

2011

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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Jushoku's Meanderings

No sensation, conception, discrimination, awareness. No eyes, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. From *The Heart Sutra* and other sutras we are advised that a major source of disconnectedness, or dukkha, is the human tendency to conceptualize, discriminate, and base our view of the world upon the sense.

[\(cont.\)](#)

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 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

6 Dharma Q&A - While reading Buddhist books, sutra, or just sitting around thinking, we all come across questions regarding teachings, history, and practices. Write down your question, and you will have an opportunity to ask it during the discussion. The question should be relatively short and should address a specific aspect of the teaching and practice. No question is too basic or too difficult. Be sure to write it down so you will remember it for the evening.

13 Leaving the Lotus Position: Susan Moon on the necessity of alternative meditation postures - A discussion on postures for meditation. There are good, bad, and OK postures for meditation. We will use Susan Moon's article as a focal point for our discussion. Read the article and join us for the discussion. The article is at: <http://www.tricycle.com/-cushion/leaving-lotus-position?page=0,0>

20 Temple Etiquette - The sill is raised across the doorway to the Hondo; it's not structural. Why? We gassho as we enter the Hondo and many times after that. Why? Why do we take our shoes off in the Hondo - no, it's not because we are a Japanese Buddhist school. There are many things we do in our temple that may be misunderstood or seem like mere curiosities. That's the discussion. Oh, by the way - what's a Hondo?



27 Discussion: "Critical Questions Towards a Naturalized Concept of Karma in Buddhism" by Dale Wright - In 2005 a conference titled, "Revisioning Karma" was conducted online by the *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*. All of the conference papers may be accessed online at the *JBE* site. This evening we will discuss the plenary paper by the organizer. The article can be accessed at: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/files/2011/01/wright01.pdf>

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Events

2 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM - We are currently studying *The Sutra of Brahma's Net*. This sutra is the basis for the Bodhisattva vows in East Asian Buddhism. The vows are relevant for lay and ordained practitioners alike. This week we will continue looking at the 48 Minor precepts. The text we are using is *The Very Mahayana Buddhist Ethics: Introduction and Translation of the Fan-wang-ching*, by Shigeru Osuka.

4 7:30 pm - John L. Esposito Lecture: "Islamophobia & The Challenge of Pluralism in the 21st Century" - Location: Saint Joseph Hall, College of Saint Rose campus, 985 Madison Ave., Albany, NY. No reservation required. For more information on John Esposito go to <http://cmcu.georgetown.edu>

Notes

Flowers - There are still several months that no one has claimed for flower donation. Please sign up to provide flowers or the money for flowers for the temple. It is a fabulous way to contribute to the first of the Six Perfections - "Dana" or generosity.

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.

We are still collecting money for Japanese Disaster Relief - You can use [PayPal on our web site](#); remember to indicate that it is for disaster relief, or give the money to Shumon when you are at the Tendai Buddhist Institute.

Coming Events:

May 2 Earth Day Lobby Day, New York Interfaith Power & Light -

JOIN US AS WE GATHER AS PEOPLE OF FAITH. Come to the state capitol in Albany to share your concerns for our planet with your elected officials. No lobbying experience needed! The event is free, but if you wish to participate in the full day event, you must pre-register (nyipl.org) so we can assign you to a lobbying team. For more information, visit nyipl.org or call (315) 256-0078 Earth Day Lobby Day is sponsored by New York Public Interest Research Group, Environmental Advocates of New York, Audubon of New

York, Citizens Campaign for the Environment, New York Interfaith Power & Light, the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter, and other organizations.

May 7 One-Day Retreat: Varieties of Practice in Tendai Buddhism - Lead by Monshin Naamon at the Great River Ekayana Sangha, in Arlington, Va. For more information contact Jikan at Jikan Anderson jikananderson@gmail.com

Meanderings (cont. from side bar at left)



From an evolutionary perspective, if we were not able to discriminate and conceptualize etc. we would never have survived to become human. Certainly knowing which berries and fruits are wholesome and which ones are poisonous is necessary for our physical survival. The ability to choose an adequate leader over an incompetent leader is necessary for society. So how do we live with this contradiction?

Can the realm of the absolute and the realm of the provisional be so far apart? How do we maintain our physical integrity while fulfilling a spiritual imperative? Even our precepts are conceptual. Do not speak ill of others implies that there are good and

bad expressions. To a large extent my political affiliation is selected through the lens of my interpretation of Buddhist thought.

The proposal regarding sensation, conception, and discrimination is directed in two ways. In one way it is the recognition of the self as being inherently empty of meaning. That's pretty easy to see at an absolute level. On a provisional level the intention is that we should consider other opinions, possibilities, and in general keep an open mind. However, if we know that a particular person is closed minded and ideologically driven we don't necessarily have to listen to a rant. But it does mean that we should not automatically react without considering another person's point of view or statement. We will still make up our mind based upon the evidence that is available. But we should not have knee-jerk reactions that shut out other people. It is sometimes a difficult judgment call.

There should be plenty of room in our lives to reduce ideologies and conceptualizations that come from habit rather than from honest inquiry. Our Buddhist teachings and practices increase our compassion and wisdom to assist us in being open and respectful. The quality of being open rather than closed to other people, their ideas, and their differences, is an important aspect of Buddhist

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

Tamarack's Meditation Space



My altar is in the corner of my bedroom and the pieces on the altar are mostly gifts.

The incense holders are a stone bowl and stone container given to me by my late wife. The vajra and bell were given to me by Jack Fitterer around the time of my ordination and have anchored my practice since 2005. The gong was given to me by my late friend Barbara on my birthday a few years back. The two stones I picked up during my second and third kaihogyos specifically to put on my altar. The old Chinese box is an antique from years ago and holds some of my wife's ashes and a lock of her hair. The Buddha is a hand-carved statue from Indonesia. It takes turns with a resin Buddha that my son gave me six or seven years ago.

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.

