

An aerial photograph of a vast vineyard in a rural, hilly landscape. The vineyard is divided into several rectangular plots by dirt paths. In the foreground, there are rows of young grapevines in a fenced-in area, with a small concrete structure nearby. The background shows rolling hills, scattered houses, and a utility pole with a yellow crane. A semi-transparent green banner with white text is overlaid in the center.

• ZEN TEMPLE GYOGENJI •

The Project

- Nestled in a panoramic setting among the UNESCO-listed hills of Langhe and Monferrato, the Zen Temple Gyogenji is located in Costigliole d’Asti, overlooking the Alps and just a few kilometers from Alba and Asti.
- Established by the Bodai Dojo Zen Association with the support of the Italian Buddhist Union, the temple blends Zen tradition with a deep commitment to environmental sustainability—offering a space for practice, deep listening, and inner transformation.
- Gyogenji stands out for its holistic vision that interweaves spirituality, ecology, and community. It welcomes people from across Europe who seek to reconnect with a way of life rooted in harmony with nature.
- The Association is dedicated to building a bridge between tradition and the local community, working in partnership with local institutions and residents to promote the values of Zen: peace, inclusion, friendship, and well-being while honouring all cultures and backgrounds.





Bio-Architecture

The new buildings of the Temple are being constructed according to the principles of sustainable architecture, using natural, eco-friendly materials designed to support human well-being and minimize environmental impact. This is in alignment with the Temple's commitment to addressing the climate crisis and living in harmony with nature.

Natural and Innovative Materials

The temple is constructed from Porotherm BIO PLAN 45 cm bricks—an eco-friendly alternative to traditional bricks. Renowned for their exceptional insulating properties and breathability, these bricks help reduce emissions from heating and cooling systems. Their performance also supports the creation of healthy, comfortable indoor environments year-round.

Eco-Friendly Hemp Fiber Insulation

The roof insulation is made from Panel Flex Biolevel hemp fiber panels—a natural, compostable, and reusable material. These panels offer outstanding thermal and acoustic insulation, helping to maintain a healthy indoor microclimate throughout the year.

Certified Ventilated Wooden Roof

The roof structure is made from PEFC-certified wood sourced from sustainably managed forests. Biodegradable, durable, and low-maintenance, this choice significantly reduces CO₂ emissions while ensuring long-term performance.

Living Interdependence

The Temple project includes:

- A 3,000-square-meter regenerative agriculture vegetable garden, developed on terraced land
- An orchard with over 150 native trees
- A true “city for bees,” with flowering meadows of nectar-producing plant species
- A wildlife refuge and a resting area for birds

Our project offers a concrete response to the ecological crisis, guided by the teachings of Buddhism.

Our vision promotes an ecocentric culture—one that recognizes the Rights of the Earth, protects animals, rejects the exploitation of soil, and fosters a community rooted in awareness, ecological interconnection, and collective action.



"Living Interdependence" actively aligns with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs).

The project and our association have been positively evaluated by the Etisos Foundation, receiving a score of 83 out of 100, confirming the strength and relevance of our commitment.





The Life That Inspired the Temple

The Zen Temple Gyogenji was born from the life journey of Master Beppe Mokuza Signoritti.

Originally from Foggia in southern Italy, he moved to Turin in the 1970s at the age of fourteen, in search of new opportunities. It was there that he encountered Zen, beginning a spiritual path that would deeply transform his life.

Alongside his dedication to meditation, he immersed himself in Sumi-e—the ancient Japanese art of ink painting—eventually becoming one of its leading exponents in Europe and gaining international recognition.

In 2009, he settled in the city of Alba and founded the Bodai Zen Dojo, which quickly became the heart of a growing community.

From a simple vegetable garden cultivated with his students, a larger vision began to emerge—one that weaves together spirituality, art, and sustainability.

Today, that vision is taking form at Gyogenji, the first residential Zen temple in the Piedmont region.



Quality Partnerships

Our Association is actively building a strong network of collaborations with organisations, institutions, and local stakeholders, guided by the conviction that collaboration is essential to the project's success and long-term sustainability.



- We have established constructive relationships with the Municipality of Costigliole d'Asti, particularly with the mayor and city council, who have expressed their full support for the project. They recognize its innovative value in a region renowned for its rich food and wine culture.

- We also collaborate with prominent organizations such as LIPU (Italian League for Bird Protection), Aspromiele (Italian Beekeepers' Association), Confagricoltura, and the Asti branch of Legambiente, with the support of agronomist Dr. Doglio Cotto, a well-respected expert from the Asti region.

- On the construction side, the project benefits from the expertise of qualified Italian companies such as Impresa Bellora, Gruppo Piroto, Wienerberger, and Biolevel, along with the contribution of renowned architect Luigi Duretto, a specialist in sustainable design.

- These synergies strengthen the project's local and participatory dimension, fostering a virtuous network that places nature, culture, and human connection at its core.

Opening to the World

- The temple grounds and surrounding park is envisioned as a place of connection for neighbouring communities and a welcoming hub from people across Europe who are seeking a new way of living in relationship with nature. It will be a space open to all, without discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender, age, nationality, or political affiliation.
- Through outdoor activities and workshops for both children and adults, the project aims to raise awareness among local residents and visitors about the value of biodiversity, the sanctity of all forms of life, and the need to see nature not as a resource to be exploited, but as a living reality to be respected and cared for.
- Core values such as belonging, responsibility, and interconnection will be at the heart of this initiative, inspiring greater awareness of the role each individual can play in shaping a more just and sustainable society.



Education and Youth

PAI – Programma di Architettura Interiore (Inner Architecture Program)

The potential for personal transformation through the experiences offered by the temple.

The Inner Architecture Program was created with the aim of guiding children and young people on a path of inner transformation. It offers practical tools for living with awareness, balance, and grounded presence.

This six month training will help participants relate to others and the earth, to understand their bodies, align their thoughts and speech, eat mindfully and move with presence and respect in all they do.

The program serves as an invitation to discover a healthy lifestyle rooted in ethical and moral principles, equipping new generations to face their future with wisdom, clarity, and thoughtful reflection.



Sumi-e painting

Sumi-e, the ancient Eastern art of ink painting, is much more than a technique—it is a meditative practice that unites gesture, breath, and silence. The process engages the whole body and encourages a natural return to mental stillness.

This method is accessible to everyone, regardless of prior artistic experience. Unlike Western painting, Sumi-e does not allow for retouching, additions, or preparatory sketches—instead, each stroke stands alone as a deliberate and mindful expression of the spirit.

The presence of an instructor is a key element in the Sumi-e journey. Through careful observation and the repetition of traditional models, students gradually refine their sensitivity and creativity.

Ultimately, Sumi-e creates space for intuition, teaching us how to embrace whatever emerges on the blank paper as a reflection of our own inner state.





Authentic Zen Practice

Master Beppe Mokuza has followed the Zen path for over 35 years and received Dharma transmission from the esteemed French teacher, Roland Yuno Rech, an internationally renowned Zen Master.

For more than twenty years, he practiced regularly at La Gendronnière, the first Zen temple in the West, located in France and guided by the International Zen Association.

Throughout his journey, he also visited and practiced at various temples across Europe, connecting with Dutch, French, German, and Italian masters, whose teachings further enriched and deepened his practice.

His path continued in Japan, where he participated in an official ceremony at the Soto Zen School's mother temples, Eihei-ji and Sojiji.

The temple in Italy shares a profound spiritual connection with two significant Buddhist temples: Fudenji in Salsomaggiore Terme and Jōhō-ji in Rome—both of which are affiliated with the Italian Buddhist Union.

An International Community

Over the years, many people across Europe have found the spiritual guidance of Zen Master Beppe Mokuza to be a pivotal starting point, and a continued source of inspiration, on their path of inner growth. This has led to the formation of a vibrant international community that nurtures core values such as compassion, humility, and generosity.





Looking Ahead

- The Gyogenji Temple is not only a place of Zen practice and artistic expression, but the embodiment of a broader dream: a space where personal transformation goes hand in hand with care for the planet, where meditation merges with working the land, and where people from all backgrounds can experience a more mindful way of living in harmony with all beings.

- The story of Gyogenji reminds us that, just as a single seed can give rise to a flourishing forest, a single act of awareness can spark global transformation. It is an invitation for each of us to become part of this story, to find our place in this great project of renewal—of the earth and the spirit.



Giving and Receiving

The Temple can exist only thanks to the generous donations of practitioners and supporters.

Donation

Bank transfer:

Zen Bodai Dojo Association

IBAN: IT21Y0853022505000000045799



Credit card: Scan the QR code to access the donation link.

In the Netherlands the Bodai Dojo Association has officially been recognised as an organisation with ANBI Status. Which means that donations from Dutch people are tax-deductable.

The ANBI number in the tax-register RSIN is: 826531672

Adopt and Protect

Adopt a tree, a plant, or an animal and take part in the rebirth of nature.

Your support helps nurture an oasis of biodiversity and harmony.

Volunteering

Samū—work offered to the community—is part of Zen practice.

Help us care for the spaces and nature by sharing a meaningful experience with the community.

Bequests

A legacy gift is a gesture that leaves a lasting mark.

You can dedicate part of your estate to support spirituality and sustainability.





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