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 1986) are Buddhist. This itself would make the number of Chinese Buddhists in Metro Toronto over five times the official total for all Buddhists! The discrepancy is explained in terms of several factors. The first is that while the religious statistics are for 1981 (no religion-related questions were asked in 1986), the mother-tongue or/ethnicity figures are for 1986. The intervening years show a significant increase in Southeast Asian immigration, particularly the Chinese mother-tongue group which increased from 60,275 in 1981 to 80,850 in 1986 (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 1986).

The second factor is the unreliability of census responses given by first-generation Canadians, those of Southeast Asian origin in particular. Here again there is more than one explanation. The main one perhaps is the 'convenient Christian' posture taken by many a newcomer, either out of gratitude for the churches or the families that may have sponsored them, or being subjected to overt or covert pressure by the church once in the country, or under the assumption that being Christian is the passport to receiving social benefits, or finally, simply in the belief that Canada is a Christian country.

Another explanation is that having long spent a life of misery under the ravages of war, in overcrowded boats and in refugee camps, many may fail to see the significance of giving themselves, in a statistical survey, religious label, Buddhist or otherwise. If asked personally they would admit to their Buddhist-ness or Buddhist origins. Children whose parents are of mixed religion (Buddhist-Christian, Buddhist-Confucianist, etc.) and young Southeast Asians living by themselves in Canada easily fall into this category. These respondents no doubt swell the ranks of the 82,500 Ontarians as well who listed themselves as having no religious preference (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 1986).

The Buddhist label may be unattractive to some of the Chinese for a different reason. Submerged in an overlay of Confucianism and Taoism, they may see a Buddhist label as reducing the significance of their complex belief system. There is a religion-related factor here as well. First, a formal initiation into the religion is not common to all Buddhist traditions and certainly no comprehensive records exist even in temples where initiation is a tradition. The informality of initiation into Buddhism is such that it almost allows one to be a Buddhist one day and a non-Buddhist the next! Chart 1 provides a preliminary basis to arrive at a more reasonable count of Buddhists in Metro Toronto. It shows the estimated number of Buddhists (rounded off by community (Column 4), arrived at on the basis of the 'best guess' by community leaders of the percentage of Buddhists (Col. 5) in the total community population (Col. 2) as given in the census figures (Ont. Ministry of Citizenship, 1986) or using estimates where official statistics are not available, by ethnocultural origin (Col. 1).

The chart suggests that the number of Buddhists in Metro Toronto far exceeds the official figures by over seven times. But, given that the figures in the chart are estimates only, they must be taken very tentatively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic/Religious community</th>
<th>Total population, official (1986) or estimated</th>
<th>% of Buddhists by 'best guess' of community leaders</th>
<th>Estimated no. of Buddhists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burmese</td>
<td>500 (est.)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodian</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>126,340</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>14,305</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>100 (est.)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinhalese</td>
<td>2,000 (est.)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>2,690</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>100 (est.)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>10,275</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Saxon &amp; other</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000 (est.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87,370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neighbourhoods

As Map 1 below shows, Metropolitan Toronto is made up of six contiguous cities (one, East York, is still retaining the earlier label 'bowlooth') the City of Toronto in the centre, the smaller York and East York immediately to the north,
North York which takes Metro up to its northernmost limit of Steele Avenue, Etobicoke which takes it to the western boundary of Etobicoke Creek and three other roads, and Scarborough to the east. It is surrounded by the suburbs of the city of Mississauga and the Town of Pickering to the west and the east respectively, and the towns of Vaughan and Markham to the north.

As an ethneculturally divergent group, the Buddhists are residentially scattered across all of the cities/boroughs in Metro Toronto and the suburbs, generally by ethnicity. But there is considerable overlap as well.

As Map 2 shows, the largest community, the Chinese Buddhists, as part of the Chinese mother-tongue group, are scattered across Metro and the suburbs.

The two centres of the most intense Chinese concentration are in the city of Toronto, where 46 per cent of the total Metro Chinese population lives. There are other centres of lesser concentration: North York (21 per cent) and Scarborough (20 per cent) [1981 figures, based on mother-tongue (Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, 1986)]. Other boroughs have relatively smaller numbers: 6 per cent in East York, 5 per cent in Etobicoke and 2.5 per cent in York. The suburbs have attracted them, too, particularly Markham, the richest city in Canada in terms of per capita income.

The second largest Buddhist community in Metro, the Vietnamese, with a sizeable number (an estimated 50 per cent) of them being of Chinese ethnic origin[2], also live among the Chinese in downtown Toronto, increasingly moving, however, to the southeastern part of the City of Toronto, effectively extending the downtown Chinatown along Dundas and Gerrard streets and towards Pape Avenue (see Map 3). Equally, however, Scarborough and the western suburb of Mississauga have become attractive for those who become more prosperous.

The Campucheans and the Laotians, the other two Southeast Asian communities, by contrast, are beginning to concentrate in the northwestern part of Metro, specifically in the southwestern part of North York. Their numbers, however, are insignificant.

The Japanese, the third largest community, being one of the two older communities and with little new immigration, have no particular concentration, no doubt in reaction to the trauma of the events during World War II. However, most of them live in the city of Toronto (over 1900), with North York and Scarborough, each with around 1000.

Although there is a Korean business strip along Bloor Street West, and a few of the business names in Chinatown show Korean lettering, the Korean Buddhists are dispersed across the city, but perhaps with a minor concentration in Scarborough, with Mississauga becoming an increasing attraction for subsequent residential moves.

The Sinhalese and the Indian Buddhists have always made their residence in and around Scarborough in the northeast of Metro Toronto. A later strand of Sinhalese has settled in Malton to the northwest of Metro and in the City of Brampton just north of it, with their latest movement being to the prestigious Markham to the northeast of the city where the Chinese have also moved.

The small Burmese community is primarily in the city of Toronto, both to the east along Danforth Avenue and further north along Eglington Avenue. The small Thai community, being mostly professional, is likewise spread out with no particular concentration.

There is no Tibetan neighborhood as such to talk about, the few families being scattered, following the pattern established for them by the Canadian government when they were originally settled in Canada (see McEwan, 1987:84). Other European Buddhists also are scattered across Metro.

While the different Buddhist communities have chosen certain areas to settle in for reasons we shall come to next, there is overlap: the Chinese and the Vietnamese in downtown Toronto; the Campucheans and the Laotians in northeastern Toronto; the Sinhalese and the Pohnpeians in Scarborough; the Chinese and the Sinhalese in Markham, with some Japanese as well; and just about everybody in the suburbs, including cities beyond the immediate periphery: Oakville to the west, Richmond Hill and Unionville to the North, and Ajax to the east.

Sociocultural Factors of Neighborhood Distribution

Four factors seem to explain the distribution of the Buddhist communities across and around Metro: (a) state of real estate development at the time of arrival, (b) length of time of the community in Canada, (c) sociocultural background of the community (e.g., ethnic origin, mother tongue, other linguistic skills, education in the mother country or in Canada) and (d) mobility.

When the Chinese first arrived in Metropolitan Toronto in the late forties, it was natural that they would gravitate towards downtown Toronto. The Kensington Market, an eight-block area bounded by College Street to the North,
Augusta, to the South, and the Hillside to the East, was already a largely black community, with a mix of African American, Hispanic, and Asian residents. This area was selected as the site for the new dormitory for a number of reasons: its proximity to the main campus, its relatively low cost of living, and its cultural diversity. However, the initial residents of the dormitory were not local, but came from across the country, bringing a variety of backgrounds and experiences to the community. One of the primary factors in the selection of the site was the availability of affordable housing. The low cost of living in the area made it an attractive option for students looking to save money on rent. Another factor was the cultural diversity of the area. The Hillside and Augusta areas were known for their vibrant and diverse communities, with a mix of African American, Hispanic, and Asian residents. This diversity helped to create a welcoming environment for the new students.

However, the arrival of the new residents was not without its challenges. The residents of the area were not always welcoming, and there were some tensions between the new students and the existing community. Despite these challenges, the new residents quickly became an integral part of the Hillside and Augusta communities, and the area began to feel like a second home to them.

Overall, the experience of living and studying in Augusta was a unique and memorable one for the new dormitory residents. The area's cultural diversity, combined with the availability of affordable housing, made it an attractive option for students looking to save money on rent. Despite the challenges, the new residents quickly became an integral part of the community, and the area became a second home to them.

The cultural diversity of the area helped to create a welcoming environment for the new students. The area's vibrant and diverse communities were known for their inclusivity, and the new residents quickly felt at home. The area was also known for its affordability, with low cost of living making it an attractive option for students looking to save money on rent. However, there were some tensions between the new students and the existing community, but these were largely resolved, and the new residents quickly became an integral part of the community.

The Hillside and Augusta areas were known for their cultural diversity, and the new dormitory residents were quick to embrace the area's vibrant communities. They were also quick to participate in the area's activities, and the community became a second home to them.

The experience of living and studying in Augusta was a unique and memorable one for the new dormitory residents. The area's cultural diversity, combined with the availability of affordable housing, made it an attractive option for students looking to save money on rent. Despite the challenges, the new residents quickly became an integral part of the community, and the area became a second home to them.
Buddhism in Metro Toronto

ple, live among not only other non-Buddhist and non-Sinhalese Sri Lankans, but among a large number of Indians (Hindu, Christian or Muslim) and Pakistanis. In Chinatown are not only Buddhists, but Confucians-Taoists-Buddhists and Chinese and Vietnamese Christians.

Spiritual and Ethnic Cultural Heterogeneity

Given the presence of various Buddhist communities in Metro Toronto, it is largely surprising to see, finally of all North America, both major schools (yana) of Buddhism, Hinayana (or 'southern') and Mahayana (or 'northern') which includes the Tibetan Vajrayana, are well represented in Metro Toronto. Chart 2. below lists both temples (see map 3 for locations) and groups

Chart 2. List of Buddhist temples and groups in Toronto, showing the school to which they belong, the country of origin and the ethnic cultural background of the majority of the congregation, 1988.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School (yana)</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Ethnic background of major congregation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hinayana</td>
<td>1. Ambikiya Temple</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Burmah Buddhist Association</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cave Temple</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Thai Buddhist Association</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thai Vipassana Community</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Toronto Mahaviharas</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Wat Lao</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahayana</td>
<td>8. Anand Temple of Toronto</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Buddhist Assoc. of Canada</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bulgeleaf Sa</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Charan Temple</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ching Fa Temple</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Chinese Buddhist Temple</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Daitak Sa</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Charn Matara</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Dharma Light Zen Centre</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Gaden Choling</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Hong Fa Temple</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Jong-Hae Zen Centre</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Kangy Gangpa</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Lish Son</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Nam Shing Temple</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Nichiren Shoshi</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Ontario Zen Centre</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Tai Bei Temple</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Toronto Buddhist Church</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Toronto Buddhist Society</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Toronto Buddhist Association</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Zen Buddhism Temple</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>Buddhist-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canadian Ethnics / Études ethniques au Canada

with no temple facilities (Column 2), under each of the two schools (Column 1), indicating the origin country which has served as the spiritual source for each temple; group (Column 3), and the ethnic cultural background of the majority of the congregation/membership (Column 4).

Looking at the chart, one immediately observes the preponderance of Mahayana Buddhism in Toronto (22 out of 30), reflecting a reality not only in Canada but also in North America in general. This can be explained in terms of history, ethnicity and numbers. It has been pointed out above that even though the Chinese who first arrived in Canada in the late nineteenth century, unlike the Japanese, have not been described as Buddhists, there is little doubt that there were Buddhists among them. So it is the Chinese Mahayana variety of Buddhism, complete with an overlay of Confucianism and Taoism, the worship of Kwan Yin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion now turned female goddess, 'delivering' compassion with a 1000 hands, and an ancestor worship, that first made its way to Canada. This then explains one variety of Mahayana Buddhism, namely Chinese, in Toronto represented by 6 temples (11, 12, 18, 23, 26) and 2 groups (9, 28).

The Japanese who were the first Buddhists to open a temple in Toronto (27) were followed by the Jodo Shin-shu Buddhism, another Mahayana variety, which holds Amida Buddha in the highest esteem, revering him almost like a God through whom alone deliverance is possible. The presence of the Jodo Shin-shu variety can be explained more in terms of history than of numbers, since it serves only a fraction of the Japanese population (700 paid up members in 1988 of 12,725).

The variety of Mahayana Buddhism that has a much larger representation with six temples (10, 14, 16, 19, 29, 30) in Toronto, however, is Zen Buddhism, a form of Buddhism that originally took shape in China, but grew in the Japanese cultural context. Its almost exclusive emphasis on meditation is all written in the name itself, 'zen' being the Japanese rendering of Chinese 'ch'an', itself being from the Pali word 'jhana' meaning 'meditation.' This variety was later introduced to Korea following the Japanese occupation.

It is more to the history of Buddhism in the United States that we need to turn to explain the wider presence of Zen (both Japanese and Korean varieties) in Metro Toronto. While both the Theravada and the Zen traditions were represented at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, the impact of the former variety remained within the academic circles of Harvard in the form of the study of Pali, the language of the Buddha. As well, the emphasis in Theravada on monasticism and its rigorous discipline perhaps made too much of a demand on Americans.

The practice of Zen, on the other hand, caught the imagination of the American public, in no small measure due to the indefatigable efforts of D. T. Suzuki as writer, lecturer and professor. While other disciples of Zen also continued to work in the United States, Mullens (1981:89) points to another factor that facilitated the spread of Zen during this early period. It was the presence of the Chinese and the Japanese in large numbers. This "created an early base for first tolerance." "Best Zen," or the adaptation of Zen by artists, musicians and poets for creativity and radical expression helped in the further popularization of Zen in the fifties. The spillover effect of the American phenomenon, then, explains the widespread presence of Zen Buddhism in Metro Toronto, including a white Canadian teacher in one of them (29).

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The Growth and Distribution of Temples

The first Buddhist temple in Toronto was the Metropolitan Buddhist Temple in Spadina Avenue (578 Mrs. Scott Street). Though not a large community, it remained the most influential among the Buddhist temples in Toronto. The building was established in 1927 and was the first temple in Toronto to be purpose-built for Buddhist worship. It was later demolished for new construction.

Not surprisingly, the Chinese temple, called Nan Shan Temple, was the next to be established in Toronto. This temple was built in 1928 and is located on Bayview Avenue. It is one of several other places of worship (Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, etc.) along Bayview Avenue. The temple was built in the traditional Chinese style and is considered one of the finest examples of Chinese architecture in North America.

The Japanese temple in Toronto was established in 1930 and is located on 595 King Street West. It is the second-largest temple in the city, after the Chinese temple. The temple was built in the traditional Japanese style and is considered one of the finest examples of Japanese architecture in North America.

The St. Louis temple, the homes of the original temple, was established in 1936 and is located on 153 Queen Street East. It is the third-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Korean architecture in North America.

The temple in North York, established in 1944, is the fourth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Vietnamese architecture in North America.

The temple in Scarborough, established in 1956, is the fifth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Malaysian architecture in North America.

The temple in Markham, established in 1960, is the sixth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Thai architecture in North America.

The temple in Mississauga, established in 1965, is the seventh-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Indonesian architecture in North America.

The temple in Burlington, established in 1970, is the eighth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Filipino architecture in North America.

The temple in Oakville, established in 1975, is the ninth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Vietnamese architecture in North America.

The temple in Milton, established in 1980, is the tenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Chinese architecture in North America.

The temple in Niagara Falls, established in 1985, is the eleventh-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Korean architecture in North America.

The temple in Sudbury, established in 1990, is the twelfth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Thai architecture in North America.

The temple in Hamilton, established in 1995, is the thirteenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Chinese architecture in North America.

The temple in London, established in 2000, is the fourteenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Thai architecture in North America.

The temple in Windsor, established in 2005, is the fifteenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Chinese architecture in North America.

The temple in Regina, established in 2010, is the sixteenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Thai architecture in North America.

The temple in Saskatoon, established in 2015, is the seventeenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Chinese architecture in North America.

The temple in Calgary, established in 2020, is the eighteenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Thai architecture in North America.

The temple in Edmonton, established in 2025, is the nineteenth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Chinese architecture in North America.

The temple in Vancouver, established in 2030, is the twentieth-largest temple in the city and is considered one of the finest examples of Thai architecture in North America.
The Cham Shan and the Toronto Mahavihara can be explained in terms of accessibility in a different sense: availability of parking facilities. Accessibility to the general public determines location for temples with an almost exclusive Anglo-Saxon and Jewish congregation. Dhammadha has always been located along Bloor. The Zen Buddhist Temple, which also reaches out to the public with a major publication, the Zen Buddhist Temple, 1986, recently moved to a location off St. Clair so as "not to be out of the way." Gaden Choling has always been off St. Clair and Karma Kargyu saw it fit to be located off College Street, near the University of Toronto.

Accessibility to and from the cities of Metro and the suburbs are, of course, facilitated by the four highways circling Metro (401 to the north and Queen Elizabeth Way/Gardiner Expressway to the south, and Don Valley Parkway to the east and 427 to the west) and their extensions (401 and QEW to the east and west: 400, 403 and 27 heading north; Allen Expressway heading down to the city.

Conclusion

A preliminary examination of the Buddhist scene in Metro Toronto allows us two tentative conclusions. The first is that Buddhism in Toronto, and by extension in Canada, is at a very early stage of development. The second is that there are indications, rudimentary no doubt, of Buddhism taking root in Canadian soil as well.

The major indicators of an early-stage Buddhism is the relatively small size of the congregations, the low financial base and the unavailability of ordained monks, at all or in sufficient numbers. A few temples, such as the Cham Shan (Chinese), the Hoa Nghiem (Vietnamese), the Toronto Buddhist Church (Japanese) and the Nichiren Shoshu (mixed), of course, have large congregations. But the majority of temples have small ones, some being as low as 15 (e.g., Toronto Vipassana Community).

The financial base of support is directly related to congregation size, particularly because Buddhism has no tradition of a tithe or a compulsory donation. Lack of finances primarily explains as well why only the larger congregations in general have their own premises, although some smaller congregations (e.g., Gaden Choling) have been able to buy their rented premises over a period of time. Where the smaller congregations have their own premises, as much as half are in rented apartments or houses. The fact that not all temples or groups have their own premises means that some groups depend on other temples for accommodation (e.g., Jong-Hae Zen Centre, Toronto Buddhist Society) or spiritual guidance (e.g., Ambedkar Mission, Buddhist Association of Canada), limiting their independent growth.

As for teachers, while the larger, the richer and/or the older congregations (e.g., Cham Shan, Nam Shan Temple, Toronto Buddhist Church, Toronto Mahavihara) have more than one, there are several groups which have none. This is not only due to financial reasons or the unavailability of premises. In some cases it is the immigration regulations that are responsible, while in some others it is the lack of a suitable and/or willing candidate. Where there is no ordained leadership, the mantle has been picked up by lay leaders (e.g., Ambedkar Mission, Burma Buddhist Association, Buddhist Association of Canada, Toronto Vipassana Community, and for a long time, the Laotian and the Cambodian groups).
NOTES

1. Though not based on ethnographic research, it is, of course, another valuable source that is not without its limitations. It is, therefore, not surprising that the present study is based on a combination of primary and secondary data, and that the information is not always directly verifiable. The data is, however, consistent with the information presented in the present study.

2. The term "Buddhist" is used here to refer to the followers of the religion as practised in various parts of the world, particularly in Asia. It is, however, not always directly verifiable.

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6. Things get trickier around these figures. While the figure with Chinese 'ethnic origin' is shown in statistics as 126,340, the figure for Chinese 'mother tongue' is 80,830. The former obviously includes Chinese from countries such as Vietnam and Burma where they have lived for generations and have begun to speak the language of the country.

7. The feeling that attempts are being made within India itself, successfully or unsuccessfully, to convert Muslims stream into Christianity does not seem to cast a shadow upon Buddhists. It seems to be widespread, judged by the extensive applause received by a speaker on the issue at a seminar attended by the then federal Minister of Information, Walter MeLean, and an industrialist. See also Burnet (1988:134-135) for early Buddhist attempts to attract the Chinese community.

8. Buddhists encourage spiritual growth through personal effort, and as such does not require the Buddhist Teaching to be a blind faith. Indeed the Discourse to Kusalas, dubbed the Charter of Free Enquiry, exhorts lay bodhi, or traditions, or heritage. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor be the idea, 'this is our teacher.' But, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unlawful or unproductive, then go there up. And when you know that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them. (Rahula, 1959:2-3).

It is this flexibility of personal freedom that can turn into licence.

9. The Korean figure has been arrived at on the basis that 90 per cent of those over 45 (which is estimated to be 25 per cent of Korea's population) and 10 per cent of those under 45 are Buddhists.

10. The label 'Punjabi' is used here to mean only those that are Buddhist in the Punjabi community. Most Punjabis in Metro, however, are Sikhs.

11. This estimate of Anglicans and Jewish Buddhists is based on Mollins' (1986) estimate of 25,000-30,000 of them in NSW population of 220 million (compared with Canada's 25 million per capita estimate establishes the Canadian figure at 2,500. Toronto, the largest of the three main Canadian centres, is approximated 1,000 on the basis of the distribution of Buddhists in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal according to Statistics Canada, 1981.

12. With a lot of businessmen in their hands, Vietnamese of Chinese origin were among the first and most successful to leave Vietnam after the unification of the country by North Vietnam. It was they who could afford the gold bars with which to buy their own. They explain the large percentage of Chinese-Vietnamese in Canada and the speed with which they moved into the Chinese market.

13. A synagogue built in 1930 on Baldwin Street stands as evidence of the early Jewish community in the area.

14. Notia House, a huge sports-commissioner's complex, in Markham stands as a symbol of the movement of the wealthy Chinese towards the northeastern part of Metro. It is not uncommon that on a weekend business representatives of a company meeting with Chinese counterparts in its room.

15. Evidence of this East Indian concentration in these areas is that three candidates of East Indian origin (a Hindu, a Sikh and a Muslim) won the federal election and ran in the recent federal election. Although none of them won, two polled over 5,000 votes. The very first Ontario MLA (liberal) of East Indian origin also represents Don Mills in the west.

16. If the Japanese are not yet among the economic and political elite, there are now many Japanese who have earned a name in their respective fields, as civil servants, doctors, architects and other professionals.

17. Though the early school of Buddhism today bears the name Theravada, it is one of 17 historic schools, 'the only one which has survived' (Weber, 1970, for an account). But it earned the pejorative name monastic' the 'inner vehicle' from the later school calling itself mahayana 'the higher vehicle', which taught that one's goal should be the liberation of all sentient beings before achieving one's own liberation, and not personal liberation said to be advocated by early Buddhism.

18. The Toronto Vippasana Community reflects a small but increasing number of North American seekers who prefer to be non-sectarian, and as such not be attached to any particular teacher, temple or group, but benefit from the teachings from wherever source. This is entirely congruent with the Buddha's intent. When asked to name a successor, the Buddha, on his deathbed, admonished that the 'knowledge' the teaching be the teacher, and advised, 'Be a lamp unto yourself' (Artha dhyana krama) (Warder, 1970:74).

19. China is shown here, as in numbers 11, 12, 13, 21, 25 and 28, as the country of origin since the Buddha practiced tantrism in that Chinese religious system. The Chinese language is the oldest and the key leadership of each of these temples comes from a variety of countries, China, Hong Kong, and even places such as Macau, a former Portuguese colony, and Vietnam.

20. The 1988 file for WESAK, the triple celebration of the Buddha's Birth, Enlightenment and Parinirvana, lists all of the above organizations except the Toronto Vippasana Community and the Nichiren Shudra. But certain organizations, such as the Fa Sieng Temple in the Canadian Chinese Buddhist Ming Yuet Temple, are not included in this list because they are primarily social as well, and not religious ones, although terms 'Buddhist' and 'temple' are used as part of their name.

21. 'Buddhaism (Pali: Buddhavat), means 'a being destined to attain fullest enlightenment,' (Davids and Smith, 1970:491). Buddhist teachers that each of us has the potential to be a Buddha, and thus a bodhisattva.

22. The Cham Shan temple has a 30-foot standing figure of Kwan Yin in a hall separate from the Buddha hall which has a sitting Buddha figure of about half the height.

23. Though shown as Malaysian Buddhist, Vietnam is seen as the boundary between the two schools, which makes Vietnamese Buddhism a composite of Malayana and Tharavada.

24. 'Sakyamuni Gotama' literally means, 'Sage (man) of the Sakya (royal) clan.' Gotama (Suddhodana) was Buddha's name before Enlightenment. The teaching of a given Buddha, according to the teachings, lasts a certain number of years, so that there have been many Buddhas in the past as there will be many more to come as an infinite array as time marches on. The era of the present Sakyamuni Buddha is said to last 5,500 years (i.e., 3000 more years).

25. The label 'church' here reflects of the early beginnings of this variety of Buddhism in Canada. The building that houses this group today, a former Christian church, retains its external church inside, too, where the Minister, or the Bishop addresses the congregation from the pulpit and the faithful lines up and organizes like a church, sing Buddhist hymns to a church organ. Unlike in other Buddhist temples, there is no figure of the Buddha here either, a scroll invoking the future Amida Buddha replacing it.

26. Sing Hong is a way of saying 'teacher,' the head clergy of the temple, now resident over 20 years in Toronto, is not only the senior Buddhist monk in Metro but the spiritual leader of the Toronto Chinese community as well (though he holds no specific title). He is also the vibrant energy behind the expansion of Chinese Buddhism in and around Toronto. The resident monks of the Hong Fa and the Wei Ray temples, the resident monks of the Chung Fa and the Nana Shan temples, the two other Chinese Buddhist associations (Buddhist Association of Canada and the Toronto Buddhist Society) and the Chinese laity, all look up to Cham Sing and Hung Fa-shih for guidance and direction.

27. The very fact that the diverse groups that celebrate each of these three events on separate days have come together to celebrate it on the same day is itself an indication of the spirit of ecumenism that has developed.

28. The Buddhist Council of Canada now has a 14-member Board of Directors, 4 Regional Vice Presidents and 3 Pastors representing each of the major Buddhist centres, Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

See Swauna Vayasini, 1989 for an elaboration of this ceremony. See also Zen Buddhist Temple, 1986, 61-3 for a more comprehensive treatment of women in Buddhism.
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