

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP

Instructions and Information:

* Please have a copy of the [SZBA Membership Standards](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jqy4QjBgsgOKtIjXWfnzaB7CcXjXooZs/view?usp=sharing) in front of you as you work on this application. Please read the standards thoroughly before writing your application and refer to them often as you write.
* It will take several hours to complete this professional application. Please treat this application as a formal piece of writing. Write rough drafts for each of your long form responses and then revise them several times later on for clarity, completeness, spelling and grammar, especially after receiving feedback on earlier drafts. Please clearly number all responses and/or write your responses directly into this form. Many of these questions will require a paragraph, or even several, to adequately respond. Please consider the scope of the question carefully and write thorough answers that cover all aspects of the question asked.
* Please ask your primary teacher (Honshi) to help you with the preparation of this application by: 1. Reading and giving you feedback on your application 2. Signing your application before submitting. If your primary guiding teacher is no longer available for such review, you may ask a senior teacher who is a member of SZBA to act in their stead.
* Due to the pandemic, we strongly prefer that all submissions be sent digitally to [info@szba.org](mailto:info@szba.org). If this is a barrier for you, please let us know and we will send you our postal address.
* As a general rule, please take care to spell out abbreviations and describe any trainings fully. Membership committee members represent different Soto Zen lineages and may not be familiar with every temple’s terminology and the various post-ordination trainings each temple offers.
* Please read the [SZBA Ethics Statement](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cad04a670468021b884ede4/t/6102e825b3c13f3deeb2eb9b/1627580453633/SZBA+Ethics+Statement+%282%29.pdf) thoroughly; you agree to abide by it by becoming a member. Note that it requires you to have and abide by a temple/center or individual ethics statement as well. If you are covered by an existing temple/center statement, send it to Anna (SZBA Operations Coordinator) [info@szba.org](mailto:info@szba.org). If you are not covered by an existing statement, you need to draft a personal one using [this template](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WmlOppJppgcv1UDd4X_gTv-epTsNCHJP/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115399890518016601519&rtpof=true&sd=true); let the Operations Coordinator know if you need any help with that.
* The application fee is $25 and the annual membership for full members is $150. All members renew on February 1st each year. Once we approve your application, it will be entered into the membership website, Wild Apricot, which will generate a prorated invoice that will be emailed to you. Please submit your application fee through SZBA's [secure Affinipay link](https://secure.affinipay.com/pages/szba/payments?reference=application%20fee&readOnlyFields=reference&amount=25). Please note that if you need to pay reduced dues that is perfectly acceptable; we value your membership. Let us know what you can afford to pay.
* The SZBA recognizes that to create equity, proactive ongoing efforts to create a multicultural, inclusive, and accessible community are necessary. As a part of this effort we have created the Membership Application Equity Council (MAEC) to provide support and accommodations to applicants for SZBA membership who are members of marginalized communities such as, but by no means limited to, people of color and people with disabilities. [**To apply please fill out this form**](https://szbaforms.wufoo.com/forms/membership-application-equity-council-request-form/), or feel free to contact info@szba.org with questions.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are required.

Contact Information

1. Dharma Name\*

2. Legal First Name\*

3. Legal Last Name\*

4. Preferred Full Name\*

5. Honshi’s Full Name\*

6. Honshi’s Home Temple\*

7. Email address\*

8. Current Mailing Address\*

9. Home Temple – Name

10. Home Temple – Address

11. Home Temple – Website

12. Home Temple – Phone

13. Home Temple – Email

14. Position and Title in Temple  
  
  
Soto Zen Training:

This section provides the basic information about your novice training.

15. **Ordination Date** (Month, Day, Year).**\***

16. **Ordination Location**\*

17. **Ordination Teacher** (Full Name)\*.   
If you changed teachers after your ordination please explain how the transfer of discipleship came about, and whether or not the change of teacher was accepted by the original teacher. Please include a copy of the letter agreeing to the change of discipleship. Review the SZBA Ethics Statement, section 3, “Teacher to Teacher Relationships” for assistance.

18. **Is/was your ordination teacher an SZBA member in good standing?\*** (This is not a requirement for your membership, but may provide context for your application.)

19. **Practice Intensive in which you served as Shuso**

Dates (starting and ending month, day, year)

Location

Teacher

20. **Shuso Ceremony**

Month, Day, Year

21. **Please list all ordained Soto Zen priests present at your Shuso ceremony**

22. **Dharma Transmission Date\*** (Month, Day, Year)

23. **Dharma Transmission Location\***

24. **Dharma Transmission Teacher\*** (full name)

25. **Is/was your Dharma Transmission teacher an SZBA member in good standing?\*** (This is not a requirement for your membership but may provide context for your application.)

Seven Categories of Standards

There are seven categories of standards beyond Ordination, Shuso Service, and Dharma Transmission for Full Membership in the Soto Zen Buddhist Association:

Training Under Qualified Soto Zen Teachers

Intensive Practice

Sangha Service

Soto Zen Knowledge and Embodiment of Form

Character Development

Knowledge of Buddhist Teachings

Ministerial Training

1: TRAINING UNDER QUALIFIED SOTO ZEN TEACHERS

Section A: Intensive period of formation as a priest

26. **What were the dates of your intensive training?\*:**

Begin: (month, day, year) End: (month, day, year)

27. **Describe in detail your regular daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly schedule of training during this intensive period.\*** This includes your daily schedule outside of sesshin (please don’t include your hourly sesshin schedule here), and how many days per week and average hours per day that you spent at your temple(s) of training. Please describe the types of activities included in your regular schedule.

Section B: Guidance by a primary mentoring teacher

28. **Describe in detail all the ways in which your primary mentoring teacher guided your training during this intensive period of formation\***

29.  **Describe your understanding of the role of transparency and accountability for priests and how transparency was cultivated with your teacher and sangha during your intensive period of formation.\***

2: INTENSIVE PRACTICE

Section A: Sangha Practice

30. **Describe in detail how you supported and were supported by your practice community(ies) throughout your period of priest formation.\*** Be specific with dates of your participation and details about your practice community so that the committee can understand how it functions as a monastic, residential, or temple-centered environment.

Section B: Sesshin

31 **Describe in detail a typical daily sesshin hourly schedule during the time of your priest formation.\***

32. **Provide the dates for all sesshin days completed after priest ordination.\*** (If you don’t have exact information, please estimate to the best of your ability.) *(Starting Date-Ending Date, Location)*

Section C: Formal Practice Intensive (minimum of one 90-day or four 3-week formal practice intensives)

33. **Please list the specific dates (starting and ending month, day, year) of all SZBA-Recognized Formal Practice Intensive(s) along with the supervising teacher(s) and locations, and explain in detail how these practice periods met the** [**Criteria for an SZBA-recognized Formal Practice Intensive**](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1l4ZN-EYkfIaaVvqhENZVX0X1u_GAzAJx/view?usp=sharing)**.\***

3: SANGHA SERVICE

Section A: Shuso service described above.

Section B: Traditional sangha service roles

48. **Describe your experience in at least three of the following service roles and how each of them were important to your training and how they were important to the practice of your sangha\*:**

* Practice Coordinator
* Work leader
* Teacher’s Attendant / Jisha
* Head Cook / Tenzo
* Head of Zendo / Ino
* Temple Officer
* Teacher’s Assistant

Section C: Service in teaching roles

49. **Describe in detail your experience teaching Dharma classes, leading sesshin, or leading a meditation group.\*** Be specific with dates and descriptions of content.  
  
50. **What was the role of evaluation and feedback during your novice training? Who provided evaluation and feedback on your teaching/leadership?** Please describe what you learned through receiving evaluation and feedback.

4. SOTO ZEN KNOWLEDGE AND EMBODIMENT OF FORM

Section A: Providing zazen instruction

51. **How were you trained/taught to give zazen instruction?\***

52. **What is your approach to working with the wide range of people who you may be called on to give instruction in zazen?\***

53. **What is your approach to ongoing zazen instruction with seasoned practitioners?\***

Section B: Ceremony

Please describe how you were trained in each of the following. Include who trained you, where you were trained, and relevant dates:  
  
52. **Regular Soto Zen services, special ceremonies such as weddings, funerals and lay precept ceremonies, and other important ceremonies in the liturgical year;**

53. **Proper use of traditional Soto Zen ritual implements such as drum, bells, clappers, incense, bowing mat, and teaching stick (kotsu);**

54. **Care and wearing of priest garments, movement, posture and timing;**  
  
55. **Care for and use priest eating bowls (oryoki), instructing others in their use, and leading formal meals.**

Section C: Practice discussion and informal practice instruction

56. **Please describe what you learned from your teacher’s guidance on leading and otherwise interacting with sangha members in various aspects of Zen practice, in both informal and semiformal settings.\***

57. **Please describe your experience learning to conduct practice discussion. Include a short explanation of appropriate boundaries.\***

Section D: Giving a dharma talk

58. **Describe your training in organizing and giving a Dharma talk. Please share an example of helpful constructive feedback you received from your teacher and/or peers.\***

Section E: Dokusan/sanzen with sangha members (If applicable)

59. **Describe your lineage’s forms for dokusan (sanzen) and practice discussion.**

60. **What is most important in encountering students in dokusan and practice discussion? In what way were you trained / taught to stay centered in Buddha Dharma during dokusan and practice discussion?**

5: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Section A: Personal conditioning habits, and tendencies

61. **Name some of your own entrenched habits of thought, speech and action that could potentially interfere with your function as a priest and explain the role of feedback from your primary teacher on working with these. What feedback was particularly helpful for you (eg. an “aha moment”)? How might consulting with another teacher or a professional counselor complement or offer additional support in your Zen practice?\***

Section B: Stability and commitment in sangha relations

62. **Describe an incidence of conflict within your sangha relations in which you were able to use the difficulty in practice to further insight for yourself while supporting the practice of the sangha?\***

63. **Describe the role of mentor and peer relationships in your practice. How do you plan on maintaining peer support as you move in the role of Soto Zen teacher?\***

Section C: Sustaining oneself over a lifetime of religious leadership

64. **Describe the importance of balancing the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the sangha with your own personal needs. Please include your understanding of the meaning of professional boundaries - what they are, how they manifest, and their purpose.\***

6: KNOWLEDGE OF BUDDHIST TEACHINGS

Section A: Study of the development of Buddhism and its foundational Sutras

65. **Which of the following foundational sutras have you studied in a formal way? For each sutra you have studied describe in detail the approach to study, the dates of study, and the core ways in which you bring that sutra forward in your practice and teaching.\***

* Lotus Sutra
* Prajnaparamita Sutra in 8,000 Lines
* Heart Sutra
* Lankavatara Sutra
* Mahaparinirvana Sutra
* Vimalakirti Sutra
* Other: (Please list below)  
  (Other) Early Buddhist Sutras

Section B: Soto Zen Teachings

66. **Which of the following Soto Zen teachings have you studied in a formal way? For each text you have studied describe in detail the approach to study, the dates of study, and the core ways in which you bring that text forward in your practice and teaching.\***

* Bendowa
* Genjokoan
* Fukanzazengi
* Tenzokyokun
* Uji
* Zazenshin
* Bussho
* Denkoroku
* Zazen-yojin-ki
* (Other) Please list additional writings of significant Japanese Soto Zen ancestors (such as Dogen or Keizan) studied. (eg. from Shobo genzo, Eihei Koroku, Eihei Shingi, Shobogenzo Zuimonki, etc.)

Section C: General study of Buddhist and Ch’an/Zen texts

67. **What foundational Zen (Chan) texts have you studied in a formal way? (such as Faith in Mind, Platform Sutra, Harmony of Difference and Sameness Precious Mirror Samadhi, Book of Serenity, Blue Cliff Record etc.) For each you have studied describe in detail the approach to study, the dates of study, and the core ways in which you bring that sutra forward in your practice and teaching.**  
  
68. **What Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy texts have you studied in a formal way? (such as the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, Nagarjuna’s Middle Way, Vasubandhu etc…) For each you have studied describe in detail the approach to study, the dates of study, and the core ways in which you bring that sutra forward in your practice and teaching.**  
  
69. **What other Buddhist traditions have you studied? For each you have studied describe in detail the approach to study, the dates of study, and the core ways in which you bring that sutra forward in your practice and teaching.**  
  
70. **What modern teachings from America have you studied in a formal way? For each you have studied describe in detail the approach to study, the dates of study, and the core ways in which you bring that sutra forward in your practice and teaching.**

7. MINISTERIAL TRAINING

Section A: Sangha ministry

69. **Explain your approach to offering guidance to students regarding life choices from the perspective of Buddhist teachings.\***  
  
70. **Explain when it is appropriate for a Zen teacher to refer a student to a professional counselor.\***

71. **How are healthy boundaries important while working with people?\***

Section B: Working with people during times of transition

72. **Describe your training and/or experience supporting people experiencing significant life transitions or difficulties such as serious illness, the dying process, or coping with significant loss.\***

Section C: Community Leadership Skills

73. **List all formal training and/or experience in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA).** (Race, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, culture, ability, etc.)

74. **List all formal training and/or experience in Buddhist and/or professional ethics.**  
  
75. **List all formal training and/or experience in conflict resolution and group dynamics.**

Section D: Respectfully relating to other faiths and traditions

76. **Describe all direct experience working with and understanding people from other faiths and traditions** (such as participation in local charitable organization, participation in interfaith events, or course work in comparative religion).

References, Ethics Statement & Signature

77. **Please provide 2-3 references who can a) verify that you are authorized to teach, b) verify that you are in good standing with your organization and have no pending ethics complaints, and c) provide a character reference.\*** (Provide their name, title, relationship to you, and email or other contact information.)  
  
  
78. **I understand that only completed applications will be considered. I authorize the SZBA and its representatives to discuss me and the information provided on this application with the reference(s) provided. I certify that I have no pending ethics complaints of any kind and that all information on this application is true and correct. \***(Please sign your name)

79. **I have submitted an individual or temple ethics statement.**  
*This is required. If you have a question about this submission, please contact* [*info@szba.org*](mailto:info@szba.org)*.*

80. **I have signed the SZBA Ethics Statement.**\*

*This is required. If you have a question about this submission, please contact* [*info@szba.org*](mailto:info@szba.org)*.*

Demographic Information

We gather this information in order to support and measure progress toward SZBA’s goals for diversity, inclusivity, equity, and access. All information in this section is optional.

**Date of Birth**

**Gender: How would you describe your gender?** (please select one)

* Female
* Male
* Gender non-binary
* Prefer not to answer
* Other: (please specify)

**Ability: Would you describe yourself as** (please select one)

* Able bodied
* Have a longstanding physical illness or disability
* Have a longstanding mental illness or disability
* Prefer not to answer
* Other: (Please specify)

**Do you identify as LGBTQIAA+?**

* Yes
* No
* Prefer not to answer

**How do you identify? Select all that apply**

* Black/African
* East Asian
* Hispanic/Latin
* Indigenous/Native American/Alaska Native
* Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
* South Asian
* White
* Prefer not to say
* Other: (please specify)

**Please list all languages spoken fluently**:

**Signature of Applicant:**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of Honshi (Primary Teacher):**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date application submitted:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**