



**2022:** stepping forward



Dear Sangha Members,

New and experienced practitioners alike came to the Zen Studies Society in 2022 seeking encouragement and the nourishment of the Dharma.

After the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic, it has felt wondrous to be able to practice together in person again, entering into deep zazen and caring for each other and for our temples. The work to share this transformative practice has never been more crucial. Complex global, community, family and personal issues require the insight and compassion cultivated through Zen training.

Throughout the year I met with young people concerned about how to respond to the seemingly intractable problems of this era, and with old-timers who were joyfully returning for daily zazen, sesshin, and special events like the ceremony in which Hokuto Nando Daniel Diffin became my second Dharma heir. All were hungry for spiritual connection, and they have continued to find it right here.

Many newcomers discovered the Zen Studies Society because of our online presence; long-time members who had moved away or are home-bound due to ill health have been able to join us consistently this way. Sangha members around the world attended online sesshin, classes, dokusan, ancestor commemorations and Mandala Day celebrations, and watched our Dharma talks on YouTube. Even the ceremonies of O-Bon weekend were live streamed. This Dharma net has never been spread more fully.

It has been a time of creativity, a time of thoughtfulness. We have been developing leadership opportunities for senior practitioners, including a challenging Dharma Teacher Training Program for our ordained members. From the Board level to informal discussions, we have begun long-range strategic planning.

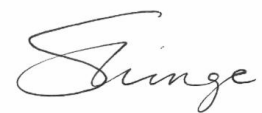
While upholding the traditions that have been passed down to us, we have also been reflecting on and responding to the special needs of our Sangha: aging and chronic pain; gender issues; economic difficulties; societal racial prejudice and injustice.

Our buildings, both in New York City and in the Catskills, have been aging too, and have required considerable maintenance. We have installed heat pumps and have made many energy-efficient improvements, including arranging for solar arrays, but it has become clear that major renovations will be needed at the monastery, which was constructed 48 years ago.

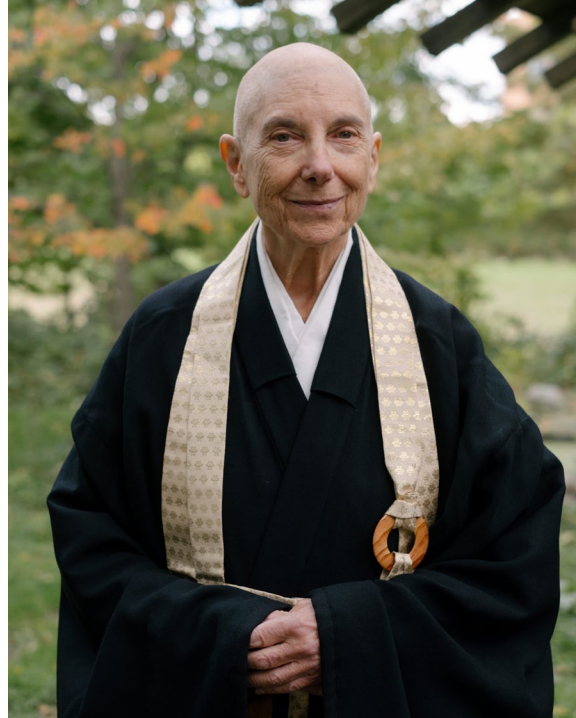
On January 23, 2023, we entered the Year of the Rabbit, an auspicious and gentle sign representing the spiritual healing, grace, and purity of the moon goddess. We go forward with resolve, vowing to respond to circumstances with clarity, loving-kindness and nobility, honoring our interconnectedness with all beings.

Let True Dharma Continue!

Gassho,



Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat  
Abbot, Zen Studies Society





# who we are

## Mission

One of the first Rinzai Zen Buddhist organizations in the United States, the Zen Studies Society offers authentic lay and monastic Zen training at its New York City temple, New York Zendo Shobo-ji, and mountain monastery, Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji. The simple yet profound teachings of Zen Buddhism are grounded in zazen (meditation). Zen practice is a way of life through which inner peace, insight and deep compassion are cultivated.

## Inclusion Statement

At New York Zendo and Dai Bosatsu Zendo, we respect and cherish our fundamental oneness while celebrating our differences. We strive to create accessible and equitable spaces, free from prejudice based on race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, economic status, religion, nationality, and citizenship status, among others. We unequivocally acknowledge the discrimination, prejudice, and privilege that exist in society at large and commit ourselves to the work of building a culture of accountability and healing.

## Dai Bosatsu Zendo

In 1970, the Zen Studies Society acquired 1,400 acres of wilderness surrounding a sparkling lake in the heart of New York State's Catskill Mountains for a retreat center and mountain monastery.

In 1875, the Rev. James Beecher built a rustic lodge on the shore of Beecher Lake. He was the brother of the well-known preacher Henry Ward Beecher and the writer Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose 1852 book Uncle Tom's Cabin galvanized the movement to abolish slavery.

In the early 1970s, Dai Bosatsu Zendo's first resident community lived and practiced at the Beecher House while the main monastery, with its Japanese-inspired architecture, was being planned and constructed.

The formal opening of Dai Bosatsu Zendo was held on Independence Day, July 4, 1976, as a gift to the United States of America. In the 46 years since, generations of Zen students from all over the world have come to practice at DBZ. The Beecher House, which was completely renovated in 2021, continues to be home to our unique Open Space program.



## New York Zendo

The Upper East Side carriage house that was renovated to become New York Zendo Shobo-ji had its formal opening on September 15, 1968. It provides an oasis of deep stillness in the heart of Manhattan. For 54 years New York Zendo has offered city dwellers the opportunity to experience traditional Zen practice through daily sittings, monthly retreats and Buddhist study courses.

Well-known Buddhist teachers and scholars – as well as artists, masters of the tea ceremony, Noh theater, shakuhachi and flower arranging – have presented special programs and exhibitions here. Shobo-ji is a jewel of architectural re-design, combining East and West and offering an immersive Zen experience.





# sharing the Dharma

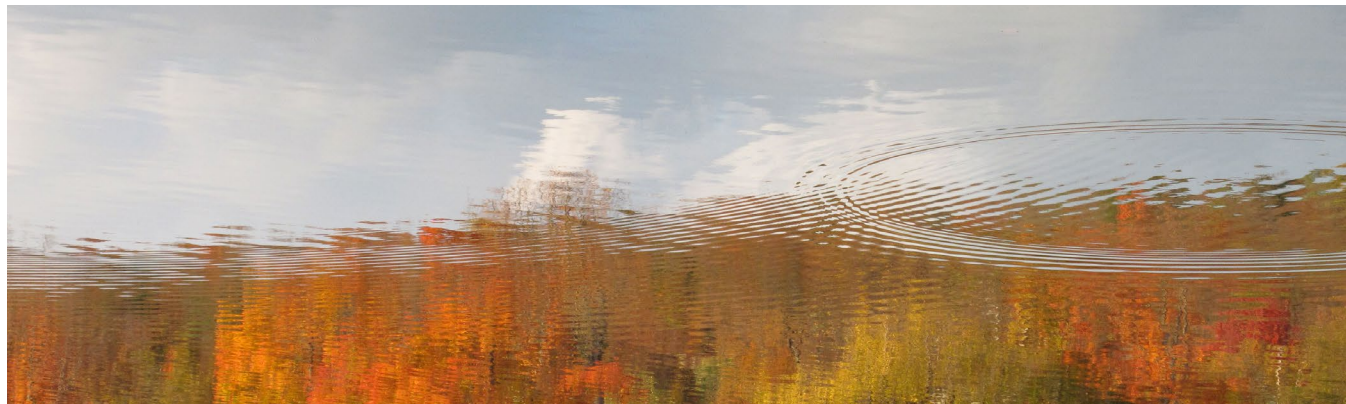
## Notable Events

We have continued to share the practice of Zen meditation as a way of living with insight and compassion. We held both in-person and online programs in 2022, with more than 5,000 online visitors at some 500 events including zazen (meditation), Introduction to Zen evenings, Dharma talks, and one-on-one interviews with our teachers (dokusan).

Participants from all walks of life, transcending barriers of geography and disability, came to our online zendo. These digital Dharma events were offered to the general public at no cost or by voluntary donation.

We also held 10 sesshins (multi-day intensive retreats). Online courses on the great Zen masters Bodhidharma and Hakuin were well received, as were Noh theater and other cultural workshops. Along with its regular meetings, New York Zendo also presented enlivening workshops led by visiting teachers on a wide range of topics including Zen monastic cooking, tea ceremony, writing workshops, Tai Chi and yoga, all offered at sliding-scale fees.

Nineteen participants joined the monastic community at Dai Bosatsu Zendo for residential practice during the 2022 year. Also at DBZ, Shinge Roshi gave Jukai (the Buddhist Precepts) to seven students, and *inka shomei*, Dharma transmission, to Hokuto Daniel Diffin, her second Dharma heir. She ordained a new monk on Thanksgiving Day.



## Scholarships

We continued to provide full- or partial-scholarship support to worthy students lacking the financial means to experience Zen training at the Zen Studies Society's monastery, Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Thanks to the generosity of a committed donor, a scholarship fund for residential training has been in place for the last three years. Residential students came from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds.

While supporting those with limited means, the fund reciprocally enriched the Sangha with the recipients' sincere presence.

We were able to offer five partial or full scholarships in 2022. DBZ residents, lay and ordained, participated in retreats at no cost as part of their continuing training commitment.

## ZSS in Print

In 2022, Shinge Roshi's article commemorating MyoOn Maurine Stuart was published in Tricycle Magazine and an additional article was accepted for publication in 2023.

Hokuto Osho's article, "There Are No Zen Teachers," is scheduled to appear in Lion's Roar in 2023.

## Social Engagement

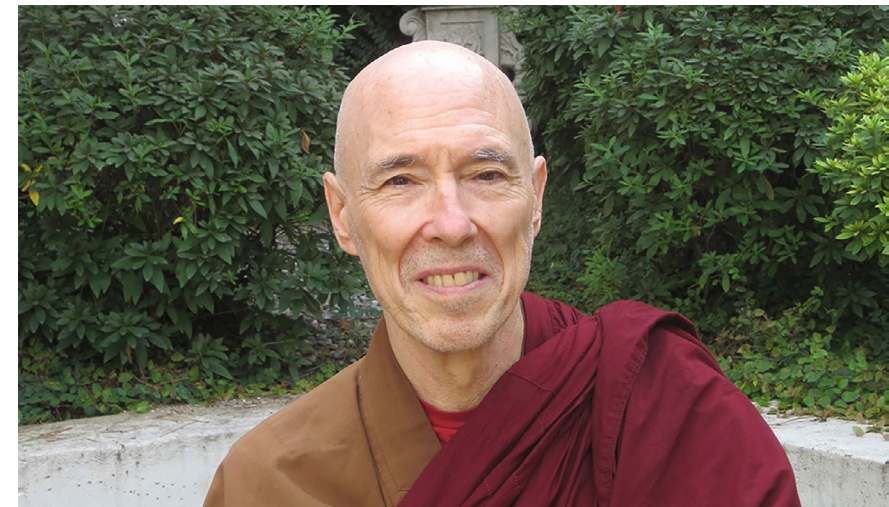
Weekly events led by the ZSS Engaged Buddhism Committee in 2022 included vibrant discussions, film screenings, workshops and presentations by guest speakers on a wide range of societal issues.

Engaged Buddhism Dharma Discussions and Open Meetings explored topics such as the climate crisis, hunger and bystander intervention. As part of the Hunger Initiative, we took a deep dive into the issue of child hunger and discussed mindful consumption practices based on a film featuring Buddhist nun Jeong Kwan. In our discussions on climate change, we learned about practices to improve habitat by restoring native plants (Myorin Catherine Landis), indigenous wisdom (Robin Wall Kimmerer), investment strategies consistent with climate-protection goals (Katelyn Kriesel) and urban planning strategies for improving energy efficiency (Gabriel Moreno).

We also completed a four-month Engaged Buddhism for Climate Action workshop, led by Chokei Hilary McManus and Karin Botto. Several sessions were devoted to studying the work of Thich Nhat Hanh, founder of Engaged Buddhism. We continued to examine Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi's thought-provoking framework of the Four Noble Truths in the context of the climate crisis and food and water shortages.

Monthly meetings of the Racial Solidarity Sangha were led by Rev. Seiho Jaye Morris, author of *The 12-Step Approach to Exploring Cultural Bias, Racism, & Otherism* and Jasmine Syedullah, co-author of *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*. We used the 12-step model developed by Rev. Morris to examine the shared koan of bias and racism within the Sangha and wider communities. The Racial Solidarity group has welcomed practitioners of all ethnicities, races and nationalities, including those not already part of the ZSS Sangha.

The Critical Buddhist Study Group continued to investigate the intersection of Dharma teachings and Buddhist practice with critical theory and radical political movements.





# ongoing development



## Dai Bosatsu Zendo

### Beecher House

With the pandemic winding down and the historic Beecher House renovation complete, our Open Space program reopened for guest retreats. Yoga, shiatsu, reiki, forest bathing, tea ceremony and other Zen arts, 12-step retreats, retreats and small conferences have been scheduled.

Among the 2022 Open Space programs was a book signing for local author Ed Van Put, who discussed his new book on James Beecher with Beecher House restoration donors at this celebratory reopening of the building.

A lively gathering after our traditional O-Bon ceremonies took place there, as did our signature Healing and Wellness retreat, the Ohashi Touch Zen Touch shiatsu workshop, and sesshins for guest Zen Sanghas.

The Beecher House facility renovation made it possible to install high-speed internet and video conferencing capabilities, with a large display screen for online participation. The Beecher House managers began scheduling group rentals. Contact (845) 439-5288 or beecherhouse@zenstudies.org to make a reservation.

### Main Building Renovation Plans

A facilities plan was developed in cooperation with Malcarne Construction to help shape the course of building and grounds maintenance and improvements for the monastery building at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, with an evaluation and maintenance schedule for the upkeep of the monastery. The plan includes a complete renovation of the building's 48-year-old heating, plumbing, electrical, insulation, and window components, as well as its exterior foundation, and painting and re-roofing.

### Electric Vehicle Charger

A new electric vehicle fast charger was installed in the DBZ garage. Residents and guests began using the Level II fast charging.

### Hiking Trails

Several miles of hiking trails were expanded and marked, and new bridges were installed to improve access to the beauty and healing benefits of the deep woods surrounding the monastery.



## New York Zendo - Shobo-ji

### Repairs and Renovation

We continued to care for our city temple, a carriage house that was renovated by ZSS and formally opened for Zen practice in 1968.

Repairs in 2022 included painting and removal of the building's defunct gas boiler, along with the attached piping, to create space for a new workshop room. The steel I-beams supporting the heat pump compressors were primed.

Rotting cedar shingle eaves were replaced over the rock garden and the roof access hatch and vertical trim wood were painted.

A series of projects focused on repairing ceiling damage from leaks and preventing future leaks during major storms.

This included extending the rear roofs to reposition the gutters away from the building; adding gutter leaders; painting and sealing the rear exterior wall; removing the chimney that had been used to serve the gas boiler; repairing damaged ceilings; patching and sealing the seams of the third-floor roof; touching up the paint on the third-floor ceilings; and repairing, sealing, and painting the airshaft walls above the men's dressing room.





# looking ahead: 2023



## Dai Bosatsu Zendo

### Repairs and Renovation

#### Solar Array

As part of our green initiative, we plan to install a 64.96 kW ground-mounted solar array at DBZ. This will offset our carbon footprint and electricity costs, with annual savings projected to be as much as \$7,000 per year.

#### Building Fund for DBZ

Based on the assessment report, we have identified several projects needing remediation, repair and renewal. In 2023, we will inaugurate the Building Fund, dedicated to protecting and maintaining the monastery and property assets.

## New York Zendo

### Repairs

Planned renovation projects for 2023 include re-tiling the leaking third-floor shower; installing heat pump units in the dokusan room and workshop to provide air conditioning and prevent pipes from freezing in the winter; replacing the main entrance door to the building and refreshing the woodwork and paint on the front facade of the building.

Sangha members interested in supporting these projects can email [office@newyorkzendo.org](mailto:office@newyorkzendo.org) or call (212) 861-3333.



# revenue streams

### Contributions

Contributions are the primary way in which we meet our operating expenses, accounting for half of our total revenue. In 2022, unrestricted contribution revenue was 58 percent greater than the prior year, and total contributions were a similar size. We are truly humbled by the generosity of Sangha members. Donations make it possible for us to continue to offer free events and meet operating expenses.

### Events

Event revenue is the second most important stream for us, accounting for one third of total revenue. We are delighted by the 58 percent increase in event revenue over the prior year, mainly due to in-person attendance. We hope that more people will continue to attend our events this year.

### Membership

Membership revenue continues to increase year after year. In 2022, we saw a four percent revenue increase compared to the prior year. Membership indicates a commitment to practice and an opportunity to express solidarity with the community. At ZSS, we offer individual, family, online and associate memberships and hope that you will consider becoming a supporting member if you are not already enrolled in the program.

### Other sources

Other revenue streams include the monastery and temple stores, space rentals (Beecher House), and funeral and other services. We saw a decline over the previous year due to pandemic restrictions.

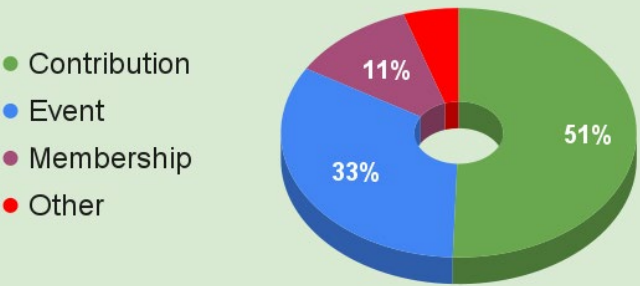
### Endowment Fund

The endowment fund at ZSS has been in place for two years now. The fund, which will help ensure the long-term viability of ZSS, was designed to leave its principal intact, allowing investment returns to be used to support general operating expenses. We hope that you will consider contributing to the fund this year.

### Planned giving

The Zen Studies Society Legacy Circle, a planned-giving program, has now entered its third year. We are grateful to those who have joined the Legacy Circle by expressing their wish to include ZSS in their long-term giving plans.

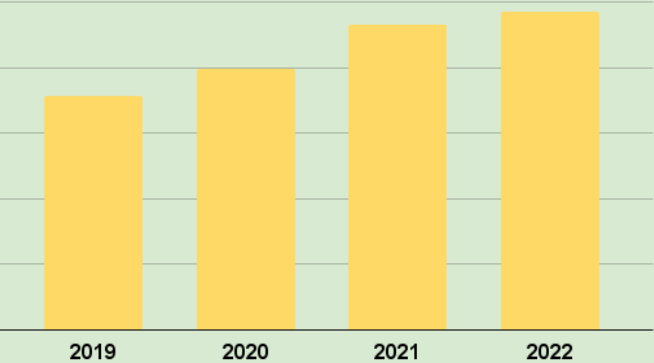
### 2022 Revenue by Category



### Revenue by Year and Category



### Membership Revenue by Year





# in gratitude to our 2022 supporters

## \$10,000-\$100,000

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Estate of Shinnen Nancy Berg  
Saigyo Terry Keenan  
Genno Linda King  
*In-kind Communications*  
Jifu Devyani Sadh  
*In-kind CRM and Data Management*

## \$2,000-\$4,999

Andris Chapin  
Shinge Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi  
Hokuto Daniel Diffin Osho  
and Victoria Diffin  
Derek Sasaki  
Shuji and Tomoko Yagi

## \$1,000-\$1,999

Ungetsu Liora Alschuler  
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and Zakke Dianne Applegate  
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American Online Giving Foundation  
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Daishi Kevin Pinzone  
Robert Precious  
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Zenshin Richard Rudin  
Daniel Rhodes  
Lucie Sasaki-Scanlon  
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Ross Taub  
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Paul Willis  
Emily Yang  
Victor Zelek

Every gift, whatever the amount,  
has made a difference, and we  
are very grateful!



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Chigan Dokuro Jaeckel Roshi

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[zenstudies.org](https://zenstudies.org)

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