

PETITION

From: The Buddhist Community of Ontario.
To: The Hon. Leaders of the Liberal, Progressive Conservative, New Democratic and Green Parties of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.
Subject: **All-party approval** for the display of Buddhist symbol on the South Lawn of Queen's Park for a full seven days in May, annually.
Date: May 2012

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Recognized by the UN General Assembly as an International event, the Buddhist celebration of WESAK – the Buddha’s Birth, Enlightenment and Parinibbāna (passing away), is celebrated in the month of May every year. By way of commemorating this significant day in Ontario, listed as a Buddhist Holiday in the Ontario Multifaith Calendar, we have had the graceful permission of the Seargent-at-Arms of the Ontario Legislature, acting under the Lieutenant-Governor, to have a Buddhist symbol displayed on the South Lawn of Queen’s Park since 2005.

The permission, however, has been for a period of 24 hours. Tradition, as accepted by all Buddhists, records that the Buddha spent 7 weeks under the Bodhi Tree (under which He attained Enlightenment), engaged in different activities, such as sitting and walking meditation, reflecting, gazing at the Tree in gratitude, etc. Honouring that tradition, we hereby respectfully request that a Buddhist symbol (variable) be allowed to be displayed for a **FULL WEEK**, each of the 7 days standing for each such week.

If a precedent were to be helpful in kindly considering our request, we may point to the annual display of the Jewish Menorah on the South lawn commemorating Hanukkah for 8 days, with all-party approval.

Buddhism has the distinction of never having had any wars waged in its name, the Buddha’s blessing being “May all sentient beings be well!”. If this blessing has a universal reach in human terms, irrespective of colour, creed or orientation, etc., it extends to the animal kingdom as well, given that by ‘sentient being’ (*sattā*) is meant, literally, ‘beings with senses’. So it is our respectful hope and expectation that passing an Act of the Ontario Legislature with all-party agreement will be done not only in recognition of and respect for our Canadian multicultural reality, but also by way of upholding the values of egalitarianism, freedom, social harmony, political stability, justice and economic prosperity, as embedded in the Buddha’s Teachings. (Please visit our website <buddhistcouncil.ca> for our Objectives.)

Wishing each and every Member of the Provincial Parliament the best in health and happiness!

Respectfully submitted.
<buddhistcouncil.ca>