

# DHARMA COUNCIL MEETING

November 9, 2023

*The Dharma Council provides oversight and stewardship of Dharma presentation and practice at DRZC to support its core mission and values.*

In Attendance: Kengan, Jyōshin, Sanin, Thomas, Gabe

Absent: Jlko, Daiko, Christina

Facilitator: Kengan

Location: Uji

Recorder: Gabe

## Agenda

1. Tiny Meditation
2. 60-Second Check-in
3. Approved Minutes from prior meeting
4. Next Meeting Date: January 11, 2024
5. Member Concerns, if any: There was enthusiasm expressed by a number of sangha members for having Ejo McMullen from Eugene Zen Center come to DRZC to offer chanting training. **Action Item: Thomas will explore the possibility of inviting Ejo to lead a chanting training with the Abbot.**
6. Updates on action Items from previous meeting(s)
7. Questions/Topics for Today's Meeting:
  - a. Review of recent class evaluations
    - i. *Background:* The DC was asked to review the evaluations for [Wisdom Sutras Fall 2022](#) and [Issues in Leadership Summer 2023](#)
    - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:*
      1. There may be additional class evals that the DC needs to review.
      2. Questions: What is the purpose of the evals? Would it be useful to post/store class syllabi and evals in an accessible place for future teachers of a class to reference? Answers: The evals currently function primarily as feedback for individual teachers to inform how and what they teach, and for the Dharma Council to track how Dharma presentation is being received. It's unclear how helpful it would be to create a new repository for syllabi and evals.
      3. It's helpful for teachers to get a reminder from the seminary registrar to distribute the class evaluations.
    - iii. **Action Item(s): Sanin will check to see if there are other evals needing to be reviewed by DC.**

- b. Request to provide text versions of talks on the DRZC Website
  - i. *Background:* See 10/13/23 email request forwarded from Genko: "I really ask you, if possible, to provide a printed version of the lectures and sermons of your masters"
  - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* The teachers circle (DRATT) was not in favor of posting printed versions of talks due to copyright issues, practice issues, and workload issues.
  - iii. *Decided:* The DC concurs with DRATT on this issue.
  
- c. Question/Topic: Approval for Kakumyo's two leadership requests
  - i. *Background:*
    1. Kakumyo is hoping to lead the Wed night classes at Dharma Rain in the later half of Spring 2024 after the precepts and the Bodhisattva class series, 4/17/24 to 5/29/24 (seven weeks). Topic to be "Koans"
    2. Kakumyo also would like to lead the Term Student Program in Spring 2024, specifically Mar 30, April 20, May 18, all dates from 830-430. The theme/topic would be: developing skill in describing and understanding our dharmic experiences - insights, zazen, mindfulness, etc... Would cap it at 15; require membership, a previous full sesshin and fall term student program; each retreat day would be a mix of formal practice, guided mindfulness exercises (done and processed in-group), and structured discussion.
  - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:* Sounds great!
  - iii. **Action Item(s): Kengan will reach out to Kakumyo to communicate the DC's approval and enthusiasm.**
  
- d. Retrospective: For each of our areas of responsibility, how has it been this past year? Council roles will be reevaluated/rebalanced in January. Discussion may include what was accomplished, what is left to do, your involvement / time commitment, as well as any observations you would like to share.
  - i. *Summary of main discussion points:*
    1. Kengan (Position 1 - Facilitator): It's been a joy to be in the DC Facilitator role. Very helpful to have a secretary. Good group dynamics and group functioning. Easy ride.
    2. Gabe (Position 2 - Secretary): Appreciating the straightforwardness of the role. Feel good about the Dharma Council's processes and documents becoming more organized.

3. Thomas (Position 7 - Workshops, Study Groups, New Offerings): Light workload - only one new offering proposed. Question: is each role equally weighted in terms of workload? Could more be folded into this role?
  4. Jyoshin (Position 3 - Strategic planning): Nothing to do explicitly, but has reviewed the Strategic Plan as a perspective from which to engage with the DC and guide our work.
  5. Sanin (Position 5 - Seminary, Talks, Classes): There is room to develop more clear delineation of what responsibilities lie with the Seminary Registrar position versus Position 5 on the DC.
- e. Health of the Sangha (standing agenda item) - any observations on trends or other items of note?
- i. *Summary of main discussion points:*
    1. There are somewhat different groups attending Weds vs. Sundays. This could be related to folk's differing schedules, but also to differences in group size and demographics on those different days. Some people start by attending Weds nights and after building some comfort, begin attending on Sundays.
    2. Good feedback from neighbors about the uplifting impact the property has on the neighborhood as a place to walk and enjoy nature.
    3. Appreciation expressed for opening up Hand in Hand program meetings to folks who didn't do the Hand in Hand training - expanding the benefits of support and knowledge through a wider swath of the community.
8. Recurring Monitoring Reports j Announcements
- a. Temple Officers: discussed scheduling times/space for sanzen; tightening transition in sesshin between soji and breakfast; looking into issues with Volgistics (used for scheduling volunteers); a member is going to Keizan's 700th anniversary in Japan next year and we'll have a brief memorial service here in April; there was a cremation service for Shisei; Rohatsu web registration form coming soon; Dogen study group is going well. No meeting in December.
  - b. Dharma Rain Active Transmitted Teachers: Nothing to report
9. Action Item Assignments