

On Mar 5, 2012, Zen Studies Society wrote:

THE ZEN STUDIES SOCIETY

New York Zendo Shobo-ji
Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji

Dear Zen Studies Society and Hoen-ji Sanghas,

We are well into the year of the Water Dragon. New Year's Eve at Dai Bosatsu Zendo was a heart-warming, joyous event. Many new students joined us for Martin Luther King Jr. Sesshin in January; everyone practiced with sincerity and appreciation.

New York Zendo Shobo-ji was completely full for the Parinirvana All-Day Sitting, and I know we all felt a real resurgence of spirit and enthusiasm--thank you, dear students, for your wonderful energy and ongoing commitment!

March-On Sesshin, dedicated to my Dharma Grandfather, Soen Nakagawa Roshi, is almost upon us, and it is indeed a blessing to be able to sit in the profundity and boundlessness that he manifested so clearly.

At Holy Days Sesshin, March 30-April 6, we will commemorate Shakyamuni Buddha's Birthday; we will also witness an authorization ceremony for Nikyu Robert Strickland as a Dharma Teacher. Nikyu was one of the founders, in 1972, of the Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji, and has been a mainstay of the practice there over the years. He was given lay ordination by Eido Roshi at Dai Bosatsu Zendo in 1985, and is a member of the Tisarana Council at Hoen-ji, which I formed to help support the Sangha when I took on my added responsibilities as abbot of the Zen Studies Society.

Hokuto Daniel Diffin, who was ordained at DBZ in 1980 and has a zazen group in Westerly, Rhode Island, where he is a Diagnostic Imaging physician, will be leading all-day sittings at New York Zendo Shobo-ji starting March 17. I plan to authorize him as a Dharma Teacher at the end of 2012.

Fujin Zenni, who has given unstintingly of herself to the practice at DBZ for two decades, also trained for many years at Shogen-ji, Gifu, Japan. She will be moving there at the end of March. We are deeply grateful to her for being such a significant part of the ZSS family. On March 12, she will lead a zazenkai and participate in a tea ceremony at Shobo-ji. A party in her honor will be held afterward.

Lou Nordstrom Roshi, who has trained in both ZSS and the Maezumi lineages and is a Dharma heir of Bernie Glassman, has agreed to come on a regular basis to Shobo-ji as Study Director, leading study sessions on the work of D.T. Suzuki and other pioneers of Zen in America. "Three Jewels Movie Night", a Buddhist film series, and tea ceremony events are among other on-going programs at Shobo-ji, in addition to the regular practice schedule. All of these are being coordinated by the NYZ Steering Committee.

I will perform an ordination ceremony at Hoen-ji for Jisho Judy Fancher at our spring sesshin, April 19-22. Jisho has been a resident at Hoen-ji for some time, is a member of the Tisarana Council and chair of the Ritual Committee, and has served as inji at Hoen-ji and at DBZ; despite struggles with some severe health issues over the years, her strong vow has made this step possible. She will continue her training at Hoen-ji as well as at DBZ.

Join us at DBZ for Nyogen Senzaki Sesshin, May 5-13, and Anniversary Sesshin, June 30-July 8. A Zen and Yoga weekend at DBZ with Evalena Leedy and Genno Linda King is set for May 18-20; no experience in yoga or Zen is required and all are welcome. Several Intro to Zen and Samu weekends are scheduled throughout the spring and summer -- check the website, daibosatsu.org.

Our first annual Family Weekend will be held at DBZ July 14-15. Sangha and family members of all ages are welcome. There will be a gathering for teens, some of whom may serve as babysitters and lifeguards. We're planning picnics, walks around the lake and other outdoor activities, yoga, youth-appropriate zazen periods, and morning and evening zazen. Please let us know what other activities you'd enjoy.

The special annual Samu sesshin to prepare for O-bon is scheduled for August 4-8, followed by the O-bon ceremony August 11.

Our Open Space series this summer will include a Shaolin martial arts weekend, more yoga weekends, Nyogetsu Ronnie Seldin's shakuhachi retreat, a 12-step recovery retreat, the annual healing and wellness weekend, and a Reiki weekend open to all who are at the Reiki Master level and higher.

At our Facilitated Sangha Weekend last September, it was suggested that the Board of Directors expand to include people with professional expertise. We followed up on this, with the Board casting unanimous votes for four new members. They are Dr. Hokuto Daniel Diffin; Genno Linda King, a graphic designer who has been creating the print and web publications of the Zen Studies Society for many years; Tamon Jeffrey Hovden, a New York City attorney and Sangha member; and Carlos Cervantes, who has long experience leading corporate and non-profit organizations, is a woodworker, and is about to begin training at DBZ this kessei. Board members who have served for many years will be stepping down. A financial audit is in progress, and we are planning a board best-practices retreat this summer with a professional in non-profit organizational structure.

We would also like to hold a Sangha-wide Envisioning Day in order to continue the work we did on the last day of our Facilitated Weekend, so that we can build upon past strengths, engage each other in deep listening, ensure a sustainable future, and continue devoting ourselves to actualizing the Buddha's Way.

Thank you all for your trust, your concern, and your wonderful Dharma energy.

gassho,



shinge

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