

## DHARMA COUNCIL MEETING Minutes

2/13/25 7-8:45 PM

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

In Attendance: Myo'i, Jiko, Daikō, Jyōshin, Ko'in, Reiju, Konen, Brian

Absent:

Facilitator: Daiko

Location: Zoom due to weather

Recorder: Konen

### Agenda

1. Tiny meditation
2. Brief check in
3. Discussion with Dharma Garden Council members about further integration of programming was *postponed until our March meeting*.
4. Next meeting: March 13th. Daikō will be out of town. We need a volunteer to facilitate the meeting. *Plan on Jyoshin unless she is working*.
5. Member concern: Member expressed concern about the scheduling of half day Zazenkaï during winter months when it gets dark early.
6. Updates on action items
  - a. Updates on action Items from previous meeting(s):
    - i. Ko'in will work on updating the *Steps to Conduct Class Evaluations* process document. **Ko'in reviewed this; it seems fine.**
      1. Concern that there's a lag time with evaluations. Perhaps this is due to the evals getting stuck in the timeline. Process is okay.
    - ii. Daikō to orient Brian to the Affiliated Groups Liaison position. Daikō to check with Sarah to see if she is still on the DEI committee - **Done.**
    - iii. Sarah is not on the DEI committee. We need a DEI liaison from the Dharma Council
      1. *Ko'in is on the Open Gate DEI committee and can be liaison*
    - iv. Temple officers to discuss late arrivals and coordinate with the Guest Master team about asking late arrivals to wait to enter the zendo. - **Done.**

1. Plan to ask people arriving after the presenter completes the ring down. *Jisha will open the door again to announce sanzen. Late arrivals will wait until the first zazen session is over to enter the meditation hall.*
- v. Daikō and Brian will coordinate on communication to the Affiliated Groups about Dharma Cloud Day. Jiko will see if there is a Dharma Rain teacher who would be involved in the planning. Done - working on coming up with a new date.
- vi. *Trying to arrive at a date for Dharma Cloud Day.*
  1. *No one has responded to possible dates. Zen West responded that May isn't good—said Jan, Feb, and March are the best months for them. No one else has responded. So May dates will probably be full soon. We're now looking at June and July dates. Brian will send another email out about dates. Desire seems there but scheduling is difficult. Maybe we should schedule it a year in advance and not change it. Brian will send another email out to that effect. April is the month when we've done it in the past.*
- vii. Daikō to invite members of the Dharma Garden Council to our next meeting. **Done** -
- viii. Jiko to work on a quiz. Daikō to talk to Daigai about the Sangha Forum presentation. Daikō to coordinate with the Board about their presentation.
  1. *It's still an open question what's going to be most important to present at Sangha Forum.*

## 7. Questions/Topics for Today's Meeting:

- a. Question/Topic: Plans for Sangha Forum
  - i. *Background:* Dharma Council is facilitating the next Sangha Forum on April 13.
  - ii. Introduce current DC members. Quiz. The Board of Directors will have a brief update (about 5 minutes). Daiko will invite the Sangha Council to do a more extensive presentation about volunteer opportunities, service as practice, team leaders, etc. Who else should we invite to present (Dharma Garden Council, Open Gate, Prison Group, update on New Member Advisor)?? We will review the Dharma Council Mandate. Mention: There is a lot going on, classes, workshops, study groups, cohort groups and scheduling at times is a challenge; recent Precepts class was increased from 6 to

8 weeks, we have additional listening devices and more seating in the zendo, we are looking at and may be modifying the class evaluation process, Spring term student program with focus on the Genjokoan, solving the problems of everyday life, was a response to sangha input. Current focus on integrating Dharma Garden and adult sangha programming, Things to come: Bigger print sutra books, The Little Library, Dharma Cloud Day, NW Pilgrimage, Summer Social. Anything else???

- iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)
- iv. **Action Item(s):**

b. Question/Topic: Strategic Plan (Jiko)

- i. *Background:* We have met the goals of the current strategic plan, and are in the process of developing a new one.
- ii. *Summary of main discussion points:*
- iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)
- iv. **Action Item(s):**
  - 1. Will have focus groups in the fall for members of the sangha to come to. Members of the councils should come to at least one if not all of the focus groups and be prepared to answer questions. We agreed to create a rudimentary plan. Looking at a three to five year plan. Working with SWOT plan (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) in relation to age, gender, income, monastic vs. lay, etc . . . Looking at all who are affected by the plan. Maybe need to add someone who is representative of new members. Will meet every month and make this yearlong plan.
  - 2. Strategic Plans: long range visions with very specific goals that are hammered out under multiple domains. Hoping to make a new plan this time. The last plan gave Dharma Council very specific goals to try to achieve, i.e. increase the number of young people in the sangha. Hope to end up with general long-range achievable goals. Lindsay and Jen are putting together data on the change in membership to account for attendance disregarding the period of the covid pandemic. Question: is there a program that it's time to sunset? Is there something we do that has fulfilled its time. Strategic plan reports are on the website. We reached our goals of previous plan in spite of the pandemic.

3. Plan ahead to be at focus groups in the fall. Times will vary so everyone will have a chance. Carry with you: What would your three major goals be for the temple in the next three years. What are you most threatened by for the temple. Also consider breadth vs. depth. Are we short changing one for the other or not? Jiko will bring a report from their meeting every month. Will show SWOT graph at some point.

- c. Question/Topic: Recognize Seminary Graduates?
    - i. *Background:* Previously there has been a brief recognition of seminary graduates on a Sunday morning.
    - ii. *Summary of main discussion points:*
    - iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)
  - d. Health of the Sangha - any observations? (standing agenda item)
    - i. *Summary of main discussion points:* Weds night classes are going especially well. Quite a lot of people in attendance. Might be 21 people taking precepts at Jukai. Weds. night group is very different than Sunday group.
    - ii. Myo'i: should we advertise the Foundational Teachings more? They're well attended. Could advertise it at the Buddhist Festival in the summer. Could be important for greeters to feel empowered to give their view when asked what we're doing by a new person.
    - iii. *Decided:* (review [Equity Lens](#) for significant decisions)
    - iv. **Action Item(s):**
8. Recurring Monitoring Reports and Announcements
- a. Temple Officers: We met on 1/25/25. Sutra Book reprinting is in progress. The NW Pilgrimage will be postponed until 2026. Discussed rescheduling of Dharma Cloud Day. Discussed large entities to the zendo on Sunday morning. There is a lot going on and scheduling in general is very challenging
  - b. Dharma Rain Active Transmitted Teachers: Didn't meet last week. Not sure when next meeting will happen.

- c. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Open Gate): We met on 1/26/25. We are working on a list of non-police resources, to be shared in a few places. Planning a forum on the topic of inclusion, mainly council process with some discussion. Doing some preliminary work with Sangha Council and Tsuho around members feeling a sense of belonging, particularly newer members.
- d. Affiliated Groups: Brian report.
- e. Other Reports/Announcements

9. Action Item Assignments

- a. *Per Dharma Cloud Day: Teachers are coming together next month—on March 1st from 2-5—so Dharma Cloud Day can be brought up at that meeting. Jiko and Jyoshin can ask about it and report back.*
- b. *Brian to check with Sokuchu to see if there's space in the newsletter for a write-up about his visits to other sanghas.*
- c. *Brian to offer to all the groups: Dharma Rain will be having Buddhist Festival at Dharma Rain on July 12th.*
- d. *Daiko will check with Dharma Garden about how much time they need at the Sangha Forum. Can also check with them next month.*
- e. *Reiju: Parties for Dharma Council. Almost all Saturdays in August are unscheduled. Grab 8/2. Reiju will add it. Just call it the sangha party.*
- f. *Per announcing graduates of the seminary program: This process went away years ago. Maybe we should announce everyone who has graduated in the last three years. Ko'in to give Jiko a list of current graduates. Ko'in will look into how to announce the graduates.*
- g. *Per member concern about Zazenkai ending after dark: Perhaps this member could approach the leader of that particular Zazenkai and ask for a blessing to leave early. If it's a problem with driving in the dark, perhaps people could arrange rides/carpool—perhaps through the sangha support network. Daiko will circle back with her.*