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**June 2016**

# SHINGI

Newsletter of the Tendai Buddhist Institute



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## Jushoku's Meanderings

This month the Tendai-shu New York Betsuin / Tendai Buddhist Institute will be hosting the yearly Doshu/Soryo Gyo (monks/priests training). There will be 10 men and women training and three instructors during this gyo. This training is important for both those being trained and the sangha.

## June Events Calendar

### Weekly Meditation Services (WMS)

are on Wednesday evenings. They begin at 6pm with a discussion or talk (see below for this month's discussion topics). At about 7pm there is a meditation service, followed at 8pm by a potluck supper. All of Wednesday evening's events are open to the public. There is no fee, and reservations are not required.



## June Wednesday Meditations and Discussions

**1 Dengyo Daishi (Saicho) Day** - this day is observed on June 4th in Japan. The founder of Tendai Saicho was seminal to all the subsequent traditional schools of Buddhism in Japan. Tonight's discussion is not a litany of his accomplishments, rather it is a more personal gaze at this extraordinary bodhisattva.

**8 How to Struggle Constructively with One's Practice** - Whether sitting meditation, chanting mantra, reading sutra, circumambulating *Nembutsu*, whatever your method of seeking the nature of reality, we all reach a point when just

(cont.)



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**Our Other Sangha:**

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[Albany, NY](#)

getting it done is a struggle. This discussion will not make your practice easier, but hopefully more productive..

**15 Shinto - 'The Way of the Kami'** Kami are spirits and occurrences that are worshiped in Shinto. Buddhism and Shinto have been syncretistic in Japan since the 7th century. Shinbutsu-shugo, the amalgamation of these two religions, contributes to the distinct nature of Tendai, and provides the foundation of Tendai's harmony in nature orientation. **No potluck dinner this evening.**

**22 Saigoku 33 Kannon Pilgrimage-** Presented by Shingaku Jen Henderson, who recently completed this pilgrimage through remote areas that was initiated over 1,200 years ago. **No potluck dinner this evening.**

**29 Buddhist Joke Night** - It's time to laugh your way to awakening. If you have any new Buddhist Jokes bring them to share. There will be a bunch of jokes set to go. (If I hear "what did the man say to the hot dog vendor . . .", I'll scream.)

#### **Other Events in June:**

**4 Sutra Class and Morning Service, 8:30 - 10:30 AM** - *The Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra (Heart Sutra)* is the most often chanted, cited and best known sutras in the Mahayana canon. We will read and discuss two different translations and commentaries (Mu Soeng's and Red Pine's) as a set throughout the classes.

**12 - 26 Doshu/Soryo Gyo** will take place during this period. At this time the Tendai Buddhist Institute becomes a monastic training center while at the same time serving the temple sangha. The Wednesday evening activities will take place and there will be a morning meditation each day of the gyo, see below. However, during the two Wednesday evenings the gyo is held there is no pot luck dinner.

**13 - 26 Morning Meditation; 7-8 AM.** Each morning during the gyo there will be an open mediation. There will be no service at this time only the meditation. Join us each day to inspire your practice and join the gyo participants for this daily meditation, usually led by Monshin.

**26 Mahasangha Sunday** - This is the final day of the gyo. Join us for a meditation service and Pot Luck lunch with the gyoja

**Notes and Upcoming Events**

## Road Trips in August:

### 8/7 **Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma at Tanglewood**

- The historical Silk Road, a series of land and sea trade routes that crisscrossed Eurasia, enabled the exchange of goods and innovations from Japan to the Mediterranean Sea for some 2,000 years, until the 14th century. With its artistic director Yo-Yo Ma, the Silk Road Ensemble returns to Tanglewood for another fascinating and wide-ranging traversal of music both traditional and new, suggesting a modern-day equivalent to the sort of cultural exchange that characterized the old trade routes in centuries long gone. Sign up for this fascinating evening (on the announcement board in the main house). We will purchase tickets separately so people may sit where they wish. We will meet for a picnic dinner before the performance.

### 8/20 **The Diamond Way - An evening of Baseball at 'The Joe' in Troy, New York.**

The Tri-city Valley Cats will be playing the Hudson Valley Renegades. There is no better way to spend a night at The Joe than with your sangha friends and family. In the past we have signed up for the 'Group Picnic' with hat, seat and picnic food. Sangha members have shared that they have enough hats and would prefer to have better seats and eat what they choose. So this year we will sign up for the best seats in the house for less than \$10 a ticket with our group discount. **Sign up for this evening of baseball (on the announcement board in the main house).** We will purchase group tickets and we need a minimum of twenty people.

**Food Pantry at Jiunzan Tendai-ji** - Springtime is especially difficult for those who are need of the very basic necessities. Gratitude is best shown by extending to others the thoughtfulness we have received. Please bring non-perishable food items to the Tendai Buddhist Institute on Wednesday's. We contribute these items to the Chatham Silent Food Pantry

## Meanderings (cont. from side bar at left)



From the time of Shakyamuni Buddha there were four groups of Buddhists; ordained men, ordained women, laymen and laywomen. Each had an essential role in the sangha. This role was expanded with the development of Bodhisattvayana (Mahayana). Within Tendai the role of the ordained men and women (Soryo) is to lead sangha, teach the dharma, perform necessary ceremonies, and liberate all sentient

beings from dukkha. The role of the layperson is to develop their spiritual practice, support the temple and work for the benefit of all sentient beings. There are also lay leaders in Tendai, Sodai, who are lay, but who take on additional responsibilities to assist the ordained leadership and direct the sangha.

What is the greatest distinct between the laity and the ordained community? They both take refuge, work for the benefit of others, are full time Buddhists, and devote themselves to their practice in order to obtain awakening. The biggest difference is that the ordained have taken responsibility to lead sangha and teach. In order to do these two things effectively they require training so that the lay folks have confidence in their Soryo abilities and character. In Mahayana awakening is not the sole domain of the ordained. Awakening may even be easier for the lay person, contrasted with the ordained, since the ordained are required to sacrifice her or his self for the benefit of others.

It is through the recognition of the roles of laity and ordained that I submit a section from 'Exploring the Character of International Tendai Buddhism':

". . . there is recognition that there will be different levels of commitment from laity compared to ordained practitioners. Everyone must receive some sort of 'satisfaction' from their participation. The laity must trust that their role is just as important as those who receive *tokudo* (ordination). The ordained must have a sense that there is a benefit to their taking additional precepts and an increased sense of responsibility. Furthermore, we live in a culture that is conflicted by the meaning and place of religion in a secular society. We must resolve to the best of our ability this conflict in the Tendai Buddhist path in order that the laity and clergy alike see their participation as meaningful. To start off the discussion I have several proposals to be examined.

My vision is to have a Tendai Buddhism that focus on the laity with a dedicated ordained core that orients, manages and directs the Mahasangha. The focus should be on the laity's participation in most activities. The ordained group should serve the laity, not the other way around."

During these two weeks of gyo we have men and women training at the Betsuin we will have the opportunity to examine our roles in the context of 21st century Buddhism, its place, time and role. Use this time fruitfully to expand your horizons of practice and commitment.

Love and Gassho... Monshin

### **The Third Jewel-**

-Where sangha members share ideas, poetry, and art to enrich everyone's Buddhist practice.

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**...From Around the Hondo ...**



Saicho and the Barn..

for Dengyo Daishi day

**Call for material:** Please send the Shingi photographs, artwork, poems, book reviews, articles, etc. that you have created that you consider an outgrowth of your Buddhist practice or that you think reflect Buddhist themes, ideas, questions, etc. If submitting an image, you may wish to include a short statement sharing some of your thoughts to accompany it.

**Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Contact . . .**

Shingi Editor

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