

Code of Conduct and Processes for Sanbo Zen International (SZI)

General Statement

Sanbo Zen International is a lay group of Zen practitioners founded in Japan in 1954 by Yasutani Haku'un Roshi. It follows in the footsteps of Shakyamuni Buddha in seeking to realize our true nature and is open to all people who wish to practice Zen, regardless of their nationality or faith. The members are bound together by a common commitment to practice zazen with the aim of realizing wisdom and compassion in their own lives and in the world.

Purpose of the Code

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

1) promote a supportive and safe environment for the ethical teaching and practice of Zen; 2) encourage open and respectful discussion, when necessary, regarding questionable behavior on the part of teachers or students; 3) support sangha teachers and students in addressing unethical behavior by setting up clear guidelines for behavior and measures for handling violations.

General Ethical Guidelines

As a lay community of Zen practitioners, we the members and teachers SZI resolve to conduct our lives and our relationships taking the Three Pure Precepts as our guiding principle. These are 1) to avoid all that is harmful, 2) to foster and promote all that is good, and 3) to purify our minds and seek the liberation of all sentient beings in all our thoughts, words, and actions.

We are bound by the Ten Grave Precepts, which are: 1) Honor all life, do not kill, 2) Respect others' property, do not steal, 3) Speak truthfully, do not lie, 4) Respect your own and others' bodies and commitments, do not misuse sex, 5) Keep a clear mind, do not abuse drugs and intoxicants, 6) Uphold the good name of others, do not engage in harmful speech, 7) Live in truthful humility, do not praise self or put down others, 8) Be generous, do not be stingy with material or spiritual goods, 9) Cultivate a peaceful heart, do not indulge in anger, and 10) Uphold the Buddha Dharma, do not defame the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha)

Sangha Relations

The relationships of those in leadership positions (Teachers, Board Members, paid staff) among themselves and with the other sangha members will receive special attention in upholding ethical guidelines. People in leadership positions must be especially careful not to abuse their power for personal gain or satisfaction.

In teacher-student relationships and in relations among students, we will practice in accord with the Ten Grave Precepts. All relationships will be conducted with mutual honor and esteem, with due acknowledgment and maintenance of boundaries, and with due care to confidentiality in matters of individual practice and personal life. We will hold one another in highest respect, and will strive to maintain right speech at all times.

Processes for Preventing Problems and Addressing Complaints

Individual Sanbo Zen sanghas will adopt this code of conduct or develop their own comparable code. All students should have an introduction to practice of Zen which includes reference to the sangha's and/or SZI's written code of conduct for teachers and students. Students and teachers shall enter into the student-teacher relationship on the consent of both parties and are free to withdraw from that relationship on advising the other party. The acceptance by a teacher of the authorization to teach includes acceptance of this code of conduct as well as responsibility for the safety and authenticity of their student's practice.

Psychosocial problems involving teachers or students when they affect the ability of the individual to practice or teach need to be addressed through one's usual ways of coping or through consultation with professionals.

Students should be informed and agree that a teacher may find it helpful to touch a student, to correct posture, or to demonstrate a point but that neither student nor teacher should ever initiate contact of a sexual nature.

If a matter of concern arises, before bringing it to the attention of SZI, individuals are encouraged to resolve it within their own sangha first with the individual in question; and, if the matter is not resolved, with the teacher.

If the matter involves one's teacher, or the teacher's response is unsatisfactory, there should first be an effort to resolve the issue within the sangha with the aid of other teachers or senior members. Individual sanghas may choose to develop

their own internal processes for addressing such concerns-which should be made clear to all.

The SZI Code of Conduct will be posted on the SZI website along with the e-mail addresses of at least one contact person in each country.

The process for dealing with concerns should ensure that they are dealt with in a timely manner. Only when the matter involves more than one sangha, or when internal processes fail or the sangha considers the matter too serious to resolve internally, should the matter be brought to the attention of the SZI Harmony, Ethics, and Reconciliation Committee.

If anyone has due reason to claim that a serious violation of ethical principles has occurred, especially in matters that include abuse of authority, financial impropriety, sexual misconduct, or a grave criminal offense with legal and public consequences, and has not been resolved within the local sangha, he or she should make a formal complaint to the Harmony, Ethics, and Reconciliation (HEAR) Committee. The committee will clarify whether the complaint is legitimate and determine how to carry out any measures necessary to address the case. A formal complaint will consist of a written description of the violation, with the name of the person or persons accused of committing the violation, along with proper documentation or testimonial to the veracity of such a claim.

The HEAR committee will be appointed by the Board in consultation with the Council of Teachers. If the accusation directly involves a teacher or board member, he or she will be excused from such deliberations. The HEAR committee shall consist in no less than three, and not more than six members, some of whom may include persons from outside of the sangha who may have special competence in dealing with the particular matters involved. The committee is to be given a specific timeframe within which to report to the board. If it determines that the complaint is valid, it shall recommend measures to address the case or cases. Having received such a report, the board shall take measures that may include: a mediated resolution, reparations, expulsion or suspension from a leadership role, expulsion or suspension from sangha membership, or reporting to legal or other enforcement authorities outside of the sangha where such matters may be appropriately dealt with.

Approved by Coordinating Committee SZI Dec 9 2014