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April 2012

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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As most people know Shumon will be attending the Tendai Gyo (monk/nun/priest training) from April 25 through

April 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.

April Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

4 Q&A - It is questions time again. Has there been anything, regarding the that you have thought about and have not found a satisfactory answer? This is your chance. Some people are shy about asking a certain question because they

June 23rd on Mt.
Hiei Japan. ...

[\(cont.\)](#)



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think, 'it's only interesting to me.' Chances are other people have the same question but are also too shy to ask. Come prepared with questions.

11 **Furnishings and Appointments in the Hondo -**

What are the different elements of the temple, what are their origins and how are they used? Many people have expressed an interest in learning more about our temple. This is it.

18 **Shumon's Gyo -** Why is Shumon going to Gyo? What

does it mean to her and what are her expectations? Shumon will be leaving for Japan on April 20th and she will going up Mt. Hiei on April 25th. She will be spending about two months in the traditional Tendai training for Japanese clergy (see below for a partial description of the process). She will join us for the discussion. When she returns in July, perhaps she will join us and let us know about her experience.

25 **The Face of Western Buddhism -** Sociologist James

Coleman looks at the emerging Buddhist population and who will shape the new public face of Buddhism in this article from the August 2011 issue of *Buddhadharma: The Practitioners Quarterly*. Read the article and join us for the discussion. The article may be found at: <http://www.thebuddhadharma.com/web-archive/2011/8/4/the-face-of-western-buddhism.html>

Other Events

11 **A Service to Welcome Julian (Allen and Kelly's new child) into the Sangha.** The ceremony will be incorporated into the Wednesday evening service. We will start the evening in the hondo for the discussion and begin the service earlier than normal.

14 **Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM - Vajrachedika Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Diamond Sutra).**

It is as 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

Our Other Sangha: following book for this class - *The Diamond Sutra: transforming the way we perceive the world*, by Mu Soeng; Wisdom Publications (2000).). **Please Note: this class is a week later than usual to accommodate people wishing to partake of Passover and Easter activities.**

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

18 Shumon's Farewell Service. This will be a special service to mark Shumon's two month training on Mt. Hiei. During the service we will be cutting her hair in preparation to her going up Mount Hiei. Join us for this special ceremony. (Please see the note below in "The Third Jewel")

Notes

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)



She will be discussing her purpose and expectations of attending the gyo on Mt. Hiei on April 18th, the last Wednesdays at the Tendai Buddhist Institute before leaves for Japan. The process of a gyo is not a seminary process in the European or American sense of clergy training. I will explain the process as it applies in Japan. First is Tokudo (ordination). In the West we think of an ordination as something done at the completion of

training. When a person takes tokudo in Japan it is an "Entrance to the Buddhist priesthood" [1] This is conducted in a number of different ways, and at different ages. It is a beginning point in one's spiritual journey. The tokudo ceremony in and of itself is not a completion of a training program or attainment of a level of Buddhist learning. In Japan many temple priests start with a refuge ceremony at a relatively young age of 10 years through about 15 years of age. They later receive tokudo around 20 years of age. Shumon received Tokudo in 2002 at Sanjusangendo[2] in Kyoto, Japan, the former Chancellor of Tendai-shu, Nishioka Ryoko officiated the ceremony in front of Senju Kannon. Ichishima Shoshin is her Shisho, or Master.

Today most Japanese Tendai priests attend college, Aizen Academy or the Tendai Academy. During or shortly after college the person will attend gyo. The 60-day training period is broken into two halves. The first half, zengyo, is when a person learns and practices, chanting, meditation, conducting the various daily services, shomyo, completes the first kaihogyo (approx. 25 mile walking meditation, down and back up Mount Hiei), performs 3,000 Buddha prostrations (Sansen Butsудо), and other practical skills. The second half of gyo is the shido kegyo. This entails learning and performing juhachido, taizo-kai, kongo-kai, (meditations) and goma (a fire ritual that removes the obstacles to awakening), as well as the second kaihogyo. These are the basis of Tendai esoteric practices or Mikkyo. During the two months there is no contact with the outside world, all meals are taken in complete silence. Practices, classes, and instruction allow no time for rest periods or free time. It is a monastic setting that requires diligence and devotion, in an all-encompassing environment. The gyoja are challenged emotionally, physically and spiritually. Most people who have the privilege of completing the gyo report that it is a truly transformative experience.

When Shumon returns to Tendai Buddhist Institute from gyo in

late June she will then be prepared to practice the many things she learned on her spiritual path. Gyo is a sacred training that will better prepare Shumon to serve our sangha. On April 18th during the Wednesday evening service I will cut her hair in preparation of shaving her head, a necessary condition to attend gyo. This will be an opportunity to wish Shumon well before her journey to Mt. Hiei.
Gassho . . . Monshin

[1] Many terms are being referenced to the Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary (Rev. Ed). By Daito Shuppansha for uniformity.

[2]Sanjusangendo is the popular name for Rengeo-in, a temple in Kyoto which is famous for its 1001 statues of Kannon, the goddess of compassion. The temple was founded in 1164 and rebuilt a century later after the original structure had been destroyed in a fire. In the center of the main hall sits a large, wooden statue of a 1000-armed Kannon (Senju Kannon) that is flanked on each side by 500 statues of human sized 1000-armed Kannon standing in ten rows. It is one of the truly amazing temples in Japan.

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

Poetry by Allen Livermore

Not Like Us

mad at the Tea Party
mad at the Republicans
mad at the Democrats
mad at the Progressives
mad at the Populists
mad at the Greenbacks

mad at the Know-Nothings
 mad at the Free Soilers
 mad at the Libertys
 mad at the Whigs
 mad at the Anti-Masonics
 mad at the Federalists
 mad at the liberals
 mad at the conservatives
 mad at the libertarians
 mad at the unaffiliated
 mad at the unclassifiables
 you see?
 they're not like us

This poem is about conceptions such as "Republican" and "Democrat" leading to negative feelings about others and questionable ideas about our relationship to them. Especially appropriate during election season. It was inspired by a talk by Thich Nhat Hahn, during the Gulf War, in which he referred to President George H.W. Bush as a "Bodhisattva." When I heard this, I was shocked. And intrigued by his challenge to reform our thinking about those we consider the Other

Satisfaction Guaranteed

Sit my ass down
 on brand new
 meditation
 bench
 anticipating
 (fill in the blank)
 and waiting and
 waiting and
 waiting
 The show

never
arrives.
I'm pissed.
Must be defective
Product. Want money back.

This poem is about the expectations we bring to meditation.
The ending: "Must be defective product.
Want money back" expresses what may happen when these
expectations are not met.

Poetry and Photography by Lindsey Jisei Longway



Trees, Northeast

This tree is Buddha.
Arms spread to the sky,
feet planted firmly in

the earth.
Her rough bark is carved
with wisdom from
winters passed in solitude
and silent meditation.

When spring approaches
she dons her green robes
and welcomes all to
her practice.
Feeding small insects and
housing bright birds,
she offers compassion to
anyone to pass her way.

Someday she will die,
becoming the soil and
the bright sunshine of the morning;
this years nestlings just opening their eyes.

And a note from Seiyō Erica Fay:
Greetings Sangha,

Wednesday, April 18th is the last Sangha night before Tamami leaves for her lengthy training in Japan. Along with a ceremonial send-off that Monshin will conduct we are going to give her complete relief from the kitchen on that night.

This means we will cover all the food, preparation and cleanup. She has been told not to prepare food that night - in fact, there's no reason for her to enter the kitchen at all. It will be nice for her to be with us for the entire evening's meditation.

So, let us all be ready to bring a plentiful feast and let her enjoy herself.
Gassho,

Seiyo Erica

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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