





Dear Sangha members and friends of the Dharma,

Another year has ended, and we are happy to present our 2024 Annual Report. The report provides an overview of our activities and accomplishments in 2024. It recounts our aspirations and illustrates the impact of your kindness, generosity, time, and material contributions. While it is impressive to enumerate and quantify, I am writing these words to remind us that developing wisdom and compassion is not a quantitative undertaking. This practice is not about accumulating merit or good deeds but cultivating the qualities of presence, clarity, openness, and loving-kindness.

Over two and a half millennia ago, an Indian prince was born into a station of material and spiritual privilege: Siddhartha Gautama. Growing up motherless, reared by a loving and compassionate aunt, he grew into a father and husband. Unfulfilled and determined to fathom what lies behind this human existence, he set out to practice as a homeless yogi and an ascetic. He ended up meditating under a tree and — solely through his own efforts — awakening. Like Siddhartha, the heart of our Rinzai Zen practice is driven by this innate longing for completion, the wish for liberation from a fragmented and self-centered existence. We long to overcome what causes us to suffer, inflict suffering, and devastate the world with acts of unspeakable violence.

In today's twenty-first-century society and culture, we find ourselves inundated with constant competition for our attention. Our economy rewards those who are best at capturing the consumer's attention. A second, equally powerful force in our highly unequal and deeply divided societal landscape is the deliberate sowing of fear and discontent. When selling products, services, news, and ideology, the end often justifies means that are driven by greed, anger, and delusion. All too often, even when genuinely seeking solutions, human beings are blinded by skillfully offered affirmations or lofty promises that fall short of what they advertise.

In this attention-driven world, we are deeply grateful for your attention to this practice and the Zen Studies Society. Beyond the numbers and achievements, I am even happier to say that 2024 was exciting and successful, thanks to your effort, contributions, and presence. This world needs you, your compassion, and your wisdom. Let us continue cultivating these treasures together.

Let True Dharma continue!

With nine bows,

Chigan

Chigan-kutsu Kyō-on Dokurō R. Jaeckel
Abbot, Zen Studies Society

From the Board President

Dear friends and practitioners of the way,

As I conclude my six-year term on the Board, I reflect with deep gratitude on the progress we have achieved together and the values that guide our work. Thanks to your unwavering support, the Zen Studies Society has flourished into a thriving community where financial strength and operational success support our deeper mission of cultivating wisdom and compassion.

Over the past five years, we have achieved extraordinary financial success, including 155% annual revenue growth and a 70% increase in strategic reserves and endowment funds, creating a stronger foundation for future initiatives. Yet, as our Abbot, Chigan Roshi, reminds us, true progress is not about accumulation. It is about fostering the qualities that ground our practice and guide our decisions.



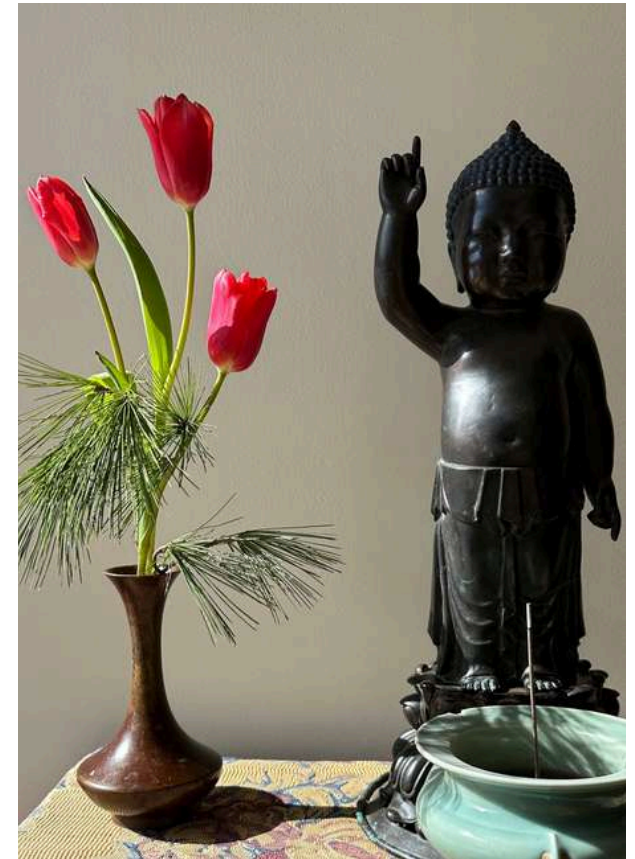
This balance between operational priorities and our spiritual mission is reflected in impactful initiatives such as the Beecher House renovation and the Monastery Restoration Campaign, which surpassed \$1 million in donations in 2024. These funds have supported vital projects to restore and modernize Dai Bosatsu Zendo, ensuring its long-term sustainability as a sacred space for generations to come.

In 2024, we also made strides in environmental stewardship and social responsibility. Key initiatives included launching renewable energy projects like a solar array, transitioning to an ESG-aligned investment firm, and planning community-focused eco workshops.

Additionally, we strengthened our commitment to building a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible community. These efforts focused on advancing meaningful board conversations and exploring opportunities to actualize these timeless Bodhisattva ideals. While this work will continually evolve, it reflects the abbot's vision and our collective resolve to create a more welcoming practice environment for all.

Equally inspiring was the sangha's engagement throughout the year. Under the guidance of the first full year of our new abbot, 18 Sangha members—the most in six years—enrolled in the Bodhisattva Training Program, which formally culminates in the Jukai ceremony of taking the precepts. We also doubled the number of *Intro to Zen* programs and celebrated the growth of our nine Junior Dharma Teachers, who began offering Dharma talks and new leadership to our programs.

In today's world of distraction and division, your commitment to this practice and the Zen Studies Society is a beacon of hope. Together, we are building a community that serves the Dharma and benefits all beings.



In deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jifu".

Jifu Devyani Sadh
President, Zen Studies Society

Organizational Ethos

Mission

The mission of the Zen Studies Society (ZSS) is to teach the principles of Rinzai Zen and the practice of meditation as a way of living with insight and compassion.

Vision

Moving forward into a new era and fulfilling the promise of our Dharma heritage, we will become an ecologically self-sustaining community that is a source of refuge, inspiration, and peace for everyone.



Values

ZSS upholds high standards of personal and group conduct and responsibility rooted in the six paramitas (virtues of perfection) of the Buddhist teachings: dana (generosity), sila (morality, living by the ten precepts), kshanti (patience and endurance), virya (assiduous, energetic practice), dhyana/zazen (meditation), and prajna (wisdom).

ZSS strongly promotes a trustworthy, open, and inclusive environment that embraces racial, cultural, generational, and economic diversity, fostering social justice. It encourages collaboration, cooperation, and a commitment to honor patience and courtesy in our communications and interactions with each other and the world.



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 prejudices 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.



Who We Are

The Zen Studies Society

One of the first Rinzai Zen Buddhist organizations in the United States, ZSS 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.

New York Zendo Shobo-Ji

New York Zendo Shobo-ji (NYZ) opened its doors on September 15, 1968. It provides an oasis of deep stillness in the heart of Manhattan.



For 56 years, NYZ has allowed city dwellers to experience traditional Zen practice through daily sittings, monthly retreats, and Buddhist study courses. Well-known Buddhist teachers and scholars – as well as artists and masters of the tea ceremony, Noh theater, shakuhachi, and flower arranging – have presented programs and exhibitions here. Located on the Upper East Side, Shobo-ji combines East and West to create an immersive Zen experience.

Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-Ji

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

DBZ's formal opening was held on Independence Day, July 4, 1976, as a gift to the United States of America. In the 48 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.

Online Zendo

In March 2020, ZSS launched an online platform in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to offer the Dharma digitally to the general public at minimal or no cost.

The Beecher House and main monastery building at DBZ are equipped with high-speed internet, cameras, microphones, and video conferencing capabilities, including a large display screen for seamless streaming and remote event participation. NYZ is also designed to facilitate online accessibility to its hosted events. In addition to organizing hybrid events at DBZ and NYZ, we consistently offer a diverse array of online-only events.



Our Teachers

Distinguished Teachers

Chigan R. Jaeckel Roshi, Abbot

Chigan-kutsu Kyo-On Dokuro Jaeckel Roshi began his formal Zen training in 1982 under Genro Seiun Osho, a disciple of Kyozan Joshu Sasaki Roshi, and was ordained as a monk in 1989. He became the first Dharma Heir of Shinge Roshi in 2017 and received the title Roshi, or Zen Master, in 2020. Since 2023, he has been serving as the abbot of the Zen Studies Society. He is also a Buddhist chaplain at Harvard University.

Shinge Sherry Chayat Roshi, Retired Abbot

Shinge-shitsu Roko Sherry Chayat Roshi began her formal Zen practice in 1967 at New York Zendo. In 1998, she received Dharma Transmission from Eido Shimano Roshi, the founding abbot of the Zen Studies Society, and was authorized as a Roshi in 2008. She served as abbot of the Zen Studies Society from 2011 to 2023 and has been the abbot of the Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji since 1996.

Hokuto Daniel Diffin Osho

Hokuto Osho has been associated with the Zen Studies Society since 1978. He was ordained in 1980 and became a student of Shinge Roshi in 2010. He was named a Dharma Teacher of the Zen Studies Society in 2015 and received inka shomei (Dharma Transmission) from Shinge Roshi in 2022.



Senior Dharma Teachers

Jikyo Bonnie Shultz Sensei

Jikyo Sensei was introduced to Zen practice in 1996 at the Zen Center of Syracuse and began attending sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 1997. She was ordained by Shinge Roshi in 2003 and authorized as a Dharma Teacher in 2013. In 2023, she was recognized as a Senior Dharma Teacher.

Ryoju John Lynch Sensei

Ryoju Sensei was introduced to Zen practice in 1994 while attending Dai Bosatsu Zendo's annual Healing and Wellness Retreat for people with chronic illnesses. He was ordained by Shinge Roshi in 2012 and authorized as a Dharma Teacher in 2017. In 2023, he was recognized as a Senior Dharma Teacher.

Junior Dharma Teachers

The teaching faculty includes nine Junior Dharma Teachers, trained through a comprehensive nine-month program led by Chigan Roshi, Shinge Roshi, and Hokuto Osho. *Giun Stefan Streit Sensei, Shindo Tim Holmes Sensei, Koge Louise Bayer Sensei, Kimpu Jonathan Swan Sensei, Muken Mark Barber Sensei and Jishin Liz Kuney Sensei* are actively serving at the Zen Studies Society.

Guest Teachers

ZSS has a long-standing tradition of collaborating with guest teachers and sanghas to create integrated offerings that reflect our commitment to strengthening ties with the broader Buddhist community. Three guest teachers are highlighted.

Eran Junryu Vardi Roshi

A 6th-degree black belt in Aikido, Junryu Roshi integrates Zen practice with Aikido. He offers Introduction to Zen classes and Dharma talks at New York Zendo.

Masaki Matsubara Osho

An eighteenth-generation Zen priest in the Rinzai tradition, Matsubara Osho has led many Zazen sessions at the Zen Studies Society.

Rev. Miki Nakura

A Buddhist priest who leads the Jodo-Shinshu Shin-Buddhist New York Sangha, Miki-san regularly offers Seiza meditation sessions at New York Zendo.

Introductory Offerings

Through our two temples and online platforms, ZSS offers multiple points of entry for those who are new to the practice. Our programs include foundational training in Zen Buddhist practice, structured meditation, and work practice.

Zen Foundations

ZSS introduces newcomers to Zen practice through a wide variety of offerings including intensive weekends, single-day programs, and hour-long in-person and online classes.

These programs provide accessible and comprehensive entry points for individuals at varying levels of interest.

The foundational training includes guidance on seated meditation, ceremonies, chanting, work practice, and Dharma talks.

In 2024, ZSS hosted four *Introduction to Zen* (ITZ) Weekends at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, offering basic training in the essentials of Zen Buddhist practice: zazen (seated meditation with attention to posture and breath), chanting, and samu (work practice). Participants also learned the mindful use of jihatsu (traditional nesting bowls) for silent eating. The weekends featured a Dharma talk and a question-and-answer session, concluding with an informal lunch and group discussion. Led by senior students, these weekends were attended by more than 100 students.

At New York Zendo, *Day of Zen* programs provided shorter immersive introductions to Zen practice. Regular *Introduction to Zen* sessions were also held every Thursday, offering a consistent opportunity for new practitioners to engage in the fundamentals.

To further broaden accessibility, ZSS partnered with the Zen Center of Syracuse to offer a weekly *Introduction to Zen* session online, ensuring remote participants could also benefit from foundational teachings.



Meditation

New York Zendo affords the newcomer a robust weekly zazen schedule featuring sitting and walking meditation, integrated with chanting, work practice, and informal discussions. The practice week begins on Sunday mornings with a chanting service, followed by zazen, cleaning, and informal tea with conversation. From Monday through Thursday, both morning and evening meditation sessions are offered; morning sessions are also available online, ensuring opportunities for consistent practice and meaningful community connection.

Work Practice

New York Zendo warmly welcomes sangha members to participate in *Samu Sundays* – a day of collaborative work and practice. *Samu Sundays* are free of charge, though donations are always gratefully accepted.

Similarly, at DBZ, the days leading up to the O-Bon ceremony provide an opportunity to work alongside monastery residents and sangha members, preparing for the main ceremony. In 2024, twenty-three participants followed a modified monastic schedule, which included morning services, daily samu, and Dai Segaki chanting each evening.



Advanced Practitioner Pathways

ZSS also offers a rich spectrum of programs tailored to meet the diverse needs of individuals at more advanced stages of their spiritual journeys.

Dharma Discourse

At least once a month, NYZ offers meetings that combine meditation with insightful Dharma talks. In addition to in-person events, ZSS hosted ten online Dharma classes in 2024 led by Hokuto Osho.

Dharma Interviews

Dokusan, or individual teacher-student meetings, are an essential part of training in the Rinzai Zen tradition. In addition to weekly dokusan for practitioners at NYZ and DBZ, our senior teachers offer regular online dokusan for practitioners who cannot physically attend events at our temples due to geographical distance, mobility, or health challenges.

Dokusan is open to all and offered free of cost.

Intensive Zen Retreats

Aligned with its core mission of making Zen accessible to those dedicated to realizing their true nature, ZSS hosts weeklong and weekend sesshin (silent retreats). These intensive retreats offer deep immersion in zazen, work practice, individual interviews, Dharma talks, and koan study guided by the abbot, senior teachers, and monastics.

ZSS held 11 sesshin in 2024, with 275 participants practicing at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and over 150 participants at New York Zendo, totaling 65 days of contemplative silence.



Bodhisattva Training

For those seeking to immerse themselves in the practice, ZSS offers opportunities for lay and monastic ordination along with residential training.



Lay Commitment Ceremony

The Zen Studies Society offers Jukai (lay ordination) to aspirants seeking to deepen their commitment to the Dharma. During the Jukai ceremony, students formally vow to uphold the Buddhist precepts and receive a Dharma name and a rakusu as symbols of their dedication to the Bodhisattva path. Preparation includes participation in an intensive program of study, discussions, and sesshin attendance. Jukai students commit to supporting the temples, are considered part of the spiritual order, and qualify for training as Dharma Teachers.

In November of 2024, Chigan Roshi led his first group of Jukai students at the Zen Studies Society. Of the 18 who prepared for the Bodhisattva initiation, 16 have already taken the precepts, and the remaining two plan to do so at a later time.

Residential Training

Twice a year at DBZ, **kessei**, a three-month residential training period affords Zen students a unique opportunity to engage in traditional Rinzai Zen practice within a small community. Guided by Abbot Chigan Roshi and senior residents, kessei participants learn traditional Rinzai Zen forms and engage in a rigorous daily schedule of zazen, chanting, samu, body practice, and study in a stunning remote setting. Group work practice includes cooking, cleaning, and caring for our buildings and grounds. Body practices including yoga and breathwork are also part of the daily schedule, as are personal and group study periods. Sesshin, a silent week of intensive practice, is held at least once a month during kessei and provides the opportunity for deep introspection and daily dokusan.

The kessei structure creates an environment conducive to intensive practice that helps settle the mind. By practicing stillness and silence in thrice-daily meditation, participants grow in awareness. The disciplined, collective lifestyle expands and strengthens one's sense of personal responsibility and balance in life. By dedicating oneself with attention and open-mindedness to clarifying fundamental, existential questions within this environment, one can begin to cultivate insight into our true nature and shed illusory constraints.

Although the traditional length of kessei training is three months, shorter stays may be arranged. In 2024, 19 participants joined the monastic community at ZSS for residential training.



Monastic Ordination

After completing kessei, students whose aspiration, sincerity, and dedication are strong are encouraged to remain at Dai Bosatsu Zendo as long as their circumstances permit. Those with a deep vow may apply for ordination.

After ordination, a newly ordained monastic was traditionally required to spend 1,000 days of continuous full-time residency at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Looking ahead, ZSS will offer flexible pathways for the completion of extensive part-time residence or service through an annual training contract that formalizes commitment and DBZ sesshin participation. This inclusive approach ensures that practitioners in a range of circumstances can deepen their practice and service in the Dharma.

Celebrations and Special Events

ZSS has long been an entry point for introducing Zen practice to the public through family weekends, forest bathing retreats, and observances of significant occasions such as Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

Held as an annual event in August, Chigan Roshi and Shinge Roshi led a deeply moving O-Bon ceremony in 2024 with 73 attendees honoring ancestors, family members, and loved ones who have passed away, and acknowledging the hungry ghosts within and around us.



Ceremonies and Services

ZSS facilitates Buddhist liturgical functions to mark significant life milestones, bringing the sangha together to honor these moments. In 2024, this included a Child Dedication Ceremony led by Chigan Roshi for the daughter of an NYZ practitioner and a funeral service in honor of a long-time Sangha member. DBZ also held jusan-kaiki, a 14-year memorial service for the father of a Japanese national whose family has been affiliated with Rinzai Zen for generations.

Additionally, New York Zendo conducts a monthly *Mandala Day* service, paying homage to lineage predecessors and teachers who have furthered the Buddha-Dharma. The monastery also conducts various services including *Mandala Day* and *Dai Bosatsu Day* ceremonies.



Community Events

In addition to its Dharma offerings and services, ZSS provides dynamic programs that engage diverse communities and foster meaningful connections. These include cultural events, wellness initiatives, and specialized retreats for affinity groups.

Art and Culture

New York Zendo continues to host cultural programs that teach traditional Japanese arts connected to Zen. Two ikebana (flower arrangement) events, two shojin ryori (Zen cooking) workshops, an introductory calligraphy class, a calligraphy series, and a tea ceremony class were held in 2024. Additionally, NYZ presented a screening of two original films, *Dust to Light* and *Pure Land*, alongside interviews with the artists involved in the films' creation.



Wellness Programs

In addition to the above events, ZSS integrates Zen practice with physical and mental wellness initiatives.

New York Zendo offers weekly *zazen* and tai chi sessions on Tuesday evenings. Another significant 2024 event was a workshop on the Alexander Technique, which focused on posture and mindfulness.

For many years, Dai Bosatsu Zendo and the Beecher House have come together to offer annual Healing and Wellness Weekends catering to caregivers and individuals living with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. Two twelve-step retreats were also held in 2024 to support individuals on their recovery journey.

Affinity Groups

ZSS reaffirms its dedication to inclusivity by offering programs tailored to specific groups and providing its spaces for use by local sanghas. For example, *Triratna NYC* has been renting space at the temple for the past two years, exemplifying our commitment to supporting diverse spiritual communities. Continuing this tradition, NYZ also hosted regular *Acceptance* (open AA 11th Step meditation) meetings. Additionally, a resident priest at NYZ led meditation sessions at the Japan Society on several occasions in 2024.

At DBZ, we extended our support to other sanghas by hosting a sesshin for the Hollow Bones sangha and two sesshins for the Eiryu-ji Zen Center.

Engaged Buddhism

The ZSS **Engaged Buddhism** (EB) initiative complements the core Dharma offerings and community events, with direction and leadership provided by the EB Committee. Entering its sixth year, it remains a dynamic platform for exploring the intersection of Zen practice with contemporary social and ecological challenges. This ongoing effort blends monthly articles with weekly events including film screenings, podcasts, workshops, and discussions on a wide array of pressing issues.

The 2024 **articles** explore themes such as environmental sustainability, intergenerational wisdom, mindful aging, and the impermanence of life. Reflecting on self-care, renewal, and the human tendency to create divisions, they also highlight the interconnectedness of all things and the wisdom teachings of different traditions that inspire unity, compassion, and resilience. These themes carry over into the EB meetings, which provide a space for community engagement and personal reflection. Led by EB committee members, the events begin with a meditation period, setting a contemplative tone for the group discussions that follow.



Engaged Dharma Discussions

Led by Jifu Devyani Sadh, online **Dharma discussions** are held on the first Wednesday of each month. In 2024, notable topics included *Beyond Barriers* and the practical application of the 14 precepts of Engaged Buddhism.

Racial Solidarity Sangha

Facilitated by Rev. Seiho Morris, the **Racial Solidarity Sangha** (RSS) offers a supportive and inclusive space for dialogue, open to practitioners of all backgrounds. Meeting on the second Wednesday of each month, in consultation with Dr. Jasmine Syedullah, RSS addresses resilience in the face of marginalization and structural challenges.

Recognizing that “out-grouping” affects a diverse range of individuals, including people of color, women, LGBTQ+ members, and others facing cultural biases, RSS provides a platform to explore these experiences. In 2024, the group focused on self-care and practical strategies for combating burnout and compassion fatigue. Using the *Four Noble Truths* as a guiding framework, discussions centered on transforming adversity into personal growth and fostering social harmony. Participants shared how the sangha’s insights have empowered them to meet challenges with greater resilience and skill, underscoring the sangha’s vital role in nurturing inclusivity, connection, and collective healing.

Critical Buddhist Study

Held on the third Wednesday of the month, the **Critical Buddhist Study Group** led by Yuki Eric Michels investigates the intersection of Dharma teachings and Buddhist practice with critical theory and radical political movements.

Climate Action and Buddhist Practice

On the fourth Wednesday of each month, Jikyo Bonnie Shultz Sensei, Dr. Michael Fayne, and Dr. Morgan Perkins lead discussions on Buddhist responses to the **climate crisis**. Prominent 2024 sessions included reflections on films and podcasts like *Outrage and Optimism*, featuring voices such as Christiana Figueres and Roshi Joan Halifax.

Having explored how Buddhist principles can shape approaches to environmental challenges, the group supported initiatives like *For Our Only Home*, an art exhibition merging Buddhist and Indigenous ecological perspectives. Events included the creation of a Tibetan Buddhist Chenrezig sand mandala, during which Shinge Roshi gave a talk titled *Caring for Our Only Home: A Buddhist Response to Climate Change*.

The Beecher House

Open Space at the Beecher House

The historic Beecher House, located near the main monastery at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, has welcomed a range of groups since the 1980s. The Open Space Program at the **Beecher House** continues to serve as a serene retreat space offering a lakefront location, cozy fireplace, and adaptable spaces for dining, yoga, and workshops. Guests have access to the Beecher House Zendo, with the solarium provides an ideal setting for group activities.

Now in its third year post renovations, the Beecher House hosted a diverse array of events in 2024. Dharma-focused programs included a sesshin led by Chimon Carl Viggiani Sensei and a meditation retreat with Elazar Aslan. Wellness and recovery offerings featured an Ohashi shiatsu workshop, two yoga retreats, a Summer Solstice Retreat and the Shinen Recovery Group.



The Beecher House provides an intimate and inspiring environment for groups seeking to deepen their contemplative practice in a tranquil, historic, and picturesque setting.

Equipped with high-speed internet and video conferencing capabilities, it is open for group rentals throughout the year. For information, or to request a reservation, visit info@thebeecherhouse.org, or call 845-439-5288.

Sangha Participation and Engagement

Event Attendance

In 2024, Dai Bosatsu Zendo welcomed over 4,000 overnight stays for retreats and practice periods, reflecting an involved sangha community. New York Zendo also hosted over 4,000 attendees across a wide range of events, including zazen, Introduction to Zen sessions, silent retreats, and one-on-one teacher interviews. The online zendo further expanded accessibility, drawing participants from a broad range of experiences and transcending barriers of geography and disability.

Overall, event attendance was consistent with the previous year, with some programs—such as O-Bon at DBZ and the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Sesshin at NYZ—reaching their highest levels in over six years.



Creative Contributions

The ZSS monthly newsletters and a **new blog section** on the website featured haiku, poetry, and reflective articles from teachers and sangha members. These offerings included thought-provoking Dharma insights that inspired and enriched the community.

To support the monastery restoration campaign, Daishin Pawel Wojtasik and Keirin Brian Smith produced compelling **videos** that showcased essential areas requiring work. These efforts were instrumental in providing clear insights into the necessary projects, inspiring sangha engagement and donor support for the campaign.

Community Adaptability

Responding to the three-month paternity leave of its head monk, the New York Zendo sangha exhibited remarkable resilience and adaptability: members stepped into expanded roles as officers and temple hosts, ensuring the continuity of leadership and practice. This collective effort demonstrated the strength and dedication of the community, allowing it to thrive in changing circumstances.

Community Outreach

Boundless Acceptance

In 2024, the Zen Studies Society strengthened its commitment to building a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible community. These efforts focused on advancing meaningful board conversations and exploring opportunities to actualize these timeless Bodhisattva ideals. Initial approaches include increasing the availability of online practice and gatherings dedicated to specific populations and their particular needs. While this work will continually evolve, it reflects the abbot's vision and our collective resolve to create a more welcoming practice environment for all.

Publications

Tricycle Magazine published Shinge Roshi's article *Full-Moon Mind* and teisho *Here for It, As It Is Now*. Hokuto Daniel Diffin Osho's article, *Liftoff*, appeared in Lion's Roar magazine. These writings reflect their insights into Zen practice and its application to contemporary life.



ZSS at JapanFes

On June 15, the Zen Studies Society participated in JapanFes, a New York City street fair celebrating Japanese culture. The ZSS booth attracted many visitors, some expressing interest in attending ZSS events or purchasing items such as t-shirts featuring Chigan Roshi's iconic ensō. Building on this success, ZSS plans to repeat these outreach efforts in 2025.

Shinge Roshi's Kyoto Trip

In May, Shinge Roshi represented ZSS at Yamakawa Sogen Roshi's installation as Kancho of Myoshin-ji in Kyoto, Japan. The trip offered the opportunity for meaningful exchanges with several Zen masters and culminated in the rare and moving Shinzan Shiki ceremony.

Move Towards Sustainability

In 2024, ZSS made significant strides towards environmental stewardship and social responsibility, reflecting its commitment to sustainability. From revising its investment strategy to launching renewable energy initiatives and community-driven eco workshops, the organization continues to align its operations with the principles of responsible stewardship and spiritual practice.



Investment Strategy

To better align financial resources with its values of social justice and environmental responsibility, in 2024 the ZSS Board of Directors voted unanimously to partner with Arjuna Capital, a Massachusetts-based leader in sustainable and socially responsible investing, ensuring that ZSS's financial practices reflect its ethical commitments.

Renewable Energy

To mitigate the environmental and financial impact of fossil fuel usage, ZSS installed a solar energy array at the DBZ facility in 2024. This solar installation is projected to provide 65 kW of clean energy, substantially reducing DBZ's reliance on fossil fuels, wood energy, and external electricity sources. With an anticipated reduction of at least 50% in outside electricity usage, the project lowers the monastery's carbon footprint while also cutting ongoing energy costs.

By integrating renewable energy into its infrastructure, ZSS demonstrates its dedication to sustainable living and the care of the earth.

Eco Workshop

In 2024, ZSS launched a new initiative aimed at fostering ecological responsibility through community engagement. A group of Engaged Buddhism practitioners held an initial meeting to plan a sustained effort to organize an "Eco Workshop" weekend at DBZ. This event will explore DBZ's natural and structural environment, showcase its innovative stewardship practices, and engage participants in collaborative sustainability projects.

While initial projects will focus on benefiting DBZ, the workshop welcomes participants with expertise or interest in broader ecological fields, such as sustainable urban planning. Enthusiastically supported by the Abbot and retired Abbot, this initiative represents a meaningful integration of environmental care with spiritual practice. It offers a platform for collective action, learning, and impactful contributions to both the monastery and the global ecological effort.

Monastery Restoration Campaign

The **Monastery Restoration Campaign** reached a significant milestone in 2024, surpassing \$1 million in funds raised to support essential Phase I and II repairs and upgrades. Building on the momentum of 2023, our efforts this year centered on addressing the most urgent initiatives.

We extend our deepest gratitude for your ongoing support, which makes it possible to preserve and enhance the monastery's sanctity and functionality. Your contributions ensure the continuity of these essential efforts and pave the way for our next wave of fundraising to support Phase III initiatives. Thank you for helping us care for this sacred space for future generations.

Funded projects have been categorized based on their status: completed, near completion, and in progress.

Completed Projects

These initiatives are fully operational, pending activation, or undergoing finishing touches.

- heat pumps for the Zendo and Dharma Hall
- replacement of the temple bell tower beams
- solar panel installation
- restoration of leaking copper roof saddles

Near Completion

These projects are over 75% complete, with final efforts scheduled for after the spring thaw.

- moss treatment on the roof
- masonry wall restoration
- bluestone patio resetting

In-Progress Projects

These initiatives are in the scoping, scheduling, or early implementation phases.

- heating for library, guest wing, and abbot's quarters
- door weatherstripping and insulation
- exterior painting of the main monastery building
- roof fascia and rafter tail repairs
- resident quarters stair repairs
- utility area dehumidifier installation
- replacement of 13 handmade oak doors
- interior painting



Maintenance and Repairs

New York Zendo

New York Zendo continues to enhance its facilities with energy conservation and sustainability goals. In 2024 a new front door was installed, roof leaks were sealed and fluorescent tube light fixtures were replaced with energy-efficient LED fixtures.

Planned initiatives for the coming year include repairing additional leak damage, installing water filters for the kitchen sinks, and repainting half of the public area. Projects under consideration include kitchen cabinet replacement and shed construction to accommodate new city-mandated garbage and recycling bins.

Sangha members who wish to help maintain and improve our cherished space can contact office@newyorkzendo.org or 212-861-3333.

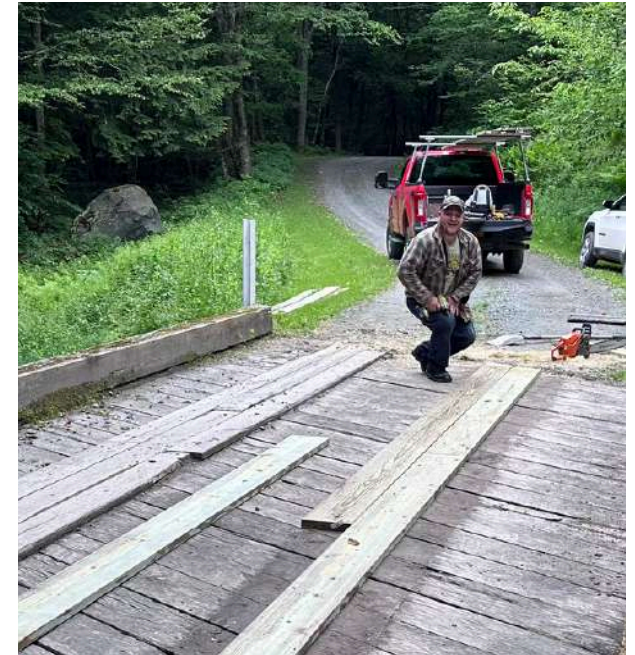
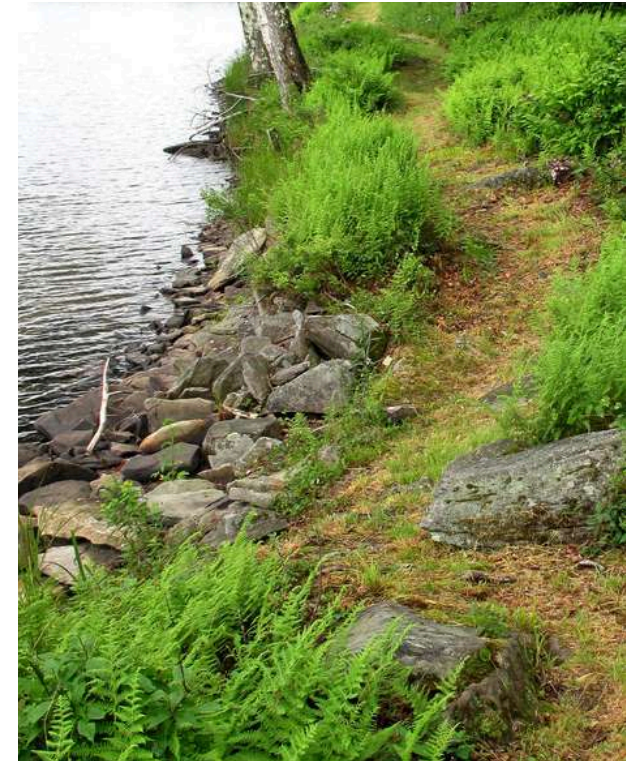


Dai Bosatsu Zendo

The Facilities Committee at Dai Bosatsu Zendo remains dedicated to the ongoing maintenance and enhancement of our buildings and grounds. Recent efforts have focused on resurfacing the lower bridge on Beecher Lake Road and preventing erosion along the road between the Gate House and the monastery during heavy rains, ensuring that it remains accessible for travel. Fallen trees are promptly removed to maintain safety and clear passage.

Additionally, the eroding path around Beecher Lake has been repaired, with plans for continued restoration.

The hiking trails have also been maintained to provide further access to the natural beauty and healing benefits of the surrounding deep woods, all while carefully protecting the ecosystem. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributes to the care of our 1,400+ acre grounds.



Five-year Financial Growth Highlights

The exceptional financial growth between 2020 and 2024 highlights the ability of ZSS to balance operational priorities with long-term sustainability. By diversifying revenue streams, leveraging strategic investments such as the Endowment Fund, and launching impactful initiatives like the Beecher House renovation and the Monastery Restoration Campaign, ZSS has established a strong foundation for continued growth. Looking ahead, ZSS is well-positioned to expand its mission, serve the sangha, and maintain resilience for years to come.

Financial Safeguards

Over the past five years, ZSS has achieved a 70% growth in strategic funds, which include reserves and the Endowment. This success reflects prudent financial management, the establishment of a \$2 million Endowment Fund, and the generous contributions of donors. These achievements ensure a robust financial foundation to support future initiatives and long-term sustainability.

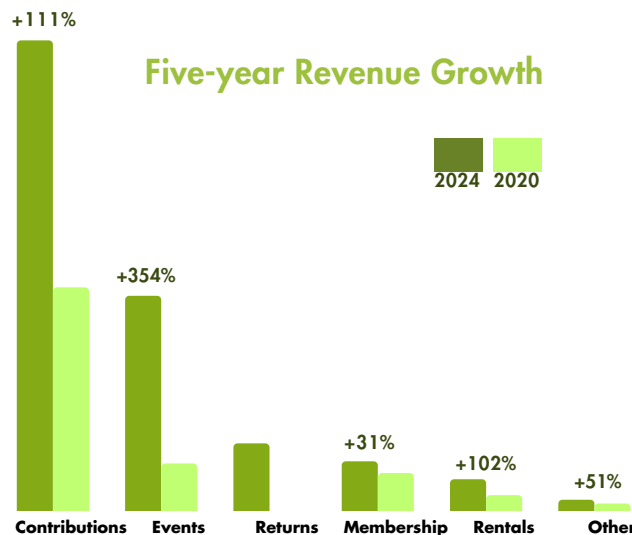
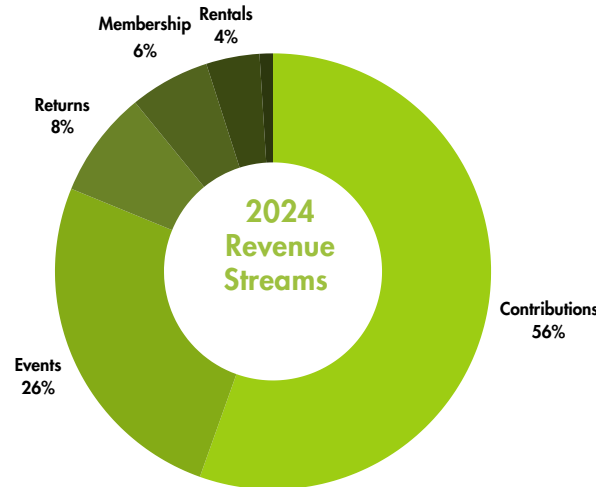
Annual Revenue Growth

ZSS also experienced remarkable financial growth in annual revenue, increasing by 155% between 2020 and 2024. This was driven by strategic fundraising, regular communications, enhanced sangha engagement, increased contributions, and effective property utilization.

Below is a breakdown of the revenue sources:

Contributions

Annual contributions grew by 111% from 2020 to 2024, making them the largest revenue source and accounting for over half of total revenue. This category includes the **General Fund** and restricted funds designated for specific initiatives. Unrestricted donations have historically enabled ZSS to continue offering scholarships to events, meet operating expenses, and support critical repairs. Restricted contributions have allowed us to undertake major renovations of our buildings. In particular, we express profound gratitude to sangha members whose generosity helped surpass \$1,000,000 in contributions to the **Monastery Restoration Fund**.



Events

Event revenue surged by an impressive 354%, fueled by a higher number of events, teacher engagement, increased sangha participation, and the success of outreach and communication efforts. **Events** now contribute over a quarter of total revenue, making them the second-largest revenue source. Growth in event participation is expected to continue into 2025 and beyond.

Investment Returns

Investment returns, driven by the establishment and performance of the Endowment Fund, accounted for 8% of total revenue. This reflects ZSS' commitment to long-term financial sustainability through thoughtful and strategic investments, supported by generous donor contributions.

Membership

Membership revenue accounted for 6% of the total 2024 revenue, making it the fourth-largest revenue source. Annual **membership** revenue grew by 31% over the five-year period, reflecting the steady expansion of the sangha's member base and their increasing engagement with our mission.

Rentals

Rental income doubled during this period, primarily due to the renovation of the **Beecher House**, which significantly enhanced its appeal as a rental property. Rentals contributed 4% of total revenue in 2024, establishing themselves as the fifth-largest revenue source.

Other Sources

Other income, including revenue from temple stores, fees for life events, and miscellaneous activities, grew by 51%.

Membership

Membership is one way to dedicate yourself to practice and show solidarity with our sangha. At ZSS, we provide various membership options, including individual, family, online, and associate memberships. We encourage you to explore the possibility of becoming a supporting **member** if you are not already enrolled.

General Fund

The **General Fund** serves as the Zen Studies Society's financial bedrock, ensuring vital funding for our day-to-day operations. Your generous contributions empower us to pay for various essential expenses, including compensation, professional fees, facilities, utilities, insurance, and other administration costs. Additionally, your support fuels our development and communications initiatives and program-related activities.



Monastery Restoration Fund

The **Monastery Restoration Campaign**, initiated in May 2023 with a target of \$1.5 million, has garnered over a million dollars. Our endeavor continues as we aim to raise an additional \$500,000.

We invite you to join this collective effort to safeguard the heritage of DBZ and facilitate sustainable upgrades. Your involvement ensures that this distinctive and invaluable resource remains vibrant for future generations. Join us in preserving the legacy of DBZ!

Endowment Fund

The **Endowment Fund** at ZSS has now been in place for four years. Designed to leave its principal intact, this fund will help ensure the long-term viability of ZSS by generating investment returns to support general operating expenses. We hope that you will consider contributing to the Endowment Fund this year.

Planned Giving

The Zen Studies Society **Legacy Circle**, a planned-giving program, has now entered its fifth year. We are grateful to those who have included ZSS in their long-term giving plans, thus joining the Legacy Circle.

\$10,000+

Anonymous (3)
Anonymous, *In-kind*
Saigyō Terry Keenan
Jifu Devyani Sadh, *CRM*

\$5,000-\$9,999

Kokan Jim Borowiec and Zakke Diane Applegate
Ungetsu Liora Alschuler
Hokuto Daniel Diffin Osho and Victoria Diffin
Karen Dodds, *Graphics*
Eigetsu Theodora Francis
Genno Linda King, *Graphics*
Kogen Michael Raftery

\$2,000-\$4,999

Anonymous
James Nuzzo
Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz
Ann Tapp
Somon Terrence Truta
The Slusher Lewis Charitable Fund
Prospect Foundation

\$1,000-\$1,999

Anonymous
Shinge Sherry Chayat Roshi
Vicara Satya Mary Connelly Roshi
Gangyo Dairen Larry Gagler
Shikyo Ursel Geissler
Myoku Fumiyo Hirano
Manuchehr Sassoonian and Lann Ikeno
Genryu Hiroshi Ito
Anusha Konduri
Keiko Laura Last
Kelley LeBlanc
Bill Lohse
Jika Lauren and Walter Melnikow

\$1,000-\$1,999

Shodo Pedro and Kanro Sandra Carr Ortiz
Shoteki Chris Phelan
Derek Sasaki
Arnold Silberman
Kyoko Ginger Storey-Welch
Nataliya Tokar
Misao Tokieda-Bauchich
Melody Selden
Michael Siegel
Rodri Fernandez Touza
Genpu Mark Uretsky
Shuji and Tomoko Yagi
Bonnie Hana Family Giving Fund

\$500-\$999

Genmyo Atsundo and Koshin Yuka Aikawa
Michiko Aizawa
William and Keri Brennan
Choshu Joseph Buxbaum
Gretchen Taeko Chua
Koge Eileen Danville
Karen Dodds
Lauree Feldman
Stephanie Fetta
Senju David Fisher and Deb Badera
Juyo Dennis Giacomo
Brian and Maki Hoashi
Kiichi Hosoda
Charles Kelly
Myoki Monica McTighe and David Karp
Chika Bettina Mueller
Tutomu and Masako Nakatsugawa
Chigen Karen Remmler
Peter Robson
Zochi Zoltan Sisko
Chris Temme
Karlheinz Tröndle
Anh Truong

Abbot

Chigan Roland Jaeckel Roshi

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Morgan Perkins
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Choshu Joseph Buxbaum
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Hokuto Daniel Diffin Osho
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Head Monastics

Jishin Liz Kuney, *DBZ*
Giun Stefan Streit, *NYZ*
Muken Mark Barber, *NYZ and DBZ*