



Minnesota Zen Meditation Center

2025 Monastic Residencies

Report to the Community

Throughout 2025, MZMC had the privilege of hosting three Buddhist women monastics for a period of deep practice, teaching, and cultural exchange.

The residencies of Tenmyo Dojima, Chikyo Imura, and Sister Pearl Pham enriched our community with perspectives grounded in long-standing Buddhist tradition as well as the lived experience of contemporary monastic life in Asia and the U.S. Their presence brought warmth, dedication, and a spirit of shared inquiry that touched everyone who practiced with them.

They contributed teachings rooted in compassion, ethical clarity, and disciplined practice; offering our sangha a rare opportunity to learn directly from women who have dedicated their lives to the Dharma. Their engagement strengthened our understanding of global Buddhist lineages, supported women's leadership in Buddhism, and helped build bridges between American and Asian practice communities.

The residencies also fostered personal connections. Community members had opportunities to speak with the monastics in both formal and informal settings, creating a sense of shared humanity and mutual learning. Whether during sewing practice, shared meals, or simple moments of conversation, the monastics' openness and presence invited practitioners into deeper awareness and connection.



Chikyo Imura giving Dharma



Sister Pearl Pham with Unkyo Ginny Gelms and Gyosho Leslie Erickson

I am grateful for the opportunity to have served as a visiting teacher resident at MZMC. I extend my thanks to community for their warm hospitality, which contributed to an enriching and memorable experience. Engaging in one-on-one meaningful conversations with members allowed for valuable exchanges about our daily practice and respective spiritual paths."

*-Sister Pearl Pham
2025 MZMC Resident*

"Chikyo's spirit shined bright during her stay. Her infectious kindness and willingness to be vulnerable opened up so many possibilities for me and my practice that I'm not sure I even knew existed before."

- Doshin Turbak

"We are always so grateful to share meditation and dharma insights with our visiting sisters, but especially with Sister Pearl who is a long time sangha friend. Her warmth and dedication to practice is truly inspirational."

- Margaret Pfeffer

Highlights From Their Stay

Throughout their time at MZMC, the monastics participated in and contributed to many aspects of community life. They offered dharma talks and Q&A sessions that explored themes of ethical conduct, mindfulness, and the challenges and joys of monastic life. They joined daily zazen and weekly practice periods, strengthening the atmosphere of stillness and commitment in the zendo. Chanting services and traditional ritual forms were shared, giving practitioners a direct experience of practices rooted in Asian Buddhist cultures.

The monastics also met individually with students and priests-in-training, offering guidance, encouragement, and compassionate listening. Their presence illuminated the essential continuity between global Buddhist traditions while affirming the unique and evolving character of American Zen.

Another memorable element of the residency was the opportunity for shared sewing practice. Working together on rakusus and okesas, the monastics and priests discovered how the simple act of stitching becomes a metaphor for the ways we weave our traditions, cultures, and lives together. These moments of quiet concentration and shared purpose deepened relationships within the community.



Tenmyo Dojima with Randy Wedin, Ben Connelly, Ted O'Toole, and Doshin Turbak

“Having tea with Tenmyo offered me the rare opportunity to connect with someone undergoing traditional and rigorous Zen training, while also deeply understanding the nuances of lay Zen practice in the U.S. Her kindness and openness made our time together especially meaningful, and I truly valued the connection!”

- Jey Ehernhalt

It was wonderful to hear from Tenmyo what Zen practice looks like in different countries. I was interested to learn about her path to becoming a nun. But I was most inspired by seeing a woman like me be so devoted to the practice.

-Katie Albright

Lasting Impact on Our Sangha: The visit of the three monastics has had a meaningful and lasting impact on our sangha. Their teachings and presence renewed our community's commitment to daily practice. Their perspectives enriched our appreciation of the diversity and depth of global Buddhist traditions. Their leadership strengthened our commitment to supporting women's roles in contemporary Buddhism. And the relationships formed during their stay continue to inspire ongoing curiosity, compassion, and openness.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism for making this residency possible, and to all members of the MZMC community whose participation and enthusiasm helped make this exchange so deeply meaningful.