

# Buddhist centre making new inroads

by John DeMont

A recently established Buddhist study and meditation center in the area, called Dharmadatu, is making further inroads through which its organizers hope to maintain and even increase the size and substance of its loyal, local following.

The Dharmadatu is located on the second floor of the Bryant Building at 1599 Hollis Street. Students there, as is done in Dharmadatu's elsewhere, follow the guidance and direction of the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche (loosely equivalent to Rever-

end), who is generally thought to be one of the major representatives of Tibetan Buddhism in the western world.

This type of religion is deeply steeped in tradition and its origins can be traced back almost 2500 years to the Buddha himself. Born of royal blood and in an extremely wealthy family, the Buddha turned his back on all of this wealth, prestige and power to travel the world as a Yoga, in search of truth and wisdom. At that time the Yoga tradition which existed and the general scope of all activity was direc-

ted towards the improvement of the individual. The legend goes that after travelling for years without receiving answers for his questions, the Buddha decided to go no further until he had obtained enlightenment. He stopped his wandering and sat under a tree, doing nothing except observing the operation of his own mind.

His biggest discovery was that instead of improving things, this pursuit of individual improvement only reinforced the idea that there was something inherently wrong with man.

The essence of this type of Buddhism is that man is not naturally flawed and that original sin does not exist, instead he possesses much basic goodness. However this inherent goodness has been covered over by the false reinforcement of the baser aspects of man. Rinpoche Trugpa teaches that the road to truth, real truth of some per-

manence, is to drop all foreign elements and simply be who you are. In this manner his inherent goodness and potentialities may be realized.

Although it seems in this respect to be the ultimate expression of individuality, it is actually far from this. Through Buddhism followers and students will eventually reach the point where they realize that what they see as "self" is actually nothing more than a traditional, habitual pattern of thought through which we do ourselves a lot of needless harm.

In the Dharmadatu, practitioners carry on a type of free form meditation. Instead of concentration on an object or word as in some of the other types of meditation, they attempt to cut attachments and therefore rid themselves of the layers of habitual falsehoods. The technique is to observe your mind in action and see where you have been tripping up.

Followers of the religion are not totally passive individuals, unable to live in the real world instead they tend to get along quite nicely. The fourteen students who study and meditate at the Dharmadatu on Hollis Street include among them journalists, advertising executives and doctors.

Activities in the center include walking meditations, sitting meditations on Tuesday and Wednesday nights at 7:30 and longer all day sittings on Sundays. There are also talks on Monday night on a variety of subjects relating to the discipline. In the first week in April a basic meditation class costing \$10 will begin and continue on Wednesday nights until April 23. General meditation instruction can also be obtained for low cost. Anyone interested may get in touch by going to the Dharmadatu or phoning 429-2033.

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