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### In This Issue

- Events Calendar
- Meanderings
- The Third Jewel

### Jushoku's Meanderings

Right View or Right Understanding is the first of the Noble Eightfold Path's teachings. These teachings were given in one of the first discourses provided by Shakyamuni Buddha following his enlightenment [\(cont.\)](#)



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## October 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.



### October Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

**3 Guest Lecturer - Roger Whitmer** - Discussing the book *Why Buddhism is True* by Robert Wright. A review by Peter Singer - "What happens when someone steeped in evolutionary psychology takes a cool look at Buddhism? If that person is, like Robert Wright, a gifted writer, the answer is this surprising, enjoyable, challenging, and potentially life-changing book."

**10 Shumon and Monshin's Pilgrimage to Japan** - Well it was not exactly a pilgrimage, but, it had some of the same characteristics. A discussion on their recent journey and what is in the planning stages for Tendai Buddhist Institute.

**17 What does it mean to 'Practice Buddhism'** - There are various terms used for people who consider themselves Buddhists. We use terms like 'night stand Buddhists', 'devotional Buddhists', 'sangha members', etc. Who is Buddhist and what does that mean in the long run. This is not so much definitional, it is more of an exploration.

**24 Back to Basics - The Five Skandas** - Taken as a whole these five characteristics constitute the conception of self or I. What does this mean exactly, and how does it vary, depending on the school of Buddhism to which one subscribes.

**31 What is the Role of Buddhism in the Political Process** - How can there not be a role for Buddhism if we are true to the teachings of the Buddhadharmā? The real issue is how does this role manifest and how does it direct our thoughts and actions? Let get to it.

### Other Events in October:

**13 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM** - The *Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra* (Heart Sutra) is the most often chanted, cited and best known sutra in the Mahayana canon. We will read and discuss two different translations and commentaries (Mu Soeng's and Red Pine's) as a set throughout the classes We will be finishing this sutra soon. Join us for the finale, this month or next..

### NOTES:

**Food Pantry at Jiunzan Tendai-ji** - Gratitude is best shown by extending to others the thoughtfulness we have received. Please bring non-perishable food items to the Tendai Buddhist Institute on Wednesday's. We contribute these items to the Chatham Silent Food Pantry.

## Meanderings (cont. from side bar at left)



I suspect that a monotheistic world view leads one to compare these teachings to the Ten commandments. These eight principles are not intended as commandments or injunctions. They were, and are, practices for the development of awakening.

The word 'Right' at the beginning of each teaching refers to something which is complete and wholesome in and of itself. Thus, we might think of the first teaching as, 'Wholesome Understanding'. The Noble Eightfold Path is separated into three categories, ethics, mental discipline, and wisdom. Right Understanding and Right Thought are in the wisdom grouping.

This does not suppose that there is only one way 'right way' of looking at something; it refers to the interrelatedness of a fundamental principle of Buddhist thought. Right Understanding is dependent on the conditions around which the understanding is formulated.

Right Understanding is a critical teaching; we must comprehend it as intended. At it's most basic it refers to insight into the nature of reality. It becomes more intricate, interpreted, and subtle, as we dig deeper into what that truly means.

Reality in this case refers first to the Four Noble Truth; the reality concerning the existence of suffering, the origin of suffering, the extinction of suffering, and the path that leads to the extinction of suffering. Here it is worth noting that noble should be translated as ennobling, that is to confer upon someone or something as nobility, dignity or honor, or to put it another way, the realization of this truth, not intellectually, but in the marrow of one's being, awakening.

When first examining Buddhist teachings a person reads this succinct primer on the nature of reality, search a little deeper and then move on to what they perceive are the more sophisticated and 'advanced' teachings. What we often fail to recognize is that this is the advanced teaching. It is the very heart of the matter. All the other teachings are commentary, expansion, and further explication of this vital issue.

We might even move along to more philosophically satisfying teachings because Wholesome Understanding is so profound that its importance is lost in its simplicity, in its elemental context.

One of the earliest interpretations of Buddhism was that its teachings were nihilistic. Dukkha - translated as suffering - is not what we wish to confront. Of course, this is an incomplete rendering of the term. There are times of suffering, discontentedness, pain, and distress. There are times of joy, pleasure, comfort, and contentment. Sometimes the negative seems overwhelming and the positive seems fleeting. These are all subjective perceptions of the conditions within and outside of us, our loved ones, neighbors and those we can only imagine.

Ennobling Understanding is the Kokoro of life in its intricacy, life in its most nuanced. Our joy and suffering is no more or less than that of the brightest star when at its most dynamic or at its eventual collapse. It is the nature of existence that everything is born, grows old, experiences pain, and dies. In between and during these events there is radiance and splendor. To be attached to any of these conditions is to lose equanimity.

Life is not so much suffering as suffering as attachment to the notion that we should be exempt from the nature of life - of the universe. That is why it is necessary when sad to experience sadness and to experience joy as joyfulness. Most importantly, be a force of agency, assisting all sentient beings in constructive ways. You are a part of the universe. No more no less. That is Right Understanding.

Love and Gassho ..... Monshin

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

from  
"Twelve Reckless Tanka"

*The cold sand under the hot sun thickens the haze.  
When will I see you more clearly?*

by Kimiko Hahn



*Ichishima-sensei's temple in Inzai City, Chiba*

Kimiko Hahn's latest book is Brain Fever. These unconventional tanka are printed here with her permission. She is Tomie Hahn's sister.

**And as always, please do send us news from your sangha! Your poetry, your images, your suggestions! Gassho!**

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .

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