



Monthly Bulletin  
Tendai-shu New York Betsuin  
Karuna Tendai Dharma Center  
PO Box 323  
Canaan, NY 12029 USA  
518-392-7963  
Tendai@msn.com  
www.tendai.org

## Jushoku's Meanderings

**B**UDDHISM is often presented in the West as a form of psychology; using the language of psychology; and portrayed as one among many sorts of therapy. Indeed, the Four Noble Truths do expound the nature of sorrow, discontent and suffering, their cause, and the way to be free of it. The Buddha's teachings, by his own description and the description of others, have been called "medicine". Hearing of this, some first come to Buddha practice as a way to liberate themselves from their own suffering through the cure of their neuroses. Perhaps they have been working with a psychotherapist to assist them in this effort and they see the Buddha's teachings as an adjunct, extension, or even a substitute for this process.

Those who are familiar with undergoing psychotherapy, may find that engagement in Buddhist practice provides a very different, surprising, and perhaps unsettling, experience, especially if they approach a Buddhist teacher for personal counseling and expect a similar sort of relationship and process.

Psychotherapy has been labeled as "the talking cure" and this is generally the primary nature of the relationship between psychotherapist and client. One popular, and effective, form of psychotherapy is called "cognitive therapy" whose basis is the belief that suffering is brought about by faulty thinking. By changing one's thought patterns and interpretations, i.e. by altering one's stories, one can obtain relief from suffering.

The Four Noble Truths lay out the nature and causes of suffering; the Five Lay Vows, the Six Paramitas, and the Eightfold Path provide a template with concrete actions that one is invited to undertake as a way out of suffering. They include, first of all, those qualities that might be summed up as "character" and include the personal development of generosity, ethics and morality, patience, vigor and endurance, and taking personal responsibility for one's thoughts, words and actions rather than claiming that the responsibility is on another or the events of daily life or the world.

The First Noble Truth states that life is "dukha", translated variously as suffering, sorrow or discontent. The Second Noble Truth states that discontent is caused by desire. And the Third states that the way to relieve discontent is to remove its cause; to relinquish desire. Thus every experience of discontent can be traced directly to some desire for things to be other than they are (or were). Often one's self-identity becomes entwined with the nature of discontent (i.e. "I am an angry person"). Through Buddhist practice one is encouraged to see through the endless manifestations of desire to the root; to recognize no-self rather than a fixed and unchanging identity; to experience that there is nothing "wrong" that requires "fixing"; and to experience the joy of the unconditioned rather than rely upon everchanging, ever unsatisfactory conditioned phenomena in the relative world.

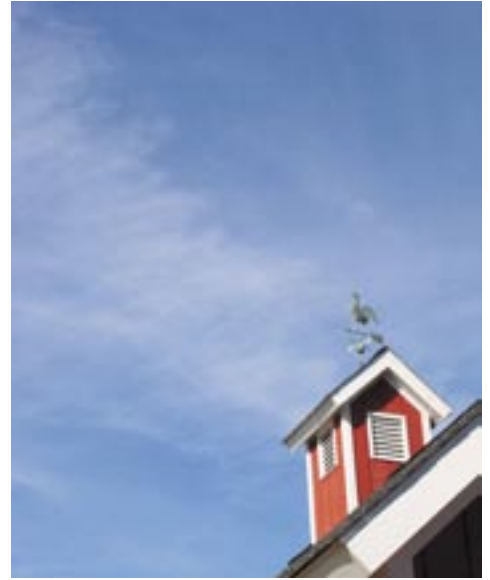
Ultimately, the experience of suffering is resolved not through a cognitive process of psychological insight or more effective skills in dealing with troublesome people, situations or emotions, but through awakening, the manifestation of which is unique to each person, arising from the heart/mind of each individual. The teacher acts as guide, not a provider of answers, and there is little discussion of personal stories and problems, which may bring some to think that the teacher is "not taking me seriously" or "not hearing me". Far from being a "talking cure" or a "cognitive" process, Buddhist practice is a transcendental, transformative process. The resolution arises not through problem-solving discussions, but ironically through a willingness to maintain oneself in a state of discomfort and confusion in the midst of that which one wishes the most to escape, observing it but not owning, or being owned, by it. There are times when further talk and discussion is sought as a means of escape rather than resolution, so the teacher may rebuff attempts to engage in these sorts of conversation, seeing them as a hindrance to the transformative process. Instead she may suggest meditations, devotional or other practices, or perhaps say simply, "sit with it" pushing the questioner back to rely upon his own wisdom nature that resides, perhaps obscured, within his own heart/mind.

In the Morning Service appears the verse Shichi Butsu Tsukaige:

*"Wishing together with all sentient beings: do not commit evil, do everything that is good, purify the mind. This is the teachings of all the Buddhas. I bow to the sacred clouds."*

This verse in a few words expounds the Buddha's approach to psychology: we live interdependently with all others without exception; we refrain from thoughts, words and actions that bring about suffering for others as well as ourselves; we manifest those thoughts, words and actions that bring benefit to others as well as ourselves; we see directly into the nature of the mind; and we express devotion and gratitude for our human life and experience.

Seishin Jack Fitterer



*The Rooster atop the main hall at Jiunzan Tendaiji calls all to awakening*



# Jiunzan Tendaiji

## ❖ *September Events*

- 7 The Bodhisattva Path (led by Monshin Naamon)
  - 14 TBA (led by Mushin Press)
  - 21 Backbone (led by Shoshin Jacan)
  - 25 Mahasangha Sunday, 11:00 A.M.; Meditation and Segaki Service (led by Seishin Fitterer)
  - 25 Refuge Retreat, 1:00 P.M. Required for all those who wish to take refuge at Jiunzan Tendaiji on October 5.
  - 28 Buddhist Art in Asia (led by Shumon Naamon)
- ❖ There will be no Survey of Buddhism Class this month due to the Labor Day Holiday.
- ❖ The Sangha sends love and best wishes for a speedy recovery to Gail Ryan.
- ❖ With the opening of our new hondo comes more responsibilities. Cleaning the new building must be an ongoing task. Shoshin cleans on Wednesday evening and prepares for the service. With the much bigger space, she is in need of an assistant who could come early—around 5:30–5:45. If four people are able to do this, they would only have to come early once a month.

We also need to form a custodial committee which will

oversee a much more thorough cleaning of the hondo every several months, say once a quarter. On a similar schedule should be housecleaning so that the entire task is not on Shumon's shoulders.

If you can volunteer some time, please speak to Shoshin.

- ❖ We need people to sign up for one month to be responsible for flowers in the hondo for September through December of this year. A sign-up sheet for each month is on the bulletin board in the kitchen.

- ❖ For those who contributed to the Jizos for Peace Project, you might be interested to know that although the goal was for 270,000 Jizos, the Great Vow Zen Monastery received over 373,000, enough to bring to Japan and also to testing sites in Nevada and New Mexico. Jizos of all types were received including knitted, clay, clothespin, matchbox, origami, turned wood and rock Jizos.

This was an international peace project which also involved chanting the Jizo mantra for peace while working on each Jizo. Thank you to all in our sanghas who participated.

- ❖ Monshin and Shumon Naamon thank the Sanghas for the generous gift of a weekend away. They are looking forward to being able to enjoy a weekend of R & R after a busy year.

## Mahasangha

### ❖ *Following are events for the coming year. Mark your calendars now!* Dates are subject to change.

- October 1 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- October 5 Refuge Ceremony
- October 14-16 Retreat
- October 16 Doshu/Soryo Kai
- October 30 Mahasangha Sunday
- November 5 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- November 12 Yakushi Nyorai Retreat
- November dates TBA Sangha trip to Japan.  
There will be no Mahasangha Sunday in November.
- December 1 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- December 31 New Year's Eve Meditation Service and Celebration  
There will be no Mahasangha Sunday in December.
- January 7 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- January 27-29 Retreat
- January 29 Mahasangha Sunday; Doshu/Soryo Kai
- February 4 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- February 19 Retreat
- February 26 Mahasangha Sunday

- March 4 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- March 17-19 O-Higan Retreat
- March 26 Mahasangha Sunday
- April 1 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- April 8 Retreat
- April 30 Mahasangha Sunday; Doshu/Soryo Kai
- May 6 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- May 13 Retreat
- May 21 Mahasangha Sunday
- June 3 Morning Service and Survey of Buddhism Class
- June 21-July 2 Doshu Gyo
- July 2 Mahasangha Sunday

### ❖ *Segaki Ceremony*

Each year concurrently with the autumn O-Higan period, which falls three days on either side of the equinox, we also celebrate Obon at KTDC. This is a time when we remember our ancestors; in Japan it is a time for families to care for the graves of those who have died. As part of this remembrance at Jiunzan Tendaiji, we perform the Segaki ceremony. Nominally, this is a memorial service for all those who have died in the past, especially in the past year. More importantly, it is a ritual practice that releases the preta, or hungry ghosts, from their

realm of suffering. The preta are those who have been reborn in that realm (one of six in the wheel of existence) because of their insatiable neurotic desires. Iconographically they are depicted as having swollen bellies, but thin, constricted throats through which no food may pass. Thus they are always hungry; being able to taste food, but being unable to swallow it they receive no nutrition or satisfaction from it.

Metaphorically the hungry ghost is anyone who experiences the suffering of any sort of yearning desire that can never be quenched, yet never be relinquished. Our modern consumer culture cultivates hungry ghosts. Every advertisement entices us to buy the next new product which is soon passé, already outmoded by tomorrow's new advertisement for the "improved" new version. We are encouraged to buy all these items, not for their function, but for the supposed ancillary qualities: the product will make us sexier, happier, and loved by all. We are enticed to taste all these products, but receive no nutrition from them, no real satisfaction. So we continue to yearn in torment, grasping after satiation, unable to experience it.

Participating in the Segaki ritual in this sense alerts us to our con-

dition of yearning for satisfaction through that which cannot possibly provide it. Through chant, mudra and mantra, all who are present may be released from the state of the hungry ghost, just as are the preta who are reborn in that realm after death are also released.

This Segaki ceremony will be held on Sunday, September 25, as part of Mahasangha Sunday and will include a period of meditation, as well as a pot luck lunch afterwards. If you would like to have any friend or family member remembered during the ceremony (cats and dogs have also been included in the past!) please pass on their name to Seishin Jack Fitterer who will be leading the service in Monshin's absence. It is also traditional to place an offering on the Segakidan of the remembered one's favorite food or beverage.

❖ *Visit [www.tendai.org](http://www.tendai.org)* to see pictures of the Rakkeishiki and celebration of the new, main hall at Jiunzan Tendai that took place on June 25. Up-to-date events and news, as well as each month's *Shingi* may also be viewed.

## Higashi Sangha

---

### ❖ *September Events*

- 5 Modern Science and the Dharmas
- 12 Dependent Arising
- 19 The Historical and Eternal Life of Buddha

26 Pot Luck Wisdom – Buddhism and Early Education (led by Jessica Mayer)

❖ September 9 – Higashi in the Adirondacks Retreat

## Nishi Sangha

---

### ❖ *September Events*

- 6 Five Classic Meditations
- 13 Poetry as Practice
- 20 Dhammapada

27 Bodhisattva Vows

❖ Nishi Sangha members congratulate Koyo Susan Spang who conducted her first service in August with great confidence and dignity. Thank you for your leadership, Koyo!

## Ekayana Tendai Sangha

---

### ❖ *September Event*

- 10 Shikan Service and Dharma teaching Taimitsu I: Summary of Dainichikyo
- 24 Shikan Service and Dharma teaching Taimitsu II:

Summary of Kongochokyo"

❖ ETS is preparing for autumn seminars and for establishing a more persistent local Shikan meditation group.

## Danish Lotus Sangha

---

### ❖ *September Events*

- 7 Meditation Service and Dharma Talk, 9:30 A.M.
- 9 Meditation Service and Study Meeting; Ichinen Sanzen, 7:30 P.M.
- 13 Meditation Service and Study Meeting; Ichinen Sanzen, 7:30 P.M.
- 15 Meditation Service and Dharma Talk, 9:30 A.M.
- 20 Meditation Service and Study Meeting; Ichinen San-

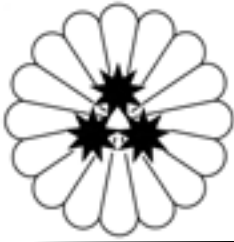
zen and the Threefold Buddha nature, 7:30 P.M.

22 Meditation Service and Dharma Talk, 9:30 A.M.

25 Half-day Sitting, 10 A.M.

27 Meditation Service and Study Meeting; Ichinen Sanzen – Living Comfortably with Change, 7:30 P.M.

29 Meditation Service and Dharma Talk, 9:30 A.M.



# September 2005

Tendai Buddhist Institute

Tendai-shu New York Betsuin and Karuna Tendai Dharma Center [www.tendai.org](http://www.tendai.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>The Main Hall at Jiunzan Tendaiji (Photo Right)</p>				1	2	3  New Moon
4	<p>5 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service</p> <p>Labor Day</p>	<p>6 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service</p>	<p>7 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service and Dharma Talk</p>	8	<p>9 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation and Study</p> <p>Higashi in the Adirondacks Retreat</p>	<p>10 Ekayana Tendai Sangha Shikan Service and Dharma Teaching</p>
<p>11  First Quarter Higashi Retreat</p>	<p>12 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service</p> <p>Yakushi Nyorai Day</p>	<p>13 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation and Study</p>	<p>14 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service</p>	<p>15 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service and Dharma Talk</p>	16	17
<p>18  Full Moon</p>	<p>19 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service</p>	<p>20 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation and Study</p>	<p>21 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service</p>	<p>22 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service and Dharma Talk</p>	23	<p>24 Ekayana Tendai Sangha Shikan Service and Dharma Teaching</p>
<p>25 Jiunzan Tendaiji Mahasangha Segaki Service Refuge Retreat Danish Lotus Sangha Half-day Sitting Last Quarter</p>	<p>26 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service</p>	<p>27 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation and Study</p>	<p>28 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service</p>	<p>29 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service and Dharma Talk</p>	30	