

April 2010

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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Jushoku's Meanderings

Shumon and I have been blessed. October of 1994 we returned from living in Japan with intentions of establishing a Tendai Buddhist Dharma Center. Our choice of location was based on where we perceived there to be a need and a group of people open to a Buddhist temple. We wished to contribute positively to the embryonic American Buddhist community. The authority for our new temple was through our lineage Master Ichishima Shoshin, whose temple Tamon-in we lived in for several years and who ordained me in 1992. ([cont.](#))

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 dinner. 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

7th - Kado: The Way of Flowers. Spring is here in upstate New York. Although it is still too early for the bursting of most flowers, it's time for people to start thinking about them. Last fall, Shumon talked about Kado, Japanese flower arrangement. On that occasion there was not enough time for a demonstration. Due to requests by some Sangha members, she will arrange flowers and show some techniques using what is available in your backyard.

14th - Suizen "Blowing Zen": A Presentation of Shakuhachi. A *shakuhachi* is a Japanese bamboo flute used as a vehicle for meditation through a practice called *suizen*. This talk will be led by Junren Tomie Hahn.

21st - "Elements of Practice". While Tendai-shu supports a variety of practices, the underlying concepts vary little at all. This discussion will focus on three pillars of practice and will be led by Shoshin Sandy Jacon.

28th - *The Foundations of Buddhism*, Chapter 4: "The Buddhist Community : Monks, Nuns, and Lay Followers." Mushin Sam Press will present a summary of this chapter.

Events

April 3rd - Morning Service and Sutra Class, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. This class concludes our monthly examination of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*. This class is useful for people who may not have attended previous discussions; it is more than just an exploration of a specific text. For a copy of the sutra, click [here](#). A more complete version of this sutra, translation and commentary by A. Charles Muller and Kihwa



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is available. It is published by State University of New York Press, 1999.

Starting in May we will begin exploring *The Very Mahayana Buddhist Ethics: Introduction and Translation of the Fan-wang-ching* by Shigeru Osuka.

Other Events

April 12th - Monday, 7 PM - Reflections on the "Psalm of Life": Exploring Conversation and Transformation.

Through our collective and individual suffering we find ourselves on a path of conversation and transformation. The legacy of world religious and ancient wisdom illustrates how these struggles have led to transcendence. Jyoti Swaminathan, Psy.D. will explore religious history, belief and the active presence of ancient stories in our lives as we engage in the challenges facing us in the world today. Dr. Swaminathan has been a teacher at the Hindu Temple in Albany, NY for the past eight years. Sponsored by the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Interfaith Lectureship, this lecture will be held at the College of St. Rose, Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary, 959 Madison Avenue, Albany, NY 12203.

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

Dana (Generosity) -- Please commit to on-going support

for our Dharma Center. Many people support the Center in different ways, but we are always in need of your financial support for our on-going programs and the maintenance of our buildings and grounds. We do not take a collection during the service, but there is a box for giving in the entryway of the hondo (temple). Giving what you can--every week or every month--helps our sangha remain a vital part of many lives. -- Gassho, Shoshin

Meanderings (cont.)



Imagine returning from living abroad for about 6 years, no jobs, nor prospects for jobs, a little savings and good intentions, taking on enormous debt without so much as a clear plan beyond 'Let's start a Dharma Center, maybe we'll support it with a B&B.' Yeah, that's what we thought. It required extraordinary faith in the Dharma and a strong relationship between Shumon and me.

We had been living in an 800-year-old Japanese temple, with an active Danka (Japanese temple members) for several years before our return. As such we had a pretty good idea of how to lead a Danka. Creating and leading an American sangha was another matter. The selection of the place and renovation of the house and, first, the barn was the easy part. Bringing an almost 1200-year-old Japanese tradition to the foothills of the Berkshires, at the nexus of the Hudson Valley and New England, was both a great opportunity and an enormous challenge. There was the sacred/philosophic/religious dimension as well as a cultural element. More than once Shumon and I looked at each other with a 'what were we thinking?' expression.

It is now 15 years since we held our first meditation meeting on April 20th, 1995. After about five years of struggle, success, mistakes and assistance from good friends and sangha members, we had a series of important visitors from

Japan. First was Saito Enshin, the current head of education for the Tendai School, who paid us a brief visit in 1997 while on tour with a Tendai Shomyo ensemble. Ichishima-sensei then visited us in 1998 and named the temple portion of our Center - Jiunzan Tendai-ji (Compassionate Mountain Cloud Tendai Temple). Ara Ryokan, Abbot of the Hawaii Betsuin and head of the overseas temples, visited us several times starting in 2000 and was able to see what we had done in about five years. This was followed shortly after, in 2001, by a visit from four members of the Jigyodan (Tendai-shu Overseas Charitable Foundation), including the then Chancellor of Tendai-shu Nishioka Ryoko, Yamada Shunwa, Sono Jitsujo and Saito Enshin.

Within a year the temple was recognized by Tendai in Japan, and I had gone for more training on Hiei-zan. Tendai-shu paid off the mortgage owed by Shumon and me, and we began to plan for renovation of the building that is our current temple. This work was completed in 2005.

This coming October, the weekend of the 23rd and 24th to be precise, we will be involved in a celebration of the five years since we consecrated our new hondo (main temple building), fifteen years since our founding, and 125 years since the first North Americans were ordained as Tendai priests (more about that in a coming meanderings section).

Many members of the sangha know the forgoing story because they have lived through it. Just as many others have never heard it. This is our way of sharing the development of the Tendai Buddhist Dharma in the West. We thank all of our sangha and friends for the blessings you have brought us.

Gassho . . . Monshin

Photo credit Onyou Susan Bues

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

Sangha member Peter Donahoe offered a couple links that he thought might round out some of the dharma talks from this past month:

Concerning Stephen Batchelor and *Buddhism Without Beliefs*, is a series of 14 short to middle-length podcasts

entitled "Godless Religion or Devout Atheism" that he and his wife Martine gave last year at a retreat. Click [here](#) to listen.

Peter also included a link to zen poetry. Click [here](#) to read.



Artwork by Onyou Susan Bues

Haiku Journal
by Bill Wilson
Japan, summer 1981 (continued)

Juxtaposed

Moving black and
 White patterns
Calibrate the zen
 garden:
School girls on tour.

Ordinary Zen

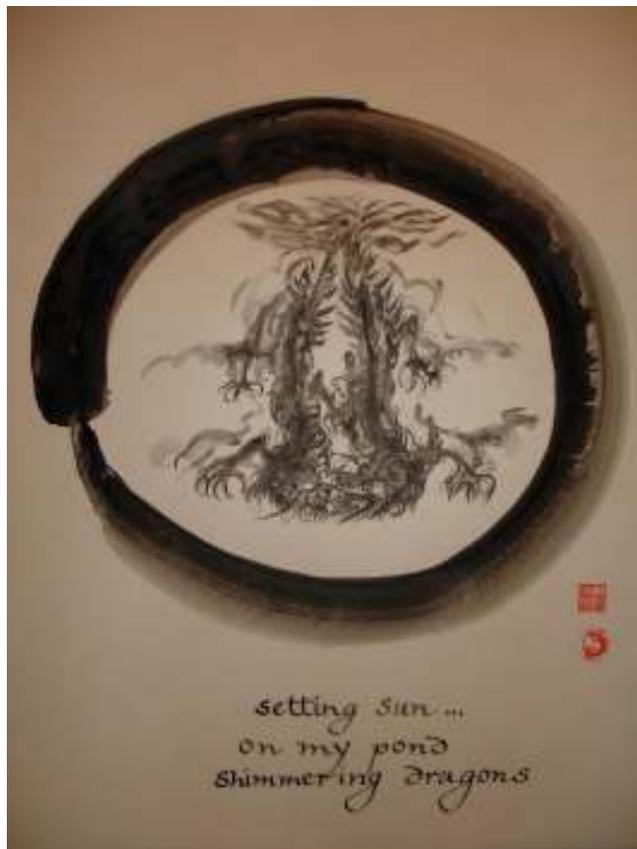
In the zen garden...
 A dog's turd,
An offering to the
 flies.

For whom

Bread on Shinto
altar,
offered to the dead
spirits...
ant food.

Joint benefits

mountain monkeys grooming,
one gets deloused
the other a light lunch



Artwork by Bill Wilson

Haiku by Koho Daniel Beaudry

sifting the sand
wave after wave always
the same

between West Hill
and all these stars
only a frog's peeping

nighttime thunder--
mountains and valleys fill
my chest

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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