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April 2017

SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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The Third Jewel

Jushoku's Meanderings

Tanizaki Junichiro's *In Praise of Shadows* is one of my favorite pieces of writing. He is one of Japan's most distinguished novelists. However, this essay is quite different from his better known, *Makioka Sisters*, *Naomi*, and

April 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.

April Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

5 Hana Matsuri, or Flower Festival: Shakyamuni Buddha's Birthday- we will be celebrating with a special service that includes washing the baby Buddha with sweet tea. The discussion center on Shakyamuni Buddha's birth and its significance for today. If possible bring fresh flowers and fruit as an offering.

12 Bishamonten- An important deity in esoteric Buddhism. He is the image to the left of Yakushi Nyorai on our *shumedan* (front altar). We will examine this fascinating Buddhist guardian deity in concept, origins, and practices.

19 Sangha: A Discussion - a conversation with sangha moderated by members of the Sodai (Temple Advisers). Join this far-reaching discussion regarding the relevance and function of sangha in contemporary Buddhism in America.



Some prefer *Nettles*, this fifty-six page essay addresses Japanese aesthetics, including, the use of space, architecture, lighting, food and other topics.

[\(cont.\)](#)



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Our Other Sangha:

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

26 Death in Buddhism: - Understanding death from a Buddhist perspective reveals important lessons about life. We will examine some major Buddhist themes that revolve around the end of life.

Other Events in April:

1 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 sutras 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.

1 The Hoping Machine presents "Music for the March" - Doors open at 6:30 PM and the show begins at 7PM at the Guthrie Center, Division Street, Great Barrington, MA. This is a fundraiser for transportation to convey people to the People's Climate March in Washington, D.C. held on March 29th.

If you would like to take the bus to the People's Climate March, contact Toni at [foto\(at\)antonianahas.de](mailto:foto(at)antonianahas.de) for more information and/or to sign up.

3 Vatican II: Nostra Aetate then and Now - 7 PM- A Roundtable Conversation with Dr. Judith Banki and Rev. James Kane, moderated by Rev. Christopher DeGiovine. This interfaith program is hosted by the Sidney & Beatrice Albert Interfaith Lectureship. Dr. Banke was a participant at Vatican II and Rev. Kane is Director and ecumenical Officer of the roman Catholic Diocese of Albany. The event is held at the College of St. Rose, Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary, 959 Madison Avenue, Albany, NY

For this 20th anniversary of the Hubbard Interfaith Sanctuary there has been an Interfaith Art Show; five of Tendai Buddhist Institute calligraphy is on exhibit during this event along with art from many other religious traditions.

4 Wholehearted Recovery Group, 7:00 - 8:30 PM; in affiliation with the Buddhist Recovery Network. This is a sit and share meditation group, open to all who identify to be in recovery from something and anything. Incorporates Buddhist Five Lay Precepts and Self-Help 12-steps and traditions. All levels of meditative practice welcome.

23 3 - 4:30 PM. The People's Concert for Peace. Tendai Buddhist Institute: Shakuhachi Flute by Tomie Hahn, Albany Hindu Temple: Classical Dance by Ragahastha Performing Arts, Macedonia Baptist Church: The Praise Ensemble, a Gospel Choir. Location: Madison Theater, Albany, NY. Tickets: a \$5 donation is requested. All money after expenses will be shared with local charities. Join us for us for a multicultural, interfaith, program that bridges the gap between people of different backgrounds and perspectives in pursuit of a shared peace.

Together we can bring the spirit, beauty, and grace, of dance, shakuhachi flute, and a gospel choir, to explore peace in a compelling fashion. This program is in

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

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

[Winding Path
Tendai Buddhist
Sangha
Springfield, MA](#)

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

association with Albany Pro Musica's *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* at EMPAC, RPI, in Troy on May 6th.

Notes and Upcoming Events:

Provide flowers for a month at Tendai Buddhist Institute / Jiunzan Tendai-ji. You can either bring them yourself or pay to have them purchased for you. There is a sign-up sheet on the notice board in the kitchen. Shumon (Tamami). Providing flowers for the hondo is a service to the temple and a *smṛti* practice.

Food Pantry at Jiunzan Tendai-ji - The need is ongoing and does not diminish after the holidays. 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)



Written in 1933 Tanizaki wrote this at a time that Japan was flush with recent military successes and Imperialist conquests. In his lucid prose, he was lamenting the days of a Japan more concerned with maintaining harmony and less with expansion. Specifically, he contrasts Western and Asian cultures. Of course, what he is really examining is the difference between a traditional Japanese culture before electricity and industrialization and a modern Japan influenced by modernization, which he characterized as western.

The essay explores the origin of these cultural differences, and calls to mind Buddhism's basic teaching of acceptance and smṛti. As Grayling writes in a 2002 " rereading:

"He writes of drinking soup from a lacquerware dish as a form of meditation.

"Whenever I sit with a bowl of soup before me, listening to the murmur that penetrates like the distant song of an insect, lost in contemplation of the flavours to come, I feel as if I were being drawn into a trance" - an experience he likens to that of the tea master who, when he hears the water stirring in the kettle, "is taken from himself as if upon the sigh of the wind in the legendary pines of Onoe". Tanizaki was inspired by the play of candlelight on lacquerware, and it made him think of the sweetmeat called "yokan", whose "cloudy translucence, like that of jade; the faint, dreamlike glow that suffuses it, as if it had drunk into its very depths the light of the sun," invites careful attention. Tanizaki said that when yokan is served in a lacquer dish, inside the dark recesses of which its colour is scarcely distinguishable, it assumes the status of a votary object. "You take its cool, smooth substance into your mouth," he wrote, "and it is as if the very darkness of the room were melting on your tongue.""[1]

This essay comes to mind because it is very tempting to be caught up in the changes that are happening all around us and to forget basic Buddhist teachings.

Or perhaps more to the point, to overlook the brilliance of the teachings in our daily lives.

There is a fine line between the provisional world and the absolute, between our spiritual path and the path of engagement. Taking time to be "inspired by the play of candlelight on lacquerware," is not just a pleasant diversion, it is a necessary pause to savor the reality of the moment, the reality of living.

[1] AC Grayling, Privy counsels. In The Guardian. (2002)
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/oct/05/featuresreviews.guardianreview25>.
Accessed: 3/28/2017

Love and Gassho... Monshin

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

A painting by a late member of our
Sangha Bill Wilson



Bill Wilson's Enso

Please do send us news from your sangha! Your poetry, your images, your suggestions!

Gassho!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .

Shingi Editor

Peter Chorin Donahoe

pdonahoe2010@gmail.com

Tendai Buddhist Institute, 1525 Rt. 295, East Chatham, NY 12060

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