

San Francisco Zen Center
Beginner's Mind Temple
PURE STANDARDS (Guidelines for Conduct)
FOR RESIDENTIAL ZEN TRAINING

(Updated February 6, 2018)

“All students should be like milk and water—more intimate than that even, because we are all good friends from past lives, sharing eternal Buddha Nature as each one’s own.”

“Just sit and see what happens... Following the rules lets you find yourself... The rules are not something to restrict you, but something to support your practice.”

—Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

Beginner’s Mind Temple/City Center is a Soto Zen residential training center, and all residents are admitted and supported to be in residency with this primary purpose in mind. Since the birth of Zen training in China over a thousand years ago, it has been common practice for residential practice communities to compose “pure standards” that enable the residents to live with each other in mutual respect, peace, and harmony. This way of life is the body and mind of Zen training and practice. Please follow these guidelines completely and wholeheartedly.

16 Bodhisattva Precepts

Our practice is grounded in the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts. These ethical principles provide skillful means for the ways we interact as individuals within the community and serve as guidelines for our embodiment of the practice.

Residents explicitly reflect on and renew their commitment to practicing with the precepts in a Bodhisattva ceremony, held each month at the time of the full moon. The precepts, as we chant them during our monthly Full Moon Ceremony, are as follows:

I take refuge in Buddha.

I take refuge in Dharma.

I take refuge in Sangha

I vow to refrain from all evil.

I vow to make every effort to live in enlightenment.

I vow to live and be lived for the benefit of all beings.

I vow not to kill.

I vow not to take what is not given.

I vow not to misuse sexuality.

I vow to refrain from false speech.

I vow to refrain from intoxicants.

I vow not to slander.

I vow not to praise self at the expense of others.

I vow not to be avaricious.

I vow not to harbor ill will.

I vow not to disparage the Three Treasures.

Formal Practice Schedule

First-year residents participate fully in all practice periods, in one class each practice period, and one seven-day sesshin (and three-day sesshin if possible). Those who continue in residency beyond the first year participate fully in one practice period each year, one class and one seven-day sesshin. All residents are expected to attend all monthly one-day sittings.

Please make a commitment to completely follow the formal practice schedule. This means attending morning zazen and service, soji (pre-breakfast temple cleaning), dharma talks and special ceremonies. WPAs and staff members whose work does not conflict time-wise are expected to attend noon service during practice periods and encouraged to attend evening zazen and service.

Attendance is taken for all weekday morning programs, the full Saturday morning public program (except for 9:25am zazen), and the Wednesday evening dharma talk. Residents are asked to attend 100% of the formal practice schedule. Any month in which a resident's attendance falls below 80% is a matter of high concern. The tanto and ino will inquire of the individual as to the reasons as well as explore with them what support may be needed going forward. A consistent pattern over an extended period of time of less than 80% attendance of the formal schedule, and/or a lack of fulfillment of other communal and work practice responsibilities (as outlined below), may be cause for the Practice Committee to consider whether a student is thriving and/or able to make residential practice at City Center a priority. A process may be initiated to explore with the student whether continued residency is appropriate and in their best interest or for that of the residential sangha as a whole.

Be on time for all scheduled events; arrive early enough to be settled at your place before an event begins.

If you cannot attend a practice event because of work, illness or any other reason, please write your name, what event(s) you are missing, and the reason in the tenken notebook outside the ino's (meditation hall manager's) office. There is a page in the notebook for each day. Alternatively, you may send the ino an email explaining your absence. Some crews will need to miss some zendo events because of their work schedules.

If you leave City Center for more than one night, please inform the ino of your absence, the reason and how long you will be away. This includes time away for any vacations, business trips or to attend to medical or personal affairs. If a person's work (as an RBT Resident) involves travel, there is a maximum of four (4) weeks per calendar year that one can be away from temple practice. Be sure to consult ahead of time with the director or tanto regarding whether your time away is in general accord with the City Center residential training parameters. If you are a work practice resident, also speak with your immediate supervisor if your time away will affect your availability for work.

Zendo and Buddha Hall Decorum

Like the schedule, the guidelines for how we move and act in the zendo help create an environment that supports our practice. When we commit to practice traditional Zen forms, we are more likely to notice what it is that we are actually doing.

Observe silence in and around the zendo whenever people are sitting. Move slowly when in the zendo, and refrain from making eye contact with others. Do not cross in front of the altar. Be in the zendo by the end of the second rolldown on the han. If late, sit or stand in the gaitan and wait for the three bells signaling the start of zazen before entering.

Stay in the zendo for kinhin unless it is necessary to leave; this is a time for walking meditation. Do not go to the small kitchen, student lounge or drink tea or coffee during kinhin. You may use the restroom during kinhin.

Muffle sounds such as coughing, sneezing, nose blowing, yawning, or throat clearing.

Handle zendo (and Buddha Hall) cushions carefully and do not move them with your feet. Do not place your feet on the meal boards.

Wear clean and loose-fitting clothes to the zendo and be sure that your face, hands and feet are clean. Appropriate zendo attire is dark and subdued in color, extends beyond the shoulders and below the knees, and is not revealing.

Always wear at least one layer of clothing under your robe if you are wearing a sitting robe. Change in and out of robes and sitting attire in private. Keep robes and sitting attire clean and in good repair.

Carry okesa, rakusu or oryoki one at a time at heart level outside the zendo and at eye level in the zendo using both hands.

If you have long hair, tie it back and wear it off the neck. Do not cover your head.

Refrain from wearing scented products or perfume, watches or jewelry, including mala beads, in the zendo.

Do not bring cell phones or other electronic equipment into the zendo.

Service

Attend morning service unless you have assigned work or practice discussion during this time. If you are late to service for whatever reason, enter the Buddha Hall and do three bows facing the front of the room on the floor just inside the door, and then step onto the nearest tatami to join a row.

“Chant with your ears,” i.e. listen to and blend in with others and to the pace set by the mokugyo.

Dharma Discussion

The abiding abbot, senior dharma teachers, the tanto (head of practice) and other practice leaders are available for formal or informal discussions regarding Zen practice, living in community at City Center, and any difficulties that may arise. All residents are asked to choose and be in regular communication with a resident practice leader, (even if you have someone who is your primary teacher and who does not reside at City Center).

The Practice of Silence

Observe silence from the goodnight bell (approximately 9:30pm) through the breakfast chant the following morning (7:20am), and from the end of evening service until after the meal chant and clackers at dinner.

If it is necessary to speak during this time, do so in a way that supports the communal silence and does not disturb others.

(While not an official guideline, you may wish to consider the ways in which it may be personally beneficial to extend the practice of silence to the realm of internet and social media use, visual entertainment (TV/movies), and the reading of non-dharma-related materials during the hours in which the community observes silence.)

The Practice of Bowing

Stop and bow in gassho (with palms joined) when passing other practitioners in hallways during formal practice times (e.g. during the morning program), including one-day sittings and sesshins.

Do not stop and bow during soji, or in functional spaces such as bathrooms, kitchen, etc.

Stop and bow to any procession, e.g. doshi and jiko/jisha, Buddha tray, wake-up bell, nightwatch bell, etc.

Stop and bow to the bathroom/toilet altar when entering and leaving bathroom/toilet.

Community Responsibilities

As is outlined in the Residents' Handbook, you agree to the following communal responsibilities and commitments as a City Center resident:

- Complete morning program six (6) times a week, consisting of two periods of zazen, service and soji, as well as oryoki (during practice periods) on Saturday mornings. Sometimes the schedule request may be adjusted.
- All Saturday morning and Wednesday evening dharma talks.
- Doan jobs (2x weekly): these are ceremonial activities which support the formal practice, such as ringing bells, cleaning altars, watching the door during zazen, etc.
- Temple/House job (which takes about one hour a week, and is assigned by work leader)
- Dish shift (1x weekly)
- Weekly bathroom cleaning assignment (15-45 minutes a week, depending on specific task); students living in the 366-368 flats will do house soji one day a week along with other flat mates.
- Night watch (1x month)
- Desk duty (1x month)
- All one-day sittings
- All resident meetings (1x month; currently the meetings are at 8:45 am on Saturdays)
- All sesshins in first year of residency, and one (1) per year after that
- Resident's Retreat (1x yearly, approx 4-5 days)
- All practice periods for first year of residency; and one (1) per year after that
- Regular meetings with a practice leader (at least 1x a month) and one-to-two (1-2) meetings per year with the Tanto.
- Kitchen/meal prep shift (1x weekly, as needed), consisting of approximately two-and-a-half hours each week: *currently this is not requested due to adequate staffing, but can be reinstated at any time depending on staffing need.*

Community Responsibilities – cont’ (graphic presentation)

DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	YEARLY
<p>Daily Morning Program <i>(6x weekly)</i> Consisting of two periods of zazen, service and soji, as well as oryoki and a dharma talk on Saturday mornings</p>	<p>Dharma Talks <i>(2x weekly)</i> Saturday morning and Wednesday evening dharma talks</p>	<p>Night Watch <i>(1x month)</i></p>	<p>Practice Period Classes <i>(2-3x yearly, depending on student 1 per year after)</i></p>
<p>Optional and Encouraged Late afternoon zazen and service</p>	<p>Doan Jobs <i>(2x weekly)</i> Ceremonial roles such as ringing bells, cleaning altars, and watching the door during zazen</p>	<p>Desk Duty <i>(1x month)</i></p>	<p>Sesshins <i>(All during first year of residency, 1x per year thereafter)</i></p>
	<p>Temple or House Job <i>(1x weekly)</i> Assigned by Work Leader, requiring about one hour per week</p>	<p>One-Day Sitzings <i>(1x month)</i></p>	<p>Resident’s Retreat <i>(1x yearly, approx 4-5 days)</i></p>
	<p>Dish Shift <i>(1x weekly)</i></p>	<p>Resident Meetings <i>(1x month)</i></p>	<p>Practice Periods <i>(All during first year of residency and 1x yearly thereafter)</i></p>
	<p>Bathroom Job <i>(1x weekly)</i> Students living in the 366-368 flats perform house soji one day a week along with other flatmates</p>	<p>Practice Discussion <i>(at least 1x a month, minimum)</i></p>	<p>Tangaryo <i>(1x total)</i> Formally enter the temple as a resident after two practice periods</p>
	<p>Kitchen Shift <i>(1x weekly, as needed)</i></p>		<p>Practice Discussion with Head of Practice <i>(2x yearly, minimum)</i></p>

Work Practice

The 9:00 am work meeting is the beginning of our work day. WPAs, staff members and practice period work students are all expected to attend work meeting Monday through Friday and after service on Saturdays unless work commitments require otherwise. RBT students are encouraged to attend if it is possible given their schedules.

Please be on time for work meeting. The weekday morning work meeting is signaled by a drum at 8:55 am, and you should be in the dining room by the time the densho is rung at 9 am. We observe a period of silence (to reflect on peace) between the time of the densho and the communal bow in. General labor students and guest students also attend the afternoon work meeting in the dining room at 1:30 pm.

Refrain from bringing food or drinks to work meeting. Water bottles, coffee/tea mugs, etc. may be left on the radiator outside dining room during meeting.

Enter wholeheartedly into the work that has been assigned.

Maintain silence as much as possible at work. Functional speech is encouraged during work hours.

Notify the work leader or your crew head if you are unable to work for any reason.

Kitchen and Meal Practice

Refrain from entering the working area of the kitchen without permission. If you need to speak with a member of the kitchen crew, first ask the permission of the fukuten or tenzo.

If you are ill and need food to be brought to you, please notify both the ino and the current resident representatives by sending an email (ccino@sfzc.org / residentrep@sfzc.org). The resident reps are responsible for making sure that food is brought to those unable to collect it for themselves.

The morning program extends through the breakfast food offering, meal drum and chant until the clackers. Please go to the kitchen immediately after soji to participate in the before-breakfast chant. Refrain from reading the newspapers in the Student Lounge any time before the 7:20am meal chant.

Dinner, and getting one's food in the kitchen, is silent until after the chant and clackers in the dining room.

Eat only in the dining room and front or back courtyards. You may sit at the silent table in the dining room if you prefer not to be involved in conversation. Refrain from reading during meals. Meals may be eaten in the student lounge on days/times when a formal meal isn't being served, (ie. Saturday evenings, Sundays and holidays).

Eat only what is served unless you have dietary restrictions or special needs, in which case please consult with the tenzo about your dietary requirements.

Between meals, snacks are available in the small kitchen, including fruit, bread, spreads, coffee and occasional leftovers or other items. You may also store personal food in the small kitchen refrigerator; be sure to label it with your name and the date. Leftovers are also available for

residents who work outside the temple and wish to make a bag lunch for themselves. If you have other needs regarding food, please check with the tenzo.

SF Zen Center is a vegetarian community. Please do not prepare or store animal products in any communal kitchen designated as SFZC residential space.

Please be respectful of the property of others, including their food stored in the small kitchen. Also be mindful of severe food allergies and to not cross-contaminate, eg. peanut butter, nuts, garlic, etc.

We encourage the practice of sitting down to eat or drink anything except water.

It's important that residents fully take up the responsibility of keeping the main kitchen and small kitchen both clean and free of used dishes on weekends. Please respect, support and care for the kitchen crew and the sense of communal harmony through this considerate effort.

Clarity of Mind and Good Health

Refrain from the use or possession of alcohol in the 300 Page temple building and all shared/communal areas in 293-295 Page, 308-310 Page, 340 Page and 366-370 Page.

Refrain from the use or possession of any illegal or other inappropriate drugs in any of SFZC's buildings. In case of medical marijuana needs, speak to the Director about requests and parameters.

Not following these guidelines around alcohol and drug use may result in a student in being asked to leave City Center residence.

Due to reasons of fire hazard and environmental health concerns, smoking is discouraged. Do not smoke in any area of 300 Page Street, in either courtyard, on the steps of 300 Page Street, on the roof or in your room. Similarly, smoking is prohibited in 293-295 Page, 308-310 Page, 340 Page and 366-370 Page. While smoking is permitted outside these buildings on the sidewalk curb, please be sensitive to the ways in which smoke may still affect those nearby and near open windows.

In order to enable the 300 Page Street temple building and the 366-370 Page Street flats to be a practice space for those with various environmental and health sensitivities, incense is no longer burned in indoor public or private areas. Flower petals are instead used as a 'fragrance' offering at altars. For safety reasons, do not leave altar candles burning unattended in any ceremonial space. Residents are asked not to burn candles in their rooms.

SFZC has environmental and sustainability practices which residents and sangha members are requested to follow. Please review the following documents (available from the director) for more information: *Environmental Practices at City Center*; *SFZC's Food Purchasing Guidelines*; *SFZC's Flower Purchasing Guidelines*; and *SFZC's Building and Maintenance Guidelines*.

Relationship Practice

San Francisco Zen Center supports people in a wide variety of relationships, from celibate to committed and regardless of sexual orientation. In the interest of establishing a harmonious life together, and in accordance with the third Bodhisattva precept (*I vow not to misuse sexuality*),

residents are asked to observe the following guidelines regarding romantic and sexual relationships.

Be aware of how sexual energy is communicated through speech and non-verbally through touch, eye contact, body language, and attitude. Be sensitive to offering a respectful space for practice for residents and non-residents alike. This includes being sensitive to the ways that people of different cultures and gender identities may interpret or experience unwelcome romantic and sexual interest.

If you are part of a couple, please maintain behavior that supports residential practice. Do not isolate yourself from the community, respect silent times, and be sensitive about public displays of affection.

Be aware of how the time and energy needed in relationships may conflict with the City Center practice schedule. Practice leaders are available for consultation regarding this and other relationship topics. Residents beginning a new relationship within the residential or extended sangha are asked to consult with a practice leader, the tanto, or the abbot. The purpose of this conversation is to ensure that relationships are formed with consideration for the impact on the community and individuals involved.

To support new students in finding their practice without the distractions and complications of forming relationships, residents are expected not to begin or express interest in a new sexual or romantic relationship with another resident if either has lived at City Center for less than six months. Residents are also asked not to begin or express interest in relationships with a participant of the wider community (eg. non-resident) for that person's first six months of practice at the center.

Observe the policy of San Francisco Zen Center which prohibits sexual harassment. All residents are also expected to follow the law regarding age of consent, and thus are not to initiate or engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with any individual under the age of 18.

Not following the 6-month guideline or engaging in illegal relationships or sexual harassment may result in a resident being asked to leave residential practice, or not being accepted for future Practice Periods.

Appropriate Attire

Dress in a manner that is appropriate to and supportive of our life of practice. For example, refrain from going without a shirt or wearing short shorts, thin-strapped tank tops or tops with bare midriffs or very low-cut necklines. Be sensitive about the effect your attire may have on the community, and particularly to how clothing is at times used (whether consciously or unconsciously) to attract sexual attention.

Refrain from going barefoot outside of the Zendo, Buddha Hall, practice discussion and personal rooms; wear closed-toe shoes when working in the kitchen, shop and garden.

Use of Electronic Devices

In order to establish and preserve a refuge from media and technological bombardment at City Center, please do not use your cell phone to make calls, engage in casual emailing/texting, or to surf the internet in any communal or public space at 300 Page Street. You may use your cell phone to make calls on the sidewalk (but not the steps) in front of 300 Page, in the phone booth

on the second floor, or in your single room. You may use also your cell phone to make calls or text in the Art Lounge with the door closed to take or make extremely brief and urgent calls/texts if it is not otherwise in use. Do not use your cell phone to make calls or engage in casual email, texting or internet use in either courtyard or in any other space at 300 Page Street except as listed above, including a shared room, as well as on the roof if others are present. Do not use you cell phone for calls/emails/texting/etc. during meal times in the kitchen serving area, dining room or small kitchen. You may use your cell phone or tablet for note-taking during meetings and classes. Please limit any texting or checking of email in public spaces to “functional” purposes, e.g. doing so is necessary for timely communication or completion of a work-practice related or sangha-related task.

Outside the hours of morning practice (5:10-7:20am), laptops and tablets may be used in the residents’ lounge and the roof. The residents’ lounge and roof is for light computer use only, limited to one hour. Laptops, tablets and e-readers may be used in the dining room on Saturday afternoons and Sundays when other events are not happening there. E-readers may be treated like a book.

Please do not wear headphones or earbuds in any communal or public space or in the hallways of 300 Page Street, including the front or back courtyard, the kitchen, dining room, etc. You may use them in the privacy of your room, and in the residents’ lounge and the reading room only for limited work or study purposes, or in the dining room on Sundays when other events are not happening there.

Listening to Music and Playing Musical Instruments

Musical instruments may be played during times when there is no scheduled practice event between 7:45 am and 8:30 pm, as long as neighbors are not disturbed. If you wish to listen to music, please do so in the privacy of your room using headphones or earbuds. While residents may listen to music on the roof using headphones/earbuds, be sensitive to the volume of the headsets to insure that the music/sound is not heard by others in the vicinity.

Diversity

Students at SFZC aspire to view all beings as Buddha, treating each person we meet equally with care and respect. As part of a diverse community and world, SFZC acknowledges that diversity practice and dharma practice are not separate. In actively promoting, nurturing, and maintaining a diverse, equitable and inclusive community, SFZC aspires to express and manifest the Bodhisattva Way. The temple’s diverse and inclusive community forms the foundation of each sangha member’s spiritual well-being and development as well as the institution’s integrity and vitality. In this context, SFZC as an institution commits to embody and support diversity, equity, inclusion and cultural humility.

So that all people may be warmly welcomed and truly supported to join, realize and embody this way of life, SFZC does not discriminate nor tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, or physical ability. City Center welcomes people of every gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, political belief, language spoken, and physical ability, and will try to accommodate the requests of the sangha. If you feel hurt by the words or actions of another person, or you observe a harmful situation, you may speak to the tanto, director, a practice leader, or a Senior Staff member.

Conflict Resolution

San Francisco Zen Center now has a *Communications Protocol for Practicing with Conflicts and Disagreements*. This protocol has been developed to encourage members of the SFZC community to take the initiative for informal, face-to-face communication when there is disagreement or conflict. It offers a respectful and considerate way to promote resolution and restore harmony in accord with our values and practices.

If a conflict arises, try to work it out directly. If you need supportive communication tools or have questions about work practice policies, ask your practice leader or crew head for help, or ask the tanto, director, HR staff or other designated person to act as a facilitator to create a neutral space in which both people can be heard and assisted to work out the conflict.

Observe the policy of San Francisco Zen Center which prohibits verbal, physical and sexual harassment. This means refraining from contact with a person who requests no contact. Please speak with the tanto or director if you believe that this policy has been violated, in an effort to seek resolution and re-establish harmony.

“To train constantly...requires unstinting support. The structure of the Practice Period [and the guidelines for conduct] provides such support. It is the head and face of Buddha Ancestors. It has been intimately transmitted as their skin, flesh bones and marrow.”

—Eihei Dogen Zenji

“The assembly of practitioners in the hall should blend like milk and water to support the activity of the Way. Although now for some period you are guest and host, later you will be Buddha Ancestors equally throughout time. Therefore, you should not forget the feeling of gratitude. It is rare to meet one another and to practice what is rare to practice. This is called the body and mind of Buddha-Dharma.

—Eihei Dogen Zenji