

January 2010

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



 Forward to a Friend

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

### In This Issue

Events Calendar

The Third Jewel



### Jushoku's Meanderings

Happy New Year - the Year of the Tiger. The Tiger is the third sign in the East Asian Zodiac. According to this mythology, the Tiger symbolizes courage and it holds a central position in mitigating the three prime disturbances of a household: fire, thieves and ghosts. This year is more precisely the Year of the Metal Tiger as an element of the five-phase element cycle. The metal part adds determination and resolve to courage so that one can achieve the goals that are set for the year. [\(cont.\)](#)

### 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 dinner. 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

6th Sangha - We are beginning our 15th year as a Buddhist sangha. We will examine the origins of sangha as well as the many ways it serves our Buddhist Path and our personal lives.

13th Does No-Thought Mean No Thought? Discussion of a vital issue in meditation taken from a Summer 2004 article in *Buddhadharma: the Practitioners Quarterly* by Wing-shing Chan. Read the article at [http://www.thebuddhadharma.com/issues/2004/summer/wing\\_shing.htm](http://www.thebuddhadharma.com/issues/2004/summer/wing_shing.htm) and join the discussion.

20th The Foundations of Buddhism - Part I. We discuss one chapter a month from the book of the same name by Rupert Gethin (*The Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press, 1998). This is an opportunity to buy the book and read the chapter before we discuss it. Many people have requested a systematic review of Buddhist teachings. This series of teachings will go on this year.

27th Anniversary of Tendai-shu establishment in Japan. Tendai has transmitted the Light of the Dharma, the teaching of Dengyō Daishi, for over 1200 years, producing many schools of Buddhism. Mt. Hiei is known as the Mother Mountain of Japanese Buddhism and has been an important source of Japanese culture. We will discuss Tendai's founding and its role in the development of Japanese Buddhism.

### Events

9th Morning Service and Sutra Class, 8:30-10:30 am. The class continues our monthly exploration of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. This class is useful for people who may not have attended previous discussions as it is more than just an exploration of a specific text. Go to [http://zen.extra.hu/sutra\\_of\\_perfect\\_enlightenment.html](http://zen.extra.hu/sutra_of_perfect_enlightenment.html) for a copy of the sutra. A more complete version of this sutra, translation and commentary



### Quicklinks

[About Us](#)

[Tendai International](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)

[Newsletter Archives](#)

[Contact Jushoku](#)

[Contact Editor](#)

commentary by A. Charles Muller and Kihwa is also available. It is published by State University of New York Press, 1999.

29th - 31st Retreat - Taizokai (Garbhadhatu) Realization. The Taizokai Mandala represents the enlightened cosmos from the perspective of infinite compassion. It is often referred to as the "Womb Matrix Mandala." The retreat will examine the Taizokai Mandala and practices associated with it. This Mandala can be looked upon as that which signifies the gradual growth of spiritually towards Buddhahood. Be prepared to observe and perhaps challenge your notions about where the spiritual arises and grows. This retreat is appropriate for all levels of practice and experience; it is intended to help the practitioner develop a better understanding of insight into the ineffable. Sign up soon as there is a maximum of 12 people and this will fill up quickly.

### Give *dana* . . .

Did you know that the Red Cross does a lot more than facilitate blood donations? The Red Cross and its volunteers also:

- Help soldiers abroad communicate news about births and deaths to family members back home
- Visit people in nursing homes and check on the quality of the care they are receiving
- Instruct people on swimming and water safety
- Reconnect families all over the globe who have become separated by international conflicts

The Red Cross does even more though, and they need our help to continue addressing all aspects of their critical humanitarian mission.

Learn more about this mission and especially how we can help the Red Cross "prepare for, prevent and respond to local disasters" in our community by attending an informational session on January 25th from 7-8:30pm at Ichabod Crane Middle School in Valatie. If you've any questions, contact Mary Riley-Jacome by phone at (518) 458-8111 ext 5150 or by e-mail at [riley-jacome@redcrossneny.org](mailto:riley-jacome@redcrossneny.org)

### Other Events

On April 23 and 24 there will be a Tendai Studies and Arts Symposium at the University of California, Berkeley. There will be papers presented by several Tendai scholars from Japan and the U.S. for the morning and afternoon of the 23rd Among the scholars will be Ichishima Shoshin, Shiori Hodo, Paul Groner, John Stevens, Monshin



Naamon, and Ryuken Duncan Williams and others to be announced. We are loaning our calligraphy to the University's art museum for an exhibit on Japanese calligraphy. On the 24th we will be traveling about 2 hours north of San Francisco to the California Tendai Monastery, founded by Keisho Leary for a consecration of his temple and a goma ritual. There will be more about this later. For more information contact either Shumon or Keisho.



On the downside, the mythological prophesy for the year suggests that this will be a year of turmoil, volatility, contention, and disagreement--a year of extremes. Not a year for the faint of heart, not a good year for gambling. The upside is that these influences also have a cleansing effect. Much like a

hurricane or forest fire cleanses and replenishes the earth, the Year of the Tiger can bring about dramatic changes and bring out the best in us. Be bold -- the fiery heat of the Tiger's year will no doubt touch everyone's life. Allow the year to be transformative. You have the capacity to overcome the negative and accentuate the positive. The tiger's leaping is the symbol of the hero; breaking through brambles and thorns, he climbs to the top of the mountain.

Some would argue that this is all pure superstition. What does this ancient mythology have to do with Buddhism?

Buddhism is not a discrete system of thought forged in a social vacuum. Mythologies, astrology, etc., contributed to Shakyamuni Buddha's insight into the nature of reality. Vedic or Indian astrology also employs twelve zodiac signs that are in a 72 year element cycle. Stepping back, we can see that the twelve-year East Asian astrological cycle with the five-element cycle (making a 60 year total cycle) represents continual change and the cyclic nature of the cosmos. Change or impermanence is the first of the Four Dharma Seals of existence; the other three are Discontentedness, Sunyata (i.e. form is empty, emptiness is form), and Nirvana. The classification of the cycle does have empirical elements, and at the very least the astrological system acts as a reminder and a metaphor for impermanence.

In our lives we look forward to change regarding phenomena we dislike, but we are discontented when phenomena we value also change. All is change, both that which is joyful as well as that which is depressing. East Asian astrology provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the world as our elders perceived it. Ultimately, however, it is up to each of us to create the world around us, with the ancient metaphysical system as a meditation and a guide.

The Year of the Tiger reminds us of possibility, accomplishment, and the beauty of free will. The Year of the Metal Tiger is said to bring in prosperity as well as usher in many other positive transformations -- if we work to make them happen.

Gassho . . . Monshin

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

**A Haiku Journal**  
by Bill Wilson  
Japan, summer 1981

### Interior

silver strands obscure  
the Buddha  
through dark temple  
doors:  
June rain falls.

### Competition

In the temple, the  
priest  
speaks of the Way,  
but from the pond  
competition:  
A croaking frog

### Dharma

in the zendo monks  
chant the sutras,  
from the pond  
croaking frogs join in.

### Skyscape

Lily pads float on rippling  
clouds.  
Spaceship waterbugs  
Play tag

### Mirroring

old pine leans over  
still pond  
one branch reaching  
down to touch its twin

**Photo courtesy of Onyou Susan Bues**



**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, please include a short statement explaining some of your thoughts to accompany it.*

**Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .**

Shingi Editor

Koho J. Daniel Beaudry

[beaudryjd@mac.com](mailto:beaudryjd@mac.com)