

Ethical Guidelines 2019 - 2020

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Preface

As members of the Auckland Zen Centre we are inextricably bound to each other, and the ways in which we interact can have a profound effect on our wellbeing and practice. For this reason, the Zen Centre's Trustees have adopted these ethical guidelines for the Sangha – guidelines that we hope will help create a supportive, harmonious, and safe environment. These guidelines are adapted from those of the Rochester Zen Center, which can be viewed [here](#). They also contain elements of the ethics code of the Boundless Way Zen Sangha, which can be viewed at www.boundlesswayzen.org.

Those of us who are given the responsibilities of teaching and leadership within our Sangha acknowledge that we are first of all continuing students of the Great Way. We also acknowledge there are power differentials in our relationships and how with leadership our words and actions carry greater weight than might be the case in other circumstances. As such we agree to consciously commit to a code of conduct that nurtures our community as well as our own continuing practice.

We have already committed to walk the way of the Four Bodhisattvic Vows and Sixteen Precepts. From these vows and precepts we find an outline for our lives. Through these vows and the guidelines listed below we seek to cultivate a community of openness, generosity, compassion and wisdom.

All Supporting Members and active participants are assumed to be willing to abide by these codes in general when interacting with other Sangha members. All who are regularly and actively involved in the Centre may avail themselves of the informal and formal complaint procedures set out in this document.

Everyone who is invited to leadership as a trustee, instructor, priest, novice priest or teacher at the Auckland Zen Centre agrees to conduct himself or herself in accordance with these Ethical Guidelines.

Definitions

The **Director** is the spiritual director of the Centre.

The **Board of Trustees**, or the **Board**, is the Centre's governing body for non-spiritual matters. It sets administrative policy for the Centre and ensures that the Centre is administered in a fiscally responsible manner that effectively furthers the Centre's stated purposes.

The **Head of the Zendo** is appointed by the Director and serves as the Director's principal assistant for spiritual affairs. If the Director is absent and has not left instructions indicating otherwise, the Head of Zendo directs the spiritual affairs of the Centre.

Instructors are appointed by the Director, and each has such teaching and other duties relating to the Centre's spiritual affairs as the Director may specify. This includes people conducting any form of group instruction on behalf of the Centre. The Director may also at any time revoke permission to

carry out those duties.

A **Teacher** is an Instructor (see above) whose own Teacher has sanctioned him or her as being fully qualified to accept formal students, give dokusan and teisho, lead sesshin, and serve as the spiritual leader of a Zen Centre or temple. A Teacher may or may not be an ordained Priest (see below) as well. In the Rochester Zen Center (Cloud-Water) lineage, once an ordained Priest has successfully served as a sanctioned Teacher for a period of time, the final step in the sanctioning process may take place, wherein the new Teacher receives Dharma Transmission (Japanese: *inka*) from his or her own Teacher, thereby becoming a Dharma heir of that Teacher. Once an ordained Teacher has received Dharma Transmission, he or she is authorized to sanction new Teachers himself or herself, and to give Dharma Transmission to priests.

In the Cloud-Water lineage, a **Priest** is an ordained cleric who has made a lifetime vocational commitment to work in direct support of the Buddhadharma, generally by serving as a staff member at a Centre or temple. A Priest may or may not be an Instructor or Teacher (see above) as well. Priests may be ordained only by Teachers who are themselves ordained Priests.

Centre members include all people who participate in the Centre's core activities.

A **Supporting Member** is someone who has pledged to give regular dana, and/or who also supports the Centre through their regular sitting and willingness to volunteer (if local).

The **EAR Committee** is the AZC Trustee-appointed Ethics and Reconciliation Committee, consisting of 5 senior members of the AZC, one of whom is a Trustee. A formal complaint must be heard by the Trustee and two other committee members.

I. The Buddhist Precepts

The sixteen precepts are so intimate a part of Zen practice that they have been called the "blood vein" of the ancestral lineage. The precepts can be understood on many levels: as supports for the practice of awakening, as the environment for that practice, and as the expression of awakening itself. Although the precepts can be understood from different points of view, we do not believe that Zen practice can exist in their absence. While the precepts have stood the tests of many generations, both the social context and the way they are explained and practiced may change and evolve. As Trustees of the Zen Centre at a specific moment in time, we realize that our interpretations are subject to change. The interpretations of the precepts in this document (see Appendix) are not intended to limit anyone's understanding or to be a definitive reading. Rather they attempt to cover some questions of conduct that might arise in the context of the Zen Centre Sangha.

II. Dual Relationships

For the purposes of these Ethical Guidelines, a dual relationship exists when the Director, an Instructor, or the Head of the Zendo engages with a student in one or more additional relationships (see also [here](#)). These include, without limitation, relationships of employer/employee (outside the Centre), therapist/patient and counsellor/client, and sexual relationships. Although some dual relationships may be appropriate, dual relationships generally involve a disparity of power, and many of them carry potentially serious risks for the student. Such risks may include the violation of personal boundaries, increased emotional and psychological vulnerability, exploitation in various forms, loss of autonomy, and confusion of roles. In addition, certain dual relationships can undermine the teacher/student relationship and the viability of the student's Zen training. Accordingly, such dual relationships are, to the extent practicable, to be avoided or, at the least, undertaken with serious consideration as to the best interests of the student. While each of the parties may have some responsibility for the dual relationship, the teacher or other person in authority, as the more powerful party, bears the primary responsibility for the protection of the student through avoiding such relationships or keeping them within appropriate bounds and pointing out their existence to the student.

We acknowledge that certain dual relationships may be appropriate as well as unavoidable in a small community such as ours. For example, the Director or others may be responsible for supervision of the Centre's volunteer workers and trainees, which is akin to an employer/employee relationship. Additionally, casual social relationships on the part of the Director or an Instructor with students are generally natural and healthy. Such dual relationships are not prohibited or discouraged. Close personal friendships between the Director or an Instructor and students may, however, interfere with the teacher/student relationship and should be undertaken with caution and with serious consideration as to the best interests of the student. The Director and any Instructor should avoid behaviour that would be construed by a reasonable person as indicating an exclusive or special relationship.

From time to time the Director, an Instructor, and/or the Head of the Zendo may appropriately be called upon to provide spiritual counselling to a student. While spiritual counselling may often involve consideration of emotional and psychological issues, it differs from psychotherapy in a number of respects: it is usually more short-term in nature, it does not purport to deal with emotional or psychological issues in as much breadth or depth as does psychotherapy, it often deals with the problems of an immediate crisis, the counsellor is not necessarily professionally qualified to offer psychotherapy, and no fee is charged for such services. When longer-term counselling or psychotherapy is needed or the student appears to be in immediate physical or psychological danger because of the acuity of a crisis, the person providing counselling should quickly recommend that the student seek psychotherapy or other appropriate professional help and, if possible, aid the student in

obtaining a referral for such services, should this be necessary.

Limitations on Dual Relationships

1. Employment

We recommended that, except as provided below, the Director and any Instructor not, on his or her own behalf (as distinguished from on behalf of the Centre), (a) employ or be employed by, (b) provide services for which monetary payment would ordinarily be charged to, or (c) receive or accept such services from, any person so long as such person is a student of the Director or Instructor or continues to receive formal instruction (dokusan or daisan) from the Director or such Instructor. While the presumption is that such dual relationships are generally to be avoided, it is acknowledged that there are situations in which it may be acceptable for a student, at his or her initiative, to express gratitude to the teacher through *dana*, or giving. In any circumstance in which the Director or an Instructor believes it may be appropriate to act other than as recommended above, he or she shall seriously consider and act consistently with the best interests of the student, and in the event of doubt shall consult with the EAR Committee (as described below) or, in the case of an Instructor, with the Director. The EAR Committee shall take the initiative to engage with and advise the Director or an Instructor in connection with any such dual relationship whenever it deems it appropriate to do so.

2. Psychotherapy

In the event that the Director or an Instructor also acts professionally as a psychotherapist, he or she shall not provide psychotherapeutic services to any person so long as such person is his or her student or from time to time receives formal instruction (dokusan or daisan) from him or her.

3. Sexual Relationships

Our practice is one of intimacy. It can be warmhearted and close. Relationships between teachers and students, as with therapeutic relationships, usually involve powerful psycho-dynamic conditions including projection, transference and counter-transference, among others. In addition there are the complexities found within the power differential that exists between a teacher and a student. With these various circumstances it may be tempting to cross a line from spiritual intimacy to sexual intimacy. This type of relationship tends to confuse the other aspects of intimate relationship necessary for a successful teacher and student relationship. Sexuality is a natural part of life and as a non-celibate Sangha, sexual intimacy is going to be a cherished part of our shared lives. However, those who teach have additional responsibilities.

a) No priest, Head of Zendo, instructor or teacher who is married or in a committed relationship should engage in sexual activities with any person outside of their stated commitment.

b) Any priest, Head of Zendo, instructor or teacher who finds a

romantic relationship beginning with a member of the Sangha should inform the EAR Committee of this relationship and seek guidance as to the most healthful way to proceed.

c) If the people involved are in a teacher-student relationship, a choice must be made between either pursuing that personal relationship or continuing the teacher-student relationship, but not both. The EAR Committee should help in this decision-making process. A resolution should be achieved with as little delay and as much openness and transparency as humanly possible.

d) Because sexual relationships between two persons, both of whom are residents or staff members, have the potential to disrupt staff harmony and interfere with a proper training atmosphere, such relationships need to be pursued with sensitivity to others and discussed with the Director at the earliest possible opportunity.

If the appropriateness of an existing or potential dual relationship involving the an Instructor, Priest, Head of Zendo, or Zen Centre staff member or resident might reasonably be questioned, that person is encouraged to consult with and seek the formal or informal advice of a member of the EAR Committee or the Director, as may be appropriate. In addition, if the Director has any concerns regarding the appropriateness of a dual relationship that involves himself or herself, another Centre Teacher, an Instructor, Priest, Head of Zendo, or a Zen Centre staff member or resident, the Director is likewise encouraged to consult the EAR Committee.

III. Sexual Harassment

The Third Precept of Buddhism is, “I resolve not engage in harmful sexual relations, but to be faithful and responsible.” At the Zen Centre, we resolve to maintain an environment in which any form of intolerance, coercion, or harassment, including discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual orientation, has no place. Sexual harassment in any context is reprehensible, and especially so in a religious community in which people are bound by spiritual interdependence and trust. Any insult to the dignity of others is an impediment to spiritual growth and thus a breach of this trust. Sexual harassment usually occurs when one person has some kind of power over another. It includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. If someone’s inappropriate sexual conduct is accompanied by a threat to continued involvement with the Centre (e.g., maintaining one’s membership, going to dokusan or daisan, or attending sesshin), we encourage him or her to make a formal complaint to the EAR Committee. One may also make a complaint if someone’s behaviour substantially interferes with one’s spiritual practice, creates an offensive environment, or is intimidating in any way.

Sexual harassment of a student by a teacher is a flagrant violation of the basic trust on which the relationship is founded. Harassment could also involve other people in positions of responsibility such as Trustees, Instructors,

Priests, the Head of Zendo, or any staff member. Teachers and others must be especially careful to avoid comments that discriminate on the basis of sex or sexual orientation; however, we acknowledge that sometimes they need to discuss matters of sexuality with Sangha members and each other. An allegation of sexual harassment can be handled either directly by the individuals involved, or through the Director or the complaint procedure set forth below.

IV. Non-Discrimination

The Centre shall not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

We aspire to make the Centre a welcoming place for *tangata whenua* and for people of all races and cultures.

V. Repentance Ceremony

These Ethical Guidelines address the informal resolution of conflicts and provide formal procedures for responding to complaints of ethical violations. The Centre's Repentance Ceremony serves a complementary and no less important function: to offer an opportunity for the person who has transgressed to atone and to help repair the bonds between himself or herself and the community. The act of repentance can be extremely purifying and cleansing. If a member of the Centre feels a need to repent before the Sangha, he or she may request the scheduling of a Repentance Ceremony.

VI. Resolving Conflicts

Introduction

Something may happen within our Sangha that causes concern. Ideally we can approach one another and speak of any such concern. We strongly encourage this as a first step if a conflict arises.

We want our life within the Sangha to express our practice as followers of the Buddha Way. As our practice is our heartfelt response to suffering, turning away from someone's suffering through silence, rationalization, assigning blame, minimizing, self-deprecating guilt, or not attending seriously to its causes and conditions are all steps directed away from the Buddhist path itself. Avoidance often acts as a condition for additional suffering.

Accordingly, when a conflict, grievance, dissonance, or violation of the precepts arises in a relationship, it is essential to attend to it fully. Personally, this involves doing our best to wake up to our own contribution to the suffering in these situations through understanding our reactions, emotions, and attachments. Interpersonally it involves taking the time to discuss the conflict with the other parties involved in an attempt to clarify the actual causes, conditions, feelings, and responses that come together in the situation.

Below are some notes on informally resolving conflicts within our Sangha. We intend them to assist in promoting forgiveness and reconciliation with oneself and with others. Whenever possible, disputes should be resolved informally and directly between the people involved. We recognize that for certain conflicts informal resolution may not be possible. Accordingly, we also offer a formal grievance procedure for such situations.

Here is a summary of the escalating steps that might be taken if a problem arises:

1. Engage in direct discussion with the person.

If this does not satisfactorily resolve the problem:

2. Bring in a neutral person the help facilitate dialogue.

If dialogue has not worked or was not possible:

3. Lay a formal complaint.

At any stage in the process an Ethics and Reconciliation (EAR) Committee member (see below) may be brought in to assist with support, advice, or facilitation.

Informal resolution of conflicts

The suggestions that follow are intended to give all persons involved in a dispute a chance to be fully heard in an environment of respect and kindness – one that flows from knowing that there is no fundamental difference between us. Although we may each see the world very differently, we all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering.

1. **Stating the Actual.** A crucial aspect of conflict resolution, as of Buddhist practice itself, is discriminating between our interpretations and opinions of an event and how the event actually unfolded. In part, this means not making general statements but rather sticking to the particulars of the actual situation (what could be “caught on film”) and the emotions experienced (how the situation made us feel). It is extremely difficult to achieve mutual understanding when discussion remains at the level of interpretation and generalization. Asking questions can be helpful, e.g. “It was my impression that A happened, then B ... and I felt scared because C ... How did you see it?”
2. **Being Heard.** It is important that everyone involved be given an opportunity to be fully heard. This means that all participants be given a chance to recount how they remember the history of a conflict, to state their feelings regarding the conflict, and to explain the goals they have for its resolution. Such statements should be neither defensive nor critical, since both stances tend to preclude deeper mutual understanding. Much conflict arises and is perpetuated through unspoken assumptions and a lack of mutual understanding. Taking

calm, deliberate, and adequate time to listen to each other is often all that is needed for the process of reconciliation to begin.

3. **Restating what was Heard.** To insure that everyone understands one another, it is useful for each party to briefly restate what the other has said, highlighting the main points. The other party then says whether he or she believes the restatement is complete and accurate, and makes any appropriate corrections.
4. **Acknowledgment.** Resolution and reconciliation are greatly facilitated if each party involved reflects on how he or she may have contributed to the conflict and then describes this to the other party. Even when one person is the primary trigger of the conflict, self-reflection, taking responsibility for one's emotional reactions, and apology on everyone's part can provide a safer, more trusting and more understanding environment for everyone to be truthful.
5. **Facilitation.** It is often useful to invite one or more neutral witnesses or mediators to take part in a session of conflict resolution. Such a person may simply be a silent witness providing a sense of calm and presence or may be an active mediator who helps ensure that each person is given uninterrupted opportunities to speak. This person may also point out the difference between statements of opinion and interpretation and direct statements of how an event or feeling was or is actually experienced. Invited facilitators can be anyone whom both parties respect; e.g., friends, neutral acquaintances, Centre instructors or other members, members of the Centre's Ethics and Reconciliation Committee, or people from within or outside the Centre who are trained in mediation.
6. **Seeking Advice.** In addition to or instead of inviting a facilitator to participate, it can be useful to seek advice from others for working informally to resolve a conflict. Such advice can come from friends, teachers, EAR Committee members and others.

Formal Complaints

Ethics and Reconciliation Committee

In the course of daily Sangha interactions, disagreements, conflicts, misunderstandings and unethical behavior can occur. Often the ethical lines will not be obvious. The Ethics and Reconciliation Committee (EAR Committee) is a standing committee formed to assist in that process of clarification as well as to pursue serious allegations. Any member of the Sangha is encouraged to bring concerns to any member of the EAR Committee for consultation, support and advice if direct discussion with the person involved has been unsuccessful at reaching resolution.

The number and membership of the EAR Committee is determined by the Trustees and the Director and members are appointed by consensus. The committee consists of 5 senior Centre members, one of whom is a current

Trustee. Tenure is for one year and may be renewed. The names of the EAR Committee members are posted on the Auckland Zen Centre website and on the zendo bulletin board.

Should an ethical concern arise, if direct discussion with the person involved has been unsuccessful at reaching resolution, the sooner one can consult with a member of the EAR Committee the better.

A meeting with a single member of the EAR Committee may prove sufficient. This can be an opportunity to air a concern, and in that conversation matters may be clarified. Possibly there will be a need for additional consultation. This can be mapped out with the EAR Committee member.

The EAR Committee member may also facilitate a dialogue between the parties to seek reconciliation. If this is not successful it may be necessary to engage in the formal process outlined below.

EAR Committee members will inform fellow Committee members of matters of concern which have been brought to them. Details of such matters will be handled with discretion (see Principles below). While there are 5 Committee members appointed, just 3 are needed to hear a complaint. The Trustee member is always one of the three, in order to facilitate communication with the Board.

Since the members of the Committee must be able to make an impartial judgment on any matter raised, anyone with a conflict of interest in regard to a particular matter should disqualify themselves from involvement in that issue.

EAR Committee Principles

The EAR Committee's deliberations and decisions will be informed by the following principles:

- nurturing healthy relationships within the Sangha
- working towards reconciliation and trust
- reciprocal communication (allowing all sides to be heard)
- acting with consistency and impartiality
- respect for privacy
- transparency in decision-making
- openness to diverse perspectives

Formal Process

In general this process is for members of the Centre -- those who are actively and regularly involved in the community.

Matters involving inappropriate sexual conduct, abusive behavior, harassment, incompetence or the use of position for personal gain or exploitation should quickly be brought to the whole EAR Committee. Anyone aware of the following matters should bring them to the EAR Committee

immediately: misappropriation of funds, gross and harmful incompetence in leadership or teaching, domestic violence or the suspected abuse or neglect of a child, an elder, or any vulnerable sentient being. If the actions also break the law then the Director and Board of Trustees should be informed at once so the matter can be dealt with quickly and turned over to the appropriate authorities for investigation.

Any complaint to the EAR Committee under the formal grievance procedure must be made in writing. The complaint should describe the alleged behavior, a history of any attempts to resolve the complaint informally, and a general statement about the desired resolution. If necessary an EAR Committee member may help the complainant prepare his or her written statement. The complaint and related documents will be retained by the EAR Committee for such period as it considers appropriate.

Anyone who registers a formal complaint with the EAR Committee should be given a copy of these Ethical Guidelines along with a written acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint.

The EAR Committee should respond to the person who has registered the complaint in writing within a month of receipt of the complaint with a statement of its decision and the reason(s) for the decision. Decisions are made by consensus and in consultation with the Director. Three committee members will hear a complaint, one of whom is the trustee member. If the Director is being complained about, the Committee will consult with the Board. If the Committee cannot reach consensus it will engage in further dialogue with the parties until a resolution can be reached.

Among the possible responses are a finding of no breach, suggesting a mediated resolution, a limited finding acknowledging some breach and forwarding this to an appropriate second party, a reversal of an administrative decision or action, a private and mediated apology, a private reprimand, follow-up meetings with affected parties, a public apology, public censure, reparation when possible, a recommendation for psychological counseling or similar programme, or a period of probation. Suspension or dismissal from membership, leadership or teaching may also be recommended but the final decision would rest with the Director (in the case of instructors) or Board (in the case of a complaint against the Director, other staff member or Centre member).

Anyone may appeal the EAR Committee's decision or recommendations to the Board of Trustees, at which time the EAR Committee members involved should be present for clarity of understanding but have no vote on the matter (with the exception of the member of the committee who is also a Trustee). However, the Board is expected to work from an assumption that the Committee has acted in good faith and with due diligence, and should not lightly overturn the findings of the EAR Committee.

If a Sangha member believes that a concern or complaint could most effectively be addressed by raising the matter directly with the Board of

Trustees, he or she may do so. If the matter is initially raised with the Board of Trustees, the Board may, at its discretion, either refer the matter to the EAR Committee for consideration or consider the matter itself without preliminary action by the Committee. As with the EAR Committee, the Board's response should be made within a month of receiving a complaint.

Nothing contained in this Policy shall limit the authority of the Board to remove a Trustee, Committee Member or Staff Member pursuant to any provision of the Trust Deed or an Employment Contract, or the authority of the Director to dismiss a Head of Zendo, Instructor, Priest, Novice Priest or Resident Trainee.

Auckland Zen Centre Trustees

Approved by Trust:.....

Signature of Chairperson:.....

Date:.....

Appendix

The Sixteen Precepts in our interactions as a community

The Three Refuges

The Three Refuges represent the foundation and orientation of our lives as followers of the Buddha Way.

1. I take refuge in Buddha.

In taking refuge in Buddha, we acknowledge the Buddha Nature of all beings. Although there are different levels of authority at the Centre, we recognize that we are all equally manifestations of Buddha Nature.

2. I take refuge in Dharma.

In taking refuge in Dharma, we acknowledge the wisdom and compassion of the Buddhist way of life. “Dharma” is often translated as “law,” and in that light we take the Buddha’s teachings as guidelines for our behaviour in all areas of our lives.

3. I take refuge in Sangha.

In taking refuge in Sangha, we acknowledge the important role that community life plays in our practice. In order for the Sangha to be a refuge, we aspire to create an inclusive environment, with room for understanding and accepting our differences while working towards the realization that the Sangha and ourselves are not separate. Open, ongoing communication within the Sangha is essential for creating this refuge. Any ethical concerns or conflicts must be fully heard and appropriately addressed.

The Three General Resolutions

The Three General Resolutions are inseparable from the Buddhist practice taught at the Centre. They represent the aspiration of every follower of the Buddha Way.

1. I resolve to do no harm..

To do no harm means to refrain from causing harm to oneself or other human beings – or to animals, plants or the Earth – by means of our thoughts, speech, and actions.

2. I resolve to do good.

To do good means to act from the loving kindness and equanimity of our awakened nature. As part of our effort to live ethically, we embrace the Mahayana practices of confession, repentance, atonement, and reconciliation.

3. I resolve to liberate all living beings.

To liberate all living beings means to manifest our Buddha Nature for

the benefit of all. When we express our awakened nature, we give others the opportunity to discover their own True Mind.

The Ten Cardinal Precepts

The Ten Cardinal Precepts are inseparable from Buddha Nature and our relations with each other.

1. I resolve not to kill, but to cherish all life.

This precept expresses the intent to live compassionately and harmlessly, arising from the acknowledgment of the inherent unity of all existence. When understood in its broadest context, not killing can also be understood as not harming, especially not harming the body or psyche of another. Physical violence and abusive behaviour (which includes physical threats and extreme displays of anger and maliciousness) are understood as a kind of “killing.” In keeping with this aspiration, all firearms and other weapons have no place within the Centre’s practice places, and flesh foods shall not be consumed within the Centre’s practice places unless permitted by the Director under exceptional circumstances. We also acknowledge our role, either directly or in complicity with others, in the killing of other forms of life. As a Sangha, when questions arise that include the killing of animals and plants, we must carefully consider our real needs and our responsibility to work for the benefit of all beings.

2. I resolve not to take what is not given, but to respect the property of others.

This precept expresses the commitment to live from a generous heart rather than from a grasping mind, realizing that just as we are, we lack nothing. At a personal level, covetous behaviour harms the person who steals as well as the one who is stolen from. On a community level, stealing can undermine or even destroy the trusting environment necessary for Zen practice. Those who handle Sangha funds or other assets have a special responsibility to take care of them and avoid their deliberate misuse or misappropriation, both of which are institutional forms of stealing. In addition, we recognize that the misuse of authority and status is a form of taking what is not given. Within the complex life of the Sangha, authority and seniority play a role in some situations. It is particularly important that individuals in positions of trust not misuse their power as a way to obtain special privileges, or otherwise seek to inappropriately control or influence others.

3. I resolve not to engage in harmful sexual relations, but to be faithful and responsible.

We recognize that sexuality is an aspect of our daily lives. Acknowledging and honouring our sexuality is part of creating an environment where conscious, mindful and compassionate relationships can be cultivated. However, special care must be taken when people of unequal status or power enter into a sexual relationship. In particular, there are two forms of relationships that can

lead to great harm and confusion. Each is considered a violation of this precept. First, it is a misuse of sexuality for an adult to engage in sexual behaviour with anyone who is under the legal age of consent. Full responsibility for avoiding such relationships lies with the adult. Second, it is a misuse of authority for a Centre Teacher to engage in sexual behaviour with his or her student. Similarly, certain other sexual relationships involving a Teacher, Instructor, Priest, or Head of Zendo create such a risk of harm that they constitute a potential such misuse. Particular care must be shown toward new members of the Centre. We believe that it takes approximately six months for a new member to establish the foundation of his or her practice and to begin to understand the nature of interrelationships within the Sangha. In order to protect a new member's opportunity to practice, no Instructor (including Group Instructor), Priest, Head of Zendo, resident or staff member shall form a physically intimate relationship with a new member during the first six months of his or her membership. Everyone coming to the Centre in any capacity has the right to be free from sexual harassment. Continued expression of sexual interest after being informed that such interest is unwelcome is a misuse of sexuality.

4. I resolve not to lie, but to speak the truth.

The precept "not to lie" is particularly important for the community life of a practicing Sangha. While ethical transgressions can involve any of the precepts, many of these difficulties would not arise were there not an element of deceit involved. Lying to oneself, to another or to one's community obscures the nature of reality and hinders the intention of Buddhist practice. Lying can include intentional withholding of information, half-truths, deliberately creating misimpressions, and not speaking up to correct lies. Open and direct communication is essential in our work and practice together. We are each entitled to straightforward, complete information when we request feedback regarding our behaviour or standing within the community. We can expect that, upon our request, this will be given in the spirit of honesty and compassion. Students at the Centre should feel that they can practice freely in an atmosphere of trust. The Centre's teacher and practice leaders shall not disclose information they receive in dokusan, daisan, or discussions when confidentiality is requested and agreed to, unless serious harm may result to individuals or to the Sangha if the information is not disclosed. Even when there is no specific request for confidentiality, such information is not to be shared casually under any circumstances by either of the people involved in the conversation. Within the teaching process, however, consultation among teachers and instructors regarding private matters which have a bearing on a person's practice may be appropriate. All those who engage in such consultations should make every effort to ensure it is done in a sensitive, fair and respectful manner.

We understand confidentiality to be a reasonable assumption of

privacy. It is not a strict code of secrecy. When complaints are made or concerns are expressed, one person should not be expected to hold these things in secret. The matter may and probably will be brought to the EAR Committee (as described above). As is appropriate and as described here, these complaints or concerns may be forwarded to the Trustees.

5. I resolve not to cause others to take intoxicants, nor to do so myself, but to keep the mind clear.

Buddhist practice occurs within the context of mindful awareness, a state of mind that is not conditioned by intoxicants of any sort. When clarity is lost, it is all too easy to break the other precepts. Furthermore, we intend the Centre to be an environment that supports those who are attempting to live without intoxicants. Therefore, alcohol or drug use within the Centre is inappropriate and is cause for concern and possible intervention. When a member is involved in abusive or addictive use of intoxicants, he or she is expected to seek help within and/or outside the Sangha. Because denial is frequently a symptom of addiction, the Sangha is encouraged to help addicted persons recognize the need for help.

6. I resolve not to gossip about the faults of others, but to acknowledge my own shortcomings.

This precept arises from our efforts to build social harmony, trust and understanding. False and malicious statements are acts of alienation arising from a delusive sense of the opposition of self and other, and the consequence is often divisiveness in the community. Even when gossip and fault-finding is consistent with the facts it can be damaging to all involved. The speaker, by dwelling on others' shortcomings, misses the chance to examine his own, listeners too are diminished and the one gossiped about is often hurt when the criticism reaches them. Where the intention to slander arises in us, we uphold this precept by trying to understand the roots of the impulse.

7. I resolve not to praise myself (and disparage others), but to speak with humility and extol virtue in others.

While rejoicing in our wholesome qualities and deeds is a time-honoured Buddhist practice, praising ourselves or seeking personal gain at the expense of others arises out of a misunderstanding of the interdependent nature of self. It may sometimes be necessary to criticize someone. When doing so, we should pay particular attention to our motives, speak skilfully and compassionately, avoid triangulation, and carefully consider the potential repercussions of the criticism.

8. I resolve not to withhold spiritual or material aid, but to give them freely where needed.

All positions at the Centre, including that of the Director, exist for the support of everyone's practice and awakening. No position within the Centre nor the resources of the Centre are the possession of any one person. It is not appropriate for anyone, especially a teacher, to use his

or her relationship to the Centre for personal gain or advancement at the expense of the Sangha or any of its members. In the spirit of non-possessiveness, decision-making groups at the Centre should make decisions in a cooperative manner, and with a wholehearted effort to consider all points of view. It is important that the Centre's finances, decision-making structure, and minutes of major decision-making bodies are available in an accessible and understandable form.

9. I resolve not to indulge in anger, but to practice forbearance.

While conflict is a normal and healthy part of living in community, the harbouring of ill-will can be a corrosive force. Even more poisonous is the harbouring of ideas of revenge. Sangha members having conflicts or tensions with others or with any of the Centre's decision-making groups should attempt to resolve them directly in a spirit of honesty, humility, forbearance and loving-kindness. However, if informal resolution is not possible, mediation should be sought as a way to clarify and resolve the difficulty.

10. I resolve not to revile the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), but to cherish and uphold them.

The Three Treasures are inseparable from one another; awakening informs our practice and our community life, Dharma practice is the basis of our community life and the path to awakening, and community life supports our Dharma practice and at its best is an expression of Buddha nature. The abuse of any one of the Three Treasures harms the other two. To acknowledge our transgressions, to seek reconciliation, and to renew our commitment to the precepts are the working of Buddha Nature and re-affirm our place in the Sangha. When the integrity of the Sangha is honoured and protected, the Three Treasures are manifest.

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