



## Meanderings on the Climatology of Mood

I WOKE up this morning to an unusually warm Adirondack day. More like early August than near the end of September. Last week there were killing frosts and we wore hooded sweatshirts and fleece gloves on our early morning walk down to Round Pond Brook while smoke from the woodstove scented the air. We're anxiously waiting for rain after several months of unusually dry weather. Our neighbor claims he saw a chipmunk crossing the Hudson hopping from rock to rock, the water was so low. Past Octobers have often brought the first snowfall, a white coating that might last only for a few days before melting away. Last September was unusually cold. Then October was unusually warm—so much so that the blackberry bushes began to leaf out thinking that spring had come after an ever so brief 'winter'. They were rudely shocked when a week later the cold returned again and blackened the emerging leaves.

These many weather events change day by day, week by week, month by month, season by season. Sometimes they follow what we call normal patterns. Sometimes they don't. But the change goes on caused by myriad factors that even the supercomputers of the national weather service can't fully encompass. We watch the clouds scud across the sky; the sunlight now bright, now watery and gray; rain pours down for a few hours and then moves on. We cover the tomatoes to protect them from the evening's frost and then pull back those same covers a few hours later to expose them to the heat of the sun. All this on-going activity and we understand this is just that—a collection of events we call 'weather'. We don't conceive of it as an independent being named 'Weather'.

During shamatha (calming) meditation, we are instructed to focus on the breath, observe thoughts as they arise, and to let them go. We can, with a change of perspective, do the same practice as vispashyana (discerning the real) meditation. If we observe the thoughts, sensations, and emotions as they arise we begin to notice many things that might have escaped our attention before. First is that they are conditioned, like the weather, by myriad factors. Some are beyond our comprehension. Others can be directly observed. We have a physical body that is equipped with five outer senses and the mind, in Buddhist psychology the sixth sense whose role is to perceive thoughts as the ears perceive sound. All perceptions come to us through those six sense faculties. We have the power naming and categorizing and conceptualizing, so we create a context or a story about our sensations. We have likes and dislikes, so we pursue some and flee from others. And lastly, we're self-conscious of this taking place. The sensations, thoughts and emotions flow constantly like the clouds across the sky and it is as impossible to grasp hold of one and keep it as it is to catch the tail of a cumulous dragon.

Yet, unlike the weather, we take our personal series of events to be the activity of a unitary and independent being to which we give our name and identity, and for those who are unhappy with their condition they yearn after one 'better'. It's as if rainy Seattle wished instead to be sunny southern California. But the lush temperate rainforest plants of the Pacific Northwest would parch in the scanty rainfall of the south.

The Buddhist path is developmental, so one is not destined to forever stay planted in a single place. You couldn't if you wished to. Climates, too, change and southern California was not always sunny, and Seattle will not always be rainy. The conditioning factors accumulate gradually over time, and change seemingly tips suddenly. As Buddhist practitioners, we have the opportunity to create for ourselves and others positive conditions that will, over time, lead to developmental progress along the Bodhisattva path. That progress may seem incremental—or maybe nonexistent—but with constant application the conditions are brought into being that will create an apparent, perhaps seemingly sudden, shift in one's personal climate of being.



# Jiunzan Tendaiji and Mahasangha

## October Events

### ❖ Meditation Meetings

Every Wednesday 6 p.m., discussion, Meditation Service and pot luck dinner

- 3 Tendai in the West
- 10 Creation of Social Movements in the *Lotus Sutra*
- 17 Setting up One's Butsu-dan (Home Altar)
- 24 Kaihogyo as a Practice
- 31 Meanderings on the Ten Ox-herding pictures

### ❖ Class

During October we have several events scheduled on weekends. Due to this we will not offer the regular Saturday class and Mahasangha Sunday. Thus you should take the following opportunities to experience the sangha in these novel ways.

### ❖ Coming Events



6 **Tendai Sacred Calligraphy—Opening, Reception and Exhibit**, 1–5 p.m., all are invited. Japanese brush calligraphy, *Shodo*, combines artistry and spiritual expression of Buddhist Masters. It is a form of Buddhist practice intended to cultivate awakening in the observer as well as the calligrapher. This exhibit presents thirty-seven scrolls created by the *Tendai Calligraphy Association* specifically for the Tendai Buddhist Institute. Included in the exhibit are works by the former and current *Zasu* (spiritual head of Tendai), leading masters and judges in Japan, all Tendai monks and practitioners. The exhibit will remain installed until November 4.

10 **Meditation Service** We will have several visitors from Japan: Reiko Tanaka, Keisuke Matsumoto and accompanying photographer. Rev. Matsumoto is a writer for a Japanese Buddhist magazine and an upcoming issue is on Buddhism in New York. They will visit several other locations after they visit us. Since we are not

having a formal Mahasangha Sunday this might be a good occasion to join Jiunzan Tendai-ji during the month. Plan on staying for pot-luck dinner so Rev. Matsumoto has a chance to speak with some American Buddhists.

27 **Kaihogyo Retreat**, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. A *Kaihogyo* is a walking meditation and pilgrimage based on the practices of Tendai monks on Mt. Hiei, Japan. This one-day retreat will cover approximately 10 miles on the back roads of Columbia County, NY near the Institute. The donation for the day is \$40 members, \$55 non-members; a vegetarian lunch is included. This is a great opportunity to experience a different type of Buddhist practice.

❖ We are expecting a new assistant, Jien Sekiguchi, to the Institute in the month of October. He is the son of Reverends Sekiguchi from Nikko Japan. The Sekiguchi's have visited the Institute on several occasions; many of you have met them. Jien will be staying for at least a year and will assist in many ways around the Tendai Buddhist Institute. When you meet him please welcome him to our sangha and to the States.

❖ In the last several weeks we have seen a repressive Burmese military regime respond to peaceful protests with brutal force. Several hundreds of people have been killed and many more are missing. The protests were initiated by Buddhist monks. Without going into the specifics in this space let me just ask that you keep the people of Burma in your thoughts and prayers and be a witness to the horrific treatment of these peaceful people.

❖ Send your sangha news, articles, photos or artwork for the November issue of *Shingi* to Seishin (fitterer@acmenet.net) by October 15. Contributions from all members of all the sanghas are welcome.

## Washington Tendai Sangha

❖ **Meditation Service, 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, 8–10 a.m.; Dharma Class and Meditation, 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month 7–9 p.m., Cherrydale Volunteer Fire Department, 3900 Lee Highway in Arlington, VA.**

**Please join us for "Dharma Breakfast", 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month, 9:30–10:30 a.m. at a local restaurant for conversation about Buddhism and the Dharma.**

**News and event updates are available at the sangha web site [washingtontendai.org](http://washingtontendai.org).**

**There are no meetings of the Sangha on the 5th Sunday or Tuesday of any month.**



## Nyoirin-An (*Ekayana Tendai Sangha*)

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

### October Events

4 Chih-i's *Fa Hua Hsüan I* (The Meaning of the Lotus Sutra) – Part III

18 Chih-i's *Ching-t'u Shih-i-lun* (Ten Doubts about Pure Land), see <http://www.geocities.com/sinweiy/TenDoubtsaboutPureLand.html>

## Danish Lotus Sangha

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❖ *Meditation Service, every Thursday, 9:30–11 a.m.*

*Meditation Service and discussion, every Tuesday, 7:30–9:30 p.m.*

### October Events

5–7 **Kaihogyo Retreat**

9 **Long Tuesday:** We meet at 4:30 p.m., sit meditation for three hours; at 7:30 p.m. we hold our regular Tuesday service and meditation, followed by a discussion meeting.

28 **Kaihogyo**, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

## Higashi Sangha

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❖ *Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Monday, 6:30 p.m., East Mountain Retreat Center, 8 Lake Buel Rd., Great Barrington, MA*

### October Events

1 Anger and Passion—Fire in the Mind

8 Calligraphy and Its Role in Japanese Buddhism

15 TBA, led by Jane Majdalany

22 Original Sin and Karma— a Sangha Discussion

29 The Yoga of Sitting, led by Erica Fay

❖ Sansho Tamarack led a Walk for Peace in downtown Great Barrington on September 15 that ended in a concert by Graham and Barbara Dean and Fran Mandeville and Lisa Sturz. at the town bandstand. This event was in conjunction with a nation-wide Walk for Peace day sponsored by *The Peace Alliance*, the grass roots organization working to help establish a U.S. Department of Peace. The Walk was received with much enthusiasm from passers by and motorists. The effort was also supported by local businesses who made various contributions for the event.

Sangha member Karen Noel, who just left a stressful job working with disturbed youth, took a much needed R & R trip to her parents house in North Carolina. Her stay will end with Sangha member Jurek Zamoyski's trip to pick her up and bring her home. We missed her world class laugh!

## Nishi Sangha

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

### October Events

2 Kaihogyo Practice, led by Mushin

9 One sitting period; Sangha quarterly dinner at a local restaurant

16 Japan's "Greatest Religious Personality"

23 Koans, led by Nenad Aleksic

30 Volunteering at the Regional Food Bank

❖ Thanks for your help everyone and a special thanks to Nenad. We'll look forward to the presentation.

## Celestial Drum Tendai Sangha

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❖ *Meditation Service and Dharma discussion, every Thursday, 6:30 p.m.; introductory meditation instruction offered at 6:15 p.m.; Indian Lake, NY; e-mail [fitterer@acmenet.net](mailto:fitterer@acmenet.net) for directions.*

### October Events

Throughout October, the Sangha discussions will focus on the role of ritual as a form of meditation and practice, looking into the qualities of inspiration contained within each of the chants of the meditation service that we perform weekly. Many of these provide positive emotional antidotes to common negative mental and emotional states.

❖ Jim Curry was the first sangha member to take refuge during O-Higan in September, receiving the dharma name *Daichi*, Great Earth.



*Celestial Drum Sangha members look out over the Flowed Lands towards Avalanche Pass during a 14 mile kaihogyo.*



# October 2007

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 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation	3 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  <i>Last Quarter</i>	4 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Nyoirin-An Meditaion Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	5  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Danish Lotus Sangha Kaihogyo Retreat</div>	6 Tendai Sacred Calligraphy Exhibit Opens
7  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Danish Lotus Sangha Kaihogyo Retreat</div>	8 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	9 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	10 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  <i>New Moon</i>	11 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	12  <i>Yakushi Nyorai Day</i>	13 Jiunzan Tendaiji Class
14 Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation Service	15 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	16 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation	17 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	18 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Nyoirin-An Meditaion Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	19  <i>First Quarter</i>	20
21 Jiunzan Tendaiji Mahasangha Sunday	22 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	23 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	24 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	25 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service  <i>Full Moon</i>	26	27 Jiunzan Tendai-ji Kaihogyo Retreat
28 Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Kaihogyo	29 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	31 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service				

Jiunzan Tendaiji Higashi Tendai Sangha Nishi Tendai Sangha Danish Lotus Sangha Nyoirin-An  
Washington Tendai Sangha Celestial Drum Tendai Sangha