

BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY

newsletter

Welcome from the Buddhist Chaplain

We mature and grow by association with other lives. Association with the good results in the expansion of good. To become a good friend to another, we need to attend to our personal wholesome cultivation, too. In our Buddhist community here at Tufts, we explore ways to become good companions to ourselves and to each other. We are a community of friends eager to be present to our own curiosities and be attentive to the needs of others. In our meditations and scripture study, we tend to our spiritual and intellectual curiosities of the group and of each individual. Together, we create a community that welcomes questions, cultivates openness, challenges our assumptions, and nurtures friendship, companionship and camaraderie – all for the purpose of our continued growth.

You are most welcome in our community. Please join us as we seek to establish and enhance a community for deeper spiritual life here at Tufts.

With much mettā,
 Priya Sraman, Buddhist Chaplain



**Buddhist Chaplain, The
 Venerable Priya Rakkhit Sraman**

“This is the entire spiritual life, Ānanda, that is good friendship, good companionship, good comradeship. When a monk [a person] has a good friend, a good companion, a good comrade, it is to be expected that he [that person] will develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path.”

Upaddha Sutta, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Welcome from the Buddhist Community

Ryan Dreher, A21, Co-president, Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha

Of all the communities at Tufts that seek to connect students, practice one’s faith, and learn life-long lessons, the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha (*Sangha* means a wholesome community) has been the most astounding. As a freshman, I attended Venerable Priya’s talks, and in my first semester we discussed Buddhist texts, went to dinners dedicated to fostering spirituality and compassion, held movie nights, and learned from our local community of monastics. This year as a rising senior, I look back on my years feeling excited to see what new community members will learn and the questions they will have. Welcome to the Sangha!



The Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha in Fall 2019

The Buddhist Chaplaincy supports the Buddhist life on campus, providing various opportunities for exploring Buddhist scriptural, religious, and spiritual teachings and practices through regular programs. It aims to nurture a wholesome community engaged in exploring Buddhist values and their practical application.

History of the Buddhist Chaplaincy

Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy started six years ago when Venerable Upali Sraman joined the team as Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy Intern. A year later, the position was re-titled Buddhist In Residence. When Venerable Upali left in 2016, Venerable Priya Rakkhit Sraman became the second Buddhist in Residence. In 2018, Venerable Priya became the first Buddhist Chaplain at Tufts University and he continues to serve the community.



Ryan Dreher, A21,
lights the candles for
a full moon celebration
in Goddard Chapel

Regular Programming

Please note: We continue to adjust our programming in creative ways to retain the spirit of past events and programs while following Tufts guidelines for the health and safety of the community in the 2020-2021 academic year.

- Communal weekly meditation
- Scriptural study and reflection
- Full moon celebrations
- Semesterly Buddhist retreat
- Guest lectures by Buddhist practitioners
- Hosting guest practitioners
- Annual Buddha Day celebration
- Visits to local Buddhist centers

“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 in.”

Katharine Odjakjian, A20

“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 Li, A22

Spotlight Event: Buddhist Retreat

Each semester, the Buddhist Chaplaincy works with the Tufts Buddhist Mindfulness Sangha to organize an off-campus Buddhist retreat. In fall 2019, we went to our favorite retreat center, Wonderwell Mountain Refuge in New Hampshire. The retreat included Buddhist chants, meditations, contemplative practices, silent meals, individual and group walks in nature, exploration of Buddhist scriptures, engagement with Buddhist arts, story sharing, camaraderie and laughter. The retreat is an important way to engage with our spiritual practices, strengthen our community, and build wholesome friendships.

Sangha members participate in a walking meditation in nature at the Wonderwell Mountain Refuge, fall 2019



“Spending 24 hours in silence was as interesting and enjoyable as it was frustrating (but necessary). Having no way to distract myself by talking to others, I was forced to look within myself for my own company, which made me remember how much I enjoy being with myself.”

Elina Garone, A23

Interfaith Collaboration: Conversation with the Chaplains

Last year the Buddhist Chaplaincy collaborated with the other chaplaincies at Tufts and the Interfaith Student Council to organize a special panel called “Mindfulness and Mental Health: A Conversation with the Chaplains.” On the panel, the Tufts chaplains (Buddhist, Catholic, Humanist, Muslim and Protestant) discussed the meaning, purpose, and functions of mindfulness and meditation in their respective traditions. More than fifty participants attended the event. Occurring right before Tufts moved online in March, the event provided some useful points regarding steps towards cultivating mindfulness and self-care.



Five chaplains share contemplative practices from their traditions, and answer student questions



Alumni Feature: Judy Chen, A19

How have you been since leaving Tufts?

There have been lots of choices, uncertainty, and surprises. Until recently I worked in sales development at a tech startup in San Francisco; I'm now preparing to return to Taiwan (where I haven't lived full time since I was four, so I'm excited!).

How did your time in the Buddhist Chaplaincy inform your post-graduate experience?

Because of my experience in the Buddhist Chaplaincy, I knew I wanted to participate in a sangha here and continue interfaith explorations. I joined a secular sangha in Berkeley, and then a Thich Nhat Hanh chapter called New Gen Sangha, which was hosted in rotations of members' living rooms. Now, in quarantine, alongside other Tufts alumni Sangha members, we've been meeting biweekly to check in and continue Buddhist discussions. It is grounding to continue to be a part of the Sangha community—especially as a recent graduate—and exciting to see how we grow together. My experience with the Sangha and the University Chaplaincy reminds me to not take a spiritual community for granted. It's something to proactively seek and cultivate.

Support Buddhist Life at Tufts University

The Tufts University Buddhist Chaplaincy is one of the first university-funded Buddhist Chaplaincies in the country. The innovative work of the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy is enhanced by the generous support (dāna) of friends and donors. We ask you to please join us in giving to ensure the continued growth of this program.



\$50

Provides community with books and other resources for deeper study of Buddhism

\$100

Supports chaplaincy's programming, including care packages, virtual speakers, and virtual gatherings

\$200

Ensures our chaplaincy is ready to support any emergent needs of our community this year

To make a one-time or recurring gift to the Tufts Buddhist Chaplaincy online, please visit: <http://go.tufts.edu/giveBuddhist>. To discuss a major gift, endowment, or bequest, please contact Buddhist Chaplain Priya Sraman or our Advancement liaison Rob Ayles:

617-627-2675 | Robert.Ayles@tufts.edu

Thank you for your generosity and support.