

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

newsletter

A Wholesome Buddhist Experience

Hello, the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy welcomes you as you are. I am Venerable Priya Rakkhit Sraman, the Tufts Buddhist chaplain. Primarily the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy focuses on strengthening the conditions for Buddhist life and practices at Tufts through weekly Buddhist meditation and dharma discussion sessions, full moon gatherings, and dharma lectures. This Chaplaincy's goal is to provide opportunities for the Tufts community to have a wider understanding of rich Buddhist traditions and practices.

Thus, we organize different Buddhist cultural and spiritual events. We celebrate an annual Buddha Day with leaders from several Buddhist traditions, host frequent dharma talks by guest Buddhist masters, and periodic retreats and trips to local Buddhist retreat centers locally. Over the summer, students involved in Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy travelled to Nanshaolin Temple (Southern Shaolin Temple) in Putian, China for a month-long retreat called Humanistic Buddhist Monastic Life Program organized by the Woodenfish Organization. This wonderful experience is an example of how Tufts students can broaden their understanding of Buddhism through study, contemplation, rituals, and meditation on cultural and traditional practices. The Buddhist Chaplain works closely with the student group, Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha (TBMS or the Sangha), to cultivate Buddhist community at Tufts.



Buddhist Chaplain The Venerable Priya Sraman



During our annual Buddha Day Celebration, Jiamin and Ryan are in line to bathe the baby Buddha in Goddard Chapel.

"The Sangha is a great community where I can meet like-minded people. I felt like I could safely practice my religion and share my stories. I have learned tremendously from my peers and Venerable Priya in the Sangha."

The Sangha community made my transition into college a lot easier."

-Jiamin, A22

Weekly Gatherings

Our gatherings include meditations and spiritual reflection sessions every Monday and Friday at noon in Goddard Chapel. This practice encourages us to be attentive to ourselves, to think together with others, and to learn with and from each other. We also provide light snacks after meditation and during the discussion.

Full Moon Ceremony

The Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy has special monthly meetings on the Full Moon days. In different Buddhist traditions each full moon signifies special events in Buddha's life and in Buddhist history. These meetings are devoted to reflecting on those events, strengthening our devotion, and enhancing the bond in our community.

Reflection on Practice and Ceremony by Katherine Odjakjian, A20

The Monday and Friday sessions have served as a great introduction to meditation for me. No matter how I feel when coming into the meditation, I always leave feeling peaceful and more grounded. The Sangha is an incredibly caring and welcoming group of people who, along with Priya, create a supportive and inspiring space to share, practice, and reflect.



Special Talks

Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy invites guest Buddhist masters to the Tufts campus in order to enrich the Buddhist spiritual life of the Tufts community. The direct interaction with different Buddhist masters and practitioners on campus allows for positive inspiration and motivation to take up different practices. No less important is the opportunity to personally ask, discuss and clarify important matters from the masters.

[Lama Sonam from Drikung Meditation Center guiding meditation, sharing his spiritual journey, and discussing questions on teachings and practices in April 2019.](#)

Buddha Day

The Buddha Day celebration is our annual end of year event to commemorate Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing away. We celebrate with local Buddhist spiritual leaders and other Tufts communities. The program included Buddhist chanting, brief meditation, dharma talk, and reflections. It is an opportunity to end the academic year with peace, mindfulness, wholesome attitude, and laughter with friends, classmates, and colleagues—as a community.

[Buddhist Chaplain, Ven. Priya addresses the community in Goddard Chapel during the Buddha-Day Celebration in April 2019.](#)



Retreats

The semesterly off-campus retreats are co-sponsored by the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha and the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy. The retreats are special opportunities for students to deepen their Buddhist practice through various communal and individual practices with the guidance from Venerable Priya.



Wonderwell Mountain Refuge, Fall 2018

Ten Tufts students joined Ven. Priya Sraman for two nights at Wonderwell Mountain Refuge, NH, for the semesterly Tufts Sangha retreat. Despite the cold weather we enjoyed walks outside in the mornings and evenings. We spent many hours indoors in meditation, dharma discussion, textual study and reflection, and silence. We also made paper arts.



Rolling Ridge, Spring 2019

Twelve Tufts students joined Ven. Priya Sraman on our retreat at Rolling Ridge Conference Center, MA. During this 24 hour retreat we engaged in meditation sessions, discussions, silent meals, and reflection. We had great fun in the nature surrounding the center. In the morning we enjoyed a long mindful walk outside and in the afternoon we went canoeing in the lake next to the center.



Reflection on Retreats by Jiamin Li, A22

I loved the spring retreat and the Buddha Day Celebration. The retreat allowed me to be more grounded in a period of anxiety before finals. I got to know many people on the retreat and discovered parts about myself that I never knew existed before.

The Buddha Day Celebration allowed me to connect with my religious tradition in a land far away from home. I feel deeply appreciative of where I am because of these events.



Trip to Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Medford, MA

Led by Venerable Priya, students from the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha (TBMS) traveled to the Kurukulla Center to experience the Tibetan Buddhist stupa, the making of Tara-mandala by Tibetan monks visiting from India. We discussed aspects of Tibetan Buddhism with the monks while sharing tea together.

Sangha leaders Palak Khanna and Ryan Dreher explore Buddhist items at Kurukulla Center.



Trip to Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Temple, Cambridge, MA

The trip to Fo Guang Shan Temple was full of laughter and joy as students shared a delicious lunch and tea at the temple. We learned about the humanitarian mission of the organization and its community service projects. The abbot, Venerable Jue Qian, kindly responded to many questions about the temple, her works, the temple's history, and her service all over the world.

TBMS students enjoy tea, while talking with a community member at Fo Guang Shan Temple.



Tufts Students Ryan, A21, Dylan, A19, Hayley, A18, and Doug, A21 stand around Ven. Priya Sraman at the Nanshaolin (Southern Shaolin) Temple in Putian, China.

Trip to China

This summer four Sangha members and Venerable Priya participated in the Humanistic Buddhist Monastic Life Program at the Nanshaolin (Southern Shaolin) Temple, Putian, China. This annual program, organized by the Woodenfish Organization run by Venerable Yifa, is attended by over sixty international students. The program included Buddhist meditations, traditional chantings, academic classes on Buddhist traditions, scriptures and practices, and classes on Chinese culture. This year, there was a new Shaolin Kung Fu practice taught daily by monastic Kung Fu masters of the Nanshaolin Temple. The program ended with a week of

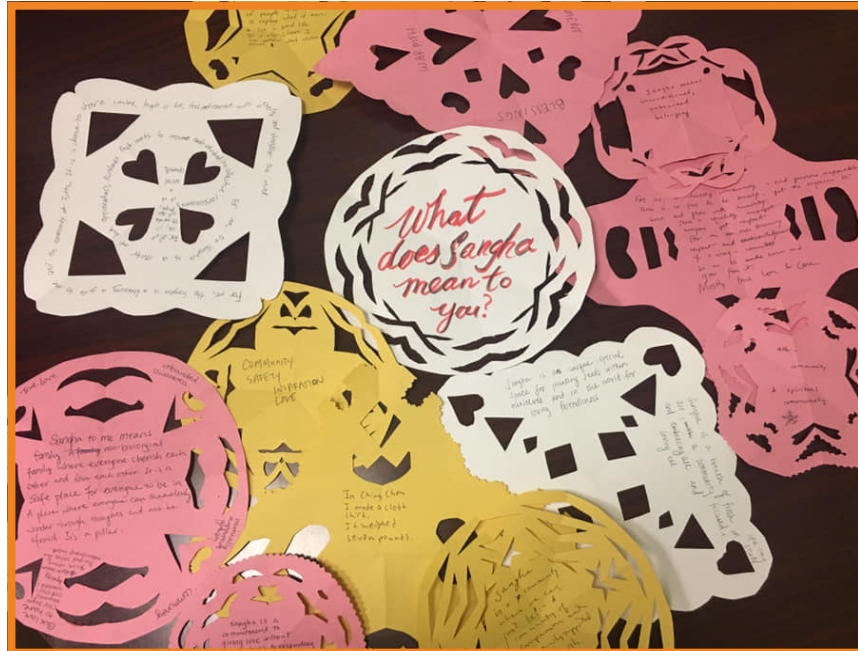
meditation in complete silence. It was a great opportunity to learn and practice at the renowned Chinese Buddhist temple with many other international students including monastics from various Buddhist traditions.

Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha

The mission of the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha (TBMS) is to provide a community at Tufts for students who practice meditation and Buddhism.

In December of 2018, the Sangha gathered for an “End of Year Celebration” to practice meditation, to eat together in silence, to share valuable thoughts, and to enjoy attention and laughter with the Sangha.

In the Fall of 2019, the TBMS gathered together for “Death in Dharma: A Conversation with Buddhist Chaplain Priya,” a movie night, alongside field trips, weekly gatherings, and Full Moon Pujas. In the Spring of 2019, TBMS hosted “What is Humanistic Buddhism?” and co-sponsored Women’s Voices in Religion with the Interfaith Student Council.



Students write reflections on what the Sangha means to them during the “End of the Year” celebration in December of 2018.

Reflection on Tufts Buddhist Sangha by Sean Lee, A20

I felt so welcomed by Venerable Priya and the Sangha, I became an executive board member within the week, supporting and helping the community grow and accomplish its goals. I eventually became the Co-President alongside the wonderful Ann-Marie, establishing protocols and a legacy of organization to help ease new executive board members in the future. I have become more confident and sure of myself and my own abilities during my tenure, and I’m happy to have helped the Sangha become a more inclusive community.

Photo Caption: Sean Lee, A20 (top right corner) sits with fellow Tufts Buddhist Sangha members and Ven. Priya Sraman in Carmichael Dining Hall.





Judy Chen, A19

I have been going to a secular sangha in Berkeley; we sit for forty minutes, and discuss our volunteer teacher's dharma talk, which is as full of Buddhist wisdom as it is that from poets, artists, writers, and teachers of other faiths. As I form different communities in my new life, my experience with Sangha and the Chaplaincy reminds me to not take a spiritual community for granted. It's something to proactively seek and cultivate.



Hayley Oliver-Smith, A18

Since graduating Tufts, I have aimed to follow the wish the sangha speaks—to dwell in health, peace and freedom. I completed a 10-day Vipassana retreat [in Thailand]. Following the retreat, I had the chance to visit many Buddhist sites throughout Asia—Kuthodaw Pagoda in Myanmar where the entire Buddhist canon is inscribed on stone tablets; a month-long program in Buddhist studies in rural southern China with three fellow student members of the sangha at Tufts and Venerable Priya. Our sangha is a promise made in the heart, an enduring bond to what is true in people and good in the world. The meetings do not close. The circle continues.

Support Buddhist Life at Tufts University

The Tufts University Buddhist Chaplaincy is a startup—it is one of the first university-funded Buddhist Chaplaincies in the country. Many campuses do not have the benefit of a paid, professional Buddhist Chaplain who is a full colleague with faculty and staff and able to integrate the ancient wisdom and modern insights of Buddhism, mindfulness practice, and contemplative studies fully into the university community. This position and program are an essential part of our integrated interfaith chaplaincy team, supporting the University's mission to advance knowledge, build inclusive community, and address global challenges. It creates and supports a space that has a transformative impact on the lives of students, faculty, staff, and alumni.



Palak Khanna, A18, gives the first Buddhist reading ever at the Baccalaureate Service 2018

- **\$2000** Semester retreat
- **\$500** Guest speaker event
- **\$200** One meditation session

The innovative work of the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy is made possible by the generous support of friends and donors. We ask you to please join us in giving to ensure the continued support and growth of this program. To make a one-time or recurring gift to the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy online, please visit: chaplains.tufts.edu/giving. To discuss a major gift, endowment, or bequest, please contact Buddhist Chaplain Priya Sraman or our Advancement liaison Rob Ayles:

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Thank you for your generosity and support.