

**CEDAR RAPIDS ZEN CENTER  
STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES**

**PREFACE**

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

A compassionate standard of behavior is expected from everyone who participates in activities at Jikyouji. This standard is based on respect for each person as a unique expression of Buddha nature regardless of age, race, gender, ethnic background, national origin, appearance, sexual orientation, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, social class, or occupation.

**ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

The principles that guide our actions as Zen Buddhist practitioners are the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts. They are:

**The Three Refuges:**

We take refuge in Buddha  
We take refuge in Dharma  
We take refuge in Sangha

**The Three Pure Precepts:**

To do no evil  
To do good  
To live to benefit all beings

**The Ten Prohibitory Precepts:**

A follower of the Way does not kill but cultivates and encourages life.

A follower of the Way does not take what is not given but cultivates and encourages generosity.

A follower of the Way does not misuse sexuality but cultivates and encourages open, honest, and acceptable relationships.

A follower of the Way does not lie but cultivates and encourages truthful communication.

A follower of the Way does not intoxicate self or others but cultivates and encourages clarity.

A follower of the Way does not slander but cultivates and encourages respectful speech.

A follower of the Way neither extols self nor demeans others but cultivates awareness of the interdependent nature of self.

A follower of the Way does not attach to anything, even the teaching, but cultivates mutual support and shares the dharma with all beings.

A follower of the Way does not harbor ill will but cultivates loving-kindness, understanding, and forgiveness.

A follower of the Way does not turn away from the Three Treasures but rather cultivates and encourages taking refuge in them.

It is our sincere intention to realign our lives continually in accord with these precepts.

**Appropriate action** We aspire to relationships that are characterized by appropriate action - relationships based on trust, cooperation, openness to differences, communication, fairness, kindness, and respect. We cultivates these qualities through keeping the precepts and developing good dharma friendships.

**Inappropriate action** Inappropriate action is harmful to others and ourselves. It may include physical violence, sexual misconduct or harassment,<sup>1</sup> harassment of any kind, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, extreme or frequent displays of anger, insults or demeaning comments, and manipulative or duplicitous speech or action. Persons encountering inappropriate actions from any member of the Cedar Rapids Zen Center Sangha (including its teachers and senior practitioners, board members, officers, staff, and volunteers) or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit of the precepts and the practice of appropriate action.

All teachers, board members, staff, volunteers, and lay leaders are mandatory reporters of child and elder abuse.

**Practitioner/teacher relationships** A teacher at Cedar Rapids Zen Center is anyone involved in an instructional capacity. This includes the resident teacher and anyone designated by the resident teacher to serve as an instructor or mentor for practitioners. This includes those giving zazen instruction, leading extended training periods (ango), and facilitating workshops and retreats (sesshin) for clergy and laity. Practitioner/teacher relationships should be based on mutual respect, compassion, and kindness. We acknowledge the inequality inherent in such a relationship and the power issues involved.

We specifically acknowledge the great harm, both psychological and spiritual, that results from teachers becoming sexually involved with practitioners, for the teacher and practitioner involved and for the community as a whole. **We, therefore, consider it unethical for a teacher to engage in sexual behavior with a practitioner at the Center.**

We furthermore expect all who participate at Cedar Rapids Zen Center to follow these guidelines:

- 1) If a teacher and/or practitioner feel at risk of violating the above ethical principle, they should suspend their teacher-practitioner relationship at least until they have sought counsel with the clergy board member or the resident teacher.
- 2) It is considered a misuse of sexuality for a teacher to form a sexual relationship with a former sangha member within three months of the termination of the practitioner-teacher relationship.

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<sup>1</sup> Sexual harassment is behavior of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and offensive to the person or persons it is targeted toward. Examples of harassing behavior may include unwanted physical contact, foul language of an offensive sexual nature, sexual propositions, sexual jokes or remarks, obscene gestures, and displays of sexually explicit materials. These acts committed by those with greater authority and power in the organization are particularly harmful because they can create a hostile work or practice environment.

- 3) Any teacher considering forming a sexual relationship with another Cedar Rapids Zen Center participant should discuss the appropriateness of the relationship with a senior practitioner or the resident teacher.

**Procedure for severe alleged ethical breach** If the alleged inappropriate action is a breach of ethical standards such that if proven, the accused might be removed from his or her position, the accused is entitled to a formal investigation by a neutral third party to determine the validity of the accusation. The neutral third party should be trained in the process of adjudication. Under no circumstances should a person who has been harmed be required to meet with the person who is said to have harmed him or her as this could lead to additional traumatization. This is especially true when there is power imbalance as between practitioner and teacher. If an ethical breach is found, a Reconciliation Council (see below) will be formed to determine the appropriate remediation. If the allegation is not upheld, a written document stating such is given to both parties and the Secretary for the Cedar Rapids Zen Center files.

**Procedures for resolving less severe alleged ethical breaches and conflicts within the Sangha** We are committed to solving problems and resolving differences that may arise between members of the Cedar Rapids Zen Center organization, including its teachers and senior instructors, board members, officers, staff, volunteers, and participants.

The following steps may be taken as appropriate:

1. **Personal contact** The aggrieved person should directly contact the person (s) whom he or she believes has/have acted inappropriately and make an effort to reach an understanding.
2. **Informal meeting** If the grievance is not resolved, the parties may request a meeting with the Resident Teacher if not included in the grievance, or the President of the Board of Directors, or the Vice-President of the Board. If the parties are unable to reconcile under Steps One and Two, the aggrieved person may proceed to Step Three.
3. **Mediation** The person filing the grievance should contact the Board President or the clergy member of the Board. If both are named in the grievance, the Vice-President should be contacted.

The aggrieved person will provide a written description of the action he or she considers inappropriate, along with an account of the effort to resolve the matter informally. The person cited shall respond to the allegation in writing to the contact person within one week.

The contact person will then arrange a mediation with an independent trained mediator. It will be held within four weeks. It will include the person bringing the grievance and the person (s) accused. The mediator may seek information from others who have knowledge related to the case under discussion.

The meeting shall be led by the mediator. If the parties agree, it may be supplemented by a meeting with others who have knowledge of the case. The mediation shall result in a written statement of the position reached by the parties, and this statement will be given to the contact person.

If Step Three results in a statement resolving the grievance, a copy will be kept in the Cedar Rapids Zen Center files. If a resolution has not been reached, the aggrieved person may proceed to Step Four.

4. **Reconciliation Council** The person filing the grievance may notify the Board of Directors that she or he wishes to proceed with the unresolved grievance. Thereupon, the Board will form a Reconciliation Council consisting of two Board members not named in the grievance, the clergy member of the Board, one person chosen by the aggrieved person, and one person chosen by the accused person. After formation, The Council shall notify the concerned parties in writing, and all written records of the case

shall be provided to the Council within two weeks. The Council shall set an appropriate date for a hearing within four weeks of receipt of the written records.

At the hearing, the Council shall hear the presentation of the person filing the grievance and the response of the accused. The Council may also solicit views of others where deemed appropriate. Additional meetings may be called and may include the entire sangha, should the Council deem them necessary.

The Council shall make a finding based on the above process. The finding shall be written and shall be communicated to the person filing the grievance and the accused within four weeks of the completion of the reconciliation process.

The Reconciliation Council will keep written records of all meetings and findings. These shall be kept on file at Cedar Rapids Zen Center.

**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 harm done. Such atonement is an integral part of our spiritual practice.

**No retaliation** Retaliation against individuals who report possible harassment will also be addressed as inappropriate action, and will be subject to the procedure described above.

**Other remedies** The above-outlined procedure for addressing incidents of inappropriate behavior is not intended to impair, replace, or limit the right of any individual to seek a remedy under available state or federal law by immediately reporting the matter to the appropriate state or federal agency.

Any employee, volunteer, participant Cedar Rapids Zen Center found to be engaging in improper conduct will be subject to corrective action, including the possible termination of employment, removal from the volunteer roster, or exclusion from the sangha.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Each practitioner 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, practitioners should know that teachers may share information among themselves for the express intention of benefiting the practitioner and for the purpose of teacher training.

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

## **CONCLUSION**

This statement was adopted by the Board of Directors on [date]. It applies to all who practice, study, teach, work and volunteer at Jikyouji and shall be kept on file at the temple and freely distributed to all.