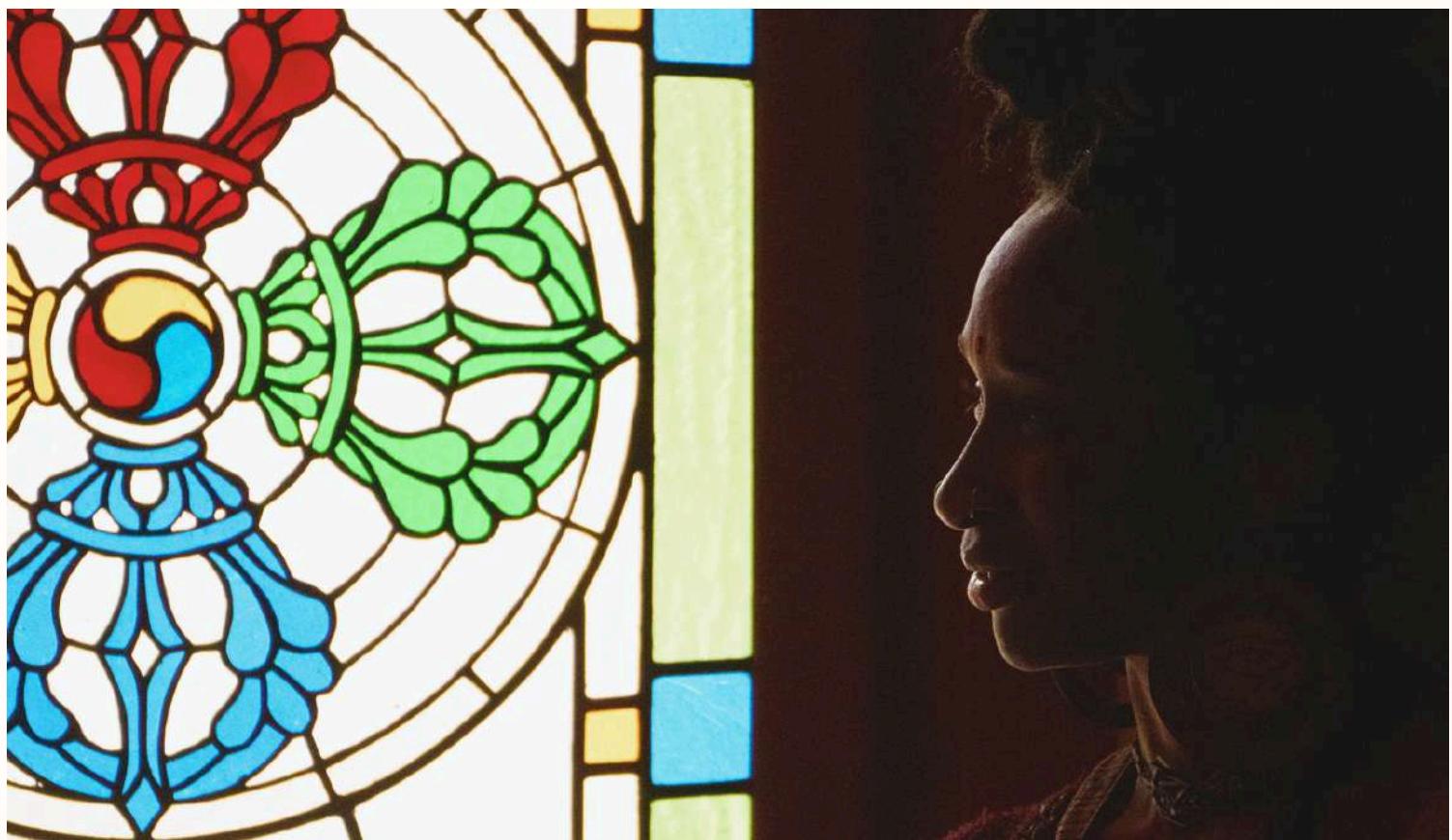




2025 EDI Council: Annual Update & Looking Ahead

In 2025, the EDI Council focused on weaving equity, diversity, and inclusion more deeply into the fabric of Tara Mandala's programs, communications, and community life. A central effort was creating the Welcoming and Belonging Orientation standards for all Tara Mandala events. This work explores ways Tara Mandala can continue to strengthen how people are welcomed into retreat and community spaces.

The Council has reflected on the value of a more consistent orientation across events, including shared context around temple etiquette, lineage, and cultural norms, as well as potential learning supports such as brief introductory materials. This area of inquiry also considers how Retreat Managers and Coordinators, Teachers, and Global Sangha Leaders can be supported in fostering environments where participants feel informed, included, and at ease.



A place where values, culture, and mindfulness meet.

Land acknowledgements received renewed attention as the Council encouraged our Teachers to offer this honoring with sincerity and personal connection. Resources were prepared for teacher training, along with explanations for why this practice matters not only in dharma spaces, but also in our lives and family traditions, and how acknowledging the people who came before us is inextricably linked to stewardship and bodhicitta.

Monthly heritage acknowledgments and cultural recognitions were shared throughout the year. Council members and advisors contributed pieces to Tara Mandala's digital magazine and social media, sharing reflections, resources, and lived experiences linked to Pride, Black History Month, Native American Heritage Month, Women's History Month, and more.



Retreat volunteers preparing a khata offering for the teachers

The EDI Communication framework was introduced to create and organize EDI-related content year-round and in a way that feels supportive and actionable by the Council. This threading of EDI themes into yana conversations, digital publications, event follow-ups, and community interactions has been well-received and nurturing to our diverse sangha.

Council members stayed responsive to "hiccups" or moments where participants felt unseen, especially newcomers and people of color, and turned those moments into opportunities for reflection and improvement.

The Council also continued building community through film and discussion. The *Stamped from the Beginning* film screening in mid-2025 offered a strong anchor for reflection, with prompts and follow-up opportunities in *yana* to help members make connections in their own lives and practice. To start the new year, we screened the streaming hit, *K-Pop Demon Hunters*, which is a family-friendly movie that aligns with *Feeding Your Demons*®, followed by discussion and guided meditation.

The Council will also launch the *American Historia* series as part of SAWS (Severing Attachment to White Supremacy Sangha) in 2026, which will embark on a three-part documentary designed to help the sangha explore Latino and Anti-Latino history with care and context. Each session will include a guided conversation and an opportunity to connect more deeply.

Support for affinity groups became another important thread this year.

As part of the 21 Taras course, the Council discussed Lopön Chandra's initiative on the importance of creating BBAIPOC, Neuro-Spicy, and LGBTQIA+ affinity spaces, clarifying that these groups are optional, self-identified, and rooted in care. This included addressing cultural differences in language across international sanghas and preparing a clear written explanation from Lopön Chandra to help participants understand the purpose and value of these spaces.



Celebrating with vajra songs and dance during retreat

If you are interested in integrating Affinity pods into your sanghas or courses, please contact edicouncil@taramandala.org for more information.



Walking together in practice, conversation, and community

Throughout the year, the Council was updated on EDI Scholarship health by the Scholarship committee, meeting regularly to review fund health, simplify applications, and keep the scholarship webpage updated. Meanwhile, cultural and dharma-based conversations continued to expand, touching on gender and sexuality in Buddhism, Tibetan culture in the West, and the meaning of hierarchy within Vajrayana practice.

Internally, the Council refined its own structure by keeping meetings monthly but shifting them toward a more open, discussion-based format with minimal administrative load. Small committees stepped in to help projects move smoothly, and plans took shape for engaging the Advisory Council at set points each year.

Taken together, these activities show a year committed to practical action, deeper learning, and community care. The EDI Council's work strengthens the foundation for a more welcoming, informed, and connected sangha.

