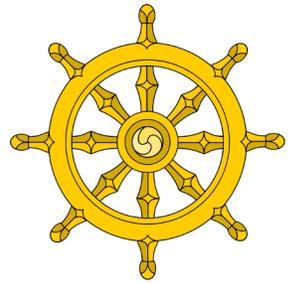




TORONTO BUDDHIST CHURCH

a Jodo Shinshu Temple



Guiding Light

December 2014

佛心



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Toronto, ON M3H 2T7

416-534-4302

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MESSAGE FROM JEFF WILSON

Recently I read a book about Shin Buddhists who had to hide their traditions from the authorities in Japan because they faced persecution. While Jodo Shinshu is the largest Buddhist tradition in Japan, there have been many times and places when Shin Buddhism faced local opposition, in part because its base among the ordinary people was a threat to the ruling elites.

In Satsuma, for example, the domain leaders disliked Jodo Shinshu and made it illegal. In response, Shin Buddhists had to go into hiding. One tactic was to meet in caves, some of which were even hollowed out of solid rock for the purpose of holding secret gatherings late at night to recite the nembutsu and discuss the Dharma. Another strategy was to hold meetings on boats away from shore or deep in the forest, where the authorities couldn't observe them. Others traveled to distant provinces in order to practice more freely, and hid their activities when they returned home.

Homes were one common place for illicit Shin activity. Devout Buddhists would hollow out spaces in door jams, closets, or house posts, and hide images of Amida Buddha inside. Others carved miniature Amida statues that could be carried concealed in one's clothing. Practitioners corresponded in secret with the Hongwanji head temple, sending donations and receiving guidance and support. Some groups eventually became cut off from Hongwanji and developed their own practices and doctrines. For example, a new tradition that blended Shin Buddhism with Shinto influences from the Kirishimako Shrine evolved, which followers affiliated with so that they would seem less suspicious to their neighbours. These neo-Shin followers adopted taboos against eating chicken, milk, horse, beef, or soft-shelled turtle. Much later, when it became legal and safe to practice Jodo Shinshu again, these groups had changed so much that they could no longer integrate back into mainstream Shin Buddhism.

The penalties for practicing Shin Buddhism could be severe. In Satsuma, for instance, when the police uncovered hidden Shin communities they would typically take them to Zen temples and force them to convert, and often impose a fine as well. Leaders of these groups faced jail, grisly torture, and even execution.

Buddhism, and the Japanese and Chinese communities who brought it to us in Canada, have faced resistance, and at times outright persecution because of perceived differences from alleged "normal" Canadian religion and racial groups. The Japanese-Canadian internment during WWII, which had both racial and religious elements to it, is probably the worst and most famous case. Yet as difficult as being Buddhist has been at times in Canada, there have been times and places in Japan where it was far more dangerous to say the nembutsu and practice the dharma. And while modern-day Canada is hardly free of prejudice, it is a far cry from the legal persecution Shin Buddhists have faced in the past.

As I think about how much our spiritual ancestors had to endure, and how fortunate I am to live where I can practice Buddhism without interference, I feel deeply grateful. All of the troubles we encounter in our temples and our daily lives are small potatoes compared to the oppression that people in our community once faced. And as I reflect further, it moves me to sympathy for those who do face continuing prejudice for their religious practice, such as Muslims in North America. An important way that we can honour those who held on to the traditions and passed them down to us in the face of violence, is to show solidarity with those who face similar difficulties today, and to work to ensure that no one is harmed because of what they believe.



Karma, Impermanence & Oneness

My first story is about Karma: I had in my Toyota Matrix 72 copies of BDK's "Teachings of the Buddha". I was transporting these copies back to the Temple following a service earlier in the week at Momiji Seniors Residence.

On Friday, September 12th, I was on my way home after a great day listening to Dr. Kenneth Tanaka, author of 'Ocean' at the Ministerial Association meeting. So there I was in the left express lane of the 401, when "Bang", I was struck from behind by a large van. It all happened so fast. Those of you who have been in similar accidents will verify that at the moment of impact, your memory is that it is all in slow motion. I lost my glasses and couldn't see. Luckily I was able to steer my damaged Matrix onto the left shoulder. So, good Karma indeed, perhaps from those 72 books.

My next story is about impermanence: We do not know when and where we may end our lives. My life could easily have ended that night if I had been in the middle lane. There might have been multiple collisions after my collision and that could have been tragic. I have chosen to think of the lady who hit me with her van as a Bodhisattva because she reminded me in a very dramatic way about the impermanence of my life.

Now, with two months plus of physiotherapy since that accident, I am close to my full mobility and I thank Amida Buddha and all the causes and conditions that allow me to be writing this article today.

Finally my story on oneness: The Sri Sathya Sai Baba Temple of York-Toronto hosted an Interfaith Conference on October 20th. The theme was "We are all One".

Eight speakers, including me, were asked to explore the commonality of our different faiths. It was heartening in this era of so much global conflict and worldwide chaos to hear how many values all of our faith communities shared in common. Kindness, generosity, right conduct – these are all positive and enduring qualities that allow each of our faith communities to contribute to making this country Canada as beautiful as it is. The speakers were from Aboriginal, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. It was inspiring to hear from each of the speakers who spoke passionately on the topic. The host members could not do enough for us, feeding us breakfast and lunch. The host Temple has over 1,000 members and over 250 in their Youth Group. Their Temple is one of 30 across Canada as the East Indian population in Canada is quite large. Such Interfaith conferences are just not possible in other countries. Again, we thank Amida Buddha and all the causes and conditions for allowing each and every one of us the freedom and opportunity to live and worship as we choose here in Canada.

Finally, if you are interested in exploring more of these themes (karma, impermanence and oneness) in an open discussion group, then I invite you to our "Let's Talk Dharma" sessions which will start the last Sunday of each month, beginning in February, 2015

Thank you,

Gassho

Dennis Madokoro
Minister Assistant

NOTICE OF ADJOURNMENT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please be advised that the Annual General Meeting of Members which was originally scheduled for Sunday, November 30, 2014 was adjourned to Sunday, January 25, 2015. Matters to be considered at the adjourned meeting will include:

1. Approval of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday November 24, 2013;
2. Presentation of Financial Statements of the Temple for the year ended October 31, 2014;
3. Consideration and approval of the Budget for the year ending October 31, 2015
4. Election of President and Director
5. Election of Directors

Such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

We regret any inconvenience that this adjournment may have caused to our members and we will look forward to your attendance at our meeting in the Social Hall on January 25, 2015 at 12:30 pm.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

December 21st Bodhi Day Service



The word *bodhi* is translated as "awakened" and on Bodhi Day Buddhists around the world celebrate the enlightenment or "awakening" of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Please join us on December 21st to celebrate this historic occasion!



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>Mrs. Misao Kawabata</i>	82 yrs	<i>October 29, 2014</i>
<i>Mrs. Phyllis Nakagawa</i>	87 yrs	<i>November 7, 2014</i>
<i>Mr. George Seiichio Baba</i>	74 yrs	<i>November 8, 2014</i>
<i>Mrs. Chiyo Okada</i>	80 yrs	<i>November 15, 2014</i>
<i>Mrs. Kumiko Joyce Izukawa</i>		<i>November 22, 2014</i>
<i>Mr. Kojiro Ebisuzaki</i>	96 yrs	<i>November 22, 2014</i>
<i>Mr. Eiichi Ronald Nakatsu</i>	64 yrs	<i>November 24, 2014</i>
<i>Mr. Katsumi Joe Miyazaki</i>	89 yrs	<i>November 27, 2014</i>

2014 TBC Bazaar



The annual bazaar was held on Saturday, November 8th and being a typical fall day, the skies were overcast with rain in the forecast. But, within the temple, the atmosphere was anything but dreary. You could hear laughter coming from the Social Hall, Hondo, Lobby and Mezzanine and the voices of the many volunteers working together. It was heart warming to see the multi-generations working together to make the day a success.

The Kids Sangha were selling lemonade and ice tea in the Social Hall as well as having a table in the Hondo selling items that they had made.

The Youth Group were also present in the Hondo selling tie-dyed t-shirts as well as serving and cleaning up in the Social Hall.

With the assistance of James Tetaka and the use of his deep fryer, the wait time for tempura is getting shorter. Thank you to Cary Kataoka for arranging this.

It goes without saying that, without our volunteers and donors, we would not be able to hold the Bazaar. **Thank You** very much to everyone for your valuable donations and for contributing your time and energy.

In gassho,
TBC Bazaar Committee



TBC 2014 BENEFIT RAFFLE DRAW WINNERS

PRIZE	ITEM	TICKET #	WINNER
1ST	\$ 3,000.00 Cash	#002110	R. Nagamatsu, Toronto
2ND	Sony 41" LED Internet TV	#002336	M.J. Nekoda, Thornhill
3RD	Panasonic CD/Mini System	#002350	Yaeko Nishihama, Etobicoke
4TH	Bose Solo TV Sound System	#004353	Tina Pleau, Toronto
5TH	\$ 500.00 Cash	#000092	H. Aoki, Toronto

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to everyone for supporting the TBC Bazaar and the Annual Benefit Raffle Draw!!

JOYA NO KANE - NEW YEAR'S EVE BELL RINGING

We are delighted to announce that the Ontario Government has once again granted permission to Toronto Buddhist Church to celebrate its annual *Joya no Kane* ceremony at Ontario Place. As we all know, the park is closed to the public, but Ontario Place will ensure that pathways will be clear of snow, that there will be adequate lighting and parking, and that washroom facilities will be available.



We will start the ceremony at **11:15 pm** (note the change in time) on December 31, 2014. You are all invited to join us in ringing in the New Year.

For any updates, please check the Temple's website (www.tbc.on.ca), or call the Temple Office at 416-534-4302 during weekday business hours.

*Please note there will be an additional service on December 31st at 10 am for those unable to make the bell ringing.

Hatsumoode, First Visit to the Temple in the New Year

In Japan almost everyone is on holiday from December 29th to January 3rd. People usually return to their home town to enjoy the New Year with family and friends. During this time it is customary to pay respects and pray for good luck at local temples and shrines. It is the first visit to the temple in the New Year, so it is considered especially auspicious.

For the last few years, the Toronto Buddhist Temple has been encouraging members, friends and visitors to visit the Temple on New Year's Day. It is in effect an open house for the community. The official Toronto Buddhist Temple New Year's Day Service will be held at the usual 11:00 a.m. that day, but the ministers will also be chanting on the hour from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Family commitments fill the day, but last year over a hundred people dropped by the Temple. It will be a great opportunity to greet new visitors and renew acquaintances with friends we do not ordinarily see over the course of the year. We welcome volunteers to help out on that day, but if you are unable to volunteer, just drop by.

Meet new people on New Year's Day by greeting and serving as hosts to visitors from 10am until 4 pm

Hoonko Weekend

"As the most important Jodo Shinshu observance, this is the date chosen to commemorate Shinran Shonin's passing. Traditionally, seven days of services are conducted at Honzan (our mother temple, "Temple of the Primal Vow", or Hongwanji), culminating on January 16. During that period, numerous activities are held, recalling the legacy that the Founder has left. This gives practitioners a chance to "hear the light" through listening to sermons, talks, ritual and sangha fellowship. Generally, temples conduct their own Hoonko observances in the fall so that members can attend the services at Honzan."

We will be celebrating Hoonko with a vegetarian potluck dinner on January 17th at 5pm, followed by an evening service at 7pm.



2015 • WORLD
BUDDHIST
WOMEN'S
CONVENTION

JSBTC WOMEN'S FEDERATION

We have reached our goal of crocheting over 4,000 hearts for the Convention - thank you to all who crocheted hearts for us! We do not need any more but we will use the ones already completed. If you still have some completed hearts at home, please bring them to the TBC and put them in the designated area in the basement hall coat closet.

There will be no workshop in December - the next workshop is scheduled for January 25, 2015, after the service. There is still a lot of work to be done, so please come and participate.

More volunteers are needed to make the convention a success. If you can help before, during or after the convention, please visit the convention website at www.wbwconvention.com - the "Volunteer Application" link is available on the homepage. Please complete the form, identifying dates and times when you are available and your area(s) of interest.



DANA NEWS

BAZAAR THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped during the week prior to the annual Bazaar and to those who worked so hard at the event. Your contributions and hard work are very much appreciated by everyone.

DANA 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Sunday, November 16th, 25 Dana ladies attended the 2014 Dana Annual General Meeting. Temple President, Roy Kusano, Darlene Rieger, Dawn Anzai and Rev. Ryuhei Endo joined the meeting. Before the meeting, the Dana ladies and Sangha members jointly enjoyed a delicious Chinese lunch and cake.

A special thank you to all for your donations to Japanese Social Service. They will be appreciated.

SHIN FUJINKAI NEWS

Thank you to everyone who baked goods for the Bazaar Bake Sale table. We were able to raise over \$1500.00 for the Temple.

Our Social Chair is planning a Ramen outing, so keep tuned for the date.

Our next SF meeting will be held February 8th, hope you can attend.

TOTE BAGS

The Toronto Buddhist Church was founded over 70 years ago and it has been over 10 years since TBC leaders had a vision to build a new temple. Planning has begun to make the 10th year in our new home a memorable one.

A customized tote bag, made of heavy-duty canvas with a waterproof lining, has been designed to commemorate this event. The bags are available at the TBC office for \$10 each. Quantities are limited.





NEW YEAR GREETINGS - 2015

In the next issue, **January 4, 2015**, your "GUIDING LIGHT/BUSSHIN" will be inserting a special 'Happy New Year' page.

If you would like your name included in the special New Year's greeting, please fill in the form below and submit it along with your donation to the temple office by **December 21st, 2014.**

.....

Please print my / our name(s) under 'New Year Greetings' in the upcoming January 2015 issue of the 'GUIDING LIGHT/BUSSHIN'.

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

(N.B. Telephone requests will NOT be accepted)

TBC HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



PLEASE NOTE THAT THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Wednesday, December 24th | HALF DAY |
| Thursday, December 25th | ALL DAY |
| Friday, December 26th | ALL DAY |

DEADLINE for January 2015 Guiding Light articles - **December 21st.**

WISHING EVERYONE A SAFE, HAPPY AND MEMORABLE HOLIDAY SEASON !

TBC SANGHA MOCHI TSUKI

PICK UP

Sunday, December 28, 2014

SALE HOURS 12:00 - 3:30 P.M.

**To ensure availability, please place order with the Temple
No later than December 21 2014**

Phone (416) 534-4302 Fax (416) 534-0575
E-Mail: tbc@tbc.on.ca
or with Sangha Executives

OSONAE (OKAGAMI) \$ 4.50 / Set KOMOCHI \$ 4.00 / Doz.

CUT AND SEND THE FORM BELOW TO:

TORONTO BUDDHIST CHURCH, 1011 Sheppard Ave. W., TORONTO, ON M3H 2T7

2014 MOCHI ORDER

Please send no later than December 21, 2014

NAME PHONE #.....

ADDRESS.....

() bag(s) Komochi @ \$4.00 \$.....

() Set(s) Osonae (Okagami) @ \$4.50 \$.....

TOTAL \$.....

SIGNED DATE

PICK UP

Sunday, December 28

SALE HOURS 12:00 - 3:30 PM

MEMBERSHIP CARDS FOR 2015

Starting in 2015, the Temple will be issuing beautiful membership cards, both for regular members and for honorary members. We invite you to take a look at the sample cards which have been designed.

Regular memberships are valid from January 1 to December 31 each year, so we ask that those wishing to be recognized as a temple member complete the application form as early as possible at the start of each year. Once your signed application and membership fee (minimum \$100 per year) or your promise to pay the fee have been received, your membership card will be sent to you.

Honorary Membership Cards will be issued to all members 77 years of age and over who sign up for the year 2015. The card will remain valid as long as you indicate that you wish to continue your Honorary Membership each year. Honorary Members do not need to pay any annual membership fees, although all donations are welcome.

We are always in the process of developing ways to improve your membership and to make it more meaningful for all members. First and most importantly, members have the right to vote on all important matters affecting the Temple, such as the election of the President and the Directors, the approval of budgets, and significant matters affecting the future of the Temple. Secondly your membership means that you subscribe to the values of the Temple.

Recently, one of our Temple members has offered free notarial services to fellow members. Further, we are now negotiating with the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) to offer high-level emergency roadside services to our ministers, employees and members of the Temple (more details will be published in the near future).

We will continue to work toward improving the value of your membership. We believe that Toronto Buddhist Church is on the cusp of a bright future and we want you all to be part of it.

In Gassho,

Darlene Rieger
Director and First Vice President