

November 2011

# SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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## November 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.

### November Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

**2 The Relationship between Shinto and Butsудо in Japan** - Shinto (Way of the Kami) and Butsудо (Buddha Path) are highly syncretic in Japan. They blend in an remarkable fashion that makes Japanese Butsудо, and Tendai especially, exceptional among Buddhist traditions.

**9 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 and ask it during this evening's Q&A session.

**16 Mind, Matter, or God?** - As the so-called new atheists go toe-to-toe with religious literalists, where do Buddhists and other contemplative practitioners stand? Barry Boyce reports on the middle way embracing both reason and the reality beyond it. Read the article from *Shambhala Sun* and join us in a discussion. The link to the article is: [http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3174&Itemid=247](http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3174&Itemid=247)

**23 A Thanksgiving of the Spirit** - Join us for a discussion on the role of gratitude in our spiritual life and how it manifests in the Buddhist Path. Please Note: there will NOT be a potluck dinner this evening.

**30 Time for Outrage** - This is a discussion of Stephan Hessel's thought provoking and much

heralded essay. Bill Wilson had read this small book and was so taken by it that he wanted to make it the basis of a Dharma discussion. Bill has purchased ten of these small books for people to borrow previous to the discussion. Please borrow a book and prepare yourself for an interesting discussion. There is a *New York Times* article about the book and the phenomenon it spawned at the following link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/10/books/stephane-hessel-93-calls-for-time-of-outrage-in-france.html?pagewanted=all>

## **Events**

**5 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM** - Vajrachedika Prajnāparamita 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). As one of the earliest Mahayana Sutras it is considered by many scholars as foundational to subsequent Mahayana thought. The book should be readily available. We are moving along at a breakneck pace. Don't miss this scintillating class.

**22 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at St. James Church in Chatham, 7 PM.** - Join members from a diversity of faith communities in giving thanks. The theme for the evening is "Faith Not Fear." The food items we normally contribute to the Chatham Silent Pantry will be contributed through this interfaith service.

## **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**

The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) Movement, both in New York City and around the country, has become a cause de celebre to different Buddhist sangha and teachers around the US. Blogs and articles in the mainline Buddhist publications, including Tricycle, Turning Wheel and Wisdom Quarterly support the protestors and advocate for widespread Buddhist involvement.

As a matter of full disclosure, I personally support in principle the protestors and many of the causes they advocate. However, as a Buddhist leader I am not making support of OWS a Buddhist cause, nor am I denying the inherent tie-in between OWS and Buddhist teachings.

The protestors, like the protest itself, seem an ever flowing wave of ideas, grievances, and proposals, surging forward and dropping back. Anyone who is unhappy with the economy, corporatocracy, and a myriad of other inequalities can project their own uncertainties onto the wave and be carried along by its momentum. At the very least, the protests address a socio-political-economic dysfunction that has led to high unemployment, an all-time high Income inequality in the United States, and a lack of political will to make inroads into the problems.

Where will this lead? Maybe to change, maybe to a footnote in history.

In this context the point I would like to make is that there should be a very definitive line between religion and politics in the US. As Buddhists we must be aware of that line and cross it at our peril.

We can support equality; individual, class, economic and racial. We can support peace and non-violence. We can support social justice and all that means. We can be the voice for immigration reform and human rights. I can go on and on because there are many causes that require our voices. But, we cannot do it in the name of a political party or politician as 'Buddhists.'

It is understandable for those who consider themselves primarily 'engaged Buddhists' to want to join the wave and be part of the solution. If they do so as individuals they are responsible for themselves and their own conscience. May the wind be at their backs. However, if they do so as engaged 'Buddhists' they are using the Buddhadharma as a political instrument. Let there be no mistake, the OWS movement is ultimately going to be used as a political device if it is going to accomplish anything.

Additionally, there are going to be those in such a movement who will violate Buddhist values. All those involved directly in the movement will be painted with the same brush as the most violent, the most unreasonable, the most irresponsible. Do we wish to be identified with those actions as well as being identified as Buddhist?

We must, as Buddhists, be a moral, ethical, spiritual, and compassionate voice of reason in a world that is fraying at the edges. But, when it is political action that is required we must use the Buddhadharma as a guide, but the action must be our own without a Buddhist label.

Gassho . . . [Monshin](#)



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**Our Other Sangha:**

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[Tendai Denmark](#)

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

**Poem by Allen Livermore . . .**

"Letting Go of Disapproval"

I'm  
Letting go of  
Disapproval. I'm  
Done.  
Gonna'  
Open my fist and  
Release that  
Red-hot coal  
From my palm.  
Gonna'  
Calmly step  
Aside as that  
135 mph line drive  
Seeks me out.  
Gonna'  
Stuff it in a

Salvation Army  
Box.  
I must have  
Washed it  
Too many times  
Or else  
I've grown,  
Because it  
Doesn't fit  
Anymore and  
I can't be constrained by  
Tiny  
Legs and  
Sleeves.

Come to think about it,  
I'm giving disapproval a  
Second chance.  
Disapproval and I  
Go way back.  
We've had our  
Problems and  
Good times, too.  
We can work it out.  
Gonna'  
Take disapproval  
To the prom.  
Gonna'  
Rent a limo.  
Gonna'  
Complement her on  
Her appearance, shake her Dad's  
Hand and have her back  
By 1 AM.

I'm making space  
for disapproval.  
Gonna'  
Tidy the house.  
Gonna'  
Wash dishes.

Gonna'  
Take out the garbage,  
Open my ears and  
Let in ordinary, everyday sounds.  
Is that how the hyena  
Got its  
Laugh?

. . . And Nikita, the dharma dog . . .



**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 . . .**

Shingi Editor  
Koho J. Daniel Beaudry  
[beaudryjd@mac.com](mailto:beaudryjd@mac.com)