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**March 2013**

# SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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## Jushoku's Meanderings

Dawn is rising as we begin to sit meditation in the morning these last few days. It was not many days ago we would perform the daily service and sit meditation in complete darkness outside. By the time we are finished with meditation now we walk outside to the sun over the horizon, Even though it is snowing it feels like spring. My father told me that spring snow is the very best fertilizer, it cause the crops to take earlier and the flowers to bloom sooner.  
(cont.)

## March 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.

### March Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

**6 Ten Ox Herding Pictures** -the pictures, poems and short pieces of prose tell how the spiritual seeker searches the countryside for the "Ox"; a common metaphor for enlightenment. We will examine the ox herding pictures along with the accompanying text as a guide to the path.

**13 Tantric Buddhism**- the origins, and development of esoteric Buddhism. In Japan this is called *mikkyo* - a vital aspect of Japanese Tendai. Much more than ritual and ceremony it is a particular set of practices, lineages and ideologies.

**20 Nagarjuna's Verses from the Center** We will use Stephen Batchelor's poetic translation of the *Mulamadhyamakakarika* as an exploration of *sunyata*, an essential Mahayana philosophy.

**27 Early Buddhist Symbols** - an exploration of the earliest Buddhist iconography and statuary. These early symbols can reveal much about how Shakyamuni Buddha was viewed by acolytes in the centuries after his death..

### Other events in March:

**2 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM**  
- *Vajrachedika Prajnaparamita Sutra* (The Diamond Sutra). It is as one of the earliest Mahayana sutras and is considered



by many scholars as foundational to subsequent Mahayana thought. Don't miss this informative and fun class. The book used for this class is *The Diamond Sutra: transforming the way we perceive the world*, by Mu Soeng; Wisdom Publications (2000).

### **Quicklinks**

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### **Our Other Sangha:**

[Blue Mountain Sage Sangha--Denver, CO](#)

[Celestial Drum Sangha--Indian Lake, NY](#)

[California Tendai Buddhist Monastery](#)

[Tendai Denmark](#)

[Flowing Rivers - Ottawa, Ontario, Canada](#)

[Great River Ekayana Sangha--Arlington, VA](#)

[Nagado Sangha--Springfield, MA](#)

[Nishi Sangha--Albany, NY](#)

[Red Maple Sangha--Renfrew, Ottawa, Canada](#)

**10 Mahasangha Sunday and Buddhist Film Evening - 4:00- 7:30 PM.** The You read it right - trying something different. First we will enjoy a Mahasangha service followed by a light potluck dinner and a Buddhist movie. A sangha function for the spirit, stomach and mind.

**22-24 O-Higan Retreat - Mindfulness , Contemplation and Exploration** O-Higan is the time of the year in which these simple, yet profound, concepts are sculpted into a coherent whole. Join us for meditations, practices, and teachings that revolve around the Six Perfections and Tendai teachings. We will begin Friday evening at 7:30 and finish about 1 PM on Sunday. Please reserve a spot early.

### **Upcoming Events April**

**6 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM**

### **Notes:**

**Food Pantry at Jiunzan Tendai-ji** - The need is much greater than the resources of the local food pantries, especially at this time of year. Please bring non-perishable food items to the Tendai Buddhist Institute on Wednesdays. We contribute these items to the Chatham Silent Food Pantry.

**The Sangha needs people to volunteer to donate flowers for for several months of 2013.** Please sign up to be responsible to bring or pay for flowers for one month during 2013. The signup sheet is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. This is a wonderful way to share with your sangha.

Meanderings (cont. from side bar at left)



The sun rising earlier reminds me that it is also time for O-Higan, which of course is the one week observance around the equinox. It is a time of reflection, intensified observance of the Six Perfections, pilgrimages and retreats.

Recently we have explored the topic of traditionalism and modernism in the Buddhadharma. The continuum from tradition to modern is marked by liberation from tradition and the collective. As McMahan [1] writes, "In this condition, individuals can critically reflect on the 'givens' of culture and religion and choose to accept or reject." (p. 58)

That is the very focus of O-Higan. It is a time for retreats in which contemplation and reflection dominate; it is a time to

reflect on the Six Perfections as a means of honing oneself. It seems to me to be an ideal Modernist Buddhist activity.

We will observe this period with a further warning on the same page by McMahan, "Individuals are now free, but at the cost of giving up the sacralized world full of magic and meaning: they are now compelled to confront a world with inherent significance, risking anomie and nihilism."

As we observe the provisional self in relation to the world around us, the phenomenon of self and non-self, we must be especially free from conceptualization. Join us during this period for reflection and be prepared for the unexpected.

[1] McMahan, D. (2008) *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Oxford University press.

*Gassho . . . Monshin*

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

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### Samsara and the Wolf

In the mirror, I see an elaborate pencil drawing  
that is slowly erasing itself.  
The tones fading to white, lines lighter, truncated

At no particular moment, no marked cadence such as a  
church bell, a wedding, dawn, nor dusk  
the vanishing marks of illusory permanence are studied,  
as the blind would read a book of braille before the covers close.

The segments of the bitter, the spaces of fond remembrance  
accumulate in a small, heap of particles that just...go away  
like summer hail melting down into waters of the sweet earth  
that made the paper, the pencil, the artists, the viewers

The hands that raised the image, wizened of time,  
are now regarded as the paws of a tattered and slowing gray wolf  
that dig and scratch out furrows on dusty, windswept mountain tops  
wanting, searching, finding, having, losing, remembering,  
and shrieking at the full moon in desire  
of what can never be seen, yet can never be erased.

- Kosei Michael Sanders 2013

### Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .

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