

November 2012

# SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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## Jushoku's Meanderings

The devastation of Hurricane Sandy and the accompanying nor'easter brought the force of nature into our consciousness once again. I tend to side with those scientists who argue that a specific event such as hurricane Sandy is not indicative of a trend, but cannot be ignored as a point on a trend line. Independent of the ultimate origination of these storms we must be aware that such forces will occur in the future.

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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 Q&A** -This is your chance. Some people are shy about asking a certain question because they think, 'it's only interesting to me.' Chances are other people have the same question but are also too shy to ask. Come prepared with questions.

**14 Nagarjuna - as interpreted by the Chinese** This discussion of Nagarjuna (ca.150-250 CE) focuses on how his philosophy and practices led to a flowering of Buddhist teachings in China.

**21 Teachings on Gratitude** - It is the time of year when we look inward and appreciate the many gifts we have been given. **Please Note:** This is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving; we will not have a potluck dinner. However, a sangha member has graciously volunteered to prepare ahead, pizza for all those who would like to stay for a traditional 'pizza night' before thanksgiving. We will need a count of the people who anticipate staying and joining us for homemade pizza. Please look for a sign-up sheet or let



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Koshin know - he will keep the tally.

**28 A Gray Matter: Another look at Buddhism and Neuroscience.** - By Bernard Faure in Winter 2012 Tricycle: A Buddhist Review. A discussion of the article and its relevance to our practice will be based upon the article. A pdf will be available for those attending the discussion. Please let us know at least two weeks in advance and we will provide it.

### **Other events in November:**

**3 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 enjoyable class. Please obtain the following book for this class - The Diamond Sutra: transforming the way we perceive the world, by Mu Soeng; Wisdom Publications (2000).

**20 Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at. 7:30 PM at St. James Church in Chatham-** We will be participating. Join us in common worship with our brothers and sisters in the faith communities.

### **Upcoming Events**

**12/1 Sutra Class as above**

**12/26 No Meditation Service this Wednesday.**  
Join us for the New Year's Eve Service

**12/31 New Year's Eve Service** - Gather from about 10:30 PM, the Meditation Service in the hondo begins at 11:15 PM. Following the service we will assemble for a New Year's celebration in the house. 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 in equanimity and celebrating with sangha, friends and family. All are welcome.

### **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.

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



Various national, state and local leaders all reminded us that it is our obligation to assist others during these times of regional catastrophe. Giving to charities that provide assistance is encouraged. Almost to a person these leaders asked us to pray for the victims and the survivors of the storms. I couldn't help but think of the implicit theology behind their kind intentions as I heard them make this plea. We live in a nation in which the majority of people believe in a monotheistic God whether their faith tradition is Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or Mormon.

Buddhists in the West, especially those who grew up in other traditions, have an interesting position in which some accommodate a monotheistic God into their set of beliefs and practices, others reject it, and yet others are open-minded of it with no commitment one way or another. At Thanksgiving time many of us will attend an interfaith service. During the service we will hear many times over words to the effect that we all believe in the same God, and many of us Buddhists will say to ourselves inwardly "Ain't necessarily so."

From a Buddhist modernist perspective we recognize the value of prayer, though we have many different ways of accommodating it. On one level we might assert that we cannot change events through prayerful solicitation. To some, we can influence the consciousness of those around us including our environment through our intention. For all we recognize the power that prayer and gratitude can have on our own attitudes towards others, which in fact will make positive change.

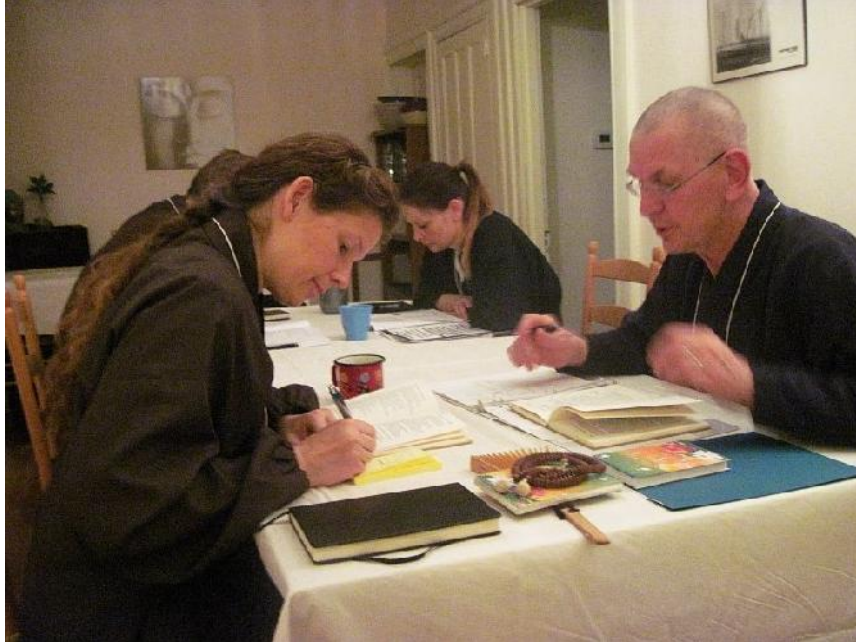
It is important during this time of year when we offer gratitude, when we join others in prayer and also when we pray for those affected by the storms, that we not separate ourselves from other people with sectarian, philosophical, or religious barriers. To see ourselves as distinct from others in this respect is in fact not a Buddhist response. With an open heart, an open mind, and generosity of spirit, joins our brothers and sisters in other religious traditions, or in no religious tradition, in the very human sense of gratitude and desire for the well-being of all. Enjoy Thanksgiving.

*Gassho . . . Monshin*

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

Some Photographs from the recent Betsuin Gyo:



The Gyo-ja study and practice many things, including creating the morning and evening services



The gyo participants meet and have a conversation with their Grand Sensei, Ichishima-Sensei



Monshin, Ito-San and Ueno-San



The Goma Ceremony, conducted by Ito-San, with Shumon-San assisting



ceremony processional



the new ordinates taking their vows



Gyo-ja never stand alone and always thrive on the support of the Sangha

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