

Greetings to all for JSBTC Day!

Jodo Shinshu or Shin Buddhism in Canada is facing a major challenge as we change from primarily serving the spiritual and religious needs of ethnic and cultural Japanese Canadians to aspiring to serve those needs for a broader spectrum of people in Canada. **Impermanence** is a fundamental teaching in Buddhism so we are equipped for it. We know that change is inevitable and we may not enjoy it but our suffering will be eased when we embrace it as part of life.

The Buddhist analogy of the finger pointing at the moon is often applied with the teachings and teachers as the finger and the Truth(or Dharma) as the Moon. It is again relevant now as we see much evidence of the change in our Sangha whether it is positive, negative or neither. For example:

- Declining Temple Membership and Attendance
- Loss of our pioneer teachers Reverend Kyojo Ikuta and Reverend Dr. Leslie Kawamura
- Installation of the young Socho Tatsuya Aoki as Shared Bishop
- Assessments increased by \$5
- New young Ministers installed at Toronto Buddhist Church
- Consolidation of Temples in Southern Alberta
- Increased presence of Minister Assistants
- Shortage of donations
- Fewer volunteers to keep programs running
- Aging population of membership

Our Buddhist backgrounds position us well to expand our awareness and sample the truth in amongst all the noise. Let's all work together on the positives, stop agonizing about the finger and embrace what we are at the moment. As Shin Buddhists, we are all fortunate to have access to this wonderful teaching that embraces all. There are others out there that don't know about this path to spirituality and awakening and are searching. Anything we do to develop our own understanding and share our delight in this path goes a step further to expose others to this teaching. We have the opportunity to learn how to share the teachings and help others choose their paths to awakening.

All of us appreciate the continued efforts of the local temples to serve the needs of our founding membership. At the JSBTC, your Board of Directors and Bishop Tatsuya Aoki are putting energy into the Living Dharma Centre (LDC) to support development of programs that broaden access to Shin Buddhist teachings to a wider audience in Canada. The LDC is a virtual team of Shin Buddhist enthusiasts who lead and participate in projects and programs to enhance the accessibility of the Teachings to everyone.

One project that is meant to reach outside of our cultural heritage is to have people write stories about how they encountered "Shin Buddhism and a Life of Gratitude". The stories will be placed on the national www.livingdharma.ca website and will direct visitors to local temple websites and contacts. If you have an idea for a project you would like to lead or would like to

find out what projects you can volunteer for, please contact Amy or Brenda (wakisaka.a@gmail.com brenda.ikuta63@gmail.com) for more information.

Whether you get involved or not, we are all **interconnected** and we are grateful for your generous donations and efforts and for the opportunity and responsibility our founding members have given us.

Living in the Dharma with Gratitude

on behalf of the Board of the JSBTC

Greg Chor