DOJOS AND TEMPLES

How can our Practice Places Respond to Today´s World?

Sangha Symposium, 28–29 December 2026

ASSOCIATION ZEN INTERNATIONALE
FONDATEUR MAÎTRE TAISEN DESHIMARU

60 ANS DE ZEN EN EUROPE (1967-2027)

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Over the past sixty years, nearly two hundred Zen practice centers have sprung up throughout Europe. These dojos and temples are now treasures that offer silence, peace, and the opportunity to discover our Sōtō Zen tradition in a supportive environment.

This symposium invites us to reflect together on the desirable, and sometimes necessary, changes and adaptations that today's world demands. The profound and rapid changes in our Western cultures must find their place in our practice without compromising its authenticity. Zen, a model of adaptability and flexibility, will rise to this challenge and demonstrate its creativity and renewal, much like fresh water gushing from an ancient mountain.

How do our places of practice – dojos and temples – respond to today's world?
Six questions will be explored in workshops, followed by group discussion.

At least one workshop will be held in English.

1. **Life in the Dojo and Finding Balance**
How does the spiritual life of a dojo and the practical management of its organisation fit together? What expectations do groups have? How does each person — practice leader, practitioner or teacher — find their place in a shared life that preserves both the spirit of practice and the smooth running of the dojo?

2. The Dojo and the Sangha
What connections does a dojo have with the wider sangha around it? How can we foster and maintain relationships with neighboring dojos and temples? How can we open ourselves to the wider Sangha without losing the distinctive character of our own place of practice? What role does the spiritual advisor (referent) play in the life of a dojo?

3. **Tradition and the New Faces of Practice**
Our relationship with tradition, our elders, and monks and nuns is evolving. Some people are drawn to Buddhist culture without wishing to commit to a demanding practice, while others are drawn to rituals and rules. People also come to practice centres already familiar with contemporary approaches such as mindfulness and non-duality. Between being open to society's expectations and remaining faithful to traditional forms, where does each of us stand?

4. The Practical Forms of Teaching
Dojo rules, posture correction and the kyōsaku: how are these forms of teaching received today? What do they convey, and what meaning do they hold for a new generation of practitioners?

5. Zen in the Digital Age
Social media is shaping new relationships, artificial intelligence offers an always-available listening ear, and online teachings provide a range of approaches without geographical constraints. All of this now permeates our daily lives and our practice. What do these developments make possible, and how do they change a practice grounded in presence?

6. Compassion and Rigour
There is a strong expectation of kindness and compassion today, both in society and in our places of practice. How is the Zen tradition viewed in light of these expectations? What can the discipline of practice offer in response, and what questions do these expectations raise about the way we teach and welcome others?