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Jushoku's Meanderings

Welcome to the New Year 2019! This is the Year of the Earth Boar or Pig. In East Asian cultures, pigs are the symbol of wealth. Thus, it is a year for material advantage. At the same time 2019 is going to be full of joy, a year of friendships. It is an auspicious year because the Pig attracts success in all the spheres of life. In terms of yin and yang, the Boar is yin.
(cont.)



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January Events Calendar

Weekly Meditation Services

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.



January Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

31/1 O-Shōgatsu (New Year's) Service - Gather from about 10:30 PM, the Meditation Service in the Hondo begins at about 11:15 PM. Following the service, we assemble for a New Year's celebration in the Kuri. Please bring finger foods, appetizers, and drinks that you would like to share. We will have sake and non-alcoholic sparkling beverage, as well as soft drinks. The emphasis on the evening is bringing in the New Year with equanimity and celebrating with sangha, friends and family. All are welcome.

2 No Discussion, Meditation Service, and Pot Luck Dinner this Evening - Join us Monday evening for the O-Shōgatsu Service.

9 What is Buddhism - We will examine contemporary conceptions and misconceptions about the Buddha- dharma. This should be a good primer, a way to dust off our prejudices, and an invitation to revise our ideas about Buddhist history, culture and society. I will use Faure's *Unmasking Buddhism* as a starting point.

16 A Survey of the Saddharma Puṅḍarīka Sutra, (Lotus Sutra) - Why is this sutra important in the development to Mahayana Buddhism? We will examine a chapter of influential Buddhist work once a month for the foreseeable future.

23 Tendai-shu Anniversary Observance - What makes Tendai distinct? - Perhaps distinct is not the correct term because Tendai is seminal to many other forms of East Asian Buddhism. We will examine essential elements of Tendai Buddhism near its anniversary on the 26th of January.

30 Awakening is Not a Miracle - What is awakening, is it possible for anyone, when will it occur, what's the difference between awakening and Enlightenment? These and other issues revolving around a basic Buddhist concept will be addressed.

Other Events in January:

5 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.

5 11 AM, please join the Dharma School of the Tendai Buddhist Institute for a family day celebration. The first temple visit of the year is understood to be an auspicious occasion. Family service and meditation will be followed by a potluck lunch. Feel free to bring friends, family, and little ones. Happy New Year!"

20 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance: 2:00 PM (Sunday) at St. James Church, Chatham, NY. The celebration will include music and readings from Dr. King's speeches and writings. The keynote speaker will be Rabbi Israel "Si" Dresner, who personally knew and marched with Dr. King, visited with him when Dr. King and others were jailed, and himself was jailed during the protests against segregation. There is no charge for admission and all are welcome to join the celebration of Dr. King's life and contribution to our country.

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)



As we have a Yin Earth year in 2019, we can expect mixed energies although there should be good news on the horizon with world events and hopefully a more calming influence with huge leaps forward in relationships worldwide. This year should be better than the last in material ways. Two-thousand-eighteen has been a stepping stone for 2019. Sounds great. It would be nice if such a prediction will be fulfilled.

Speaking for myself I have experienced a socio-cultural backlash combined with a deep introspection in the last year. It was 50 years ago (1968) that I experienced a similar year, that was during the American aggression in Viet Nam. Today partisan politics have dominated our national discourse. Occurring at the same time we see the rise of reactionary politics around the world. Posturing politicians and media outlets that feed the beast give us the impression that every tweet and impulsive utterance is of utmost importance. This is not to say that the consequences of these political processes are not important, it may very well determine the future of the American experiment in democracy, as well as liberal democracies in Europe, South America, and Asia.

Human reasoning faculties are superb at certain skills but notoriously bad at risk assessment. Add to that ideologies that are more concerned with perpetuating political power than what is most beneficial for the people writ large and we have a toxic mix.

That said, a major determinate of the wellbeing of all sentient beings on our mother the earth has largely been relegated to an obscure corner of reportage - climate change (aka, global warming). The environmental crises that we are currently experiencing has become a political question rather than scientific certainty. It is an issue used primarily for political gain.

That is not to say that race, gender, criminal justice, economic inequality, religious bigotry, immigration, and other vital issues are of less importance. These other problems are all highly impacted by environmental degradation. It is the marginalized, disenfranchised, and discriminated that pay a disproportionate price for societies inattention to the environment. We do not ignore our social problems, we continue to resist the forces that block progress toward equality and justice. We do so while elevating the environmental predicaments to a priority in our intentions and actions.

There are no direct, specific, references to the environment in the Buddhist canon. In the Abrahamic traditions humans have dominion over all the creatures of the field and the earth itself. Buddhism by contrast asserts that humans are a part of the earth, one of all the many species that inhabit our environment. Every creature, tree, rock, cloud, mountain, sea, all that we perceive, is a part of the universe itself. When we ignore the wellbeing of the earth, we ignore our own wellbeing.

When we follow the first of the Four Bodhisattva Vows to 'liberate all sentient beings' [from dukkha (suffering and discontentedness)] let us look beyond our species as the recipients of dukkha. Let us include the discrimination, inequality, injustice toward our brothers and sisters, but, let us not overlook all sentient beings - the rivers, the hills, the animals of the fields, the air we breathe. In this new year strive for an awakening that is greater than our own individual insight into the nature of reality.

Using *Upaya* (skill in means) guided by *Prajna* (wisdom) let our *Karuna* (compassion) address our loved ones, our acquaintances, those with whom we disagree, to transform our actions from selfishness, greed and willful ignorance to healing the earth, of which we are part. Let us fulfill the prophesy of the Year of the Earth Boar that it be full of joy, a year of friendships, an auspicious year with a calming influence and huge leaps forward in relationships worldwide. Make this a joyous commitment for all sentient beings in the New Year. Have an equanimous New Year.

Love and Gassho Monshin and Shumon

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

A Little Monk of the Daschoilin monastery in Ulan Batar by David Rubin



David says:

This was taken, by me, in Ulan Batar, Mongolia. The abbot gave me permission to photograph anywhere in the monastery and this young monk kept staring at me so I "shot" him.

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

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .

Shingi Editor
Chorin Peter Donahoe
pdonahoe2010@gmail.com