



CENTER  
OF  
DENVER

*Realizing Our Vision  
Temple Renovation Business Plan*

## **The Zen Center of Denver – Overview and Summary**

During the course of the year, approximately 600 men and women come in contact with the Dharma at The Zen Center of Denver through public meditation, Zen talks, and the more intensive introductory seminars. Roughly 150 of these people elect to become Associate Members who may then attend almost all Zen Center activities. Associate Members support the temple by making a donation of their own choosing whenever they attend a Zen Center service. At present, the Center has 80 full-Supporting Members who contribute monthly dues and commit to a prescribed level of participation in Zen Center events. The Center's central vision is to provide authentic Zen Training for lay people, and to safeguard the tradition by producing qualified teachers. This is the function of the Lotus in the Flame Temple. The name itself is deeply evocative of the potential for spiritual awakening in the midst of the marketplace.

In 1998, to realize fully this vision, the Center re-located from a small, modified residence into a larger, highly visible religious structure located in the historic Highlands neighborhood of Northwest Denver. Since the move, the Center now opens its doors to the general public for Zen talks, meditation sessions and teaching of the Dharma. A Thousand Hands Unlimited, a community outreach program, operates in a limited form in the new facility. The School of Zen Arts and Studies will open to the public upon completion of facility renovations.

Our new building has great potential to provide a framework for authentic, engaged Zen training and to become a highly visible center for the nurturing of the Dharma for future generations. However, its current configuration is wholly inadequate for these purposes. We must renovate the facility to provide for our Zen training activities (meditation hall, and devotional and training rooms), The School of Zen Arts and Studies, our community outreach programs, residential facilities, offices and other necessary improvements.

***The Zen Center of Denver is implementing a major renovation of its facilities. The Center is raising money from within the sangha and from donors to fund this important project. The renovation project is crucial to the successful implementation of our vision. Your support will help make our vision a reality. The Zen Center of Denver is a nonprofit, tax exempt 501(C)(3) religious corporation.***

***The renovation project requires \$4,700,000 of capital funding.***

## History of the Zen Center of Denver

The Center was established in 1974 as an affiliate of the Rochester Zen Center, Rochester, New York. From 1974 to 1989 the members practiced Zen Buddhism at a small converted residence on Columbine Street, in Denver's Congress Park neighborhood. Members were guided in their practice by affiliate teachers sent from the Rochester Zen Center.

In 1989 Philip Kapleau Roshi sanctioned Danan Henry Sensei as a full teacher and installed him as the Spiritual Director of the Zen Center of Denver. With a resident teacher, the Center grew in size and depth, developing greatly expanded programs of daily meditation, devotional ceremonies, regular Zen talks, Zen arts and Zen based therapy and counseling.

The limited space of the Columbine house could not adequately support formal Temple practice and an envisioned set of programs. In 1998, the Sangha made a decisive move that would allow for expanded formal Temple practice as well as Zen related programs for the public, and a shift toward greater community involvement. The Center purchased and moved into an impressive structure in Northwest Denver, an imposing neoclassic building, completed in 1929, designed by the renowned Denver architect Burnham Hoyt, the Fourth Church of Christ Scientist.



*Columbine St. Location*



*Current Location*

The move to the new facility opened a new era in the evolution of the Zen Center of Denver. Now situated in a large, visible, religious structure, the Center opened its doors to the general public while further developing its strong philosophy of intense lay training, modeled after traditional monastic forms. The move from a small house on a side street into a highly visible religious structure can be seen as a metaphor for the evolution of Zen in the West.

## **Zen Center of Denver Vision**

The Center is dedicated to the accomplishment of a vision that incorporates three areas of focus.

- Formal Zen Training
- A Thousand Hands Unlimited
- School of Zen Arts and Studies

## **Vision for The Zen Center of Denver**



**Lotus in the  
Flame Temple**

**School of Zen  
Arts and Studies**

**A Thousand Hands  
Unlimited**

### Formal Zen Training (Lotus in the Flame Temple - Monastery Without Walls)

Historically, the authentic religious experience of Zen has been safeguarded by those who have forsaken secular life to seek enlightenment as monastics or hermits. At this time in the history of our tradition, we find ourselves in a real dilemma. Because the monastic movement is almost non-existent and irrelevant to a majority of practitioners, the responsibility for keeping and teaching the Dharma rests primarily in the hands of the laity. The responsibility is ours. We cannot assume that the monastics will “ride to the rescue” of the Dharma. For the better part of a decade, the Lotus in the Flame Sangha has been striving to implement a model of lay practice and training that can safeguard and transmit the Dharma. This is the Monastery Without Walls program, a new form of Zen training for the deeply committed lay practitioner.

The goal of the Monastery Without Walls program is to make it possible for serious lay practitioners to transform their lives such that they live with greater equanimity and compassion for the benefit of all beings. To accomplish this the Center’s Monastery Without Walls program provides an intensive approach to lay practice based upon consistent, long-term formal Temple training and guided systematic practice integrated into the course of everyday life away from the Temple.

The Monastery Without Walls is unique among lay practice models. It includes the training elements of commitment and accountability that includes a full schedule of morning and evening meditation periods, all-day meditation sessions on the weekends, 7-day meditation retreats, regular private instruction from the teacher and training in all of the positions responsible for the operation of the Temple.

### Formal Zen Training (Lotus in the Flame Temple – Practice in the Marketplace)

There is a strong tendency for lay people to separate formal practice at the Temple from daily life -- to simply cease practicing the moment they get off the meditation mat and leave the Temple. As long as one conceives of practice as only taking place in the Temple or in periods of formal meditation, there is no possibility for cultivation of practice in the midst of engaged activity. The practice of mindfulness in one’s daily life, extends Zen practice into the marketplace. Mindfulness practice includes exercises assigned by the teacher to be carried out in the student’s daily life and reported on during private interviews with the teacher.



## **Practicing Zen in the Marketplace**

### A Thousand Hands Unlimited - Community Outreach and Engaged Buddhism

Arising naturally from proper Zen training is a greater ability to respond to the sufferings of the world. Increasingly freed from the bonds of self-concern, the student is more able to respond compassionately to the needs of family, friends and the community at large. By way of further eroding self-centeredness and enlarging the heart of compassion, serious Zen students training in the Monastery Without Walls program often participate in community outreach programs. Such programs, though modest, have included:

- Ongoing meal preparation for the Urban Peak Youth Center
- Contributing materials and labor for improvements to Gathering Place (a women and children's shelter) and the Tenemos House (an assisted living facility).
- Pet therapy programs for the elderly.
- Annual banquet sponsorship for RESULTS (a non-profit Congressional lobby for the disadvantaged).
- Participation with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship in cleaning up parks and streams.
- Personal support for homeless individuals and refugees.
- Assistance with Zen practice for the incarcerated.
- Assisting in construction of homes for Habitat for Humanity.
- Benefit peace concerts.

It's the aim of members actively engaged in these efforts to further develop the Center's programs and approach to the work of engaged Buddhism.

## The School of Zen Arts and Studies

The Center, located in a highly visible, religious structure, opens its doors to the general public with the vision of sharing Zen Dharma, Zen Arts and Zen oriented physical disciplines. Once our facilities are renovated, the full range of classes and activities will include:

- Zen talks
- Zen Art classes
- Tai Chi and Hatha yoga
- Zen Based Counseling
- Calligraphy
- Ikebana (flower arranging)
- Public meditation sessions
- Lectures

### **The Strategy - Turning the Vision into Reality**

To turn our vision into reality, the Center will raise money for and begin a renovation project that will transform the Christian Science Church into a new Zen Buddhist lay training temple and a School of Zen Arts and Studies. This renovation and expansion will directly support the continued growth, expansion and deepening experience created by formal Zen practice, engaged Buddhism and Zen education and the arts.



The Zen Center of Denver has completed the first phase of its renovation project, the architectural design phase. The Center's architects, SlaterPaull, have created the preliminary schematic designs with cost scenarios and project time phases.

### **Financing Required and Fundraising Plan**

The full renovation project requires \$4.7 million dollars of capital funding.

#### Fundraising

The Fundraising Committee will be responsible for the implementation and management of fundraising efforts to support Capital and Endowment funds for the renovation project and ongoing support of the Center.

The Fundraising Committee operates with the following strategy.

- The Board of Directors will oversee the types of organizations and individuals from which funds will be solicited and accepted.
- The Sangha will be fully briefed and educated on the goals and objectives of the fundraising initiatives as well as all information needed to present a consistent message to potential donors.
- The Sangha will be expected to raise a substantial portion of the funds, through individual donations and special events sponsored by the Center.
- The fundraising committee will concentrate its fundraising efforts within the domestic and international Buddhist communities targeting both individual and organizational sources for funds.
- During the course of the fundraising for renovation of the Center, actions will be taken to raise the visibility of the Center through advertising, enhanced Web interface, direct mail, press releases, magazine articles and other means.
- A variety of collaterals will be used to articulate the message of the Center, and all collaterals will be consistent in look, feel and message. These collaterals will include a comprehensive plan, brochures, letters, enhanced Web site, advertising and other methods.

### Financial Status and History of the Center

The Center has successfully funded its continued operations and expansion, since its founding in 1974. With approximately 80 members, the Center is currently cash positive with regard to ongoing operational costs. It should be noted that the operating costs of the new facility are substantially greater than those at the Columbine facility, and the sangha has risen to the challenge to successfully raise the operating funds required by the larger facility.

### Key Financial Events in the History of the Center

1974 - Purchase of the Columbine House

1998 - Sale of the Columbine House for a net profit of \$218k.

1998 - Purchase of the Fourth Church of Christ Science

1999 - Sangha met the increased operating expenses of the new facility

2001 - The mortgage of the new facility was forgiven.

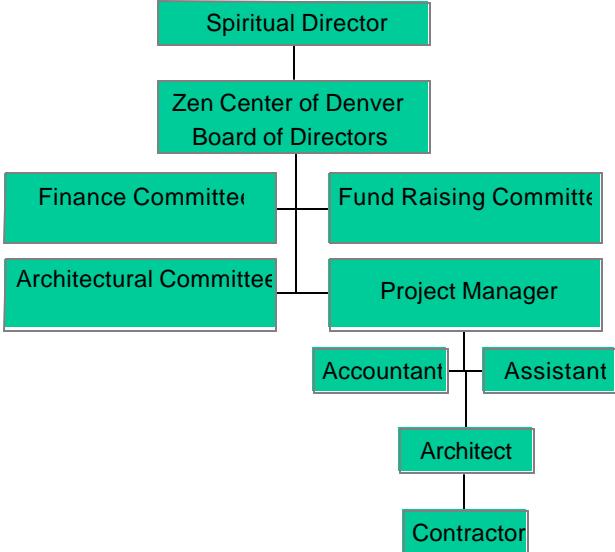
The new facility provides significantly enhanced opportunities for income generation resulting from usage of the 800-seat auditorium. The auditorium stage, lighting and sound are capable of hosting events such as weddings, concerts and lectures. In 2002 the Center hosted three benefit concerts, two classical music concerts, one wedding, a school recital and the Relics of the Buddha exhibition sponsored by the Maitreya Project.

Financial Management and Controls

The Center’s Board of Directors is responsible for the financial management of the Center. A member of the Center who is a professional CPA manages the Center’s formal set of accounting tools to keep track of its financial position. The Board reports the financial condition of the Center to the sangha once a quarter. The Board has set up a separate accounting for fundraising and renovation to maintain visibility of ongoing operational performance of the Center.

**Project Management and Controls**

The Architecture and Design Committee will appoint a Project Manager who will serve as the single point of contact with the architect and contractor. The Spiritual Director, Board of Directors, Finance Committee, Architectural Committee and Fundraising Committee will jointly develop, review and approve the detailed project plan.



Management Structure for Center Renovation Project

The Project Manager will manage the renovation project per a set of management guidelines and procedures set by the Board of Directors that include:

- Selection criterion for contractors
- Time phasing of renovation in support of objectives and ongoing Zendo training
- Approved master project plan
- Formalized change management process
- Formal review process and review schedule
- Financial controls and management controls (project management team)
- Approved cost estimates
- Formal accounting (separate from normal operations) for:
  - Capital fund for renovation
  - Endowment fund for enhanced operations of renovated Center

The Project Manager, with the coordination and guidance of the Board and Committees, will manage the day-to-day operations of the renovation project, report project status to the Board, and coordinate changes, as required with the contractor.

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