

# HEALTH, HEALING & RELIGION

C O N F E R E N C E

**May 6-8, 2011**  
**Bracebridge Campus**  
**NIPISSING**  
UNIVERSITY

## Itinerary

Please note that participants are encouraged to attend all sessions as the conference was envisioned as a holistic experience that is both a retreat and a series of lectures. It is important that we move through this process of imagining new forms of healing together.

As part of an attempt to heal the planet we respectfully request that all participants refrain from the use of disposable food and drink containers while at the event. Those who have their own yoga mats are encouraged to bring them.

### **FRIDAY MAY 6. 2011**

**8:00-9:00 am**

**Front Foyer**

Registration and Sign up for Treatments

Free treatments are being offered to participants at the conference and will include: shiatsu, massage and consultation with a naturopath subject to availability

**9:00-10:00 am**

**Room 122**

**Dr. Rick Vanderlee, Dean of Applied & Professional Studies, Nipissing University**

Opening Remarks

**Dr. Gillian McCann, Religions and Cultures, Nipissing University**

Introduction and Welcome to the Conference



**10:00-10:45 am**

**Room 122**

**“Svastha: A Yogic Perspective on Health”**

**Gitta Bechsgaard, Vidya Institute**

This discussion will focus on the multi-faceted dimensions of healing including an understanding of the Sanskrit term – *svastha*. This concept recognizes the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of health and also encompasses a variety of techniques that allow the individual to come to stand firmly within the Self. This talk will examine how the classical path of yoga insists on the integration of all aspects of our life and being.

**10:45-11:30 am**

**Room 122**

**“Imagining a Healing Curriculum”**

**Gitta Bechsgaard and Gillian McCann**

Gitta and Gillian will discuss their experiences in developing programmes at Vidya Institute in Toronto that integrate theory and practice. The challenges involved in attempting to take the spiritual aspects of healing seriously will be examined along with strategies for overcoming them.

**11:30-1:00 pm LUNCH**

**1:00-2:30 pm**

**Room 122**

**“Healing as Communal Experience”**

**Mike DeGagné, Ph.D., Aboriginal Healing Foundation**

This talk offers an overview of healing drawing on the larger work of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and Aboriginal concepts of healing. This will include ideas about community healing, cultural rejuvenation, and the challenges of reconciliation. This approach questions the typically individualistic focus of both holistic and allopathic models of healing.

**2:30-3:00 pm BREAK**



**3:00-4:30 pm**

**Classroom 2**

### **Guided Relaxation with Gitta Bechsgaard**

During this session the focus will be on a guided practice that aims to bring awareness to five aspects of our being as described in the *Upanishads*. This process of contemplation will proceed from a focus on the physical and vital body to the emotional and mental one, finally leading to cultivation of witness consciousness.

Please note you will need loose fitting comfortable clothing for these practices

**6:00-8:00 pm**

**Treatments with Vidya Practitioners**

**SATURDAY MAY 7, 2011**

**8:00-9:00 am**

**Treatments**

**Classroom 2**

**9:00-9:45 am**

**Morning Practices with Gitta Bechsgaard**

**Classroom 2**

Surya Namaskar (sun salutation) is one of the core practices of traditional yoga, combining prayer, all categories of movement and focus on the breath. This series of *asanas* (postures), which are traditionally practiced in the early morning, helps to develop strength vitality and stamina. This practicum will centre upon the steps and stages of Surya Namaskar.

*Again loose fitting, comfortable clothing is required*

**10:00-11:30 am**

**Room 122**

### **“Intuition in Psychological and Physical Healing”**

**Adam Crabtree, Centre for Training in Psychotherapy**

Intuition has been variously described as “knowing through the unconscious” (Carl Jung) and “as it were becoming one with the thing known” (Henri Bergson). In this talk, Dr. Crabtree will speak about the importance of immediate intuitive knowledge is essential for effective psychotherapy and for healing of all kinds. Without intuition the healing practitioner is likely to fall back on analytical knowledge, which lacks the power and holistic character of the intuitive. Dr. Crabtree will provide an experiential demonstration of one way in which intuition can be mobilized in healing work.

**11:30-1:00 pm**

**LUNCH**



**1:00-1:45 pm**

**Room 122**

**“Traditional Chinese Medicine as a Holistic Healing Practice”**

**Xiaolan Zhao, Xiaolan Health Centre**

The topic of this talk will be the modality of TCM and its understanding of the meaning of health. This will include a discussion of the how health is to be achieved from within a Chinese world view. Xiaolan will draw on her experiences both as a medical doctor and practitioner of TCM.

**1:45-3:00 pm**

**Room 122**

**“Integrating Allopathic and Holistic Healthcare”**

**Christina Gordon, ND, Lindsay McMaster, M.D., Xiaolan Zhao, CMD, and Dr Ac**

The panelists will discuss the development of the vision that led to the creation of Xiaolan Health Centre in Toronto. The presenters will discuss the innovative model for the Centre that includes a wide variety of healing modalities including allopathic medicine, psychotherapy, TCM and yoga.

**3:00-3:30 pm**

**BREAK**

**3:30-5:00 pm**

**Room 122**

**“Developing Health Daily Routines”**

**Gitta Bechsgaard, Vidya Institute**

Simple daily routines hold the key to good health and the prevention of illness. These forms of self-discipline include physical postures (asanas), simple breath awareness, and various forms of contemplation. Lifestyle and diet and their importance to overall well-being will also be considered. This session will also include a discussion of possible health routines as well as experiential inquiry into healing modalities.

**6:00-8:00 pm**

**Treatments**

**SUNDAY, MAY 8, 2011**

**8:00-10:00 am**

**Treatments**



**10:00-12:30 pm**

**Room 122**

**“Healing into Life and Death: A Multicultural Perspective”**

**Khenmo Drolma, Abbess Vajra Dakini Monastery**

In this slide lecture, Khenmo Drolma will explore the healing perspectives of diverse cultures presented through the arts. Included are perspectives from Tibet, Native Americans, western art history and innovations in care for those with life threatening illness in western settings. We see how integrated body, mind and spirit are seen as a healing force. Expression during the most difficult times can and does become a celebration of life, encouraging us to expand how we approach our own family passages. Spirituality helps us see what is truly healing in our lives and come to peace.

**12:30-2:00 pm LUNCH**

**2:00-5:00 pm**

**Room 122**

**“From Psyche to Spirit: The Link Between Emotional and Spiritual Health”**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS Gabor Maté, M.D.**

Spiritual health implies a connection to something beyond the self, to something greater than the ego. Emotional health depends on an authentic connection to the self. Neither is sufficient without the other and, especially, spiritual realizations without a deep exploration of the psyche leave us, in the words of Joseph Wellwood, in a state of "spiritual bypass." How to combine the two journeys will be the subject of this talk.

**5:15 pm Closing of Conference**

**Khenmo Drolma**



## Biographies

**Gitta Bechsgaard, RYT, MTC** is the founder of Vidya Institute, has been practicing Yoga for twenty years and teaching for the past fifteen. She received her foundational training in Europe at the Yoga Institute of Copenhagen (1990-1997), and in 1999 completed a two year program at the Esther Myers Yoga Studio, Toronto. For the last eight years she has been studying privately with Krishan Mantri in the areas of Yoga philosophy, Eastern psychology, Sanskrit, and related Vedic disciplines. Gitta holds a degree (B.A.) in psychology from Copenhagen University and a Masters of Therapeutic Counseling from the Open International University, where she is also currently completing her Ph.D. The focus of her work has been the transformation of consciousness and the healing of mind, body and spirit as seen through a variety of healing paradigms.

**Adam Crabtree, Ph.D.** is a psychotherapist in private practice and on the faculty of the Centre for Training in Psychotherapy in Toronto. He has published extensively in the areas of the history of psychotherapy, hypnosis and psychical research and works with multiple personality disorder (dissociative identity disorder) and other dissociative disorders. His latest book is *Trance Zero: The Psychology of Maximum Experience*.

**Mike DeGagné, Ph.D.** is the Executive Director of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, a national Aboriginal organization dedicated to addressing the legacy of Canada's Residential School System. He has worked in the field of addiction and mental health for the past 25 years, first as a community worker on-reserve in Northern Ontario and later with the Addiction Research Foundation (ARF), the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), and the National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP). Mike lectures nationally and internationally on issues of Aboriginal health, Residential Schools, reconciliation, and governance. His Ph.D. focuses on Aboriginal post secondary education.

**Khenmo Nyima Drolma** is the Abbess of Vajra Dakini Nunnery. She spent two years in training at Gampo Abbey guided by Ven. Pema Chödrön. In 2002 she took full ordination as a Buddhist nun in Taiwan becoming the first woman in the Drikung lineage to do so. In 2004 she was installed as a Khenmo in the Drikung lineage, becoming the first westerner in her lineage to hold the responsibility of abbot. Since then she has worked continuously to establish Vajra Dakini Nunnery and teach the Dharma internationally. Khenmo Drolma, a breast cancer survivor, has spent many years in the Art and Healing and Hospice fields. She served as an Art Fellow at the Connecticut Hospice and board member of the Addison Respite Care Home in Vermont and Maine Respite Home.



**Gabor Maté M.D.** is a physician and author. As a public speaker, he addresses professional and lay audiences all over North America. His four books are all Canadian bestsellers, published internationally in over fifteen languages. The most recent, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* has been awarded the Hubert Evans prize for literary non-fiction. Gabor was for twenty years a family practitioner and for seven years served as Medical Coordinator of the Palliative Care Unit at Vancouver Hospital, caring for the terminally ill. For twelve years he worked in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside with patients challenged by hard core drug addiction, mental illness and HIV. In 2009 Dr. Maté was honoured with an Outstanding Alumnus Award from Simon Fraser University. In 2011 he will be granted an honorary doctorate from Northwestern University.

**Xiaolan Zhao, C.M.D., Dr Ac** born in Kunming in southwest China, Xiaolan completed a degree in Western medicine and in 1977 began her career as an abdominal surgeon. After witnessing firsthand the efficacy of herbal remedies on the chronically ill, she went back to earn a second degree in traditional Chinese medicine. In 1988 Xiaolan came to Canada to do research at Queen's University. Inspired by Canadians' growing interest in complementary therapies, she established a Chinese medicine clinic in a modest Toronto house and from there pursued her vision of a holistic balance between East and West that led ultimately to Xiaolan Health Centre. Xiaolan is a Director of Canadian Association of Nutri-Health Education and Canadian Association for Cancer Support. Her first book *Reflections of the Moon on Water* was translated into over 15 languages.

