

 Dharma Rain Zen Center

# Strategic Plan

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# Plan Overview

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Dharma Rain Zen Center is a Soto Zen temple for lay practice that was founded in 1972 and given its current name in 1987. It is dedicated to helping people cultivate and realize Zen Buddhism in everyday American lives. DRZC is what it is today in a large part because our founding abbots, Kyogen and Gyokuko Carlson, had a vision: to establish a place of practice for lay people that would both be accessible and offer depth of practice to those who wanted it. Gyokuko was also determined to involve families and children as an important part of the sangha, because in many places children were seen primarily as an obstacle to serious Zen practice. Other aspects of DRZC are the result of careful choices: its central, urban location; open-handed offering of the Dharma without an inner circle of those who are “really” practicing and an outer circle of those who are not; offering the Dharma for free or at relatively low cost.

Our first strategic plan was developed in 1997-1998. It included five focal areas: membership, delegation, transition planning, succession, and facilities and management. Dharma Rain has met or exceeded the goals set in that first plan, especially in increasing membership, expanding our facilities, delegating operational responsibilities, improving communication within the sangha, and developing our children’s programs. The success of our first plan demonstrated that strategic planning works by focusing our intention and by providing a consistent touchstone for making organizational decisions.

In the past several years our sangha has intentionally and successfully transitioned from a pastor-centered community with 50-150 active members, to a program-centered community with 150-350 members. As this has occurred, our financial, physical, administrative, and spiritual resources have been stretched in multiple directions. The current plan is an effort to clarify and direct our collective intention regarding our future growth and development.

In our current organizational documents, the Board of Directors and the Dharma Council are charged with strategic planning. This plan is the product of a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of our abbots, development director, and representatives from the Board and Dharma Council. The Strategic Planning Committee developed the plan in light of sangha input, feedback, and comments that were gathered in an online survey and an extensive series of public meetings. Although the recommendations and goals in this document include a range of target completion dates, this plan is intended to function as an organizational road map for the next 15-20 years.

This document addresses the following focal points:

- Facilities
- Rigor in Practice
- Children and Families
- Succession and Leadership
- Related and Cohort Groups
- Staffing and Finances

Each focal point is explored in a dedicated chapter that provides:

- An overview of the issue
- A description of our current state regarding this point
- Sangha input and feedback

- Potential future states and their pros and cons
- Recommendations regarding our future direction.

The Board, Dharma Council, and Elders Council have evaluated these recommendations and determined which we will pursue. Strategic goals and a process for monitoring our progress and amending the plan are detailed in the Appendices.

The Strategic Planning Committee would like to express its deep gratitude to all who participated in the strategic planning process and so helped to create this document. It is our hope that this plan is a meaningful, living document as Dharma Rain continues to fulfill its mission as a sanctuary of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in such a way as to cultivate compassion, love, wisdom and understanding.

# Chapter 1: Mission and Vision

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This chapter describes the mission and vision of Dharma Rain Zen Center. The mission statement is copied from our current Articles of Incorporation; the proposed vision statement was developed by the Strategic Planning Committee as a supplemental frame of reference for our planning efforts. Strategic recommendations in subsequent chapters of this plan were drafted with the intention that they should support and align with our mission and vision.

## Mission (Why we exist)

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**Primary Purpose:** To provide for the Transmission of the teachings and practice of Soto Zen Buddhism. To be a sanctuary of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in such a way as to cultivate compassion, love, wisdom, and understanding within the members. To preserve the Transmission lineage. To promote lay practice first, but also provide for priest training. To provide the facilities and support the priests necessary for these ends, and to meet the religious needs of the members, their families and the community at large. To provide the traditional religious services, counseling and instruction of a Soto Zen Temple, and to provide additional facilities such as retreat centers, affiliate temples, etc. as deemed necessary by the membership to fulfill these purposes.

**Secondary Purposes:** To provide a framework for other activities as may be deemed useful by the sangha for their development in practice, e.g., the study of psychological matters and family issues, the promotion of social or charitable works, education, etc. These purposes should be an adjunct to the Primary Purpose, and support that purpose without outweighing or obstructing it.

## Proposed Vision (How we carry out our mission)

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- Acknowledge the importance of Way-seeking mind by making the Dharma available to all
- Respond skillfully to those who ask for the Dharma
- Make the rigor of monastic forms accessible to lay people
- Provide a visible example of the transformative power of practice through committed ordained and lay practice
- Operate in an ethical, environmentally sustainable, and fiscally responsible manner
- Model practice as integrated with all aspects of life
- Nurture depth in the sangha by:
  - Recognizing the central place and transformative power of zazen in our practice;
  - Encouraging courage and intimacy within the sangha, deep commitment to Zen practice, and the release of suffering;
  - Recognizing and fostering the transformative power of the student-teacher relationship.
- Make the Dharma widely available by:
  - Providing an array of doorways into the Dharma, offered in ways that are appropriate for a diverse spectrum of people;
  - Offering programs that are living expressions of love, compassion, and wisdom;
  - An explicit commitment to inclusion and openness;

- Minimizing obstacles by offering the Dharma at low or no cost, and without requirements or commitments where appropriate.
- Teach and demonstrate the interdependent nature of ordained and lay practice by:
  - Honoring the ordained and lay paths as equally valid and worthwhile, and as each having the potential to lead to the same awakening and liberation;
  - Honoring the ordained and lay paths as different, and as two essential components of the sangha mandala;
  - Ensuring that lay practice does not become marginalized, resulting in lay practitioners observing or primarily supporting practice financially rather than participating in it fully.
  - Ensuring the presence of ordained practitioners within the sangha, though they will always be a small minority, is valued not just because of their work in service of the sangha, but also because of their monastic experience and their rigorous training in the lineage tradition.

# Chapter 2: Facilities

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## I. Overview

We've outgrown our buildings, and our ability support the sangha is hampered by our physical limitations. Moving to larger, more flexible facilities addresses many of the needs the sangha has identified as pressing. It enables the sangha to continue to grow and mature, developing a variety of programs for different components of the membership.

## II. Current State

Our sangha has intentionally, and successfully, transitioned from a pastor-centered community with 50-150 active members, to being a program-centered community with 150-350 members. As this has happened, the financial, physical, administrative and spiritual resources have been stretched in multiple directions. Our facilities have not kept pace with this growth.

As a sangha, Dharma Rain Zen Center is ready for a significant change. We have been growing for 35 years. There have been many changes to forms, structures, personnel, and relationships over time, and we have collectively weathered them with perspective, patience, and humor. Sangha members feel known and seen, and have a sense of ownership over the endeavor. While many members drift to the periphery with time, we've maintained a dynamic group of 50-100 engaged, committed members for at least 15 years. These factors account for a substantial reservoir of energy, enthusiasm and wisdom. The sangha treasure is a resource that can be used to refine and clarify this facilities proposal and to achieve our facilities goals. This proposal can help galvanize this resource, tapping into the inspiration that is inherent, helping to find a clear pathway for our dedication to express itself.

### A. Benefits of Current State

- We have three beautiful buildings that are in a good state of repair. The Zendo in particular would be hard to replicate aesthetically.
- We are in a prime area: The highest concentration of members in the 97214 area code. We are close to most of what we need, and central for people to get to us.
- We have been here for 20 years, and that consistency is valuable. Most people make several attempts at getting involved before they stick, and being able to come back to the same place makes it easier.
- We are well served by public transportation.
- The neighborhood is happy we are here.

### B. Limitations of Current State

- The Zendo is routinely full on Sunday mornings, Dharmagarden facilities have been overcrowded for years, and growth/flexibility in the residential program is at its limit.
- We turn people away on a regular basis because of the lack of wheelchair access.
- We would like to host more events on weekends & evenings than we have space for.
- It is difficult to maintain a retreat container at this location, given the proximity of distractions.

- Our buildings don't offer a very recognizable or approachable presence in the neighborhood.
- Our living arrangements are makeshift and, when retreats are held elsewhere, are financially challenging for the temple, and we miss the opportunity to develop a sense of stewardship and reap the practical rewards of work practice.
- Finally, and perhaps most immediately, our ability to continue to function in our current neighborhood is threatened by losing a parking lot, so that we currently have no adjacent parking for our events.

We have been able to sustain our programs through creative use of space, limiting offerings, using rooms for a variety of functions, accepting overcrowding, and capping attendance at some events. The consequences of engaging in makeshift strategies such as these accumulate, and result in a restriction of the growth and maturation of the sangha. The essence of what we provide is spiritual discovery, community and transformation. Both the breadth and depth of what we can offer is limited by our current facilities.

### III. Potential Future States

Three different scenarios for addressing Dharma Rain's facilities needs are described below. This was narrowed from an initial list of five options; two options were discarded after the first round of sangha input based on concerns about transportation and cost. The following is an attempt to examine the shifts in property, buildings, usage, location and offerings that we could make in order to meet the challenges we are currently facing. The latter two of these options stand out as being practical and feasible.

#### A. First Option: Work to Optimize Current Facilities

- In this scenario, Dharma Rain maintains the Dharma House, Sangha House, and Zendo in their current locations.
- We continue our strategies to minimize the negative impacts of overcrowding, lack of handicapped access, and inadequate parking, retreat, and classroom spaces. We attempt to meet goals by adjusting our current situation. We rent space in nearby apartments or offices for Dharmagarden, make the Zendo handicapped accessible, and buy the Rivermark parking lot if possible.

*Pros:* If it's not broken, don't fix it. The rationale for this option is that we have a thriving community and we know our limitations. Every other option has risks that are less known. This option minimizes change and disruption. Costs are relatively small and distributed. We can start immediately, and don't need a lot of preparation. Another benefit is that we maintain a beautiful Zendo in an ideal location. To trade this, and the many memories the sangha has with our current place, would be a loss for many in the sangha. One consideration is that this could happen before other options manifested, as a preparatory step.

*Cons:* The primary issue is the parking situation. It may not be possible to tread water indefinitely, and we may lose the off-street parking that we have access to now. That would put our use of the Zendo in a very tenuous position, so the risks with this scenario are quite high. Secondly, because of its location on the lot, internal structure and usage pattern, the Zendo is

very difficult to make wheelchair accessible; it would be very expensive and significantly change the look of the building.

### **B. Second Option: Single Campus**

Purchase and convert a large facility in Portland that could hold all our programs at once. A nursing home, a large church, a commercial building with flexible space, or a vacant school are possibilities. All classes and events, retreats, Dharmagarden programs, adult programs, and residency would be accommodated in this property. We would either need to secure adequate financing to be able to buy a property and prepare it for use before selling the Zendo and Dharma House, or buy a property that is ready-to use in order to minimize disruption of services.

The following are some criteria that a suitable property would meet; however, these are meant to be fairly flexible, and allow for judgment on the part of the search committee (5 acres can feel like a lot or a little, depending on how it's laid out and what is around it.). The property should have these features:

- Transit accessible.
- Located between SE 174<sup>th</sup> Ave. and the Willamette River, between Route 224 and the Columbia River, the closer to SE 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Hawthorne Blvd. the better.
- Zoned appropriately.
- In the 18-40,000 <sup>ft</sup>2 range.
- Able to be made visually recognizable as a Zen temple.
- Adequate parking.
- Wheelchair accessible, or easily convertible.
- In a neighborhood that is receptive to our use.

The following are some examples of the types of facilities that might work well for this scenario. These are not necessarily for sale, and we are not necessarily considering these. This list is only to provide a sense of the possibilities, and the numbers associated with them.

- Elks Lodge
  - 13121 SE McLoughlin Blvd, (near Milwaukie Transit Center).
  - \$6.5 million actual, 61,000 ft2, 7.5 acres.
  - Lots of flexibility, but out of desired area, lots of conversion required
- Reedwood Extended Care
  - 3540 SE Francis, (just S of Powell)
  - \$4 million est., 20,000 ft2, 1.5 acres, built 1965, zoned C in R-5
  - Nice land buffer, very accessible, but lots of remodeling required no suitable large spaces.
- Waldorf School
  - 3550 SE Woodward, (between Division and Powell)
  - \$5 million est., 40,000 ft2, 2 acres, built 1930, zoned C in R-5
  - Lots of space, well kept, but dense location in residential neighborhood, significant parking issues
- St David of Wales
  - 2800 SE Harrison, (5 blocks S of DRZC)
  - \$4.3 million est., 13,000 ft2, 1.2 acres, built 1952, zoned C in R-5

- Very close, beautiful spaces, very little to convert, could use immediately, but couldn't do camp, residential and retreat facilities questionable, and expensive.

*Pros:* Stays relatively local. Keeps sangha most unified. Space for different activities to happen concurrently allows diverse contingents of membership to interact and learn from one another. Everything in one location is simple & efficient for administration and organization. Having a large campus will make retreat practice more feasible, allowing some movement while staying on grounds.

*Cons:* The transition is hard without lots of money, as we'd likely have to sell all our current buildings in order to move. Efficacy of sodo and/or retreat practice is inhibited by being in town, as the container is inherently more permeable. Having Mandala on the Mountain in-town isn't really feasible. It would likely be less centrally located than our current situation, or the central location for the Dual Campus model.

### **C. Third Option: Dual Campus**

Specialize function and location: Sell the Sangha House to develop a residential/monastic property in a cost-effective but commutable area; this eventually becomes a retreat facility. Then buy a facility in central Portland that can house the main adult public programs and Dharmagarden. The whole sangha would be together at the central location for Sunday and Wednesday programs.

Developing a residential/retreat property would take pressure off of the current campus, strengthen and enlarge the residential program, broaden our accessibility, and provide more scheduling and leadership/service opportunities in the short-term. In the long-term, this would improve our retreat access, our ability to provide staffing, our organizational flexibility, and our ability to serve members over their practice career, thus improving retention and sustaining commitment. Finding a larger central property that is specialized for providing larger events, Dharmagarden, institutional visibility, and an introduction to practice could resolve crowding, parking, access and scheduling issues.

Financially, this is realistic because our equity in the Sangha House is likely in the \$450,000-550,000 range. We owe \$353,000 total on our properties right now. Selling the Sangha House could allow us to put a substantial down payment on a residential property. We would then have flexibility to pay it off completely, pay down other mortgages, develop the property or speed up looking for an in-town location, depending on what aligns with our strategic goals and financial situation at the time.

For the residential property, we would seek the bones of a retreat property, with a large space or two that could serve as a Zendo/Hondo to get us started. We would need around 10,000 <sup>ft</sup><sup>2</sup> of buildings or buildable area, and space for natural areas as a buffer from our surroundings, in the 10-20 acre range. It wouldn't have to be a strictly residential property – craft/industrial, agricultural, store, and/or stable uses could all be adapted for our purposes. Properties would need to be less than 30 min drive from downtown Portland, cost less than \$600,000, and be suitably zoned. Some examples of a property that could become a monastery/residential & retreat facility include:

- Monastery/Residential & Retreat Facility
  - Horse boarding facility
    - 15898 Springwater Rd. (just south of Carver, where Route 224 hits the Clackamas River, 30 minutes from DRZC).

- \$575,000 actual, 3 residences on 27 acres,
- Numerous large outbuildings, lots of pasture, wooded areas, pool. Usable right away, and gradually convert and build to suit. Could hold Dharma Camp, retreats, residents.
- On market since February 2010, price reduced almost 300,000.
- Farmhouse – Zoned for forestry
  - 19966 S Moore Rd, Oregon City (off of Route 213, north of Beaver Creek)
  - \$569,000 actual, 2,400 ft<sup>2</sup>, 40 acres, built 1935.
  - Beautiful house, several outbuildings, lots of forest around
  - Limited new building possibilities, 35 minutes to DRZC

For the central property, we are probably looking for something with the following qualities: Between SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and the Willamette River, between NE Fremont St. and SE Tacoma St, the closer to SE 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Hawthorne Blvd. the better. These are high cost criteria, but they are also very important for the membership. It would need at least 12,000 ft<sup>2</sup> with classrooms, parking, large interior spaces, and appropriate zoning. Some possible targets would be a large church, a warehouse or industrial building with some space around it, a commercial/retail space, or small school. The basic bones of it need to be sound, and it needs to be made usable fairly quickly, as buying it would require sale of the Dharma House and possibly the Zendo as well. We'd likely be trading away some initial aesthetic appeal (compared to what we have), but we'd be able to serve more people. Some examples of a Zen Center/Temple/Central facility include:

- Alethia Bible Fellowship
  - 4511 SE Main St., (between Hawthorne & Belmont)
  - \$950,000 actual, 12,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, .15 acre, built 1910, zoned C in R-2.5
  - Stays in neighborhood,
  - Major repairs necessary before useable.
- Portland Cement Warehouse
  - 111 SE Madison Ave., (almost under Hawthorne Bridge)
  - \$1.5 million actual, 22,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, < 1 acre, built 1929, zoned IG1 (with extras)
  - Very central, interesting and workable building, lots of transportation options.
  - Only 9 parking spaces, loud area, no grounds.
- Harney St. Warehouse
  - 2330 SE Harney (W of McLoughlin, S of Tacoma)
  - \$1.8 million actual, 19,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, .5 acre, built 1965, zoned EG2 (with extras)
  - Has apartment, and office space, parking, near parks.
  - Lots of conversion required. Borderline industrial/residential.

*Pros:* This could happen relatively quickly. Selling the Sangha House could allow us to pay down mortgages and still buy a residential site. We would need to rent space for Dharmagarden until we could find a place to relocate the in-town program. This is a fairly flexible option – the in-town facility could be rented out when we are not using it for our programs. It is easier to find an in-town facility if it doesn't need residential/retreat capabilities.

*Cons:* Harder for members to regularly access the residential property for volunteer time, meals, morning zazen. Possibly more complicated temple management with two locations. More difficult to staff central location regularly. This would also involve two consecutive property searches which are

complicated and energy-intensive. There is also a concern that a more distinct residential facility could lead to an inside/outside dynamic, with residential practice feeling increasingly distant and inaccessible to the wider membership.

#### **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

Members were quite interested and engaged in discussing needs and options regarding facilities, and considered resolving facility challenges a high priority. There was broad acknowledgement that a move would be a major change and have far reaching impacts, and some consideration that it would be helpful to move before succession was complete so the Carlson's can have input.

In cohort group strategic planning meetings, there was discussion of the five options the SPC has considered. The most popular options were remodeling a large central facility and the dual campus model, which has a residential/retreat facility and a central facility for main events, classes, and Dharma school. Members voiced concerns about the convenience of attending a facility that was farther away, and with separating parts of the sangha, and appreciated the container that the dual campus model could provide. There has been considerable range of expectations as to what the dual campus model might look like and how it might function. Much of the anxiety around losing the breadth of the sangha comes from not understanding that the entire sangha would be together at the Zen center/temple location on Sundays and for major events, and at the residential/monastery location for retreats.

Some major concerns that came up often while discussing facilities are handicapped accessibility, planning for eldercare or hospice needs and possibilities for Dharmagarden. Some other ideas included doing more work to promote alternative transportation at our current site, having satellite households, and developing "branch offices."

At the Facilities Focal Point meeting, some themes that stood out were:

- There may be 6-10 acre properties closer in, only 15-20 min away.
- We need to go out of our comfort zone financially to be able to make a significant difference.
- Some members would be willing to pay to support a major shift, especially if they could be more involved, perhaps through equity in houses they own.
- Thoroughness of the search process: considering less-desirable neighborhoods, distressed properties, build-to-suit options, and coordinating with Heart of Wisdom.
- The potential perceived separateness of a "rural" property.
- The order of buying property. At the strategic planning facilities topic meeting, there was strong support for the dual campus model, with preference for acquiring a retreat center first, in part because of its income-generating character.

#### **V. Recommendations**

Pursue options B and C.

##### **A. Establish Search Group**

Form a property search group of 4-8 people to investigate possibilities, refine the search criteria, prepare for buying property and communicate with the sangha about this process. This group

reports to the Board and is made up of candidates with time to contribute, a significant history of high (and preferably broad) involvement with this sangha, relevant professional expertise to offer, and exposure to other temples/centers function and facilities. This group could draw from the Strategic Planning Committee, Operations Committee, Board of Directors, Elders Council, and other groups in the sangha. An invitation will be sent to those who may meet these criteria, to see who may be interested in participating. The search group would use the following set of core Guiding Principles to conduct the search process.

### **B. Guiding Principles**

- The sangha needs to know about important developments, be invited to tour facilities of particular interest, and be given the opportunity to contribute information, insights and opinions.
- The search group will endeavor to find a solution that will minimize any disruption of services, programs, and events.
- We are looking for a facilities situation that will last for the next 20 years. We could have as many as 350 members by that time, and want to eventually be able to accommodate the needs of a sangha that size in the facilities we develop.
- We are looking to provide the sangha with the stability that comes with owning property; leasing is not desired.
- The property we develop will have a human-sized, friendly feel that resonates with our values of simplicity, accessibility, and a relationship to practice that is direct, personal, and pragmatic.
- If the dual campus option is chosen,
  - We will keep the sangha practicing together for the primary public events, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening.
  - We will actively work for integration of the two locations on many levels.
  - Both locations will be interdependent, the Zen Center depending on the residential facility for retreats, and the residents using the Zen Center for classes and other events.
  - We will work to build awareness of differing methods and venues for practice, and to encourage a broad engagement with the dharma.
- Although the purchase of property is a significant expense and is likely to stretch the sangha's resources, any decisions will be fiscally responsible. The search group will treat the sangha's resources with respect, ensuring that a concerted effort is made to make well-informed, sound, and creative financial decisions in buying and/or selling property. There should be a reasonable level of confidence that the sangha can continue to make any necessary ongoing payments. Significant expenses that are necessary to make a property usable, or that are likely to be required in the next ten years, should also be considered.
- The search group is held to Dharma Rain's organizational ethical standards and is a model for harmony and integrity. The individuals that make up the search group treat the process as work practice and an opportunity to practice with and express wisdom, patience, willingness, and mutual respect.
- Any decisions are to be made within a broad context, considering the needs of Dharma Rain, the broader sangha, the local, national, and global community, and the natural environment. The search committee will try to ensure that our impact on the site (e.g., building or renovating structures), the surrounding area (noise, parking), patterns of use

(travel time, upkeep) are responsible and sustainable in both human and material terms.

- There is not a hard timeline for finding a solution to the facilities problem. Starting the search quickly is important, but we are not under excessive time pressure to complete it. It is more important to trust the discernment process and find an appropriate property that can meet the sangha's needs thoroughly. It is advantageous to move as soon as it is feasible, so the soft expectation is that a suitable property will be found by 2013.

### **C. Position for Move**

By March 2011:

- Adjust Operations Committee priorities to maximize resale value of Sangha House and Dharma House, and to prolong use of Zendo. Buying the credit union parking lot stays a high priority, as does improving handicapped access for the Zendo.
- Investigate selling the Sangha House to get an idea of how much it may be worth and what we might need to do to it first.
- Begin positioning financially to be able to pay out around \$120,000 towards closing costs, on short notice. A loan may or may not be necessary depending on the timing of selling the Sangha House.

### **D. Start Search**

By June 2011, and preferably before, begin actively searching for potential properties, looking for any of three possible fits:

- Monastery/Residential & Retreat Facility within 30 minutes drive of downtown.
- Centrally-located Zen Center with space for multiple events and dedicated Dharmagarden space.
- Large, flexible, moderately central facility that can have residents, retreats and Dharmagarden.

The decision whether to go with option two or three will depend on what is available on the market and how well the various property options fit our search criteria, guiding principles, and financial situation. The ease of acquiring and transitioning into a given property would also be a significant criterion.

There are pros and cons to buying either half of the dual campus first. If we went with the dual campus model, it may be easier to buy the monastery property first, because we could maintain our current programs and most of our facilities during the transition. On the other hand, buying the monastery property doesn't relieve the current crowding that we experience, particularly on Sundays. If we bought the Zen Center portion first, we risk the stability and momentum of the residential container, along with the majority of staffing resources, as we would either have to disperse residents into private housing, or shrink the number of residents until residential property is acquired.

### **E. Buy Property**

When a good fit is identified and researched, the Search Committee will bring their recommendation/s to the Board of Directors. The Sangha House may need to be sold before a purchase is made. The decision to buy & sell property comes from the Board. It is the Board's role to

determine financial feasibility of the Search Committee's recommendation/s, and when the sangha has embraced the plan. Once these criteria are satisfied, then a purchase can be made.

# Chapter 3: Rigor in Practice

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## I. Overview

This focal point develops opportunities to deepen practice, for those looking for “the next step” in developing their practice, for those needing structure, inspiration, or guidance because of spiritual or life transitions, and for those seeking intensive formal training. Maintaining rigor as a priority for the temple helps keep our practice authentic, vital, and true to our lineage and traditions. Keeping rigor as an explicit priority also fosters accountability that reinforces the foundation of spiritual community which is such a crucial refuge for so many members.

## II. Current State

The first sentence of Dharma Rain Zen Center’s Bylaws states that our Primary Purpose is “To provide for the transmission of the teachings and practice of Soto Zen Buddhism.” All of our programs, facilities, events and activities support this specific intention, either directly or indirectly.

Dharma Rain has excelled at making practice broadly available for lay, 21<sup>st</sup> century American lifestyles by providing an array of dharma gates. We have shown a strong commitment to cultivating a family-friendly environment, to inclusion and openness, to modeling practice integrated with all aspects of life, and to supporting a wide variety of programs (e.g., seminary, residency, classes, retreats, discussion groups, Dharmagarden, prison programs, outreach speakers, the Daoren Circle, associated & affiliated groups, and introductory workshops).

We also have a responsibility to provide opportunities to intensify or deepen practice. The opening of insight arises out of the focusing and stilling of the mind. Likewise, the temple’s educational, social, and organizational functions depend on this current of profound inquiry. Taking the steps necessary to maintain and nurture formal aspects of practice keeps Dharma Rain relevant to the sangha of practitioners, and to the broader community in which we find ourselves. We function as an inspiration, example, and reminder of the significance and potency of contemplative practice for the community of the ten quarters. Showing that this depth is accessible is the foundation that supports our commitment to openness and accessibility.

### A. Benefits of Current State

Dharma Rain is nationally recognized as a leader in developing lay and family practice. We offer a wide variety of events, and our events are very well attended. We hold the Zendo forms fairly lightly and are tolerant of mistakes in form; the openness and accessibility that the community finds here because of that is valued highly. It is quite easy for someone to get started practicing with us, as there are many different ways to get involved, and we don’t have many requirements for participation.

We have also managed to nurture a stream of deep practice within this container. This is exemplified by:

- The Daoren circle, in which a small group of lay practitioners shares the intimacy of vow, service, and mutual support, now in its fourth year.

- The Seven-Up Group, an opportunity for those with seven or more years of practice to share in and lead focused Dharma discussions.
- The Term Student Program, in which both newer and more experienced members develop sangha connections and learn to express the Dharma in a personal way.
- The Seminary Program, a curriculum designed to provide a broad background in Soto Zen teachings, and to prepare students to lead classes. Students must demonstrate their grasp of the material in writing and speaking in order to graduate.
- Monastic practice, a training program for ordination-track practitioners who live at the temple, participate in the schedule full-time, train under the direct guidance of a teacher, and serve the broader sangha in many ways.
- Transmitted Lay Teachers, senior practitioners whose depth of practice is formally recognized, who are entrusted with representing our lineage within the sangha, and who are highly visible exemplars.

### **B. Limitations of Current State**

The Strategic Planning Committee has identified limitations in the following areas for this focal point:

**Intensity:** Urgency about practice is generally perceived as low in the sangha. Although members may have a thriving internal practice, few utilize the more intensive, structured training venues that we offer. Only 1 in 6 members have done a sesshin within three years, only 1 in 3 come to sanzen, and the daily schedule is underused by the non-residential community. Our collective hair is only smoldering. Can we make it easier for members to add time and proximity to their practice lives?

**Residential Training:** Two kinds of issues show up in this venue. First, there is not enough flexibility for different kinds of residents, or space for an increase in number of residents. Secondly, the residential container hasn't reliably provided the accountability and challenge necessary to support members' practice during vulnerable times.

**Schedule:** The yearly and monthly calendar is complex and confusing to new members, and isn't always set far enough in advance for members to plan around. We have such a large variety of events that our institutional resources become strained. Events sometimes displace regular practice, thus sacrificing continuity. The daily residential schedule is geared to meet the needs of people who aren't actually participating in it.

**Container:** The trade-off of our looseness towards Zendo form is that we miss opportunities to display the sacredness of everyday life. Many members would like more awareness of, and skill with, the Zendo and kitchen forms in particular, but do not take advantage of the traditional ways of learning them – consistent, regular formal practice. We also would like to emphasize work practice as taking the mind of meditation into activity, rather than just accomplishing goals.

**Mature Lay practice opportunities:** Senior non-residential practitioners want more support and opportunity for developing their practice within their lives. Some years into Lay Discipleship, what else is there to do? How do we develop our practice in secular environments? We need to

develop service positions and temple responsibilities as an integral part of practice. This is also addressed in the Succession and Leadership focal point.

### III. Potential Future States

#### A. First Option: Stay the present course.

No specific changes are made as a result of the strategic planning process. It is left up to the membership and Dharma Council to identify and address the issues raised here over time. Small changes to residency, Daoren program, and the monthly calendar would likely continue to happen, but there wouldn't be an overall scheme guiding these changes.

*Pros:* This is the most familiar option and would cause the least change. It would allow other strategic shifts (such as succession or facilities) to happen in a more isolated context.

*Cons:* Dharma Rain risks losing members who are most active and committed to practice.

#### B. Second Option: Form a monastic, cloistered training environment.

This option creates a significantly more structured residential container that supports the rest of the temple.

*Pros:* Makes it very easy to introduce changes that would increase rigor. It could provide a lot of rigor to those who can most easily access it, and could give the sangha as a whole a potent and easily recognizable practice environment.

*Cons:* May involve a significant shift in flavor. One risk is developing a sense of inner and outer groups. This option may sacrifice the accessibility that members value highly.

#### C. Third Option: Blend to suit.

Create a multi-layered container with different practice styles in different contexts. Address current limitations by adding practice venues with more form, clarifying the differences between different containers, and adjusting the calendar.

*Pros:* Takes advantage of Dharma Rain's strength of diversity.

*Cons:* May be more complex and difficult to administer. This option could be confusing for new or occasional participants. Like other areas for development, it also would be limited by facilities and staff/volunteer resources.

### IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point

The Resident cohort in particular spent a lot of time on this focal point. Topics included wishing for more visibility & accountability, discussing whether a residential facility would be a monastery, and clarifying full-time/guest/part-time/staff nomenclature. There was a high value placed on the ability to maintain full or part time work while in full-time residency.

There was broad interest in sesshin; many people value it highly, but timing is the primary limiting factor. Suggestions include having more sesshin throughout year, especially local, weekend retreats, acknowledging attendance at sesshin, and having some relaxed as well as some formal opportunities. Zazenkai were also popular; it was suggested that they happen more often and perhaps not always on a Saturday.

It was noted several times that seniors have a healthy ability to develop responsibility and leadership here. Daoren or an oblate program was discussed in this respect. However, many seniors are seeking venues for deep practice *other than* formal teaching and visible leadership. Other issues members brought up included developing apprenticeship-style learning opportunities, satellite groups, fear of sanzen, approval of family retreat, and instruction on forms.

## V. Recommendations

The third option offers the most benefit to Dharma Rain's membership. We recommend the following:

### A. Sesshin:

By 2015, increase the number of weeklong sesshin each year to 6. Developing the ability to hold sesshin on our property is a high priority, as is offering a sesshin during the summer or during the week between Christmas and New Years. Have some retreats that allow flexible attendance or participation, as well as some that are closed once they begin, or are open only to more advanced practitioners. Hold a zazenkai or similar event 11 months of the year. The goal is to triple the number of person-days devoted to silent, formal practice from approximately 400 (2009) to 1200 (2015).

More frequent sesshin could be accommodated by skillful use of current facilities (such as using the Sangha House for sleeping accommodations), and by integrating sesshin participants with Wednesday evening and Sunday morning public programs. This could have the added benefit of making sesshin more visible to the sangha at large.

### B. Residency:

Much of the specifics of how residency is developed may depend on the Facilities and the Succession and Leadership Focal Points. The intent is to transition to offering a more intensive, formal schedule for those who want to take advantage of it. This could include increased zazen, contemplative or silent mornings, and more formal or structured meals.

For the period that someone is in residency, Zen practice should be the most important priority for them. However, it does not necessitate that all who are living there follow the schedule full-time; it would still be possible to maintain some level of outside employment.

Differentiate between guests, residents, and staff: Guests could be anyone who agreed to respect the rules, would not be obligated to follow the full schedule, and would pay a higher price. This category may include private retreatants, visitors, and those in hospice or eldercare situations (on a case-by-case basis). Residents would have more responsibilities, would be expected to participate in the schedule as much as possible, and would pay a market rate for room and board. Staff are those who are on the schedule full-time and do not pay room or board. Staff might include those who have either been residents for a year and have taken discipleship, or have been a resident for 2 years and have taken the precepts. This would allow intensive residential practice without the

necessity of a monastic commitment. Part-time visitors would be either guests (off-schedule) or residents (on the schedule).

Entry requirements are shifted: Application goes through residential review committee, which includes a member of Board, Dharma Council, the Doan, and residency Team Leader. Applicants must be a member, but the 1 year requirement of involvement and two year limitation on length of stay are waived. There will be a mandatory residency review for each resident every 4 months for the first year, yearly after that.

### **C. Schedule and Calendar:**

Starting in Fall 2011, simplify yearly calendar to more closely accord with the training cycle, to fit better with school year, and to keep fall term as a unit:

- Have two ~90 day Ango periods each year, corresponding to fall and spring terms. Fall Ango starts Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, and includes all of October and November, through the end of Rohatsu. Spring Ango becomes March, April and May.
- These periods are marked by term student programs, intensified daily practice schedule, and opening/closing ceremonies.
- Summer term is June, July and August, with a lighter schedule and an emphasis on community, informal or outdoor events.
- Winter term runs from the end of Rohatsu through the end of February.
- Keep both the residential and the Sunday and Wednesday schedules consistent, despite special events. For instance, even if a special retreat were being held, Sunday service would be offered.
- To ease understanding of the Center's schedule, publish separate calendars for public events (e.g., classes and sitting) and for the daily residential routine.
- More intense residential schedule, see above.

### **D. Formal Container:**

The best way to spread knowledge of formal practice is to make the mature practice held by long-term members more visible. An increase in number of sesshin, visibility of residential practice, and emphasis on formal practice during Ango, should all contribute to a greater fluency with and respect for the forms within the sangha at large. However, the most effective way for members to develop a sense of the sacredness of everyday life is to see the mature practice of other members in the context of everyday activities. The Daoren Circle is exploring this point.

Apprenticeship opportunities are especially valuable in this regard. In the course of learning a temple job from a senior, an apprentice not only contributes to the temple's function, but also cultivates the mind and heart of practice in the context of an otherwise "mundane" task.

The Mandala Model already provides the practical structure for developing members' skills in keeping the temple running. Its capacity as a vehicle for spiritual training is currently underutilized. We recommend that the Mandala Council, perhaps in consultation with the Godo and/or Dharma Council, review the orientation, mentorship, and oversight of team leads and trainees to emphasize trainees to emphasize the Dharma of each temple job. This could be accomplished by:

- Formalizing the mentoring process for all jobs, with the current process for training in ceremonial roles as a model.
- Intensify Mandala Council's involvement, emphasizing leadership in non-teaching roles.
- Adding a small amount of ceremony to the beginning and end of a work period. This could be as simple as the Hymn to Daikoku or Great Vow's work period chant and the beginning of a work period and a Dedication of Merit at the end.

**E. Mature Lay Practice:**

Having advanced classes, groups, or retreats for senior members is one strategy for addressing this, as evidenced by the Daoren and 7-Up groups. Modifications to the other areas of concern identified above will also affect this category. For example, more frequent sesshins would provide opportunities for Seniors to train in roles such as Tenzo, enabling lay-led retreats. This point is also addressed in the Leadership section of the Succession and Leadership chapter of this plan. Explore restructuring the role of Shuso, both to provide increased opportunities for deeper challenging practice and to meet the changing and expanding needs of the community. Possible options to consider include:

- Two Shusos, one for each campus (assuming the dual-campus facilities option).
- Lay and ordained Shusos working together.
- Two shorter, more intensive Shuso terms per calendar year.

# Chapter 4: Children and Families

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## I. Overview

Dharma Rain Zen Center has been actively supporting the family life of lay practitioners for over twenty years. The most obvious element of that support is the children's program, one of a few and arguably the best in the country. Besides the Sunday programs and annual children's camp, we offer child care so that parents may attend meditation and Dharma talk, Dharma talks that focus on everyday affairs, classes that focus on the needs of parents, and ceremonial and social events that invite families to participate with their children.

## II. Current State

We have an active program for children up to the age of 18/high school graduation that meets approximately every two weeks during the school year. This currently serves approximately 75-100 children from about 60 families.

We have a week-long summer camp for children ages 8-18. Enrollment for summer camp is up to about 45 children.

Services for these programs are mostly volunteers from our membership, with some support from the parents. Crowding of our current facilities and staffing limitations have required us to limit enrollment. Although we have not yet had to turn people away because of enrollment caps, we will have to seek rental space in the neighborhood to avoid that eventuality. All classrooms are near capacity and past the comfort level.

### A. Benefits of Current State

The programs for children have grown organically over the years. They serve the children, help to support families who value Buddhism and/or meditation, bring an element of vitality to the whole of the sangha, and provide Bodhisattva service venues for many volunteers.

### B. Limitations of Current State

- Needs of parents . As the programs have grown, we have attracted more families that do not have prior experience of Dharma Rain, and in some cases, no previous relationship with Zen practices and teaching. The result is that we have more need than ever to provide support for the parents to help them find an appropriate understanding of the culture, teachings, and practices of Dharma Rain. Without a substantial grounding in the teachings and practices Buddhism has to offer, it can be difficult to communicate clearly with the parents, and to maintain harmonious relations.
- Limitations of our staff. We are hearing some enthusiasm for more family outings, family retreats, and communication with the center. This represents an increase in the workload associated with the children's and families programs that cannot be met with our current staff. As things stand, our current staffing can barely meet current needs. We often make

mistakes, drop important tasks, or neglect things until the last minute because there is too much work.

- Facilities limitations. The major limitation is our facilities. The first Sangha House was purchased to help relieve the stress on facilities we were experiencing in 1999. We have exceeded that level of crowding. Dharma Camp has outgrown the accommodations of Great Vow Zen Monastery, so we are forced to rent from another organization and accept the time slots they are willing to allow. Even within our own facilities we cannot schedule more events for the families without considering the other ongoing practice events that take up the space and require our full attention.
- Safety. Dharma school has three safety issues related to having three locations. One is crossing the city streets from one building to another. Next it is hard to supervise children when there are so many of them relative to staff. Next is the inherent problem of crowding into small spaces. Three of our classes have hit the limit of how many children can fit in their assigned rooms. The safety issue of Dharma Camp, beside the threat of accidental physical injury, is the fact that we do not control the comings and goings of strangers on the property.
- Young Adults. An underserved population are the 19-29 year olds. This includes adults who have graduated from Dharma School. We have not yet turned our attention to what those needs are, much less designed anything to serve those needs.

### III. Potential Future States

#### A. Adapt where we are

*Pros:* With our current facilities almost paid for (\$1,600,000 in assessed value with \$353,000 still owed on two mortgages), we incur no extra major expenses if we put caps on the numbers of people who can come to any given event and do not increase services. This is perhaps the easiest and most fiscally conservative path. Adapting would include the expense of renting space in a nearby building for one or more classes.

*Cons:* This is a difficult choice when it comes to individual people and events. Crowding causes stress for our teachers and staff, is stressful (read: over-stimulating) for the students, and is particularly difficult for special needs children. Limiting enrollment may result in excluded children feeling hurt and in bewildered and frustrated parents.

Through no actions of our own we are losing parking facilities and may lose even more parking options over the next 3-10 years.

Allowing crowding to continue inside our buildings and on the streets will increase the probability that people will feel neglected or unwelcome and discontinue participation. Some of these will not continue searching for a Dharma home, which would be a loss for us all.

#### B. Shed our skin and grow

*Pros:* Having grown our programs and cultivated the wisdom of the community over the years, we have a lot to offer the Portland community. By investing in a large church building with many rooms for classes, meetings, and practice events to happen simultaneously, we could meet more of the variety of demands for services that we hear from parents and families, as well as from young singles and senior citizens. For instance, it could become possible that Dharma School could include, simultaneously: classes for adults that cover basics of practice, an adult version of what the children are learning, and a class on advanced parenting skills. This would also allow lay and ordained teachers to express the Dharma, use their leadership skills, and would enhance the richness of our Dharma community.

Continuing to offer all our services in a central location, especially if it is more unified, allows for improved integration of our community. It could increase the ways in which the various demographics within our community can interact and cross over. In particular it could increase the likelihood that parents will begin to (or resume) their deeper relationship to practice and the fruits of practice. The integration of adults into the practice life of the community is very much to be desired.

*Cons:* Change is risky. When we stopped using Great Vow for Dharmagarden's summer camp, the children were very upset. It took two years of holding camp at Camp Adams before the place stopped being an issue.

Because it would be necessary to sell our current buildings in order to invest in the new building, there would be a period of no services to the community during the transition.

Once the transition was complete, the demand for services in a larger facility might require more staff, including hiring additional professional staff. All of this would require more money and fund-raising, and increase the risk that members will feel over-burdened or taken advantage of.

### **C. Cell division**

*Pros:* Dividing programs into different locations with different teachers and different focuses would allow us to allocate resources in more targeted ways. We could have a family center with class rooms and large meeting space with limited zazen and no living quarters. For this division, accessibility by car, public transportation, and wheelchair would all be important. Another facility would focus on rigorous meditation and Zen discipline and have extensive living and Zendo space, with some classroom space and less need for parking or accessibility. Other cells might simply be neighborhood centers with limited zazen space, small meeting rooms and simple accommodations for the resident teacher/caretaker. By concentrating on specific needs in each location, initial costs and upkeep can be kept down. Because facilities do not have to serve many different functions, they do not have to be reconfigured often; this saves effort. Because there would need to be so many leaders (at least one for each cell), many lay and ordained teachers and many senior members get opportunities to express the Dharma and exercise their gifts. The sangha can choose which center or centers serve their needs the best and hear many different voices expressing the Dharma. Some of the cells could provide more intimacy and others a larger sense of community.

*Cons:* Over the long run, these different centers will probably diverge. The differences will become more pronounced as the teachers in each center become more confident and as the members

attending them develop into a deeper relationship with that particular sangha. It would take a lot of effort to continue to have a broad sense of family connection across the cells.

Comparison and competition could become more prominent. It would become more difficult to encourage people who are attending the family oriented center to see the possibility and or value of rigorous practice. It would become difficult for someone to leave the rigorous practice center to attend the family oriented one without feeling like a failure. These losses would represent a loss in the flexibility and seamless mutability of practice that we currently enjoy.

#### **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

- A desire for increased information from staff to parents, and structured points of contact (e.g., regular emails from staff to parents)
- Requests for increase in programs and scheduled events for families and children
- There was broad consensus that having less segregation between youth and adult sanghas would be nice, at least at times.
- There is a high level of interest from every cohort in seeing Dharmagarden continue and perhaps expand. There were ideas for several possible directions, including moving towards supporting home schooling, forming a school, or a parenting co-op, or a mentorship program.
- A dedicated administrator for Dharmagarden would be appreciated, primarily to improve communication and planning for our existing offerings, but there was also nervousness about costs going up. A variety of ideas to compensate for our space limitations were given, involving adjusting dates, times, splitting the group, and renting more space.

#### **V. Recommendations**

- This year (2011): To take care of the children who are already involved in our programs, we need to rent more classroom space and recruit more teachers.
- To answer the needs of parents and families we should assemble and distribute a directory of parent's families and teachers to facilitate communication and social opportunities.
- To further the support of the spiritual development of the parents, we should schedule annual family retreats starting in 2011, contingent on staff and volunteer support.
- To facilitate the integration of families with children into the larger sangha, there should be at least one dharma talk per year that is focused on everyday issues and relatively free from unexplained jargon.
- Schedule a game night (or afternoon) or similar all-invited event per year. These points will all require the cooperation of the Dharmagarden steering committee and the Dharma Council.
- Elicit suggestions for better meeting the needs of young adults, and experiment with different programs to address this group. To this end at least two people should be tasked with this and start experimenting by the summer of 2011. One person should be sitting on the Dharma Council and another should have been involved in Dharmagarden. By 2013 we should have at least one program annually (retreat, class series or other) that is particularly geared for young adults. If we design something that is successful, we may increase the frequency as seems prudent. Dates for this goal are subject to revision based on success and interest (or not) of the young adult cohort.
- Until larger more flexible space can be acquired, we will need to make do with what we have. This necessitates renting one or more office spaces for dharma school Sundays. However, within

the coming year (2011), a search committee should form (see Facilities chapter of this document) and begin to look for properties that will allow either the cell division or skin shedding option to move forward. The best outcome for children and families is if the emphasis is placed on the desirability of a single unified but complete campus. If this is not attainable, some version of the cell division option could be a good one, especially if it is seen as an intermediate step. At least one of the people on the facilities search committee should be familiar with the Dharmagarden programs and the needs of families.

- Increase emphasis on the practice of parents, possibly requiring them to attend a class if they're not already active members. Require membership for families. Increase parent volunteer time to support programs and events for families and children.

# Chapter 5: Succession and Leadership

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## Succession

### I. Overview

Our founding Abbots are approaching retirement age. While they plan to continue indefinitely in their role as teachers, over the next ten years (by 2020) they would like to transition their administrative temple duties to the next generation of leaders. There is a real advantage in consciously planning for this transition so that we maintain our Temple culture in a way that fosters its development, rather than disrupting it due to a rocky transition. This chapter attempts to structure a transition that is harmonious, minimizes conflict and anxiety about the transition, and shows clarity. Succession should be a straightforward, simple, and transparent process that preserves our sense of continuity – both in the lineage and in the flavor of practice at Dharma Rain.

### II. Current State

We have a process in place a process for handling succession under several sets of circumstances. It is a multi-tiered system that incorporates input from the Abbots, Elders Council, Board of Directors, and the general membership to ratify a decision. The current process for succession is described in the Bylaws (last revised in 2003):

#### *Section 7.1: Appointment*

The Abbot[s] may appoint a successor, subject to review by the voting membership. A notarized and dated Successors List, or notice of no appointment, will be held by the corporate Secretary. This list, when possible, should have at least three names ranked in order of preference. Whenever the list is amended or updated, the date of the new list will be noted in the corporate minutes. In case of the death or incapacity of the Abbot[s] to serve, the Board will contact those named on the list. The highest ranking person named on the list to accept the position will become interim Abbot, able to act as Abbot until confirmation. The Board must contact the voting membership and arrange for a vote of approval to be held within six months of the acceptance of the interim Abbot. Voting members may vote “yea” or “nay” on the appointment, with a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast against confirmation required to overturn the appointment.

#### *Section 7.2: Council of Elders*

The Abbot[s] shall appoint a Council of Elders from the membership. The Council shall be chosen from currently active lay or monk disciples. The Council membership shall be recorded in Board meeting minutes, and shall be updated annually. The purpose of the Council is to assist and advise the Board in identifying and recruiting candidates for the Abbacy, and on other matters as determined by the Board.

#### *Section 7.3: No Appointment*

In the absence of a Successors List, or if no one on the Successors List accepts the position of Abbot, the Board of Directors and officers are fully empowered to conduct the business of the Temple until a replacement is found. The Board shall convene the Council of Elders to assist with finding a replacement. An Abbot must be a fully transmitted priest of the Soto Zen tradition. When

the Board makes a selection, it is put before the voting members for ratification. A sixty percent (60%) majority of the votes cast in approval is required to ratify the selection.

#### **A. Benefits of Current State**

A clear course of action that provides for certain circumstances, and gives the current Abbots primary responsibility for deciding the next abbot (s).

#### **B. Limitations of Current State**

The current succession procedure was designed to accommodate a sudden, unexpected vacancy. It is a top-down process, rather than a gradual transition involving the membership. Some elements of the process (the Elders Council) are in place, but others (the Successors List) are not. Also missing is the explicit preference to succeed from within the sangha. The transition process is not clear to most members. Finally, the only clear requirement to become abbot is to be a fully transmitted Soto Zen priest; more specificity at this level would make the decision more obvious.

### **III. Potential Future States**

#### **A. First Option: Stay the present course.**

No specific changes are made as a result of the strategic planning process. It is left up to the Board and Dharma Council to identify and address the issues raised here over time.

*Pros:* Simple, and doesn't require any extra time or administration.

*Cons:* Relies on the Carlson's to manage the process. Less transparent.

#### **B. Second Option: Form a Succession Committee to assist the process of transitioning the abbacy.**

This option establishes a Succession Committee to plan for, monitor, and regulate succession.

*Pros:* Takes some of the administrative burden off the Abbots, and pins the process to a timeline, helping to ensure a smooth and systematic transition.

*Cons:* Complexity of creating another committee, staffed primarily by people who are already highly committed.

### **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

- Traditionally there are "lineage" and "public" temples. The former were passed down in a family and evolved their own flavor; the latter were focused on training priests, and the abbot was more of an administrative/managerial role in charge of that training. We're more of a family/lineage style of temple, and want to keep the abbacy in the family if possible.
- The succession process in the Bylaws reflects DRZC 15 years ago, when our unique lineage traditions were much more closely held, mostly by the Carlson's. That's no longer the case; our unique flavor is now held by Lay Teachers, Lay Disciples, and Junior Priests as well.
- The Elders' Council's original mandate was to advise the Board on succession in an emergency. The process required will likely depend on the circumstances when the need arises.
- Succession and facilities seem like a lot to tackle at the same time. They need to happen together so that the Carlson's have input, and the new abbots are invested in the process.

## V. Recommendations

- By June 2011, establish a Succession Committee. The committee will be composed of Kyogen, Gyokuko, and 1-2 representatives each from the Elders Council, Dharma Council, and Board. Each council will choose internally which representatives they will send. This Committee will meet no less than annually.
- Kyogen and Gyokuko to notarize, date, and file a Successors List by August 2011. It is understood that this list is only used if they are unable to communicate their preferences.
- By October 2011, the Succession Committee will identify 3-5 Zen Centers nationally that have gone through the process of succession through retirement rather than death. Gather information and perspective from these centers, asking what worked and what didn't, and what recommendations they would have for a skillful succession process. Compile results and report to the Board, Dharma Council, and Elders Council.
- By 2014, the Committee will have developed an Abbacy transition plan and submit it to the Board, Dharma Council and Elders Council for review and to the Board for approval. The plan will likely incorporate steps that delineate a gradual transfer of responsibility and authority. For example, the plan may have candidates step in for periods on an interim basis, allowing for more training and guidance. The plan should include points to clarify the process, to describe maintenance of the Succession Committee, to develop and establish support in the membership, and to monitor and evaluate the transition. The plan will include the explicit steps to transition to a new abbot/s.
- By 2015 the Succession Committee will propose abbot nominee/s for Board approval and ratification by the sangha. There are many circumstances that may affect how the Abbots and Succession Committee make decisions. However, there are some qualities the nominee/s should have, based on discussions with the Cohort and Focus groups, and within the Strategic Planning Committee. The goal is to have a nominee/s who:
  - has fairly united support from the sangha;
  - demonstrates the maturity of practice to inspire;
  - has the organizational acumen and interpersonal sensitivity to lead;
  - displays the practice-realization to teach the sangha;
  - be able to commit to full-time service, due both to the amount of work required and to the importance of an abbot's full-time presence and accessibility to the sangha, and to commit to long-term (working life) service, as this allows stability and trust to grow over many years and allows an abbot to develop skill in his/her role.
  - Ideally, the nominee/s would be drawn from within the sangha, as this has the greatest likelihood of preserving the continuity of our lineage traditions and temple culture.
- Kyogen and Gyokuko to transition out of Kanin and Godo roles by 2015
- Abbacy transition to be complete by 2020

## Leadership

### I. Overview

We have a wealth of mature practitioners within the sangha, some of whom are interested in leadership, service, and/or teaching opportunities. In addition, our growth requires that we utilize the

talents of these senior members. We need to clarify opportunities and paths available for senior members who wish to serve in leadership roles.

## II. Current State

Dharma Rain has established a distinctive practice container. We are an urban center with a wide variety of different programs, and have historically prioritized accessibility and nurturing Dharmagarden. We have a relatively young membership, maintain a proper but casual atmosphere (e.g., we encourage questions in both classes and dharma talks), and hold forms somewhat loosely, although we emphasize liturgy and precept practice strongly. We have both a strong residential and monastic component, as well as lay teachers who have significant roles, both dharmically and institutionally.

Authority is distributed beyond the abbots, and is seen to reside in the role, not the person. There is a culture of openness, with teachers frequently asking for input from seniors on issues (e.g., asking about candidates for discipleship at Disciple dinners). Our practice with authority is developed and nuanced, recognizing many kinds of seniority. Some examples are: Years of practice; level of ordination -lay, discipleship, and monastic; degree of personal maturity and dharmic realization; institutional role & informational access; level of entrustment – Shuso & transmission; and intensity of practice as shown by participation in Term Student program, temple jobs and sesshin. Emphasis is placed on bowing, willingness, and maintaining an awareness of our own inherent sovereignty.

Benefits and limitations of the current state are as follows:

### A. Benefits of Current State

1. Service Opportunities: There are a wide variety of prospects, at many different levels of seniority, for members to contribute meaningfully, express dharma and practice with authority. These include outreach activities, temple jobs, service positions, affiliated and associated groups, classes, workshops, Dharmagarden, offering dharma teaching, and guiding disciples.
2. Mandala Model: We have a functioning system for distributing leadership throughout the sangha that describes roles and relationships between positions in the sangha, particularly between temple officers, Board of Directors, Dharma Council, and abbots. We also have a friendly, distributed interpretation of how to train within a traditional Zen hierarchy. This quality makes us more accessible to newcomers, and invites a higher level of involvement and participation.
3. Participation in Community: Nationally, Dharma Rain has held a position of some influence, due to the Carlson's involvement and leadership with American Zen Teachers Association and the Soto Zen Buddhist Association.
4. Lay Practice: We have a unique way of expressing the Dharma, one that has been highly successful in working with lay people.

### B. Limitations of Current State

1. Service Opportunities: Mentoring, oversight, and specific training for members in instruction and teaching roles are limited, with a tendency to have trainees “learn as they go.” This may be good karmic practice for the trainee (and perhaps the audience), but is not a sound method to represent the temple. There is also some concern that

there will not be enough teaching opportunities for the number of Lay Teachers and Priests that are currently active.

2. **Mandala Model:** This system is still relatively new, and is not well-understood. Long-term members in particular have found it difficult or burdensome to work with, or have been unaware of how changes affect them or what processes they should follow. Many people have an array of roles, and how these responsibilities interact is not spelled out. There is also some confusion around who is empowered to do what, and how appointments are made.
3. **Participation in Community:** Many opportunities are being missed for collaboration, particularly in areas of interfaith work and service to the broader, local community.
4. **Lay Practice:** Understanding the relationship between lay and ordained paths, responsibilities and authority has been a moving target over time, and tends to qualify as a hot-button issue in discussions at classes or LD dinners.

### III. Potential Future States

The goal of this section is:

1. To clarify options for senior sangha members to refine, challenge, and nurture their practice.
2. To have a diverse spectrum of voices and teaching styles represented.
3. To have continuity and reliability in the teaching and practice that is presented.
4. For there to be clarity about where someone is in the mandala, and what authority they have.
5. For seniors to be fluent in moving in and out of authority.

There are three options presented: the first is a do-nothing approach; the second focuses on shoring up our current state; the third focuses on expanding opportunities. The second and third possibilities are not mutually exclusive.

#### A. First Option: Stay the present course.

It may be that nothing needs to be done. The Mandala Model will continue to sort itself out. It is left up to the Board and Dharma Council to identify and address the issues raised here over time.

*Pros:* Simple, and doesn't require any extra time or administration.

*Cons:* We risk losing members who don't have a meaningful way to contribute, or alienating members who are not getting their dharmic needs met by under qualified instructors.

#### B. Second Option: Enhance clarity and credibility.

1. **Service Opportunities**
  - a. Create or expand procedures for mentoring instructors in workshops, classes, and outreach situations. Establish clear lines of oversight and responsibility for content and dharmic credibility of offerings.
2. **Mandala Model**
  - a. Encourage the Mandala Committee to be more proactive and visible in overseeing temple administration. Regular meetings should include 1) monitoring and filling temple jobs and service positions, and 2) analysis of how the system is working, and remedial action as necessary.

- b. Modify the Shuso's relationship to the Mandala Council. Having the Shuso change every year introduces an unfortunate amount of instability, transition and learning time into the equation. Perhaps as the scope of Mandala Council changes, the Shuso would only be involved in apprenticeship functions of the Council.
  - c. Finding and either eliminating or explaining duplicate jobs and lines of oversight (numerous teams are monitored by team leaders, Mandala Council, and Dharma Council representatives) would be helpful.
3. Participation in Community
    - a. Create a task group to developing a coherent and current message and branding that represent Dharma Rain. Our marketing efforts have tended towards being piecemeal and event-specific, with little sense of continuity of message.
  4. Lay Practice
    - a. Have Lay and Ordained teachers continue to process questions. Include discussion of lay/ordained roles in Issues of Leadership series.

*Pros:* Creates a safer and more reliable system for developing instructors. Simplifies and streamlines temple administration. Adds consistency to how Dharma Rain is perceived.

*Cons:* Takes time and effort to accomplish any one of these goals.

**C. Third Option: Broaden and expand offerings.**

1. Service Opportunities
  - a. No specific change.
2. Mandala Model
  - a. Develop and increase emphasis on non-public, non-teaching leadership roles within the sangha.
  - b. Expand Outreach Team's focus to be more proactive. Requires a volunteer who is interested in monitoring outreach generally, including keeping aware of conferences, sending out manuals, perhaps writing articles, etc... This position would collaborate closely with Prison Program Administrator and the Affiliated & Related Groups Liaison. Clarify and communicate priorities in responding to requests.
  - c. Work with other sanghas in the area to spread the Dharma. (Connects with Dharmagarden recommendations).
3. Participation in Community
  - a. Explore ways to get the word out about our unique programs. Encourage teachers to write articles for national magazines, and be visible at conferences. We would like to become more (dharmically) visible nationally, and make our model of practice more widely known/visible as a model that might be helpful to others.
  - b. We need to continue build relationships and collaborations with other sanghas. In particular, effort needs to be given to the relationship with Heart of Wisdom and Great Vow Zen Monastery, due to our long history of cooperation and our increasing institutional independence.
  - c. Continue and strengthen our ongoing participation in the Portland Area Dharma Umbrella, the PDX Buddhist Festival, and the Community of Welcoming Congregations.
4. Lay Practice

- a. No specific change.

*Pros:* Any expansion adds opportunities for service and leadership.

*Cons:* Takes time and effort. Risks changing some familiar aspects of how Dharma Rain is perceived. Risks spending human or material resources on projects farther afield than we can sustain.

#### **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

- It would be helpful if there were more clarity around the leadership roles for ordained vs. lay seniors.
- It's comforting to think that there are defined roles for lay seniors to step into. I would strongly advocate developing and preserving this.

#### **V. Recommendations**

To pursue both B) Enhance clarity and credibility, and C) Broaden and expand offerings.

1. Service Opportunities
  - a. Dharma Council to develop and implement procedures for mentoring instructors of classes, workshops, and outreach situations and supporting and honoring leadership in other roles.
2. Mandala Model
  - a. Mandala Council to hold regular meetings. Consider expansion of council if necessary to deal with meta-issues of temple administration, such as the role of Shuso. Promote involvement in the Mandala Council as an opportunity for Lay Leadership.
  - b. Either expand Outreach Coordinator's position beyond just responding to requests, or add a new position to give attention to broader questions that fall under this team's responsibility.
  - c. Align Mandala Model with changes made in the Strategic Plan.
3. Participation in Broader Community
  - a. Create advertising task group to revisit how Dharma Rain is represented. This group will be made up of members of the advertising and marketing Team, the strategic planning committee, and the website team. The task group should evaluate our marketing and branding efforts, bring them in line with the Strategic Plan, and develop a plan for implementing changes. This plan should be presented to both the Dharma Council and the Board of Directors for approval before any changes take effect.
  - b. In conjunction with the task group to revisit how Dharma Rain is represented in the community at large (a. above), The Dharma Council, the Board of Directors, and all subgroups within our organization that interact with the community at large will remind our members that integrated Zen practice within the community is a way of living that responds with selfless actions to the needs of all living beings with no thought of gain, with no goal, and with no emphasis on affiliation.
4. Lay Practice

## Dharma Rain Zen Center

Encourage and support the cohort group of transmitted Lay and Ordained teachers in developing mutual respect and harmonious functioning as they enact their collective responsibility for maintaining and transmitting this lineage. This acknowledges that all DRZC transmitted teachers will need to be able to work together for the good of the lineage, no matter how varied and/or physically distant (from DRZC) their manifestations of the teaching role.

# Chapter 6: Related and Cohort Groups

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## I. Overview

As DRZC has grown, related groups have naturally evolved at locations away from the main temple, and cohort groups have formed within the temple. Both of these types of groups serve important needs for the sangha, including: 1) access to the intimacy that comes from meeting in smaller groups; 2) special group needs such as meetings closer to home, peer support, or topics and practices targeted to the group; 3) opportunities for service and leadership for the senior sangha members who help lead the groups. Related and Cohort groups have developed naturally as sangha members have stepped forward to start them, and many operate fairly independently of the main DRZC organizational structure. Given the importance of these groups to the overall well-being DRZC and its mission, it would be beneficial if more attention, guidance and support were given to them without compromising the positive aspects of their independence.

## II. Current State

### *The Groups*

Over the past ten years, approximately 11 related groups and 7 cohort groups have formed in connection with DRZC.

Six of the 11 related groups are prison sanghas, most of which were begun by Getsushin Brox and various volunteers that have helped her over the years. Currently these prison sanghas meet at O.S.P., Coffee Creek Medium and Minimum, MacLaren Youth Corrections, Eastern Oregon C.I. and Two Rivers C.I. Until recently, these groups have been coordinated by Getsushin (O.S.P. and Coffee Creek) or more or less independent (Malaren, E.O.C.I. and T.R.C.I). This fall (2010) we identified that a prison program administrator would be very helpful and recruited Cindy McKinley for that position.

The other related groups were started mostly by individuals who live at some distance from the main temple and wanted practice groups closer to their homes. Jill Bukkai Washburn leads weekly meetings of the Valley Zen Circle in Dallas (near Salem); Kyri Kengan Treiman coordinates the twice monthly Hood River Zen group with monthly visits from Kakumyo Lowe-Charde; Debra Seido Martin leads weekly events in the Empty Field Zendo in a building she built on her own property outside of Eugene, and hosts various retreats there; Joe Mugaku Engum has organized a meditation group in Pendleton off and on for many years; Emilie Teiko Cartoun coordinates a weekly meditation and discussion group in Sandy. Responding to many inquiries from the far west Portland and Beaverton area, Domyo Burk and Lisa So'on Mann share leadership of the bi-weekly Westside Zen group.

Within the temple, many different cohort groups have formed and met at various times and for various purposes, including the lay and monastic disciples, a women's group (not currently active), a men's group, gay tea, a parent's group that meets during Dharma School, a "7-up" group for seniors with seven or more years of practice, and a prison transition group for people who are or work to support released inmates.

### *The Relationship of the Groups to the DRZC Organizational Structure*

So far, leaders and coordinators have made all, or almost all, the decisions about how related and cohort groups have been run. The Dharma Council has made efforts to monitor cohort groups since its

creation in 2008, but the groups remain largely independent. On the temple job list, so far individuals have been listed as a “leader” of a related or cohort group only if they are a transmitted teacher, otherwise they are listed as a “coordinator.” However, these roles and distinctions have not been formalized in the Dharma Council’s document that describes teaching roles, and a coordinator usually ends up in something of a leadership position.

Although moral support for the groups has not been lacking, relatively little practical support has been offered to them. They have been able to list their meetings in DRZC literature and on the website, they have been able to recruit volunteers from within the sangha, cohort groups have been able to meet onsite, and some material support has been provided occasionally, upon request (visits by teachers, meditation cushions, website hosting, tea, some copying, Zipcar rental for transportation of DRZC staff to the groups).

In 2009, DRZC signed the first Affiliation Agreement in its history with Debra Seido Martin’s Empty Field Zendo in Blachly, Oregon. The Board deemed this necessary because there were potential legal, financial, and liability issues associated with DRZC-led retreats being held at the property.

#### **A. Benefits of Current State**

As stated above, these groups serve important needs for the Dharma and Sangha, including: 1) access to the intimacy that comes from meeting in smaller groups; 2) special group needs such as meetings closer to home, peer support, or topics and practices targeted to the group; 3) opportunities for service and leadership for the senior sangha members who help lead the groups.

These groups form in response to needs and are organized and/or led by individuals who are personally inspired in their efforts. They meet important needs while drawing, in a large part, from a different pool of volunteers and resources than are utilized in supporting our main temple programs and activities. At same time, the groups depend on DRZC in many ways, primarily as a place of sangha support and deep practice for the group leaders, so it is a mutually supportive relationship.

The self-sufficiency of the groups minimizes the time and effort they require from the temple staff, officers and councils. Their relative independence allows for a greater diversity in tone, style and teaching methods than is usually found within the core temple programs, which can provide points of entry and/or practice niches for a wide variety of people.

#### **B. Limitations of Current State**

##### ***Related Groups***

There is a lack of clarity in the sangha, including within many of the related groups, about the relationship between DRZC and the groups. Some group coordinators and leaders would like some guidelines on starting and running a related group, and would like to know what resources DRZC can offer them. Certain members might start groups if they knew it was supported or even encouraged, and if they had guidelines about how to do so. Sometimes it is unclear whether DRZC sees related groups as an outgrowth of its mission, or as completely independent entities.

As related groups grow and mature, and perhaps proliferate in the future, DRZC runs some risk that the way the groups are run will not be up to temple standards. The content of the activities or

teaching may differ significantly from what is offered within the core temple programs, or the tone and style of the group may be out of keeping with DRZC culture or standards. One challenge is that most of these groups operate away from temple grounds; another challenge is that there is little or no interaction of these groups with senior sangha members (other than the leaders) who have the experience needed to provide normative feedback or oversight. To date we have largely trusted the judgment of group leaders and figured that if anything was amiss, we would hear about it.

There are also liability issues that the DRZC Board must take into consideration. If anything happened in the context of one of the related groups, DRZC might be sued even if the group is fairly independent. We have an Affiliation Agreement with Empty Field Zendo that addresses some legal and ethical aspects of this, but we have not clarified DRZC's legal relationship to the other related groups.

### ***Cohort Groups***

For the most part, cohort groups seem to be forming and functioning effectively and harmoniously. Because they take place at the temple, it is somewhat easier to monitor their tone and content, and it is clearer that they would fall under DRZC's liability insurance. However, at this point it has not been formally stated who is qualified to start, coordinate or lead a cohort group, what kinds of cohort groups will be given time and space on the temple calendar, or the nature of the relationship of such groups to the Dharma Council. If more cohort groups form in the future, as they probably will, some of these issues should be addressed.

## **III. Potential Future States**

### **A. First Option: No Planned Changes – Organic Growth**

#### *Pros:*

- Continues to allow related and cohort groups to 1) provide access to the intimacy that comes from meeting in smaller groups; 2) meet special group needs such as meetings closer to home, peer support, or topics and practices targeted to the group; 3) provide opportunities for service and leadership for the senior sangha members who help lead the groups.
- Avoids the extra work, meeting time, etc., that would be involved with a greater degree of organization with respect to related & cohort groups.
- Allows groups to arise and grow naturally, in response to need and conditions.

#### *Cons:*

- We already have numerous groups that would appreciate more acknowledgment, support or guidance.
- When the founders of a group move on and can no longer provide coordination and leadership for their group, the group often has developed a life of its own and wishes to continue; without some strategic thinking DRZC may overstress its volunteers in trying to serve these needs, or the groups may suffer from lack of leadership.
- We continue to run some liability risks that should be managed more systematically.
- Related and cohort groups serve several important needs; there may be more energy in this area that will remain untapped if the groups are not more clearly identified as an important part of DRZC's mission.

- We continue to run the risk of teachings that may be inconsistent with Dharma Rain standards

## **B. Second Option: Identify Related and Cohort Groups as an Important Part of DRZC's Mission, and Encourage, Guide and Support Their Formation and Existence**

### *Pros:*

- Continues to allow related and cohort groups to 1) provide access to the intimacy that comes from meeting in smaller groups; 2) meet special group needs such as meetings closer to home, peer support, or topics and practices targeted to the group; 3) provide opportunities for service and leadership for the senior sangha members who help lead the groups.
- Likely to gradually increase the number of groups and the vitality of those groups.
- Related and cohort groups expand the number of people DRZC can serve; there will be people in the smaller groups who would not otherwise participate at the temple.
- Related and cohort groups expand the number of people who support DRZC; people in the smaller groups support DRZC as a/the base from which their groups draw sustenance (leaders, coordinators, teaching materials, place for retreat, etc.).

### *Cons:*

- Decreased sense of overall sangha unity and intimacy, by allowing more growth and providing times and place for people to participate in smaller groups rather than as one large group.
- Requires more time and attention, perhaps material support, from DRZC

## **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

There was no topic meeting on this Focal Point because it was not identified as a Focal Point until late in the process of cohort and topic meetings. However, individuals involved with a related group were asked to think strategically about their group as well as its relationship to Dharma Rain. All of them greatly appreciated being approached and asked to take part in Strategic Planning. Several points were clear:

- 1) No group had serious concerns that other aspects of the Strategic Plan were going to negatively affect them. Interest in the SP was based on their own involvement as members and on their desire to see DRZC healthy and vital. All saw DRZC as important resource for their group.
- 2) Many (perhaps not all) of the cohort felt that their groups and efforts were rather invisible to the DRZC sangha and leadership. They appreciated their independence, but felt their groups would benefit from a sense that their work was a vital part of Dharma Rain's mission rather than peripheral. It seemed that more support was being requested, but that this support would be minimal in terms of money or time. Requests for more support included:
  - i) a higher profile on the website (the Prison Program was hard to find there);
  - ii) better communication to groups about options (e.g. listing in StillPoint, web page attached to/on DRZC's, association/affiliation, visiting monks/teachers)
  - iii) a commitment on the part of the leadership of DRZC to honor the work being done by related/affiliated groups - how important it is, as well as how difficult it can be. One group leader expressed this as wanting to feel as if her related group "was part of DRZC's heart."

## V. Recommendations

Increased attention to, and support for, related and cohort groups will support DRZC's mission as well as increase the base of support for DRZC. In all dealings with related and cohort groups, it is recommended that DRZC exercise the minimum amount of control necessary to ensure basic standards are met and liability concerns addressed. Some of the greatest strengths of these groups are their relative independence, diversity and self-sufficiency, so care should be taken to preserve that.

### A) Identify Related and Cohort Groups as an Important Part of DRZC's Mission

Related and cohort groups have received plenty of moral support and encouragement, so this shift is a rather subtle one. What is recommended is to continue the natural evolution from viewing the groups as peripheral to DRZC's mission, to viewing them as integral. This 2010 Strategic Planning process has already helped start this shift. It is more a matter of changing our temple culture than it is about changing the temple structure or function. Some concrete recommendations are:

- 1) **Revision the temple's Mandala diagram;** recruit a small committee of sangha members to think of a better way to represent the related groups in it. One possibility is to pull all of the Councils into the white circle and place the related groups around the outer edge. Committee could be formed and present its suggestion to Board and Dharma Council.
- 2) Ask DRZC teachers with disciples to **recommend coordination of a related or cohort group to appropriate students** as a valuable practice opportunity. This essentially will happen if this Strategic Plan is approved.
- 3) **Raise profile of existing groups** on web site, and add a brief description about how the groups are related to DRZC and what association means. A computer-savvy rep from one of the groups could be recruited to do this. An example can be taken from San Francisco Zen Center's web site, under the prominent Affiliated Groups tab.
- 4) **Commit more resources to material support of groups.** For reasons stated earlier, these groups tend to benefit DRZC and its core programs directly and indirectly. Ask the Board to consider what level of support might be offered to related groups if they are viewed as investments. Suggestions include a discount or no cost (if needed) for a certain number of meditation cushions (to remain property of DRZC); a web page hosted on DRZC's site; transportation costs for visiting monks and teachers; reasonable supply of incense and candles; limited printing and copying.

### B) Provide Oversight and Guidance for Formation and Coordination of Related & Cohort Groups

- 1) **Request that sangha members work with DRZC when they are considering starting a group or taking over coordination of a group.** This is in recognition that related and cohort groups affect the rest of the temple, and that they will require temple resources in one way or another (even if that is only volunteer time). It is recommended that the Dharma Council adopt these guidelines or some similar set of guidelines:
  - Ask that members considering starting or coordinating a group to present their ideas to the Dharma Council. Unless there are serious concerns or temple resources (such as meeting space) are too limited, the Dharma Council will work with the person to draft an acceptable proposal, facilitating the formation or function of the group.

- Encourage members to wait to start or coordinate a group until they are a disciple of a DRZC teacher, or have practiced regularly at DRZC for at least 7 years (for related groups) or 3 years (for cohort groups); ask that those who do not have a personal teacher to choose one as a mentor in their group coordination role.
- Ask those considering starting a new related group to speak to others who have done so, and to estimate the likelihood that someone else will have to take over the group from them in the near future;
- Distinguish between group facilitators who are transmitted teachers and those who are not. It is recommended to call someone a group's "leader" only if they are a teacher, and use a term like "coordinator" for those who are not formal teachers. It is fine if some authority naturally accrues to an experienced coordinator, but this will avoid misrepresentation of a less experienced person by calling them the leader of a relatively independent spiritual group.

2) **Appoint a Related Group Liaison.** This should probably be a transmitted teacher so s/he can provide some personal oversight regarding teaching content and tone. This person would visit each associated group during one of its regular sessions at least once a year, and preferably twice. S/he would also be the contact person for existing groups as well as people interested in forming a group, facilitate communication between the groups and rest of the temple Mandala, and obtain support for related groups to the extent possible. S/he would work in cooperation (and not interfere with) the Prison Program Administrator. The goal would be to serve the related groups and help them operate in a way compatible with DRZC's mission, not to manage them. Note that San Francisco Zen Center has a similar position (Dharma Group Support, I believe).

### **C) Encourage and Facilitate Peer Support Among Coordinators and Leaders of Related Groups**

The sangha has a growing number of people with experience in starting and coordinating related groups, both within prisons and elsewhere. The experience of being "out on the Dharma frontier" can be very challenging and sometimes lonely, and coordinators and leaders in very different locations and venues often find they have a lot in common. A Related Group Liaison could work with group's coordinators/leaders to encourage and facilitate peer support. The specific timeline and form for this should probably be left up to the interested parties.

### **D) Clarify the Relationship Between Related Groups and DRZC**

1) **Clarify three categories of group – Related, Affiliated and Independent.** This will help both DRZC and the groups better understand their relationship, as well as suggest avenues for development to various groups. It is recommended that the Dharma Council adopt these or similar terms and definitions, and submit them to the Board for approval:

***Related Groups*** are groups focused on meditation and/or the Buddhadharma, led or coordinated by senior DRZC members at other locations than DRZC. In running related groups, coordinators and leaders agree to abide by the DRZC Ethics Guidelines and to operate in harmony with DRZC's mission. A related group may be a short-lived, informal and fairly secular meditation group held in someone's home and publicized only by word of mouth; it

may be a large, formal and public practice group; it may be a branch temple with a DRZC-affiliated Dharma Teacher; and it may be anything in between. Such a group may or may not wish to be connected with DRZC, but for organizational (not necessarily publicity) purposes they will be identified as a related group because they are led/coordinated by a senior DRZC member and will be inevitably be associated with DRZC to some degree in the mind of the public.

***Affiliated Groups*** are Related Groups that want to be publicly identified with DRZC and to maintain a connection to the DRZC sangha and lineage. The Dharma Council should create guidelines for how this connection should be maintained. Once an affiliated group has developed into a permanent separate entity by incorporating, acquiring property or a bank account, or offering fee activities (such as retreats) that are not run by DRZC, the leader/coordinator may be asked to sign a legal Affiliation Agreement with DRZC that specifies the legal and financial relationship between the two groups.

***Independent Groups*** are groups that might appear to the public as a Related Group, but which do not want to be publicly identified with DRZC, or that DRZC does not want to be identified with. Their leader/coordinator, as a member of DRZC, will still be asked to abide by the DRZC Ethics Guidelines and to operate in harmony with DRZC's mission; this does not mean they are obligated to further DRZC's mission, but simply to act in harmony with it (not work against it).

2) **Write Related Group Agreement and Affiliated Group Agreement.** Once definitions have been approved by Board and Dharma Council, create agreements for these different groups to sign with DRZC. These will serve two purposes: first, to clarify the Dharmic and practical relationship between DRZC and a particular group, and second, if necessary, to establish the legal relationship between DRZC and the group. An agreement will only be constructed as a legal document if it is deemed necessary by the Board and its legal counsel.

3) **Have groups sign Related or Affiliated Agreements,** as appropriate.

## Related & Affiliated Groups – Strategic Plan Task List

Deadline	Task	Responsible Party/Parties	Closure
April 1, 2011	Appoint/Recruit Related Group Liaison	Dharma Council, with help from Abbots, teachers, Shuso, etc.	Appointment noted in Dharma Council minutes
April 15, 2011	Mandala Image Revision committee recruited	Related Group Liaison	Mandala Image Revision committee forms plan & timeline
April 15, 2011	Related groups invited to work on peer support	Related Group Liaison & related groups	All groups contacted, feedback received
May meeting, 2011	Association & Affiliation Defined	Dharma Council	Submit terms & definitions to Board
May 15, 2011	Revision of Temple Mandala Image	Mandala Image Revision committee	Submitted to Board and Dharma Council for approval; approved

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible Party/Parties</b>	<b>Closure</b>
June meeting, 2011	Association & Affiliation Definitions Approved	Board	Approve terms & definitions recommended by Dharma Council
July 1, 2011	Association Agreement template completed	Marty Barrack/ Related Group Liaison	Submit template to Board and DC for approval
August 1, 2011	Raise Profile of Existing Related Groups on Website	Webmaster (Genko) plus a web-savvy recruit from one of the groups?	Task gets completed
Board Retreat (August)	Decide on level of material support to offer related groups	Board	In minutes
Sept 30, 2011	Related Groups sign agreements with DRZC	Related Group Liaison & related groups	Report agreements to Board and DC, file them with Secretary
Dec 31, 2011	Create & Adopt Guidelines for Formation & Coordination of Related and Cohort Groups	Dharma Council	In minutes

# Chapter 7: Staffing and Finances

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## Staffing

### I. Overview

How might DRZC maintain adequate staffing for the facilities and programs that are part of the Strategic Plan? What will staffing cost?

### II. Current State

DRZC serves as a spiritual home for over 200 adults and 100 children. Members can participate in zazen and formal practice at least 5 days a week, receive spiritual counseling at no cost, join the residential community for activities and meals, attend classes and meditation retreats, enjoy the temple buildings during community practice or private retreats, and take advantage of Zen teaching that is firmly grounded in a lineage tradition. The center operates almost 50 weeks a year, six days a week, and members can generally reach a staff member in person or by phone at least 40 hours a week, during the temple's Tuesday-Saturday business hours. DRZC has a well-maintained extensive website, a bi-monthly printed newsletter, regular events emails, and a Buddhist library. It also offers numerous programs and events that are tailored to different populations, including children, parents, newcomers, senior students, gay and transgender (LGBTQ) individuals, and prison inmates. In addition,

- The Zen Center serves the community with 6 full-time ordained staff and over 70 lay volunteers, most of who serve the temple in more than one way.
- In the 2009-2010 fiscal year the Zen Center had the benefit of 5 full-time staff for the total cost of around \$40,400 - including room, board, health insurance and stipends.
- With the approval of the Board (when the budget allows), junior ordained staff receive room, board and health insurance. Senior ordained staff receive some financial support: In 2010-11, Gyokuko will receive a salary of \$12,000; Kyogen \$3,240; Domyo and Kakumyo each \$2,400. When the budget allows, the Board already has as a goal to increase one Abbot's salary to at least \$20,000.

DRZC does all of this on an annual budget of only \$210,000 (as of the 2010-11 fiscal year).

#### A. Benefits of Current State

We manage to get a big bang for our buck – providing many services and opportunities, and supporting a large, vibrant community, with a relatively small budget. Staff clearly performs a labor of love because the financial reward is slight. Dependence on volunteers requires relationships and participation amongst sangha members and provides valuable practice opportunities.

#### B. Limitations of Current State

Staff are often stressed and overworked, and some things get neglected. Whatever goals are identified by the Strategic Plan, staffing needs are likely to increase over time.

- **Limitations of Relying on Lay Volunteers.** Lay volunteers generally have work and/or family responsibilities that limit the amount of time they can devote to the temple. Not only does this limit the amount of work that can be done by lay volunteers, it also runs the risk of burning out lay practitioners when the Zen Center becomes yet another source of overwork in their lives. Some lay people also find that devoting hours to temple jobs results in too big a sacrifice of time spent in formal Zen practice (the effort to fulfill a commitment to a job trumps zazen).

Also, some jobs are not suitable for volunteers: jobs that volunteers are not interested in doing (difficult, isolated or boring, etc.); skilled or technical jobs that we have no volunteers qualified to do; jobs that require too much of a time commitment; and jobs that require a long-term commitment (they require a fair amount of training and experience before someone can do them effectively).

- **Limitation of Relying on Junior Ordained (or Full-time Lay Residents) for Staffing.** The vow to support sangha is only one of the vows the ordained person takes, and hours spent serving as staff are only one way the ordained person supports sangha, so there will always be competing demands for their time, including meditation retreats, time spent away at other formal practice places, study, participation in temple events, classes and formal practice, and various other things their teacher might instruct them to do. The same thing applies to full-time lay residents but even more so, as they have not made a vow to support sangha.

The number of junior ordained or full-time lay residents active at the temple will vary greatly over time. Some people will return to lay life, some will complete their junior training and be called elsewhere. Over the next ten years we might have anywhere between zero and ten people in this category active at the temple at any one time.

- **Limitations of Our Current Level of Support for Abbots.** Future Abbot(s) are likely to need more financial support than we have given the Carlsons in the past or are giving them now. There are three aspects to the need for increased support for Abbots:

1) Kyogen and Gyokuko have been a shining example of living on a shoestring in order to serve the Dharma (until 2010 they made less than \$7,000 a year between the two of them in addition to their room, board and health insurance), but they admit there have been some costs to their health. They believe that the ascetic priest ideal should not be overemphasized; while some individuals are drawn to live an ascetic life, the Carlsons believe it is wise for the Zen Center to plan for long-term priests who will require some financial support.

2) The Carlsons are obviously each married to another ordained person; future long-term priests and/or Abbots may be married to lay people, which may complicate the picture somewhat (future Abbots may not be able to live in the attic of a community house, for example).

3) The Carlsons have also had the benefit of receiving some money via inheritance, something which is by no means guaranteed to future Abbots.

### III. Potential Future States

Members perceive staffing as a significant challenge for DRZC. Note: Options are being presented rather than states, because it is likely that any plan for the future will be composed of a “mix and match” of these options.

## **A. Financial Support of Abbot(s)**

### **Option 1) Keep level of financial support the same, or decrease.**

*Pros:* Less expense to sangha. Helps ensure that an Abbot isn't in it for the financial rewards. Helps maintain the renunciate aspect of the role of the ordained, requiring (unless they have other means of financial support) that they maintain a simple lifestyle and in most cases that they live in whatever housing the Zen Center can provide.

*Cons:* May increase the stress on any Abbot who has a lay spouse, other responsibilities, health problems, etc. May require an Abbot to work outside of the temple for money, reducing the time and energy they have for the sangha. May limit the sangha's options in terms of eligible and available people to serve as Abbot.

### **Option 2) Increase level of support to what would be considered a modest income**

*Pros:* Frees Abbot(s) from many concerns about money, provides greater level of comfort and care. Opportunity for the sangha to demonstrate their appreciation for the Abbot's service.

*Cons:* Expense to the sangha. Possible confusion on the part of Abbot or sangha about whether an Abbot is primarily motivated by vocation. May allow Abbot to avail him/herself of things or opportunities that some sangha members feel they themselves cannot afford.

## **B. Adequate Staffing (options are not mutually exclusive)**

### **Option 1) Continue as we are, relying on whatever ordained trainees are present and on lay volunteers.**

*Pros:* Pay as we go (we support people as we are able). Relatively informal employment situation requiring little supervision and management (all ordained folks we know very well). Continues strong emphasis on volunteers and involvement by sangha members.

*Cons:* Some overwork and stress, some things neglected. Potential for this situation getting worse as Zen Center grows. Unstable staffing situation because ordained trainees come and go.

### **Option 2) Develop a stronger residential community.**

*Pros:* Attract practitioners who want to spend significant amounts of time in community and will contribute time and energy to the sangha. Sometimes people are even willing to pay for such an opportunity, while providing full-time practitioners with room and board can be a very inexpensive source of valuable help for the sangha.

*Cons:* Probably requires better facilities, which has an associated cost. Requires significant oversight and leadership from at least one teacher.

**Option 3) Make use of paid help as most efficient and appropriate. This could be a Development Professional, a Dharmagarden Administrator, and/or a General Assistant, as most needed when the opportunity to hire presents itself. Help might be in the form of a contractor or consultant, or might involve formal employment. It might be part or full time.**

*Pros:* A paid employee will generally be around longer than a volunteer and can be trained to do complex tasks and be asked to take responsibility for more. People who are being paid can also be asked to do tasks that are unattractive to a volunteer and to step in where there are gaps in staffing. It is also easier to hold an employee/contractor/consultant accountable (one needs to be more gracious and accepting with a volunteer). This could be a valuable opportunity for a practitioner that wants to serve the Dharma and work in community but needs to earn money.

*Cons:* Salary, some additional formality and management.

#### **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

Members perceive staffing as a significant challenge for DRZC. Finding strategies to minimize staff burnout and manage competing demands are high priorities. There was considerable interest in and support for adding some kind of paid staff position at the temple, or eventually more than one, perhaps starting at few hours a week and moving toward half or even full time. Discussed was a Development Director (would bring in more money), a General Assistant (assist staff in many ways), and a Dharmagarden Administrator.

#### **V. Recommendations**

##### **A. Financial Support of Abbot(s) or senior staff.**

**First, plan for two Abbot salaries, or one Abbot plus a paid senior staff person.** The Carlsons as well as many other seniors in the sangha agree that DRZC is of sufficient size and complexity to require two Abbots, or one Abbot plus significant staffing support. This has been discussed but not yet adopted as a plan; it is recommended that we begin planning for and around this scenario.

**Adopt Option 2: Increase level of financial support to what would be considered a modest income.** The DRZC Board has already identified this as a goal for one Abbot. The full-time presence of an Abbot is beneficial to the sangha spiritually, and also directly increases the income for the sangha in many ways, including through retreat leadership, class teaching, staff time, leadership of the residential program, etc.

Suggestion: Increase gradually over ten years, increasing the second Abbot's/senior staff base salary once the first has reached \$20,000, not including the cost of benefits. Note that benefits include the cost of retirement contributions made on the Carlson's behalf in the coming years, either given to them through payroll or made as an employer contribution. By "base" salary, then, we mean salary exclusive of the retirement contributions, which in the next 5-10 years will be significant for the Carlsons and will make it look as if their base salary has increased to near the goal discussed here. However, the center needs to be budgeting for an increased base salary because the next Abbot/s or senior paid staff will not be receiving anywhere near as large a contribution for

retirement (we are trying to catch up for the Carlsons, who have no retirement savings yet at age 61).

The estimated cost of benefits is \$5,000 a year for health insurance. Given our current facilities, the housing provided the Abbots is worth approximately \$500 a month (\$6,000 a year; a private studio apt with a kitchen runs starts at around \$600, locally) and board for an Abbot probably costs about \$800 a year (1/10 of the 2009-2010 total annual cost for the center). That makes the total support package to an Abbot (after the increases) worth about \$31,800.

Increases would never be planned to exceed the annual budget, but goals would help drive the budgeting process. The first salary is already at \$12,000. If this is increased \$4,000 a year for the next two fiscal years (2011-12, 2012-13) it would reach \$20,000. The second salary is already \$3240; if it was increased \$4760 in the 2013-14 fiscal year and then \$4,000 a year thereafter, it would reach \$20,000 in the 2016-17 fiscal year.

### B. Adequate Staffing

**Combine all three options.** (1) Continue as we are, relying on whatever ordained trainees are present and on lay volunteers; (2) Develop a stronger residential community, and (3) Make use of paid help as most efficient and appropriate Work on these simultaneously. Continue to strengthen our system of involving and supporting lay volunteers. Develop a stronger residential community in our present facilities, and move toward a new facility. Hire help, starting with as few as 8 hours a week or so, after a few years if seems that we are on track with projected donation increases. Suggest visiting this possibility while budgeting for fiscal year 2012-13.

### Staffing – Strategic Plan Task List

Deadline	Goal	Responsible Party/Parties	Closure
Adoption of Strategic Plan	Strengthen residency program & pay attention to its affects on staffing pressure	Discussed in the Rigor in Practice chapter of this plan.	Discussed in the Rigor in Practice chapter of this plan.
Sept 1, 2011	Increase Abbot #1 base salary to \$16,000, not inclusive of 403b deferrals or employer contributions <sup>1</sup>	Board	Adoption of 2011-12 Budget
Sept 1, 2012	Increase Abbot #1 base salary to \$20,000, not inclusive of 403b deferrals or employer contributions	Board	Adoption of 2012-13 Budget
Sept 1, 2012	Investigate adding an 8-hour a week staff position if the budget allows (estimated cost \$4,000)	Board	Adoption of 2012-13 Budget; revisit question each budget cycle

<sup>1</sup> This statement (and similar ones below) applies specifically to the Carlsons because efforts to build retirement savings are separate from efforts to increase salary; for subsequent abbots it may be appropriate for the base salary to include employee deferrals.

Deadline	Goal	Responsible Party/Parties	Closure
Sept 1, 2013	Increase second senior staff base salary to \$8,000	Board	Adoption of 2013-14 Budget
Sept 1, 2014	Increase second senior staff base salary to \$12,000	Board	Adoption of 2014-15 Budget
Sept 1, 2015	Increase second senior staff base salary to \$16,000	Board	Adoption of 2015-16 Budget
Sept 1, 2016	Increase second senior staff base salary to \$20,000	Board	Adoption of 2016-17 Budget

## Finances

### I. Overview

How might DRZC pay for the goals of the sangha that are described in the Strategic Plan? This Focal Point does not deal with overall financial management and budgeting, which is a Board function and has been proceeding well. Rather, this focuses on increasing and maintaining Zen Center income.

### II. Current State

In the 2009-10 fiscal year (Sept 1-Aug 31), DRZC's income was \$214,000 and its expenses were \$194,044 (figure does not include payment toward mortgage & loan principal). Compared to 10 years ago this is a 63% increase in income (\$131,445 in year 2000) and a 90% increase in expenses (\$102,302 in year 2000). There has been a steady and consistent increase in both income and expenses over the ten year period.

DRZC's fundraising efforts have slowly developed and increased over the last ten years as well. This began with an emphasis on membership and the identification of a series of membership pledge levels (from \$100 a year to \$100 or more a month). Most events were, and continue to be, open to nonmembers, so the choice to become a member is largely dependent on someone being around long enough to realize there was such a thing as membership, and a personal conviction that financial support of the temple is important. At the end of the calendar year a holiday greeting card is always sent out with an ask for year-end donations. Over time, fundraising events like an annual yard sale and a gourmet dinner (Kanzeon in the Kitchen) were attempted. The former was eventually identified as involving too much work for the pay-off (approx \$3,000), and the second was a great community builder but did not generate much income.

In the past 4 years or so, fundraising efforts and discussions about money have become a more pervasive and prominent part of temple culture. Around 2006-7, a fundraising committee was formed. Out of this committee's work a Capital Fund drive was initiated that resulted in a number of donations toward DRZC efforts to improve and care for its facilities. Some of these were one-time donations and others were multi-year pledges made in addition to membership. The donations were solicited by phone in one of the first direct "asks" done by DRZC. The committee also chose to concentrate on a developing a Silent Auction as the main or only annual fundraising event. Carlene Zoki Orman chaired the first

auction, which was held at the Zendo and raised \$12,000 (net \$7928). The 2009 auction was held at McMenamín's Kennedy School and raised \$23,000 (net \$18,509); the third was in 2010 at the Treasury Ballroom and raised \$26,600 (net \$17,640). (The Treasury Ballroom is more expensive than McMenamín's but will allow more growth over time; we had already reached the maximum capacity of the McMenamín's facility in 2009.)

Recently, membership is mentioned more often, and the importance of financial support for the temple has become salient because of things like the annual Silent Auction. Since 2008, Domyo Burk has been identified as DRZC's Development Director. Although she has many other duties and no experience in this role, it signifies that the Board and the rest of the temple have acknowledged the importance of development and fundraising.

#### **A. Benefits of Current State**

We manage to get a big bang for our buck – providing many services and opportunities, and supporting a large, vibrant community, with a relatively small budget considering our size. We are financially able to take care of our existing facilities and are slowly building equity in them. Our facilities are clean and functional but generally present a value of thrift over wealth or luxury. Staff clearly performs a labor of love because the financial reward is slight. Dependence on volunteers requires relationships and participation amongst sangha members and provides valuable practice opportunities.

People are able to participate in the sangha no matter what level of financial support they are able to provide to DRZC. It is clear to participants that DRZC uses money in service of the Dharma, and not vice versa; we believe that fundraising efforts so far have been low-pressure and have been developed slowly so people can get used to them. The increase in DRZC income over the last 10 years has probably been due much more to an increasing number of people feeling deeply grateful to the temple than an increased sense of financial responsibility amongst its members (with many individual exceptions, of course). Said another way, our growth in income is due more to the strength of our core programs and activities than to any specific fundraising efforts.

#### **B. Limitations of Current State**

With our current budget we cannot afford many of the other goals identified in the Strategic Plan, particularly regarding new facilities or improvements to existing ones (see Appendix A, Vision of a Possible 2020 Budget). Appendix A is just a brainstorm, giving an ambitious example of a 113% increase in income by 2020 (compared to a 62% increase between 2000 and 2010). DRZC may not need this large a budget, and if it had that amount of income it might spend it differently. However, it gives some idea of the growth we might want to envision. Even given our projected growth in membership, increased levels of giving will probably be required to meet our Strategic goals (see Appendix B, Projection of Growth of Membership and Donations from 2010-2020).

### **III. Potential Future States**

Options are being presented rather than states, because it is likely that any plan for the future will be composed of a “mix and match” of these options.

#### **Option 1) No Substantial Changes**

*Pros:* We're used to it, no need to get used to new things or think about money any more than we do now. Chances are our income will continue to grow somewhat anyway, as membership increases.

*Cons:* Our income is unlikely to increase as much as would be needed to fill Strategic Planning Goals.

### **Option 2) Ask Members to Increase Annual Giving.**

Approximate increase needed: new donors from \$148 a year (average; this is \$13 a month) to \$295 a year (\$25 a month); retained donors from \$650 a year (\$55 a month) to \$974 a year (\$81 a month). Note: annual giving includes gifts given at any time throughout the year, so this does not all have to be given monthly.

*Pros:* This is the most reliable way to increase income. Done right, can increase people's sense of ownership of the Center and build relationships. Celebrating the Zen Center and sangha's value and achievements can raise consciousness and build loyalty.

*Cons:* Requires sensitivity in order to make sure people know they are welcome no matter what level they are able to support the Center financially.

### **Option 3) Keep Developing the Silent Auction, Extending Base of Support Beyond Members.**

*Pros:* If the Silent Auction can become a fun event that nonmembers look forward to attending every year and we build in an expectation that it is also an opportunity to donate to a worthy cause, this will create a source of funds outside of our membership.

*Cons:* Silent Auction takes a lot of work.

### **Option 4) Encourage Planned Giving.**

*Pros:* Can be a good source of support, with low pressure.

*Cons:* Takes work to research this and communicate the need and options to people.

### **Option 5) Fundraise Specifically for New Property**

Many people in the sangha have expressed excitement about the prospect of new and improved facilities for DRZC, along with willingness to support the effort to acquire such facilities financially. It is always easier to fundraise for a specific and concrete object or project; once we have a possible property in mind, approach individual sangha members about visiting the property, and then about making gifts toward the purchase. Within 1-2 months we would know exactly how much capital we could count on through this fundraising effort. Even if we fail to obtain the property, we will have gauged the financial commitment of the sangha for consideration of another property.

*Pros:* Easier and more straightforward than trying to build a general fund for a future purchase. Also gives people more input in the choice and lets them feel like the new property partially belongs to them.

*Cons:* Takes intensive effort whenever we happen to find property that would suit us.

#### **Option 6) Use a Development Professional.**

*Pros:* A good development director is worth their weight in gold. They are good at helping people feel positive about their organization and about giving. They can personalize the fundraising efforts such that people feel more connected to the organization. This ties in with the “Make Use of Paid Help” option under staffing, as development and fundraising (including the Silent Auction) require a great deal of work.

*Cons:* Cost. Would require a careful search and hiring process.

### **IV. Sangha Input/Feedback/Concerns on this Focal Point**

There was a moderate amount of questions and answers about finances. Take home messages are that retaining members really helps and we are getting better at fundraising. There were suggestions about tithing, planned giving, wish list, raising fees, mindful work for money, and other fundraising events.

### **V. Recommendations**

**Combine Options 2-6.** 2) Ask Members to Increase Annual Giving; 3) Keep Developing the Silent Auction, Extending Base of Support Beyond Members; 4) Encourage Planned Giving; 5) Fundraise Specifically for New Property; 6) Hire a Development Director.

#### **2) Ask Members to Increase Annual Giving.**

Approximate increase needed: new donors from \$148 a year (average; this is \$12 a month) to \$295 a year (\$25 a month); retained donors from \$650 a year (\$55 a month) to \$974 a year (\$81 a month). Keep asking, generally and in person.

Introduce the option of a Tithing Membership, where a member would make a 2.5% “tithe” of their gross income. (This percentage was chosen to be reasonable but challenging. The \$81 a month goal for retained donors represents a 2.5% tithe of a \$38,880 annual income; Portland’s median income in 2009 was estimated at \$42,000 for a 1-person household, according to HUD, <http://www.ocpp.org/cgi-bin/display.cgi?page=2009povmedian>.)

Ideally a tithe would be of their gross household income, but if they have a partner who is not a member it may have to be the individual’s income. Special acknowledgements and thank yous would regularly be made to tithing members, as dedicated members who help make the temple available to all and invest in its future. The tithing aspect of it would allow people of all income

levels to participate equally. Those who could not (or did not want to) do this could still opt for other levels of membership. Have tithing membership option up and running by Sept 1, 2011.

### **3) Keep Developing the Silent Auction, Extending Base of Support Beyond Members**

This can be done primarily through building a list of regular attendees and by inviting individuals personally. Members have been and will continue doing this, plus the Development Director can be reaching out to people in the community that Dharma Rain touches. Ongoing.

### **4) Encourage Planned Giving**

Another job for the Development Director. Have a template ready, make a pamphlet and put an article in the newsletter about it by Sept 1, 2011. A new Development Director could take this further, approaching people individually.

### **5) Fundraise Specifically for New Property**

#### **6) Use a Development Professional.**

This overlaps with the “Make Use of Paid Help” option in the Staffing Focal Point. Starting with as few as 8 hours a week or so, increasing after a few years if it seems that we are on track with projected donation increases. Suggest visiting this possibility while budgeting for fiscal year 2011-12.

### **7) Monitor Growth in Membership & Donations Relative to Appendix B (Projection of Growth in Membership and Donations from 2010 through 2020)**

Budget decisions and projections regarding the Strategic plan can be made by comparing yearly budget data with this chart of growth in membership and donations. Before the Board commits to significant expenses, it can see how actual growth compares to the chart. If we are growing more slowly than the projections, caution can be exercised. Several important measurements can be monitored and tracked in addition to total membership and donations (number of new/reactivated donors compared to retained donors, donor retention rate, average annual donations of the different categories of members).

## **VI. Finances – Strategic Plan Task List**

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible Party/Parties</b>	<b>Closure</b>
July-August 2011	Investigate possibility of using a Development Professional during Budgeting Process	Board of Directors & Assistant Kanin	Adoption of 2011-12 Budget
Sept 1, 2011	Tithing – have description and process worked out, make available to membership	Development Director, Board	Present ideas at annual Board retreat for approval; make available

Deadline	Task	Responsible Party/Parties	Closure
Sept 1, 2011	Planned Giving – have a template ready, make a pamphlet, and write an article for newsletter	Development Director, Board	Report to Board at Sept 2011 meeting
Subsequent budgeting cycles (August)	1) Monitor growth in membership and donations relative to Appendix B. 2) Investigate possibility of using a Development Professional during Budgeting Process, or increasing hours for one that has been hired.	Board of Directors	Recorded in Board minutes.

# Appendix A: Strategic Goals

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This section provides page numbers for the strategic goals that have been proposed. All recommendations listed in each chapter's Recommendations section will be pursued.

[Facilities](#) Pg. 13-16

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[Rigor in Practice](#) Pg. 20-22

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[Children and Families](#) Pg. 26-27

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[Succession](#) and [Leadership](#) Pg. 30, 34

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[Related and Cohort Groups](#) Pg. 40-43

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[Staffing](#) and [Finances](#) Pg. 47, 52

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# Appendix B: Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

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## **Ongoing Monitoring**

The Strategic Planning Committee recommends the formation of a plan monitoring committee (PMC). This committee should be relatively small (4-5 members), and comprised of delegates drawn from the Board, Dharma Council, Strategic Planning Committee, and the Elders Council. Delegates should be willing to commit to meeting every three months for a minimum of the next five years. During meetings, PMC members are charged with reviewing plan recommendations and goals, and determining whether satisfactory progress is being made. Meeting minutes should be kept, and after each meeting a plan status report should be sent to the Chairs of the Board and Dharma Council. The Board and Dharma Council can adjust PMC membership at their discretion if plan monitoring functions are not proceeding satisfactorily. At its annual retreat, the Board should review the past year's strategic plan progress.

## **Amending the Plan**

In June of each year, the Chairs of the Board and Dharma Council are charged with touching base to determine if any amendments to the plan are needed. If amendments are in order, the Board and Dharma Council will schedule a joint meeting to consider and discuss the amendments proposed. Amendments will be adopted based on the group consensus of this joint meeting. If consensus cannot be achieved, the group should solicit assistance from the Elders or Ethics Council. Amendments to the plan should be limited to one amendment (or set of amendments) per calendar year.

## Appendix C: Communication of Plan

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These are the steps for communication of the plan:

1. SPC to send finalized plan to Board for review and vote at their 2/3/2011 meeting.
2. Upon approval, the plan and a shortened overview of the plan to be sent to the DRZC webmaster for posting on the web site.
3. An announcement of the plan's approval and links to the web postings will be sent in the weekly sangha-wide email bulletin.
4. The Dharma Council and Board will work together to discuss the strategic plan at the Spring 2011 Sangha Forum.
5. Genko will print hard copies of the full length finalized plan and put one copy in the tea room at the Zendo and one at the Dharma House.
6. A short announcement about the plan will be sent in the March edition of StillPoint (Annen to draft and send to Genko).

# Appendix D: Description of Strategic Planning Process

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This appendix provides an overview of the planning process used to generate this strategic plan. It is provided in the interest of transparency, and as a point of reference for those who may be charged with strategic planning in the future.

## Initial Planning

Dharma Rain developed a new organizational model, the mandala model, in 2008. This model was intended to address and support the growing size and complexity of our operations and programs. In this model, the Board and Dharma are jointly charged with strategic planning. In the Fall of 2009 an initial meeting was held to discuss how such joint strategic planning might proceed. The outcome of this meeting was as follows:

### **DRZC Board / Dharma Council Joint Strategic Planning**

12 November 2009

**Present:** Kyogen, Annen, Kakumyo, Shisei

#### **I. Initial Questions for Discussion**

##### **A. How does the Board view the annual retreat? What is its function?**

Clarify that the summer board retreat is now for dealing with annual reports and other business that doesn't fit in the regular meeting agenda. It's not a strategic planning process, but deals with ongoing strategic concerns (e.g., issues of membership, fiscal management, organizational functioning, communication, etc.) from a Board perspective.

The Board and DC each have responsibility for various aspects of membership and communications matters, and handle them as a matter of course. Transitions such as teacher training fall under the DC; succession is a Board responsibility. We seem to be handling them on an ongoing basis rather well.

##### **B. What now belongs in what we call Strategic Planning?**

In the past, items in the strategic planning review included: membership; communication; transitions; succession. A brainstormed list of current items that should be included:

1. Transition of teaching responsibilities (primarily DC's domain)
2. Succession (primarily Board's domain, with Elders Council input)
3. Membership & communications
4. Facilities, assets, property (Do we add another building? Rent a facility for Dharma School? Buy and move to a larger campus?)
5. Programs (e.g., Dharma School, Residency, Retreats)
6. Carlsons' retirement
7. Monastics & their support

##### **C. How do we – Board and Dharma Council – view Strategic Planning?**

It would be very useful for Board and DC members to look all of the above items through the lens of five and ten year planning.

Note from Kyogen: I'm enthusiastic about the growth and development of the sangha right now. Lots of new members, people stepping forward. I think we would be smart to make use of the momentum and enthusiasm of growth and new members.

## II. Recommendations

- A. Take these ideas to the Board and DC and get input.
- B. We suggest a joint strategic planning group consisting of the two abbots, the Development Director, and two reps each from the Board and Dharma Council. A series of meetings to start in March or April. This will be a series of relatively extended meetings to take place in quick succession. This will allow the group to gain momentum and keep track of planning.
- C. Report and feedback at Sangha Forum in the spring.
- D. Goal is to generate a DRAFT strategic plan by the end of Spring 2009 term. Submit it to the Board and Dharma Council in time for the Board's summer retreat.
- E. More reporting and feedback at the Sangha Forum next Fall.

### Board Amendments to these recommendations (12.3.2009):

1. Minutes of each of the series of the strategic planning meetings (see Recommendation B) will be distributed to the Board and Dharma Council after each meeting for review.
2. There will be a joint meeting open to all members of the Board and the Dharma Council to discuss the recommendations of this sub-committee, prior to referring the recommendations to both bodies for approval.

The abbots at their discretion may invite additional persons to participate in the strategic planning meetings. The Board moved, seconded, and unanimously accepted to accept the Strategic Planning committee's procedural recommendations as amended by these 3 suggestions.

## Formation of the Strategic Planning Committee

Dharma Council and Board strategic planning delegates were identified in early 2010. The first Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) meeting occurred in March 2010, and a series of meetings were held during the spring. The SPC:

- Reviewed our current mission statement and developed a vision statement
- Discussed current organizational strengths, weaknesses, trends, and limitations
- Identified areas of strategic concern. After some initial brainstorming, these were defined as succession and leadership, facilities, rigor in practice, finances and staffing, and children and families. These were termed focal points.

Some initial work had been done on developing focal point strategic goals when a sangha member and a member of the SPC both raised the issue of the need for broader sangha involvement in strategic planning. After hearing and discussing these concerns, the SPC agreed, and developed a communication plan to provide strategic planning information to the sangha and to solicit sangha input and feedback into the process. A copy of the communication plan provided at the end of this Appendix. In accordance with that plan, an online strategic planning survey was developed and sent to sangha members, and an extended series of meetings was held to discuss focal areas and collect sangha feedback and input. Regular strategic planning updates were sent to the sangha via our weekly email bulletins, and we established a web site and online forum for strategic planning documents and discussions.

## Strategic Plan Development

The SPC met before, during, and after the Cohort and Topic meetings to discuss feedback received. Once the Cohort and Topic meetings were complete, the SPC met to review all feedback and begin incorporating it into focal point recommendations and goals. Each focal point owner took responsibility for drafting a focal point summary, including strategic goals, and putting this into a standard format. These were then sent to the SPC lead for compilation into a master plan.

A complete draft version of the strategic plan will be sent for review to the Board of Directors, Dharma Council, and Elders Council by December 1, 2010. Edits, suggestions, and comments should be returned to the Strategic Planning Committee no later than December 31, 2010.

A meeting to review the revised plan will be held in early January, 2011 (no later than January 11). All members of the Board, Dharma Council, and Elders Council will be invited to discuss and review the revised plan, and to determine recommendations and next steps. Avenues for communicating the plan to the sangha will be discussed at that meeting and, once determined, will be added to Appendix D. Possible communication avenues include:

- Holding open meetings for the sangha to review and comment on the plan
- Posting the plan to the Dharma Rain web site
- Publishing portions of the plan in StillPoint

Final revisions of the plan will be completed by January 31, 2011, and the final version will be sent to the Board, Dharma Council, and Elders Council by February 1, 2011. The Board will be asked to vote on adoption of the final plan at their February 2011 meeting.

## Strategic Planning Communication Plan

**The purpose of this communication plan is to:**

- Raise awareness in the sangha regarding the strategic planning process
- Foster transparency of the strategic planning process
- Ensure avenues for sangha participation, input, concerns, and feedback

Proposed communication methods are:

### Live Meetings

Our suggested approach is to schedule two types of meetings. Both types of meetings would have the same general format. The meetings would be facilitated by someone from the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). After a short presentation, each session would provide an opportunity for comments, questions, ideas and discussion. There would be a designated note-taker at each meeting. Notes from each session would be taken back to the SPC and also posted on-line (see the section on Electronic Communication, below). The purpose of both types of meetings would be to build awareness, to hear ideas and respond to concerns by involving members in small groups, and to get a deeper level of feedback about what works and what doesn't for specific groups in the sangha.

**Cohort Meetings**, for particular groups within the sangha that may share particular interests, needs and perspectives.

Suggested approach: Schedule at one meeting per cohort between July and October. If other groups within the sangha identify themselves as having a particular perspectives in relation to the strategic plan, additional Cohort Meetings may be scheduled. Suggested cohort meetings are:

Date	Meeting Type	Time, Location	Strategic Planning Delegates
TBD	Cohort: Lay Teachers	TBD	Kyogen, Gyokuko, Annen (note

			taker), Kakumyo or Domyo
July 24 (Sat.)	Cohort: Lay Disciples	7-9 PM, DH	All SPC Members
July 29 (Thurs)	Cohort: Full Members	7-9, DH	Domyo, Genko
Aug. 3 (Tues)	Cohort: Residents	7-9, DH	Kakumyo, Shisei
Aug. 11 (Wed)	Cohort: New Members	7-9, Z	Kakumyo, Annen
Aug. 15 (Sun)	Cohort: Parents (childcare provided)	10:30-11:30, Z	Gyokuko, Annen

**Topic Meetings**, which each address one focal point of strategic planning.

Suggested approach: Schedule five Topic Meetings between July and October, one on each topic listed below. Suggested Topic meetings are:

Date	Meeting Type	Time, Location	Strategic Planning Delegates
Sept. 8 (Wed)	Topic: Succession and Leadership	7-9, Z	Kyogen, Gyokuko, Annen
Sept. 12 (Wed)	Topic: Children and Families	7-9, DH	Gyokuko, Kakumyo
Sept. 21 (Tues)	Topic: Rigor in Practice	7-9, DH	Kakumyo, Shisei
Sept. 30 (Thurs)	Topic: Facilities	7-9, SH	Gyokuko, Kakumyo
Oct. 2 (Sat)	Topic: Finances and Staffing	2-4, DH	Gyokuko, Domyo, Annen

**Sangha Forum** in October will include a strategic planning status report, including information about where Dharma Rain is with this process, what we have learned so far, ongoing ways to provide input and feedback, what are the emerging ideas, and perhaps some ideas about how we may actualize them.

### Electronic Communication

**Establish an on-line forum** to foster sangha member involvement with the process and invite ideas, feedback, questions and discussion. This would be linked to DRZC's home page and the bulletin emails. This could be a blog, or Wetpaint, or something where people can post comments on different threads/forums. SPC members would moderate the focal areas they are most involved with. The minutes/notes from strategic planning meetings would be posted here so people could easily access them. It will be important to keep this site current so members know that they are getting all the information as soon as it becomes available. We would need to identify a resource to help with set up and maintenance of this type of forum. Suggested time frame for establishing this: July 2010.

**Include strategic planning information in the current weekly bulletins** emailed to DRZC members. This would consist of a short paragraph about the strategic planning process, its current status, and provide information about how to get more involved. These bulletins may also be posted on DRZC's Facebook page. Suggested time frame: As soon as possible.

**Develop and distribute an online survey** to gather information about sangha priorities, concerns, and ideas. Paper copies of the survey could also be made available.

Suggested time frame: Distribute survey in late July or early August; analyze results by the Sangha Forum in October.

### Other Considerations

- A. Develop consistent verbiage/descriptions for strategic planning focal points to foster shared understanding and clear communication.
- B. Determine how we will monitor, acknowledge, and celebrate involvement.

- C. Take advantage of current activities and avenues to raise awareness about strategic planning: Still Point newsletter, Lay Disciple potlucks, Elders' Tea, discussions, etc.
- D. Publicly identify the members of the SPC
- E. SPC, Board, and Dharma Council should become ambassadors for this process, willing to have conversations with the sangha about it and to receive questions and concerns.
- F. Leadership visibility. It is important for the Carlsons to show clear involvement in and support for the strategic planning process. Active, visible sponsorship is a key element of successful change. Important aspects of this support include:
  - a. Communicating why change needs to happen.
  - b. Gathering support for the process.
  - c. Articulating goals – what they want to see, but not presupposing how it will come about.