



January 2012

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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January 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.

January Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

4 The Four Brahma Vihara- One comes across the four sublime states: metta (loving kindness), karuna (compassion), mudita (sympathetic joy), and upekkha (equanimity), in many Buddhist traditions. They are first found in the Brahmaviha Sutta and then reaffirmed in the Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra, where Shakyamuni Buddha teaches that the Brahma-vihara are characteristic qualities of the Buddha-dhatu (the all-pervading essence of the Buddha). These four states are powerful antidotes to negative mental states, such as avarice, anger and pride. They inter-relate and support each other. This is the practice we will emphasize this year.

11 TBA - Mushin will be presenting the discussion and meditation this evening while Monshin and Shumon are away for a week.

18 Meditation as a Practice - One does not need to meditate to be a Buddhist; one doesn't need to be a Buddhist to meditate. So what do we mean by meditation as a Buddhist practice? We will examine the role of meditation in Buddhism and how it constitutes an important element of a Buddhist life.

25 Jushoku Q&A. - Ok, what was that question you had during last month's discussion? Oh yeah, it had to do with . . . Now is the time to write it down so you don't forget it, then ask it during this evening's Q&A session.

Other Events

3 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM - *Vajrachedika Prajnaparamita Sutra (The Diamond Sutra)*. Please obtain the following book for this class: *The Diamond Sutra: Transforming the Way We Perceive the World*, by Mu Soeng; Wisdom Publications (2000). It contains one of the earliest Mahayana Sutras and is considered by many scholars as foundational to subsequent Mahayana thought. We are moving along at a breakneck pace. Don't miss this scintillating class!

27 - 29th Winter Retreat: Hongaku (Original Enlightenment) - Hongaku is a fundamental characteristic of Japanese Butsudo. We will discuss the meaning of original enlightenment, but more importantly we will engage in practices that have at their core the embodiment of Hongaku. The retreat begins at 7:30pm on January 27th and ends at about 1pm on the 29th. Sign-up soon; we are allowing just a limited number of attendees to assure personal attention.

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.

Jushoku's Meanderings



A new year . . . the earth has revolved around the sun once again. It is a yearly reminder that our lives move inexorably on. For some people it is a good thing - for others - not so much. Many of us make New Year's resolutions. Such things as doing more aerobic exercise, stopping smoking, taking Italian lessons so we can finally understand opera, eating breakfast every morning; we all have a few that we might recycle or dream up new each

year. For the coming year I might recommend that we attend to our inner life by

addressing intention as much as behavior. This resolution is to focus ones intention on, and be observant of, the Four Brahma Vihara (Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity). Recognize that we must incorporate prajna (wisdom) and upaya (skillful means) into this practice.

How does one make this happen?

To do this one must practice on the cushion and off. One does meditations on the four Brahma Vihara and is cognizant of these four insightful mental states throughout the day, with loved ones, acquaintances, antagonistic persons, and all sentient beings even in the most the simple situations.

Intention is not the same as action. Good intentions that are not manifest are less important than good actions with no intention. However, we are more likely to produce good actions with positive intentions, than with negative intentions. Brahma Vihara that are kept in one's heart-mind, as well as mental formation become incorporated in the individual in a profound and vital way. I will be providing guidance in this through the year.

Finally this is The Year of the Water Dragon. The Water Dragon is the ultimate auspicious symbol signifying success and happiness. What better way to make this potential a reality than by harnessing the power of our heart-mind toward positive change in the cosmos, starting with one's self.

May the Celestial Dragon bring great good fortune to you and all sentient beings.

Gassho . . . Monshin, Shumon, and Koki

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



"Even the Dark," photo by Kari Murad

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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