



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

After spending a year living in Kuji, Japan, Stian and I spent two weeks traveling in Korea before returning to the United States. We spent fourteen days in the most oppressive humidity imaginable: walking all over Seoul, hiking in national parks, risking our lives on buses which the drivers seemed to have mistaken for sports cars, and visiting world heritage site after world heritage site and temple after temple.

A few days before the end of our trip, we detoured from the standard tourist route to make a stop at Haeinsa Temple. Haeinsa, or Reflections on a Calm Sea, Temple is famous for housing the 81,258 carved woodblocks of the Korean Tripitaka. The woodblocks were carved in the mid 13th century, and have been housed at Haeinsa since the late 14th century. The temple is located halfway up Mt. Gayasan in the middle of South Korea. The woodblocks have been preserved for hundreds of years in two depositories built above the rest of the temple complex and tucked against the northeast side of the mountain. The woodblocks have survived fires and pillaging that have devastated the rest of the temple buildings at various periods in history. And, in more modern times, a former President of Korea commissioned a new modern, climate-controlled storage facility to be built to house the blocks. The few test blocks that were placed in the facility quickly began to mildew.

All this background information about Haeinsa had fascinated me. And, what appealed to me even more was the *Lonely Planet's* description of the monks at Haeinsa chanting the morning service.

Stian and I left Gyeongju on the earliest bus possible in order to arrive at Haeinsa by the late morning service. (We would, of course, miss the 3 a.m. service.)

The journey to Haeinsa seemed interminable. At dawn we donned our packs and ran across town to the bus station in Gyeongju. After 90 minutes on a fish-scented bus, we arrived in Daegu. We left our packs at the



Roofline of Haeinsa Temple complex, Mt. Gayasan, South Korea.

only remaining lockers at the central bus terminal, ran through the rain to the subway station, navigated Daegu's subway, and ended up at the Eastern Daegu bus terminal just in time to catch the bus to Haeinsa Temple. The bus's final destination was not actually the temple, and, although the *Lonely Planet Guide* had told us which bus to take, the guidebook had been somewhat less clear about where to get off. At every stop we struggled to compare the Hangeul on the signs with the Hangeul in our guidebook. And, each time we thought we were there, the bus driver sent us back to our seats. In the end, the driver dumped us in the middle of a small village, in the pouring rain, with no temple in sight.

As luck would have it, the only other remaining passenger on our bus invited us to share her cab. Her grey clothing indicated that she had some connection to the temple, and, indeed, that's where she was heading. We arrived at the temple just at the time that the second of the two morning services was supposed to be ending.

The sounds of the monks chanting filled the entire temple compound, and I started swiftly walking toward the music, ignoring all of English signage and tourist information on my way in. I climbed the steps to the worship hall, and peered in the front doors. The building was amazingly full. Hundreds of people were already packed inside, and many more were still entering when I arrived. I wanted to go in and get a better look at the monks and to listen to their chanting. I was just trying to make up my mind about whether it would be appropriate for me to enter, when a young Korean woman with competent English said to me, "Please, you should come inside." Moments later, I had *cont. on page 2*



Jiunzan Tendaiji and Mahasangha

❖ *Wednesday Evening Meditation Service Discussions*

7 Creating a Buddhist Practice

14 Using Sutra in Daily Life

21 Planting the Seeds of Happiness

❖ *December Events*

3 Morning Service, 8:30 a.m.; Survey of Buddhism Class:
We continue examining the *Vimilakirti Sutra*, 9–10:30
a.m.

31 Mahasangha New Year's Eve Service. All the local sanghas gather in this traditional KTDC year-end service with meditation that stretches across midnight followed by a toast and refreshments to welcome the New Year.

❖ Seven Sangha members accompanied Monshin and Shumon on a journey to Japan in November. Look for their report in next month's issue of *Shingi*.

❖ The Sanghas offer best wishes to Shunsho and Tae Yamada upon the birth of their son on November 24.

Meanderings Continued from page one

stacked my shoes and umbrella outside the door and was following the woman into the temple.

The primary image and altar were located in the center of the building. People doing prostrations surrounded the image on all four sides of the temple. My host led me over to a stack of cushions behind the image, and we each took one, put them on the ground, and started doing prostrations along with the chanting. Our pillows were positioned next to a huge sound system or recording system sparkling with dozens of red and green lights. I was just thinking about our unfortunate placement (and the fact that I hadn't yet been able to catch a glimpse of the chanting monks), when my host went to speak with a woman who appeared to be one of the primary temple assistants. The temple assistant led us through the crowd of people, and found us a spot in front of the image.

I spent twenty minutes absorbing the sights and sounds. The people (mostly middle-aged women) surrounding me were clad in grey pants of every imaginable shade and fabric. Everyone was prostrating at his or her own pace. There seemed to be certain points in the chanting when everyone prostrated together. At other times, some of the practitioners rested while others continued to prostrate. At various times during the practice, my host had tears streaming down her face. The monks were clad in robes of grey and brown. Three of them were up at the altar beating on the wooden hand drum and singing into the microphone.

After twenty minutes or so, I began to lose interest in the newness of the experience, and I started to wonder when the service would be ending. According to my guidebook, it was supposed to have ended long before this. I thought of Stian outside wandering in the temple grounds, and hoped that he wouldn't have already gone to look at the woodblocks by the time I got out of the main worship hall.

Eventually more monks started wandering into the hall. Ten or twelve of them were seated on cushions in front of the front door. The chanting ended, and one of the monks began to give what I assumed to be a Dharma talk. After he spoke for about ten minutes, my host leaned over to me and said, "Once a week there is a special ceremony for people who have died." So apparently, the morning service was over, and now I was in here for a memorial service.

The memorial service seemed to proceed in much the same manner as the morning service. We recited something that I am fairly sure was the Heart Sutra in Korean. We did more prostrations. We recited

something that had a lot of a word sounding like "*Namu Abitafu*". During this chanting, row by row, the people in the temple began to make their way to an altar on the right side of the hall. I watched them and noticed that they were carrying money, and I figured that this is how they take up a collection in Korean temples. I started thinking about the huge number of people sitting in this temple, and I realized that this collection business would take at least another half hour. I turned to look behind me out the open front doors, and I located Stian sitting on the porch of another building across the courtyard. I thought about the woodblocks that I had yet to see. I wished that I didn't have such a "good" seat right in front of the altar. If I had stayed by the side doors, I would have been able to sneak out. I wondered how we would ever get a taxi back to the spot where our bus dropped us off two hours before.

Finally, my host turned to me and said, "Okay, it's our turn. Please come." So we jumped in line and made our way up to the side altar. As we approached the altar, I could see numerous vases of flowers and three photographs resting on top. When we were within several feet of the altar, my host turned to me again. "That picture over there—that's my boy."

She turned back toward the altar and I waited for her words to sink in. I looked more closely at the photograph—a boy of no more than seven years old standing in a field and smiling. Her boy. Her son. Her son was dead. Recently dead. And she had taken time and effort to speak English with me, to welcome me, a tourist really, into this ceremony.

I suddenly felt like I had been snatched out of ordinary life and dropped down in the middle of a turbulent ocean of pain. Or maybe more like I had been woken up out of a dream that had let me temporarily forget that I am swimming in this ocean. I could see how life doesn't stop for death, but I wanted to be able to stop it, to rewind it, to erase this woman's suffering...and my suffering.

Of course, there is only the here and now. After the ceremony was over, the woman told me about the years she had spent studying in Rochester. She told me about her son who had died the week before. She told me about her current life—her life at the temple where she will live for a month while she is praying for her son.

And, when I left Haeinsa, I didn't mind that I hadn't had time to see the woodblocks.

Gassho, Seigaku Jenny Henderson

Higashi Sangha

❖ December Events

Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Monday, 6:30 p.m., East Mountain Retreat Center, Lake Buel Rd., Great Barrington, MA

- 5 No-self, Emptiness Made Personal
- 12 Engaged Practice
- 19 Short Service and Semi-Annual Pot Luck Dinner

Nishi Sangha

❖ December Events

Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Tuesday, 6 p.m., Friends' Meeting House, Madison Ave, Albany, NY

- 6 The Sangha will be working at the Regional Food Bank.
- 13 The Diamond Sutra
- 20 Holiday Gathering
- 27 No Meditation Service. Plan to attend the New Year's Eve Service at Jiunzan Tendai-ji.

Ekayana Tendai Sangha

❖ December Events

- 1 Shikan Meditation Service with Dharma Talk: Tendai and Zen.
- 15 Shikan Meditation Service with Dharma Talk: Tendai and Pure Land Teachings.

Danish Lotus Sangha

❖ December Events

Meditation Service every Thursday, 9:30–10:30 a.m.

- ❖ The basic track on the Six Paramitas meets from 7:30–9:30 p.m.
 - 6 Wisdom
 - 13 Round Up
- ❖ The advanced track meets from 7:30–10 p.m.
 - 1 Emptiness and the transcending of views:
Required reading: *The Heart Sutra*; *Kaccayanagotta Sutta*, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/sutta/samyutta/sn12-015.html>; *Nagarjuna*, <http://www.duke.edu/~kepler/nagarjuna/garfield.htm>
Discussion questions: In what ways can some of the following be seen as 'empty'? a) Danishness, Englishness or Americanness (for example); b) Buddhism; c) dukkha, d)

26 No Meditation Service. Plan to attend the New Year's Eve Service at Jiunzan Tendai-ji.

- ❖ Jessica Mayer will be graduating this December from Antioch New England Graduate School with a masters in early childhood and elementary education. After a brief trip to Atlanta for the holidays, she will be traveling to Auroville, India, in January to work in an elementary school classroom for 2 months.



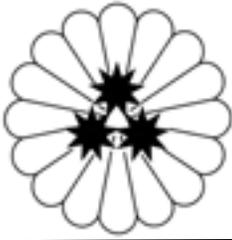
"Awaken", a scroll by Bill Wilson, hangs in the hondo at Jiunzam Tendaiji

the human body; e) a car; ? Does the Madhyamaka 'reduction' of Nirvana to the apprehension of the empty quality of samsara make sense?

15 Meditation and Buddhist cosmology:

Required reading: *Aganna Sutta*: <http://www.webcastmy.com.my/bodhivision/aganna/agannaS.PDF>; *Gaddula Sutta*: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/canon/sutta/samyutta/sn22-099.html>; *Brahmajala Sutta*: http://www.buddhistinformation.com/ida_b_wells_memorial_sutra_library/brahmajala_sutta.htm (only the 'End Of First Recitation' section)

Discussion questions: What is your opinion of attempts to correlate Buddhist and scientific views of the structure and development of the universe? What are the implications of rejecting the Buddhist world-view? Keep in mind that Buddhist cosmology is more than just a description of the physical world; it's also a mind-map, a meditation guide.



December 2005

Tendai Buddhist Institute

Tendai-shu New York Betsuin and Karuna Tendai Dharma Center www.tendai.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Ekayana Tendai Sangha Meditaion Service <i>New Moon</i>	2	3 Jiunzan Tendaiiji Morning Service Survey of Buddhism Class
4	5 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	6 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	7 Jiunzan Tendaiiji Meditation Service	8 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service <i>Rohatsu (Bodhi Day)</i> <i>First Quarter</i>	9	10
11	12 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service <i>Yakushi Nyorai Day</i>	13 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	14 Jiunzan Tendaiiji Meditation Service	15 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Ekayana Tendai Sangha Meditaion Service <i>Full Moon</i>	16	17
18	19 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	20 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service	21 <i>Winter Solstice</i>	22 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	23 <i>Last Quarter</i>	24
25 <i>Christmas</i> <i>Hanukkah begins at Sundown</i>	26	27	28	29	30	31 Jiunzan Tendaiiji New Year's Service Danish Lotus Sangha New Year's Service <i>New Moon</i>