



## *Jushoku's Meanderings*

**L**EGEND has it that when Shakyamuni Buddha was on his deathbed and preparing to die, he asked the animals of the forest to come and bid him farewell. The twelve who first arrived are the animals we see in the Asian zodiac. The very first was the rat. The year 2008 is the year of the Earth Rat. Thus we begin a new cycle.

The Western rat is loathed; being seen as a disease-ridden, filthy vermin. The rat is viewed differently in the East. The Eastern rat is revered for its quick wits and its ability to accrue and hold on to items of value; rats are considered a symbol of good luck and wealth in both China and Japan.

The actual date of the Chinese New Year is February 7. We are finishing the end of the twelve year cycle with th

e Year of the Fire Pig. Between now and the beginning of February we should work hard to finish old business and prepare for a new year of new ideas, directions and ways of doing things. This is a year to experiment and put plans into action. It will be a good time to achieve success. Things begun during this year are likely to have long term consequences, so choose your actions wisely to enrich your life. By tradition, the Year of the Rat is an especially good year for material well-being and even more auspicious for spiritual growth. What a great combination. Here is an interesting paradox.

Material success and spiritual attainment are often perceived as antithetical. Material well-being is not affluence or materialism. It is the quality of having one's basic needs met. Spiritual growth is not reaching a state of ecstasy. It is living in a state of equanimity with compassion to all. We start with liberation from discontentedness within and extend that liberation until it encompasses everyone with whom we are in contact, everything that we touch or perceive. The growth starts small and builds with one's life. Let's consider what the Year of the Rat may bring us.

In our time-deprived, overly stimulated, celebrity oriented, life it is difficult to see the beauty, wonder and promise of the world around us. We are confronted by the material and social artifacts of this age, bounded by a society obsessed by commercialism. Things, not character or quality of a life or relationships, but things, seem to be of supreme importance. Seeing this rationally, with the mind is not as obvious as it should be. It takes more than intellectual understanding to overcome the pervasive nature of societal weight.

Awakening is the process of seeing with clarity from the heart. This is where the Year of the Rat enters the scene.

In the Year of the Rat it will be possible to achieve material well-being without being immersed in materialism. It will be a year to redirect your energies toward the spirit and the whole. What a great opportunity to live a purposeful life. To begin you should recognize this great reality. This will be a year to grasp your future and make choices that are filled with meaning, not with things. This will be a year to embark on, or refine, a life of compassion and wisdom. This is not a year when your spiritual path is a path of deprivation. It is a year when your spiritual path is an inner and outer journey into the nature of reality. This year embrace the *Brahma Viharas* (loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity) in your practice and your daily life in order to meld material well-being and spiritual growth.

Shumon and I wish you a year of extraordinary grace and beauty as you explore the Year of the Rat. The Tendai Buddhist Institute would like to be part of that fascinating journey.

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Tendai-shu New York Betsuin

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*Gassho,  
Monshin*



# Jiunzan Tendaiji and Mahasangha

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## January Events

### ❖ *Meditation Meetings every Wednesday 6 p.m., discussion, Meditation Service and pot luck dinner*

2 No Meditation Service. Join us for the New Year Service December 31-January 1.

9 Living a Buddhist Life

16 Eightfold Noble Path – Right Effort

23 Art of the *Lotus Sutra*

30 Tendai Buddhist Institute–The Mission

### ❖ **December 31 New Year's Service**, 10:30 p.m. – 2:00 a.m.

A New Year that begins with peace and joy. This year we will also include a Refuge ceremony beginning about 10:30 p.m. and we will continue on to the New Year meditation. The service will be over about 12:20 a.m. Following the service we will have a New Year's observance with traditional American and Japanese finger foods, champagne, sake, etc. Join us for this very special service and celebration.

❖ 5 **Morning Service and Sutra Class**, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. The class begins at the conclusion of the service, about 9 a.m. We

are studying the *Lankavatara Sutra*. This sutra, known for its treatment of “store house” consciousness (skt. *alaya-vijnana*), is a seminal sutra for much of East Asian Buddhism. It is considered especially important to Ch'an in China and zen schools in Japan. The sutra can be found on-line in its entirety at, [http://www.buddhistinformation.com/lankavatara\\_sutra.htm](http://www.buddhistinformation.com/lankavatara_sutra.htm). We have a number of copies available. Ask you sangha leader.

❖ 25–27 **Retreat, Ekayana: the Gift of Saicho**, 7 p.m. Friday evening through 1 p.m. Sunday afternoon. January 26 is the anniversary of the founding of Tendai in Japan. The subject of the *Ekayana* is the round or complete teaching that incorporates early Buddhist (*Shravakayana*) and later Buddhist (*Bodhisattvayana*) teachings. The first temple on Hiei-zan, founded in 785 by Saicho, was *Ichijo-Shikan-in*. In Japanese Ekayana is *Ichijo* and *Shikan* is Shamatha and Vipashayana meditation. We will investigate these teachings and practices that transformed Japanese Buddhism. People of all levels of practice will find this retreat appropriate.

❖ Please send your articles, sangha news, artwork and photographs for the February issue of *Shingi* to [fitterer@acmenet.net](mailto:fitterer@acmenet.net) by January 15.



Winter's snow covers the hills above Jiunzan Tendai-ji

(all photos by Onyo Susan Bues)

## Washington Tendai Sangha

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❖ *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.*

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

❖ On December 8, the Washington Tendai Sangha celebrated our one-year anniversary by re-conducting the inaugural services held by Monshin Sensei at the Cherrydale Volunteer Fire Department last year at this time.

The members of our Sangha are reading and discussing the chapters of the *Lotus Sutra* at each meeting, and we continue to meet regularly for meditation and services. However, we regret to inform everyone that due to a hosting service problem, the web site of the Washington Tendai Sangha [washingtontendai.org](http://washingtontendai.org) is currently down. Chion is working on getting the Sangha web site re-posted on a new hosting service, so we will advise the Mahasangha once it is back up, either by e-mail or with an announcement in next month's *Shingi*.

## Danish Lotus Sangha

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❖ *Meditation Service, every Thursday beginning January 17, 9:30–11 a.m.*

*Meditation Service and discussion, every Tuesday beginning January 8, 7:30–9:30 p.m.*

*Meditation class for beginners every Thursday beginning January 17, 7:30 p.m.*

## Higashi Sangha

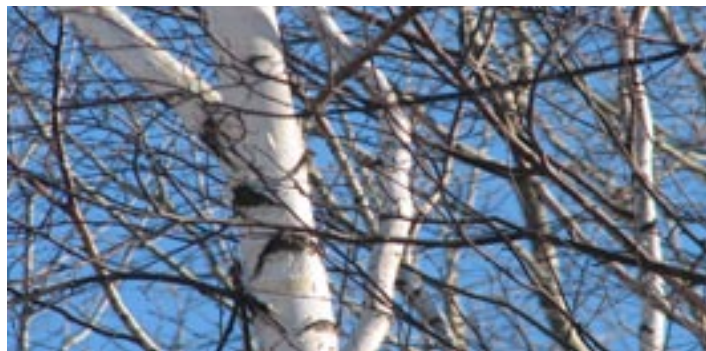
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❖ *Meditation Service and Dharma Discussion every Monday, 6:30 p.m., South Berkshire Friends Meeting House, State Rd., Great Barrington, MA*

### January Events

- 7 The Bodhisattva Vows
- 14 Taking Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
- 21 A Study of Incense
- 28 Pot Luck Wisdom TBA

❖ The weather wrote the story of Sangha attendance at Higashi in December. Weeks one and two were knocked out by ice and snow, but the last was the evening of our annual Holiday Pot Luck Dinner which the weather allowed us to celebrate, but at the Friends, not at East Mountain due to the long uphill snow-covered drive-way.



## Nyoirin-An (Ekayana Tendai Sangha)

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

### January Events

- 10 Chih-i's *Mo-ho Chih-kuan*, Chapter 4, part 1
- 24 Chih-i's *Mo-ho Chih-kuan*, Chapter 4, part 2

❖ On December 1, Daishin held an introductory seminar on Buddhist haiku poems at a Bavarian Dharma Center. Besides dealing with history, structures and basics of the Japanese language, there was a workshop on making haikus in German.

## Nishi Sangha

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

### January Events

- 8 TBA, Shoshin
- 15 The Three Dharma Seals, Mushin
- 22 TBA, Koyo
- 29 Just Sitting

## 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.*

### January Events

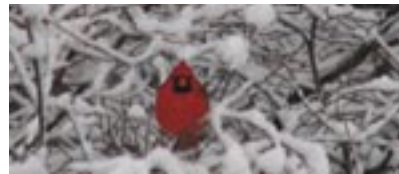
In January, we'll complete our discussion on the *Six Paramitas* (or perfections) that we began in December. On January 3 the topic will be the Perfection of Meditation and the Perfection of Wisdom. For the remainder of the month, we'll take a look at some of the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that appear in Buddhist texts and images and discuss their role in practice.



# January 2008

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  <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3 Celestial Drum Meditation Service	4	5 Jiunzan Tendaiji Class
6	7 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	8 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service  <i>New Moon</i>	9 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	10 Nyoirin-An Meditaion Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	11	12  <i>Yakushi Nyorai Day</i>
13 Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation Service	14 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	15 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation	16 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	17 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	18	19
20	21 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	22 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service  <i>Full Moon</i>	23 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	24 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Nyoirin-An Meditaion Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	25	26  <i>Tendai-shu established in Japan</i>
27 Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation Service	28 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service	29 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	30 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  <i>Last Quarter</i>	31 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service		

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