



## End-of-Year Reflections from the Abbot

We brought our 2013 training period to a close at Dai Bosatsu Zendo with a profoundly transformative Rohatsu Sesshin. Inspired by Hakuin Zenji's Rohatsu Exhortations, each person's daring spirit was palpable. Several sat all night. The sound of the bonsho at dawn, the brilliance of the morning star—ah!

Not in spite of, but because of the challenges that have come our way, the practice at the Zen Studies Society has grown stronger, deeper, and more resolute. At the conclusion of Anniversary Sesshin at DBZ, we engaged in a moving and restorative ceremony of atonement and healing, with a listening circle offering everyone a safe space to give voice to their feelings. We plan to make this an annual event, with more frequent councils as needed.

The natural beauty of DBZ fosters our inner maturation and outward engagement. Everyone who comes here—whether for a weekend, a sesshin, or a training period—is struck by what a unique treasure this place is. Our residential program, samu volunteers, deeply moving O-Bon and other ceremonies, and our many Open Space guest retreats manifest the true spirit of Namu Dai Bosa. To participate in this dedicated community of bodhisattvas is to grow ever more aware of and responsive to the needs of the world around us. Each day, we renew and dedicate our vow to manifest insightful practice through compassionate service.

Looking ahead to 2014, we will continue to offer Introduction to Zen and samu weekends, sesshin, and spring and fall kessei (intensive training periods), with an expanding Open Space program emphasizing healing and wellness, yoga and other movement practices, retreats for and readings by poets and writers, and various Zen-related creative endeavors. Other programs on the horizon include two guest Sangha retreats, one led by Enkyo Pat O'Hara Roshi of Village Zendo and the other by Junpo Denis Kelly Roshi of Mondo Zen.

In an ongoing examination of how to develop sustainability for DBZ's facilities, we are investigating replacing our forty-year-old wood furnaces with a geothermal heating system, as well as other energy-efficient technology.

I will lead our January Martin Luther King Jr. Sesshin at New York Zendo. March-On Sesshin will also take place at New York Zendo this year, and will feature guest teacher Gentoku Kobayashi Roshi, abbot of Shokoku-ji in Kyoto, one of the most important Rinzai temples in Japan. We expect a big turnout for both, so be sure to send in your application soon by emailing Shobo-ji Resident Manager Zuiho, [office@newyorkzendo.org](mailto:office@newyorkzendo.org).

At both DBZ and New York Zendo, we have all worked very hard to make the Zen Studies Society a shining example of a healthy, trustworthy, and inspiring community that shines as a beacon of Buddha's wisdom. I bow deeply to each one of you for all you have done to make this possible. Whether you are an old-timer or a newcomer, or someone in between, your voice is valued, respected, and essential.