



*Our literary efforts will be guided by the language-related personal ethic
“I commit myself to true speech, not false; healing speech, not divisive;
amiable speech, not unkind; meaningful speech, not idle chatter”.*

Buddhist Literary Festival Canada 2021

Friday-Sunday, December 10–12, 2021, 2–5 p.m. EST Daily
Online & Free ([Register By Clicking Here](#))

PROPOSED BY: Venerable Professor Bhikkhu Mihita (Retired, Trinity Divinity, University of Toronto)

SPONSORED BY: Centre for Religion and Its Contexts, Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto

TEMPLE CO-SPONSORS: Mahadhammika (Burmese); Mahayana Pure Land Temple (Chinese); Pho Hein (Vietnamese); Toronto Mahavihara (Sri Lankan)

INSPIRATION

It has been nearly two years since Canadians have been deprived of, thanks to COVID, what the Buddha calls ‘contact food’ (*phassāhāra*). So the inspiration to hold this second Buddhist Literary Festival (the first was held in 2017 at *Word on the Street Harbourfront*) at this time as we come out of a sombre experience is to provide an opportunity for Buddhists to join hands in a joyful and relaxing esthetic experience, and enjoy some ‘contact food,’ literally and figuratively, at the same time introducing ourselves to a relatively little known dimension of Buddhism.

SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS

1. To introduce the Buddhist practitioners to the **rich Buddhist Literature** comprised of, among others, the following:
 - a. Of the Buddha himself: Birth stories (Jataka), Dhamma in poetic diction (e.g., *Dhammapada*);
 - b. Elders’ verses, by males (*Theragatha*), and by the first women poets in the world (*Therigatha*);
 - c. Classical Literature – Pali, Chinese, Tibetan and Buddhist Sanskrit;
 - d. Historical Ethnocultural Literature over time - Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Newari, Sinhalese, Thai, Tibetan, Vietnamese, and other;
 - e. Buddhism-related modern day literature, e.g., *Light of Asia* (poetry), *Siddhartha*, *Dharma Bums*; *The Way of Siddhartha* (all three novels), etc.
2. To introduce **contemporary Canadian Buddhist creative writers** – poets, short fiction writers and novelists, if also dramatists, and **writers in general**:
 - a. to each other;
 - b. to the wider Buddhist community;
 - c. to the wider Canadian literati.
3. To promote creative writing among the Canadian younger generation of Buddhists, lost to a lay education and Western materialism.
4. To provide a common platform going beyond the religious to introduce to each other Buddhist academics, university Buddhist student body, other Acquired Buddhists and Inherited Buddhists.
5. To provide support for the Canadian Buddhist publishing world.
6. To help the wider world to understand a dimension of Buddhism other than exclusively religious.
7. To introduce Buddhist literature to the wider world of literature.

Buddhist Literary Festival Canada 2021 Program

DAY 1: Friday, December 10, 2021 (2–5 p.m. EST)

OPENING

1. National Anthem, Land Acknowledgement, Theme Song: “*Roll Along the Literary Wheel*”
2. Welcoming Addresses
 - a. **Prof. John H. Young**, Interim Principal, Emmanuel College
 - b. Co-sponsoring Buddhist Temples:
 - i. Mahadhammika (*Burmese*, GTA) Temple: **Venerable Bhante Kawwida**
 - ii. Mahayana Pure Land Temple (*Chinese*, Markham, ON): **Venerable Master Xin Yin**
 - iii. Pho Hein (*Vietnamese*, GTA): **Venerable Thich Chan Toan, PhD**
 - iv. Toronto Mahavihara (*Sri Lankan*, GTA): **Venerable Ahangama Rathanasiri Mahathero**
 - c. Proposer Welcome & Introductory Talk: “Buddha as Language and Literary Entrepreneur:”
Venerable Prof. Bhikkhu Mihita (Retired, Trinity Divinity, University of Toronto)

PRESENTATIONS

3. Elders’ Verses–Female (*Therigāthā*) (earliest women in poetry): **Upāsikā Eleanor, PhD**, University of Toronto
4. Elders’ Verses–Male (*Theragāthā*): **Prof. Martin Adam**, University of Victoria, BC
5. Early Canadian Novelists: **Terry Watada**
6. Pioneer Recognition in Gratitude (*Kataññutā*)
 - Historical: Interfaith
 - Literature / Creative Writing
 - Buddhist Fiction Blog
 - Academic
 - Organizational
 - Educational
 - Biographical
7. Honoree Hour

DAY 2: Saturday, December 11, 2021 (2–5 p.m. EST)

1. Contemporary Canadian poets:
 - a. **Terry Watada**:
 - b. **Asoka Weerasinghe**: poem: “The Bamiyan Buddhas”
2. “The Literature of the Pali Canon”, **Dr. Bryan Levman**, University of Toronto
3. Canadian Buddhist women Writers: **Prof. Vanessa R. Sasson**, Marianopolis College, Quebec: novel: *Yasodhara and the Buddha*.
4. Buddhist Youth Oratory [Sunday Dharma school students at Temples]: [TBA]

5. “Classical Chinese Literature”, **Prof. Henry Shiu**, University of Toronto
6. Canadian Buddhist Publishers
 - a. **Nalanda Publishing Canada, Jim Vuylsteke**
 - b. **Sumeru Press, John Negru**
7. “Early Buddhist Western Literature”, **Ven. Ajahn Punnadhammo Mahathero**
8. Buddhism as Theatre: Ethical Dimensions of adapting for the Stage What the Buddha Never Taught, **Prof. Martin Adam**, University of Victoria, BC

DAY 3: Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021 (2–5 pm)

1. Buddhist Biographers: **Prof. Glen Choi**, Seneca College: *Beginning, Middle & Zen: Tales from Canada to Korea and Back Again*
2. “Literature in the Sky! (as in the Canon),” **Venerable Prof Bhikkhu Mihita**
3. “Overview of the Realms of Existence,” **Venerable Ajahn Punnadhammo Mahathero**
4. **TOWNHALL Towards the Future: *Share, Ask, Shape, Volunteer***
5. Youth / Children hour: dance, music, theatre, etc. [Temples] [TBA]

CLOSING: Metta! Anumodana! Namo Amitabho! May you be well and happy!