

ALL-STAR

Doctors within borders

Paul Caulford treats Canada's often-overlooked patients: asylum seekers



DR. PAUL CAULFORD HAS HAD A busy and unusual year. Since November, he's seen an unprecedented volume of patients, and treated a peculiarly high number of frostbite cases. Many of these visitors have traveled on foot from the United States, escaping the Trump administration's anti-immigration

agenda. As the cofounder of the Canadian Centre for Refugee and Immigrant Healthcare (CCRIHC), Caulford and his small team of volunteers are often the first people asylum seekers turn to when they arrive in southern Ontario.

Caulford, along with Jennifer D'Andrade, founded the clinic in 1999. While they intended to help undocumented migrants safely access health care (many avoid it for fear of being detained or deported), another objective was to fill the health care gap for sponsored refugees.

Government-assisted refugees and other refugee claimants in Canada access health care through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH). "The problem is that a lot of places like walk-in clinics and medical offices won't take IFH," Caulford explains, because doctors aren't required to sign on to the program. In many cases, refugees can only access health care through expensive emergency room visits.

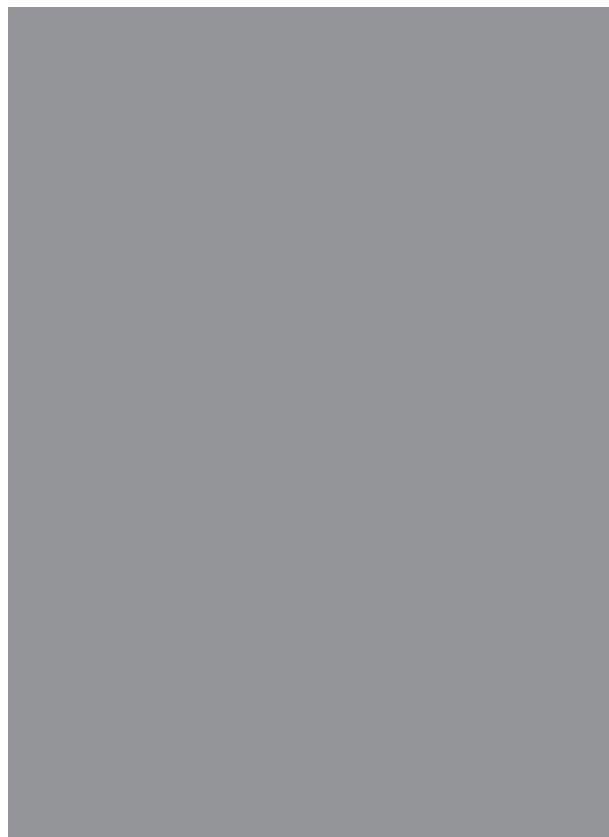
"When we found out about this in 1999, we were shocked," says Caulford. "We found thousands of people living and working in our community, going side by side with us to the parks with their children, but as soon as they get to the door for their own health care, it's shut for them."

The CCRIHC provides daytime and evening health care assistance to its patients. The clinic had more than 3,000 clinic visits last year, a number that continues to grow as Canada's refugee health system remains stagnant, yet increasingly in demand.

"It's been very hard to get government-assisted funding for the clinic," Caulford says. "We have a little bit of a grant that we use for some lab tests and X-rays but it runs out very early. There's no money for rent, supplies, security, telephones, computers—what it takes to run an office." All 30 volunteer doctors pool money together to help pay for the clinic from their own pockets.

"Canada is a compassionate nation with a humanitarian soul, and I'm proud of our country, and proud to be doing this," says Caulford, who hopes the government will enforce a health care program that offers all refugees—documented or not—coverage for urgent circumstances. "But Canada has lived and profited from this dirty little secret. To have people working here, paying taxes here, but not giving them health care in return is shameful."

— PEMA TSERING



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ENLIGHTENED



Pema Tsering connects with her heritage through the activism of Tibetan women around the world.

PEMA TSERING

I'VE

always imagined how different my life would be if I was born in Tibet.

My younger sister Karma and I were born and raised in Peterborough, Ont. Our parents tried to teach us how to speak Tibetan, but we never seemed to have the time to learn. Besides our parents, there weren't a lot of Tibetan influences in our community. Though our family embraced our lives in Canada, it always felt like there was something missing.

I started looking for more Tibetan figures for answers. When I looked for influences, it began with a long list of Tibetans who all appeared to be men. This all changed when at the age of 18, I finally discovered Woeser.

Woeser is a Tibetan activist, poet, essayist and blogger who lived in Beijing while writing about Tibetan unrest. My admiration for Woeser spiraled into my informal introduction to the work of Tibetan women. I discovered that there are many Tibetan women across the world who speak for those who cannot speak for themselves—not because they don't want to, but because they're trapped within the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Pressing political issues in Tibet, like freedom and cultural identity, have often overshadowed the fight for Tibetan women's rights.

Tibetan women are quiet about the issues that they face inside of Tibet. Many women feel that the country's struggle for freedom is more important than the injustices that they face. While the rest of the world sometimes seems to ignore the rights of Tibetan women, there are many who continue to fight for their rights inside and outside of Tibet.

On March 12, 1959, the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) was created. Two days following the Tibetan Uprising against the Chinese invasion of Tibet, thousands of Tibetan women marched into the streets of Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet. They protested on their own because many Tibetan men were killed and arrested after the initial uprising protests on March 10, 1959. Today we know this day as Tibetan National Uprising Day.

Many Tibetan women were forced to flee their homeland as a result of the Chinese military crackdown in Tibet. They founded organizations to empower Tibetan female refugees and to raise awareness women's rights inside Tibet.

In 1984 His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama reinstated the TWA with 12 branches across India. The TWA continues the fight of those who began protesting in 1959. They work to promote the social, political and economic equality of Tibetan women inside Tibet and those living in Tibetan exiled communities.

Alongside promoting women's rights, the TWA also promotes the

Photography by Michelle-Andrea Grouard

HERITAGE

preservation of Tibetan culture, language, tradition and the arts through community education, literacy and publications.

There are many women living close to me who work for the rights of Tibetan women. The TWA started an Ontario chapter in 2003. Dadon Jengfeng was appointed vice president of the association in December 2013. She lives in Toronto with her husband and two children who were born and raised in Canada. Before she came to Canada in 1999, Dadon worked for the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India.

"Here in the West, working with the TWA is the best way to get involved and help Tibetan women in need, not only in Ontario, but everywhere," says Dadon.

"I want to promote Tibetan culture within the school—not the politics, but through Tibetan food and clothes," Dadon says. In the past, Dadon has served Tibetan food at Noreseman Junior Middle School, her children's school, in order for the students to gain understanding of Tibet as a country.

"There will come a day when Tibetan women living inside of Tibet will live freely and will not have their human rights ignored."

I SAW

Toronto's TWA chapter in action at a fundraising event held in Parkdale, an area where many Tibetan immigrants find their first homes in Canada. They were selling Tibetan momos, a traditional Tibetan dish that's similar to steamed beef dumplings, at the Tibet Kitchen restaurant. It's one of my favourite places to eat Tibetan comfort food.

Tibetan women of all ages made their way to the restaurant. It was a friendly atmosphere full of independent Tibetan women who want to support the cause.

Volunteers of the Tibetan Cultural Centre in Toronto, along with Dadon, made 2000 Tibetan momos for the event. There weren't any momos left at the end of the day.

While my parents often worried about how much my sister and I would end up embracing our Tibetan heritage, Dadon doesn't share the same fear for her own children. In 2013, Dadon and her husband, Woeser, fought for the Toronto District School Board to provide Tibetan language classes for her children as well as other Tibetan children born in Canada.





One year later, 42 Tibetan children from the area, including Dadon's children, began Tibetan language classes at Noreman Junior Middle School. They also learn Tibetan prayers alongside writing, music and dance classes at the Tibetan Community Centre in Toronto.

"I did it not only for my kids, but for all the kids growing up here," said Dadon. "Someone needs to take on this responsibility and I decided to do it. That's my mentality. His Holiness has always said that even though we are outside of Tibet, we need to help those people in need."

Pemna Mench works for the government in Toronto and is also the president of the TWA chapter in Ontario. Pemna took on the position as president because she wanted to inspire other women to get involved with the TWA. When her term ends, Pemna

hopes that younger people will want to take her position and help build the TWA in Ontario.

"We represent Tibetan women in Ontario and follow the same goals and [objectives] as the main office in India," said Pemna. "Not only do we promote women's empowerment and leadership, but we also assist seniors in our community."

The TWA is working to raise funds that will go towards building a brand new TWA main office in India. The TWA main office sent Pemna a request for funding assistance earlier this year for what they are calling the Integrated Women's Socio-Economic Development Project.

Since its re-inception in 1984, the TWA main office has been a single floor in a Tibetan hospital in Northern India. With a full-time staff, a monthly rent to pay and daily visitors to the office,

the TWA believes that a new building will "contribute immensely to the empowerment of Tibetan Society in Exile on all fronts of development; education, economic, social sustenance and it will also facilitate the organizational and structural development of TWA."

The new infrastructure will also assist with housing the TWA's tailoring and handicraft initiative, "Stitches of Tibet." The initiative was established in October 1995 and provides training to economically disadvantaged Tibetan women. Tibetan refugee women are provided with an 18-month tailoring course and a steady income for living expenses. Many of these women have escaped from Tibet where educational and employment opportunities for women are minimal. The project works to boost the economy in the local community and allows Tibetan women to become self-reliant.

Before I met the women of the TWA, I didn't know a lot about the atrocities that Tibetan women suffer in Tibet. Now that my eyes have been opened to these issues, I feel like it is my duty as a Tibetan woman living in Canada to raise these issues to the public and to assist the TWA in a job that, with time, will pay off.

There will come a day when Tibetan women living inside of Tibet will walk freely and will not have their human rights ignored. I can see it in my mind and it will become a reality with the help of Tibetan women around the world—just like Dadon and Pemna. ■

HER STORY

OPINION: THE EMMA DILEMMA #HEFORSHE

EBYAN ABDIGIR

IN September, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson delivered a speech to the UN about gender equality. The premise of this speech was to launch a campaign called #HeForShe, "a solidarity movement for gender equality." Watson's speech received positive media attention, engaged online discussions, and brought feminism into mainstream conversations. But the speech received criticism for what it lacked and for what it suggested.

Watson delivered her speech with emotion, coyly discussing the gender wage gap, her privilege, gender stereotypes, and not having rights of her body. She mentioned being viewed as aggressive, without showing aggression in her delivery. As pointed out by blogger Feminist World Problems, Watson presents the type of feminist that society seems to be generally accepting of: she is modest, quiet, and rarely shows anger.

"I have realized that fighting for women's rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating," Watson says in the speech. While the sentiment is there, many may misinterpret Watson's message because it is far too ambiguous. When Watson "formally invites men" to what she says is "a movement of gender equality," some may start to believe that men weren't part of the movement to begin with.

Since delivering the speech, Watson has been subject to scrutiny and criticism. The #HeForShe launch didn't change the game—it's playing it. The speech proves that in order for feminism to succeed, it needs to be packaged in articulate, feminine discourse that may not challenge society's perception of all types of feminism. While the speech had prevalent points, many sectors of feminism remained unrepresented.

Still, the speech sparked discussions about feminism. In the discourse sparked by the speech, we learned that women's rights shouldn't be a "natural consequence" to male empowerment. Too often, women are only valid when they're called somebody's daughter, sister and mother. This invalidates a woman's role as her own being. She is somebody, period.

Feminism is an issue under the human rights umbrella. It is far more complex than the angle positioned by the campaign launch. While the #HeForShe speech is not a game changer, it started an enticing conversation. ■

Illustration by Hana Shafi



the white French settlers who started arriving in the 15th century. While there are elements of globalism that affect society in all regions, there are also many regions, such as Beauce, where the majority of residents are born and raised here and tend to interact almost solely with their neighbours. Immigration has been a controversial issue for decades. The nationalist movement goes through waves of support and decline, but most people here sincerely view themselves as a nation within a nation.


It's with this in mind that I continue my work in Beauce. I remind myself every day that there are few others like me here, and that there is still much work to be done to tackle racism.

Education is a great starting point.

On the same day I learned about the connotations of the word *tamoul*, my teacher made it a point to tell the class why I was there in the first place. "How many of you know of people who are not from Beauce?" he asked. In the class of 20, I saw two hands go up. The teacher then explained it further. "We don't realize it often, but we are a very insular region," he said.

It was after that presentation that I wanted to understand more about the region. Doing so has made it easier for me to deal with micro-aggressions that I rarely encountered in Toronto. It has also helped me realize that living in a big city is a privilege. It is a privilege to

be able to live in a place where there is diversity, where multiculturalism is celebrated, and where there is immediate access to multiple forms of information and education.

Still, I'm grateful for the opportunity to see how different things are in a region that is just a 10-hour drive from my home. 

BADRI MURALI is working as an English language assistant at a CEGEP in Beauce. He graduated from Ryerson University with a Bachelor of Journalism degree in 2016. In the past, Badri has done a little bit of everything: He has served ice cream, promoted universities, and worked as a journalist.

SPOTLIGHT

Locked up

Migrant detainees use hunger strikes to enact change from within the walls of Ontario correctional centres

MACDONALD SCOTT'S CLIENT called him on October 17, 2016 to tell him that he, along with the other detainees at the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Ont., had stopped eating again. It was the third hunger strike less than a year—an act of defiance that both encouraged Scott, an immigration lawyer, and worried him.

"I was excited to know they were still fighting," says Scott, whose client, a Nigerian man, has been detained since 2005. "But scared because the government has been ignoring them, and hunger strikes can lead to serious medical issues."

Scott has been battling what he calls unjust immigration policies for decades. Before becoming a lawyer, he volunteered at the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty in 1998. It was there that he began doing casework with migrants, which inspired him to become a lawyer. "I thought legal training might point me forward as how to deal with these forms of oppression," says Scott. "I haven't looked back."

Currently an immigration consultant at Carranza LLP in Toronto, Scott frequently does pro-bono work for detainees. "I am driven by love for my comrades, who organize and fight and are so brilliant, and for my clients, who are so resilient and so smart," says Scott, who's also an integral voice of migrants rights group No One is Illegal.

According to the government, migrants are detained when deemed a "flight risk" or "danger to the public," or when their identity cannot be confirmed by border agents. Often they are plucked from the street for small offences—such as speeding or minor drug possession—and kept jailed indefinitely for violating immigration policy.

In 2013, more than 7,300 migrants were detained in Canada without charges or trial. In Ontario, where the majority of undocumented migrants are held in Canada, only nine percent of detainees are ever released.

In August, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale announced a \$138-million investment for Canada's immigration detention centres in response to the recurring hunger strikes. Goodale expressed hopes for making detention a last resort. But critics are calling for more, including capping detention periods at 90 days, a standard practice in many developed countries.

Ultimately, Scott wants to see an end to immigration detention, which he says simply doesn't make sense.

"Technically it's administrative, not a punishment," says Scott. "Why would you put someone in jail if not as punishment? Incarceration tears apart families, communities, and partners."

— PEMA TSERING

REVIEW: New novel explores survivors' realities in the Second World War

The *Water Beetles* was inspired by author Michael Kaan's own family history

By Pema Tsering  @PemaTsering1

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The Water Beetles

By Michael Kaan

Goose Lane Editions, \$22.95

At times graphic and disturbing, *The Water Beetles* by Michael Kaan tells the heroic and poetic story of a young boy living in Hong Kong during the Second World War. Based loosely on the diaries and stories of Kaan's father, the narrative follows 12-year-old Chung-Man as his prestigious family is reduced to shambles. Along with his

siblings, Chung-Man is forced to leave his home, travelling on foot to find safety. The book seamlessly flips between present day and the war, with the narrator shedding insight on how the war affected him after all those years. Along the way, the young boy faces the horrific realities of war. However, Kaan is able to balance the bloodshed with beautiful imagery and detail.

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