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“GROWTH OF A TREE: AN INTRODUCTION”

in

Suwanda H. J. Sugunasiri (Ed.),

Thus Spake the Sangha: Early Buddhist Leadership in Toronto,

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GROWTH OF A TREE:
AN INTRODUCTION

1. Introductory Remarks

What has culminated here as a book began with a simple interest to tell the Stories of the ordained sangha\(^1\) who I had the privilege of interviewing, way back in 1984-85, under the sponsorship of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (see Appendix I, Research Report, dated April 7, 1986). They were among the eleven Buddhist leaders, six sangha and five lay\(^2\). My interest was to place on record the voices of this early Buddhist leadership - Kwang Ok Sunim, Bhante Punnaji, Samu Sunim, Sing Hung Fashih, Tsunoda Sensei and Zasep Tulku Rimpoche, the other teacher Thich Kwang Leung of Hoa Nghiem not being available.

But when recently, Nalanda College of Buddhist Studies (Canada) decided to bring out a history of this earliest phase of Buddhism in Toronto, drawing upon as well some primary source material available in the personal possession of the present editor, the material of the interviews lent itself as a perfect fit. But as my work progressed, it dawned upon me that the publication may have a greater significance in that there aren’t too many publications on the life of the Buddhist ordained, particularly as told by themselves. So *Thus Spake the Sangha* is then presented to you as a contribution towards filling that hiatus. This Volume I is
expected to be followed by a sequel, Volume II, based on the lay leadership.

In terms of methodology, the interviews were done, at the temples themselves (see Chart 3), between “December 1984 to September 1985”. Every interview begins with something like this:

*I’m going to be asking you some questions, and if there is anything you’re not clear about, or not familiar with, or you’re not willing to talk about, of course, you don’t have to say anything. But, otherwise, we’ll just have a discussion. This is in relation to a Buddhist research I’m conducting for the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.*

The interviews were based in a standard Questionnaire (see Appendix II), developed by Prof. Bob Harney of the University of Toronto, for the Multicultural History Society of Ontario to elicit ethnocultural information (see primarily Part II, *Life Before Canada*, in each of the Stories in the Volume). In order to capture the particularly Buddhist element, however, an additional Questionnaire was developed.³
All interviews taped, the tapes were then transcribed (after over two decades!), each Story coming to be constructed from out of the transcript itself. In our editing, while repetitions, hems and haws, and unclear material have been eliminated, any editing was when the English idiom demanded it or the text unclear. Additions, shown in sq. brackets, have been kept to a minimum in order to the spare the reader.

However, we have sought to retain the orality of the narrative, even indicating pauses, laughter, etc. On occasion, we have sought to retain a dialogue as is, to give some vibrancy, and a living reality, to the narrative. This approach may have resulted in some tense and number inconsistencies, not just within a paragraph, but perhaps even within a sentence.

While you will find more copious editorial footnoting in the Stories by Bhante Punnaji and Tsunoda Sensei, based in my personal knowledge and involvement in the Buddhist community, I regret that I did not have the same level of expertise regarding other Stories. I regret, too, that the story of Sing Hung Fa-shih does not see the light of day out of respect for his wishes.

While these extremely vibrant and dynamic Stories themselves have an intrinsic value, both individually and collectively,
providing an Oral History of an immigrant community, this
introductory essay seeks to pull them together to provide a
collective picture of the Buddhist sangha. We have also
additionally introduced some theoretical input, to provide a wider
contextual background.

In terms of the content of this essay, we begin (in Section 2) by
presenting the Sangha involved in this study, including their
Ethnocultural Background and Settlement in Canada, this segment
speaking to the primary interest of the Multicultural History
Society of Ontario. Then we explore some details regarding the
Congregation (Section 3). This is followed by details of the
personal religious life of the sangha, providing an insight into a
little known world (Section 4). Of most theoretical interest to the
reader may be Section 5, Harmony in Diversity, where we provide
two schema (Figures 1 and 2) explaining the wide variation of
traditions of the sangha members, but also how they have come to
relate to each other grounded in the teachings of the Buddha. In the
penultimate Section 6, we present the future of Buddhism, as seen
through the eyes of the interviewees, with additions of my own
based on the personal experience in the context of Canada.

The tree in the title “Growth of a Tree” refers to Buddhism in
Toronto, reflective as it is of Canada, Toronto being one of the
three major centres of Buddhist concentration, the other two being Vancouver and Montreal.

2. Presenting The Sangha

2.1 The Interviewees

We begin our introduction to the Stories by presenting the six sangha members interviewed⁴, Chart 1 providing the personal name, in alpha order, their titles as used in the given traditions, the ethnocultural tradition and the ‘yānic’ tradition (see next).

The basis of selection of the sangha leadership was self-suggestive:

a. Providing leadership in the context of a given ethnocultural community,

and /or

b. Their personal involvement in Buddhist activities in Toronto.

The temples represented by the six included in this study were the earliest on the scene (1946 to 1981 (see Chart 3)) and about the most visible⁵.

The term ‘ethnocultural community’ includes not only the Acquired Buddhists (see Sugunasiri, 2006, for a characterization), i.e., primarily the immigrant communities, but also the Inherited Buddhists (namely, the wider Anglo-Saxon / Jewish adherents that constitute the total congregation, or the large majority, as e.g., of Samu Sunim’s Zen Buddhist Temple and Zasep Tulku Rimpoche’s Gaden Cholin (Tibetan) (see their Stories in this collection for details).
To explore further the Leadership of the sangha members, we may begin with Tsunoda Sensei (#5), Bishop of the (Japanese) Buddhist Churches of Canada⁶, representing the oldest Buddhist community in Canada (Watada, 1996) and the oldest Buddhist temple (called the Toronto Buddhist Church) to be opened in Toronto (1945) (ibid.). But the Toronto Buddhist Church earns its place in this study for a more recent important reason, namely, that its premises (at 918 Bathurst Street (see chart 3 below)) served as the venue for the meetings of the newly formed Toronto Buddhist Federation (later Buddhist Federation of Toronto). Additionally, it was Fujikawa Sensei, the Minister of the local chapter, who joined this editor in bringing the Buddhists together for the first time in 1980⁷.

It was under Sing Hung Fa-shih’s (#4) leadership that the first Chinese Temple was opened in 1965 (see Chart 2). And he was also one of three sangha members present at the inaugural meeting of Buddhists (above). Additionally, another temple under his leadership, Hong Fa, at 1330 Bloor St. West, was to house the Office of the Buddhist Council of Canada, providing also the street address. Hong Fa was also the venue for activities such as the following:

(a) the First Buddhist Congress (1989), representing all of Canada (see Yu, forthcoming), organized by the Buddhist Council of Canada;
(b) many a WESAK celebration, including one telecast over the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) (1989); and
(c) many a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue⁸.

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Sing Hung Fa-shih
Kwang Ok Sunim (#1), the only female teacher of the time, had earned her leadership in Korea itself when she was officially sent to Toronto. To draw upon her story own story, “Currently there are three Sunims in Toronto”, but she was the only one sent “officially”, the other two coming “as private (laughs).” Serving a primarily Korean community, her temple had come to be established very early, in 1978 (see footnote in chart 3). Reserved and quiet by nature, she took part in no public activity.

Participating at the Buddhist inaugural meeting (1980), by bringing, at the end of the meeting, refreshments for the participants, Samu Sunim (#3) had turned his Zen Buddhist Temple into a place open to one and all. As he himself puts it, “I mean, I’m not doing ethnic Buddhism here.” Unlike Kwang Ok Sunim, and three others (#2, #4 and #5) that served their own ethnocultural communities, Samu Sunim was reaching out to anyone, of any ethnocultural background, interested in Buddhism, the very name ‘Zen Buddhist Temple’ indicative of the audience being invited. Indeed his congregation included not many Koreans. His attempt at outreach is evident from his publication, Spring Wind (est. circa 1983).

Though Bhante Punnaji (#2) was not the first Head of the Toronto Mahavihara (the monk living there “had disappeared, and so I was invited.”), he was one of four sangha members who appeared on the stage at the first WESAK celebration held at Toronto’s Nathan Phillips Square (1981), along with Tsunoda Sensei and Fujikawa Sensei. Drawing upon his hidden artistic talents, he also wrote the lyrics, at the invitation of the present editor, for the Buddhist Unity Song (Appendix V), sung at the event (a tradition continued off and on in later Wesak celebrations) by Toronto musician Brent Titcombe to the accompaniment on his guitar.

Zasep Tulku’s (#6) leadership in the wider Buddhist community came initially through the participation of his temple in organizing the first Wesak (represented by Paula Fins). Like Samu Sunim, his
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONAL NAME</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ETHNOCULTURAL TRADITION</th>
<th>YÂNIC TRADITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwang Ok⁴</td>
<td>Sunim¹⁵</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Mahāyāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punnaji, Madawela¹⁶</td>
<td>Bhante¹⁷</td>
<td>Sinhalese (Sri Lankan)</td>
<td>Adiyāna¹⁸ / Theravāda¹⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samu</td>
<td>Sunim</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Mahāyāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing Hung</td>
<td>Fa-shih²⁰</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>Mahāyāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsunoda, Shodo Noboru</td>
<td>Sensei²¹</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Mahāyāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zasep</td>
<td>Tulku Rimpoche²²</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
<td>Mahāyāna / Vajrayāna²³</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
outreach was also beyond his own Tibetan community (of which there was no sizeable number\textsuperscript{24}) to the wider community, one of his earliest core members being Norman Feldman\textsuperscript{25}, now a meditation teacher in his own right, and his brother, Jeff.

The leadership of the interviewees may be further gauged by their own initiatives. Mention has already been made of Tsunoda Sensei being the Bishop of Buddhist Churches of Canada, responsible for churches all across the country. Sing Hung Fa-Shih has pioneered more than one Temple, in addition to Cham Shan on Bayview (where the interview was held) and the Hong Fa Temple (1330 Bloor St.), namely Tai Bay, and two temples with resident nuns, Ching Fa and Nam Shan. Then there is the Buddhist Association of Canada, not to mention the Cham Shan Library (1224 Lawrence Ave. West), the only Buddhist library open to the public. This is not to mention the Temple in Niagara Falls.

Bhante Punnaji also may have only a single Centre, but his travels take him across Canada, to serve the spiritual needs of the Sinhalese Buddhists in other cities such as Edmonton and Vancouver, as well as in the US\textsuperscript{26}. Samu Sunim’s outreach was to take him to establish a Centre in London and Ottawa in Ontario, and internationally in Chicago and Mexico. But perhaps it is Zasep Tulku who has the widest and the most international outreach: “We have a small center in Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Nelson, British Columbia, and Vancouver. Also ... a Center in Ithaca, New York. I also have two centers in Australia, in New South Wales and Tasmania.”

As can be seen from Row 3, then, the sangha members in this study are truly a multicultural community. But they also reflect the make up of world Buddhism, from the earliest and the longest standing Sinhalese Buddhist tradition (see above) to the latest Japanese (11\textsuperscript{th} C. ACE). (See also below for a more detailed breakdown.)
What strikes from column 4 is the preponderance of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This may be understood both in terms of the history of Buddhism in North America as well as population figures.

While Japanese Buddhism in Canada dates back a century (see above), the presence of the Toronto Buddhist Church may also be explained in terms of the population: 6,300 in 1988\(^27\). Canadian Buddhism, as can be seen from this chart, in its first pluralistic thrust, dates no earlier than the late sixties (see above).
largest Inherited Buddhist communities of this first wave came to be the Chinese (63,000\textsuperscript{28}), thus explaining the early leadership of Sing Hung Fa-shih, with the Vietnamese at 7,000\textsuperscript{29}. But what explains the rest of the Mahayana presence?

For this, we have to turn to the history of Buddhism in the US (see Fields, 1986. for a study), which can be seen in terms of two major thrusts:

1. 1850’s to 1950’s: Japanese Zen Buddhism in particular, but *Mahāyāna* in general\textsuperscript{30}.
2. since 1950’s: Tibetan.

This may, then, explain the two Korean Temples (both Zen), given also the Korean population of 4,000. While the Tibetan community in Toronto was no more than 100, it was the impact of the US that may explain three other *Mahāyāna / Vajrayāna* Centres in Toronto at the time, in addition to Gaden Cholin headed by Zasep Tulku Rimpoche.

Finally, the comparable Sinhala Buddhist population of 1,400, of course, arriving in Canada beginning in the late sixties\textsuperscript{31} explains the presence of the Toronto Mahavihara, headed by Bhante Punnaji.

### 2.2 Ethnocultural Background

Now we tabulate, in **Chart 2**, the information sought for purposes of establishing the Oral History in the context of Canada, as per the intended perspective of research of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario, taking us also to the country of origin:

Row 1 of Chart 2 tells us that Sing Hung Fa-shih was the first to arrive (1967) ("the year of the Expo", says he with a laugh), with Samu Sunim a close second (1968). Kwang Ok Sunim arrived in 1976, while two more (Tsunoda Sensei and Zasep Tulku
Rimpoche) arrived in 1980. Though arriving in the US earlier, Bhante Punnaji was the last to reach the shores of Canada, in 1981.

While in Row 2 we note the global spread of the sangha presence in Toronto – China, Korea, Sri Lanka and Tibet, what may stand out as odd is that the Head of the oldest Buddhist tradition in Canada, who is Japanese, was from the US. This should, however, not be surprising given the history of Buddhism in North America (see above). Says Tsunoda Sensei, “My father came to the US, as an adult, about 1907. I’m the offspring of an Issei. So I’m a Nissei.”

In terms of Ethnicity (Row 3), while Japanese and Korean are familiar enough, Han, among the Chinese, are, in the words of Sing Hung Fa-shih “like the Anglo-Saxons in Canada.” The Sinhalese are an Aryan people, tracing their history to North India, and constituting the majority population in Sri Lanka (over 75%, of which over 90% are Buddhist). Perhaps the least known is Khampa, of Sino-Tibetan origin, the mothertongue (Row 3) spoken by Zasep Tulku Rimpoche itself being Kham (Row 4). While Kwang Ok Sunim is shown as speaking Korean, insisting that there is “only one language, slightly different accents”, Samu Sunim identifies Kinzang as the dialect he speaks. Be Hong Wa is a “northern dialect” of Mandarin, while not surprisingly, Tsunoda Sensei says, “You may say English is my mothertongue,” although, of course, he speaks Japanese as well.

As for place of birth (Row 5), while Oxnard, California (Sensei), and Seoul, Korea (Kwang Ok Sunim), may be easily located on a map, the least likely is Zago (Rimpoche), 14,000 ft above the sea level in Tibet. While Chinju, Korea (Samu Sunim) and Madawela, Sri Lanka (Bhante Punnaji) might need some remote travel in each country, Hopei, China (Sing Hung Fa-shih) may be more easily identifiable, being “north of the Huang He River, Yellow River”, in the county of Chao”.
While the origin of travel (Row 6) for Tsunoda Sensei (being the US) should not surprise us, Canada seems to have benefited from another western country (Australia), the two together acting as the stepping ground for three others, only two arriving in Canada directly from a home country (Hong Kong and Korea).

While the story being told relates to Toronto, the next Row (7) shows that the entry point of only three of the sangha was Toronto. While another arrived in Ottawa, still in the Province of Ontario, our neighbouring province Quebec and the furthest, British Columbia, gave us one each, welcoming our guests in Montreal and Vancouver.

The last Row gives us an insight into the state of Buddhism in Toronto in the phase under study (late 1960’s to early 1980’s) when only one of the six Sangha members came to live in a temple right after arrival, namely, Bhante Punnaji. But this seems to reflect history itself. “The other day,” comments Samu Sunim, “Professor David Waterhouse sent us word that a vihāra is a converted dwelling. I mean, during the Buddha’s time, people donated their houses, and then, you know, you had a converted dwelling. Well, that’s how I started out in New York City, and in Montreal and at 378 Markham Street,” starting out “in the basement on Markham Street.” Living there “for a long time… I ruined my health. I didn’t have any money.” While Sing Hung Fa-shih is shown to live in a temple, it was, in that historical spirit, no more than a house converted into a temple. While Kwang Ok Sunim had a house where the temple was set up, Zasep Tulku Rimpoche was living at his sister’s. The least to have such worries was Tsunoda Sensei. He did not have to live in the Church, an apartment rented for him by the Church.

2.3 Settlement in Toronto

Chart 3 provides additional information regarding the first location of Temples with which the interviewees were associated:
Column 1 of Chart 3 shows that all but one of the Temples were as originally named and opened, the exception being Sau Fu Temple, although the interview was conducted at the Cham Shan, at 7254 Bayview Avenue, the first formal Temple. While Toronto Buddhist Church dates back to its founding in 1945, so does Bul Kwang Sa, sa meaning ‘temple. Gaden Cholin, meaning ‘Joyful Dharma Land’, is the name picked by Zasep Tulku Rimpoche’s teacher Ling Rimpoche while the nondescript Zen Buddhist Temple, a creation of Samu Sunim himself intended to declare to the world that it is open to any and everyone. Toronto Mahavihara gets its inspiration for its name from “the historic centre of Buddhist orthodoxy in ancient Sri Lanka” (de Silva, 1981:12) of the Anuradhapura Kingdom (256 BCE ) on land donated by King Devanampiyatissa himself immediately following the introduction of Buddhism by King Asoka of India (see op.cit, passim for details).

Column 2 shows us that the earliest temples were primarily in the core of the City of Toronto, the exception being the Toronto Mahavihara in Scarborough where the Sinhalese had come to live primarily (see Sugunasiri, 1989, for a Map). Next Column tells us that, by 1981, each community had been able to summon the financial resources to have their own place of worship or Centre. Interesting in this context is that at both the Zen Temple and Gaden Cholin came to provide accommodation for their lay disciples. “There are five full-time members, training and living here. And they also work to support the temple and finance it.” (Samu Sunim). Asked “Anyone living in the temple?” Rimpoche says, “Right now we have five, myself and four others.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>KWANG OK SUNIM</th>
<th>BHANTE PUNNAJI</th>
<th>SAMU SUNIM</th>
<th>SING HUNG FA-SHI</th>
<th>TSUNODA SENSEI</th>
<th>ZAZEP RIMPOCHE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Sri Lankan</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>Tibetan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Sinhalese</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Han [Chinese]</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Khampa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Sinhala</td>
<td>Kinzang (dialect of Korean)</td>
<td>Be Hong Wa “northern dialect” (of Mandarin)</td>
<td>English / Japanese</td>
<td>Kham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place / Country of Birth</td>
<td>Seoul, Korea</td>
<td>Madawela, Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Chinju, Korea</td>
<td>Hopei, China</td>
<td>Oxnard, California USA</td>
<td>Zago, Tibet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin of Travel</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Hong Kong&lt;sup&gt;20&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry point in Canada</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Montreal, Quebec</td>
<td>Ottawa, Ontario</td>
<td>Toronto, Ontario</td>
<td>Vancouver, British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Residence In Toronto</td>
<td>House in Willowdale</td>
<td>3555 Kingston Rd, Scarboro (Toronto Mahavihara)</td>
<td>378 Markham Street, Toronto</td>
<td>100 Southhill Drive, Don Mills (Sau Fu Temple)</td>
<td>Apartment at Bloor &amp; Dovercourt</td>
<td>114 Marchmount Road, Don Mills&lt;sup&gt;21&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2: Oral History Data of the six Sangha Members
As Column 3 shows, Kwang Ok Sunim, Samu Sunim, Sing Hung Fa-shih and Zasep Tulku Rimpoche were the founding Teachers of their respective temples, with Rev. Tsuji serving as the first Minister of Toronto Buddhist Church (Watada, op.cit.:289ff) and Ven. Piyananda as the first Teacher of the Toronto Mahavihara.

When it comes to the Congregation (Column 4), we see how small each of them was, Sing Hung Fa-shih saying that, with “between 20 to 50” attending on the weekend, “it’s really crowded.” Gaden Choling has “roughly about 40 members” while Toronto Mahavihara has a support base of 31 families who ensure meals once a month every month. While no exact numbers are given, Tsunoda Sensei’s church serves about 50% of the 50,000 strong community. Kwang Ok began with about 20 members in her temple association, while now there were about 150 families – “all Korean”. While the Korean population in Toronto had risen to be about 30,000 by now, the percentage of Buddhists would be “not too much”, many becoming Christian after they arrive. The Zen Buddhist Temple probably then has the largest, with a congregation of 100.

The Cham Shan congregation is primarily Chinese, but there are a “few” members of Anglo-Saxon and Jewish backgrounds.
“Actually, there’s a Black lady (name not clear here), and Margot is another Black lady”. At the Toronto Buddhist Church, “it’s mainly Japanese, and a few Caucasians”, this being the pattern for all congregations. The same pattern is followed in relation to the Toronto Mahavihara and Bul Kwang Sa, but the majority at each of the Zen Buddhist Temple and Gaden Choling are Anglo-Saxon and Jewish.

While this explains why at Zasep Tulku Rimpoche’s temple the services were “always in English,” as would be the case with Samu Sunim, Chinese (Sing Hung Fa-shih) and Korean (Kwang Ok Sunim) seem to serve well the respective congregations at each of these temples. Both Japanese and English came to be used at the Toronto Buddhist Church, “Japanese for the older people and ... English for the younger.” The only temple that uses a language other than the mothertongue is at the Toronto Mahavihara, where Pali is the language of religious worship while Sinhala is the language of address, both formally at the service as well as outside of it.

Chart 3: First location of Temples

3. On the Congregation

3.1 Stages of life

As is to be expected, the sangha is involved in the rituals associated with the stages of life – birth, marriage, death.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF TEMPLE</th>
<th>FIRST LOCATION</th>
<th>YEAR FOUNDED</th>
<th>FIRST RESIDENT TEACHER</th>
<th>SIZE OF CONGREGATION IN THE 1980’S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bul Kwang Sa</td>
<td>“in Willowdale, in a house set up as a temple by Korean Buddhists in Toronto”</td>
<td>circa. 1978</td>
<td>Kwang Ok Sunim</td>
<td>Over 150 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaden Choling</td>
<td>633 Christie Street, Toronto</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Zasep Tulku Rimpoche</td>
<td>“roughly about forty members”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sau Fu Temple</td>
<td>100 Southhill Rd., Don Mills</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Sing Hung Fa-shih</td>
<td>“About 20 on a busy day.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto Buddhist Church</td>
<td>134 Huron Street, Toronto</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Rev. Tsuji</td>
<td>No information available, but 50% of the community of 50,000 Buddhist…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto Mahavihara</td>
<td>3495 Kingston Rd, Scarborough</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Ven Piyananda</td>
<td>31 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zen Buddhist Temple</td>
<td>46 Gwynne Avenue, Toronto</td>
<td>Late 1970’s</td>
<td>Samu Sunim</td>
<td>Over 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Birth

There is no religious ceremony associated with birth in Buddhism. As Bhante Punnaji notes, “There are certain religious ceremonies like chanting when the mother is pregnant. Sometimes we visit the home, sometimes they come to the temple. And then, just before the delivery, before the labor. And then, after the child is born, they bring the child to the temple, and we might chant.” It is “just customary”, and there are no “rules laid down.”

Kwang Ok Sunim speaks of what she does when a child is born. “I go to the hospital and I chant for the baby and offer good wishes. I give them Korean names, not Buddhist names, Korean names.”

In the Japanese traditions, “First when a child is born, oftentimes they'd bring them in for a little service. They'd bring their little child in... when the child is still maybe 6 months old...” And then there is an ‘initiation service’, when the parents promise that they'll bring them up as Buddhists.” And, of course, that can take place at any age, even when they're “7 or 8”.

But there is no formal initiation into the religion. “One waits until the child knows what he is doing”. And if at a subsequent age, when “the child is old enough to know himself”, one decides to take the Refuge, at that point he “becomes a Buddhist”. And then there is another service at which “the children themselves know that they enter Buddhism. They're conscious of the fact that they'll follow the path of the Buddha.”

“And then there is another”, continues Sensei, “when as adults, laymen promise to follow the teachings of the Buddha. These are the stages as far as the laymen are concerned - little baby, child, adolescent, adult,” taking the vows to follow the Buddha's teachings.
Marriage

Perhaps the most orthodox when it comes to the role of the ordained in marriage, not surprisingly, is Theravada. Bhante Punnaji explains how in the Sinhalese Buddhist tradition, “We don’t conduct marriages like the Christian priests do. But we might bless the married couple. Marriage is mainly a civil ceremony. And the married couple comes to the temple after the marriage. They might come even before getting married, and then we bless them, and after marriage also. There is no hard and fast rule about it.”

The primary contrast is with the Japanese tradition. “I think this is more or less a Western influence. In Japan, some of the temples now have marriage services, but over there, they used to go to the Shinto shrine to get married, but nowadays some of them are getting married in the Christian churches….Well, they think it's rather fashionable … But I think the greater majority of weddings, however, would be at the Shinto Temple”. But the Buddhist churches “are gradually encouraging them to get married in the Buddhist church… Buddhist temples”.

It is also the Korean custom to have marriages performed in the temple. “Sometimes I go to the home, sometimes they come. Since now our temple is big enough, we can have it here,” explains Kwang Ok Sunim.

Like Tsunoda Sensei and Kwang Ok Sunim, Fa-shih Sing Hung, too, functions as a Marriage Registrar, although in the Chinese tradition, one may also get married at City Hall. In San Francisco, the Sensei was not required to be licensed as a Marriage Registrar. “All you have to do is say you are a Buddhist priest and that's enough as far as the law is concerned. But here in Canada you have to register with the provincial bureau”.

Samu Sunim Sunim, too, conducts marriage ceremonies, with an added flair - a “flower wedding.” The inspiration is from the life of the Buddha when in one of his previous lives, in the time of Dipankara Buddha, he meets a girl (who will later become Yasodhara, wife of Prince Siddhartha), and “exchanges flowers and makes vows.” The custom is also influenced by Confucianism “which requires that people get married at Confucian shrines.”

**Death**

“There is a ceremony that we perform at death”, says Bhante Punnaji, in the Sinhalese tradition. “We might go to the funeral home, and perform what you call the pāṇsukūla ceremony, an offering of [a yard or so white] cloth to the monks. And the merits are transferred to the departed…”

Fa-Shih, too, would sometimes go out to the family, to offer a service in a home setting. Dead bodies, however, are not brought to the temple, unlike in the Japanese tradition in which the visit to the home after a person dies includes setting the date for the funeral and the day “for the wake service”. This service takes place when, “the night before the regular funeral service, they would generally bring the casket into the home, and sit up all night,” adding, “Nowadays, we have it at the funeral parlor.” Once the body is brought to the temple, the funeral service consists of “bestowing a Buddhist name if they didn't have one before.” A Buddhist name is “one that's given to you at the time you receive affirmation or a service as an adult.” After a Buddhist name is bestowed, the ceremony is conducted - the chanting of sutras, the burning of incense.”. Following the ceremony, the Sensei “has to sign the license. There is no registration of that.”

Ceremonies associated with death don’t end at the disposal of the dead body. There is, in the Japanese tradition, e.g., the memorial services, the first being “the 49th day service. And then there’s –
and this is very optional, a hundredth-day service. Then the first year, third year, seventh year, 13th year, 17th year, 25th year, 33rd year and the 50th year.”

Noting that it was a Confucian custom that the dead would be interred or buried, Samu Sunim points out that “according to Buddhist custom, people are cremated. So now, when people die, even though they have a burial service, they would always come for the 49th day funeral service. You know, the spirit wanders around until he or she finds the right place in the universe. So we hold a special service for the 49th day. The monks read a sutra and follow the procession.”

3.2 Daily Schedule

While there isn’t enough information in the interviews to outline a comprehensive ‘typical day’ for all temples, we may list a few aspects that seem to cut across traditions:

- Wake up: 3.00 am to 5.00 am.
- Begin the day with Study or Chanting
- Breakfast: 6.30 am to 8.30 am
- Cleaning the temple and personal laundry
- Buddha Puja: 11.00 am to 11.30 am
- Lunch: around noon
- Study, Chanting, Meditating after lunch
- Meeting congregants
- Evening Buddha Puja: 5 pm to 7 pm
- Evening nourishment
- Study, Chanting, Meditating: both morning and after lunch
- Bedtime: 9 pm to 10 pm
3.3 Changes in a Canadian Context

The stories here are of leaders whose commitment, and responsibility it is to propagate the Dhamma in the lineage or tradition they had come to inherit. So it would not be surprising to see a replica of what one may see in a home country setting within the borders of Canada. “No changes to the service, compared to the homeland, Hong Kong or China,” Sing hung thus declares.

While that is in general true, the very fact of importing seems to have brought in its wake certain conditions that call for changes. “Yes. There were some changes,” comments Kwang Ok Sunim, “because there are usually things to do late in the evening. So, I changed the chanting time. Instead of 3:00 in the morning, I do it at 6:00 in the morning.” And “there is no set evening chanting, because I am here alone. There are so many things to do. I have to look after 150 families. So they call and they ask me to do something, go somewhere. So that’s why I have to make that change.”

In the case of Zasep Tulku Rimpoche, the change was in the attire. “When I travel, I wear western clothes.” Bhante Punnaji’s suggests a similar change – pants and hat, when he goes out, to avoid incidents such as the following: “Once we were two monks, walking on the road, and a car stopped and said, “Why can’t you be dressed like the other Canadians. This is Canada and not Sri Lanka”.” Of course, in the case of Tsunoda Sensei, the western attire constitutes the regular attire, with the robes worn only at ceremonial occasions, very much like in the Christian church.

A change Tsunoda Sensei would like to see in his tradition, however, is the inclusion of meditation. “I feel that meditation is an integral part of Buddhism. The Jodo Shinshu has not put enough emphasis on it, I think. They place more emphasis on repeating the Nembutsu,” but I would think both should go hand
in hand.” Indeed the congregations in Toronto and Hamilton have already begun this in a small way.

The practice in the home country contexts is, of course, is for the sangha to be driven around respectfully to meet their needs. But Kwang Ok Sunim began driving, “three years after coming to Canada,” the vehicle bought by the congregation. While Bhante Punnaji did not take to driving, today, Sinhala monks are seen to drive over to homes for alms in the temple vehicle, changing a long practice, even in Canada, of the congregants driving them back and forth.

Another change has come to be determined by practical considerations. Under the Vinaya rules, food is to be collected on a daily basis, with food to be stored in the temple. But in the context of Canada, the Sinhalese congregants “bring the meals the evening before, and we keep it in the refrigerator.”

One final overall change in all traditions is that the sabbath day may be held on the Sunday closest to whatever significant event that falls on the Full Moon day or the 15th day of the New Moon.

4. Personal Religious Life

Chart 4 gives us information about the interviewees, more at the personal and religious levels:

4.1 Ordination

We begin with the interesting information of the age of ordination, the oldest at 38 years (Bhante Punnaji), explainable by the fact of leading a lay life earlier, doing “about 2 years of medical studies”, working as an Apothecary (= pharmacist Canadian context) and teaching prior to that. The age of 25 for Tsunoda Sensei may be explainable in terms of the North America educational system: high school, followed by a university education, after which only
one enters the professional world, being a Minster in the Buddhist Church being his chosen field.

The youth-oriented culture of North America may look aghast to read that three of the sangha members got their ordination in their prime teenage years: 13 (Sing Hung Fa-shih, “13 or 14” (Samu Sunim) and 18 (Kwang Ok Sunim). But it may also be noted that each of the three had spent time in a monastery prior to their ordination.

“I wasn’t feeling very well. I was not very healthy. And I stayed in the temple to become healthier, and during that time, I became very interested. I liked very much the life in the temple. So I decided to become a bhikkhuni,” explains Kwang Ok Sunim.

Having left home as an orphan, and curious “to confirm for myself”, Samu Sunim ends up on the street in Seoul:

I was begging. I was very hungry. And one day, I was looking in the alley. There was something like a temple. I didn’t know what it was. I had grown up in the country, and so I had not seen temple architecture. But this was like a palace, very beautiful, and in downtown Seoul, though in a back alley. So I thought, how nice it would be to live in such a place, very peaceful. You know, I was looking for peace. So I just went there and stood at the gate. “I would do anything you ask me to, you know, if you just allowed me to live here.” And he laughed. “This place is a Buddhist temple; unless you intend to become a Buddhist monk, you cannot live here.”

“Well, I’ll become a monk. Allow me to live here.”

Things were less dramatic for Sing Hung Fa-shih when he came to live
“in a Buddhist temple” around the age of 12\textsuperscript{47}, about 300 “Chinese miles” away\textsuperscript{48}, where the incumbent was a friend of his father’s. Living at the temple for a period of time, he felt that it was “a very good way of living.”

The most orthodox was Zasep Tulku Rimpoche, who entered the order at age 7 years, a practice that goes back to the time of the Buddha himself. His own son, Rahula, was ordained at that age, the Vinaya (rules for the ordained) allowing ordination to begin at 7, by way of encouraging the practice of the holy life at the youngest possible age for a given individual. But Rimpoche’s was even a more special case.

“Myself, I was different from other children, because I was recognized as a Tulku. That’s a Tibetan word, meaning a ‘reincarnated lama’. So I went to a monastery when I was 6 years old.”

Row 3 of the chart tells us how each of them received their monastic education, as a pre-requisite for ordination, the exception being Zasep Tulku Rimpoche, who received his monastic training after ordination. He was after all only seven years old when he became ordained! But, he also came to have the highest education, earning a Master’s degree (āchārya) in India. While the BA in Buddhist studies constituted the only monastic education received by Tsunoda Sensei, it was a qualification earned by Kwang Ok Sunim prior to ordination, explaining her ordination at age 18.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Kwang Ok Sunim</th>
<th>Bhante Madawela Punnaji</th>
<th>Samu Sunim</th>
<th>Sing Hung Fa-shih</th>
<th>Noboru Shodo Tsunoda Sensei</th>
<th>Zazep Tulku Rimpochen</th>
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<tr>
<td>AGE AT ORDINATION</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>“13 or 14”</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>38 or 39^17</td>
<td>Info. not available</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Not Applicable^38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
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<td>Apothecary (about 2 years of medical studies) Sri Lanka; Monastic Training</td>
<td>Monastic Training</td>
<td>Monastic training</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in Buddhism (Japan); Monastic Training</td>
<td>Monastic Training; Achara (Master’s degree, India)^39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENOMINATION/TRADITION</td>
<td>Chogye Order (Korean Zen)</td>
<td>Sinhalese (Theravada)</td>
<td>Chogye Order^40 (Korean Zen)</td>
<td>Tiantai</td>
<td>Jodo Shinshu (Japanese) Pure Land</td>
<td>Kagyu-pa^21 (Tibetan Vajrayana)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 4: Some ordination-related data of the six sangha members
Ordination in Buddhism entails two levels, novitiate and higher, *pabbajja* and *upasampadā* respectively, as laid out in the *Vinaya* (see below). Accordingly, all but two earned it, noting, however, that only two of them seem to have abided by the *Vinaya* age requirement of 20 years (Bhante Punnaji and Zasep Tulkhu Rimpoche). The exception is Tsunoda Sensei, in whose Jodo Shinsu denomination, ordination does not entail leaving the lay life for a life of celibacy. “We pretty much live a secular life” he explains, hence “Not applicable” in the column. As for Samu Sunim, the interview does not provide information regarding a higher ordination, the closest inferential comment being that he was at one point “recognized.” Another reference is that, ordained under another teacher (see below), his training process took about “I think 2 to 3 years.”

4.2 Ordination Ceremony

We now turn to the ordination itself that initiates a layperson into a formal sangha, entailing, as noted above, two levels, novitiate and the higher. Despite the great variations across traditions, there seems to be a recognition across traditions (except the Japanese) of the two levels of ordination *pabbajja* ‘minor ordination’ (as a *sāmaṇera* [Sanskrit *śrāmaṇera* ‘novice’]) and *upasampadā* ‘major ordination’ (see Wijayaratna, op. cit., under ‘ordination’ for a discussion). Likewise the role of an *upajjhāya* [Sanskrit *upadhyāya*] ‘Preceptor’ prior to, and after, ordination – “a father-figure,” as Samu Sunim puts it), “just to watch me, to observe me” as Bhante Punnaji explains.

In the Korean tradition, “the first step towards ordination was establishing one in the Five Precepts.” But this is “Tenja, meaning ‘acting person’, one in preparation to become a Sunim,” but different from a novitiate (*śrāmaṇera*). However, “you are given a name. In my case, it’s Kwang Ok Sunim,” at which point “my lay name [Mun Ja] is taken away, even the last name.”
The ordination in all traditions seems pretty standard, with minor variations. A public ceremony, lasting “about half an hour,” and “with everyone watching, and attended by other ordained monks.” But the presence of other monks “is not a requirement,” since “it is only the first, what is called sāmenera (‘novice’) ordination, for which just one monk is enough,” notes Bhante Punnaji. But in the Tibetan tradition, “They have to have five bhikkhus.”

As Zasep Tulku Rimpoche explains his ordination, “You do a prostration, first to the Buddha image, and to the bhikkhus [present],” taking “refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,” and then take the “10 Precepts” (see Appendix) from the preceptor,” as in all traditions. “And then they tell you to do prostrations to the five preceptors.”

Next, as in all traditions, “you shave your head.” Although shaving the head everyday thereafter is not required by Vinaya rules, no more than two inches of hair is allowed either, explains Bhante.

During this training period, which lasts 1 to 3 years, one is faced with “hard work” (see below), and “you also learn the chants, and all the necessary things to become a monk.” So why the range of one to three? The three years are “for the ones who are not doing a good job,” explains Kwang Ok Sunim, here meaning, it appears, when one’s progress is slow. But in her case, apparently a serious novice progressing well, the novitiate training was one year, at the end of which, she became a Sunim. She was the only one to enter the robes on that occasion.

‘Buddhist’ name at the point of the novitiate ordination (Madawela Punnaji), he continues “to live at the Bhikkhu Training Centre for 6 months.” Following the shaving of the head, “you wear maroon robes” (Rimpoche), “change into robes” (Fa-shih). Rimpoche outlines what follows: “And then you sit down and again you do prostrations to Buddha and monks. Then you take
the Refuge Vow. And then you take the precepts, repeating after them. And then you become a novice.”

Bhante provides a few more details from the oldest, Sinhalese, tradition: “… you put on a white dress … a white shirt, white sarong and then another one like a classical uturu saluva, a shawl.” Then you “ask for ordination.” When the preceptor consents to it, “I have to give a set of robes, the robes that I am going to wear … as a monk. I… was also to get a bowl.” The robes and the bowl may be provided by one’s family, or the temple. “Reciting certain things”, the preceptor then returns “the robes back to me, putting [something] around my neck, which means that the robes have been given to me.” Next, leaving with robes and bowl in hand, he would return, now “wearing the robes.” Vinaya rules prescribing no particular colours (see Chart 5), but in his case, orange. But “there are colours that we are not supposed to wear…. And that includes red, yellow and colours like that - blue, green.”

As for the robes, there are “actually three — what you wear underneath the waist cloth, what you wear over the shoulder, and the other, one called the depota sivura ‘two-fold robe’.” The third is for use “not exactly as a blanket, but when you want, if it is too cold, you might use it…That was the original purpose. But … today we use it … sometimes, as a spare robe… Also, sometimes, … when we have to perform some official ceremony, then we should have all the three robes. And you have to carry the three robes wherever you go. And the bowl.” And there is “just one set.”

We have seen above (Chart 4) that the higher ordination, upasampada, follows extensive monastic training, depending on one’s age, diligence and educational background.

An interesting take on the ordination comes from the Japanese tradition, with only a single ordination. Based on the Shingon
tradition, “it was done in the middle of the night.” As in other traditions, the ordination begins by “shaving the head, and you repeat the three treasures - Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. That's what constitutes the ordination.” They darken the place and the ordination is done in the Hongan Gian, the mother temple in Kyoto.” The Chief Abbot sits there with the razor, even though “actually our heads had already been shaved the night before.” When one now “asks for ordination, the Abbot, the head of the monastery, actually shaves his hair off.” Then he would “just take a razor and put it on your head, although your head is already done by a barber.”

Both Rimpoché and Samu Sunim talk of a re-ordination. To study in Thailand, explains Rimpoché, “you have to first enter a Thai monastery.” That meant that he had to become a monk in the Thai tradition, officially. The Thai ordination lineage being Theravadan, and the Tibetan Sarvastivadin, “I returned my Tibetan ordination, and took the Theravadan ordination.” But all he had to do was “to talk to one of your Tibetan bhikkhus. Or you can even talk to a Thai bhikkhu. Doesn’t have to be the same lineage. All you do is, you go up and do 3 prostrations. Then you explain that you want to return the ordination, or renounce the ordination. You have to tell the reason. And then you do prostrations and then, when he says yes, then at that moment (snaps fingers), your ordination is gone!” The only difference in the Thai ceremony was in the language, “which in Theravadan countries is Pali.”

In the case of Samu Sunim, having studied Zen meditation under “Dharma master Sulbong Sunim as his disciple,” he left this teacher, because he “wanted to train under this other teacher. So I asked, you know, to be formally re-ordained by him. It’s a much larger monastery, and he was a very renowned master. I was ordained under Master Tung Sunim.” The training process took about “I think 2 to 3 years.”
Asked what material things he possessed after getting ordained, Bhante Punnaji explains:

“Nothing really, other than just the robes and the eight requisites.” First there are the three robes, the begging bowl being the fourth. Another is “the razor that you shave the head with.” Finally, “the needle, the thread and the strainer, water strainer.” The needle and thread are “to sew, to mend the robe if you have to,” by oneself, a fellow member of the sangha or even a layperson, “to make sure that one is not “wearing a torn robe.” As for the water strainer, “The water we drink should be strained mainly because there may be small insects - that we might swallow or something.”

**4.3 Route to Ordination**

The station of life each comes from is as varied as the interviewees and the cultures they come from. Rimpoché perhaps comes from the most exotic (to us in the west), a nomadic life 12,000 ft above the sea level in the Tibetan Mountains. Fa-shih Sing Hung comes from a small business family in rural China. While the people of Chinju, Korea, where Samu Sunim comes from, is a small city, mostly “agricultural”, his mother was a school teacher. She “was kind of an intellectual. I mean, not many women were educated in those days,” and his grandmother “was rich”. The other three of our sangha members come from an urban and/or middle class setting: Tsunoda Sensei from North America (California), Kwang Ok Sunim from Seoul, Korea, with father being a medical doctor, and Bhante Punnaji from Sri Lanka with medical training. Like Tsunoda Sensei, Bhante Punnaji, too, comes with an education in the English medium.

While all of the sangha members were born Buddhist, i.e., born to a Buddhist family, the strongest family influence appears to be in the case of two of them. In the case of Kwang Ok Sunim, “Everybody in our family was Buddhist. My mother did the ceremonies starting at 3:00 in the morning - 108 times bowing,
and chanting, Kwanzeum Bosal\textsuperscript{50}. My mother still does it, every
day.”

As for Zasep Tulku Rimpoche, “Yes. Well, for example, most
people - older people, parents and grandparents, get up in the
morning, 4:00 in the morning, or 3 or 2, and do prostrations to
the Buddha, three times, and they take refuge, they say a refuge
prayer, and they make offerings, they set up an altar, put water and
flowers, and candles, or light butter lamps at the altar, and they
create merit [for themselves and others]\textsuperscript{51} …

“And then in the evening, after everybody comes home, and after
dinner, there is also Dharma activities, group prayers, the family,
they pray together. Every day. They say prayers to different
Buddhas - Shakyamuni, Medicine Buddha\textsuperscript{52}, and so forth.”

Zasep Tulku Rimpoche comes to it with perhaps the most
‘legitimacy’, and under the most fortunate of circumstances,
having being identified, as noted, as a Tulku, “a reincarnated
lama” at the age of 6, coming to live in the temple, and getting
ordained a year later. Sing Hung Fa-shih is 12 when comes to live
in a temple, sent by his father, himself active in Buddhist
compassionate work. Living at the temple for a period of time, he
felt that it was “a very good way of living.” It was likewise living
in a temple that put Kwang Ok Sunim on the path: “I wasn’t
feeling very well. I was not very healthy. And I stayed in the
temple to become healthier, and ... during that time, I became very
interested, I liked very much, the life in the temple. So I decided
to become a bhikkuni.”\textsuperscript{54} Tsunoda Sensei got his interest in
ordination through “Sunday school training, youth activities”,
when he went to Japan for his monastic degree. Bhante Punnaji
came to his ordination through his own volition, through an inner
compulsion: “I was not interested in the things that a layman is
interested in. I was not interested in getting married, I was not
interested in earning money, and doing a job and planning a social
revolution and that sort of thing. And, I was not interested in
going to parties…” The most destitute was Samu Sunim, who, having run away from home, began as a beggar on the streets of Seoul (see above), when through sheer hunger, he approached a temple and is taken in.

5. Harmony in Diversity

5.1 Traditions Explored

The last Row of Chart 4 shows the tradition to which each of the six sangha members belongs. In order to get a better handle of each of them, we provide a thumbnail sketch of the history of Buddhism, in the form of a Tree Diagram (Fig. 1), leading up to the tradition represented by each, the extent of detail determined exclusively by the data of this study:

1  Buddha Vacana
   (Buddha's Words)

2  383 BCE Second Council (Vaisali)
   Theravāda Mahāsāṅghika

3  250-210 BCE Sri Lanka
   Theravāda
   Buddhagama*

4  100 BCE Ādiyāna (Hinayāna) Mahāyāna
   Vajrayāna

5  2nd-11th c.
   China Korea Japan Tibet

6  2nd-11th c.
   Tiantai Zen / Jodo Kagyu- pa
   Chogye Shinshu

Figure 1: ‘Tree Diagram’ showing Lineage of the Six Sangha members
Beginning with *Buddha Vacana* (Buddha's Words) (6 c. BCE), we fast forward to the Second Council⁵⁷ (Vesali) (383 BCE) (descending level 2) after which there begin to appear, over time, the first doctrinal differences that lead to the eventual emergence of *Mahāsāṅghika*, those rejecting the dissident stance(s) constituting themselves into *Theravāda*⁵⁸ (Warder, ibid.:214).

To understand the later outcomes of this schism, we make a linguistic detour here to explain how *Mahāsāṅghika* eventually develops into *Mahāyāna*. *Mahāsāṅghika* is a derivative of *Mahāsamgha*, meaning ‘Great Community’ or ‘Great Collectivity’, ‘sangha’ referring to ‘the ordained’, the third Refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The suffix –ika (in *Mahāsāṅghika*) adds the meaning ‘based in’ or ‘relating to’. So *Mahāsāṅghika⁵⁹* may be understood literally as ‘the Great Collectivity based’, with ‘great’ having the denotative sense as in the English phrase ‘the great mass’ or ‘the wider mass’ of people.

But the prefix ‘mahā’ comes to be elevated from the denotative ‘great’ or ‘wide’ to a connotative, and comparative, ‘Higher’ when the ‘Rehearsal’ of the breakaway community comes to be called the ‘Great Rehearsal’ (*mahāsamgīti*). The linguistic self-elevation now paralleled in the arena of doctrine, the goal of seeking *Nibbāna*, through the personal practice of self-purification, as taught by the Buddha, and the ideal of becoming an *arhant* ‘worthy one’ (Buddha himself being the first), now come to be characterized, and pulled down, as being selfish⁶⁰. Saving all sentient beings, and becoming a Buddha, encapsulated in the term *bodhisattva* ‘Buddha being’, now become the new ideal. This promoted as the higher, it takes only three centuries for the appearance of *Mahāyāna* (100 BCE) (level 4) ‘Higher Vehicle’ as a distinct school, along with the emergence of new texts, marking the “transformation of the Buddha and his doctrine…, from the humanism of the original *Tripitaka* to the supernaturalism of most of the Mahayana *sūtras*” (Warder, op.cit.: 218).
It needs to be noted in this connection that “the divided schools do not seem to have been estranged by unbuddhistic feelings of bitterness and hostility, for all that they denounce each other’s propositions in their theoretical works; on the contrary, monks of different schools are found later to live side by side in the same dwellings (vihāras) in apparent harmony…” (Warder, op.cit.:215), a practice we find continuing in Sri Lanka.

Despite such beginnings, however, there now emerges, over time, the pejorative Hīnayāna ‘Lower Vehicle’, formed through the linguistic process of ‘back formation’: replacing Mahā- in Mahā + yāna with Hīna-, the reverse arrow at level 4 of Figure 1 indicating this process. Though a school born of a linguistic twist, it serves the useful but unbuddhistic role of a punching bag for the geographic and temporal expanding base of Mahayana.

Adiyāna, meaning ‘early vehicle’, shown in the tree diagram as an alternative to Hīnayāna, then, is my own alternative offered by way of establishing some objectivity, facilitating the discussion of the historical reality without the pejorative associations (see Sugunasiri, 2005 for the basis).

Returning to level 3 now, we begin to see the first geographic spread of the Buddha Vacana (Buddha's Words) beyond the shores of India to neighbouring Sri Lanka, when King Asoka sends his son and daughter, each of them an arhant, to share his enthusiasm for Buddhism with his friend, the Sinhalese King Devanampiyatissa (‘Tissa the beloved of the gods’). Sharing what is precious itself being a Buddhist value, it was not surprising that Asoka would reach out, receiving an enthusiastic welcome by the entire royal family (Mahāvamsa, cited in de Silva, 1981:9). Theravada, meaning ‘Doctrine of the Elders (Thera)’, thus now formally established in Sri Lanka, nearly two centuries before the emergence of Hīnayāna, the people of the country simply come to call it Buddhāgama* (the asterisk indicating the informality of the label), simply meaning ‘Buddha(’s) Religion'.

38
Level 5, then, shows the outreach to Central Asia and China through the ‘Silk Route’, circa the 2nd and the 3rd centuries (see Warder, op. cit: 292 ff., for details). Even as it begins to co-exist with Confucianism and Taoism in China, we see Buddhism spreading to Korea and Japan. While Buddhism also enters Tibet in a reverse geographic direction from China (shown with the arrows to the left and down), it is Padmasambhava who introduces Buddhism to Tibet from India in the 8th c. Tantric practices already having entered Buddhism in India itself, there emerges a ‘Diamond Vehicle’ (Vajrayāna) as a further development of Mahāyāna itself now joining the linguistic and the ideological bandwagon to elevate itself to a particularity in the context of Tibet.

What we see at level 6, then, is the manifestations of the Buddha Vacana in the Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Tibetan contexts, as represented by the sangha members in the study, Sri Lankan (Sinhalese) Buddhāgama, represented by Bhante Punnaji, already identified under Theravada at level 3. Tiantai is the tradition that Sing Hung Fa-shih belongs to, and Jodo Shinshu ‘Pure Land’ to which Tsunoda Sensei belongs. The Chogyo to which both Kwang Ok Sunim and Samu Sunim belong to is the leading Order in Korea. While Zen is the Japanese rendering of Chinese Ch’an (itself a derivation from Pali jhāna / Sanskrit dhyāna, meaning a ‘super-calm’, the higher states of concentration that serves as a foundation towards experiencing Nibbana), what is practiced by Samu Sunim comes to be called Zen in preference to the little known Korean term ‘Son’. Kagyu- pa, Zasep Tulku Rinpoche’s tradition is one of four major Tibetan schools, the other three being Gelug-pa, Nyingma-pa and Sakya-pa.

5.2 Variations of a Theme

The core criterion for the selection of the interviewees in this study was the fact of ordination. Drawing strictly upon the data elicited
here on the basis of the Stories, and only rarely referring to any theoretical or textual studies, then, we may now be able to arrive at a caricature understanding of what exactly each tradition constitutes, with the help of a pie (Fig 2). Made up of 7 circles, 5 of them represent the traditions encountered in our study, the innermost taking us to the origins, and the outermost assigning categories by label.

To begin with Country (slice #1), the innermost represents the tradition as we get from the Buddha himself in the context of India, in the 6th c. BCE. The next circle stands for Sri Lanka, the closest to the Buddha’s tradition, both in terms of time and geographic proximity. The third shows China, more distant in both time (when Buddhism was introduced) and proximity. The next circles represents Korea, further distant in both time and geography again, and Tibet closer in proximity but more distant in time. Japanese Buddhism is the furthest in our study in both temporal and geographic terms.

Next (#2) we go to the personal Goal of the practice, which, in the Buddha Vacana (Buddha's Words), of course, is Nibbāna (Sanskrit: Nirvāṇa), the goal being retained in the Sinhalese Theravada. Sing Hung Fa-shih expresses his goal, in the words, “I want to be a Buddha.” Since a Bodhisatva is “someone who has resolved to become a Buddha”, the goal of the Tiantai tradition may then said be said to be becoming a Bodhisattva as well, “the saviour of all living beings” (in Epstein, R, 2003:22-23). The same, of course, holds for both Korean (“Mahayana Buddhism says that we try for nirvana on the one hand, but on the other, to save others,” says Kwang Ok Sunim) and Tibetan, while for Tsunoda Sensei in Jodo Shinsu, “I am in the hands of Amida Buddha.”

Dependence on Amida Buddha, then, explains the primary Practice (#3) in the Jodo Shinsu Shinsu tradition, chanting, i.e.,
Nembutsu, repeating the prayer, *namu amida butsu* ‘Homage to Amida Buddha.’ Meditation is shown in square brackets to indicate, though not part of the tradition (as noted above), a preference expressed by Tsunoda Sensei: “And since a couple of years ago, in some of the temples, we have begun to practice a little meditation. But we didn’t ever do this before. Some of them still don’t, but here in Toronto, and most of the eastern churches,
like New York, Washington, they have gone into meditation. But it isn’t extensive like in Zen, for instance, but, well, we’re trying it out.”

When we come to Tibet, it is Meditation that comes to be the primary practice, although prayer and chanting seem to find an almost equal emphasis. While chanting constitutes the major practice in the Korean tradition, meditation, too, as shown in the chart, comes to be practiced. In the Tientai tradition, what we get is mostly prayer (namo amitafo), paralleling namu amida butsu in Japanese.

When it comes to Sri Lanka, Bhante Punnaji complains that the Sinhalese are “not interested in meditation”, but does say how they are eager on dāna. “31 families for 31 days” in Canada, and a “list of donors for the 50 or 60 monks at the Bhikkhu Training Centre,” in Sri Lanka at the Bhikkhu Training Centre. While the practice has come to be understood as just feeding the monks, dāna is what the Buddha recommends as the antidote to greed. This, in fact, captures an essential element of Sinhalese Buddhism, namely, the great emphasis placed on sīla ‘morality’, which the Buddha emphasizes is the basis for the meditative life. If the next step of meditation has been lost in Sinhala Buddhism, the present regeneration of interest in meditation within the community, both in the Canadian68 as well as the home country context70, shows that it was an ember hidden under the ashes of a 1000 years of colonial rule69 waiting to come alive.

When it comes to the Vinaya (# 4) requirement of celibacy, we find a strict adherence in the Sinhala Buddhist and the Tiantai traditions. While celibacy is the order of the day in the Korean Chogye Order as represented in the study as well, it is not a vow upheld strictly in the home country context70. Tibetan Buddhism allows a free variation. “There are two types of Lamas. Married lamas and unmarried lamas,” explains Zasep Tulku Rimpoche. Ordained, as noted since age 7, he was, at the time of the
interview, planning to get married. Jodo Shinsu Shinsu has no such requirement, Tsunoda Sensei getting married right after ordination.

Another feature that clearly marks the ordained in Buddhism is the robe \((\text{Attire}, \#5)\). Since the Vinaya does not stipulate a specific colour, only disallowing strong colours such as “red, yellow and blue” (Bhante Punnaji), the orange robe, as in the Sinhalese and the Chinese traditions, the Grey in the Korean and the maroon in the Tibetan all seem acceptable. Jodo Shinsu stands out here again in that the robe is merely ceremonial, and not for daily wear.

We now come to \textit{Meals} (\#6), the noon cut off for solids being the Vinaya rule. If the Sinhalese tradition seems to observe it to the letter, the Chinese seems flexible. “In Hong Kong, shifu had no meals after the noon hour,” explains the interpreter, but in Canada, under work pressure, meals may be taken later. While both in the Korean and the Tibetan traditions, the noon cut-off is respected, there is some flexibility. Once again, leading a lay life, there is no such requirement in Jodo Shinsu.

When we come to \textit{Higher Ordination} (\#7), we note that all but the Jodo Shinsu having the requirement.

Finally, we see that the one common factor that characterizes sangha membership across culture and across time is the \textit{Role} (\#8) as Religious Teacher. The status comes to be conferred by the knowledge of the dharma each brings to the congregation. Indeed Tsunoda Sensei notes, “The congregation can readily tell if you don’t study (laughs)”

While it is difficult to arrive at generalizations on the basis of a small sample, the ordained in our study can be said to represent not just themselves, but a whole tradition. So, if on that basis, we were to arrive at a hypothesis, it may run something like this: \textit{The variance of a tradition vis-à-vis the ‘Buddha Vacana’} (Buddha's
Words), in theory and practice, is a function of the geographic and the temporal distance.

Such variance, let it be noted, is only to be expected, given that first, the Buddha does allow for a freedom for each to take in the teaching according to one’s own circumstances. Secondly, given the reality of the changeability of phenomena (anicca), Buddha Vacana can hardly be expected to be exempt from it. The changes we have noted as Buddhism reaches the different cultures, then, theoretically speaking, may be seen as providing a living example of change at a social level.

Let it also be noted that there is nothing in the proposed hypothesis to suggest the quality of the spiritual practice of a given tradition or a sangha member. Where, and at what level, one is on the Path is not something necessarily visible externally but only experienced by, and known to, a given individual, conditioned as well by one’s karma.

5.3 Relating to the Other

We have noted above that what falls under the term ‘Buddhism’ varies from culture to culture. The spiritual expectations of the sangha members, as in the pie diagram, vary considerably as well – from seeking Nibbana, to becoming Buddha, to saving all sentient beings, to reaching the Pure Land. So are the different practices - meditation, prayer, chanting, and so on. And then the historical yānic disharmony.

What we gather from the data is also that the frequency of participation in each other’s activities is not high either. While every single one of them expresses an interest in participating in the activities of others, some can’t find the time (Samu Sunim; Rimpoch, Sing Hung Fa-Shih, Tsunoda Sensei), Kwang Ok Sunim lacks English, Bhante Punnaji is not invited and Zasep
Tulku Rimpoche is simply “a private person” who doesn’t like to be in the public eye.

Yet, such a level of minimal participation belies a camaraderie and friendship at a personal level. Tsunoda Sensei captures it well: “We have so many views in Buddhism and we’ll have to learn how to get along (laughs).” Indeed. Asked, e.g., if he has any contact with other Buddhist clergy, the Sri Lankan, Chinese and Korean temples mentioned, he responds, “Yes we do.” In a similar vein, says Samu Sunim, “I’ve lots of friends.” As for Bhante Punnaji, “Well, I treat them as friends, a friend in the Dhamma. (laughs)”. Even though he is ‘a private person’, Rimpoche says, “I would like to do some things [together]. Sometimes. I have been at the Cham Shan temple, I’ve been at the Mahavihara. One time we invited Bhante Punnaji and another Bhante to our place for lunch, and they invited me, we had a lunch there. And we do some things with Dharmadhatu, we do some things with Karma Chime Rimpoche’s centre.” Samu Sunim sums it up all well: “We are all Buddhists.”

In the next breath, however, Samu Sunim adds a curve. “Buddhism is a wonderful religion, but it is very sectarian. And this was made clear to me while visiting some Buddhist groups. For instance, once visiting Tibetan Buddhist groups, one of them told me that in Tibetan Buddhism, there are many groups. So if you belong to one sect, you are not allowed to go to a Tibetan Buddhist temple belonging to another school. This is sectarianism. Mahayana Buddhists don’t necessarily understand Theravada Buddhists. And Theravada Buddhist bhikkhus think they are the real monks.”

His response to the perceived or the real sectarianism is to serve as a Buddhist centre serving all communities. “We provide information about the different Buddhist groups. This is behind our major effort in putting out *Spring Wind*. It’s clearly non-
sectarian. That’s why a lot of people recommend us because most groups put out Newsletters, talking about their own groups.”

Though not pro-active as Samu Sunim, other Sangha members speak a different language when it comes to other denominations and schools. When asked pointedly about Fa-shih’s attitude towards other Mahayana sects, he replies, “In China, there are eight different sects of Mahayana. Major ones. And although the practice of, or even the way of looking at, Buddhism may be different [in each of them or from each other], the ultimate purpose or the aim is still the same. We all want to become Buddha.”

As for his attitude towards other denominations of Buddhism, namely, Theravada and Vajrayana, “Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana differ only in their practice. Hinayana Buddhism is the origin, so to speak, the original Buddhism. And later on it developed into Mahayana Buddhism.” As for the Vajrayana, “it is one of the (8 sects of) Mahayana Buddhism (see fig. 1 above). And it depends on the person’s ability, the condition, in Buddhist terms, the karmic condition, and also the background of that person. It’s up to that person whether [or not] to do Vajrayana practice. Or even Pure Land practice [where one] recites the Buddha’s name. Whatever way, what we all want to achieve is the same goal, to become Buddha.”

Bhante Punnaji, of the Sinhalese Theravada, provides an additional basis for respecting each other. “Well (pause), the main thing is that these various forms of Buddhism recognize the Buddha. That means they have what is called shraddhā ‘appreciation’ with regard to the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha. And Buddha is taken as the guide in life. And the wisdom of Buddha. And so to that extent, they are all Buddhist…

“And how the teaching has been interpreted and understood is a matter of evolution. I would say that each person has to evolve in
his understanding, mature in his understanding of the Dhamma, the teaching of the Buddha. So, these different forms that we see today, in the form of Mahayana and all that, various cultures ..., they are not sects. I don’t see them as sects. I see them as cultures. The culture in China or Tibet or any other country. It’s just their cultural expression of the teaching of the Buddha.”

But perhaps the most insightful response comes from Zasep Rinpoche, well instructed in both Mahayana (including a previous life of a lama) and Theravada (studying in both India and Thailand), and also with a lived experience in both religious cultures (Tibet, India, Thailand). A more authoritative voice would be hard to find.

“Well, this is very interesting. As you know I went to Thailand and I studied Theravadan Buddhism, and I grew up in Tibetan society, and we’re Mahayanists. And who is Mahayanist and who is Hinayanist, it is up to the individual person. Like some Mahayanists, they call themselves Mahayanist, but they’re may be not even Hinayanist (laughs), you know! Because it is not easy to become a Hinayanist. I mean, hīna means ‘little’, [and hīnayāna] ‘lesser vehicle’, but it’s really a person who is trying to reach liberation, arhat, trying for self-liberation.

“And then there is the [Mahayana] goal to help others. It’s even harder to do that. And they may call themselves Mahayanist. And I think, some people have the idea of a Hinayanist [as being a] kind of selfish people. But that’s absolutely wrong. I think very wrong. I went to Thailand and studied there. I found many Thai monks and teachers and laypeople who are extremely generous. They have so much love, they have so much compassion. And they are not selfish people.”

What we have here, then, is a classic case of a textual claim based in a superiority complex (seyyamāna), and an attempted disharmony, born in cultural isolation and temporal and
geographic distance, quashed on the crucible of the face to face lived experience within the context of a shared geopolity, indeed also returning to a tradition of harmonious living (see 5.3 and 5.4).

While Buddhists may not be all above sectarianism, i.e., not freed of ‘attachment to views’ (diṭṭhi taṅhā), what we see overall, then, is an attitude of friendship and mutual respect. We can only say, “What a delight, and what a model of social living in harmony within diversity.”

So what is behind it all then? We may begin by noting that multicultural Canada has provided a stage, or a forum, for the diverse traditions to come face to face, allowing them to see each other in their full humanity, warts and all – that is, as sentient beings like oneself, seeking to overcome dukkha and attain their individual spiritual goal(s) in whatever way they can. Such a coming together may also be seen as forcing an understanding that the particularistic claims, of one’s own superiority or purity, may be more the result of isolation and insularity, than of wisdom and insight.

To muse somewhat doctrinally but on a somewhat lighter note, we may also ask, “How could six empty persons, each from an ‘illusion’ called a ‘tradition’, and with no substantial self to grab on to in oneself nor reject in another, given the anatta teaching, not be interconnected in this limitless void? How could one emptiness not be in tandem with another emptiness?”

What we, then, have in Canada is a community in harmony – not in the sense that every player sings the same from the same page, but rather a variation on a theme, taking off from the same page.

5.4 On Being a Buddhist

The reality of Buddhists in unity in diversity finds additional support in the responses to the question on ‘Being a Buddhist’, the
question itself stemming from the wide confusion as to who, in a Canadian context, e.g., constitutes a Buddhist and who not.

First there are the varieties of Buddhism that has its different practices, from meditation to chanting to abstaining from eating meat to praying to be born in some future happy state. Some go to the temple regularly, and some never do, preferring to practice at home. Some meditate, others never do. Then there are the new Buddhists, among them those who think of themselves as being both Buddhist and Christian – ‘Buddhist for my inner peace and Christian for my social activism’, as one confesses. And then there are Catholic Zen masters, men and women. Then there are the Jus – Jewish Buddhists who retain Jewish culture but embrace Buddhism as their religion.

But there is no such confusion in the minds of the Teachers interviewed. Asked what is meant when someone says ‘I am a Buddhist’, there is basic agreement across traditions.

Bhante Punnaji goes to the very texts. “Well, this has been defined by the Buddha. [It is] one who has (pause) avecca pasādo in Pali, which is very difficult to translate”, the Pali Text Society Dictionary (Davids & Stede, 1979) giving the meaning ‘perfect faith in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha’.

The Bhante continues: “The closest is something like ‘appreciation’ (pasansā). Appreciating the value of the Buddha. In other words, you are acquiring a sense of value. And the sense of values is indicated in the recognition of the Triple Gem. The gem refers to what is valuable, and the Triple Gem is the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. And when you are talking about the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha74, we are talking about mainly the value of that human perfection…

“The state of perfection. The greatest gem, the most valuable gem is Buddha, who represents the most pure state of mind. And that
state of mind is the most valuable gem in the world. And the Dhamma represents the same thing. So the experience of Buddhahood is the Dhamma. The way to that state, the experience of the way to that state, is the Dhamma. And Sangha represents all those people who are practicing the way and evolving to that state.”

“So ‘I am a Buddhist’ means ‘One who appreciates the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha’.” Explaining further, “and taking Refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Sangha, which means you recognize that the only guide in your life is the wisdom of the Buddha. And that becomes your Refuge in all your troubles. And then you begin the practice, sīla, which is self-discipline. So to become a Buddhist, you begin by practicing self-discipline. And then from there, you go on to meditation, and the practice of giving, sharing with others, dāna.”

Asked if one has to go to temple to show that you have taken Refuge, “No no no. You don’t have to go to a special place to do it. The special place is only a symbol. Because, say, you want to pay homage to the Buddha. How do you pay homage, in which direction should you bow down? So, you have to have a symbol like a statue, or you go to temple. All those things are symbols, representing the Buddha. And you bow to that symbol.”

Zasep is in agreement. “Well, according to the teachings of Buddha, when you call yourself Buddhist, that means you are committed to the Buddhist path, Buddhist teaching. And those persons, anyone who take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, take Buddha as the teacher and example, Dharma as the path, the teaching, and Sangha as the spiritual community. And you practice Dharma, and share the wisdom teachings. Then you call yourself Buddhist. And also, following the teachings, not harming others, not killing... and follow the 10 Virtues, the Paramitas (see Appendix IV) Then, I agree that that kind of
person, who is following these things, and who is committed to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha may be called a Buddhist…

“And there are 2 ways of becoming a Buddhist. The informal way is, whenever you decide you want to take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, then you become Buddhist, automatically. The formal way is, you go to a lama, and you take the Refuge (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) Vow, and do prostrations, make offerings, flowers. And then you get a refuge name, like a Buddhist name.”

Fa-shih adds a personal note: “I’m Buddhist. The Buddha is the person that I adore, and appreciate.” He adds another dimension of what it takes to be a Buddhist – taking “… the Precepts.” Now “whether one is ready to take all the Precepts or take 1 of the 5, or 3 of the 5, that’s up to the person’s motivation.”

A final addition comes from Samu Sunim. “The two main components of Buddhism are compassion and wisdom. I follow in the footsteps of the Buddha and his teachings. So that means I am a member of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.”

6. Towards the Future

What then is the future of Buddhism in Canada, as expressed a quarter of a century ago? “Very good prospects,” says Kwang Ok Sunim. Agrees Sing Hung Fa-shih, “I think Buddhism has a good future in Canada.”

Kwang Ok Sunim explains: “Things are changing in North America.” Part of the change, of course, stems from Canadians, especially the native-born, giving up on their received tradition, courted by the Western Enlightenment, secularism and an advancing materialism. But today, secularism itself may be losing ground, as secularists begin to find no increased happiness, and indeed contrary to expectations, an increasing unhappiness, and
an emptiness within. Kwang Ok Sunim observes the toll: “Current civilization is based on materialism and automation. And those things take away the mental strength and health.” This is where, then, Buddhism steps in to offer an option.

Bhante Punnaji suggests why “Buddhism may well be catching on.” Because “there are a lot of intelligent people here in Canada.” While materialism and automation might have taken away the mental strength and health, there should be little debate that in the last three centuries, science in particular has leveraged a higher intelligence in the West. And, of course, if there is one social class that Buddhism appeals to, it is the intelligent and the urban, including what has been dubbed the ‘creative class’ by Florida - entrepreneurs, inventors, artists, thinkers, and so on.

The resulting growth of Buddhism in Canada may now be shown as a Tree of Saddhamma (Figure 3), fully alive and dynamic, using the same data as in Figure 1, but with an additional level 7, representing the next generation of Canadian Buddhism beyond our study sample, representing practically all of World Buddhism, in all their distinct shapes, nuances, practices, mythologies and meditations. This current generation is, in addition to an increasing immigrant sangha leadership and discipleship, constituted of the children of the soil — as sangha leaders, lay teachers, professionals, Educational institutions and Associations (see http://www.buddhismincanada.com/Toronto-c.hotmail for a list), the Buddha reminding us that it is only when children of the soil take to the Path that the saddhamma can be said to be established on a soil. Then there are the academics, no longer what Prebish calls ‘closet Buddhists’, who now openly wear their Buddhism on their sleeves.

If this speaks to a quantitative growth of the tree in the Canadian context since the 1980’s when these interviews were conducted, we may also note a particularly distinctive feature of Canadian Buddhism. We have noted how the growth of Buddhism in the
US followed a linear pattern – Zen, Tibetan, Insight, in that order, over two centuries. But what we have in Canada is a parallel, simultaneous and co-mingling growth of all the twigs of the branch, resulting in a cross-fertilization, generating a collective wisdom, a sample of which would be as evidenced in this study. What this means in pragmatic terms is that Buddhism not only comes to be shared from a wider perspective (Indic, Sino-Tibetan, etc.) and a diverse experience (meditation, chanting, ceremonies, etc.), but also begins to reach out to different strata and segments of society – adults to teenagers, artists to professionals, the sick and the healthy, and so on, and to a diversity of other cultures that constitute the Canadian mosaic (in addition to the Anglo-Saxon and Jewish, French, Black, East European, and so on).

Then there is the media that is not rarely hungry enough for Buddhism, an example being OMNI TV presenting a 13-episode series, developed on their own, unprompted by any particular Buddhist group.

If all this can, then, be seen as providing fertile soil for the tree to grow, there is also the sunlight. “I think the Buddhist Teachings are comprehensive enough,” notes Tsunoda Sensei. Sing Hung Fa-shih points to the “all-embracing nature of the Teachings,” Buddha characterizing his discoveries under the Bodhi Tree in the words, “A light was born. An eye was born.” (āloko udapādi, cakkhum udapādi). Sensei refers in particular to the “attitudes that the Buddhists have, like compassion and tolerance.” Zasep Tulku Rimpoche tells us about another Teaching of the Buddha that has helped him in his life: “Yes. Because I know of impermanence, and I know of suffering in the world. And I also know that impermanence is impermanent, and that you can change it again.”

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“There are do’s and don’t do’s in other religions, too,” he continues. “But specifically, I think if you become Buddhist, you do not harm any sentient beings. That I think is specifically Buddhism. You don’t kill animals, and ... even try to avoid killing insects, bugs, and so forth. And also, if you’re a good Buddhist, you don’t lie, don’t cheat and even don’t drink alcohol, no intoxicants.”
The point is repeated by Tsunoda Sensei. Asked for any specific thoughts about personal living, anything that Buddhism can teach, he responds: “I think that the Five Precepts is one of them — you know, the universal values: not taking life, not stealing, not lying, and so on. We’re taught to be sincere. So in our everyday lives, that sets an example to show how Buddhism does affect us—in social life and in cultural life.”

Conducive to the growth of the Canadian *Tree of Saddhamma*, in addition to a fertile soil and plenty of sunshine, is the watering, done at the personal level. Here is how the Canadian journalist Ron Graham records the impact on himself of going through 10 days of meditation under teacher S N Goenka, in far away Dalhousie, India at a far away time (1970’s). “Even by the end of the first ten days of meditation, I found my mind slightly quieter, my pains somewhat subdued, my personality somehow lighter, and (as a kind of unexpected bonus) my smoking habit totally eliminated without the least regret” (Graham, 1990:384). Of the results over time, “None was more obvious than my sudden distaste for alcohol.” (ibid.), the vow to abstain taken originally as a “temporary vow” (see Appendix), namely, for the duration of the retreat (p. 380). Even more intriguing is that he had “not gone to India on a spiritual quest” (377). This, then, is the crux of the growth — that Canadians would come to benefit from it, almost by osmosis as the benefits of Buddha’s come to be the small talk at parties, not to mention at in depth treatments at intellectual gatherings and study, and the experience of meditation.

So Kwang Ok Sunim can be said to be right on the ball when she talks of the “encouragement of meditation” as the Buddhist contribution to Canadian society. “Buddhism will offer, through meditation, the regaining of mental health and regaining of humanism.” But meditation is not to be something done at a particular time and a particular place only. It is to cultivate a lifestyle, as Bhante Punnaji points out, to be “aware of one’s feelings, thoughts, all the time.” Zasep Tulku Rimpoche speaks of the
benefits of meditation in his own experience: “I feel physically very healthy. And even though I work very hard and eat very simple food, I’ve never really been very sick. I am physically very strong, and in mind absolutely happy. I have a lot of peace in me, joy, always very happy. And inside, wisdom, and what we call calm abiding mind, and my concentration [is] very good, and energy very high, and always lots of good feelings, love towards others.”

It may be that, as Bhante Punnaji observes, “Canadians are becoming more and more interested in Buddhism, at the moment, for the wrong reasons..” However, he concedes that “as they become more and more interested, then they will become interested for the right reasons.”

And so, what is this right reason? It is the practice of self-discipline (sīla), which the Buddha insists is foundational to the other two dimensions of the Noble Eightfold Path, the three listed in the order of discipline, concentration and discernment (sīla, samādhi, paññā). This discipline may be even in small things like going fishing for sport. As Tsunoda Sensei points out, “If there’s one feature that marks a Buddhist in his tradition, it would be not going fishing.”

Then there are aspects of Buddhist practice, though not strictly religious, that falls under self-discipline. One is cleanliness. Here is how several teachers point to the habit. “After breakfast, there is cleaning up of the whole temple” (Kwang Ok Sunim). “All the monks come out and sweep the monastery compound” (Samu Sunim). “The first thing we do is wash and clean out the bowl… After the chanting, there’s a cleaning time” (Bhante Punnaji). Another value encouraged by the Buddha is decorum and propriety. Again to Bhante Punnaji, talking about the robes: “The only thing is, you should not be wearing a torn robe.”
Another habit/value, a more religion-based one, is the practice of earning and transferring merit (puñña). Bhante Punnaji refers to such a Buddhist custom at death in Sinhala Buddhism. After offering a yard of white cloth to the sangha in a pāṇsukūla ceremony, “the merits [gained by the donation] is transferred to the departed.” So the transferring constitutes a win-win situation, since before merit can be transferred, the donor has to accrue merit by doing a good deed. Dāna ‘giving’ or ‘sharing’, an antidote to greed as Buddha teachers, then, may be seen as another practice in watering, in keeping with the laws of karma under which every action, good or bad, has its outcome. Paying homage to the Three Refuges is another that brings merit to the doer, which explains the importance of it as a regular practice.

Our sangha add other small acts of compassion (karuṇā) and friendliness (mettā) that bring merit: sending money to Africa (Sing Hung Fa-shih), fasting so the money could be donated (Samu Sunim); freeing birds (Sing Hung Fa-shih; Samu Sunim).

Finally, supporting a fertile soil, sunlight and water, there is also the air of understanding, and tolerance of diversity in the contemporary culture as encouraged by the Canadian policy of multiculturalism, Samu Sunim pointing out that “Buddha was, I think, the first religious figure promoting multiculturalism.” Adds Tsunoda Sensei: “I really think that Buddhism is probably one of the most tolerant religions in the world and this is where I think we have our contribution to make. Our being able to accept other religions besides our own. Doesn’t mean that we accept them as our own. We have our own religion, but we are able to look upon other religions with a little more understanding. This is something that probably no other religion has.” There is every reason to agree, there having been no wars in the name of Buddhism, and Samu Sunim noting Buddhism to be ‘the first religion of peace.” Of course, the ‘Dalai Lama factor’ – his message “My religion is Compassion”, which resonates with Canadians, cannot be ignored here either as a supportive bit of fresh air rustling through
the leaves. Finally, the novelty of the Buddhist worldview, providing an alternative window to the world of knowledge and reality.

We have seen, then, how the Canadian Tree of Saddhamma shows every sign of a healthy growth, through a fertile soil, plenty of sunshine, watering and fresh air. But we need to note that foundational to it all is the quality of the roots - sīla, samādhi, paññā (Discipline, Concentration and Discernment) as shown in the Figure.

Despite the potential for growth, Tsunoda Sensei is realistic when he says that Buddhism catching roots may not be “in my lifetime.” It is Samu Sunim who reminds us that it took over 200 to 300 years for Buddhism to take hold in China and Korea. And here, I can’t help add my oft-heard quip, “It’s taken 2500 years for Buddhism to reach Canada. So what’s the rush..”

Karma, here meaning the outcome of the presence of conditions, works over life times. So we need to see the growth as continuing over generations, just as in evolution, in which the individual (namely, individual practitioners, practices, traditions, etc.) may die out, but the species (namely, the Teachings and the Practice of Buddhism) continues.

However slow the process may be, we may have no doubt as to individual happiness, as our sangha attests to, the saddhamma brings: “I’m satisfied with the way I am.” (Samu Sunim). “I feel that the religion that I follow is a very good religion. In that sense, I’m very satisfied (laughs)” (Tsunoda Sensei). “I’m very happy with what I’m doing. I feel like I’m very fortunate, being a lama” (Zasep Tulku Rimpoche). Would this, then, be reason, and an incentive, for the daughters and sons of good families to consider shaving their heads in search of a life of happiness that may lead to Nibbana?
7. Concluding overview

This study is intended primarily to present the leading sangha members of Toronto of the 1970’s to 1980’s, telling their life story, both before and after ordination, in their own words. Our introduction has sought to pull together the vast ocean of information contained in the Stories, providing some cohesion under seven sub-headings: In a theoretical thrust, we have seen Buddhism in Toronto in terms of the Growth of a Tree, as in the title to this Introduction.

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ENDNOTES

1 The term sangha here refers only to the ordained, both male and female. But it is
used in North America to mean a total congregation of a given temple, or
Buddhists in general. However, the term that covers this collectivity - male and
female ordained and lay, being caturparisā ‘the four groups’. Nevertheless,
as pointed out by Bhante Punnaji (see his interview in this collection), the North
American usage is not without precedence. “Sangha, even in the Theravada,
strictly speaking, is not only the monks. Because … the followers of the
Buddha are of four classes - bhikkhu-sangha, meaning ‘monks’, … bhikkhuni-
sangha ‘nuns’, … upāsaka-sangha ‘laymen’ and the upāsikā-sangha, ‘laywomen’”. He makes an additional interesting observation: “Sangha
represents all those people who are practicing the way and evolving … to that
state…..”

2 This is not including the interview under same series of this editor, then
President of the Buddhist Council of Canada and Founding Coordinator of the
Toronto Buddhist Federation (later changed to Buddhist Federation of Toronto),
conducted by Vijay Agnew, of York University.

3 While the questionnaire also included items eliciting views on (a) aspects of
Buddhism and (b) socially relevant topics such as democracy, pornography, sex
and the like, they have been excluded here and is to make up Vol. 3 in this
series.

4 While material is drawn for this introduction from all six interviews, only five
Stories, as noted in the Preface, appear in this collection.

5 See Sugunasiri, 1989, for a fuller list of temples and groups that had come to

6 See Watada, 1996, for a history, and the North American context of using the
term ‘church’.

7 Both Fujikwa Sensei and Suwanda Sugunasiri were members of the WCRP
(World Conference on Religions for Peace) when they were invited to facilitate
Buddhist participation at an Interfaith Service to be held at the Bloor United
Church. This first meeting was held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, where the latter had just earned a PhD, and was working as a Project Director.

5 Initiated by Prof. Stanley Fefferman of York University, the first President of Buddhist Council of Canada, it was continued by the present Editor, upon becoming President. Christian leadership was by Dr John Berthrong, the Interfaith Officer of the United Church of Canada (and now Associate Dean, Boston School of Theology, USA) (see photo on p. 157), to be followed by Rev. Paul W. Newman, author of *A Spirit Christology: Recovering the Biblical Paradigm of Christian Faith*, 1987, Univ. Press of America.

9 Indeed one of his leading disciples, resident at the temple, and the one who had come with him for the inaugural meeting of the Buddhists, was Sujata (Linda Klevnick), who was also, at the invitation of this editor, the designer of the Poster for the very first WESAK celebration at Toronto’s Nathan Phillips Square (City Hall).

10 In the congregation of “about 100”, there are different categories of members. They are very committed...about 30. And then the supporting or contributing membership. And then there’s the Korean Sangha” who “comes once a week. But these days, I devote my time more and more to North American Buddhists so I am neglecting the Korean congregation. .. There are two other Korean temples, so they go there.”

11 He got ordained at 38 (see his Story), having led a lay life as a health professional.

12 When the Buddhists of Toronto first met (1980), a decision was made to address the ordained by their cultural titles (personal knowledge, as Founding Coordinator of the Toronto Buddhist Federation, later Buddhist Federation of Toronto), even though the Japanese, pioneers, seeking to adjust to the wider Christian culture, had begun to use ‘Reverend’, ‘Minister’ (and Church), etc. The listing of titles here reflects that practice.

13 As Buddhism evolved over time, there came to be, in India itself, two major traditions, one pejoratively called the ‘Lower Vehicle’ (*Hinayāna*) by the newly emergent ‘Great(er) Vehicle’ (*Mahāyāna*). (see 5.1 in text for a more detailed treatment). ‘Yānic’ is the derivative.

14 This is only female *sangha* at the time.

15 In Korean, the honorific title is gender-blind. See same column, row 3, for male sangha.

16 The practice in Sinhala Buddhism is that upon ordination, one would get a personal (Buddhist) name (Punnaji) preceded by the village name (Madawela). An interesting recent innovation is replacing the village by country, thus a Dutchman ordained in Sri Lanka coming to have the name Olande (the Sinhalese for Holland) Ananda.
This title, in Pali, is an abbreviation of bhadante, a form used in addressing the Buddha.

At Nalanda, we have come to replace Hinayana with Adiyana ‘Early vehicle’ (Sugunasiri, 2006).

Of the 18 or so schools that fall under the Adiyana, only the Theravada continues, the longest tradition being in Sri Lanka (3rd c. BCE) (see Robinson and Johnson, 1977: 67 for a chart). Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Cambodia are the other major ones.


Sensei’ means ‘teacher’ in Japanese.

While ‘Rimpoche’ is the title, Tulku stands for one identified as having being a lama in the immediate past life. To put it in the words of Zasep Rimpoche himself, “I was recognized as a Tulku. That’s a Tibetan word, meaning a ‘reincarnated lama’.”

Vajrayana ‘Diamond Vehicle’ is a further branching out of Mahayana, primarily in the context of Tibet, though with origins in India. See Diagram 1 for a further elucidation.

The only study on Tibetans at that time was McLellan (op.cit.), on Tibetans in Lindsay.

In the words of Zasep Rimpoche, “We started a small Center …near Danforth and Coxwell. I was there with Norman [Feldman] and his brother. We started our center. Norman and Jeff helped so much, Norman especially.”

Of late, he seems to have found a niche in Malaysia, seeking to fill a wide chasm left by the passing away of Ven. Kirinde Dhammananda who had provided leadership for over half a century. In a recent phone conversation, he tells this editor (by phone) that the Malaysians, his students mostly Chinese, are taking in his teachings “like a blotting paper”, and expresses the thought that before he dies, he would like to train some Buddhists in his scientific approach to Buddhism and meditation (see Punnaji, 2001), resolutely based in the Suttas (see Bodhi, 2005, for a recent Anthology).

This, and the next few figures, are as guesstimated for 1988 (Sugunasiri, 1989:87), on the basis of official government figures (Ont. Ministry of Citizenship, 1986).

This, and the nest few, are rounded figures.

While Thich Quang Leung encouraged his congregation to participate, visible leadership in the Vietnamese community during this early phase was lay, represented by Khan Lekim. (See his Story in Sugunasiri (ed.), forthcoming).

Representing Buddhism at the first World Parliament of Religions were Anagarika Dharmapala of Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and Soyen Shaku of Japan. But while it was the former that made the case for Buddhism in a brilliant speech in English and made an impact on William James, the scholar of
Religion at Harvard, the follow up came to be in the hands of David Suzuki, US scholarship itself having had made contact earlier with Japanese Buddhism since the 1850’s. See Fields, op. cit. for details).

31 The current editor, with his family, serves as an example.

32 This is a guesstimate. Kwang Ok Sunim arrived in Toronto in 1976, and began to drive “within three years”.

33 “That was the early ‘80s”, reports the transcript in describing the beginnings of establishing the Centre. But we know (personal knowledge) that Gaden Cholin took part in the first Wesak ceremony in May 1981.

34 The Cham Shan Temple where the interview was conducted was established in 1973.

35 “The Huron Street Church (see photo on p.164), [also the Minister’s residence] became the focal point of Buddhist activity” (Watada, 1996: 299).

36 This is from personal knowledge.

37 While there is no reference to the size of the congregation, this figure represents the families that have signed up to provide alms for the bhantes on a particular day every month of the year.

38 This again is a guesstimate on the basis of the interview. While Samu Sunim arrived in Toronto in 1970, he spends five 5 years visiting “Brantford and the Iroquois villages” of the Native Indian community. Reference to getting a temple at Gwynn Avenue comes after that.

39 The practice referred to is the paritta chanting, when e.g., the Angulimāla paritta ‘Angulimāla Protection’ is chanted, specifically directed at protecting the pregnancy, the ending reading as follows: “Oh sister, from the time I was born in the Aryan birth, I do not know if with intention I have deprived the life of living being. On account of that truth, may there be well-being to you! May there be well-being to your womb.” (see Lokuliyana, n.d., 179).

40 “Yes, there is a way of naming, an ancient way. There are three syllables in Korean names. The first syllable is the last name, family name [already there, father’s]”. And either the second or the third is a name that’s given to that generation of that family. So all I have to do is to put one name in, one syllable, as either the second or the third, to be in harmony with other name, “nothing to do with Buddhism, but a word that gives good luck, happiness. So that’s what I decide.”

41 For this part of the ceremony, the next of kin come together to pour water from a pitcher into a bowl until it overflows, the sangha chanting words having the meaning “Just as the waters of the flowing river fills up the ocean, just so, may the merit accrued here accrue to the departed.” Preceding or following is a sermon in which the following lines are standard: ‘Impermanent indeed are the flows / Once arisen, phenomena go to decay / Having arisen, they die / Taming the flows alone is happiness’ (aniccā vata samkhārā / uppāda vaya dhammino / uppajhitvā nirujjhanti / tesam vīpasamo sukho).
The reference here must be to Korean, or Far Eastern Buddhism, on the basis of the Buddha himself being cremated, but it is not universal, since in Sri Lanka as in Japan, e.g., a body would be cremated or buried. While Tsunoda refers to the Abhidharma as the source for the significance of the 49th day, an on the ground inspiration may have been the Buddha spending 7 weeks in and around the Bo tree following Enlightenment.

The idea of a spirit wandering around is not in early Buddhism which teaches that re-birth takes place right away, though not necessarily as a human. In the experience of this editor in the context of Canada, other individual lamas have been seen, unrelated to travel, in both their standard brown robe as well as in western attire, suggesting a flexibility in the Tibetan tradition.

Nembutsu is the Japanese rendering of Pali ‘namo ‘homage’ + buddha’ (= butsu), and the – su suffix appears to be common ending particularly for terms imported from another language.

This is a calculation on the basis of the interview.

“...it’s quite far. Because a Chinese mile is probably either longer or equivalent to the ... English mile.”

This is not to say that Buddhism was practiced at home, or was a direct influence. Fa-shi, e.g., “knew very little about the Buddha”, although his father was in an “organization called ‘Ming Shin Tao’, where people get together for …vegetarian meals and recite the Buddha’s name, and also help people to do good things”. Samu Sunim knew nothing of the Buddha either, but he was impressed by his grandmother making donations to the temples.

Kwan Yin in Chinese, and Avalokiteswara in Indian Buddhism.

Buddhism teaches that, in keeping with the laws of karma, where every action, good or bad, has its outcome, paying homage to the Three Refuges – Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, sharing with others, doing a compassionate deed, etc., all bring merit (puññā) to the doer. An additional beautiful aspect of this is that when that merit is transferred to others (as e.g., to the departed), that sharing brings additional merit to the giver of merit in a win-win situation. See fn. 41.

One of the epithets the Buddha given in later Mahayana texts in particular is ‘Medicine Teacher’ (bhiṣāja-guru), and even ‘Medicine King’ (bhiṣāja-ṛāja) but popularly ‘Medicine Buddha’. See Birnbaum, 1989, for a study.

A distinction needs to be made here as between the historical Shakyamuni Buddha and all the other the mythological Buddhas.

It is interesting that she uses the Pali term bhikkuni, instead of ‘sunim’. Perhaps this may be because the term was used by the interviewer in his question. However, it may also indicate an intention on her part that ordained women in the Korean tradition do also uphold the traditional Vinaya as in the Theravada countries. Or it may well be the practice in Korean Buddhism.
Samu Sunim seems to be in good historical company, when many a destitute one ends up as a disciple of the Buddha – a killer (Angulimala) and a prostitute (Ambapali) among them (see Norman, 1969 and 1971 for their stories).

See Warder, 1970, Ch. 9, 10 & 11, for a fuller discussion.

The First council took place right after the Buddha’s Parinibbana (483 BCE) and a Third, Council of Pataliputra, in the 250 BCE (see Robinson & Johnson, op.cit.).

It needs to be noted that, in time, several other schools come to be formed within each of these two.

Indeed in Sinhala Buddhism, when alms (dāna) are offered to the sangha, it is offered in the name of the total collectivity of the sangha; hence sānghika dāna. We find inscriptive evidence as early as the 1st c. BCE when, according to the cave inscription itself, a cave is offered to the ‘the sangha of the four quarters, already come or yet to come’ (agata anagta catudisa sagasa dini).

There are other arguments made against the ideal of the Arhant, but they need not deter us here. See Warder, ibid., for the details.

The fact that the division doesn’t find mention in the Pali Tipitaka, of course, speaks to the relatively late date of the division.

While Buddhologists have come to prefer śrāvakayāna ‘Hearer Vehicle’ in preference to Hinayāna, it is the latter that is in public vogue, its usage by the sangha members in this study being some evidence.

Having fought a bitter (Kalinga) war which successfully allowed King Asoka to unite India for the first time in its history, he couldn’t bear to see the carnage and destruction that had been required for success, when he sought out, and embraced, Buddhism, setting up a ‘Just Kingdom’ (Dharma Rājya) (see Guruge, 1993, for a ‘definitive study’).

In fact, it was only Arhant Mahinda who first came to Sri Lanka, and it was at the request of Queen Anula that Arhant Sanghamitta arrived, thus establishing the female (bhikkhuni) ordination at the very beginning.

This is the ‘Great Chronicle’, written in the 6th c., the record of the Sinhala people from its founding father, Vijaya in the 6th c. BCE on. (see Geiger, 1950 for the first English translation).

“It is very like that the early Aryans [founders of the Sinhala race] brought with them some form of Brahminism,” the prevailing orthodox religion (de Silva, op. cit.:9).

While there is, for local consumption, a nikāya division within the ranks of the Sinhalese sangha, based on caste, a spillover of the Indian system but in a milder form (e.g., the govikula ‘farmer caste’, e.g., being considered the highest), no Sinhalese monk working beyond the national borders seems to seek mileage about belonging to one or another.

There is now a temple in Toronto, Mahamevna exclusively committed to the practice of meditation.
This was by four different colonizers and two religions – Indian/Hindu (11th c.), Portuguese-Dutch-British/ Christianity (16th to 20th c.). Visiting Korea for his study, Dumoulin reports about his meeting with Dr Myung-Gee Joh, President of Dongguk University: “First he brought my attention to the opposition between married an celibate Buddhist priests and monks.” (Dumoulin, 1976:203)

He explains: “So, somehow I feel, I myself have been a monk for many years, and I have a great respect for the monkhood. And I would like to support many monks, and monasteries in the future, whenever I can. But my own personal feeling is that, if I’m a lay lama, I can relate to my own friends better. Also, in my own interest, I felt that it would be nice to change, and, you know, have a family, a wife.”

This is a Tibetan Centre under Chogyam Trungpa Rimpoche. See Sugunasiri (ed.), forthcoming, for Stories on two of its leading members, Prof. Stanley Fefferman, Founding President of the Buddhist Council of Canada, and Paul Hardman (see photo on p. 157).

Deleted here, for reasons of flow, is the following: “And ... Tibetans, we do have the concept of Hinayana ... but Theravada society doesn’t have the concept of Hinayana. They don’t call themselves Hinayanist. They call their own Theravada.” See the continuing argument.

Further to fn.1, it is clear from this context that the term sangha here refers only to the ordained, for it would make no sense for the laity ‘take refuge’ in the laity.

This, again, is a latitude not available in Theravada practice.

We use the label ‘Western Enlightenment’ as a minor reminder to ourselves that there was another Enlightenment 2500 years ago in India!

Indeed many an early disciple of the Buddha comes from the learned Brahmin class. Some little linguistic evidence of the urban bias of Buddhism may be found in the Pali term grāmya, meaning ‘village-based’, to refer to something that is not polished or vulgar!

To mention a few, we may consider the Leadership at the Toronto Zen Centre, Friends of the Heart, Theravada Community, Goenka Centre, Tengye Ling, Arrow River Centre, etc.

Norman Feldman, the Vipassana teacher, comes readily to mind.

Psychologists Paul Kelly in Toronto and Kay Partridge in London would be examples.

Nalanda College of Buddhist Studies (Canada) serves as the only example here.

Buddhist Education Foundation would be an example.

To give a partial list here, we may name, Michael Berman (Brock), Mathieu Boisvert (Universite du Quebec a Montreal), Victor Hori (McGill), Kay Koppedrayer (Wilfrid Laurier), Mavis Fenn (U of Waterloo), Leslie Kawamura
(U of Calgary), Janet McLellan (Wilfrid Laurier), James Mullens (U of Saskatchewan), Veronique Ramses (York), Henry Shiu (U of Toronto), Angela Sumegi (Carleton), Peter Timmerman (York) and Tony Toneatto (U of Toronto).

84 Pointing to the Zen groups where the teacher is of one ethnicity (Korean) and the congregation another (primarily Judeo-Christian, with a smattering of Korean and others) as an example (and we may add Zasep Tulku Rimpoche’s Gaden Cholin as another), Tsunoda Sensei points to a decline that may result if such a cross-fertilization were not to take place: “Our view is that Buddhism is just for the Japanese. Eventually, I believe that Buddhism that’s come from Japan will continue along with other varieties, but, even as it gradually declines, other groups will come in and take over. That’s my view of it. Unless Buddhism does so in Canada, if we’re just gonna be based on just racial or national lines, it’s about doomed I think.”

85 This editor approached, in addition to writing out a proposal (though not eventually used), Nalanda College of Buddhist Studies (Canada) ends up providing the key resources – faculty member Veronique Ramses as Associate Producer and Admin Asst. Glen Choi as Host for the series.

86 This refers to the Five Training Principles (sikkhāpada), or more commonly, Precepts (See Appendix IV for more details, and Thich Nhat Hanh, 1993, for a treatment, with his own imprint in the interpretations.)

87 The other two are sexual misconduct and abstaining from liquor to an extent that leads to indolence (pamāda).

88 The Christian dictum “Cleanliness is second to Godliness”, then, may in God-absent Buddhism be rendered as “Cleanliness is second to none”!

89 Some evidence of this may be 29,000 gathering at Toronto’s Skydome to listen to him.

90 It is with regret we report that as of this writing, Tsunoda Sensei has passed away, in Nebraska, where he returned to after serving as Bishop in Canada (this editor informed by the office of the Toronto Buddhist Church).