



TENDAI BUDDHIST INSTITUTE  
SHINGI

## Meanderings on the meaning of Sangha

SANGHA is one of Three Treasures, Sanbo. It consists of Buddha (*Butsu*), Dharma (*Ho/Po*) and Sangha (*So*). A sangha was the Buddhist community of a particular area or monastery, which consisted of monks, nuns, and novices in a narrow sense. In a wider sense it included lay followers who were affiliated with the groups.

Those people who are disciples of the *Jushoku* (Abbot) or master of the temple are called *Deshi*. The term *Deshi* is used primarily in esoteric Buddhism and refers to the third level of *Samaya* (*Skt.*), or vows. The Japanese term for these vows is *Honsei*. The Precept Master administering these vows is referred to as the *Honshi*. There are many other terms for the different levels of ordination and vows.

The highest level of Bodhisattva vows is *Kanjo*. The term *Kanjo* (*Skt. Abisheka*) means to anoint with water on the head. There is a first level, the *kechien-kanjo*, used to find a person's special diety. This is accomplished by tossing a flower onto a mandala. There are several other types of *kanjo* transmitted to monks who will assume an *ajari* or a master position, one of these is called the *dembo-kanjo*. The importance of these distinctions is to insure that there are people of appropriate training and commitment to teach and lead the Buddhist community.



Sangha members from across the country and from Denmark attended the *Taizo-kai* retreat in January.

In common Japanese terminology, *Danka* is the closest word to Sangha with a meaning of Buddhist community. *Danka* is translated as a supporter of a Buddhist temple; hence, it is a parishioner at a temple.

Every family in a village or neighborhood was required by law to be affiliated with a local temple. The temples maintained birth, death marriage records, etc. Ceremonies, rituals, and most social gatherings took place at the temples. A character for *Dan* is transcription of Sanskrit *Dana* 'charity' or 'donation'. *Ka* is a character for house or family. *Danto* is the term used for a member of a temple who does *dana* to support the temple.

As we mark the eleventh anniversary of our center this year, it is also appropriate to mention a Japanese term, *Arigato*. As many people know *Arigato* means thank you in Japanese. The word came from *Arigatai*. The character for *Ari* is to exist, have, or obtain. The character for *gatai* means difficult, hard or not easy. It describes the appreciation for someone who did something difficult for you.

Since the first weekly meditation meeting in the spring of 1995, Karuna Tendai Dharma Center has grown steadily until it became the Tendai-shu New York Betsuin and expanded further into the Tendai Buddhist Institute. It is due to all of Sangha members. Without you, the center could not have survived. Monshin and I would like to take this opportunity to say *Arigato* to all of you who have supported the center with us.

*Shumon Naamon*

CHOOSING to follow the Buddhist path without a Sangha is akin to crossing an ocean without a boat. It is possible to reach the other shore, but...

Twelve years ago Shumon and I were living at Tamonin in Japan, a small temple that has been serving the families of Matsuzaki village for over 700 hundred years. Living in this environment provided us with a deep respect for the role of a Buddhist Sangha in everyday life. While the pattern of Buddhist practice is different in Asia than what non-Asian Americans are accustomed to, the role of the Sangha is vital to the well being of the village. We desired to bring the best aspects of such a village Sangha to a western setting. (*Cont. on Page 2*)

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We knew that there were many fine retreat and program centers in the States. Many of these centers are exceptional in providing Dharma teachings and authentic practices. A person leaves a week-end retreat filled with a sense of spiritual well-being, devotion and resolve. However, without a local Sangha the resolve begins to fade, the devotion becomes less important, and the sense of spiritual connectedness dissolves, until the next week-end spiritual fix, perhaps a year later. Shumon and I knew that for Buddhism in the West to further mature and become more than a curiosity to most people, we in the west must develop Sangha. The Sangha should be local. People need to develop ongoing relationships with teachers and with other Sangha members as part of their community.

So it was that Shumon and I thought we might establish a small village temple in a rural area of the U.S. for a Sangha. We specifically chose Columbia County, New York for a host of factors. The most important was that we felt an inherent spirituality to the Berkshire Hills. There are no coincidences. The gentle, peaceful, mature Berkshires hills were exactly the right place. It felt like the right place. Time and place converged with the Triple Gems.

The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are not discrete components of the Buddhist Path, they are interrelated aspects of a single practice. In order to provide people with the opportunity to encounter the Buddha that dwells within there should be a supportive, nurturing environment. The dharma is all around us at all times. But like a fish we are not aware of the water, or the dharma, in which we swim. The Sangha is that environment for the realization of the Buddha awakening within, for the Dharma to manifest in our actions.

Without a local Sangha the Buddha and Dharma are in danger of being marginalized in our lives. A person's spiritual life must be interconnected with one's day-to-day mundane life. This happens in many ways. A small village temple provides many services a community needs. These may be funeral and memorial services, wedding ceremonies, blessings, etc. These serve not only to mark an event in time, to perpetuate the religious system, but also to bring together the spiritual community in times of joy and sadness for the benefit of all.

Each member of a Sangha brings a different vision of what a Sangha is and should be. A Sangha reflects the spirit and heart of its members. Some of these visions will seem to conflict. The Sangha teaches us many lessons about attachments; our desires, our frailties and our strengths. These visions will coalesce into a quilt of extraordinary magnificence.

A Sangha is more than a support network for those on a particular path of meditation and practices, though practicing with others is important. It is more than a vehicle for perpetuation of Buddhist philosophy, though without sangha our path would have ceased many years ago. It is more than a community of friends, though friendship is important. It is more than a congregation of co-religionist who assemble together on a regular basis, though it is that. A Sangha is all of those things and taken together, it is a vibrant, dynamic environment for exploration, discovery and attainment.

Monshin Naamont



## *Jiunzan Tendaiji and Mahasangha*

### *February Events*

❖ *Class and Morning Service*

4 Sutra Study Class and Morning Service, *Lotus Sutra* Chapter One, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

❖ *Meditation Meetings*

*Every Wednesday, Shikan Meditation, 7–8 p.m.; tea following.*

*Every Sunday, a lecture discussion, followed by a full meditation service. Pot-luck lunch follows the meditation on Sunday, February 26 only.*

5 Sunyata and the Perfection of Wisdom

12 Shila as Social Justice

19 A Buddhist Reflection on Death

26 Becoming a Buddha

❖ *Other Events*

12 Yakushi Nyorai Service during regular meditation service

15 Parinirvana Day

19 One Day Retreat, The Sounds of Buddhism. This is a one day retreat that involves, shomyo and temple percussion, chanting and other forms of sacred sound along with meditation and classes.

26 Mahasangha Sunday

### *Mahasangha*

❖ We are very happy to welcome Gojun Terada-sensei back from Japan. We send our condolences to his family and entire Sangha on the death of his grandfather in November.

❖ Several members are vacationing in Florida and Mexico during these cold months. Remember, you can keep track of Sangha news by checking [www.Tendai.org](http://www.Tendai.org). The *Shingi* is posted there every month.

❖ We would like to remind all Sangha members that even in the winter—or perhaps especially in the winter—in the new hondo it's always the “perfect temperature for meditation.”

❖ Please sign up to be in charge of flowers for a month in 2006. The sign-up sheet is in the genkan of the hondo. Only a few members have been donating flowers month after month. The schedule for this year has many blanks, so if you haven't provided flowers in the past, please consider doing so this year. If it is inconvenient for you to provide or purchase the flowers, you can always donate money, and someone else can actually purchase them. Thank you!

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(Continued from Page 2)

❖ SHOP ON-LINE THROUGH AMAZON OR BARNES AND NOBLE AND FIGHT GLOBAL AIDS

Sangha members now have another way to help fight the AIDS epidemic in Africa. As many of you know, Shosan Phil DiSorbo and Seifu Cindy DiSorbo are very actively involved in this mission, partnering their Community Hospice resources with those of three “sister” groups in Africa. Phil, Cindy and sangha members Sando Reiner Kopp and Jisen Larry Dye have made several trips to Africa, personally working in the AIDS clinics and on building projects to enlarge the clinics. They always welcome donations and now there is an additional step you can take to help. Through a special arrangement, *Amazon.com* and *Barnesandnoble.com* now have authorized links on the home page of Community Hospice: [www.communityhospice.org](http://www.communityhospice.org). Amazon and Barnes and Noble will donate approximately 4% of each sale to The Community Hospice Africa Fund if you go through the hospice home page link. It’s the exact same shopping items and the exact same prices. The only difference is that you get there through the [www.communityhospice.org](http://www.communityhospice.org) address. The links are on the main home page. 25 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are now infected; over 8,000 people are dying daily, with an untold tragic impact on orphans and vulnerable children. So make a note to yourself to help this worthy cause through your on-line purchases.

**March Events**

❖ **Class and Morning Service**

4 Sutra Study Class and Morning Service, *Lotus Sutra* Chaper Two, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

❖ **Meditation Meetings**

**Every Wednesday, Shikan Meditation, 7–8 p.m.; tea following.**

**Every Sunday, a lecture discussion, followed by a full meditation service. Pot-luck lunch follows the meditation on Sunday, March 26 only.**

5 Excerpts from the Bodhicaryavatara of Santideva

12 Peace is a Verb

19 O-Higan and the Ferocious Madhyamika

26 The Dharma Body

❖ **Other Events**

12 Yakushi Nyorai Service during regular meditation service

17 – 19 O-Higan Weekend Retreat – Mindfulness. A week-end of meditations and mindfulness training. We begin at 8p.m. on Friday evening and finish at about 1 p.m. on Sunday.

26 Mahasangha Sunday

**Mahasangha**

❖ Comments about the new schedule have been mixed. Sev-

eral people have said that they are glad that we don’t have the pot luck every week on Wednesday evenings. It reduces the pressure of preparing something after work, and they get home earlier. Many people seem to like the fact that the service starts later. Other people have said that they miss the pot luck dinners because they miss the sharing after the meditation service. Still others miss the lecture or discussion before the meeting.

The total number of people attending services per week may be slightly improved, though not drastically. The Sunday meditation service has had the least attendance.

We will continue the current schedule into the spring and re-evaluate the it at that time. Let Monshin know your opinion of the new schedule, *Hoza*, anything else that you think may assist us in meeting your needs.

❖ Gojun returned from Japan the last week of January. He will be staying until the last week of February and will return again to the States the middle of March.

❖ A group of Sangha members is beginning work on an archiving project for the Center. We will be asking members for various “historical” data and personal reflections regarding the “early” years of the Center. If you have suggestions for the project, please speak with Shoshin.

## Nishi Sangha

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**February Events**

❖ **Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Tuesday, 6 p.m., Friends’ Meeting House, Madison Avenue, Albany, NY**

7 Ichiguo Terasu-Kai

14 Be My (Buddhist) Valentine!

21 Discussion of *No Real Protection without Authentic Love and Compassion* The article may be downloaded from *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* at <http://jbe.gold.ac.uk/>. Click on “Current Issue” and then click on “Printer Friendly”.

28 Practice: A discussion based on a passage from Jamgon Kongtrul’s *Creation and Completion*.

❖ Nishi Sangha would like to thank Monshin for his visit on February 7. He will lecture and conduct the service.

**March Events**

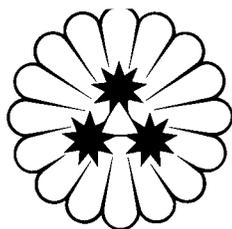
7 Bodhisattva Vows

14 Experiencing Southeast Asia

21 Working at Regional Food Bank

28 The Seasons of Practice

❖ Nishi Sangha is happy to welcome Mushin Sam Press back from his two month visit to Southeast Asia. Mushin was able to visit his son and family in Thailand and also travel to other countries in the region. He will speak about his experiences to the group on March 14.



# February 2006

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation	2 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	3	4 Jiunzan Tendaiji Morning Service Sutra Study Class
5 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  <i>First Quarter</i>	6 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	7 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service	8 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation	9 Ekayana Tendai Sangha Meditaion Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	10	11
12 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	13 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service  <i>Full Moon</i>	14 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	15 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation  <i>Shakyamuni's Parinirvana</i>	16 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	17	18
19 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service and Sounds of Buddhism Retreat	20 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	21 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha  <i>Last Quarter</i>	22 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation	23 Ekayana Tendai Sangha Meditaion Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	24 Danish Lotus Sangha Winter Retreat	25 Danish Lotus Sangha Winter Retreat
26 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Winter Retreat and Meditation Service	27 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	28 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha  <i>New Moon</i>				

Jiunzan Tendaiji Higashi Tendai Sangha Nishi Tendai Sangha Danish Lotus Sangha Ekayana Tendai Sangha

# Higashi Sangha

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## February Events

- ❖ **Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Monday, 6:30 p.m., South Berkshire Friends Meeting House, State Road, Great Barrington, MA**

- 6 The Care and Feeding of a Personal Practice
- 13 Science and Buddhism, Part 2. Cells and the Biology of Intentions and Interdependence
- 20 The Four Abodes, Living in the Houses of Right Wisdom
- 27 Pot Luck Wisdom—Simile and Metaphor, Useful Tools for the Unexplainables

## March Events

- 6 Personal Practice, The Path to the Era of Maitreya
- 13 Anger, The Footprint of Mara
- 20 Meditation, Mind Looking at Mind
- 27 Pot Luck Wisdom—Confronting and Sharing.. our Hindrances and the Wondrous Path of Difficulties, led by Musho Margaret Welch

❖ Jessica Mayer is in India as part of her teacher-training. An excerpt from an email after her arrival: “*This morning was my first day at school. School started with an all-school meeting in a big room, teachers and students seated on the floor, with announcements and news, and then meditation. It was amazing for me to see young children sitting quietly and still, in this manner.*” At Higashi Sangha we are all thrilled that Jessica has this opportunity and can’t wait to hear more!

❖ Myotei Dan LeBlanc will go to India in March to visit Jessica; they will travel a bit, including a visit to Paris before returning home. We wish them a safe & joyful journey.

❖ Sansho Garlow celebrates his one year anniversary (February 21st) as Sangha leader of Higashi Tendai Sangha. Thank you, Tamarack!

❖ Jisho Julia Erickson will host a DVD screening of a Marshall Rosenberg workshop on Non-Violent Communication (also known as Compassionate Communication.) While the date has not yet been set, it will be in March or April. Anyone interested, please email Julia directly: [julia\\_erickson@mac.com](mailto:julia_erickson@mac.com)

# Ekayana Tendai Sangha

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## February Events

- ❖ **Meditation Service every second and fourth Thursday of the month.**
- 9 Shikan Meditation and Dharma Talk: Tendai as a Madhyamaka school
- 23 Shikan Meditation and Dharma Talk: Yogachara

elements in Tendai.

## March Events

- 9 Shikan Meditation and Dharma Talk: *Lotus Sutra* Chapter One (*Jo*) and Chapter Two (*Hoben*).
- 23 Shikan Meditation and Dharma Talk: *Lotus Sutra* Chapter Three (*Hiyu*) and Chapter Four (*hinge*).

# Danish Lotus Sangha

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## February Events

- ❖ **Meditation Service every Tuesday, 7:30–9:30 p.m., Meditation Service and discussion every Thursday 9:30–10:30 a.m. and the last Sunday of the month, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.**
- The Thursday discussions in February will be on Dhyana Practice and the Five Hindrances.
- 26 *Lotus Sutra*
- ❖ 24–26 Winter meditation retreat
- ❖ Sangha members will be reading one chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* each day, and discussing it using the Danish news group.

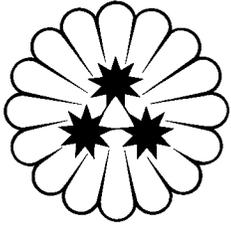
## March Events

- ❖ **Meditation Service and discussion every Tuesday, 7:30–**

**9:30 p.m., Meditation Service and dharma talk every Thursday 9:30–10:30 a.m.**

The Tuesday discussions will be on the *Satipatthana Sutta*.

- ❖ 26 Kaihogyo practice
- ❖ A local Rotary Club visited Danish Lotus Sangha as the beginning event of an outreach program to bring Buddhist teachings to the larger community. A year-long meditation program for local business leaders is in development.
- ❖ Shoken Pia Trans, leader of the Danish Lotus Sangha, is translating into Danish the chanting excerpts of the *Lotus Sutra* from *Tendai Buddhist Services for Ordained Practitioners* published by Tendai Buddhist Institute last year. Currently, there is no Danish translation of the complete sutra available.



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			19 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">O-Higan Retreat</div>	20 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service  <i>Spring Equinox</i>	21 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	22 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation and Hoza  <i>Last Quarter</i>	23 Ekayana Tendai Sangha Meditaion Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	24	25
26 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service Mahasangha Sunday Danish Lotus Sangha Kaihogyo	27	28	29  <i>New Moon</i>	30	31				