

Karl Tonisson, the Father of Estonian Buddhism

Marju Broder
Conferences; Estonian Nyingma
Public Relations; Buddhism&Australia
E-mail: marju.broder@gmail.com

Karl Tonisson, born in 1873, was the first to disseminate Buddhism in Estonia and in the Baltic States. Tonisson studied philosophy in St Petersburg University, and later in Buryatian monasteries, having close relations with most prominent Buddhists of his time: Agvan Dorjiev, Roman Ungern von Sternberg, Dzha lama etc. Tonisson met the 13th Dalai Lama in Mongolia where Dalai Lama had escaped from General Younghusband; and there he also met with Agvan Dorjiev. At these meetings a plan to build the Buddhist temple in St Petersburg was decided.

In my presentation I cast a brief glance at the ideas and activities which connected Karl Tonisson, Ungern von Sternberg and Agvan Dorjiev; and follow the footsteps of Karl Tonisson from St Petersburg to Myanmar, where he was declared a Bodhisattva after his death in Rangoon in 1962.