



Marching On



Dear Sangha Members and Friends of the Dharma,

Once again, we are presenting you with the Annual Report of The Zen Studies Society. The work that has gone into this report, and the activities that underlie everything reported, are impressive and inspire gratitude. How fortunate we are to have met this practice, the path of the Bodhisattva, and one another.

This year particularly brought many changes to the world, the country, and also our society. In this practice, events and occasions that challenge us are welcome. Anything that gives us a jolt to look deeper, to examine more closely and more intimately, to break through habitual and karmic impediments, has a place of appreciation in the Zen practitioner's heart. Thus, we are finding abundant fuel for our exploration of the human condition and the path of awakening and liberation.

With the passing of Aiho Shimano, an era has come to an end. Aiho-san's death certainly stirred up a lot of memories and deep gratitude for her and her late husband's work. Eido Roshi and Aiho-san contributed so much to this Society; it would not be where it is today without their tireless work. Yet I feel strongly that, finally and organically, this society has made the gift of Japanese Rinzai Zen its own, giving rise to an American Rinzai Zen, which with open eyes and hearts carries forward a rigorous practice while adapting to the needs, aspirations, and challenges of twenty-first-century life and society. One of the human tendencies very much present in contemporary American culture that we have to address is that important people are often glorified, and once they fail, they are torn down and become villains. Zen history has its own issues with hagiography, the writing about ancestral teachers as if they had been saints.

No longer. Our practice must develop to the point that we can embrace all the wonderful contributions that Aiho and Eido Shimano made to this Society, while clearly acknowledging any harm they caused. Furthermore, there is hardly a more important lesson to be learned: we must keep one another accountable. If we live in this way, we actualize the teaching of Zen in society.

We had a great year, filled with events and opportunities to engage in Rinzai Zen training, Zen arts, and Sangha. Dai Bosatsu Zendo had well-attended Kessei, especially in the Fall. Our Bodhisattva Initiation drew 24 participants, culminating in 17 newly inducted practitioners with Dharma names. ZSS Junior Dharma Teachers were busy helping out with the Jukai meetings, leading Introduction to Zen events at our temples, and giving Dharma talks at the retreats that we held. Hokuto Osho led several weekend sesshin at New York Zendo and has been offering online dokusan; Shinge Roshi co-led two sesshin at Dai Bosatsu Zendo, offering dokusan and teisho. For all of these bodhisattvas and their selfless offerings, I am truly grateful.

Lastly, without you, your participation, your generosity, and your determination, the Zen Studies Society would not be able to succeed. Thank you for everything.

Let True Dharma continue!

With nine bows,

Chigan

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

From the Board President

Dear Sangha Members and Friends of The Zen Studies Society,

In these times of local and global turbulence, when polarization often seems to be the only organizing principle, we look back on 2025 with the deepest gratitude to each person who has made it possible for The Zen Studies Society to continue to serve its mission. Sangha members, temple friends, dharma teachers, ordained, board directors and committee members, and of course, our Roshis; thank you to each of you for manifesting the vibrant practice in which we can all take refuge.

Despite the tumultuous uncertainty of the past year, we at ZSS are fortunate to have been able to continue fulfilling our mission and stewarding the practice of Rinzai Zen Buddhism into its fullest expression in the United States. Under the dedicated leadership of Chigan-kutsu Roshi, ZSS is offering more open structures for ordination and temple governance for 21st century householders —while still honoring traditional pathways. Practitioners these days live both inside and outside the temples, and we are evolving more flexible pathways to accommodate their needs.

The continued vitality of dharma commitment was demonstrated by the more than 4,000 people served by New York Zendo's programs in 2025, as well as the 17 people who took jukai this past autumn during the biggest kessei Dai Bosatsu Zendo has run in several years.

In addition to the bedrock of zazen practice at our temples, we are fortunate to host numerous related arts, social and cultural events at our temples. A suizen intensive (the spiritual practice of playing of the shakuhachi flute during zazen); Thursday intro nights in the City; a rakugo show (centuries-old style of Japanese comedy) for our members; an "Eco Workshop" planning weekend at DBZ; events like these, and more, nurture practitioners' lives off the cushion.



And beyond the temple walls, new and evolving projects also help to sustain our practice. On the Dai Bosatsu Zendo grounds, many years of work finally culminated in the debut of the much anticipated solar array (more on this soon!). At the Beecher House, we celebrated the arrival of three new groups that resonate with our mission, bringing us closer to reaching our goal of a completely pre-booked annual season.

Undergirding all this dharma activity, the board of directors remains focused on prudently developing the financial resources of the organization. Our Monastery Restoration Campaign and Endowment Fund have met and exceeded their previous goals but with costs rising, balancing our annual operating budget remains a challenge. We on the Board of Directors are vigilant and mindful of our fiduciary duties and spiritual obligations to ensure that ZSS remains the type of teaching and practice center so needed today. We welcome with gratitude the contributions we receive each year from sangha members and friends, as detailed later in this report.

And along comes a milestone for the dharma in these United States: this coming July we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji.

With palms together,

Kanchi Lucía Oliva Hennelly, President, 2025, The Zen Studies Society
Tamon Jeffrey Alan Hovden, President, 2026, The 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

ZSS was established in 1956 to support the Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki in his efforts to introduce Zen to the West. One of the oldest Zen organizations in the US, ZSS is an American Rinzai Zen Buddhist community dedicated to cultivating an atmosphere of respect, harmony, deep insight, and boundless compassion.

Under the auspices of ZSS, we offer the simple yet profound teachings and practice of Zen Buddhism at our city temple, New York Zendo Shobo-ji, at our mountain monastery, Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji, and online.

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 57 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 49 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.



Our Teachers

Distinguished Teachers

Chigan R. Jaeckel Roshi, Abbot

Chigan-kutsu Kyō-on Dokurō R. 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.



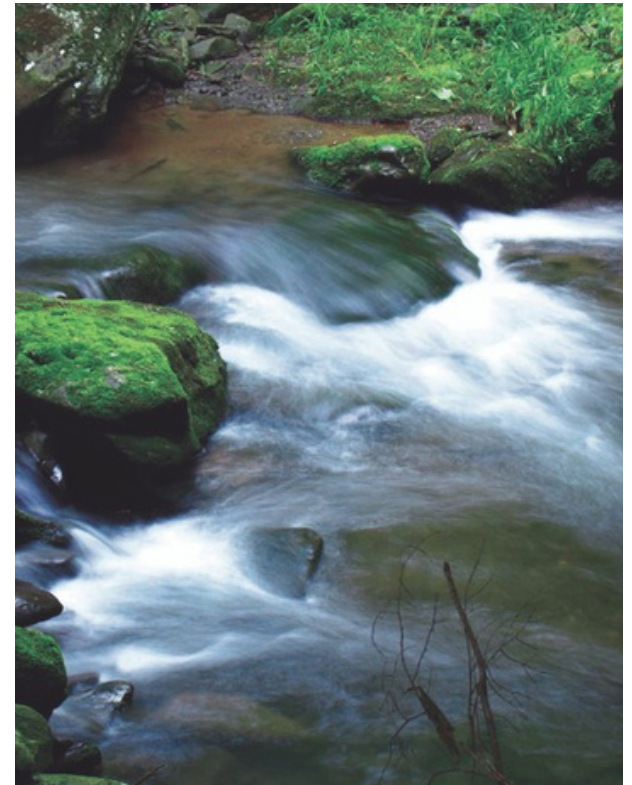
Senior Dharma Teachers

Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz 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.



Our Teachers

Junior Dharma Teachers

The teaching faculty includes the following Junior Dharma Teachers who trained through a comprehensive nine-month program led by Chigan Roshi, Shinge Roshi, and Hokuto Osho.

Giun Stefan Streit Sensei

Giun Stefan Streit has been the temple director at New York Zendo Shobo-ji since early 2019. His first contact with formal Zen took place in 2001, when Nonin Chowaney Roshi of the Nebraska Zen Center visited one of his college classes. Americorps brought him to Seattle after graduation where he practiced at Chobo-ji under the guidance of Genjo Marinello Roshi. Genjo Roshi referred Giun to Dai Bosatsu Zendo for more intensive training. In 2008 he was ordained by Eido Roshi at DBZ. After leaving the monastery in 2010, he practiced with the non-sectarian Cross River Meditation Sangha in Frenchtown, NJ, and also regularly attended a Quaker meeting with his wife. He returned in 2018 to complete his monastic training with Shinge Roshi and in 2023 he was authorized as a Dharma Teacher.

Shindo Tim Holmes Sensei

Shindo Sensei began formal Zen practice in 1990 with the Piedmont Zen Group in Raleigh, NC. He took Jukai/precepts in 1997 with Bodhin Kjolhede Roshi, now retired Abbot of the Rochester Zen Center. Later he ordained with Gentei Sandy Stewart Osho, former Abbot of the North Carolina Zen Center (previously of the Joshu Sasaki Roshi Rinzai lineage). He first met and became a student of Shinge Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 2018 and later recognized by her as a Dharma Teacher in 2023. He worked nearly four decades as an Occupational Therapist.

Koge Louise Bayer Sensei

Koge Sensei began sitting at New York Zendo in 1978, and has been a resident there and at Dai Bosatsu. She was ordained in 2015 and has completed chaplaincy training. She served as head monk (Shika) at New York Zendo from 2016 to 2018.

Kimpu Jonathan Swan Sensei

Kimpu Sensei began formal Zen practice in 2006 at the Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji with Shinge Sherry Chayat Roshi. He was a resident of Hoen-ji from 2010 to 2011 before attending his first kessei at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in the fall of 2011. He was ordained by Shinge Roshi in March 2017 at Dai Bosatsu Zendo where he trained as a resident monk until August 2021. In December 2023 he was recognized as a Junior Dharma Teacher. He currently resides in Wisconsin where he has been offering guest Dharma talks at Zen River Sangha in Appleton since January 2024.

Muken Mark Barber Sensei

Muken Sensei began Zen practice in 2013 at the Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji, and first became a resident at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 2014. He was ordained by Shinge Roshi in 2018 and authorized as a Dharma Teacher in 2023. He currently serves as the head monk and head cook at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Jishin Liz Robson Sensei

Jishin was introduced to Rinzai Zen Buddhism in 2004 at Sunday morning services held in the only Zen (Seon) Buddhist high school in America, a mile from the farmhouse she rented in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. She quickly began training at Endless Mountain Zendo with Genro Osho and Yayoi Zenni, receiving the precepts there in 2008. After an untimely interruption in her ordination track at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 2010, she was ultimately ordained in 2020 by Shinge Roshi. In 2023, Jishin was entrusted as a Dharma Teacher by Chigan Roshi. She will formally open Choka-an, Bird's Nest Zendo in Oneonta, NY in 2026.



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 Zazenkaï 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 2025, ZSS hosted four *Introduction to Zen 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 over 100 practitioners.

At New York Zendo, regular *Introduction to Zen* evening 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 that remote participants could benefit from foundational teachings.



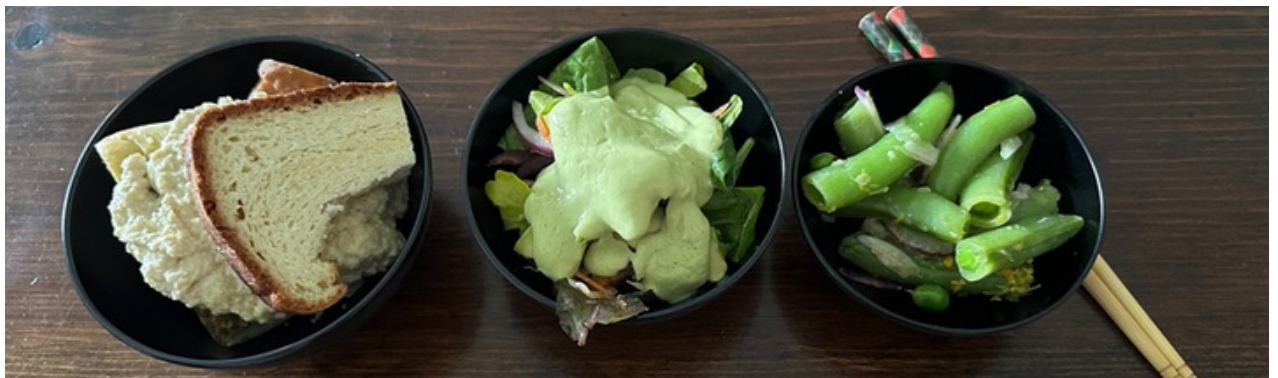
Meditation

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.

At DBZ, the days leading up to the 2025 O-Bon ceremony took the form of a Samu Sesshin, where monastery residents and sangha members prepared for the weekend ceremony with zazen, formal meals, and dokusan, augmenting the periods of silent work practice. In 2025, twenty-eight participants joined O-Bon Samu Sesshin, the first held in fifteen years.



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. For seasoned practitioners, we offer Dharma study groups, dokusan (Dharma interviews), and immersive weekend and week-long retreats.

Dharma Offerings

At least once a month, NYZ offers meetings that combine meditation with insightful Dharma talks. In addition to in-person events, NYZ hosted Dharma classes on the Pali Canon and breathing techniques led by Giun Sensei in 2025.

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 2025, with 273 participants practicing at Dai Bosatsu Zendo and 147 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.

Bodhisattva Initiation Ceremony

The Zen Studies Society offers Jukai (receiving precepts) 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 2025, at the conclusion of Harvest Sesshin, 17 participants of the Bodhisattva Initiation group underwent Jukai. Abbess Emerita, Shinge Roshi, bestowed a Dharma name on her disciple, and Chigan Roshi on the remaining participants. In 2025, a total of 19 individuals received the precepts.

Residential Training

Kessei, a three-month residential training period held twice a year at DBZ, 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.

Although the traditional length of kessei training is three months, shorter stays may be arranged. In 2025, 25 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 is traditionally required to spend 1,000 days of rigorous Zen training. In the past, continuous full-time residency at Dai Bosatsu Zendo was the only option for such training. Beginning in 2026, 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 while still fulfilling the 1,000 days requirement.



Celebrations and Ceremonies

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.

August at DBZ saw the annual O-Bon ceremony, led by Chigan Roshi and Shinge Roshi with 61 attendees in 2025. This deeply moving ceremony brings the sangha together to honor ancestors, family members, and loved ones, 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. Honoring the passing of Aiho Yasuko Shimano, long-time shikaryo of NYZ, the city temple held a memorial service attended by more than 30 sangha members and well-wishers. Aiho-san was interred in Sangha Meadow at DBZ next to her husband, founding Abbot Eido T. Shimano, in a service led by Chigan Roshi. Also interred in September 2025 was Daihachi Yagi, son of a family of long-time supporters and benefactors, in a deeply heartfelt family ceremony.

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



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 the practice of Zen. In 2025, over a dozen events were held including: a member appreciation Rakugo show, suizen intensives, a Pali Canon course, a shakuhachi workshop and concert, ikebana (flower arrangement) classes, shojin ryori (Zen temple cooking) workshops, a calligraphy series, and a tea ceremony event entitled, How to Boil Water: Serving Tea with the Senses. Additionally, NYZ presented a screening of the original film, *Dust to Light*, alongside interviews with the artists involved in the film's creation.



Wellness Programs

ZSS also provides opportunities to cultivate physical and mental wellness. New York Zendo continues to offer weekly zazen and tai chi sessions on Tuesday evenings. In 2025, these regular events were joined by a workshop on breathing techniques, an auricular acupuncture workshop, and a series focusing on neurodiversity in Zen. 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 2025 to support individuals on their recovery journeys.

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 hosts regular Acceptance (open AA 11th Step meditation) meetings. Additionally, DBZ hosted one sesshin for the Hollow Bones sangha and two for the Eiryu-ji Zen Center.

Engaged Buddhism

The ZSS **Engaged Buddhism** (EB) initiative continues to complement core Dharma offerings and community events under the guidance of the EB Committee. Entering its seventh year, EB remains a vital space for exploring how Zen practice responds to contemporary social, relational, and ecological challenges. Through monthly articles, weekly meetings, and periodic workshops, the initiative supports reflection on lived experience while cultivating awareness, compassion, and ethical engagement.

The 2025 articles explore themes of interdependence, mindful aging, embodiment, gratitude, impermanence, and care for the natural world, while also addressing issues of division and the work of bridging gaps within and across communities. Reflections on illness, loss, spiritual lineage, and shared humanity are integrated with attention to environmental responsibility and relational healing, emphasizing the inseparability of inner practice and outward engagement.

These themes carry directly into EB meetings and offerings, which provide structured spaces for Zazen, dialogue, and collective inquiry grounded in presence, resilience, and community care.

Engaged Dharma Discussions

Led by Jifu Devyani Sadh, online Dharma Discussions are held on the first Wednesday of each month. In 2025, participants explored the four Brahma Viharas—loving-kindness, compassion, equanimity, and joy—and the three marks of existence—impermanence, suffering, and no-self—as they relate to navigating life's challenges. The sessions then turned to reflections on honoring our non-human relatives and concluded with three methods for transforming chaos.



Racial Solidarity Sangha

Facilitated by Rev. Seiho Morris, on the second Wednesday of each month, the Racial Solidarity Sangha (RSS) offers a supportive and inclusive space for dialogue to practitioners of all backgrounds. 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, inviting individual and collective kindness, compassion and dignity.

In 2025, the group focused on cultivating deep resilience using the Eightfold Path and the Twelve Steps to Bridging Divides framework. Grounded in the three practices of resilience: Internal Stability (Zazen - Mindfulness), Strategic Action (Sincere Activity), and Community Strength (Effort/Energy Service), participants explored how to remain in "the eye of the hurricane": centered, still, aware, and composed.

Caregiver Support Group

Held on the third Wednesday of the month, the Caregiver Support Group, co-facilitated by Sören Cathy Shrady and Meigetsu Rebecca Beers, creates a compassionate space for sharing the experience of caring for a loved one with dementia or related conditions.

Caring for the Earth and Buddhist Practice

On the fourth Wednesday of each month, Morgan Perkins and Michael Fayne lead discussions on Buddhist approaches to caring for the natural world. Sessions incorporate readings, films, and podcasts—often blending Buddhist and Indigenous perspectives. In 2025, participants reflected on works such as *Outrage and Optimism*, featuring voices like Christiana Figueres and Roshi Joan Halifax. These meetings also informed planning for the annual summer workshop at Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Contemplative Practice and Caring for the Earth Workshop

In the summer of 2025, a workshop at Dai Bosatsu Zendo invited a deepened relationship with the natural world through contemplative practice. Set amid the mountains by Beecher Lake, where woods meet meadows, the program included forest bathing, swimming, honoring non-human ancestors, and shared reflection. Attendees from diverse fields—including ecology, biology, anthropology, and the arts—explored themes of reciprocity, balance, and responsibility to future generations.

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 providing an ideal setting for group activities.

In 2025, the Beecher House, now in its fourth year, continues to host a diverse array of events. Dharma-focused programs include an annual sesshin led by Chimon Carl Viggiani Sensei and Peaceful Lake meditation retreat. Wellness offerings featured an Ohashi Shiatsu Workshop, two yoga retreats, a breathwork retreat and a Summer Solstice retreat.



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 Engagement and Participation

Event Attendance

In 2025, Dai Bosatsu Zendo welcomed over 700 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 continued to produce 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.

ZSS at JapanFes

On September 6th, for the second year, The Zen Studies Society was represented at JAPAN Fes, renowned as the world's largest Japanese food festival, highlighting Japanese culture and cuisine. Visitors to the ZSS booth bought curated merchandise and learned about our mission.

ZSS plans to repeat these outreach efforts in 2026.

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 that became operational at the end of 2025. This solar installation comprises 65 kW of panels, capable of producing over 300 kWh of clean energy in a day. For reference, the average American household uses 30 kWh per day. With this installation, we look forward to substantially reducing DBZ's reliance on fossil fuels and lowering the monastery's carbon footprint. The project will also reduce our reliance on external electricity sources, while 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

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.

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

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Maintenance and Repairs

New York Zendo

New York Zendo continues to enhance its facilities with energy conservation and sustainability goals. In 2025 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. In 2025, we completed the installation of heat pumps in every bedroom of the monastery. The pumps and related equipment have been hidden and blend in beautifully with the architecture of the monastery. Because heat pumps are more efficient than the older heating system, their installation furthers ZSS's commitment to sustainability. In addition, we are repairing and restoring the masonry of the entrance to the monastery to ensure the safety of visitors and help maintain the foundation of the monastery for the future.

We've also continued our repair and restoration of the path around Beecher Lake. The hiking trails continue to be maintained to provide further access to the natural beauty of the woodland, while protecting the ecosystem. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributes to the care of our 1,400+ acre grounds.



Monastery Restoration Campaign

The **Monastery Restoration Campaign** entered its second year in 2025. 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.

Completed Projects

- Install heat pump in Zendo
- Install heat pump in Dharma Hall
- Replace the big temple bell beams
- Prepare site for solar array
- Install solar array
- Connect solar array to utility provider
- Restore leaking copper roof valley between buildings
- Install heat pumps and thermostatic control for genkan (formal entry), library, abbot's quarters, and residents' floor
- Install ductless mini-splits in all guest rooms
- Install ductless mini-splits in dining room, meeting room, and kaisando
- Install ductless mini-splits in dormitory, office, and tenzo (kitchen)

In-Progress Projects

- Weatherstrip and insulate doors
- Treat damaging moss on the roof
- Repair the stone retaining walls
- Restore the masonry entry stairs
- Reset the bluestone patio
- Repair fascia/rafter tails on roof

Planned Projects

- Repair stairs to resident quarters
- Install dehumidifiers in utility areas
- Replace 13 handmade oak doors
- Fix wells, pipes, valves, filtration
- Renovate bathrooms/ventilation
- Construct an equipment care area
- Renovate garage and woodshed



Five-year Financial Growth Highlights

The exceptional financial growth between 2021 and 2025 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 Overview

With the establishment of the \$2 million Endowment Fund a few years ago, ZSS transitioned to a more stable financial structure supported by significant financial reserves – our Endowment and Reserves accounts. Since 2024, these accounts have been managed by Arjuna Capital, a wealth management firm that provides strong financial returns while investing in an environmentally responsible, equitable economy. Our financial stability reflects prudent financial management of our investments and the generous contributions of donors.

Although ZSS continues to run a modest deficit in yearly budgets, our long-term planning is aimed at achieving fiscal balance in FY2028. These plans include growing the Endowment Fund and implementing changes that increase revenue, even while keeping tight controls over future spending. These plans will ensure a robust financial foundation to support future initiatives and long-term sustainability

Annual Revenue Growth

ZSS has experienced remarkable financial growth in annual revenue which increased by 51% between 2021 and 2025. This growth was driven by strategic fundraising, regular communications, enhanced sangha engagement, increased contributions, and effective property utilization.

The following page details a breakdown of the revenue sources.



**51% Revenue Growth
2021-2025**

Five-year Financial Growth Highlights

Program Events

Event revenue surged by an impressive 171% from 2021 to 2025, with this increase caused by a 74% increase in revenue from NYZ programs and an incredible 213% increase from DBZ programs. The event revenue has been fueled by a higher number of **events**, increased teacher engagement, increased sangha participation, and the success of outreach and communication efforts. This significant growth has caused program revenue to become the largest revenue source for ZSS, now contributing just over half of total revenue. Growth in event participation is expected to continue into future years.

Contributions

Annual unrestricted **contributions** grew by 11% from 2021 to 2025, making them the second largest revenue source and accounting for about a third of total revenue. Unrestricted donations have historically enabled ZSS to continue offering scholarships to events, meet operating expenses, and support critical repairs. Notably, these contributions were received from over 220 individuals, groups, and foundations, and ranged from a few dollars to significantly larger amounts. We express heartfelt appreciation for each sangha member who offered a donation, no matter the amount.

In addition to unrestricted contributions, restricted contributions have allowed us to undertake major renovations of our buildings through the **Monastery Restoration Fund**, as well as other important new projects. In particular, we express deep thankfulness to a sangha member who provided ZSS with a significant contribution that allowed the organization to order wonderful new accordion-style sutra books that are now found at both ZSS temples (and at Hoen-ji, The Zen Center of Syracuse).



Investment Returns

Over the last year, the investment return on the ZSS Reserves fund (used for general operations) was 8.2%. Over this same period, the ZSS Endowment account (whose growth provides for an annual transfer of funds to the Reserves) had a higher 11.6% return, reflecting different investment strategies for the two accounts. These returns demonstrate ZSS' commitment to long-term financial sustainability through thoughtful and strategic investments, supported by generous donor contributions.

Rentals

Rental income increased significantly over the past five years, primarily due to the renovation of **Beecher House** that has become a significant revenue source for ZSS. Rental of Beecher House, Dai Bosatsu Zendo and New York Zendo contributed 21% of total revenue in 2025, establishing rentals as the third-largest revenue source.

Membership

Membership revenue accounted for 13% of 2025 total revenue, making it the fourth-largest revenue source. Annual **membership** revenue grew by 25% over the five-year period, reflecting the steady expansion of the sangha's member base and their increasing engagement with our mission.

Other Income

The solar panel facility on Dai Bosatsu Zendo property was approved by state agencies in 2025 and began providing power to the New York State electrical grid in Q1 of 2026. Although more of an offset to current electrical usage at Dai Bosatsu Monastery than a true revenue source, it will reduce electrical expenses at the Monastery and thereby help strengthen the ZSS financial outlook for the foreseeable future.

Ways to Give

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. Additional options will become available in 2026.



Endowment Fund

The **Endowment Fund** at ZSS has now been in place for five 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 sixth year. We are grateful to those who have included ZSS in their long-term giving plans, thus joining the Legacy Circle.

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.

In Deep Gratitude

\$10,000+

Anonymous (4)
Anonymous, In-Kind
Dan Levinson
NOK Foundation
Jifu Devyani Sadh, CRM

\$5,000-\$9,999

Kokan James Borowiec and Zakke Diane Applegate
Hokuto Daniel and Victoria Diffin
Karen Dodds, Graphics
Chris Goldsmith
Tamon Jeff Hovden
Genno Linda King, Graphics
Prospect Foundation
Kogen Michael Raftery
Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz

\$2,000-\$4,999

Anonymous
Shinge Sherry Chayat
Shoyo Carol A Collins
Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies
Keiko Laura Last
Loew's Corporation
Eikyu Nadia Marc
PayPal Giving Fund
Shoteki Chris Phelan
Shodo Pedro and Kanro Sandra Carr Ortiz
Genpu Mark Uretsky
Somon Terrence Truta
Shuji and Tomoko Yagi

\$1,000-\$1,999

Anonymous
Koge Louise Bayer
Bonnie Hana Family Giving Fund
Russell Brant
Choshu Joseph Buxbaum
Eileen Conlon and Gary Lenox
Vicara Satya Mary Connelly Roshi
Koge Eileen Danville
Myoku Fumiyo Hirano
Brian and Maki Hoashi
Joohee Lee

\$1,000-\$1,999

Genno Linda King and Bill Lehman
Bill Lohse
Kigyo Kayphet Mavady
Myoki Monica McTighe and David Karp
Linda Myers
Mira Nakashima and Jonathon Yarnall
Derek Sasaki
Manuchehr Sassoonian and Lann Ikeno
James Streit
Peter and Karen Streit
Leslie Stevens
Urasenke Tea Ceremony Society
Marcel Urech

\$500-\$999

Bessemer Giving Fund
Jikan Lucy Brusini
Claudia Chakravaka
Egen Craig Fischer
Julia Gordon
Duncan Hall
Ann Higgins
Kyotai Amanda Hill
Kiichi Hosoda
Imperfect Family Foundation
Robert Johnson
Jika Lauren and Walter Melnikow
Chika Bettina Mueller
Tsutomu and Masako Nakatsugawa
Ohashi International, Ltd.
Hokai Joshua Olmstead
Swan Paik
John Peterman
Carlos Rivadeneira
Peter Robson
Zochi Zoltan Sisko
Mathew J. So
Kyoko Ginger Storey-Welch
Giun Stefan and Meave Streit
Daikan Katsuo Takeda
Onkyo Kevin Tkacz
Karuna Arlene Washburn
Joan Weinstein
India Wood

Executive Committee

Tamon Jeffrey Alan Hovden, President (2026)
Kanchi Lucia Oliva Hennelly, President (2025)
Jikan Lucy Brusini, Vice President
Kokan Jim Borowiec, Treasurer
Nyofu Boz Wahlster, Secretary
Chigan Roshi, Abbot

Development and Communications Committee

Kyotai Amanda Hill (Co-Chair)
Sabrina Plum (Co-chair)
Jikan Lucy Brusini
Genno Linda King
Daishi Kevin Pinzone
Myoki Monica McTighe
Myogen Conor Keenan

Facilities and Land Stewardship Committee

Chigan Roshi (Co-chair)
Keirin Brian Smith (Co-chair)
Kokan Jim Borowiec
Myoki Monica McTighe
Kimpu Jonathan Swan
Muken Mark Barber
Giun Stefan Streit

Finance Committee

Kokan Jim Borowiec (Chair)
Kanchi Lucia Oliva Hennelly
Hokuto Osho Daniel Diffin
Daniel Rhodes
Giun Stefan Streit
Koge Louise Bayer

Governance Committee

Jikan Lucy Brusini (Co-Chair)
Tamon Jeffrey Alan Hovden (Co-Chair)
Nyofu Boz Wahlster
Hokuto Osho Daniel Diffin
Kyotai Amanda Hill

Beecher House Committee

Keirin Brian Smith (Co-chair)
Daishi Kevin Pinzone (Co-chair)
Chigan Roshi
Juyo Dennis Giacomo

Ethics Committee

Chigen Karen Remmler
Michael Fayne
Choshu Joseph Buxbaum

Engaged Buddhism Committee (Affiliated Group)

Jifu Devyani Sadh, (Chair)
Michael Fayne
Yuki Eric Michels
Seiho Morris
Morgan Perkins
Jikyo Bonnie Shoultz
Sören Cathy Shrady

Volunteers

Karen Dodds
Eli Perez
Sabrina Plum
Daishin Pawel Wojtasik
Stella Austin
Myogen Conor Keenan
Keith Johnson