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Jushoku's Meanderings

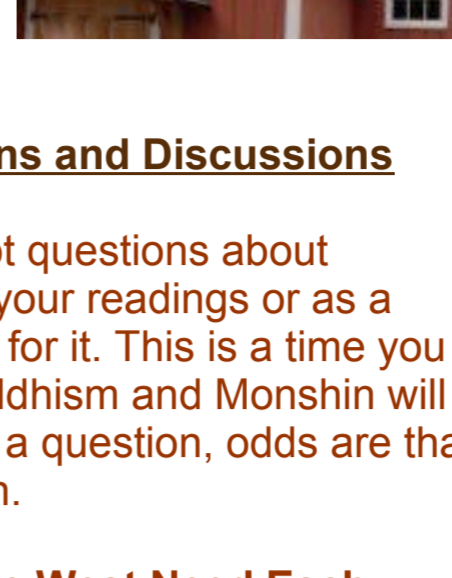
Once upon a time, I would sit down to write the meanderings and think about what I wanted to convey and how to say it. Perhaps it would be on a theme from something I just read, or a question that had come up during a discussion; there are various ways to come up with a subject to write about. At times I sit and agonize while staring at a blank screen, or write, toss it away and write again. (cont.)

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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

7 Stump the Sense! - Got questions about Buddhism that recently came up in your readings or as a result of our weekly discussion? Go for it. This is a time you can ask any question regarding Buddhism and Monshin will do his best to answer it. If you have a question, odds are that other people have a similar question.

14 Why Buddhism and the West Need Each Other: On the Interdependence of Personal and Social Transformation - by David Loy. This is an article in the online Journal of Buddhist Ethics. Read the article and discuss it this evening. David Loy will be speaking at the College of St. Rose, as indicated above. You will find the article at: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/category/volume-20-2013/>. Click on the article, or cut and paste it into your browser, then scroll down to the article.

20 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service 7- 8:30 pm "Giving thanks over troubled waters. Bridging our communities with humility, gratitude, generosity and harmony." This is an opportunity for our faith community to gather with other faith communities in our area in common worship during this most special of holidays. The service will be held at St. James Roman Catholic Church, at the intersection of Routes 66 and 203 in Chatham, NY.

21 No Meditation Service this Evening - Please attend the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service listed above and join with the larger community.

28 Zhiyi's Memorial Day - Recently Shoshin Jacan sent an article, "Zhiyi's Deep Imprint on East Asian Buddhism", from *Buddhadharma* by Jacqueline Stone. It is a review of Paul Swanson's recent translation of *Clear Serenity, Quiet Insight*. We will use this as a starting point to discuss Zhiyi and his vast contributions to Buddhism. The article will be available starting in November.

Other Events in November:

1 The Chatham Synagogue Netivot Torah is having a Memorial Service for the community in light of the Pittsburgh tragedy. Thursday, November 1st, at 6:30PM at 1536 Route, 28 in Valatie. Please consider being present on this occasion to show our support for the Jewish community during their grief.

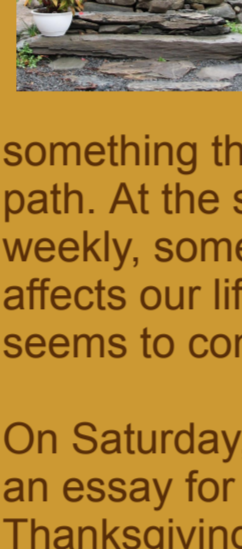
3 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM - The *Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra* (Heart Sutra) is the most often chanted, cited and best known sutra in the Mahayana canon. We will read and discuss two different translations and commentaries (Mu Soeng's and Red Pine's) as a set throughout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

6 VOTE !!!

13 A Healing Ecology? Buddhist Reflections on the Eco-Crises by David Loy. The 2018 Vickery Speaker in Ethics and Leadership, at the College of Saint Rose, Lally School of Education, 1009 Madison Ave., from 7:00 - 9:00 PM. Monshin will be the moderator for the evening. We will be discussing one of his articles for the meditation service the next evening.

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)


Then about two years ago, the world tilted ajar. I would sit down and think about what I was going to write, using the methods I'd used in the past. But, increasingly I was struggling with, should the subject matter be Buddhist teachings, history, philosophy, or should I respond to the most recent egregious actions playing out on the world, or national stage. To be clear, I often feel that I need to write about something that gives the reader an insight into the Buddhist path. At the same time I know that we are preoccupied on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, with disturbing news that affects our life. Clearly, I do not wish to feed the monster that seems to consume us with alarming updates.

On Saturday, the 27th of October I had pretty much finished an essay for meanderings on gratitude in Buddhism; Thanksgiving will be here soon. I was rewriting for clarity and cleaning up the typos, etc. While taking a break I heard horrifying news.

No matter how I might wish to ignore what's going on outside my study, my heart was aching, my mind going back to the events; a racist killing of two African-Americans in a supermarket in Kentucky when a white nationalist could not gain entrance to a church, pipe bombs being delivered to political opponents and the media around the country, and then, and then, 11 Jewish congregants murdered and four others wounded in a synagogue on Shabbat in Pittsburgh.

The above events cannot be ignored. One of the things I noticed is that we are not trying to solve the issues of violence and the proliferation of guns in America. It is a much larger more pernicious issue.

The study in the house no longer feels safe; Buddhist teachings bring some consolation, but how do we ignore the anger, hatred, and bigotry of our fellow Americans. That's right, this is not some sort of foreign plot carried out by those wishing to wage war on foreign soil. It is not some misguided person suffering from an emotional or psychological disorder. These are 'fellow Americans'. And fellows they are - white nationalist males, who have been given license to hate and do violence.

It is now October 31, and I'm writing this rather than preparing my discussion for the evening, which paradoxically is on 'What is the Role of Buddhism in the Political Process'. Why so late, what happened between today and several days earlier? This week I have been called upon to attend panels, discussions, and conversations, on healing and dealing with tragedy. This is not something that one just shows up for, one prepares intellectually and emotionally. Tomorrow night, there is one more joining together with members of the Chatham Synagogue.

The racist, antisemitic, anti-immigrant, anti-Islamic, homophobic, misogynist, nativist, and nationalist rhetoric, and the tolerance of this hateful talk at many levels, has produced an effect that goes far beyond the lust for political power using 'fear of the other' as a centerpiece of political discourse. Yes, the media is complicit and ramps up the temperature for ratings, but the content for this message is produced for political advantage. And, no, it is not the same on both sides.

This is a rather personal essay because we should take these events personally. We should feel the pain of the African-American community, personally. We should feel threatened by those who would make pipe bombs and send them to their enemies, personally. We should endure the pain and fear of the Jewish community, personally.

I am not going to provide platitudes and comforting words. Let us bear witness to the pain. We are taught that when there is pain we take that pain, transform it, and extend *Karuna* (compassion). We use *karuna* with *prajña* (wisdom) employing *upaya* (skill-in-means). This requires that we extend our *Kokoro* (hearts=mind=spirit) first in sympathy and empathy to those who have lost so much, and then act to change the future course of events. Tea and sympathy are not enough. Standing up to the bullies, walking with the marginalized, discriminated, weak, and powerless, is not an option - it is a duty. We must find ways that fit our character and capacity to do this effectively. To be complacent is to be complicit.

We start by voting on Tuesday, November 6th. Then we work to change the political culture into one of civility, rather than winning at any cost. We do not get angry, that only diminishes our effectiveness, and brings anguish, confusion, and emotional pain to ourselves.

We work constructively to educate and diminish the hatred in those who would bring us harm. We must have resolve and understanding, gaining insight into the nature of the threats. We do what we can to empower those who have been dominated and subjugated. We can do this. We need to do this. We will do this.

I would like to provide some of the text I will deliver at the Chatham Synagogue Netivot Torah on Thursday, November 1st :

There is nothing the Buddhist community, nor I, can do or say to console this synagogue and the Jewish community. Be assured our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Pittsburgh and especially with the Tree of Life* or L'Simcha Synagogue.

This was an assault not only on the Jewish community, though the pain is much deeper there; it was an assault on all faith communities. We should remember there were two African American's killed in a supermarket when a white nationalist could not gain entry to a predominantly Black church in Kentucky this last weekend.

The virulent anti-Semitism and bigotry, the hate, that has been unleashed has been an ugly thread that has in the past, and still is, running through the fabric of our society, and we see it rising in other societies around the globe, as well as our own. This is not new; it is now more evident because of recent events.

The interconnectedness of the universe binds us all together. At times of crises we join together for support and succor. That is the way it should be. When one of us is hurting we are all in pain. Let us all stand together in defiance against hate.

Not in anger, but with loving kindness for each other that we hold in common with all the faith traditions. I am reminded that Kaddish, a version of which is recited for the deceased, does not refer to death, but to the glory of the divine. We should memorialize those who have perished, we should mourn, sit shiva, rend our clothing in anguish. Then join together with resolve to do what we must to dispel the hatred against us.

Again, not with anger, but with the knowledge that each of our communities is not alone, we are each an integral component of the larger, open, welcoming, and loving faith community. We stand with you at the time of our loss.

Love and Gassho Monshin

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

today again
death draws nearer...
the wildflowers



don't go geese!
everywhere it's a floating world
of sorrow



this dewdrop world
is but a dewdrop world,
and yet

three haiku by Issa

two photographs by Susan Bues taken at the memorial service at Netivot Torah Synagogue

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