



## *Meanderings on belief, faith, devotion*

**S**HAKYAMUNI BUDDHA taught the Dharma 86,000 different ways, so we're told, to meet the various capacities, needs and interests of those to whom he spoke. Each of us have different personalities, life histories, skills and 'ways of being in the world' so clearly the same method is not going to be suited to all. Some might be more scholarly: reading, analyzing thinking. Another might be a person of action: always looking for something to do. And another may respond to the emotional qualities of a situation.

My introduction to Buddhism was through books. Of course in the early 70s there weren't many opportunities for practice, but still books suited my temperament; always searching for those systems of thought that were rationally argued and led to the possibility of relief of discontent. What I read led me to a 'belief' in Buddhism and its possibilities for the amelioration of sorrow. I developed 'faith' that what had worked for so many others would work for me as well. And several years later, I found a group of people who were actually engaged in practice—they were 'doing' it.

These three qualities of belief (intellectual or cognitive understanding), faith (an emotional sense of 'rightness') and devotion (physically carrying out an activity) provide a three-prong approach to practice. Some, due to their temperament may primarily be inspired by cognitive investigation; others by their emotion and others through their activity. Each factor individually is important to developing and maintaining a practice, and while there is within each person an emphasis on one particular area, a practice is best supported and developed by a union of all of them.

Belief alone may yield an intellectual understanding, but left by itself it fails to yield transformation. Faith and the emotions may yield a sense of bliss and well-being, but may remain a solitary and self-satisfied experience. Devoted activity without understanding becomes meaningless repetition. But when the three are joined in some measure, a secure practice may be developed. Belief provides the basis for understanding 'what' you are doing and 'why'. Emotion and faith provides the energy of enthusiasm to carry it on from day to day. Doing, when supported by belief and faith is ultimately transformative.

Inevitably, though, in an on-going career of practice, there will be times when the field of Dharma seems to go fallow and where there was certainty is now only confusion and doubt; or what brought joy now brings ennui; or activity becomes drudgery. At this point, when it may not be possible to call upon all three factors, any one alone can sustain a practice, and if called upon and applied consistently over time, will carry you across that fallow period, and then you will discover that fallow time, perhaps a period of required dormancy, was a period of unseen regeneration yielding unexpected fruit. Again the factors that had withered regain vitality: belief overcomes doubt, enthusiasm supplants boredom and activity replaces lethargy.

TENDAI BUDDHIST INSTITUTE  
SHINGI

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*Gassho  
Seishin*



# Jiunzan Tendaiji and Mahasangha

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## March Events

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

- 5 The Heart Sutra as Taoist Teachings
- 12 Buddhist Precepts for living, part 3
- 19 O-Higan Lessons
- 26 *Ichinen Sanzen: 3,000 Realms in a Single Moment*

❖ 1 **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*, chapter three. 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).

❖ 14–16 **Spring O-Higan Weekend Retreat** *Calm the Mind–Heal the Heart*. This week-end is a mindfulness retreat devoted to putting our busy lives into perspective. A week-end of meditations, dharma talks, and mindfulness trainings. We begin at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening and finish at about 1 p.m. on Sunday.

❖ 16 **Mahasangha Sunday**, 10:30 a.m. Join members of the Mahasangha for observance, meditation and the breaking of bread. Our lives are so busy and packed that we often let our personal relationships and commitments to a sane life style slip. Mahasangha Sunday is an opportunity to reconnect with folks who share your path and reconnect with yourself.

❖ Congratulations to Ryushin Nick Karapasas who has been

working toward his Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine at New York Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls, New York, and more recently has been involved in a clinical internship on Long Island. Ryushin was accepted to complete his internship at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. This is a very competitive program and Ryushin's appointment demonstrates his devotion and hard work. He starts his new position at the end of March and it will last for about nine months, at which time he will have completed his degree and training.



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



*Gojun Terada, former temple assistant at Jiunzan Tendaiji recently led a peace walk near his home in Japan, assisted by his pup.*

## 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.*

## Celestial Drum Tendai Sangha

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❖ *Meditation Service and Dharma discussion, every Monday, 6:30 p.m., introductory meditation instruction offered at 6:15 p.m., Parker-Benton American Legion Post, Main St., Indian Lake, NY*

### *March Events*

During the month of March the discussions at Celestial Drum Tendai Buddhist Sangha will revolve around establishing and maintaining a complete personal Buddhist practice using the Eight-fold Path as a guideline. Creating a practice as part of one’s daily activities expands one’s view of the world and one’s place within it, providing an antidote to many of the causes of discontent. From among the many choices and ways presented in the great variety of books and articles on Buddhism, however, it can be difficult to construct such a practice and carry it on over time. The Eight-fold Path has provided a roadmap for this task for the past 2,500 years by encouraging the development of understanding, intention, ethics, and meditation.

## 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*

### *March Events*

- 3 Eightfold Path and the Six Paramitas
- 10 Self Directed, Other Directed
- 17 General Intro to Esoteric Buddhism
- 24 A Sangha Discussion—The Six Realms
- 31 Update of Peace Initiatives

❖ Another consistent member from Gould Farm has left Higashi. Young Drew has processed on and has left the Farm. Though painful, the transition the Farm offers is quite a good lesson on impermanence. These people become part of our lives, then move on, like our family and loved ones. He will be missed.

## Danish Lotus Sangha

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❖ *Meditation Service, every Thursday, 9:30–10:30 a.m. Meditation Service and discussion, every Tuesday, 7:30–9:30 p.m.*

❖ 13 **Introduction to Buddhism**, 7:30 p.m

❖ 27 A six week session of classes in **Beginning Meditation** begins this evening and will run for the next six Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

❖ 30 **Advanced Lay Training**, Open meditation for all levels of practitioners, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.



## Nishi Sangha

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

### *March Events*

- 4 Yoga led by Koyo
- 11 Buddhism and Fasting led by Shoshin
- 18 Borobudur led by Mushin
- 25 No talk, just service and sitting



# March 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 Jiunzan Tendaiji Class
2	3 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	4 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation	5 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	6 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	7  <i>New Moon</i>	8
9 Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation Service	10 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	11 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	12 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service  <i>Yakushi Nyorai Day</i>	13 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service, Introduction to Buddhism Class	14  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">O-HIGAN RETREAT</div> <i>First Quarter</i>	15
16  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">O-HIGAN RETREAT, Mahasangha Sunday</div>	17 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	18 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation	19 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	20 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	21  <i>Full Moon</i>	22
23 Washington Tendai Sangha Meditation Service  30 Danish Lotus Sangha Lay Training & Meditation	24 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service  31 Higashi Sangha Meditation Service Celestial Drum Meditation Service	25 Nishi Sangha Meditation Service Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service	26 Jiunzan Tendaiji Meditation Service	27 Danish Lotus Sangha Meditation Service, Introduction to Meditation Class	28	29  <i>Last Quarter</i>

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