

December 2010

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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Happy Holidays! "Holiday" now refers to vacations and breaks from work. Though this time of the year 'Happy Holidays' is an inclusive salutation for Christmas, Chanukah, solstice celebrations and New Year. December 8th is (Shaka-Jōdō-e) Bodhi Day. East Asian Buddhists commemorate Shakyamuni Buddha's awakening under the Bodhi tree in

December 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.

December Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

1st Visualization in Buddhist Practice. We often use visualization in our meditations. What is the background for this practice? How do we do it most effectively? Are there some precautions? We will explore the meaning and place of visualizations in Buddhist practices.

8th Bodhi Day - An observance of Siddhartha Gautama's awakening. This day is most observed in Japanese Buddhism, where it is referred to as Shaka-Jōdō-e in Tendai and some other Buddhist schools and Rohatsu in Rinzai Zen. We are initiating a new way of celebrating Shaka-Jōdō-e at the Tendai Buddhist Institute. See Jushoku's Meanders for more details

15th Exploring Religion in North America - Buddhism is one of many religious traditions practiced in the West. Religion is just one of the many phenomenon that our societies marginalize and commodify. "Hindu Group Stirs a Debate Over Yoga's Soul" (see the link below)
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/28/nyregion/28yoga.html>

what is today Bodh Gaya, in the State of Bihar, India.

[\(cont.\)](#)



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22nd Celebrating The Winter Solstice with Amida - Amida Nyorai - the Buddha of infinite light and life is the sovereign of the Western Paradise and a useful image for this special service before the New Year to come.

29th No Meditation Meeting this Wednesday. Join us for the New Year's Eve Service on January 31st.

Events

6th Morning Service and Sutra Class, 8:30 - 10:30 AM -

We have been deeply involved in an study of the *Sutra of Brahma's Net*. This work has had a profound influence on East Asian Buddhist thought and practice. The ramifications of that effect influence the ways we look at and practice Buddhism in the west. This week we will continue to examine the second volume of the translation of *The Very Mahayana Buddhist Ethics: Introduction and Translation of the Fan-wang-ching* by Shigeru Osuka.

31st-January 1st - New Year's Service, Meditation and Celebration - People will begin gathering around 10 PM.

There will be a discussion on 'The Year of the Rabbit.' From 11 PM the New Year's Service will be followed by meditation. The meditation will continue into the new year with the service concluding about 12:30 AM. From the hondo everyone will reassemble in the main house for a New Year's celebration. Bring finger foods and champagne, sake, non-alcoholic beverages, whatever you would like to share, as well as finger foods.

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)



Many people have a complicated relationship with the holidays. This time of the year may represent memories of home and hearth, family and friend; it can also be lonely and alienating to others. I have been hesitant to include Bodhi Day into the melange that is the holiday season in part because our society is so effective at marginalizing and commodifying religious observances. Perhaps it is time to embrace a day important to our tradition in spite of the corruption of meaning to other sacred faiths.

In Tendai the observance lasts about a month. This period is noted for extra periods of practice, much light and a profound sense of appreciation to our founders. This year let us join in all the festivities with our brothers and sisters of many faiths, and none. At the same time we can use this period to better observe our own tradition in a very real way.

From the beginning of Bodhi Day through the beginning of New Year commit yourself to being more diligent in your practice and be more conscious of mindfulness through the Bramha Viharas: Loving-kindness (*metta*), Compassion (*karuna*), Sympathetic Joy (*mudita*) and Equanimity (*upekkha*). Finally, enjoy the holidays with your family and friends.

Gassho . . . [Monshin](#)

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



photo by 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, you may wish to include a short statement sharing some of your thoughts to accompany it.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .

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