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**December 2016**

# SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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## Jushoku's Meanderings

According to sutra Shakyamuni saw the morning star at dawn on December 8th and attained awakening. This occurred after six years of arduous practices which prepared him for this final period of realization.

[\(cont.\)](#)

## December 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.



### December Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

**7 Bodhi Day** - In Japan Shakyamuni Buddha's enlightenment day is observed on the 8th of the twelfth month. We will discuss the nature of awakening and how Gautama of the Shakya clan changed history in Asia because of this momentous event.

**14 Letting Suffering Be in Early Buddhism**  
- Dukkha is a paradox. We will be exploring what this means and what we can learn from early Buddhism. This discussion, and others, in the future are using Brook Ziporyn's recent book,



(2016) Emptiness and Omnipresence: An Essential Introduction to Tiantai Buddhism. Indiana University Press. This is from Chapter one.

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**Our Other Sangha:**

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**21 Winter Solstice** - A time for end and a time for beginnings; In Japan, this period is called Bonenkai. We will use this evening for a sangha discussion about where we find ourselves at the end of the year. .

**28 No Meditation Service this Wednesday.** Join us for the New Year's Eve Service - see below.

### **Other Events in December:**

**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 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.

**31/1 O-ShOgatsu (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 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 with equanimity and celebrating with sangha, friends and family. All are welcome.

**Food Pantry at Jiunzan Tendai-ji** - The Autumn with its many celebrations is especially difficult for those who are need of the very basic necessities. 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

**Please sign up to be in charge of 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. If you have any questions please ask Shoshin (Sandy), Chorin (Peter), or Shumon (Tamami). Providing flowers for the hondo is a service to the temple and a smṛti practice. By providing flowers one makes an important contribution to Jiunzan Tendai-ji.

Meanderings (cont. from side bar at left)



He embarked on an inner journey that led him to confront Mara, to resist temptations and distractions of anxiety, to overcome anger and greed. He came to a realization of the nature of reality; a synthesis of the wisdom and compassion that had been grasped through discipline and an open heart/mind.

In Tendai the day of Shakyamuni Buddha's awakening is referred to as *Shaka-Jōdō-e* or just *Jōdō-e*. The observances take different forms. Celebrations with traditional sweets, tea, a simple meal of milk rice, and readings are common. Dharma study and chanting sutra are suggested activities. In the meditative traditions extended periods of meditation are observed. This is also a period when being attentive to acts of compassion and loving-kindness are practiced.

We will observe Shakyamuni Buddha's awakening on Wednesday the seventh. For this entire month meantime, we can all commit ourselves to practices which expand our understanding of the dharma. We can further develop our pledge to perform acts of compassion. We can further dedicate ourselves to the middle way, the core of Shakyamuni Buddha's message. The path to a life of peace and equanimity.

During this month of religious observances enjoy your family and friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. Appreciate our own Buddhist traditions while experiencing the sympathetic-joy for all our friends regardless of their faith journey, or none. This is a time to embrace the qualities of all religions that can bind us together. Rejoice by performing acts of gratitude and kindness to all.

Love and Gassho... Monshin

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

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**An unexpected gift from NYSEG  
(New York State Gas & Electric)**

There's nothing like a power loss to give one new perspective on darkness and our dependence on light. The recent snowstorm and its accompanying 13-hour power outage provided an interesting

opportunity to reflect on darkness, on waiting, and on the coming of the light.

Candlelight creates a contemplative atmosphere. I didn't fight it. As a matter of fact, I welcomed the break from our ever-present 'devices', and basked in self-awareness, self-reliance, and independence.

Darkness falls in our area closer to four p.m. each day as we near the winter solstice. To preserve body warmth, we 'hunker down', as we did in front of the fireplace during the storm. The richness of the dark, the holiness of silence, the mystery of shadows and anticipation of things unseen are ripe in our consciousness and imaginations.

It was the perfect gift of the season. A sharp crackle of the birch logs on the fire shook me from my reverie and yawning, I waited by the fire for the coming of the light.

Onyou (Susan Bues)



#### Four

Moon peeking halfway through the window's edge.  
The small carpet, a cushion, the shortened candle.  
In a few moments, the quiet time.

Counting off the beads in two hands  
to say again, and again forgotten words  
Metta, Karuna, Mudita, Uppekkha.

And the syllables mix into moonlight  
that shines upon all,  
recollecting today when you  
pointed a bewildered old woman home,  
and stilled the tears of a child,  
gave applause to a shy student making a first speech

and wished well to a rude curmudgeon with  
neither pity nor anger to him.

When the moon reaches the other edge of the window,  
will I know peace tonight in these divine abodes?

Will those I touched smile in this very moonlight  
that raises four simple words up to the deed well done?

-  
Kosei Michael Sanders

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

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