

Her prayers answered

Deacon granted immigrant status

TOM GODFREY
Sun Media

North York church deacon Shunyu Piao says her prayers were answered after a deportation order was quashed and she was given a chance to remain in Canada.

Piao, 57, can now make arrangements to sponsor her husband, Zhen Gen, 57, and son, Yong Hseng, 22, whom she hasn't seen in 11 years.

"I feel blessed that the government has allowed me to stay," Piao said through an interpreter yesterday. "I want to thank God for this opportunity."

More than 500 worshippers of the Church of the Resurrection on Tippet Rd. had signed a petition asking Immigration Minister Jason Kenney to allow Piao to stay.

"I haven't seen my family for a long time and I want them with me," she said. "I am very excited and have faith in God."

Piao came to Canada in 1998 and filed a refugee claim that was unsuccessful. She has been fighting deportation for more than two years and was on the verge of being placed on a flight to China when her case was reviewed.

Rev. Frank Lim said Piao, a trained sushi chef, reads in Chinese and Mandarin to new immigrants and seniors suffering from cancer.

"She is a truly deserving woman who does a lot for the community," he said. "She is a God-fearing woman who will be excellent for our country."

Piao, who's "popular and well-liked" by the congregation, is studying to become a lay preacher, Lim said.

Immigration consultant Roy Kellogg said Piao was approved on Tuesday for landed immigrant status based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

tom.godfrey@sunmedia.ca