



ZEN CENTER OF LOS ANGELES/BUDDHA ESSENCE TEMPLE
Statement of Ethics for ZCLA Teachers

PREFACE

The Teachers of the Zen Center of Los Angeles uphold and adhere to the ZCLA Vision, Core Values, Core Practices and its Statement of Right Conduct. The role of the Teacher also carries with it additional responsibilities that are expressed herein. While we recognize that we are all Students and Teachers of each other, this Statement of Ethics applies to those who have received authorization to teach the Dharma through the receipt of Dharma Transmission.

COMMITMENT OF THE TEACHERS

As Teachers we recognize that we are the recipients of the Sangha's trust. We each receive the role of Teacher as a deepening of our own personal practice and as service to the Dharma. We are committed to supporting the practice and awakening of others through teaching, Face-to-Face meetings, and through our own practice. We are committed to honoring the trust of the Sangha, to honoring the essential nature of the Student-Teacher relationship, and to honoring the importance of that relationship in the transmission of Dharma.

ALIGNMENT WITH ZCLA CORE VALUES

Our conduct as practitioners and as Teachers is guided by the Sixteen Zen Bodhisattva Precepts. In particular, we align ourselves with the ZCLA Core Values, which are as follows:

We honor the **Vision (Buddha) Value** of pursuing the Enlightened Way and promoting harmony. We realize the implications of interdependent reality and the natural unfolding of cause and effect. Therefore, we are deeply aware of the effect that our conduct as Teachers has on the life of Students. We are committed to conduct that promotes trust, respect and open communication with and among Sangha members. We pledge to refrain from conduct that abuses the power dynamic between Student and Teacher. We pledge to refrain from conduct harmful to the student physically, sexually or psychologically.

We honor the **Foundational (Dharma) Value** of protecting the Dharma. We are committed to live and teach in a way that honors our life as a Way of Awakening for all beings, including ourselves.

We honor the **Focus (Sangha) Value** of contributing to the peace of the world. We are committed to live and act in accord with the fact of interdependent reality.

Our conduct as practitioners and as Teachers is also guided by the following specific commitments:

- **The Student-Teacher Relationship.** We recognize the spiritual intimacy of the Student-Teacher relationship. We vow to be honest and to maintain clear boundaries between Student and Teacher. We define Teacher misconduct as conduct that is harmful to the well-being of the Zen Center, Sangha, or an individual Student. We vow not to abuse our role as Teachers by exploiting the trust of Students through verbal abuse, sexual misconduct, misuse of the Zen Center's funds, or through psychological manipulation of the power dynamic inherent in the Student-Teacher relationship.
- **Sexual Relationships.** We recognize that any sexual relationship between a Teacher and Student is harmful to the Student, the Teacher and the Sangha as a whole. Such a relationship is therefore never appropriate. We also recognize that attraction and affection between or among people may arise. We are mindful of the harm that can be done even under the most sincere consensual circumstances. We acknowledge that shifts in romantic and sexual dynamics can occur gradually or suddenly and require both vigilance and integrity. We vow to be open and transparent to ourselves and to the other Teachers and to end any Student-Teacher relationship before any romantic or sexual relationship is begun. In the event that the parties involved wish to pursue such a relationship, they will end the Student-Teacher relationship. It is the responsibility of the Teachers to counsel and guide the parties involved.

- **Privacy.** We respect the intimacy and sensitivity of all Face-to-Face meetings (Dokusan and Daisan) with students. We will treat matters discussed there as private matters shared within the context of practice and training in the Dharma.
- **Dual Relationships.** A dual relationship is created whenever a Teacher and a Student are relating to each other in two different capacities. For example, a Teacher who is a psychotherapist may be asked by a Student to become a client/patient. Or a Teacher who is an attorney may be asked by a Student to provide legal services. These and other such situations give rise to a dual relationship.

We recognize that not all dual relationships are inherently unethical. We are, however, mindful of the complexities and risks in these circumstances. If, for example, a Teacher becomes a Student's psychotherapist or attorney, the Teacher-Student relationship will end upon commencing the new professional relationship.

We acknowledge our shared and individual responsibility as Teachers to hold the clarity and integrity of the Teacher-Student relationship. We will seek the counsel of the other Teachers as needed.

- **Financial Responsibility.** We are mindful that all of the Zen Center's funds belong to the Zen Center organization and the whole Sangha. We acknowledge our responsibility to be scrupulously honest with the Zen Center's Funds.

- **Gifts.** From time to time, Students may wish to offer gifts as an expression of gratitude for a Teacher's offering of the Dharma. We wish to avoid any undue influence that a gift might have on the essential Student-Teacher relationship. Therefore, we will consider all gifts over a token amount to be gifts to the Zen Center itself rather than to any particular teacher.
- **Conflicts or Grievances with Teachers.** ZCLA Teachers vow to support each Student's effort to awaken by behaving in a way that nurtures and does not cause harm. It is our responsibility to maintain clear and appropriate boundaries within the Student-Teacher relationship.

ZCLA Teachers and Students alike are expected to look out for the well-being of the Sangha. Any concern or complaint about the conduct of a Teacher should follow the grievance procedure outlined in the Statement of Right Conduct.

TEACHER-TO-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

We will respect, support, and, as needed, counsel each other. We will address whatever issues arise between and among members of the Zen Center's Teachers Circle in a timely way. We commit to ongoing Council Practice.

SUMMATION

We recognize that our practice continues without end. We hold ourselves accountable to the Zen Center organization, to the Sangha, to our peers in the Teachers Circle, to our own Teacher and to the White Plum Lineage.

Adopted by the Abbot and Teachers Circle

March 19, 2012

Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao, Abbot

Sensei John Daishin Buksbazen

Sensei Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

Adopted by the ZCLA Board of Directors

March 28, 2012

Patti Muso Giggans, President