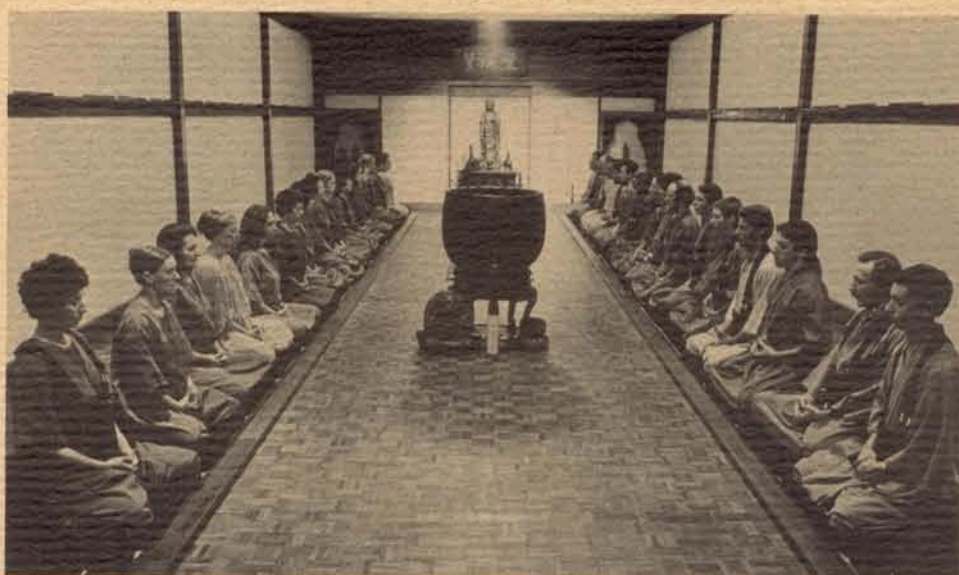


# THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY, INC.

New York Zendo Shobo Ji  
223 East 67 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10021

Cover photograph by Merete Galesi: Beecher Lake, International Dai Bosatsu Zendo



Photograph by Dennis Lund

*Zazen at the New York Zendo.*

discontinued. An eight-day Rohatsu sesshin commemorating the Buddha's Enlightenment is held in December at Shobo Ji, and in January at Dai Bosatsu.

All are welcome at the public meetings held on Tuesdays from 11:30 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. and on Thursdays from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M. The Thursday meetings include instruction for beginners, a talk, and Zazen. On Tuesdays, there are two Zazen periods and sutra chanting. A \$2.00 contribution is suggested at these meetings. Those wishing to attend should wear loose, comfortable clothing of an unobtrusive color, and observe the rule of silence while in the Zendo. Twice a year, those whose attendance at these meetings has been regular may apply to be provisional students. They will be accepted according to the availability of space. Provisional students may attend regular meetings and weekend sesshins, and receive weekly group instruction. They are expected to maintain their practice diligently. The most important criterion for becoming an active member of the Zendo is one's Zazen condition, but other considerations, such as a responsible attitude, good physical and mental health, and a humble and sincere enthusiasm for one's practice, are also important.

*Ah, the degenerate materialistic world!  
People are unhappy; they find self-control difficult.  
In the centuries since Shakyamuni,  
Demons are strong, the Dharma is weak, disturbances  
are many . . .*

*Right here it is eternally full and complete;  
If you search elsewhere, you cannot see it.  
You cannot grasp it, you cannot reject it;  
In the midst of not gaining, you gain it.  
It speaks in silence,  
In speech you hear its silence.*

*The great way has opened and there are no obstacles.  
— Song of Enlightenment*



*A special transmission outside the scriptures;  
No dependence on words and letters;  
Direct pointing to the mind of man;  
Seeing into one's nature and attaining Buddhahood.*  
— Bodhidharma

The special transmission of Zen is the very realization of the Buddha's enlightenment itself in one's own life, in one's own time. This experience has been passed on from master to master for over 2,500 years.

Central and indispensable to Zen is daily *Zazen* practice. It is this practice that is the "direct pointing to the mind of man." *Zazen* melts away the mind-forged distances that separate man from himself; leads one beyond himself as knower, to himself as known. In *Zazen*, there is no reality outside what exists here and now. Each moment, each act is inherently Buddha-nature. While sorrow and joy, anxiety and imperturbability cannot be avoided, by not clinging to them we find ourselves free of them, no longer pulled this way and that. With this self-mastery come composure and tranquility of mind, but these are by-products of *Zazen* rather than its goals.

*Zazen* is a Japanese term consisting of two characters: *za*, "to sit (cross-legged)," and *zen*, from the Sanskrit *dhyana*, meaning at once concentration, dynamic stillness, and contemplation. The means toward the realization of one's original nature as well as the realization itself, *Zazen* is both something one does—sitting cross-legged, with proper posture and correct breathing—and something one essentially is. To emphasize one aspect at the expense of the other is to misunderstand this subtle and profound practice.

In ordinary experience, being and doing are separated: what one does is cut off from what one is, and conversely. Such separation leads inevitably to the condition of self-alienation. Particularly in this century, this condition has become acute. *Zazen*, because it is nothing less than the doing of one's original being, is a way beyond self-alienation. Through *Zazen* practice comes the recognition that regardless of age, sex, race, education and position, it is possible in this life to actualize what one fundamentally is.

With time and sincere effort in *Zazen* practice, mind and body, inside and outside, self and other are experienced as one. This condition of non-duality, of intense yet effortless concentration, is known as *Samadhi*.

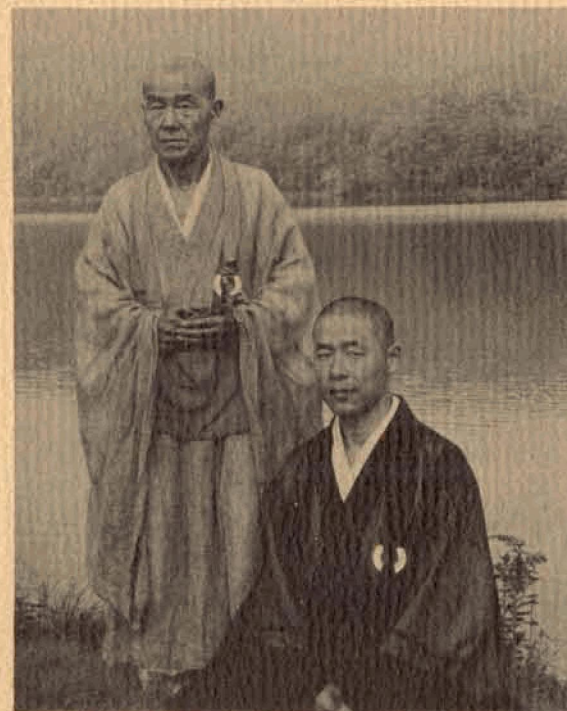
In the clarity of *Samadhi*, loneliness, dissatisfaction, and the sense of the meaninglessness of modern life vanish. No longer searching for answers externally, the student journeys within to reach the moving spirit of the Buddha—his own Self-Nature.

Through devotion and persistence, the aims of *Zazen* are eventually realized. The first is Enlightenment. With this experience, *Samadhi* is fulfilled; mind and body, the self and the universe are seen to have been from the beginning one reality. The second and more difficult aim is the actualization of the *Bodhisattva* (Enlightened Being) ideal. This spirit of love and compassion for all our fellow beings is developed through continual spiritual purification, the cultivation of a deep sense of responsibility, and most importantly, through self-discipline. As one's practice ripens, one becomes more alive, more creative—and filled with the longing to actualize the *Bodhisattva* spirit in every moment of daily life.

*Now I understand this Mani-jewel  
And my gain is the gain of everyone endlessly.  
The moon shines on the river,  
The wind blows through the pines—  
Whose providence is this long beautiful evening?*  
— Yoka Daishi, *Song of Enlightenment*



"MU" Calligraphy by Eido Shimano Roshi



Photograph by Dennis Lund

*Soen Nakagawa Roshi and Eido Shimano Roshi at Beecher Lake, International Dai Bosatsu Zendo.*

Since the founding of The Zen Studies Society, Inc., in 1956, the practice of *Zazen* in the Eastern United States has grown rapidly, first through the efforts of Dr. D. T. Suzuki, who made a large body of Zen literature available to Westerners, and then through the strong guidance of two Zen masters, Soen Nakagawa Roshi and Eido Shimano Roshi.

The Zen Studies Society, Inc. is an umbrella organization for two Zendos: the New York Zendo, called Shobo Ji, "The Temple of True Dharma," located at 223 East 67 Street; and the International Dai Bosatsu (Great Bodhisattva) Zendo, located on a beautiful 1400-acre tract of land high in the Catskill Mountains. On this site an authentic Zen monastery is now being constructed. July 4, 1976 is the projected date for the opening of the monastery, which will serve as a spiritual training center for students from all over the world. A brochure giving more information about Dai Bosatsu Zendo is available upon request at the New York Zendo.

In 1960, after many years of intensive practice at Ryutaku Ji temple in Japan, Eido Tai Shimano was asked by his teacher Soen Roshi to come to America. For the first four years, he led a Zen group in Hawaii. On January 1, 1965, he came to New York, and during the next few years, he met with a small group of New York students. During this time he continued his own practice under the guidance of both Soen Roshi and the late Hakuun Yasutani Roshi. On September 15, 1968, the New York Zendo Shobo Ji was formally opened. Eido Roshi received the transmission of the Dharma from Soen Roshi at a memorable ceremony on September 15, 1972, at which time he was given the Roshi name Muji Shitsu, "True Man without Rank," and was formally installed as Abbot of both the New York Zendo and the International Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Soen Roshi retired from his position as Abbot of Ryutaku Ji in 1973, in order to be able to participate more fully in the completion of International Dai Bosatsu Zendo.

Zen training at the New York and International Dai Bosatsu Zendos is basically in the Rinzai tradition, but is flexible, adopting characteristics of both Rinzai and Soto schools where appropriate, to meet the needs of American lay men and women.

At Shobo Ji, there are two training periods a year, each approximately five months long, with the Zendo closed during most of June and December. In addition to early morning and evening *Zazen* meetings several times a week and on the first Saturday of each month, there are 3-day *sesshins* (retreats) on the third weekend of each month, as well as week-long *sesshins* several times a year. The meetings consist of two or three *Zazen* periods of forty to fifty minutes, alternating with *kinhin* (walking *Zazen*). Sutras are chanted after—and on special occasions before—the *Zazen* periods.

On Monday evenings, Eido Roshi, or Soen Roshi when he is in New York, conducts *dokusan* (private Dharma confrontation or consultation). During *sesshins* *dokusan* is held twice a day.

Weekend *sesshins* are held both at Shobo Ji and at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. At the present time, seven-day *sesshins* are conducted at a Retreat House in Litchfield, Connecticut, and four times a year at Dai Bosatsu Zendo. Eventually, with the completion of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, *sesshins* at Litchfield will be