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May 2012

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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Recently I was honored to receive an award from the New York State Interfaith Alliance.

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May Events Calendar



Weekly Meditation Services (WMS) are on Wednesday evenings. They begin at 6pm with a discussion or talk (see below for this month's discussion topics). At about 7pm there is a meditation service, followed at 8pm by a potluck supper. All of Wednesday evening's events are open to the public. There is no fee, and reservations are not required.

May Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

2 The Kaihogyo on Hiei-zan - Tendai Butsido teaches that enlightenment can be attained in this lifetime. It is through the process of self-denial that this can be achieved, and the Kaihogyo is seen as the ultimate expression of this desire. We will see a 20 minute video on the Kaihogyo followed by a discussion.

9 Q&A - Stump the Sensei - Do you have any questions about the Buddhadharma about which you have not found a satisfactory answer? Write down the question and bring it with you. There are no 'too simple' or involved questions. Sensei will do his best to answer in a way that at least sheds light on the issue.

16 Ten Ox Herding Pictures - The pictures first appeared in their present form by a Chinese Ch'an master in the 12th century. They represent the ten stages experienced

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by a bodhisattva as outlined in various Mahayana sutras, most particularly the Avatamsaka Sutra. A series of short poems and accompanying pictures are intended to illustrate the stages of a Mahayana Buddhist practitioner's progression towards awakening and perfection of wisdom.

23 Hongaku Shiso - Jacqueline Stone writes, "In the medieval Tendai context, "original enlightenment" thought [Hongaku Shiso] denotes an array of doctrines and concepts associated with the proposition that all beings are enlightened inherently." [1] We will examine this important teaching as it applies to our world today.

30 Is the Buddhadharma a Religion or Philosophy - this is one of the most often asked questions by people who discover you are Buddhist. The answer is not as straight forward as we would like. We will discuss this question in a way to better understand what Butsudo means in America today.

[1] Stone J. (1999) Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, p 3.

Our Other Sangha:[Blue Mountain Sage
Sangha--Denver, CO](#)[Celestial Drum
Sangha--Indian Lake,
NY](#)[California Tendai
Buddhist Monastery](#)[Tendai Denmark](#)[Flowing Waters--
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada](#)[Great River Ekayana
Sangha--Arlington,
VA](#)[Nagado Sangha--
Springfield, MA](#)[Nishi Sangha--](#)**Other events in May:**

5 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM - Vajrachedika Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Diamond Sutra). It is one of the earliest Mahayana sutras and is considered by many scholars as foundational to subsequent Mahayana thought. Don't miss this enjoyable class. Please obtain the following book for this class - *The Diamond Sutra: transforming the way we perceive the world*, by Mu Soeng; Wisdom Publications (2000).

19 Introduction to Meditation - 1 - 4 PM. This class will provide basic instruction on meditation. Starting with posture, breathing and focusing the mind the class will provide the essential tools necessary to integrate a meditative practice into your life. By practicing meditation a person can decrease stress and increase overall wellbeing. The class which will be presented by Koki Bower is open and free to the public.

Notes

Congratulations to Monshin Naamon, a recipient of this year's "Ed Bloch Voices that Challenge Award". Monshin was one of five people honored on Tuesday May 1st, with the

[Albany, NY](#)

[Red Maple Sangha--
Renfrew, Ottawa,
Canada](#)

"Ed Bloch Voices That Challenge Award" by The New York State Interfaith Alliance of the Capital District. The Interfaith Alliance of the Capital District's goal is to "...promote the positive healing role of religion in public life through encouraging civic participation, facilitating community activism, and challenging religious and political extremism."

Buddhist Movie Night - In early June we will have our first Buddhist Movie night (afternoon?) with a showing of two outstanding films. The first is the visually stunning Korean film, *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring* (2003). This film takes place on an isolated lake, where an old monk lives in a small floating temple. The wise master has a young boy with him that he teaches to become a monk. We watch as seasons and years pass by. Director: Ki-duk Kim. We will also be seeing the revealing comedy, *The Cup* (1999) 93 min - While the soccer World Cup is being played in France, two young Tibetan refugees arrive at a monastery/boarding school in exile in India. Its atmosphere of serene contemplation is somewhat disrupted by soccer fever, the chief instigator being a young student, the soccer enthusiast Orgyen. (film summaries from IMDB)

Food Pantry at Jiunzan Tendai-ji - The number of families who now depend on the food pantry has grown as a direct result of the continued economic recession. There are fewer and fewer resources going to more and more people. Please bring non-perishable food items to the Tendai Buddhist Institute on Wednesdays. We contribute these items to the Chatham Silent Food Pantry.

Meanderings (cont. from side bar at left)

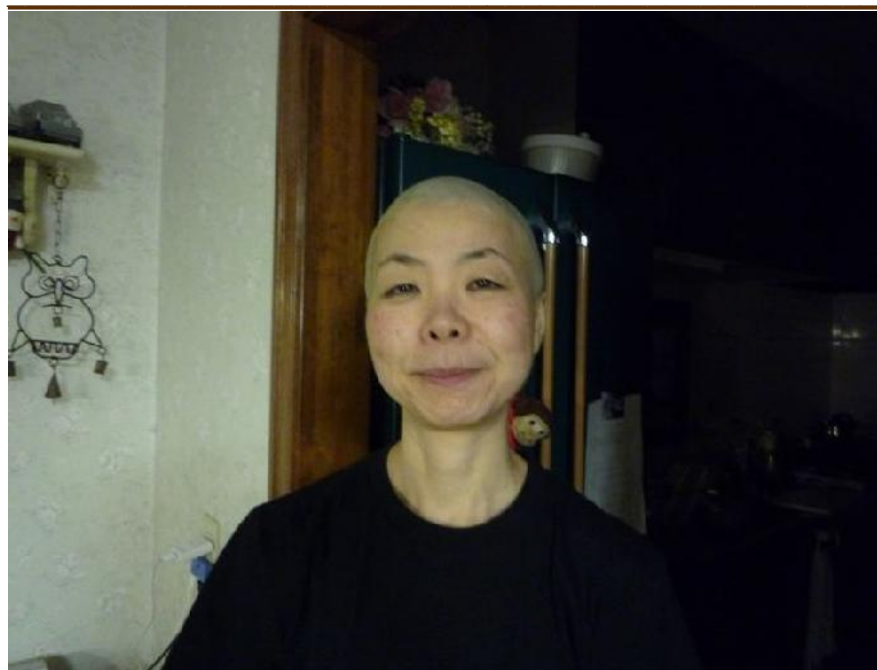


The award is given to people identified as contributing to "... social and economic justice by examining public policy through the ethical lens of the major religious faiths. In addition to studying public policy options, the Alliance also advocates for those policies which are most consistent with the fundamental religious principles of justice, fairness and tolerance." [1] The goals of the Interfaith Alliance are not only consistent with, but are essential, for any Buddhist. They speak to the very heart of what it

means to attain awakening. It is when one drops away notions of the provisional self as an independent, autonomous, entity that awakening can find a space to dwell within the heart/mind.

Gassho . . . Monshin

[1] From New York State Interfaith Alliance literature.



Shumon before going up the mountain...may we continue to remember her daily in our dedication of merit.

The Third Jewel--Where sangha members share ideas, poetry, and art to enrich everyone's Buddhist practice.

On Service and Listening by Jikan Anderson

Disraeli Gears is playing on the stereo now. I mention now because Garry would want to know up front. He was a great listener: to music, to people, to animals.

I met Garry Hanck Woodward in January of 2012. The local hospice had found me online in a search for a local Buddhist of some stripe; Garry had been involved with Namgyal Monastery in New York, but not with any particular group in his hometown of Arlington,



Virginia, and time was short for him. They were right: Garry passed away on 7 May.

The capacity for listening is what struck me first off, though. When I paid Garry and his wife Susan a visit that January, I was greeted by posters of musicians on all the walls, many of them I deeply appreciated. Of the three dogs in the house, one was named Tina Turner (herself a Buddhist). Garry was clearly in great pain, but wanted to know how I was doing; the dying man wanted to be sure I'd had enough for breakfast, wanted to know about my hometown, my practice. He wanted to listen to my troubles, so I let him have it and he was happy. Buddhist of some stripe; Garry had been involved with Namgyal Monastery in New York, but not with any particular group in his hometown of Arlington, Virginia, and time was short for him. They were right: Garry passed away on 7 May.



His memorial service was primarily about this capacity for listening. About a hundred people gathered to remember the man, and not so much for his service as a decorated officer. A month later on 16

March 2012, we gathered again at Arlington National Cemetery for the formal interment. Two of our local sangha members, Anji and Seichi Powers, joined us; Anji took the photographs. I found the flag presentation to be particularly moving, largely due to the care taken and attention given to the family.

The service itself was brief. I invited everyone to honor Garry by remembering to listen carefully to the world we inhabit, to those close to us but not only those close to us and to respond with compassion as best we can. I read a passage from the Lotus Sutra, again on the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, the one who listens and to remember not just his work in the US Navy or his work in non-profits, but his ability to hear and respond to the needs of others. Several lifelong friends commented on his voracious appetite for soulful American music, recorded and live, and his bottomless capacity for cheerfulness and jokes, his patience, his stillness. I had been asked to officiate the ceremony, and my contribution was to comment on Avalokiteshvara - the Listener to the Cries of the World - as the embodiment of compassion

and a commitment to service, and to sing the OM MANI PEME HUNG mantra to a Tibetan melody (as appropriate to Garry's way to practice Buddha Dharma). Friends played live music.

The music machine has moved on to Axis: Bold as Love, a transition Garry surely would have approved.

(Jikan Anderson is the Doshu of the Great River Ekayana Sangha in Arlington VA)

Call for material: Please send the Shingi photographs, artwork, poems, book reviews, articles, etc. that you have created that you consider an outgrowth of your Buddhist practice or that you think reflect Buddhist themes, ideas, questions, etc. If submitting an image, you may wish to include a short statement sharing some of your thoughts to accompany it.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .

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