



SHINING BRIGHT  
**LOTUS**  
MEDITATION SOCIETY



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



## From the Spiritual Director

Welcome! Welcome! Our first year as a Buddhist community was marked by the welcoming of all people, regardless of race, gender, social status, gender preference, or spiritual belief. Our teacher Jun Po Roshi was committed to offering his dharma teaching to anyone and everyone. Shining Bright Lotus Meditation Society actively pursues inclusion by offering our signature retreats – the Mondo Zen Intensive and Gently Sitting Like a Stone with the intention of making these retreats accessible.



How? With the support of our generous donors like you, and from a grant from the Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism, we were able to remove the financial barrier to participation at our retreats in 2023. This led to a marvelous Mondo Zen Intensive experience, with our staffing positions primarily held by people of color. No longer was there just one person representing diversity at our retreats, we were multicultural. (Read more <https://www.shiningbrightlotus.org/sblms-blog/mzi2023-report>)

Gently Sitting Like a Stone was offered at All Nation's Gathering Center in South Dakota. Koto Dallas Chief Eagle continued to develop his dharma wisdom, through teaching, presence and guidance with horses. Supported by his daughter, Delacina and his son Roman, we gracefully witnessed and walked with the equine spirits that live with Koto Washi in Yellow Bear Canyon. This retreat hosted a Jukai Ceremony in which three of our members took vows for stream entry at Hollow Bones Zen. (Read more about Zen Ko Ryan Harriot, Daijo Scott Duffer, and Ming Po Larry Matthews page 4 & 5). This ceremony was followed by Inipi – the traditional Lakota Purification Ceremony. Many look forward to returning again this September of 2024.

To support diversity, our members and donors offered over \$7000 in financial assistance for participation in our retreats, over 17% of our overall budget. This does not include the sliding scale fee structure that allows anyone to enroll in our training programs regardless of socio-economic status.

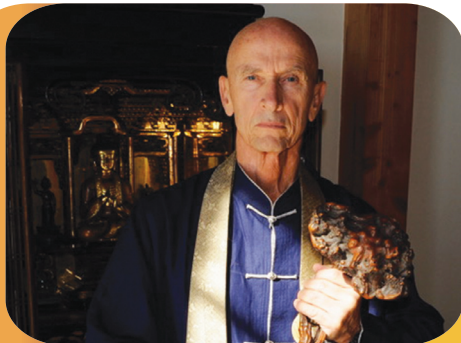
Throughout this year, much of the infrastructure required to safely and securely serve as a community were put in place. The Board of Director established a regular rhythm of meeting with Shoan Victoria Montanez serving as Chair, Soshin Lisa Baitzell serving as Secretary, Ming Po Larry Matthews serving as Treasurer, with Heisoku Mak Bain, and Engo Michael Jackson completing the board membership. The board developed our mission statement. *"Our mission is to foster a diverse, inclusive community, dedicated to awakening through Buddhist teachings, promoting personal and interpersonal healing through ethical and compassionate action."* We established Shining Bright Lotus as a member organization. As of December 31st, 2023 we have 21 members. We launched our first online practice period in partnership with One Wisdom Zen. We became a member of the Association of Spiritual Integrity and an affiliate of Zen Peacemakers.

Please continue to look further into this annual report to learn about who we are and how we are growing as a sangha committed to Jun Po Roshi's Dharma. More importantly, please join us as we deepen our practice through our weekly meditation practice online, our monthly Sacred Ceremony, or our retreats and training programs. You'll find our community receptive and welcoming. You are welcome to join just as you are and bring your uniqueness into our circle.

Blessings,  
Ekai Joel Kreisberg



## Remembering Our Teacher – Jun Po Roshi



“Shoan, it is up to you now!”

— Shoan Victoria Montanez

I did not have the pleasure of meeting Jun Po in person yet I did have the honor of spending time with him on Zoom. Specifically a Mondo Zen weekend, Jukai and whenever he would pop into Virtual Zendo. I specifically remember Dokusan and his absolute serenity emanating through the ‘screen’. We talked about letting all the ‘stuff’ that had happened in the past stay in the past. To live in the here and now. He said, (in sum and substance)-notice your reactions and how they are not rooted in what is happening right here and right now. They are directly related to the story you continue to carry. Let it go . . .

— Soshin Lisa Baitzell

“Wake Up! No one can do this for you. Go Sit.”

— Ming Po Larry Matthews

I am embracing the Sovereign King energy that I continue to receive from Jun Po Roshi as I walk the path that he has laid out through his teachings. It is up to me to garnish the fruits that he has offered and continue planting the seeds that can be relished by others who choose to partake in the lessons that I pass on.

— Heisoku Maik Bain

Jun Po Roshi, in my observation, was completely awake and realized and simultaneously completely human and fallible. He was the real, whole and complete deal. And, I never put him on a pedestal or followed him blindly, nor did he ever ask for such. I knew very quickly I wanted to find what he had found, I wanted to seek the truth he had sought. So I dedicated over 10 years to practicing and studying with him and he shared everything he had to give, freely and openly. I will continue to practice, do everything I can to fully realize “the truth”, and share whatever I can with anyone and everyone who likewise seeks this for themselves. For everything he taught me I am deeply and eternally grateful.

— Engo Michael Jackson

Jun Po Roshi modeled fierce compassion. He would poke me on the way out of the zendo whenever I was falling asleep on sesshin. “Wake up!” With a big smile on his face. His voice compassionate and firm.

— Ekai Joel Kreisberg

Just returned from a “40 Days, 40 Nights” Kessei Retreat at DBZ, where my favorite job around the Monastery was “Tombstone Cleaning.” Much to my delight, I was moved to tears when I noticed the edit they made from the Mondo Zen Manual to the inscription on Jun Po’s Tombstone: “Our Angst Becomes Our Liberation” became “Your Angst is Your Liberation.”

— Fugen Roshi



## Taking Jukai With Hollow Bones Zen

We are welcoming three 'stream-entrants' to the Hollow Bones Lineage. Zen Ko Ryan Harriot, Diajo Scott Duffer, and Ming Po Larry Matthews. Shoan Victoria Montanez caught up with Zen Ko and Daijo. Their sharing is below. Ming Po joined Fugen Roshi for a 40 day Kessei, practice period at Dai Bosatsu, our root monastery. He shared about his experience in a blog posted on our website. We've included an excerpt.

### **Zen Ko Ryan Harriot – The Way of Silent Illumination**

Zen Ko's story started in 2002 when he would first meet Junpo. He attended an eight day sesshin in 2004. Fast forward to 2021 during Covid, he resubscribed to Hollow Bones Zen through the Virtual Zendo and the Sunday Sangha joining us for the in-person Mondo Zen Intensive last year. As the universe would have it, Zen Ko had planned to take Jukai a couple of times, but life got in the way. Things happen in the readiness of time, he was honored to take jukai with Fugen Roshi at Gently Sitting Like a Stone.

Zen Ko or The Zen Way of Silent Illumination, experienced stream entry as a homecoming, steeped-in tradition both Fugen Roshi and Ekai are authoring. He recently started his own sitting meditation circle Emmeus, PA and has observed that more folks have started showing up once he began wearing his Rakusu. I ask what he would say to somebody who is considering Jukai, Zen Ko, with the confidence of a man who walks the journey, said "remain open to the possibilities" he is continuing this training in the two year clergy training program at Dragon Heart Dharma.



Ming Po Larry Matthews, Diajo Scott Duffer, Zen Ki Ryan Harriot with Fugen Roshi

### **Daijo Scott Duffer – The Middle Way of Grateful Grounding**

Daijo's story starts with the connection to Fugen Roshi as well. Fugen Roshi stepped in and supported him at a ManKind Project program in 2010. Hailing from Woodland Hills CA, it would take over ten years for the two men to meet again after Scott joined the CyberSangha at Hollow Bones Zen. The online programming developed by Ekai at Hollow Bones Zen offered Daijo a means to deepen his connections. It wasn't until 2023 with Gently Sitting Like A Stone that he was actually able to sit in person with the sangha. The two years of preparation provided the necessary fuel for him to take his vows as a stream entrant. Daijo shared "I didn't give jumping into the deep end a second thought, as I felt safe enough to jump in knowing there is a strong Sangha and path to keep me from drowning. The experience included moments when separation flickers and oneness remains – Atta Dipa. The ones who are on the path with us, they shape us, we shape each other, we are one."



## The Heart of the Mothership

At dawn of my first morning, I was awakened by the rhythmic cadence of temple bells and the soft footsteps of other resident monks getting ready to arrive at the Zendo before the last bell. The simplicity of this preparation struck me; the elegant robes, bare wooden floors, paper screens filtering soft sunlight, and the subtle fragrance of incense wafting through the air as we all finally took a seat on our cushions.



My initial days were dedicated to understanding the monastery's way of life. I was assigned to a small room with a tatami mat, wool blankets, a pillow, a lamp, and a window looking out on the lake. Our daily routine began early and ended late. Because of the ongoing essential silence, I discovered my mind's own deep emptiness and stillness while sitting four to six hours each day. At some point there was no difference between sitting, working, eating, and sleeping. My active mind seemed to fade and disappear.

Days turned into weeks, and the monastery became my flow and sanctuary. In the afternoon, I joined the monks tending to the kitchen, doing the laundry, cleaning the Zendo, or drinking tea in silence at our dharma or poetry classes. The simple tasks started becoming an embodiment of another form of meditation. Each activity was performed with mindfulness, turning mundane tasks into expressions of spiritual devotion and joy.

As the days went by, I found myself not just participating but becoming an integral part of the monastery's rhythm. My heart opened, insights deepened, and the boundary between self and surroundings blurred. The flow of the present time became my teacher, and the monastery, my classroom.

In the quiet moments before bedtime, I would often go outside (even in the snow), to be alone under the starlit sky, and to reflect on the day's lessons. The cold breeze carried whispers of wisdom from our past lineage, embracing me in a timeless dance of love for my Buddhist dharma and my own Shining Bright Lotus Sangha.

By Ming Po Larry Matthews, Boulder, CO.



Full blog available  
<https://www.shiningbrightlotus.org/sblms-blog/heartofmothership>

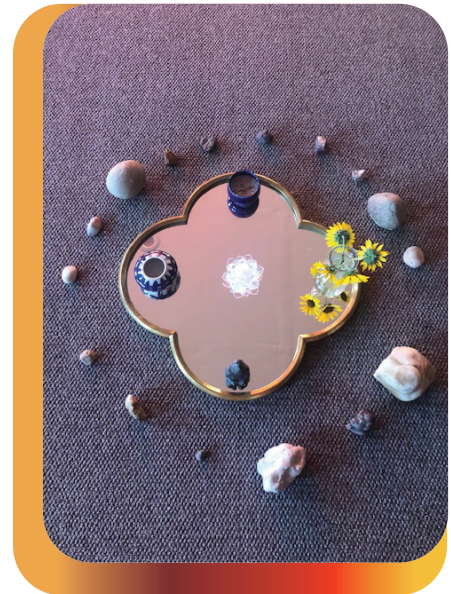
Ming Po is currently the Shuso, head student, at Shining Bright Lotus Meditation Society. Six weeks after the jukai ceremony, he joined Fugen Roshi for a 40 day kessei period at Dai Bosatsu Monastery in the Catskills, NY. Pictured here (left) with Chigan Roshi, the new Abbot of DBZ, and Fugen Roshi.



## Gently Sitting Like a Stone



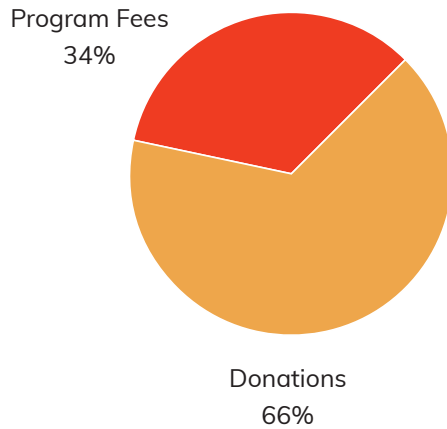
Hosted at All Nation's Gathering Center, Gently Sitting Like a Stone returns annually to continue our partnership with Koto Washi Dallas Chief Eagle and Fugen Roshi of Dragon Heart Dharma. Join us this year September 11 - 15, 2024.  
<https://www.shiningbrightlotus.org/events/gslas-24>



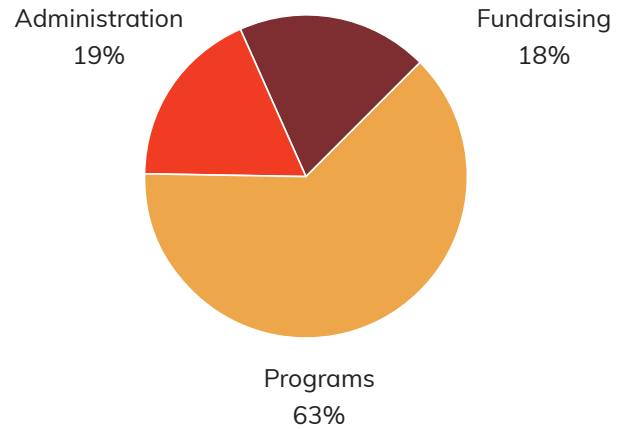


# Financial Summary 2023

**Total Income**  
\$39,771



**Total Expenses**  
\$36,217



## Donors 2023



- Abel & Willow Walker
- Heisoku Maik Bain
- Soshin Lisa Baitzell
- Hakue Wendy Buffett
- Lisa Cardo
- Susan Clark
- Karen Cuthbertson
- Daijo Scott Duffer
- Tom Faltns
- Lesley Freed
- Zenko Ryan Harriott
- Taisan Bruce Iverson
- Engo Michael Jackson
- Alan Jacobson
- Jewish Community Foundation and Endowment of San Francisco
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- Sam Kreisberg
- Nanda Nina Lynch
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- Ming Po Larry Matthews
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- The Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism
- Elizabeth Tomboulian
- Pablo Tomeo
- Elisabeth von Baldas
- Marleen Vrancken
- Jamie Wellik
- Lev White
- Eric Williams



# 2024 Retreats and Training Programs

## Retreats

**February 23 – 25**

**Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Freedom**

Online Retreat

In partnership with One Wisdom Zen

With Emyo Darlene Tataryn

**March 21 – 24**

**Mondo Zen Intensive**

Online Retreat

In partnership with Dragon Heart Dharma

With Fugen Tom Pitner Roshi

**September 11 – 15**

**Gently Sitting Like a Stone**

In-Person Sesshin

In partnership with Dragon Heart Dharma and All Nation's Gathering Center

With Fugen Tom Pitner Roshi & Koto Washi Dallas Chief Eagle Kyle, South Dakota

## Training Programs

**April 15 – May 20**

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm ET (Six Mondays)

**Opening the Heart: Mondo Facilitation and The Path of Liberation - Part 1 –**

**Ego Deconstruction/Reconstruction Koans**

With Ekai Joel Kreisberg

**March 30 – May 18**

12:00 Noon – 1 pm ET (Six Saturdays)

**Eight Brocades Qigong**

In partnership with Iron Mountain Zendo

With Jozen Jonathan Fielder

**October 7 – November 11**

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm ET (Six Mondays)

**Opening the Heart: Mondo Facilitation and The Path of Liberation - Part 2 -**

**Emotional Awareness Intervention Koans**

With Ekai Joel Kreisberg

**PARTNER**



**MEMBER**



**AFFILIATE**



**STAFF**

Ekai Joel Kreisberg, Spiritual Director

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Shoan Victoria Montanez, Chair of the Board

Soshin Lisa Baitzell, Secretary

Ming Po Larry Matthews, Treasurer

Heisoku Maik Bain

Engo Michael Jackson

**ADMINISTRATION**

David Leskin, Administrator & Tech Support

**MISSIONS STATEMENT**

Our mission is to foster a diverse, inclusive community, dedicated to awakening through Buddhist teachings promoting personal and interpersonal healing through ethical and compassionate action.

Shining Bright Lotus Meditation Society

PO Box 101

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[www.shiningbrightlotus.org](http://www.shiningbrightlotus.org)

Photos Courtesy of Janet Seidel & Bodhi William Prince

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Mondo Zen Intensive 2023

