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Beacon Institute presents respected theologians for second talk in “Spirituality and the Environment” series

Buddhist and Islamic perspective on Sept. 15 at environmental center

BEACON, NY— Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, as part of its environmental lecture series, is presenting the second of two panel discussions with respected spiritual leaders to examine the role of spirituality in protecting the environment at the Institute’s Center for Environmental Innovation and Education at Denning’s Point in Beacon, NY. The lively and engaging discussion that began earlier this summer with Christian and Jewish leaders continues with revered Buddhist and Islamic theologians, designed to transcend differences amongst belief systems to find common points of intersection and hope.

The panel discussion will take place on [Thursday, September 15, 2011 at 7 pm](#) with Bonnie Myotai Treace, founder and head Sensei of [Hermitage Heart](#) and the Bodies of Water Society in Garrison, NY, and Faraz Khan, a Senior Environmentalist with the New Jersey DEP and Muslim Chaplain at Rutgers University. Through the dialogue, they will explore the similarities and differences between the ways Buddhist and Islamic traditions relate to environmental challenges within the context of today’s world, as well as how human responsibility to earth itself is understood. Beacon Institute’s [John Cronin](#), an internationally renowned environmentalist and a former Thomas Merton Fellow, will moderate the discussion. [Online registration](#) for this free event is encouraged at www.bire.org/events.

“Clearly this is a pivotal time. Life as we know it is genuinely at stake,” states Myotai Sensei. “What religious practice brings to the table is the critical capacity for a centered, dignified stance —fully and intelligently engaged while exquisitely and peacefully still.”

“The environmental ethics in Islam are based on serving humanity and preserving the resources, whether animate or inanimate,” offers Faraz Khan. “Preserving the environment is a communal obligation based on the Islamic paradigm of living a well-balanced life.”

[Online registration](#) for this event is encouraged. For more information about upcoming Beacon Institute events, visit <http://www.bire.org/events>.

About the presenters:

Bonnie Myotai Treace, Sensei, is the founder and head priest of [Hermitage Heart](#); she teaches at Gristmill Hermitage in Garrison, New York. "The Water Mala," a Buddhist right action project on water awareness and meditation initiated by Hermitage Heart in 2007 is now established on all five continents. Serving for almost two decades as vice-abbot of [Zen Mountain Monastery](#), the largest Zen monastery in the West, Myotai Sensei has led over 500 retreats and conferences, and is particularly known for her work in women's spirituality, poetry and the nexus of mind and environment.

Myotai Sensei was the establishing teacher and first abbess of the Zen Center of New York City. She holds advanced degrees in literature, and has worked as an analyst with the Potomac Research Institute specializing in hydromechanics.

Publications include: chapters for *Water: Its Spiritual Significance* (Vons Fitae Press), *The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza*, and *Lotus Moon: The Poetry of Rengetsu*.

Faraz Khan is a Senior Environmentalist with the New Jersey DEP and is Muslim Chaplain at Rutgers University. Mr. Khan is a social activist and a thinker who holds a M.A. in liberal arts from Thomas Edison State College and a B.A. degree in Environmental Geology from Rutgers University. He is a frequent speaker on Islamic Ecotheology and Environmental Ethics in Islam on various college campuses in the tri-state area.

Aside from Mr. Khan's professional career as a wetland scientist for the State of New Jersey, his interest lies in Islamic art, history, philosophy, environmental ethics and sharia – the religious law of Islam. He teaches at the Department of Religion and Philosophy as an adjunct professor at St. Francis College in New York City. His work focusing on American Muslims is available online at www.liberalartsforum.com and <http://faraz-khan.artistwebsites.com>.

About Beacon Institute:

Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries, with offices in Beacon and Troy, New York, is a not-for-profit environmental research organization engaging scientists, engineers, educators and policy experts in collaborative work focusing on real-time monitoring of river ecosystems. It aims to make the Hudson Valley a global center for scientific and technological innovation that advances research, education and public policy regarding rivers and estuaries. <http://www.bire.org>

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