

## Ethical Guidelines for Members of the Chapel Hill Zen Center

The purpose of the Chapel Hill Zen Center is to provide opportunities for the practice and study of Zen Buddhism, based on the example and teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha. The Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts (see page 2) and the teachings of the Soto School of Zen transmitted through the lineages of Shunryu Suzuki and Dainin Katagiri guide these efforts. Our central value is to develop the realization of the non-duality of practice and enlightenment through zazen. Non-dual realization manifests our direct connection to, and dependence on, all living beings and everything that exists. Compassionate concern for the welfare of others flows naturally from this insight.

We welcome anyone to join us for silent meditation. In order to provide an environment where we may meet ourselves at our most fundamental level and that supports trust, safety, and harmony in our community, we, the board members and priests of the Chapel Hill Zen Center, encourage following these guidelines.

Please use mindful speech, appropriate behavior, and avoid approaching individuals to promote your business while at the Chapel Hill Zen Center.

### **Mindful Speech**

Please be mindful of your speech and refrain from gossip and from talking about your private interviews with any teacher. Gossip, or third party information, does not promote an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. Please safeguard information shared during study groups, practice teas, dokusan, and other contexts where people may disclose personal information.

### **Appropriate Behavior**

Inappropriate behavior is harmful to others and to ourselves. It includes harsh or manipulative speech or action, and sexual misconduct or harassment.

We try to create an environment at the Chapel Hill Zen Center where conscious, mindful, and compassionate relationships can be cultivated, and where members are supported to focus on practice, free from unwanted sexual or romantic attention or energy.

Anyone involved in an instructional capacity has particular responsibility toward others, especially with regard to romantic or sexual relationships within this community of practitioners. This includes priests, and anyone who gives zazen instruction, teaches introductory workshops, leads study groups, teaches classes, or anyone in a position of formal authority, such as the Ino, as well as board members and officers, and is not limited to these persons only.

Particular care must be taken with newcomers. As the foundation of a practice is formed in the first weeks and months, it can be seriously undermined or distorted through the lens of a romantic relationship. Because this area is so sensitive we ask that priests, and others in formal roles of responsibility and authority in relationship to others, be especially aware of their feelings and actions. Such people are encouraged to speak with a teacher before pursuing a romantic or sexual relationship within the community, and consider allowing a new practitioner six months of continuous practice before initiating a relationship.

### **Dual Relationships**

Mental health professionals, and those in the helping professions, are asked to be sensitive to the possible complexity of dual relationships that may arise when both parties practice at the Chapel Hill Zen Center.

## **The Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts**

### **The Three Refuges**

I take refuge in Buddha

I take refuge in Dharma

I take refuge in Sangha

### **The Three Pure Precepts**

I vow to refrain from all action that creates attachments.

I vow to make every effort to live in enlightenment.

I vow to live to benefit all beings.

### **The Ten Clear-mind Precepts**

A disciple of Buddha does not kill.

A disciple of Buddha does not take what is not given.

A disciple of Buddha does not misuse sexuality.

A disciple of Buddha does not speak falsely.

A disciple of Buddha does not intoxicate mind or body of self or others.

A disciple of Buddha does not slander.

A disciple of Buddha does not praise self while putting others down.

A disciple of Buddha is not possessive of anything, not even the Teaching.

A disciple of Buddha does not harbor ill will.

A disciple of Buddha does not ignore the Three Treasures,  
Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, the true nature of all-being.

## Guidelines for Resolving Conflicts Within the Community

A member who is in conflict with another or feels that a member has acted inappropriately is encouraged to discuss the situation with the other person involved. Both are asked to speak and listen with the precepts in mind. On page 4 are some guidelines for such conversations, *Communities in Conflict: Difficult Conversations*.

It may be useful to invite one or more neutral witnesses or facilitators to take part in face-to-face conflict resolution. Such persons may be silent witnesses, or may be mediators who help ensure that each person has an uninterrupted opportunity to speak. A facilitator may be anyone whom both parties respect and agree upon e.g., a neutral acquaintance, or someone who is a trained mediator.

In the same way, if the issue is with a priest, someone in a position of authority or an instructional capacity, direct resolution is recommended either individually or with a third party witness or mediator. If, however, informal resolution is not possible, or directly addressing the conflict or issue does not bring a satisfactory resolution, it may be brought to the attention of the head teacher/ abbess or president or vice president of the board.

### Formal grievance procedures

For certain issues, informal resolution may not be possible. For these situations, we offer a formal procedure through the Board of Directors. A written grievance may be brought to the president or vice president of the Chapel Hill Zen Center board, who will give a copy to the person named in the complaint. Generally, the person named will have two weeks to prepare a written response. After receiving the written response, the board officer will then bring the grievance and response to a closed meeting of the board, where it will be discussed. **All involved will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and any documentation.** If the board concludes that the grievance warrants it, a grievance committee will be formed. The purpose of such a committee is to resolve conflicts and promote harmony in the community, rather than assign blame or punishment.

A grievance committee is made up of three board members: one to be chosen by the member bringing the grievance, one by the other person involved, and one by the two committee members chosen in this way. If circumstances indicate that this is appropriate, the board may allow the choice of someone who is not a board member. The member chosen by each party does not represent that person, but functions to listen fairly and impartially. If any ethical issue concerning the head teacher/abbess arises, a respected teacher from our lineage may be invited to participate in the grievance process by the board or by the teacher, in which case the invited teacher will be given access to all documents.

The committee will meet with the parties involved and thoroughly hear and examine the situation. Additional inquiry may take place. The committee will make recommendations to the board, and the board will inform the parties. Such recommendations may be appealed to the whole board, but the decisions of the whole board will then be binding, except in the case of removing the abbot/abbess. In this case, Section 8.3 of the Chapel Hill Zen Center By-Laws applies:

*Section 8.3 A majority of the Directors may dismiss the Abbess/Abbot, which dismissal shall be effective only if confirmed by written ballot of a three-fourths majority of all Participating Members who are Participating Members at the time the Board dismissed the Abbess/Abbot. Within thirty (30) days of dismissing the Abbess/Abbot, the Board of Directors, unless a majority shall direct otherwise, shall submit the dismissal for approval by the Participating Members who shall vote to approve or disapprove the dismissal within ninety (90) days after the Board submits the issue to the Participating Members for approval.*

## Communities in Conflict: Difficult Conversations

### Avoid Conversations

when you are not willing to learn  
when you want to control the outcome instead of being open  
when the real conflict is inside you  
when there is a better way than talking  
when your purpose doesn't make sense  
when you are trying to change the other person  
when you are looking for short-term relief at long-term cost  
when you want to hurt the other person ("hit and run")

### Preparing for a Difficult Conversation: Feelings and Identity Conversations

#### ***Know your feelings***

see what feelings are disguised as easier to handle feelings  
explore whether you have bundled contradictory emotions  
understand where feelings have transformed into judgments, accusations and attributions  
recognize your "emotional footprint"  
negotiate with your feelings

#### ***Be prepared for "identity quakes"***

examine which identity is vulnerable: e.g. competence, worth  
acknowledge complexity of identity issues  
understand how your feeling threatened may be contributing to the problem  
realize that the other person's identity is implicated too

### "What Happened?" Conversations

#### ***Move to curiosity: know and state your intention***

focus on understanding not blame or judgment  
look for your highest hope  
strive for understanding, not necessarily agreement  
express the impact on you, rather than argue about who is right  
inquire about the other's intentions  
practice deeply listening to the other  
focus on your contribution to the problem, not blame for the problem

### The Learning Conversation

be open to the outcome, not attached  
suggest how the other person can help you with your contribution  
ask about what you can do to help the other