



TENDAI BUDDHIST INSTITUTE  
SHINGI

Monthly Bulletin  
Tendai-shu New York Betsuin  
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## Jushoku's Meanderings

ALL around us we are inundated with disasters, human-made as well as natural. Hurricane Katrina was devastating. In New Orleans the loss of life and the potential for the disappearance of a unique culture saddens me beyond words. It has been predicted that this calamity may well change the fabric of our nation. The tragedy of Iraq has resulted in death, disfigurement and destructions to Iraqis and Americans alike. Many are not aware of the typhoon that has caused loss of life and displaced people in Kyushu, Japan. How quickly the tsunami in Asia and the human catastrophe in Darfor have dropped off the radar of the press, but not our consciousness. How can we even imagine the desolation of HIV/AIDS in South Africa? Today, as I write this, it is the fourth anniversary of September 11th. I know many of our sangha have their own personal struggles as well.

We should all be empathic I can not tell you how many eyes listening to and watching the stories unfold in New Orleans and Mississippi. I witness these kinds of misfortune and not be profoundly

I know people who steep and immobilize themselves. This does not improve the wit, it just adds to the overall suffering of the world. When it becomes so evident, we need not be surprised. The Buddhist way of suffering, we need not be surprised. The Four Noble Truths, also and do those things we can, but to actively work toward

During sitting meditation and extend to all compassionate service I do the offerings with these events in my mind, in course prayers, empathy, and We can materially assist the victims through the Red Cross, Salvation Army and other reputable organizations. I recognize the amount of contribution I can make is like a thimbleful of assistance in an ocean of need. The combination of donations, prayers, offerings, witness and awareness is what I can do, in the end it is all that any can do. We can not control the weather, political forces, or other people's hatred. We can make our lives the Dharma and contribute to this world in a way that reduces hatred, influences political discourse and ameliorates the pain of change. We also are brought to the reality that life is indeed suffering and we must do our best, bit by little bit over our lifetime of awareness for the benefit of all sentient beings. It may be a thimbleful of assistance, but we make the world that much better.

Today, a day in which there is so much misery in the world, the sun is shining bright and warm, a cool breeze of imminent autumn blows across my face. The reality today is that I am in this life to do what I can for the benefit of others and live in the moment; feeling the sun, feeling the breeze, feeling alive. I cherish my companion, family, teachers, friends, animals, and enemies without attachment. I breathe deeply of this life, knowing it comes and goes. And, like a turtle on a rock in the sun I exist in this moment without grieving that I can not control the world. By living in this moment of beauty and grace I am not ignoring the suffering of the world I am cognizant of that sadness while I reduce the overall suffering of the world, one moment at a time.

The way of the Buddha is the way of the seasons. In the cold shiver, in the heat sweat; the sun will set in the evening and rise in the morning. Breathe in the air of spring, summer, autumn, fall. When sad be with the sadness, when happy be with the happiness. The Middle Way is the Way of Balance. Pray for those who are suffering then allow the sun to wash away your tears.

*Gassho, Monshin*

*(Photo Above) Honzon Yakushi Nyorai at Jiunzan Tendaiji*



and bear witness. Personally times tears have welled in my

ing the stories unfold in New don't think a person can witness and not be profoundly

themselves in this suffering emotionally and physically. suffering of the world one suffering. The Buddhist way ing, we need not be surprised The Four Noble Truths, also and do those things we can, but to actively work toward

tion I take on this suffering sion. When doing the daily those who are suffering from my prayers, in my heart. Of witness are not all we can do.



# Jiunzan Tendaiji

## ❖ October Events

1 Morning Service, 8:30 a.m., and Survey of Buddhism Class, 9:00 a.m.

5 Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; Annual Refuge Ceremony. Those who wish to take refuge should speak to their Sangha leaders beforehand (and should have attended the Refuge Retreat on September 25).

12 Yakushi Nyorai

14 – 16 Shikan Retreat – This retreat is focused on Shikan Practices, Shamatha and Vipashyana, which are the basis of all Buddhist meditation. We will be exploring how these two forms of meditation intertwine to present a sublime method for the attainment of awakening and furthering the Bodhisattva Path. There will be teachings and practices other than meditation as well. This

retreat is intended for all levels of practitioner.

16 Doshu/Soryo Kai, 1-5 p.m.; quarterly meeting for all soryo and doshu

19 Practices For Peace

26 The Heart Sutra

30 Mahasangha Sunday, 11 a.m., followed by a potluck lunch.

- ❖ Gojun Terada is traveling in Vietnam and Laos for a month.
- ❖ Seigaku Jenny Henderson has returned to the Berkshires after spending a year in Japan. Welcome home!
- ❖ Monshin Paul Naamon traveled to Mt. Hiei at the end of September to receive Nyudan Kanjo and Enton Jukai. Look in the November *Shingi* for his report on his experiences.

## Mahasangha

### ❖ Reading Your Way to Awakening?

Most of us Buddhists are avid readers. In fact, many Americans have their first serious encounters with Buddhism through reading. In parts of our country, teachers are few and far between and there has been an exponential growth in Buddhist texts available in bookstores in just the last eight to ten years. The internet makes a wide range of interesting materials available that even a decade ago would have been impossible for most of us to access.

Those of us fortunate enough to live near Jiunzan-Tendai-ji also have a wealth of information available through the teachings of Monshin-sensei. His skills focus us on the essential scholarship and practices we need as we come to practice for the first time or continue on the Path. There are weekly dharma talks and the once a month class on Buddhism. The focus of the teachings and study class has been on important sutras and Buddhist texts as well as the history of Buddhism. Those who have attended a Gyo have access to other texts regarding the history, study and practice of Buddhism in general and Tendai-shu in particular.

Tendai-shu encourages study and scholarship and as a whole is an eclectic school which besides traditional sutra study encourages development and practice of a variety of the arts such as calligraphy and painting. A wide variety of practices are available such as meditation, chanting and attending rituals. A Tendai-shu monk, Vimalakirti J. Leary, in *One View of Tendai Buddhism* points out that one of the Bodhisattva Vows is to “master all Dharmas” and includes in his partial list thirty-three different practices to do so. His intent seems to be to emphasize the Buddha’s use of upaya, or skillful means, to show that the Dharma can be of benefit and is accessible to all sentient beings through a variety of methods. This is encouraging, and we should strive to find the best method of approaching the Dharma for ourselves based on the collective wisdom of the great masters and teachers.

As human beings we are subject to dukkha, sometimes translated as dissatisfaction. Dukkha pushes us toward constant movement and unwholesome striving in the material world. It is also at the root of a type of intellectual questing that can be as dangerous as the materialism that most of us speak of so negatively when attempting to understand and practice the Dharma. American Buddhists seem to be inveterate “seekers” and this, coupled with our enjoyment of reading and exploring new information, can easily lead us into a trap.

Buddhism is a system that seems to fit our spiritual and mental outlook even though, paradoxically, it can make us very uncomfortable. Because we

are avid readers it is very easy to constantly seek more and more information, looking for answers, taking a bit from here and there to satisfy our intellect. Many of us spend a lot of our leisure time reading, and it appears that some practitioners mistakenly believe that it is possible to find Awakening somewhere on a printed page. The more “Buddha-books” we read, the more Buddhist magazines we can peruse, the more viewpoints we can understand, the harder we study, the closer we think we will come to enlightenment. We subconsciously cling to the idea that we can find understanding and enlightenment if we just work a bit harder or understand a bit more or try one more practice that we have heard about. We become attached to our questing. It appears that some of us even hope that if we find just the right teaching or practice we won’t have to work so hard, and the challenges we face on our quest will finally be over. Perhaps we think that Awakening is having all our questions answered and all paradoxes resolved. Perhaps we believe the Buddha Way is smooth if we can just find the secret.

Questioning is important, and the Buddha himself encouraged it on many occasions, perhaps most famously in the Kalama Sutra. But at the bottom line of all our questing and questioning must be a profound faith in the solid “basics” of Buddhism: the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-fold Path and the Six Paramitas. These contain all the wisdom needed to follow the Buddha Path.

However diligently we may pursue our hobby of reading all that is available to us on the subject of Buddhism or engaging in new practices, we will not progress on the Path without a thorough understanding and application of these ideas. Monshin-sensei’s wisdom and upaya emphasize these essentials and guide us on the path.

After listing thirty-three possible practices for the Tendai-shu practitioner, Vimalakirti J. Leary concludes with what he calls possibly the “most important practice”:

*Development of Gratitude, Loving Kindness, Friendliness and Compassion toward all Living Beings. This is the essential practice.*

All of our practices, whatever they may be, and all of our studies, wherever they may lead, are truly inefficient and ineffective if they are not leading us toward being more mindful and compassionate human beings.

Perhaps each of us needs to ask just this one question and search for the true answer: Are my practices developing compassion and loving kindness for all?

*Gassho, Shoshin Sandy Jacou*

# Higashi Sangha

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## ❖ *October Events*

- 3 The Historical and Eternal Buddha (Postponed from an earlier date)
- 10 The Jataka Tales
- 17 A Screening and Discussion of the Movie “What the Bleep Do We Know”
- 24 Faith, Prayer and Devotion in Buddhism
- 31 The Buddhist Path Seen in the Light of the Navajo Beauty Way - Led by Erica Fay

❖ Two members from Higashi are taking Refuge on October 5: Julia Erikson and Regi Wingo.

❖ Gail Ryan has been recovering from a few weeks at the hospital. She has been very ill with a disease of the tissue surrounding the nerve fibers. Since Gail is a member of two Sanghas her presence is sorely missed by twice as many people! We all wish her a full recovery!

❖ The monthly “Pot Luck Wisdom” Monday, Sangha members chance to lead a discussion group, is a continuing success. Everyone who has led this period has come away from the evening with a powerful appreciation of teaching practice and what it offers the group and the evening’s leader. Discussions are very lively and offer a great chance for full participation

❖ (Photo below) Higashi members Cindy Duryea, Erica Fay and Jane Majdalany traveled to the home of Seishin Jack and Taff Fitterer for a weekend retreat of shikan practices on the *Conditioned and the Unconditioned*, based upon the text *Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, attributed to Ashvaghosha and frequently quoted by Chihi-i in his *Shamatha and Vipashyana for Beginners*.



# Nishi Sangha

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## ❖ *October Events*

- 4 Mindfulness Practice
- 11 God Is Big These Days—and Thus No Rest for Karen Anderson Armstrong

18 Anger from Thich Nhat Hanh’s Perspective

25 The Practice of Sutra Copying

# Ekayana Tendai Sangha

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## ❖ *October Events*

- 13 Shikan Service and Dharma Teaching (Taimitsu III: Soshitsuki kyo)
- 27 Shikan Service and Dharma Teaching (Taimitsu IV: The ori-

gins of Vajrayana in India and China)

❖ Meetings at Ekayana Tendai Sangha continue to be held on Thursday every fortnight.

# Danish Lotus Sangha

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## ❖ *October Events*

Every Thursday morning, Meditation Service and Dharma Talk, 9:30 a.m.

❖ To better provide teachings and practices appropriate to beginning as well as more advanced students, we have established two series of meetings.

The basic track will consist of a seven week course on the Six Paramitas. Each session meets from 7:30–9:30 p.m.

15 Patience

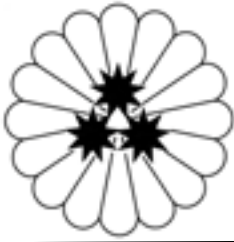
22 Energy

25 Generosity

29 Meditation

❖ Advanced track:


30 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.; Desire on the Buddhist Path; a paradox?



# October 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
		<i>The statue of Dengyo Daishi at KTDC was created by Takao Sato and contributed by Shigeyuki &amp; Risa Ito</i>				1 Jiunzan Tendaiji Morning Service Survey of Buddhism Class
2	3 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service  <i>New Moon</i>	4 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service	5 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service and Refuge Ceremony	6 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	7	8
9	10 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service  <i>First Quarter</i>	11 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service	12 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  Yakushi Nyorai Day	13 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Ekayana Tendai Sangha Shikan Service	14	15 Danish Lotus Sangha Basic Course  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Shikan Retreat</div>
16  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Shikan Retreat</div>	17 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service  <i>Full Moon</i>	18 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service	19 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	20 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	21	22 Danish Lotus Sangha Basic Course
23  30 Jiunzan Tendaiji Mahasangha Sunday Danish Lotus Sangha Advanced	24 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	25 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Basic Course  <i>Last Quarter</i>	26 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	27 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Ekayana Tendai Sangha Shikan Service	28	29 Danish Lotus Sangha Basic Course