ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR ZEN FIELDS

(ADOPTED AT BOARD MEETING HELD ON June 23rd , 2023)

PREFACE

The intent of this statement is to nourish and protect the treasure of Sangha; to promote harmonious relationships among all its members and participants; and to lead to the spiritual growth of each participant.

A compassionate standard of behavior is expected from everyone who participates in Zen Fields' activities. This standard is based on respect for each person as a unique expression of Buddha nature regardless of age, race, gender, ethnic background, appearance, sexual orientation, physical, intellectual or emotional abilities, political beliefs, social class or occupation. This standard additionally includes a focus on the use of inclusive language. We are mindful of the ways that the words we use often unconsciously make assumptions about people and unintentionally reinforce dominant norms.

MISSION OF ZEN FIELDS

Zen Fields is a Soto Zen Buddhist Temple organized to relieve suffering through the development of human understanding through spiritual practices and education.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Precepts as Guiding Principles

The Ethical Guidelines for Zen Fields applies to every individual who participates in Zen Fields' activities, whether such individual is a guest, visitor, member, student, teacher or is attending or participating in another capacity. The Sangha (community of participants) relates with one another on the basis of compassion, mutual respect, and inclusivity. Sangha is to support each participant's spiritual development and to maintain an environment that is conducive to spiritual practice. The principles that guide our actions as Zen Buddhist practitioners are the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. They are:

The Three Pure Precepts

Do all that is good.

Do not what is evil.

Purify the mind.

The Ten Prohibitory Precepts

1. Do not kill; Cultivate and encourage life
2. Do not steal; Honor the gift not yet given
3. Do not commit sexual misconduct; Remain faithful in relationships
4. Do not lie; Communicate truth
5. Do not intoxicate self or other; Polish clarity, dispelling delusion
6. Do not slander others; Create wisdom from ignorance
7. Do not praise self or blame others; Maintain modesty, extolling others
8. Do not be possessive or stingy; Share understanding, giving freely
9. Do not harbor ill will or anger; Dwell in equanimity
10. Do not abuse the Three Treasures; Respect the Buddha, Unfold the Dharma, Nourish the Sangha

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in the Buddha.

I take refuge in the Dharma.

I take refuge in the Sangha.

Together these comprise the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts

Psychological and Social Dynamics

We encourage practitioners to be aware and mindful of the dynamics of projection, transference and counter-transference, and power differentials (including factors such as sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ageism, and so forth).

While the 6th Prohibitory precept states that a practitioner should not talk about the faults of others, Zen Fields commits to investigating any and all complaints that may arise in the Sangha, including but not limited to sexual misconduct and fiduciary irresponsibility.

All clergy, staff, and volunteers are dedicated to protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. Registered Sex Offenders must seek formal permission from the Board of Directors to participate in any Zen Fields activities. Zen Fields is under no obligation to monitor Sex Offender Registries for participants. All staff and volunteers interacting with vulnerable populations must undergo criminal and civil background screening unless the applicant can provide proof of a recent satisfactory result from the past year.

Appropriate action

We aspire to relationships that are characterized by appropriate action; relationships based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, good communication, fairness, kindness, and respect. Through the practices of keeping the precepts and developing good dharma friendships, the Sangha cultivates these qualities. Appropriate action and a fiduciary duty is also required of individuals who are entrusted with handling the funds or assets of Zen Fields. Board Members, Officers, Spiritual Guides and members of the Sangha are prohibited from using their relationship with Zen Fields for personal gain or status, and any such behavior is a violation of these Ethical Guidelines and will be investigated and addressed.

Confidentiality

Each student should feel free to explore the Dharma and study the self in an environment of trust and confidentiality.

Private conversations within the community are to be held in confidence including discussions with a teacher or anyone acting in a teaching capacity. However, students should know that teachers may share information between themselves for the express intention of benefiting the student and for the purpose of teacher training and that situations exist where information must be shared, such as when required for an investigation or if the disclosing party is a mandatory reporter.

Personal information offered at meetings, practice events, or Sangha gatherings is not confidential.

Student/teacher relationships

A teacher at Zen Fields is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the Spiritual Guide(s) and anyone designated by the Spiritual Guide to serve as an instructor or mentor for newer students. This includes those giving zazen instruction, teaching Intro to Zen workshops, and leading study groups. Student/teacher relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. Because teachers are inherently in position of confidence and trust and because of this may be in a position of power, it is imperative that they not misuse status or authority to achieve privileges or other consideration, or to inappropriately influence others.

We specifically acknowledge the great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with their students, both for the teacher and student involved and for the community as a whole. **We, therefore, consider it unethical for a teacher to engage in sexual behavior with her or his student.**

More specifically, if a teacher and/or student feel at risk of violating the above ethical principle, they must suspend their teacher-student relationship and must seek counsel with a senior teacher.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can involve a person of any gender being harassed by members of any gender or gender identity, gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. Although sexual harassment typically involves a person in a greater position of authority as the harasser, individuals in positions of lesser or equal authority also can be found responsible for engaging in prohibited harassment. It is also possible for third parties, such as visitors or guests, to engage in prohibited harassment. Sexual harassment can also involve a hostile environment, in which case the target does not have to be the person harassed but could be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.

Examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to the following:

1. **Verbal:** Sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, lewd remarks, threats, and requests for any type of sexual favor (this includes repeated, unwelcome requests for dates). Verbal abuse or "kidding" that is sexually oriented and unwelcome.

2. **Non-verbal:** The distribution or display of any written or graphic material, including by email or text message, that is sexual in nature.
3. **Physical:** Unwelcome physical contact, including but not limited to touching; tickling; pinching; patting; brushing up against; hugging; cornering; kissing; fondling; forced sexual intercourse or assault.

Inappropriate action

Inappropriate action is harmful to others and ourselves. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or regular displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons who encounter inappropriate actions from any member of the Zen Fields' Sangha -- including its teachers and senior instructors -- or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts, the practice of appropriate action and these Ethical Guidelines. If you have concerns that others are engaging in inappropriate action, you are required to bring this to the attention of the Ethical Designee (see below).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR ZEN FIELDS

(FINAL — ADOPTED AT BOARD MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 29, 2022)

The Board of Directors and the Spiritual Guide(s), as well as the Sangha, are committed to solving problems and resolving differences that may arise from inappropriate action.

Defining the "Concerned Person(s)"

If a person (or persons) believes that they have been inappropriately treated and seeks resolution, or if a person (or persons) witnesses another Sangha member engaged in inappropriate action, the following procedures are available and should be followed. In either case, the person(s) raising the issue will hereafter be referred to as the "Concerned Person(s)."

Defining the Ethical Designee

An Ethical Designee serves and assists Sangha members who may be unsure about their own or another's ethical course. The Designee may function as a sounding board

or as a source of advice on how to resolve conflicts. The Ethical Designee is (a) any Sangha member who has received the 5 or 16 precepts and (b) who has been appointed by the Board of Directors to serve for a term of three years.

Procedures for Addressing Inappropriate Action

Step 1: Informal Meeting. If a matter of importance concerning a violation of the ethical guidelines arises, the Concerned Person(s) may request a meeting with one or more of the following people: the Spiritual Guide(s), the Ethical Designee, and/or a Board Member. If one or all three of these people are named in the ethical complaint, then Concerned Person(s) will contact a qualified member of the Soto Zen Buddhist Association or the Soto Zen North America. At the discretion of the Concerned Person(s) the person who has allegedly acted inappropriately may be invited to the meeting or to a subsequent meeting. The goal of the informal meeting is that the involved parties reach a reconciliation of the issue. This meeting must be arranged as soon as possible, but, generally within two weeks and will be either face-to-face or virtual.

Step 2: Mediation. If the issue is not resolved under step 1, further consideration of the issue will occur through mediation. In situations of sexual misconduct, illegal behavior such as concerning a violation of one's fiduciary responsibility, or violent behavior, where mediation is clearly not appropriate, the Concerned Person(s) should proceed directly to step 3.

The Concerned Person(s) should contact the Ethical Designee or a Board Member. The Concerned Person(s) will cooperate to provide details of the incident to the Ethical Designee or Board Member who is acting as the designated contact person (the "Contact Person"), and the Contact Person will prepare a written description of the alleged inappropriate action and of any efforts to resolve the matter informally taken in step 1) above. The person who allegedly acted inappropriately shall respond to the complaint in writing to the Contact Person within one week. The Contact Person may support either party in writing their statement.

The Contact Person shall request a meeting with a third party trained in mediation practices to be held within four weeks of receipt of the response. The mediator will work

with the two (or more) parties that include the Concerned Person(s) and the person (s) who allegedly acted inappropriately. The meeting shall consist of an attempted mediation led by the mediator, and may be supplemented, if the parties agree, by information from others who have knowledge relevant to the complaint under discussion. . The mediation meeting shall result in a written statement of the position reached by the parties in the mediation process, and this statement will be given to the parties and the contact person who originally received the complaint stored in the Zen Fields' files.

If the parties are unable to reconcile under steps 1) and/or 2) (or involves one of the issues mentioned above that requires #3), the Concerned Person(s) may proceed to step 3).

Step 3: Investigation. The Concerned Person(s) may notify the Board of Directors and/or Spiritual Guide(s) that they wish to proceed with the unresolved complaint. (In the case that the Board or the Spiritual Guide(s) are implicated in the complaint, then the Concerned Person(s) must contact a designated Soto Zen Buddhist Association member, or Association of Soto Zen Buddhism member. As of the writing of this, Zuiko Redding of the Cedar Rapids Zen Center is designated outside of Zen Fields.

Thereupon, the Board will name an appropriate person to conduct an investigation of the incident. The person conducting the investigation (the investigator) is tasked with simply receiving the complaint and then to the best of their ability determining whether there is evidence to back the complaint. They are not to dismiss the investigation under any circumstances, nor are they to conduct the investigation with the aim of protecting either the reputation of Zen Fields nor the reputation of the person or people in question. Rather, the purpose of the investigation is to determine whether the allegations made by the Concerned Person(s) are more likely than not true.

Step 4: Results of the Investigation and Communication to the Sangha

Once a thorough investigation has taken place, the findings will be presented to the Spiritual Guide(s) and/or Board of Directors.

The finding shall be written and shall be communicated in writing to all parties named in the complaint within two to four weeks of the completion of the investigation. The Board

of Directors will keep written records of all meetings and findings. These shall be kept on file at Zen Fields.

In the case of allegations against the Spiritual Guide(s)or other fully ordained clergy of Zen Fields, such individuals may be removed “for cause” upon the affirmative vote of seventy-five percent of the Board of Directors. For this purpose, “cause” shall be defined as: neglect of or failure to perform the duties set forth in Article VIII of the By-Laws of Zen Fields, material failure to follow one or more of the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, violation of law, theft or other self-dealing or obtaining a benefit for self or others pursuant to undisclosed conflicts of interest, fraud, deceit or other misconduct, acts contrary to the best interests of Zen Fields, material violation of Zen Fields’ policies and principles, willful misconduct or recklessness, actions which are harmful to others, sexual relationships with students or other members of Zen Fields without full and complete disclosure thereof to the Board of Directors, incapacity, incompetence or death.

Once a decision is reached in either step 1 or step2, the Board of Directors will inform the Concerned Person of the decision. Additionally, the Board of Directors will inform the Sangha that a concern was raised and resolved, but the nature of the violation does not need to be made public. If the concern is addressed by an investigation (Step 3), a summary of the findings may be shared publicly with the entire Sangha by email. In the latter case, it is advisable that the Board of Directors also create space for discussion of the complaint and its resolution at a Sangha assembly.

Step 5: Atonement. Any person who acts inappropriately is expected to make every effort to realign their conduct in accord with the precepts and to take the actions necessary to restore the harmony of the Sangha and to mitigate any harm done. Such atonement is an integral part of our spiritual practice. The Board of Directors or Spiritual Guide(s) may make recommendations as to an atonement process.

Retaliation

Retaliation is prohibited. Any individual that reports a suspected violation of the Ethical Guidelines, provides information, testifies or otherwise assists in any investigation of a complaint is protected from retaliation, regardless if the alleged conduct cannot be confirmed by an investigation. No one should fear reporting a violation of the Ethical Guidelines if they believe it has occurred. So long as a person reasonably believes that they have witnessed or experienced such behavior, they are protected from retaliation.

If individuals believe they have been subject to such retaliation, they should inform the Spiritual Guide(s), the Ethical Designee or a Board Member

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