



## [Live life with a vow ]

This summer was quite hot. But lately, I am sensing some signs of autumn, as though from out of nowhere, I will hear the singing of insects.

The other day, I received a letter from my friend in Japan in which she wrote:

“We have had continuing heat waves in Tokyo, with intense sunlight burning the asphalt, and pedestrians baked by the heat. I cannot help but say, “It’s much too hot!” Oh yes, in this oppressive heat, the crape myrtle flowers that you love, are lining the streets blooming beautifully in full glory...and so forth.”



I suddenly recalled how crape myrtle trees fearlessly spread their branches freely toward the summer skies. Yes. As my friend had said, I love crape myrtles. Well, actually, perhaps it would be more appropriate to say, I truly respect them. In any case, I was captivated.

Everyone, are you familiar with the crape myrtle tree? They are lovely in the gardens, but as trees that line the streets, they paint those streets.

It was on a summer day about 10 years ago...crape myrtle as street trees did not catch my attention until then. But for some reason that sight took my breath away. Their branches were powerfully spread out with beautiful white, purple, and bright red flowers blooming on each branch. That is, while enveloped by steamy and stifling heat, the trees dauntlessly and wholeheartedly accepted the sunlight, even exposing themselves to be burned, and by exerting themselves to the utmost, they were brilliantly illuminating the life they had received. I was enchanted by the flowers of crape myrtles, known for their beauty, striking in their full glory with confidence. As they fully carried out their own roles, it was as though they were living to firmly accept their “wish to be born.”

Now, let us consider the term “calling.” Generally speaking, it means a profession innately endowed from heaven, and seems to be defined as the profession in which the person has own aptitude as well as own desire to be engaged.

Therefore, there seem to be many people who assume that the profession which perfectly fits their aptitude, make every use of their talents and appeal, and where they can feel joy is their “calling.” These people have the illusion that they must reach this state and are always thinking, “I must find my calling...” Perhaps they misunderstand the real meaning of the “calling.”

Our “Calling” (*ten shoku* which literally means ‘job from heaven’ in Japanese) is from heaven, and thus, it is a job that has been endowed from the Buddha. We have already received it. When we think from that perspective, there is no need to agonize about “What is my calling?” or to keep changing our jobs from one to another saying, “My calling must be somewhere else...” Whatever the work may be, we must wholeheartedly dedicate ourselves to give our best effort. Because it is the work chosen by the Buddha, nothing is a waste. When we are able to train and



refine ourselves through our various feelings and challenges that manifest at the work place, and experience joy and gratitude in the process, there will definitely be lessons learned. Furthermore, if there is another job that will further enrich our lives and is necessary for us, then the Buddha will lead us to that path.

Now, there are four basic great vows for Buddhists. For that, we must first set our ideals and wishes, and then devote our heart and soul toward that by dealing with our reality.

The four great vows are:

\* *Shujoh muhen seigan-do*:

I vow to diligently practice to guide as many people as possible to awaken to the Dharma and attain true happiness.

\* *Bonnoh mushuh seigan-dan*:

I vow to diligently practice to extinguish all my inexhaustible delusions.

\* *Hohmon mujin seigan-gaku*:

I vow to devote myself to study all the vast teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha.

\* *Butsudoh mujoh seigan-joh*:

I vow to continuously hold my aspiration to attain the unsurpassable Buddha Way.

Furthermore, there is the “*Betsu-gan*” known as “Special Vow.”

These vows are made according to the talents, characters and jobs of each person aiming to be of service to the world and to live a life which will bring joy to others. Having just one vow is fine. I believe it is in setting our “Special Vow,” and making the effort toward it, that gives value to our lives. Just like the crape myrtle displaying pride in their life’s objective and inspiring me with their energy, let us exert our utmost effort in this life, to which we had respectively wished to be born, and realize “the value of having being born.”

Gassho  
New York Center Minister  
Etsuko Fujita

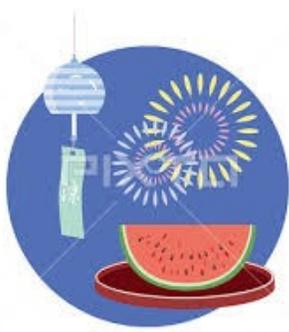
## Topic

We have started the Kyoten study session. When we study again, we should be able to have new realizations. Although it has just started, I found one of my realizations in the invocation. In the study session, we were told, “Invocation means to ask the Eternal Buddha and the emanations of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and the countless heavenly spirits to come down to us, so that we can grasp the truth in our heart with the conviction that we are protected and can make our mental state one with the Eternal Buddha. By drawing the pictures and characters, the mandalas made by Buddhists express the universal view that the one great life is being manifested in various shapes (forms, appearances) like the emanations of the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, and the heavenly spirits. Therefore, we could say that the invocation that we recite is an invocation of a mandala. It is important for us to feel that the world of the mandala is being realized here and now.” Visualization of the invocation allowed me to start seeing the mandala image in front of me. Since then, whenever I recite the invocation part, I could hear and see the wish of the Buddha, and my heart is filled with gratitude.

Gassho

Chapter Leader Yasuko Vendley





pixta.jp - 3779132



8/12 Monthly Memorial Service

8/14 Study session by James Lynch.  
Live connection with Ft. Myers via Skype



8/7 Discussion of President's  
Dharma guidance for August.



# SCHEDULE FOR NEW YORK CHAPTER

## September 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b> <b>9AM</b> <b>First Day of the Month Service</b> <b>President's Dharma Guidance</b>	<b>2</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>3</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>4</b> <b>1PM</b> <b>Memorial Service for Founder President's Dharma Guidance</b>	<b>5</b> <b>Labor Day</b>	<b>6</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza 2-4PM Chapter Leaders' Meeting	<b>7</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Reach out day	<b>8</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Guidance for Leaders	<b>9</b> <b>9AM Memorial Service for Cofounder</b> 10AM Sutra Recitation	<b>10</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>11</b> <b>8:30 AM</b> <b>9. 11 Memorial Service</b>	<b>12</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation <b>10AM-5PM</b> Steering Committee/ Missionary Mtgs	<b>13</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>14</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Reach out day	<b>15</b> <b>9AM The Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni Day</b>	<b>16</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>17</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>18</b> <b>1PM Sunday Service Hoza</b>	<b>19</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>20</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza 2-4PM Chapter Leaders' Meeting	<b>21</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Reach out day	<b>22</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation <b>10AM Higan-e Special Memorial Service</b>	<b>23</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>24</b> Closed: Dharma Practices at home
<b>25</b> <b>Closed</b>	<b>26</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>27</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	<b>28</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Reach out day	<b>29</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Guidance for Leaders	<b>30</b> 9AM Sutra Recitation 10AM Hoza	Online Buddhism 8/3(Wed)-9/21(Wed) Every Wednesday