



Monthly Bulletin

Tendai-shu New York Betsuin  
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## Meanderings

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*Horisawa sensei is the current Principal of Eizan Gakuin (Academy) on Mt. Hiei and the Jushoku (Abbot) of Taimon-an on Hiei-zan. He has been the Gyoincho (director) at the Hiei-zan Training Center. He has also traveled widely in India and is a Master of Shikan meditation. This transcript came from a speech he gave on April 26th, 2006, at the Second Buddhist-Christian Symposium in Osaka and Hiei-zan, Japan. Shumon and I are asked to translate and edit many speeches and papers given at international conferences and meetings. We have asked permission from Mt. Hiei to reprint some of these papers.*

### Twelve-Year Rozan Gyo

*Ven. Somon Horisawa, Principal of Eizan Academy*

#### 1. Gyo at Mt. Hiei

Mt. Hiei is the foundation mountain of Japanese Tendai Buddhism, which was opened by Dengyo Daishi (Saicho) at the beginning of Heian Period (806 A.D.) This year is exactly 1,200 years since its establishment. It is said that Mt. Hiei is the mother mountain of Japanese Buddhism. It is because the founders of almost all Buddhist schools in Japan studied and spent a significant period of time for their training on this mountain. Although each founder left Mt. Hiei and established their own schools, the spirit of Buddhism on Mt. Hiei runs deeply in each of these schools.

Mt. Hiei is especially well-known as a training mountain. There are two main kinds of training. The first is the Twelve-Year *Rozan Gyo*: a twelve-year training confined to the mountain. The second is the One-Thousand-Day *Kaiho Gyo*: a training by walking and running to sacred places on Mt. Hiei every day for 1,000 days. These trainings have been practiced for over one thousand years. The Twelve-Year Rozan Gyo was started by Saicho himself and has been continued uninterrupted for 1,200 years.

Two superior monks were sent to Mt. Hiei every year as government sponsored students to be enrolled in the twelve-year training. Inevitably, however, many of them went down from the mountain in the middle of the training. The reason why Saicho established this Twelve-Year Rozan Gyo was to confine the monks to Mt. Hiei in order to ensure they would complete the training. In other words, he established the system for monks to concentrate on their training by imposing curfews and keep them secluded from the world outside the mountain.

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*“Three weeks later I was at the top of the mountain. Buddha should be there, but he was nowhere to be found. I felt the failure and was disappointed yet I kept repeating the same thing again and again.”*

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#### 2. Koso Gyo

Before one can start the Twelve-Year Rozan training, there is one step the person has to do. That is, to receive Mahayana Precepts. Every Tendai monk receives the Mahayana Precepts at the time he or she takes ordination vows. In this case, *Jisei Jukai* is required. *Jisei Jukai* is to receive the precepts directly from the Buddha, not from a human being.

In order to do the Koso Gyo, a special dojo, training hall, has to be created. There, scrolls with pictures of Shakyamuni Buddha, Monjushri and Mitreya are hung, and one has to venerate each of three thousands Buddhas daily: one thousand prostrations for the past, one thousand prostrations for the present and the one thousand prostrations for the future Buddhas. The prostrations start in the kneeling position and touching one's forehead to the ground while raising one's *(continued on page two)*

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hands beside the head, standing up while reciting the name of each Buddha and doing gassho, and once more returning to the kneeling position with the forehead upon the ground. Then, one places grain incense onto an incensor, tosses flower petals and strikes the *kei*, a flat metal gong, once. The process is repeated, again standing up and reciting the name of the next Buddha.

One has to continue venerating Buddhas by reciting the names of three thousand Buddhas with great intention. During this training, one has to repeat the act of veneration without sleep, lying down, nor resting. There is no time limit for this training. It will not end until one sees the Buddha with one's own eyes. If and when one sees the Buddha, it has to be strictly evaluated by the monks who are guiding the training. Only after it is recognized that the participant indeed saw the Buddha, is it certified that one has achieved Koso.

### The Experience

I knew it was a very difficult training because of the strict conditions, such as no sleeping, lying down, nor resting. However, once the training started, I found out the difficulties were beyond my imagination. First of all, there is the physical hardship. It is not easy to prostrate to the three thousand Buddhas every day. During the day, it can become hot on Mt. Hiei. I sweated and soon a prickly heat rash covered my body. Although I applied talcum powder, it did not help much. Yet, it became cold at night.

I faced more hardships mentally. Since the purpose of this training is to see the Buddha with my own eyes, I started thinking about how I could see the Buddha. It is like climbing a mountain. I started to plan each step; setting a goal of reaching the peak in two to three weeks. I started the climb up from the bottom of the mountain eagerly. Three weeks later I was at the top of the mountain. Buddha should be there, but he was nowhere to be found. I felt the failure and was disappointed yet I kept repeating the same thing again and again. After trying so many times, I felt as if I were knocked down and was filled with discouragement.

After all, I was in the state of mind that I could no longer expect to see a Buddha. I venerated one Buddha at a time, one day at a time. One month passed by then two months. One evening I fell asleep while I was sitting on a *Josho*. During training, it is permitted to sit on the *Josho*, a very narrow chair, when the trainee reaches the exhaustion. However, it is such a narrow and hard chair that it is impossible to keep sitting on it more than a half hour at a time. One evening in the middle of the night, a Buddha appeared to me while I was sleeping. I was surprised and opened my eyes, yet the Buddha was still there. I knew instinctively that it was Shakyamuni Buddha. Then, from nowhere the phrase *Namu Shakyamuni Butsu*, a title of the historic Buddha,

arose from my lower abdomen as if it was bubbling up, and I kept chanting it.

My entire body became very stiff as if I was tied up with a wire. I was moved by the experience and could do nothing but chant while holding my hands in gassho. I could feel tears and sweat were running down my face. As I was gazing at the Buddha, I saw a rope came down from the Buddha's right hand and around my waist and back to the Buddha. The Buddha took the rope in both hands and started to move back quietly. At that time, I received a light shock. When I felt as if my body were just about to float, the rope came loose and the Buddha kept moving backward and slowly disappeared in the dark. After that, as it had been previously, the dojo was illuminated dimly with a pair of candles. I could not move my body freely yet, but at that time, I felt with my whole body that the experience was "koso."

### 3. Content of the Gyo

The Rozan Gyo begins only after completion of the Koso Gyo and the receiving of the Mahayana Precepts at a ceremony. During the first six years of the 12-year gyo, one primarily has to master the scholarship in his specialized field; additionally one will undergo actual practices. Then, during the last six years, the practices become the main training and the academic side continues in order to hone one's knowledge as the secondary feature. There are two paths in this Rozan Gyo; one is *Shikangyo* or the meditation path, and *Shanago* or esoteric path. One determines the path before entering the gyo. Once you have started, you can't change the path for twelve years. Dengyo Daishi chose this period of twelve years by following a story from sutra that stated even a dim-witted person can achieve positive results if he trains earnestly for twelve years.

During the first six-year academic phase, one serves Dengyo Daishi and undergoes the training at the *Jodo-in* where Dengyo Daishi is enshrined as a living master. At *Jodo-in* the Morning Service is conducted every morning at 4:00 a.m. and the Mahayana Precepts are reverentially maintained. Cleaning this temple is also a very important training. The term for this phase is the Cleaning Hell; the name gives you some idea of this practice.

During the second six years, the practice becomes the main part of the training. If one selected the Shikango course, the person will do *Shishuzanmai*, the four kinds of *samadhi*. It is a method to enter *samadhi*, or the state of one-pointed consciousness. The first stage is constantly sitting zen meditation, the second is to visualize the Buddha while walking, referred to as walking meditation, the third is to alternate both the first and second methods in intervals, and the fourth stage is neither walking nor standing and refers to cultivating *samadhi* wherever the mind is directed at the moment, this makes one's daily life a state of *samadhi*.



# *Jiunzan Tendaiji and Mahasangha*



*Sangha members bathe the Buddha during the service celebrating the birthday of Shakyamuni.*

## **May Events**

### ❖ ***Class and Morning Service***

6 Saturday, Sangha Day

8:30 a.m., Morning Service

9:00 a.m., Sutra Study Class. This month we will be examining the 4th chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* titled “Willing Acceptance” or “Faith Discernment”

10:30 a.m.–4 p.m., Clean Up Day: cleaning up around the Dharma Center, landscape, window washing, etc.

### ❖ ***Meditation Meetings and Other Events***

***Every Wednesday, Shikan Meditation, 7–8 p.m.; tea following. Pot-luck dinner follows the meditation on Wednesday, May 3 only.***

3 Wednesday, 6 p.m., Discussion: Living a Buddhist Life, Meditation, Potluck Dinner

10 Wednesday, 7 p.m., Shikan Meditation

17 Wednesday, 7 p.m., Shikan Meditation

21 Sunday 10:30 a.m., Mahasangha Sunday, Discussion: Karuna (Compassion), first in a series of talks on Essentials of Buddhist Thought and Practice., Meditation Service and Potluck Lunch.

1:00 p.m. – 4 p.m., Sangha Community Meeting – Come hear of Center developments and share your thoughts and ideas.

24 Wednesday, 7 p.m., Shikan Meditation

31 Wednesday, 7 p.m., Shikan Meditation

❖ Please note: Monshin and Shumon will be visiting the European Sanghas from May 22 – June 2. Gojun will be taking care of the Center. Meditations will be lead by Soryo and Doshu.

### ❖ ***Announcements***

❖ **Scheduling** After several months of the expanded schedule we have decided to go back to our old schedule with a few modifications. We will continue to have Mahasangha Sunday once a month, usually the 3rd Sunday, with a discussion, meditation service and (continued on page 4)

potluck lunch. This will be the only Sunday meditation. Once a month, usually the first Wednesday of the month, we will have a discussion followed by a meditation and finishing with a potluck dinner. The other Wednesday evenings we will have a meditation without the service. We recognize that each month there are many opportunities for meditation and classes. We don't wish to "overload" people.

- ❖ Congratulations to Shosan Phil and Seifu Cindy DiSorbo. I'm pleased to announce that Phil been asked to serve on the Senior Management Team of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in Washington, DC. He has been appointed as the Executive Director of The Foundation for Hospices in Subsaharan Africa. The start date is approximately July 21, 2006. Phil will be working globally with businesses, faith communities, foundations, and large hospitals to advance the forgotten cause of palliative care for dying and orphaned victims of HIV/AIDS. Phil and Cindy are currently looking for an apartment in the Washington, D.C. area. They will keep their home in Ghent as their permanent residence. We look forward to involving the sangha in this vitally important initiative.
- ❖ This month Shumon and Monshin will be traveling to

Denmark to lead a retreat and meet with our sangha members in Europe. We look forward to meeting for the first time new Dharma friends.

- ❖ Katherine Houk, of the Chatham area Pastors Association, has asked us to place in our bulletins a call for the following items for the Chatham Area Silent Pantry: sugar; coffee, cereal (other than corn flakes), juices, canned sweet potatoes, canned white potatoes, canned fruits, shrimp ramen noodles, canned beef or chicken stew, canned chili, canned meats, spaghetti sauce, sugar-free pudding, crackers, cake mixes, toilet tissue, diapers. Thank you! Your donations are greatly appreciated by those in need.
- ❖ Chion Ernie Lissabet represented our sanghas at the the *Rally to Save Darfur* in Washington, DC on April 30, sounding the horagai (conch shell horn) to support the call to end the suffering in Sudan.
- ❖ We send out prayers and best wishes to Koushun Ted Phelps and his family during his stay at St. Peter's Hospital in Albany.
- ❖ ***Complete event listings through the end of the year are on-line at [www.tendai.org](http://www.tendai.org)***

## *Higashi Sangha*

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### *May Events*

- ❖ ***Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Monday, 6:30 p.m., East Mountian Retreat Center, 8 Lake Buel Rd., Great Barrington, MA***
  - 1 Death, The Ultimate Lesson in Impermanence
  - 8 Simile and Metaphor, Useful Tools in Understanding the Dharma
  - 15 Sunyata, The Inherent Emptiness in All Phenomena.
  - 22 The Five Skandas, Non-Self Revealed
  - 29 Pot Luck Wisdom—Natural Buddha: The Environ-

ment and Buddhism, led by Myotei Dan LaBlanc

- ❖ Sansho Tamarack Garlow was invited to attend and give a few words at a vigil for Mitchell Lawrence at the Superior Courthouse steps in Pittsfield, MA, on April 2nd. Lawrence was one of the Taconic 7 who are threatened with a two-year minimum sentence for drug sales within a questionable school zone and has begun his prison term. The event was organized by John Whalan and Rev Steve Bridges and was attended by over 90 people including about eight clergy.
- ❖ Welcome home to Jessica Mayer and Dan LeBlanc from their stay in India.

## *Nishi Sangha*

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### *May Events*

- ❖ ***Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Tuesday, 6 p.m., Friends' Meeting House, Madison Avenue, Albany, NY***
  - 2 The Middle Way
  - 9 Celebrating Vishaka Day
  - 16 Wes Nisker's *Buddha's Nature*
  - 23 What is the Spiritual Path and What is a Spiritual

Person?

30 TBA

- ❖ Kansho Dana Biondi was able to spend ten days in Italy during spring vacation. She visited Florence, Venice and Pisa and is still trying to decide which city has the best food.
- ❖ Jifu Jim O'Rourke spent ten days in Russia at the end of April. Welcome home, Jim.

# Nyoirin-An (Ekayana Tendai Sangha)

## May Events

- ❖ **Meditation Service every second and fourth Thursday of the month, Nyoirin-An meditation room in Naubeim near Frankfurt, Germany.**

11 Shikan Meditation and Dharma Talk: *Lotus Sutra*

Chapter 9, *Ninki*, and Chapter 10 *Hosshi*.

13 Vishaka with the Frankfurt Area Buddhist Sanghas at East Park

25 Shikan Meditation and Dharma Talk: *Lotus Sutra* Chapter 11 *Ken Hoto* and Chapter 12 *Daibadatta*.

# Danish Lotus Sangha

## May Events

- ❖ **Meditation Service every Thursday, 7:30–9:30 p.m. and the last Sunday of the month, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; Meditation Service and discussion every Tuesday 9:30–10:30 a.m.**

A new “Basics of Buddhism Course” runs from March 28 through May 23. Readings for each week’s topic can be found at [www.Lotus-Sangha.dk](http://www.Lotus-Sangha.dk) The topics for April are:

- 2 The Bodhisattva ideal – the paramitas
- 9 Sunyata
- 16 The Lotus Sutra
- 23 Monshin and Shumon are in Denmark for the retreat

## Special Events

- 7 One day *Lotus Sutra* retreat, 10 a.m.
- 21 The Danish National Museum has a Buddhist collection that we will see, 10 a.m.
- 25–28 Retreat lead by Monshin and Shumon

## Recent Events

Sangha members chose a snowy day in April for our first kaihogyo practice.



*The new shikando was completed rapidly, beginning with a loft full of hay. Hard work (by Shoken Pia Trans, shown at left) and others brought it to completion in time for the official opening service on Sunday, April 23.*







# May 2006

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
	1	2 Danish Lotus Sangha	3 Jiunzan Tendaiji Discussion, Shikan Meditation, and Potluck Dinner	4	5  <i>First Quarter</i>	6 Jiunzan Tendaiji Morning Service Sutra Study Class, Clean Up Day
7 Danish Sangha Lotus Sutra Retreat	8 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	9 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	10 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation	11 Nyoirin-An Meditaion Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	12  <i>Yakushi Nyorai Day</i>	13  <i>Vishaka Day Full Moon</i>
14	15 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	16 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	17 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation	18 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	19	20  <i>Last Quarter</i>
21 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service, Mahasangha Sunday and Community Meeting	22 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	23 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha	24 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation	25 Nyoirin-An Meditaion Service	26 27 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Danish Lotus Sangha Retreat</div>  <i>New Moon</i>	
28 Danish Lotus Sangha Retreat	29 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	30 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service	31 Jiunzan Tendaiji Shikan Meditation			

Jiunzan Tendaiji Higashi Tendai Sangha Nishi Tendai Sangha Danish Lotus Sangha Nyoirin-An