

Guiding Light

June 2015

佛心



TORONTO BUDDHIST CHURCH
a Jodo Shinshu Temple

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COSTA RICA

The other day I was watching a Japanese television program about some people in Costa Rica. The program was not about Buddhism, but reminded me of the Buddhist teachings.

The title of the program was called “Let’s find the most beautiful bird in the world.”

Perhaps some of you who know about Costa Rica are already thinking “I know what bird they talked about! Costa Rica is famous for the quetzal!”

I myself have never seen a quetzal in real life, but I would like to. It is the bird Osamu Tezuka modeled the famous “fire bird” or “phoenix” after. It must be beautiful.

In Costa Rica, there are more than 100 kinds of bats and more than 400 kinds of amphibians and reptiles.

Costa Rica is the birth place of a new kind of tourism that is gaining popularity called “eco tourism”. Amidst all of these different kinds of animals and the beautiful landscape is where we find the quetzal.

Often when we think about Central America our initial reflex is to think about unstable social conditions and constant dispute and unrest. For much of Central America this is the case, but not so much in Costa Rica. Things in Costa Rica have settled down.

The television program introduced the family of Willford Ginton. This family played a vital role in bringing peace to Costa Rica.

When Willford Ginton was 18 years old, he decided he did not want to serve in the military and started looking for a place to emigrate to. At that time Costa Rica had no armed forces and had a lot of economic growth. In 1950 the Ginton family decided this would be the perfect place to go, and left the US for a new life.

Costa Rica was encouraging many people to raise cattle in order to continue their pursuit of economic growth, so at that time cattle breeding was a big business. It is much easier to raise cattle in a clear field than it is in a jungle, so many immigrants cut down trees. Day after day more and more trees disappeared and Costa Rica started to see the impact of deforestation.

More than half of the forests were cut down and replaced with meadow. Mr. Ginton himself participated in deforestation and cut as many trees as he could to increase his meadow area to look after his cattle.

Then Mr. Ginton saw a report that changed his mind. According to a biologist’s survey, the number of quetzal in the area was rapidly decreasing. It wasn’t due to hunting or an increase in predators, but because of the change in the environment. The people were cutting down the forests and they were destroying the quetzal’s natural habitat.

Mr. Ginton was a very compassionate man with a big heart. Until then, he did not realize the impact his actions were having on the wild life. He immediately changed his ways and started to conserve forests in order to preserve the ecosystem. One of his friends, Eradio Kurus became a big supporter and started to help him, but not all of the farmers were so quick to join. Their livelihood was based on the need for these meadows. Mr. Ginton very enthusiastically explained to the farmers that they had to stop clear cutting or they would never again see their beloved bird, the quetzal.

The quetzal was the trump card. Everyone loved the quetzal. The quetzal was not only a beautiful bird, but was also the reminder of paradise. There was no doubt. They had to do what they could to preserve the quetzal.

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The people stopped cutting trees without restriction and rather than looking at their land as being a tool for their own financial gain, they started seeing it as it was...something that sustained the life of their beloved wild life.

People started to consider how their actions effected the lives of others and their love and respect for everything around them deepened.

Eventually the forest recovered. With the recovery of the forest, many different forms of life also recovered. The people learned that instead of manipulating the environment to serve their own selfish needs, they could live there happily. There was lots of beautiful greenery, fresh air, and many different animals.

This led to Cost Rica becoming a very famous tourist destination.

If people continue with deforestation, what will happen to the world? What would happen if people did not care for the lives of others and acted only for their own sake? I surmise this world would be in a very difficult situation. This kind of action eventually leads to a dead end.

As I mentioned at the beginning, this program was not directly about Buddhism, but the workings of Buddhism are reflected in the people of Costa Rica. In Buddhism we talk about interconnectedness. We say that to think of the wellbeing of others and the interconnectedness of all life makes us happy. This is a deep wisdom.

As part of their education, the children of Costa Rica receive education in the preservation of the environment. The local school looks after the forest. As an extracurricular activity, the students keep track of the forest by counting the number of birds and doing scientific research.

The people grow up learning and caring about nature. It is their way of life.

After watching this program, learning about the Ginton family made me very cheerful. I was very impressed with their understanding of interconnectedness, and watching how they interacted with each other made me so happy.

They said "Just after the marriage we moved to Costa Rica, and for 60 years our honeymoon is still going on."

I did not learn about the religious faith of the Ginton family, but it is unlikely they are Buddhist. However, their compassion for life and ability to recognize interconnectedness shows that their minds are very much Buddhist.

Gassho

Rev. Endo



MEDITATION CLASSES

There are different ways to meditate.

Let's practice meditation based on the Jodo Shinshu teachings.

Join Rev. Endo's meditation class to practice walking, listening, and sutra chanting.

Date: Monday June 15 and 29 from 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Come and feel refreshed.



Message From Wilson-sensei

Last year the temple bought new service books, designed by the Orange County Buddhist Church. They're really quite nice, and while I have some nostalgic fondness for the older books, these new ones are definitely an improvement. One aspect of the books, however, did leave me wanting a little more.

The authors of the *Shin Buddhist Service Book* tackle the important question of what we experience when we chant. As they point out, chanting has a meditative quality, a ritual aspect, and a learning aspect. Chanting, they state, is similar to sitting meditation, as it helps us to focus on the present moment. The ritual aspect re-enacts the timeless stories that undergird Buddhism and encapsulate its teachings. Such rituals link us to the generations who came before us and to our fellows in the hondo as we chant the same words passed down from long ago. The learning aspect takes place when we actually understand the meaning of the words being chanted. As the authors point out, this actually isn't so easy in our usual styles of chanting, which use Chinese texts—usually, some form of study is also necessary.

I don't disagree with any of this, but for me, there is something crucial left out as well. All of these are reasons why Buddhists in general might perform chanting. But there isn't anything specifically Jodo Shinshu in these explanations. And to me that is the missing piece.

Unlike in other forms of Buddhism, in Shin we are taught to say the nembutsu as a form of thanksgiving, rather than as a petitionary prayer. And I apply the same logic to my approach to chanting sutras as well. When I go before the buddha in the hondo and chant the sutras or writings passed down from previous masters, for me it is a practice of gratitude. These chants aren't just words on a page—they are the living essence of those who have shown us the way of liberation. When I raise the service book to my head and begin the *Juseige*, “Ga gon chō se gan” doesn't just mean “Having established all-surpassing vows,” the literal translation. It also means, for me, in that moment, “thank you.” It means “I am so grateful for the opportunity to live another day and come here to express my thankfulness for all that I have received.” I wish to bring that spirit of thanksgiving every time I chant, whether at home, at the temple, the cemetery, or elsewhere.

Of course, there can be many ways and reasons to chant, and chanting can serve many functions at the same time. Perhaps for you there are yet other aspects of the experience of chanting that are important. The discussion in the service book really only opens the matter, rather than giving the final word on the subject.

Gassho

Jeff Wilson

OBITUARIES

The Toronto Buddhist Church wishes to extend its deepest condolences to the families, relatives and friends of the following individuals who have passed away during the past month.

<i>Dr. Barron Brainerd</i>	<i>87 yrs</i>	<i>May 19, 2015</i>
<i>Mr. Frank Masaki Kitazaki</i>	<i>87 yrs</i>	<i>May 22, 2015</i>
<i>Mrs. Mary Mitsuki</i>	<i>81 yrs</i>	<i>May 23, 2015</i>

JSBTC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015



This year's JSBTC AGM was held in Steveston B.C. from April 24th to 26th. Representing Toronto were Roy Kusano, President and wonderful meals for all delegates and an extremely hospitable atmosphere.

The weekend started with a Friday afternoon Workshop on Shared Bishop Alternatives. The Workshop was attended by virtually all delegates and ministers. Conclusions were non-binding but the consensus (unanimous) was that Canada should have a full-time Bishop. The question has been referred to a cross-Canada Committee.

The General Meeting on Saturday went as smoothly as could be expected and we were able to get through the busy agenda in the allotted time. The 2016 JSBTC AGM will be held Darlene Rieger, First Vice President. The Steveston Temple was an outstanding host, providing in Winnipeg and 2017 in Toronto. Saturday ended with a magnificent Chinese Feast where all delegates and ministers were able to relax and mingle with one another. The AGM ended on Sunday with a service which was attended by all the ministers of Canada. This was an extraordinary experience for the delegates across Canada! During the AGM, the Women's Federation held their Annual General Meeting and representing Toronto were June Asano, Jessie Ebata, Myra Takasaki and Diane Mark.

The new JSBT Board

Harvey Kaita – Director (Manitoba)
 Amy Wakisaka – Living Dharma Centre Program Director (Toronto)
 Arnie Hayashi – Director (Vernon)
 Reverend Tatsuya Aoki – Socho (Bishop, Vancouver)
 Trudy Gahlinger – Secretary (Calgary)
 Larry Wakisaka – Vice President (Toronto)
 David Otori – President (Vancouver)
 Laura Sugimoto – Director (Calgary)
 Roland Ikuta – Director (BTSA)
 Terence Beresford – Director (Steveston)
 Reverend Michael Hayashi – Ministers Association Chairperson (Manitoba)
 Greg Chor – Treasurer (Vancouver, Outgoing President)



Vesak Celebration



Once again this year we participated in the Vesak Celebration in Mississauga held at Celebration Square, and it was indeed a formidable celebration. There were monks and nuns from many different Buddhist traditions chanting together and sharing in the Buddha Dharma.

Despite the risk of rain we were fortunate to have beautiful weather, which roughly 6000 people took advantage of to come and join us. This year Rev. Christina Yanko led the chanting of Sanbujo with the help of Jeff Wilson sensei.

We shared a booth with our friends from Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai Canada, which always is a great advantage as we can help to promote each other.

There was a wonderful variety of cultural presentations, including martial arts, music, and dancing. The ladies from our temple's Buyo group as always did a beautiful job performing, and really made us proud.

Participating in this event annually is very important. Not only does it help bring awareness to our temple, but helps to bring awareness to Buddhism in Canada. Thank you so much to all of our volunteers for helping to look after the booth, hand out material (and everybody's favourite...our Uchiwas!), and speak to the people interested in learning about our temple and Buddhism.

We look forward to participating in this event again next year!

Namo Amida Butsu



Special Guest at Obon

Reverend Yuki Sugahara is from Shimane Prefecture located just north of Hiroshima. He is from a temple family called “Korinji” (father’s side) and “Gokurakuji” (mother’s side) in Shimane Prefecture. Because he was born a son of a temple family he was able to receive his Tokudo Ordination in 1996. He was only a freshman in high school at that time. During Reverend Yuki’s junior year in high school he came to the United States and lived in Rochester, New York for a year as a Rotary Club exchange student to pursue his dream of becoming a translator for the United Nations.



Reverend Yuki studied Political Science at the Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto. During that time his mother suddenly passed away and it was shortly after that Reverend Yuki decided to get his Kyoshi Certification which he then received in 2002. In 2009 Reverend Yuki came to the United States to attend the International Ministerial Orientation Program at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California. Then in July 2011 he was assigned to the Buddhist Church of Florin.

One of Reverend Yuki’s hobbies is playing the bass guitar. After graduating from the university he played in a rock band called Jelly Belly. The members at the Florin Buddhist Church get to enjoy his bass guitar playing on the third Sunday of each month. Reverend Yuki and his wife Namiko have a two year old daughter, Aoi, the cutest baby in the world!

Infant Presentation

This year we had one new addition to our Sangha, adorable 3 year old Logan Wakabayashi. He is a very artistic addition to our temple, and decided that instead of making hand and foot prints, painted a lovely impressionist picture of the service.

Thank you to Ted Wakabayashi for bringing him and introducing him to us!
Namo Amida Butsu



2015
WORLD
BUDDHIST
WOMEN'S
CONVENTION

This week was the World Buddhist Women’s Convention which has been mentioned in the Guiding Light over the past year. The July/August Guiding Light will feature news and pictures from the 15th World Buddhist Women's Convention in Calgary.

KIDS SANGHA

Kids Sangha dates for June will fall on Sunday June 7th and 14th due to the change in date for the annual picnic.

Therefore, there will **NOT** be a Kids Sangha program on Sunday June 21, 2015.

After June 14th we will break for the summer months and resume again in September.

Sunday June 14, 2015

Annual Picnic at Camp Green Acres (note the change in date)

Join us at Camp Green Acres
1123 Kennedy Rd. Markham
10:00 am - 6:30 pm



Kids Activity: 10:30 - 11:30 am

Although the kids program is only from 10:30 - 11:30 am, there are many activities available to the kids throughout the day. The choice is yours, stay for a few hours and enjoy the sunshine or stay for the whole day and take part in some of the other planned activities. For more information please see the link below.

http://www.tbc.on.ca/images/uploads/2015_TBC_Picnic_11x17.pdf



HonobonoMovie



Our second Honobono movie will be “Heisei Tanuki Gassen Ponpoko” directed by Isam Takahata of studio GHIBLI. It takes place in a new town known as Tama in Tokyo. As the forest development progresses, it grows to eventually destroy the habitat of raccoon dog. They start to protect their environment against humans by using their disguising skills. As a result... (*English subtitles)

When: Sunday, June 21 @ 18:00pm Place: Temple social hall
No admission charge. Refreshments. Donations welcome

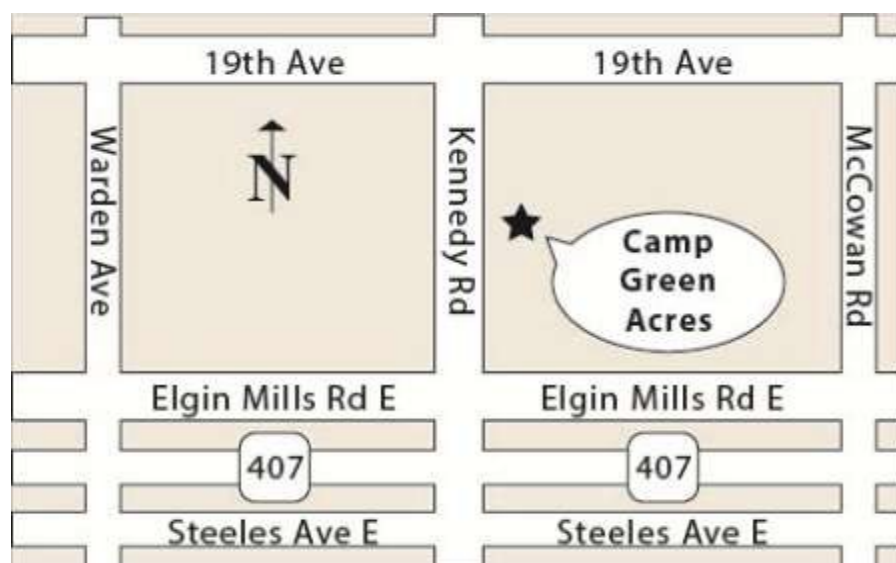
JULY HONOBONO WILL BE ITALIAN COOKING .



TBC Annual Picnic
 Sunday, June 14, 2015
 at Camp Green Acres
 11123 Kennedy Road, Markham, ON

Admission fee:	Car and driver	\$5.00
	Adults (16 yrs+)	3.00
	Seniors (65 yrs+)	free
	Children (15 yrs and under)	free

10.00am	Gates open
10.30am – 11.30am	Kids Sangha activity
11.45am – 12 noon	Open Air Service
12 noon – 12.30pm	Free hot dogs
12 noon – 1.00 pm	Lunch
1.00 pm – 2.00 pm	Free time
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Races and games
3.15pm – 4.15pm	Bingo
4.15pm	Fukubiki
5.00 pm – 6.00 pm	Supper
6.30pm	Clean up and load truck



HELP WANTED

Following the picnic, around 7.30pm, the Picnic Committee is seeking volunteers to help unload the van and put everything away at the Temple.

OBON 2015

SATURDAY, JULY 11 CEMETERY VISITATION SCHEDULE

ATTENTION: MANY CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE THIS YEAR
PLEASE NOTE AND PASS ALONG THIS INFORMATION TO YOUR FAMILIES

The Obon committee has very thoughtfully made some changes to our regular schedule this year due to the conflict we may experience with road issues due to the Pan Am Games in Toronto. Please note that some cemeteries will have altered times as we are moving the Senseis and choshos around to ensure we have covered all the locations.

Our visiting guest Sensei has usually attended to Mount Pleasant and then Park Lawn Cemeteries but this is not the case for Obon 2015. Please read the schedule and alert all family members to these changes.

2015 CEMETERY SCHEDULE

ENDO SENSEI	CENTRAL SERVICE * CENTRAL SERVICE*	PINE HILLS AT 9:30 AM RESTHAVEN AT 11 AM
YUKI SUGAHARA SENSEI (Gloria Sumiya or Karuna Sato Fleming will meet Choshos at the entrance of the cemetery to guide them to the grave sites)		TORONTO NECROPOLIS AT 8:30AM
	CENTRAL SERVICE * CENTRAL SERVICE *	ST. JAMES CEMETERY AT 9:30 AM MOUNT PLEASANT FOR <u>10:30 AM</u>
CHRISTINA YANKO SENSEI	CENTRAL SERVICE* CENTRAL SERVICE*	PROSPECT CEMETERY AT 9:30 PARKLAWN CEMETERY AT 11AM
JEFF WILSON SENSEI	CENTRAL SERVICE* CENTRAL SERVICE*	GLEN OAKS AT 9:00 AM SPRING CREEK AT 9:30 AM
DENNIS MADOKORO	CENTRAL SERVICE*	HIGHLAND MEMORY AT 9:30 ELGIN MILLS AT 11AM
MARTIN CARTLEDGE		YORK CEMETERY AT 9:30 AM
JESSIE EBATA		SANCTUARY NORTH END 9:00 ST. PHILIPS AND RIVERSIDE 9:30AM
GEORGE NAKANO		SANCTUARY SOUTH END AT 9:00 AM MEADOWVALE 1PM OR TO BE ARRANGED BY MR. NAKANO
JOHN NISHIKAWA		GLENDALE CEMETERY AT <u>9:30**</u>
PAULINE KNUDE WILL ATTEND		SALEM CEMETERY AT 11AM***

The Obon Committee is grateful to all volunteers who participate and give of their time in our annual Obon tradition. We are dedicated to serving our temple families with appreciation and respect.

Obon Committee

Please join us for a week of fun this summer at

Camp Lumbini 2015

July 26 – August 1 2015



Camp Lumbini is the Temple's annual summer camp for children and youth aged 8-14. Held at the Wasaga Beach cottages the overnight camp provides campers with a daily schedule of games and team building activities.

Each day starts with morning exercise followed by a service done by the campers. The campers can then expect the rest of the day to be filled with trips to the beach, arts and crafts, games and other group activities. Each evening we schedule a camp wide activity including mini-golf, a trip to the movies,

campfires, and bowling.

Each year we also plan one big outing where we pack a lunch and head out for the whole day! In the past we have gone rock climbing, kayaking, caving, and tree-top trekking. This year we are planning to go rock climbing and caving. It is always a memorable experience.

If you would like an application for this year's Camp Lumbini please e-mail the TBC office: tbc@tbc.on.ca

We hope to see you this summer!

OBON LANTERNS

Last year we created and sold Obon lanterns as a memorial to the deceased loved ones of our members. We will not have any new Obon lanterns for sale this year but those who did purchase lanterns last year are invited to bring them to the Temple on Sunday, July 12 for the regular Obon service. We will display them at the front of the Hondo during the service. After the service the lanterns will be returned to you so you may keep them at your home again.



Visitors from Abroad

There were many people in Canada for the International Women's Convention in Calgary and we were so happy to have them stop by and visit our temple! We had people from Sanin, Nagasaki, Shishu, Miyazaki, Hyogo, Fukui, Ishikawa, Gifu and Hawaii.

10th Anniversary Celebration

This year marks 10 years since the big move from Bathurst Street. The new temple opening was a memorable occasion. But, sometimes it is the unplanned moments that make the occasion more unforgettable.

Do you remember:

- getting occupancy clearance the day before the opening ceremonies?
- the biggest torrential downpour for decades which flooded major roads the day before the opening?
- the article in the Toronto Star featuring a picture of the Gomonsu with Home Depot buckets in the background?
- how the teru teru bozu saved opening day?

It's time to Party!

It's time to relax, enjoy each other's company and thank the people who spearheaded "The New Temple" project.

Come to our

10th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DINNER

which will be held at Toronto Buddhist Church
on Saturday, September 26, 2015 starting at 5.30pm.

Tickets on sale before and after service only.

Adults \$50 per person.

Children under 12 years \$25 per person.

Limited number of tickets available.

Choice of entree: Salmon, Chicken or Vegetarian.

Children's menu: Chicken fingers.