



ZEN CENTER OF LOS ANGELES

THE SANGHA SUTRA:
ZCLA ETHICS PRACTICES



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Overview

The Sangha Sutra of ZCLA includes the following documents.

1. **The Sangha Sutra**, which sets forth the background and context for ethical behavior.
2. **Statement of Right Conduct**, which sets forth an overview of Right Conduct for our members, organization, and Sangha.
3. **The Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedures**, which sets forth the duties of HEAR, the Hearing, Ethics, and Reconciliation Circle, and the procedures for resolving conflicts and addressing grievances.
4. **Statement of Ethics for ZCLA Teachers**, which sets forth ethical guidelines for teachers at the Zen Center, including visiting teachers.

THE SANGHA SUTRA

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Preface

Thus have I seen. There is a Zen mountain in the heart of Los Angeles called the Zen Center of Los Angeles, which is a gathering place for people who wish to live a life of awakening and service. It was founded in 1967 by the Venerable Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi, a Soto Zen priest, and continues to this day. Maezumi Roshi named this mountain Dairyuzan Busshinji, or Great Dragon Mountain-Buddha Essence Temple.

This mountain was home to the Tongva peoples for thousands of years. We pay homage to the Tongva people, their elders and ancestors in the past, present and future. We bow in respectful acknowledgement to them and offer deep gratitude to this Tongva land and water that support us.

More recently, before this geographic area became designated as Koreatown, many groups that newly immigrated to the region made this area their first stop. The ethnic groups that have lived here—African Americans, Japanese Americans, European Americans, Hispanic Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans, many of them working class and laborers—all came seeking a better life. Each group and person leave a unique energetic imprint upon the land. We respectfully bow to all.

This mountain does not exclude anyone on the basis of nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability, class, or political point of view. At the same time, serious Zen practitioners will learn the ways of the mountain and, through their own experience and insight, test to see if it is a fit for their spiritual growth.

What Is the Sangha Sutra?

Strictly speaking, a Sangha is formed when three people who have taken refuge in The Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, practice together. For our purposes here, the Buddha is awakened realization; the Dharma, the teachings of awakening; and the Sangha, the community of practitioners, especially those who have taken refuge. While the emphasis is often

on individual awakening, today we speak of collective awakening. On this mountain, the Sangha strives to embody collective awakening. This means not only that we all awaken as an interdependent being, as the One Body, but also that every facet of ZCLA itself is designed as a skillful means for awakening and living awake together.

The word “sutra” (Sanskrit *sutta*) translates as “thread.” Each of us is a thread of the Sangha fabric, the community of practitioners who have taken refuge. Fabric is made of the warp, the threads that run lengthwise, and the woof, the threads that weave around the woof running crosswise. We could say that the warp is The Three Treasures and how each of us engages the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha is the woof. We could also say that the Sutra documents form a warp and how each of us engages with them comprises the woof. Together they are the endless practice of an ethical life.

What kind of fabric are we weaving together? What patterns are being revealed? The Sangha Sutra is the fabric woven of all of our behaviors and actions as we align with the nature of reality as embodied in The Three Treasures. Together we weave the fabric of the Sangha treasure by realizing and aligning with the Dharma of emptiness of a self, interconnection, and impermanence. Aligning ourselves with this nature of reality is called living in harmony. We are called forth to see others as ourselves and ourselves as others. In this way, we develop a maturity that respects and honors diversity. With this fundamental view, we practice becoming skilled in understanding differences and, therefore, in addressing conflicts as a path to living awake to the connection of all beings as the One Body. The fabric of our lives inevitably wears out, holes and tears appear, and seams rip apart. Whether these are caused by our own actions, circumstances, or the actions of others, we learn that fabric is strengthened in the mending and that mending matters.

It is like sewing a rakusu, the Buddha’s robe. Pieces of discarded and used fabric are sewn together with your tiny stitches, some even, some crooked, some long, some short. The needle pierces all the layers of fabric; the thread of emptiness leaves nothing unstitched. Each stitch of the thread is your life just as you are living it. When the rakusu is finished, it is the robe of liberation. Weaving Sangha is just like this—stitch by stitch.

These ethics documents comprise the heart of the Sangha Sutra. Please study them well. Turn this Sutra; let yourself be turned by it. The Sutra is not a rigid set of rules. Rather it provides guidance on how to live together respectfully, intelligently, with kindness and care in accord with the ever-changing circumstances of life. Reality has many paradoxes: there is no self and yet, there is a self-and-other; we are all of the same nature and we are all completely different; we are not one and not two; and so forth. Life is nuanced, complex, and situational. Although there are no fixed answers, there are practices that can help us become flexible and responsive to situations.

In the weaving of Sangha, there is one thing we all recognize: we know when harm is done, when someone has been injured. The Sangha Sutra addresses this fundamental principle of non-harming and how to live it in relationship to oneself and with each other. It challenges us to imagine how each of us can go beyond our self-centeredness to a deep-body-knowing of what is needed in any given situation. And the Sutra addresses the art of mending when the threads break and the fabric is torn.

Zen Training at ZCLA

Zen training is Life—your life. Your life includes everything; your practice includes everything. As the founder of Japanese Soto Zen Dogen Zenji wrote: “What is practice? Everywhere, nothing is hidden.”

When you undertake Zen training on this mountain, you come home to yourself—not who you think you are, but who you really are. Life is unpredictable and messy. Because nothing is hidden and yet we don’t see clearly, coming home is also a mysterious and messy journey. The invitation of practice upon this mountain is to bring your whole self to maturity as a human being. Human beings and buddhas are not one, not two. The person that you think you are continually realigns to the fullest and most mature expression of who you really are, which is a buddha. When you confront the gap between yourself and buddha, your conditioning—the deeply ingrained patterns of behavior, insecurities, flaws, and secrets—are all exposed through the very activity of Zen practice. This means that the training invites you to turn toward what is most difficult to face in yourself. Why? Because everything is included in buddha, in who you really are. Whatever has been or is pushed away is the very dharma that spiritual practice asks you to include.

Your ideas of what practice is, of who you are and of what a buddha is, and your ideas of perfection, are strongly held. You have likely created personal narratives that reinforce your ideas. Therefore, you may fall into spiritual bypassing. Spiritual bypassing is exactly this: you go around, avoid, or circumvent whatever you deem is “not you,” which is most often the qualities that you consider unacceptable in yourself. You may project these qualities onto others. You may feel ashamed of these qualities, which are often repressed and, therefore, live in the shadow of your being. Hence, these are called “shadow aspects.” All of these patterns are woven into the robe of liberation.

Remember, “[Practice is] everywhere. Nothing is hidden.” Therefore, everything can be practiced with.

A Brief Ethical History of ZCLA

ZCLA was founded in the midst of the cultural upheaval of the Sixties. One of the early residential Zen communities to take root in the United States, ZCLA grew rapidly to encompass almost a city block with over one hundred Zen practitioners living and working on the mountain. It also served an international community of practitioners, developed businesses, and published some of the first Zen books for practitioners in the West. In time, serious problems within the robust community would come to light, ripping it apart at the seams.

Sixteen years after its founding, incidents of power abuse and sexual abuse on the part of our founder and some of the teachers, and even misuse of funds, became known to the community. In the Zen Center’s early history, there were two times when these problems caused the Zen Center to implode, its fabric tearing seemingly beyond repair. The first was in 1983 when our Founder’s sexual misconduct and alcoholism were exposed. The second was in 1997 when after the Founder’s death, the then resident teacher’s drinking and alleged sexual misconduct came to

light. Some of the early Dharma successors of Maezumi Roshi also perpetrated power abuse and sexual misconduct in their own Zen communities.

Two formative incidents for our organization are the following:

- In the early 1980s, Maezumi Roshi had a secret sexual relationship with a female disciple while they were both married with families. The repercussions due to these abuses of power and sex have continued almost to this day. Online posts can be found on the White Plum Asanga website (www.whiteplum.org/news).
- Maezumi Roshi was an alcoholic. His drinking behavior caused disruption and consternation among members of the community. In the 1980's, he entered rehab at the Betty Ford Clinic. The Sangha underwent counseling as well. A film of this time, "Zen Center: A Documentary Film about the Zen Center of Los Angeles" by Anne Cushman, can be found in the ZCLA library.

The 1983 ZCLA scandal resulted in most of the Sangha leaving Maezumi Roshi and the Zen Center. This was followed by years of coping with the fallout from the sudden departure of the Sangha, Maezumi Roshi's coming to terms with his own misconduct and addiction, and the sheer survival of ZCLA. Being in survival mode, the in-depth grappling with the dynamics of misconduct, the traumatic effects of abuse and all of its implications for Zen practice, as well as the dynamics of secrecy, came about many years later. Questions about the nature of enlightenment, the human nature of Zen teachers, and the psychological foundation for practice were yet to be addressed.

At that time in our evolution, ZCLA, like all the other Buddhist centers, lacked a structure for dealing with ethical misconduct and accountability. The confluence of Asian and American culture led to further misunderstandings about what was Zen and what was Asian culture. There was also the issue of the expectations around an enlightened teacher and what role conditioning and shadow issues played in the process of awakening. We had yet to learn that spiritual wisdom does not mean that our conditioning has been dealt with or even deeply understood. Or that deeply embedded cultural conditioning of the dynamics of power and sexism, racism and homophobia that we all bring to the Sangha do not stand the test of ethical living. Much of this led to dysfunctional Sangha cultures that people shrugged off as "practice" and left little room for insight, conversations about such behavior, and the reporting of such misconduct and accountability. ZCLA's early practice culture was aggressive and harsh. The practice emphasis was on waking up, and so conditioning and cause-and-effect were poorly investigated.

Although it is not necessarily so, times of crisis can be followed by years of sincere self reflection and discernment. A very big tear in your life's fabric may cause you to consider deeply what you have been weaving and how to go forward. Twelve years after ZCLA imploded and a few months before his death in 1995, Maezumi Roshi and Egyoku were in his office reading through his correspondence. He often asked her to read the letters because he did not like to read English. One particular letter was from a former student going back to the 1980s. In the letter, the student apologized to Maezumi Roshi for the student's mishandling of an investment of funds that he had been responsible for. "That's a nice letter, Roshi," Egyoku said. Maezumi Roshi made no comment. The return address was smeared and there was no way to respond.

They put the letter away and continued working. After some time had passed, Maezumi Roshi sat back in his chair and said, “About that letter. I want you to know that I did what I did (referring to the incidents of 1983). The reasons don’t matter. I hurt a lot of people, and I have spent these years doing what I can to make up for it and continue sharing the Dharma.” After a few moments absorbing his remarks, Egyoku sat back in her chair and said, “You know, Roshi, I don’t know that when I mess up I could say that ‘the reasons don’t matter.’ I would want to offer reasons.”

Speaking to the Sangha, Maezumi Roshi once reflected that his “wheels were not quite turning smoothly.” This was an honest self-reflection arising not from telling stories or giving reasons, but from a sensitivity to how life actually feels. This very feeling, a deep intuitive knowing, lets us know when we are not in alignment, not in harmony. In the very act of living, our wheels naturally go out of alignment. Regardless of the “reasons,” we admit our errors, atone, and commit to doing better. Just as we say about precepts: We drink from the glass, so the glass gets dirty; we clean the glass, and then drink from it again and it gets dirty again. The activity of alignment is not a one-time action, it is continual. Or to use our fabric metaphor, in the very act of wearing our clothes, the fabric wears out, seams come undone, tears appear at the knees. Mending strengthens the fabric, but soon the edges around the patch begin to fray. The Sangha Sutra is about caring for the fabric we are weaving together and mending its tears and worn places, again and again.

At the time of ZCLA’s implosion in 1983, the San Francisco Zen Center had already ousted their Abbot and other Buddhist groups were imploding. Some of this is documented in Rick Fields’ book *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (updated edition by Ben Bogin, Shambhala, 1992). It was a time when the idealism of the early Buddhist practitioners met the reality of human nature. As we learned through harsh experience at Zen Centers, the effects of abuse in spiritual communities lead to devastating feelings of betrayal and a profound distrust of spiritual groups and teachers. Many sincere spiritual practitioners never return to practice at all. Sadly, even today, few religions—Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim— are untouched by scandals involving abuses of power, sex, financial misconduct, and discrimination. Learning how to address these issues, including the harm caused by abusive incidents, has taken ZCLA many decades. These effects need to be addressed on an ongoing basis; bypassing is not an option. This is the noble practice of revolving the Sangha Sutra.

What Are the Main Issues of Ethical Conduct?

The main issues relating to ethical conduct that a Sangha needs to identify and understand include the following:

- **Power:** What constitutes an abuse of power? What is the embedded inequity of power positions such as in the relationships of teacher to student and senior to junior practitioners; in matters of gender and race? What is power over versus power with? How does the structure of a Zen community contribute to power abuse? What is the right use of power?
- **Sex:** What constitutes sexual misconduct and abuse? How can it be prevented?

- Money: What constitutes financial misconduct? Are safeguards in place?
- Addiction: What constitutes an addiction? How is it treated? What are the Sangha's expectations regarding sobriety and practice?

In addition, there are fundamental dynamics that everyone needs to understand that can help prevent abuse and misconduct and contribute to sustaining healthy organizational cultures. These dynamics, some of which are also discussed in the ethics documents, include:

- Interpersonal dynamics, such as triangulation, projection, transference and countertransference.
- Spiritual bypassing.
- Being a bystander to misconduct or improper behavior in the Sangha.
- Unexamined expectations of Zen practice and teachers.
- Lack of understanding of psychological work and its place in relation to practice.
- Trauma. What do we need to know about trauma and how to heal from it?
- Deeper understanding of the precepts. How does one develop a more nuanced understanding of the precepts, such as how "Not talking about others' faults and errors" can lead to silence when, in fact, one needs to speak up.
- The shadow aspects of spiritual practice. How are these identified and practiced with?
- Knowing the difference between wise discernment and being self-absorbed.
- Learning new skills, such as how to have difficult conversations and how to resolve conflicts.

What Has ZCLA Done to Address These Issues?

During the years of turmoil and its immediate aftermath, there were attempts to address misconduct at ZCLA and within the White Plum Asanga, the affinity group of Zen teachers in the Maezumi lineage. Following the passing of Maezumi Roshi, the White Plum Asanga addressed the conduct of its teachers and began to mature as an organization. The process has been a steep learning curve which has been aided by a change in U.S. cultural mores, and the development of formal training by professional organizations regarding healthy boundaries for both individuals and organizations. Research in this area has resulted in a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power, in particular power over versus power with. The suffering caused by the abuse of power, sexual abuse, and addiction have resulted in the development of best practices and the skill sets that are needed to prevent such abuses. All White Plum Asanga teachers today agree to follow its Code of Ethical Conduct and a Grievance and Reconciliation Procedure (<https://whiteplum.org/wpa-ethics-policy/>).

In 1992, Egyoku wrote ZCLA's first Statement of Right Conduct, which articulated a framework for how we might live together without causing harm based on the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts

and the practice of Atonement. At the time this was first written, ZCLA itself had quieted down. The Statement of Right Conduct has been revised over the years, but remains largely intact.

It was not until 1997 that the ZCLA began to actively and consistently address misconduct around power, sex, and addiction both in terms of its past and in laying the ethical foundations for its future. Upon Roshi Egyoku's return to ZCLA in 1997, she began addressing the shadow energies remaining at ZCLA from 1983 through her return. She began to create the conditions for healing the Sangha. Through meticulous examination and processes over the years, the issues of teacher sexual and power abuse and addiction were examined by the Sangha. Healing circles were created and shadow exploration classes offered. Individuals who had experienced abuse during Maezumi Roshi's tenure were invited to come forward and a healing ritual was created. Those who needed attention from the 1997 scandal formed a healing circle and attended to outstanding issues. The practice of Council was introduced and the Sangha began to learn to listen, to speak from the heart, respect differences, and create a more transparent and peer-related horizontal culture, which was not possible when everyone simply faced the wall and related primarily to the teacher hierarchy. Attention was paid to skillfully developing a horizontal culture in order to bring balance to the hierarchy. The study and practice of the Zen Bodhisattva precepts was moved front and center to anchor daily practice. It took about twelve years of dedicated and unrelenting hard work to attend to the many grievances and shadows in the Sangha caused by the early breaches of ethical conduct. In time, a grievance procedure was created and the Ethics documents were developed.

In 2010, the Teachers' Circle began to formulate an Ethics statement. In 2012, a Wisdom Circle was formed to resolve conflicts in the Sangha. A few years later in 2015, the Wisdom Circle was dissolved and ZCLA established a Hearing, Ethics, and Reconciliation Circle (HEAR). The HEAR members further developed the documents that comprise this Sangha Sutra and how to implement them. These core documents are the Statement of Right Conduct, Conflict Resolution, Grievance Procedures, and the Teachers Ethics Statement. In addition, there are documents on how to speak to someone you are having a conflict with and descriptions of basic interpersonal dynamics that everyone should be fluent in, such as triangulation, projection, and transference-countertransference. Today HEAR undertakes to educate individuals on the issues of power abuse and sexual abuse and also serves as the Grievance Council for ZCLA.

At ZCLA today, every teacher, priest and priest-in-training, and senior student must undergo training on healthy boundaries, sexual abuse, and power abuse. Our goal is that every ZCLA member—and, in fact, every person who practices here, whether a formal member or not—has received training on these issues, has studied the Sixteen Zen Bodhisattva precepts, and has reflected deeply on their own conduct. Understanding the power differentials in the various positions held by teachers, priests, and stewards at ZCLA, as well as honest acknowledgement of our motives and conduct, is crucial to creating a culture free of such abuses.

When humans gather to investigate the truth of their lives, each person immediately encounters their own limitations and conditioning. The limitations can take the form of emotional reactivity, such as angry outbursts, defensiveness, and arguing, and a lack of patience with themselves and others. It can also take the form of mental rigidity, such as fixing one's views of others, story-telling drama about what they assume is happening, and an inability to truly listen and reflect. It can take the form of power abuse and sexual abuse and not questioning a culture that enables

misconduct to continue. It can take the form of being a bystander to such abuses, of missing important clues or dismissing the feeling sense that something is not in alignment, and not addressing harm.

The ways human beings create suffering through ignorance and delusion are endless. We are committed to addressing it.

Experience has shown us that the tears and holes in the fabric of community do not simply disappear with time. The long reach of cause and effect has taught us that making careful repairs matter.

What Is Being Asked of Us as Zen Practitioners?

Zen training in our community means that each person must commit to knowing themselves on a very deep level. It also means that each person commits to learning the basics of interpersonal and organizational dynamics and learning how to effectively address conflicts with others. Practicing and living an awakened life in community means that each person commits to a deep embodiment of the Sixteen Zen Bodhisattva Precepts and learns how to make atonement. Each person learns how to have difficult conversations by listening deeply to one's inner voice and to the voices of others. We do this not necessarily to seek agreement, but rather to foster deep respect for a diversity of views that are woven into the wisdom of the wholeness of the community. We commit to expanding beyond our own biases and needs.

Furthermore, we learn the basics of organizational dynamics and the kind of culture our behaviors create. Our aim is that our organizational culture is ethically based and consciously created and not simply assumed or unquestioned. Prevention and intervention are key components in our training. It does not mean becoming rigid and uptight, but it means to acknowledge and face problematic behaviors either through our own insight or input from others. It does not mean policing others' behaviors, but being aware when power is being abused. It does mean looking deeply into ourselves with kindness and insight and basic honesty. We endeavor to create a culture where speaking out is not hampered by cultural or conditioned repression and where our forms help us to behave ethically.

What is required of each of us? A capacity for self reflection, honesty, humility, and a willingness to admit when we need to change our behavior. That we ask for help. That we are willing to have conversations. It does not mean that we succumb to group think. We realize that each of us are pillars of our own unique wisdom, shining as clarity and discernment, as well as our own unique compassion, shining as kindness and respectful caring. Our practice together requires an attitude of openness to and fundamental respect for oneself and for each other.

Each of us is called upon to do the deep inner work that Zen training calls for. You doing your inner work allows us to do the outer work together. Similarly, when we do the outer work together of shifting our organizational culture, your inner work is nurtured. Those who do not do this work become the complainers and blamers of the community. They simply remain as immature people. They seem unable to activate their innate capacity for self reflection and for questioning in a way that helps create new narratives and possibilities. We must learn to ask

questions. We must learn to hold complexity and nuance. Otherwise, we fall into black and white—this and that, them and us—patterns of thinking. How do we awake and shift the paradigms we have all inherited and been a part of for so long? Such are our challenges we fearlessly face as we weave the Sutra of the Sangha.

What is ZCLA’s Overall Framework?

Our intention is that ethical conduct is woven into the fabric of ZCLA’s organizational structure. Furthermore, the organizational structure itself is woven so that ethical behavior is readily called forth from each of us. How do we lay the groundwork, the structural foundation, to frame a vital culture of awakening? What is the bigger picture of the Zen Center’s organization structure? Statements of right conduct and grievance procedures do not stand apart from our structure.

An overview of the Zen Center, adapted from the Center for Collective Wisdom framework, might look something like this:

Dimensions of Transformation	Interior Work: Work we do alone (only known when it is revealed to others)	Exterior Conduct: Work we do together (observable by everyone)
Individual	Your thoughts and feelings Your sense of identity Your motives and intentions Your imagination and dreams Your personal history Your innate gift(s)	Observable Behaviors Observable Practices Observable Skills and competencies Observable Public commitments Observable Expressions of who you are
Zen Center Organization	ZC Purpose: Mission and Vision ZC Core Values and norms ZC Collective history and culture ZC Core practices ZC Context and View (Big view)	ZC Budgets ZC Organizational tree ZC Technology systems ZC Policies and procedures ZC Collaborative agreements ZC Feedback loops
Collective Together Action	Reading the Field Feelings and relational field Alignment of individuals/group to higher intentions	Shared Stewardship Sangha practices, e.g., Council Flow of Communication Interpersonal Relationships The Sangha Sutra & Ethics

At ZCLA, we engage all six of these dimensions for transformation. In so doing, we invite individual and collective wisdom to arise. Our transformation is amplified when each of us engages not only the dimension of our individual self, but also the Zen Center organization and the collective of its practitioners. The Buddhist tradition recognizes three jewels or treasures: the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Here we also recognize a fourth jewel, the Zen Center organization, which is consciously structured to foster awakened life. These four are the crucibles for awakening.

What Does ZCLA Ask of You?

Everyone is called upon to inform themselves of what the underlying principles are for community life that will help weave the best possible conditions for collective awakening and wisdom to arise here. To this end, this Zen organization has carefully developed these documents — the ZCLA Statement of Right Conduct, the Grievance Policy with Addenda on basic interpersonal dynamics and how to have difficult conversations, and The Teacher’s Ethics Statement. The underlying intention of these core documents is that each person will learn and practice the basics of ethical conduct as has been defined by the community. Ethical actions, including mending the tears in the fabric of the Sangha, will become habitual. Therefore, we call these documents the Sutra of the Sangha.

The basis of ethical conduct is found in the way that each of us is in relationship to ourselves and to each other — how are we tending to the inherent goodness in each of us and within ourselves? Are we tending to our own emotional maturity by learning to integrate our emotional and psychological selves? Are we recognizing the habitual ruts of our behavioral patterns and practicing shifting them? Are we tending to our everyday behavior? These inquiries are a necessary part of practice at ZCLA. We are all capable of transformation. Liberation is, after all, your birthright as a buddha.

The practice of Zen itself is a hugely shifting paradigm: everyone has the nature of awakening and everyone manifests completely differently. In our country where everyone is declared equal, we have gross inequalities of income, race, gender, class and so forth. Zen does not ask us to complacently accept, but to question and create change so that we can truly meet these realities. And yet, as each of us likely knows from our own experiences, it is so easy as human beings to rationalize and ignore—to look away and not attend to—behaviors that are causing harm. What kind of fabric are you weaving? What kind of fabric are we weaving together?

In order to create a truly supportive and awake Zen culture at ZCLA, we require that each member study and practice the ethical conduct set forth in this Sangha Sutra. We ask that each member sign a statement that states that at a minimum they have read these documents and will commit to practicing this conduct.

The Three Tenets of the Sangha Sutra

There are many practices that help us weave a life of awakening. For example, Roshi Bernie Glassman’s deep insight gave rise to the practice of The Three Tenets, which are foundational to how ZCLA functions and how the Sangha practices. These tenets are described as follows:

- Not-Knowing: letting go of fixed ideas about yourself, others, and the universe.
- Bearing Witness to the joy and suffering of the world.
- Taking Action that arises from Not-Knowing and Bearing Witness.

We find that these Tenets are a skillful practice to help us weave the fabric of a healthy Sangha. As a practice for ethical living, they call us forth in this way:

- **Not-Knowing.** This is Original Nature. Original nature is before there is buddha, before ideas of right and wrong, or harming and not-harming. It is the nature of who you are and who we are together before any divisions appear, before we succumb to any sense of separation. It is before the forming of opinions, points of view, and personal narratives. We speak of this as being open, being without knowing. In terms of weaving, the threads on the loom have not yet been set up. The loom is bare.
- **Bearing Witness.** This is the practice of weaving. We are weaving with the threads of our eyes, ears, smell, taste, body, and consciousness. We are seeing, feeling, and listening to the myriad patterns that are emerging. We are continually letting go of ideas, continually taking backward steps and sensing into a larger space. We are expanding to include all that is appearing just as it appears. We are continually sensing and recognizing the interconnections of life. Weaving in this way, we are aligning continually with the fabric of the oneness of life by being-the-fabric itself. Learn to listen. But to what are you listening—your own ideas or those that agree with your own ideas? What are you excluding?
- **Taking Action.** This is the action that arises from both the continual weaving of original nature and whatever ingredients arise and are seen. This action is not calculated, reasoned, or figured out beforehand. It arises from being-the-situation at hand and, therefore, naturally serves the whole of a situation. This is discernment—the felt sense of what is needed and appropriate to align with the natural wholeness of life. In ethical matters, this includes the practice of mending. How are you repairing the tears in your life?

Moving Forward

The very act of living creates misalignment. It is the task of each one of us to humbly keep realigning ourselves with gentle good humor and a radiant kindness. Each of us can attune to the vitality of human life. Each of us is a buddha in the making, a beautiful being. There is a huge intelligence in the Sangha—how can we draw this forth? How do we change and transform? The Sangha Sutra calls forth imagination as the great friend of possibility of new ways of relating and acting collectively to benefit the whole. Each of us has our own gifts—can we awaken together so that the very essences of ourselves are experienced as valuable resources that can be brought forth to enhance our lives?

Upon hearing this Sutra, the assembly placed their palms together and recited this verse:

The original nature is pure and undefiled.
The thread of emptiness leaves nothing unstrung.
The needle of practice pierces through every fabric.
The patterns emerging are many and varied—
Everything appears just as is.
Stitch by stitch, breath by breath,
I take up the practice of sewing the Sangha Sutra.
When seams rip apart and tears appear,
I take up the practice of mending.
The vow to live an ethical life calls me forth:

I revolve the Sangha Sutra—
May it benefit all beings everywhere.

May it be so.

Humbly,

Egyoku
January 2019

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Intention

It is important that the proper environment for practicing at ZCLA be continually actualized by any teacher, practitioner, employee, or student for the practice of the Buddha Way. These guidelines are intended to encourage each of us to continually examine ourselves and the basic attitude and conduct necessary to accomplish the Way, to mature fully as human beings, and to create together a viable Zen practice environment. We urge all who come to practice at ZCLA to assume responsibility for themselves, the Zen Center organization, the welfare of others and the well being of everyone in the Sangha. It is through all of our efforts that mutual trust and respect will flourish in our Sangha.

Practicing Zen at ZCLA carries with it certain responsibilities to practice right conduct, which include clear boundaries and consequences for harmful behavior. To this end, we commit to right conduct by endorsing this statement.

Each Zen Center member will be asked to agree to abide by the Zen Center's Ethics Policies.

Statement for Supportive Practice Environment

ZCLA is committed to providing a supportive environment for the practice of the Buddha Way. To this end, ZCLA supports an environment free of harassment or discrimination. ZCLA prohibits discrimination or harassment based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, or any other basis protected by federal or state law, or local ordinances applicable to nonprofit religious corporations. ZCLA's anti-harassment policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of the Zen Center and prohibits harassment by any teacher, practitioner, employee, student, or vendor.

The Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts

The ethical ground for right conduct are the Sixteen Zen Bodhisattva Precepts:

The Three Treasures

I take refuge in the Buddha. I vow to embody Oneness, the awakened nature of all beings.

I take refuge in the Dharma. I vow to embody Diversity, the ocean of wisdom and compassion.

I take refuge in the Sangha. I vow to embody Harmony, the interdependence of all creations.

The Three Tenets

I commit myself to Not-knowing, the source of all manifestations, and seeing all manifestations as the teachings of Not-knowing.

I commit myself to Bearing Witness, by encountering all creations with respect and dignity and by allowing myself to be touched by the joys and pain of the universe.

I commit myself to Healing, by inviting all hungry spirits into the mandala of my practice and using my energy and love for healing myself, the earth, humanity, and all creations.

The Ten Grave Precepts

I will recognize that I am not separate from all that is. This is the practice of Non-killing. I will refrain from leading a harmful life and from encouraging others to do so. I will live in harmony with all life and the environment that sustains it.

I will be satisfied with what I have. This is the practice of Non-stealing. I will refrain from taking anything not given and from encouraging others to steal. I will freely give, ask for, and accept what is needed.

I will encounter the diversity of life with respect and dignity. This is the practice of Chaste Conduct. I will refrain from unchastity and from creating the conditions for others to be unchaste. I will give and accept love and friendship without clinging.

I will listen and speak from the heart and deceive no one. This is the practice of Non-lying. I will refrain from lying and from creating the conditions for others to lie. I will see and act in accordance with what is.

I will cultivate a mind that sees clearly. This is the practice of Not Being Deluded. I will refrain from using intoxicants that delude the mind and from encouraging others to be deluded. I will embrace all experience directly.

I will accept what each moment has to offer. This is the practice of Not Talking About Others' Errors and Faults. I will refrain from talking about others' errors and faults and from encouraging others to do so. I will acknowledge responsibility for everything in my life.

I will speak what I perceive to be the truth without guilt or blame. This is the practice of Not Elevating Myself and Blaming Others. I will refrain from elevating myself and blaming others and from encouraging others to do so. I will give my best effort and accept the results.

I will use all of the ingredients of my life. This is the practice of Not Being Stingy. I will refrain from fostering a mind of poverty in myself and others and from encouraging others to do so.

I will refrain from harboring resentment, rage, or revenge. This is the practice of Not Being Angry. I will refrain from creating the conditions for others to be angry. I will accept negative experiences as part of my practice. I will recognize and express my emotions as part of my practice.

I will honor my life as a peacemaker. This is the practice of Not Speaking Ill of The Three Treasures. I will refrain from speaking ill of The Three Treasures and from creating conditions for others to do so. I will recognize myself and others as manifestations of the Oneness of Buddha, the Diversity of Dharma, and the Harmony of Sangha. We recognize that the study and practice of the precepts is a life-long effort and is the responsibility of each person who endeavors to live the Buddha Way.

Psychological and Social Dynamics

We encourage practitioners to explore the dynamics of projection and shadow (disowned) energies, transference and counter-transference, power differentials (including factors such as sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ageism, and so forth), and triangulation. (See Appendix for a discussion of these terms.)

Sexual Conduct

We acknowledge that sexuality is a highly vulnerable part of human experience and recognize that certain sexual relations have serious potential for the subtle and overt abuse and/or

abdication of power, which can result in disruption and harm to individuals and institutions. ZCLA's policy for Teacher-Student sexual involvement is addressed in the Teachers Ethics Statement. Sexual involvement between ZCLA members in positions of authority, such as staff, and other members is highly discouraged.

While we recognize that visitors and new members come to ZCLA with a wide range of familiarity with Zen practice and maturity levels, in general, pursuing a dating or sexual relationship within the first 6 months of a new person's arrival is also highly discouraged. The expression of sexual or romantic interest in visitors and new students is particularly problematic and can be inconsistent with the creation of a supportive and welcoming environment. It may also be perceived as sexual harassment regardless of the good intentions of the one instigating the relationship.

People need a chance to settle into practice before engaging in sexual/romantic relationships. In addition, members who enter sexual/romantic relationships with each other should be aware that, in the event the couple breaks up, it has been our experience that one member often leaves the Sangha afterwards.

It is our goal to ensure the safety of everyone in contact with ZCLA. Our community is aware of the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse. Though our practice is largely adult- centered at ZCLA, we are committed to be awake to the potential for the abuse of children and to adhere to best practices for prevention.

HEAR (Hearing, Ethics, and Reconciliation) Circle

The purpose of HEAR is to facilitate the resolution or dissolution of disagreements, complaints, or grievances. HEAR members are all available to receive complaints of conflict, misconduct and criminal conduct. Sangha members are encouraged to bring concerns to any member of HEAR for listening, reflection and guidance.

HEAR members will also consider all issues that require action and proceed in accord with the Zen Center's Grievance Procedure. The particulars of HEAR and the Grievance Procedure are set forth in a separate document. HEAR's purpose also includes familiarizing the Sangha with these documents and providing the necessary education on related issues. It is the responsibility of all Sangha members to be familiar with these documents.

HEAR will have three or more members serving five-year terms. The members are identified on the ZCLA website and posted on the Sangha House bulletin board.

Conflict

Conflict is a normal part of human behavior. It is natural, inevitable, and unavoidable. From the perspective of Zen practice, conflict presents an opportunity for personal growth and can function as an impetus for awakening and transformation. Interpersonal conflicts arise whenever there are sustained relationships, such as the ongoing relationships within the Sangha.

Conflict, as used here, refers to unaddressed ongoing interpersonal disagreements, slights, and situations where oneself and others are negatively affected. In a community, the dynamics of triangulation are especially harmful. (See Appendix: Triangulation.)

All parties to a conflict are asked to engage in deep self-inquiry and to take the steps presented in the Grievance Procedure to address the situation before it spirals out of control.

Harmful Conduct

Harmful conduct affects ourselves and others. Two categories of harmful conduct are referred to in ZCLA's Grievance Procedure:

- **Misconduct** refers to untreated addiction, abuse of power, malicious gossip, inappropriate sexual relationships, sexual harassment, bullying, and written, verbal or electronic abuse.
- **Criminal Conduct** refers to any violation of the law.

People who encounter harmful conduct from any member of the Zen Center Sangha — including its abbot, teachers, priests, senior students (those who have completed the position of head trainee), instructors, circle stewards, and staff — or who themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit and practice of right conduct and seriously undermine the well being of the Sangha. Sangha members should also know that each person is expected to take the actions necessary to address one's own harmful conduct.

The following are particularly harmful forms of misconduct that the Zen Center wishes to highlight. We expect that all persons with these behaviors will actively work to address them.

- **Abuse of Power on the Part of the Abbot, Teachers, Priests, Senior Students, Stewards, and Staff.** Although the Zen Center is evolving more egalitarian forms, we acknowledge that power differentials exist in the structure of the Zen Center. ZCLA puts its trust in its members who are in positions of authority and therefore regards any violation of this trust as particularly harmful. We recognize that these positions of authority involve a power inequality. Exploiting relationships, harming others, or abusing influence breaches this trust, especially when such misconduct occurs under the pretense of teaching methods or Zen practice. Examples of misconduct may include crossing sexual boundaries, emotional and psychological manipulation, and misuse of the Zen Center's funds. Misconduct by those in positions of trust can destroy the community.
- **Addiction.** Substance and sexual addictions are harmful to the addict and to others in the Sangha. Anyone in the Sangha who demonstrates such addictive behaviors will be directed to seek help as a condition for participation in the Zen Center's activities. Intoxication on ZCLA property is prohibited. Recreational drugs are not allowed in our public spaces. Alcohol is only allowed in the Zen Center's private residences.
- **Sexual Harassment.** Sexual Harassment is especially disruptive and damaging to individuals and to the well-being of the Sangha. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advance or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is

unwanted. Sexual Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at the Zen Center and anyone experiencing or witnessing it should report it.

- **Sexual Abuse of Children.** This form of child abuse includes any type of sexual activity with a minor, including but not limited to physical contact. This is criminal misconduct and situations interpretable as abuse will be referred to authorities. At ZCLA we are aware of the potential for abuse and are zealous in our commitment to the safety of children.

Addressing Harmful Conduct

We are committed to working through conflicts and difficulties that arise from violations of right conduct. Sangha members who bring conflicts to be addressed through the Zen Center process will not be subject to reprisal in any form and will be expected to participate in the resolution process.

The precept “Do Not Talk about Others’ Errors and Faults” can inappropriately be used to evade our responsibility to report misconduct or attend to problems in the Sangha. Each of us needs to know that not speaking up when conflict, misconduct or criminal conduct has occurred is a serious evasion of responsibility. On the other hand, gossiping about others’ problems makes it harder for the parties directly involved to resolve their issue. (See Appendix regarding Triangulation and other dynamics.)

Notification and discussion of violations of right conduct shall be limited to those with a bona fide “need to know.” Where a problem potentially affects the whole Sangha, it will be the responsibility of HEAR to call a meeting of the Sangha to discuss the issue(s) in an expeditious manner.

A complaint may arise from any person who is participating in ZCLA programs. Any member of HEAR can guide any person on how to effectively handle complaints or difficult situations as addressed in ZCLA’s Grievance Procedure.

In addition, the Zen Center’s Grievance Procedure stipulates the procedures for addressing Misconduct and Criminal Conduct.

Atonement

Anyone who violates right conduct is expected to admit their error and to make every effort to realign their conduct with the precepts and to take the action(s) necessary to restore the harmony of individual relationships and of the Sangha. Such atonement is an integral part of right conduct.

Atonement can take many forms, including but not limited to person-to-person apologies, public acknowledgement, letters of amends, financial restitution, and acts of service as amends. The formal practice of atonement is held regularly at the Zen Center and members are strongly encouraged to make this an ongoing practice.

Summation

It is our sincere intention to continually realign our lives in accord with the precepts and to provide an open, supportive, and nurturing environment for the practice of the Buddha Way. The Zen Center upholds core values and core practices to support us in continually facing and shifting our individual and collective conduct for the mutual awakening and benefit of all. We are committed to maturing fully, both individually and collectively.

We recognize that this Statement of Right Conduct is a living document and will evolve according to the needs of the organization and the Sangha.

Endorsement

This Statement of Right Conduct has been revised and adopted by the Abbot and Board of Directors on January 29, 2017.

Appendix. Key Concepts in Human Interaction

By Ellen Reigen Ledley and Penelope Luminous Heart Thompson

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Triangulation

The term **triangulation** describes a situation in which two people are in conflict and one or both parties entangle other people in the situation usually to gain favor for their individual positions. In triangulation, contacting a third person is done not to dissolve and/or resolve the conflict, but rather to avoid the conflict or solidify one’s position.

Triangulation often results when we have been conditioned to not deal with conflicts directly, when we want to be right, when we want to be liked or approved of, and when we are in denial of the suffering we may cause ourselves or another. It is also likely to happen when people lack the skills to deal with conflict or are fearful of conflict.

For example, Angela and Brody are in conflict with each other. Instead of working directly with each other to resolve the conflict, Angela talks to a third person, Craig, about what is going on and to gain sympathy and support for her view or position. Angela may or may not be aware of her intention in speaking with Craig.

When Craig is unaware, he will become entangled in the conflict by taking sides or, even worse, begin to spread the conflict further by talking to others. Hence, a triangle is formed among Angela, Brody and Craig although person Brody may be unaware of the triangulation. Perhaps Brody is also triangulating someone else regarding this same situation, in which case, multiple triangles are being formed. Triangulation spreads the conflict to others not previously involved and many more patterns of triangulation result as other people are snared into the situation. This dynamic makes resolution more complicated and difficult.

The preferred approach or action would be for Angela or Brody to initiate direct communication with the other. If that seems too difficult or if resolution does not occur, then a good option could be for either party to talk with someone like Craig, with the straightforward intention of sorting out their confusion about the situation. The aim would be better understanding of his or her role in the conflict and an exploration of ways to move the situation forward.

When Craig is aware, he will listen, ask guiding questions, and redirect that person back to the other, or to an appropriate person who can be involved in resolution. Craig will listen openly and affirmatively and ask questions that can help to clarify the situation. Craig could also suggest that Angela or Brody look at the Statement of Right Conduct for guidance.

Craig must be aware that he is hearing only one side of the story, no matter how compelling or convincing the account may appear or how emotionally upset the person is.

Here are some guiding questions for any stage in the conflict resolution process (e.g. Angela or Brody could address these questions to themselves or Craig could address them to either or both of them.)

- What are the facts of the situation?
- What is your story about these facts?
- What is your role in this conflict?
- What is being triggered for you in this conflict?
- What is your motive in speaking with me about it?

Projection

Projection describes a two-step process of seeing something in another that you do not see in yourself and then responding to the other as though they embody that quality. It is a process of disowning one's self-perception or quality, which may be a positive or negative aspect. The cause and the effect of projection is that we tend not to see ourselves clearly.

You can begin to observe projection in action when you are using second or third person pronouns instead of the first person pronoun. This projection may take the form of a thought or something that is directly spoken. For example, when you hear yourself thinking or when speaking aloud phrases like "You always", "You never", or "She always", you are probably projecting.

Some examples of projection might sound like this:

- You always come late.
- You never call me back.
- He is much more thoughtful than I am.
- She is much smarter than I am.
- He is not that smart.

Notice that each of these projections involves comparing oneself with another or others and it involves a judgment as well.

Some ways to notice and to work with one's projections:

1. Begin to pay attention to when you are thinking or speaking in the second or third person and when you are using the words “always” or “never”. Experiment with changing your thought/or speech to “I” and then notice the meaning and impact of that change, on your perception of yourself and of the other.
2. Ask yourself: “What about the other’s behavior triggers me?” Using the example of lateness: “Do I come late or what about the other’s lateness bothers me?” If you feel “I am never late”, does it feel to you like disrespect when another is late? Or do you feel “I am a good person because I am always on time”? And therefore “a person who comes late is a bad or thoughtless person”?
3. As another example, if you perceive another as smarter than you, ask yourself “Where does this judgment come from in me?” Experiment with re-owning the projection by saying to yourself, “I am smart”. Even if it feels initially unfamiliar, try it out anyway. See what it is like to stay with that statement. If you are saying about another, “He is not that smart”, notice what it feels like to say that in the first person, “I am not that smart”. Then see if you can discover what drives that statement. Is there some old fear that you are not smart? Did someone important to you tell you that? Again experiment with an affirming self statement, such as “Actually I am smart.”

It appears to be human nature to project disowned aspects of ourselves onto others. By bringing our pre-conscious projections to awareness, we are acting on our commitment to know ourselves more clearly and thereby to free ourselves from delusion.

Transference

Transference involves the *unconscious* projection or transfer of feelings, attitudes and expectations from previous life experiences and people onto a person or situation in the present. We act and feel as if that person or situation in the present is a person or situation from our past.

It is as if we are reliving past memories without being aware of it, transferring scenes and ways of perceiving from the past onto the present.

Examples of transference:

- You meet someone at the Zen Center who reminds you (unconsciously) of a person from your past that you felt very close to, and you find yourself feeling close to the person at Zen Center.
- A person who always felt that their parent favored their sibling, may feel that the teacher favors others, not them, and may feel angry or hurt.
- A person who experienced disapproval or rejection as a child finds themselves worrying about judgment or criticism from a teacher or other Sangha members, or they may feel like they don’t belong or fit in.

Counter-transference is the term that describes the feelings and response evoked by the other person’s transference to them. The term counter-transference relates to a Person A’s reaction to

the way they are being treated by Person B who has the transference to Person A, which then activates a transference reaction in Person A.

For example: somebody behaves towards you in an angry way, and you think it's about you. You might react by getting angry back or feeling victimized and that reaction is your counter-transference.

Sometimes it may feel very clear to you that someone's behavior and feelings towards you don't really belong to you. In that situation, it may feel natural to you to come into a place of open-heartedness or concern for the other. This is an example of not coming into a counter-transference position or relationship.

Bringing these transferences to consciousness can lead to more clarity in the relationship, based on what is actually going on between the two people.

Guiding Questions one might ask oneself:

- Does this person remind me of someone in my past?
- Do my feelings about this person feel familiar?
- What are my feelings and body sensations when with this person?
- Can I begin to access what my part of this difficult connection is?
- Do I act in ways, when with this person, that feel out of my control or are not how I would want to act?

Tracing back the threads of these historical connections can be complex and anybody can benefit from talking them through and exploring it with a friend, sangha member, teacher or even therapist. This is always done with an awareness and intention of better understanding oneself and one's reaction, and not in the service of gossip.

If you feel yourself in recurrent clashes or conflict with someone in the sangha, we encourage you to seek help and support. It is part of your responsibility as a community member.

Power Differentials

Power differentials exist when there is the reality or the perception that a difference in influence or authority exists.

Some examples of power differential situations at the Zen Center:

- A female member feels that certain men treat her as unimportant/not valuable, and experiences this as possible sexism.
- A member comes to the Abbot with an idea. The Abbot decides it is not a good idea. The member feels that the Abbot is misusing their power or is not open to consideration of this idea because the member is not valued.

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- There is a Sangha member who is in a position of authority, who acts in an authoritarian or self righteous manner making unilateral decisions. A Sangha member may experience difficulty in making their point of view known.
- A resident or member perceives that one person is more highly regarded or receives special attention from an authority figure.

The privileges or inherent sense of entitlement that comes with being part of the group “in power” are often taken for granted or are enacted without awareness.

The following are questions that might inspire thinking and exploration for each of us:

- Have you had an experience of feeling there was a power differential in the Sangha that has impacted you in a negative way?
- How have you observed power differentials operate at ZCLA? Positively, neutrally or negatively?
- What is a positive experience you have had with the power differential at the Zen Center?
- If you allow yourself to bring awareness to any uncomfortable situation you have experienced or experience currently, is there any power differential involved between you and any other Sangha member?
- Have you personally experienced racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, classism, or prejudice based on cultural, religious or ethnic identity at ZCLA?

Confidentiality

Basic definition of **confidentiality**: a person receives another person’s information and holds it in confidence unless there is a risk of danger to that person or to someone else. There is an inherent trust or articulated understanding that the privacy of the information will be maintained.

We are in many community situations at ZCLA where people share vulnerable information (Face-to-Face, council, atonement ceremonies, circles, staff meetings, board meetings and other contexts). Confidentiality in those contexts means treating what is shared with respect and holding the information safe.

Council is by definition a confidential setting. However, there are times when one person could say to another:

“I was so moved by what you shared...would it be ok to talk further with you about it?”

The other person might respond, “I would be fine with that.”

Or they could say, “I don’t want to discuss this further.”

There may be occasions in which confidentiality needs to be maintained for a given time before it can be shared. For example, a circle may explore an issue, and while the discussion on it continues, they may choose not to open the topic to the larger community. When the circle’s consensus is reached that they are ready to open the discussion, then confidentiality would be

lifted. There is a necessary balance of transparency, function, and confidentiality which exists in all circle communications.

In Face-to-Face situations, teachers or senior students in Face-to-Face training may need to confer with other teachers when they become uneasy about something shared in Face-to-Face. In the case of senior students who are being trained in Face-to-Face, teachers may discuss as necessary an issue/person to make sure students are being properly guided and teachers-to-be can be supported in their learning. Zen teachers are not bound by formal confidentiality laws. Therefore, Face-to-Face is considered private but not necessarily confidential.

Guiding Questions:

- How do we hold other people's vulnerable sharing?
- Remember a time when you shared in confidence and that confidence was broken. What was that experience like for you, and what were the consequences?
- Remember a time when someone shared something with you and wanted it kept confidential. Again, what was that experience like for you, and what were the consequences?
- What has been your experience when you have felt able to trust someone with a vulnerable concern, when you felt deeply heard, and felt that the other would maintain confidentiality?
- Are there other examples that come up for you in thinking about confidentiality? It may be useful to explore them for yourself.

Shadow Energies

Shadow energies are those aspects of ourselves we find unacceptable and therefore disown. These parts of ourselves are not conscious, nor is the process of disowning them, unless and until we start to be aware of them. They usually are marked by "heat" (intense emotional and physical energy).

A person may experience him/herself as on the moral high ground, coming from a place of superior righteousness. Another might disown their sexual proclivities such as homophobia. Perhaps another does not own their leadership skills and/or other gifts. Yet another might present him/herself as empathically concerned when they are in fact engaging in gossip or criticism. Some people who disown their anger manifest it passively aggressively. Shadow energies cause suffering to oneself and to others.

Examples:

- A sangha member sees another member taking on a leadership role and feels critical of their always "taking over". The shadow energy here might involve one's unconscious desire for recognition they did not receive earlier in life; it might also stem from being shamed for being "too verbal" or "too bossy".

- A resident member notices that another resident member is not sitting regularly in the zendo and says, “I’ll bet (s)he isn’t following the resident requirement.” The shadow energy here might be envy for someone breaking rules and getting away with it, as they historically were not allowed to do.
- In Face-to-Face meeting with a teacher, a person may perceive, accurately or not, that the teacher is being impatient with them. They may feel shamed and judged. Earlier in life, it may have been unacceptable to not know, to not be perfect or to not get it right away.
- A teacher finds him/herself attracted to a student or a self-defined heterosexual person may have sexual feelings for someone of the same gender. The shadow energy here might be the sense of unacceptability of such feelings. Appropriate behavior for a teacher in such a situation would be to acknowledge their feelings to themselves and to seek counsel and support from other teachers. In this way the person could make decisions on how to handle the situation without causing suffering to anyone. A person coming to awareness of sexual responses to another of the same gender might then get support to explore the meaning for them and to make thoughtful decisions on possible actions without harm to self or others.

Some guiding questions for consideration:

- Can you remember situation(s) where you have felt “the heat”, a reaction to another’s behavior or to a situation at ZCLA?
- What are the conscious feelings or thoughts that arise in that situation?
- What do you notice your consequent behavior to be?
- If you sit with your awareness of the situation and your reactions, thoughts and feelings, can you begin to touch into what that disowned part of you is?
- Can you allow yourself to be patient and self-accepting in this process ?

This work allows us to come face to face with the shadow and to reclaim it. In effect, it is a willingness to shed light onto dark, hidden aspects of ourselves. The process of discovery involves opening ourselves to vulnerability, deep honesty, self compassion and courage. As Zen students, we take on this work in the spirit of ending suffering for ourselves and all beings.

Defensiveness

Defensiveness is an excessive response or over reaction to a real or perceived threat. Defensiveness is different than defending oneself or others.

To defend oneself or another may be an appropriate response to a situation. A person may correct misperceptions, clarify a situation or prevent/stop someone from abusive speech or behavior.

A part of our Zen practice is to listen deeply from the heart, to ourselves and to others. With this practice we increasingly may have less need to defend. We learn to acknowledge that which we

may have difficulty in accepting about ourselves. In such listening, we also are committed to greater awareness of the suffering of the other.

Let's say for example that a sangha member confronts another member. She might say, "You never rinse your dirty dishes and put them in the dish rack. You always leave them in the sink." That statement might cause the recipient to react in a defensive way, refuting the whole statement. A non-defensive way to respond in that situation might be to say to the speaker, "When you describe my behavior in always and never terms, I find myself feeling defensive and not able to hear you. It would help me if you could just address this particular situation and my behavior as you see it. That said, you are right. I did not rinse my dishes. Thank for reminding me and I will pay attention in the future."

Using the same example, without the "always and never", here is a statement with two responses. "Fran, could you please rinse your dishes and put them in the rack?" First response might be "I WAS GOING TO." Another response might be, "Thanks, I was going to, and thanks for the reminder"(with no denial or emotional charge).

Some guiding questions to ask yourself:

- Can you remember a recent incident where you felt defensive?
- As you remember it, can you access in your body the sensations you had?
- Can you access the stream of thoughts and judgments you had as well?
- Do you have any hunches about what might be being triggered in you?
- If you were to use the sentence, "It makes me feel..." what might you say?
- "I feel like a child." "I'm not good enough." "I'm stupid."

When one feels defensive, it is an opportunity to explore what the triggers are inside oneself. This may not be accomplished in the moment of the interaction, but may be an invitation to sit with this experience and open to new considerations of response in present time, not based on past events.

Compartmentalization

We tend to wall off or **compartmentalize** certain aspects of our lives that feel too shameful or painful to carry in conscious awareness.

The consequences of compartmentalization over time can lead to various behaviors that increase suffering, such as: all addictions, emotional reactivity, difficulties with relationships and work, and so on.

Examples:

- If you grew up in a family where anger was unacceptable, you might avoid connection or contact with a person toward whom you feel unconsciously angry.

STATEMENT OF RIGHT CONDUCT

- If there is something in your past you experience as shameful, you might be afraid to share that with your teacher or other Sangha member for fear of displeasing them or alienating them. Many of us grew up in families where we learned to survive by pleasing others.

THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

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Purpose of the Hearing, Ethics, and Reconciliation Circle (HEAR)

As stated in the Statement of Right Conduct, the purpose of HEAR is to facilitate the resolution of disagreements, complaints, and grievances. HEAR members are all available to receive complaints of conflict, misconduct and criminal conduct.

Sangha members are encouraged to bring concerns to any member of HEAR for listening, reflection and guidance. It is the purpose of HEAR to empower voices, to ensure that people have their issues heard to their satisfaction.

HEAR members will also consider all issues that require action and proceed in accordance with the Zen Center's Grievance Procedure. HEAR's duties also include familiarizing the Sangha with these documents and providing the necessary education on related issues. It is the responsibility of all Sangha members to respond to HEAR's efforts and become familiar with these documents and practices.

HEAR will have three or more members serving five-year terms. The members are identified on the ZCLA website and posted on the Sangha House bulletin board.

Who Can Use This Process

In general, this process is for the Zen Center membership; however, a non-member who is an active participant in ZCLA activities may also use this process. Examples include a participant in an introductory class, a guest practitioner, etc. HEAR will determine whether a complaint by a non-member who is not involved directly in the life of the Sangha should be addressed.

Conflict Resolution Procedure

Conflict is a normal part of human behavior. It is natural, inevitable, and unavoidable. From the perspective of Zen practice, conflict presents an opportunity for personal growth and can function as an impetus for awakening and transformation. Interpersonal conflicts arise whenever there are sustained relationships, such as the ongoing relationships within the Sangha.

Conflict refers to unaddressed ongoing interpersonal disagreements, slights, and situations where oneself and others are negatively affected. In a community, the dynamics of triangulation are especially harmful. (See Statement of Right Conduct Appendix: Triangulation.)

All parties to a conflict are asked to engage in deep self-inquiry and to take the following steps to address the situation before it spirals out of control.

Procedure for Addressing Conflict

Step One: Go directly to the person(s) involved. Keeping The Three Tenets in mind, we encourage people to speak directly to each other. We encourage face-to-face interaction, and discourage the use of email or other indirect communication. Face-to-face interaction may be uncomfortable, yet it is important to do this. However, physical or psychological threat may render face-to-face interaction inappropriate without support. The idea here is to be as direct as possible and avoid copping out of the opportunity to experience direct communication. For suggestions on speaking face-to-face, see Appendix A, "Guidelines for Speaking Directly with a Person with Whom One is in Conflict."

When speaking directly is inappropriate to the situation or when attempts at speaking directly have been unsuccessful, ask for help from a teacher, a senior student, or a HEAR member. You will be supported and guided in discernment and in the next steps.

Step Two: Facilitated meeting. In a situation where a facilitator is necessary, HEAR will help the parties involved choose an appropriate facilitator. All parties to the conflict should make every effort to agree on the choice of facilitator and method of facilitation (e.g., council, conversation, mediation) before proceeding. If the parties cannot come to agreement, HEAR will appoint a facilitator and a method of facilitation.

Situations may arise in which a quick solution is not forthcoming. The members of HEAR commit to practicing with these situations by continuing to hold a space for introspection, deep listening, speaking our truth, and working toward action(s) that will serve all parties. Effort should be made by all parties to move forward to a satisfactory resolution or dissolution of the problem.

Step Three: A formal, written grievance. For the process of filing a formal grievance please see the “Procedure for Addressing Misconduct” section.

Grievance Procedure

Statement of Confidentiality

Anyone bringing forward a grievance is assured that information concerning people and situations is confidential. “Confidential” means that names and situations will not be disclosed in ways that will make identities known. The privacy of individuals concerned will be respected. Teachers may discuss an issue or person that presents a situation requiring their discernment. (See also the Appendix to the Statement of Right Conduct: “Confidentiality.”)

How to File a Complaint or Grievance

To make a complaint or grievance, go directly to any member of HEAR. There will be a good faith effort to respond to the complaint within two weeks from the date the complaint was received. Adjustments to the timeline will be made in situations of urgency.

The HEAR member who receives the initial complaint will listen, help assess and discern the situation, review the procedures set forth in this document, and act in accordance with these procedures.

In keeping with HEAR’s commitment to ensure that a complainant has been heard, if for any reason the process is unsatisfactory to the complainant, he or she is free to go to another HEAR member or to a Teacher at any point in the process.

Categories of Harmful Conduct

ZCLA Statement of Right Conduct defines two categories of harmful conduct as the following:

Misconduct. This refers to egregious violations of right conduct. Examples include untreated addiction, abuse of power, malicious gossip, inappropriate sexual relationships, sexual harassment, bullying, and written, verbal or electronic abuse.

Criminal Conduct. This refers to any violation of the law.

Procedure for Addressing Misconduct

If misconduct is observed or experienced and you do not feel that you can address it on your own, report the misconduct to a member of HEAR. The person you contact will guide you through the Written Grievance Procedure.

For any situation concerning misconduct by a member of the community in a key leadership role, the policy of ZCLA is to consult with an outside organization or person with expertise on the matters in question. Key leadership roles include the Abbot and Teachers.

A person wishing to file a formal grievance will meet with HEAR for support and direction. A formal grievance is written, signed, and dated by the person filing the grievance. The written grievance will include all the pertinent details of the situation(s), what previous attempts have been made to resolve the issue(s), and why the previous attempts have not been successful, if pertinent.

The written grievance is submitted to a member of HEAR. The HEAR member contacted will immediately forward the written grievance to the other members of HEAR. Upon receiving the written grievance, HEAR will convene and follow the procedures for adjudicating a complaint. HEAR will make a good faith effort to respond to the written grievance within 14 days from the date it is initially submitted and to resolve it within 60 days from the date it is received. In addition:

HEAR will make every effort to adjudicate grievances fairly, with wisdom and compassion for all the parties involved.

In the event that the misconduct affects the entire Sangha, other steps may be taken, as deemed necessary or appropriate to the situation by HEAR and/or the Abbot.

HEAR will keep confidential written records of all proceedings. Access is limited to HEAR; consultation with the Abbot is at his or her discretion.

The written grievance is addressed in the following order:

1. Interview the Complainant. The complainant can choose to have a support person. The role of the support person is to be there for the complainant without taking sides in the situation or having any official role in the situation or the grievance process.
2. Interview the subject of the grievance. A written response by him or her will be made. A support person, as defined in (1) above, will be offered.
3. An investigation will take place, involving the following:
 - More information will be gathered.
 - Zen Center leaders who need to know will be notified.

- A narrative timeline will be developed that documents the incidents and is verified by all parties involved in the dispute.
 - The subject of the grievance may be placed on leave from teaching duties, staff position, or other leadership positions.
 - The subject of the grievance may have access to the Sangha and/or ZCLA property curtailed while the investigation is ongoing.
 - The issue may be referred to an independent party for investigation and recommendation. Independent parties may include White Plum Asanga teachers or someone with expertise in the subject area of the grievance. Should HEAR decide that the misconduct requires an outside investigator, HEAR will consult with the Board of Directors regarding legal counsel and the assessment of potential liability to the Zen Center.
4. After the investigation is complete, a determination on the validity of the complaint will be made. In the case of a grievance with transmitted teachers or the Abbot, HEAR's determination will follow consultation with the Teachers Circle and the Board of Directors.
5. If the misconduct is substantiated, HEAR, in consultation with the Abbot, will do the following:
- Stipulate disciplinary action for the subject of the grievance. Disciplinary action may include requirements for treatment, restitution, and a determination for suspension/termination of position.
 - Notify the Complainant in writing.
 - Notify the Membership/Sangha as appropriate.
 - Educate the Membership/Sangha as needed.
6. If the misconduct is not substantiated, HEAR will:
- Notify the complainant in writing.
 - Address recommendations for the complainant as appropriate.
 - Exonerate the subject of the grievance in all appropriate ways.
7. If misconduct is substantiated, the subject of the grievance will be disciplined in some way:
- Corrective Actions. The requirements for corrective action will be spelled out in a written document. These may include recommended or required treatment, financial restitution, apologies to particular parties, and atonement.
 - Suspension.
 - The requirements for suspension will be spelled out in a written document, including the beginning and ending dates of the suspension period and salary considerations for paid employees.

- There will be a review of standing as spelled out in the suspension document.
- There may be a restoration of standing under supervision, if necessary, when requirements are met.
- There may also be a termination of standing if requirements are not met.
- Termination. The conditions of termination will be spelled out in a written document. These will include the date of termination, salary considerations for paid employees, and appropriate access to the Zen Center.

Procedure for Appealing HEAR Circle Decisions

If an appeal of HEAR recommendations is desired, the request will be made in writing stating the basis for the appeal and submitted to the Board of Directors. When an appeal is considered, HEAR members should be present for clarity of understanding but will have no vote on the matter. All parties are expected to work from an assumption that HEAR has acted in good faith and with due diligence, and the Board should not lightly overturn the findings of HEAR.

Procedure for Addressing Criminal Conduct

Victims of a criminal offense or any Sangha member who witnesses or becomes aware of a criminal offense, should report it to the proper authorities. (This could mean calling 911, or reporting to the police, the proper civil authorities, and/or those licensing bodies that govern that person's profession.) A member of HEAR should be notified immediately.

HEAR will do the following:

1. Inform the Membership/Sangha as appropriate.
2. Address what the impact will be on the accused in terms of Zen Center participation. If there is suspension or termination, HEAR will follow the procedures as outlined in the Misconduct section pertaining to these areas.

Bringing Attention to Unaddressed Conflicts

Ongoing unaddressed conflict can seriously undermine the well-being of the Sangha. It is important for a Sangha member to be empowered to step forward and bring to the attention of HEAR any situation ongoing in the community that is not being attended to by those involved. Examples of such conflict include observably disruptive behaviors, addictions, bullying, the spreading of gossip or rumors, triangulating, and behaving in ways that are not in alignment with Zen Center practices or policies. HEAR will determine an appropriate response after a thorough investigation of the situation.

Conflicts with Members of Other Sanghas

Where a problem occurs between a ZCLA Sangha member and a member of another Sangha, the problem-solving process will follow the policies of the Sangha of the person that the complaint is about. HEAR and the Abbot will be informed about the situation. The situation will be discussed with the ZCLA Sangha only where there is a bona fide need to know.

Endorsement

This Conflict Resolution Procedure and Grievance Procedure has been revised and adopted by the Abbot and Board of Directors on January 29, 2017.

Appendix A. Guidelines for Speaking with Others

Speaking with a Person with Whom One is in Conflict

The majority of the work in any conflict conversation is work you do on yourself. No matter how well the conversation begins, you'll need to stay in charge of yourself, your purpose, and your emotional energy. The suggested reflections may prove very valuable whether or not the conversation takes place.

Reflect on the following:

1. What's the purpose for the conversation?
2. What do you hope to accomplish?
3. What would be a satisfactory outcome?
4. What buttons of yours are being pushed?
5. Is a personal history being triggered?
6. What are your needs and fears?
7. How have you contributed to the problem?
8. What solutions would you offer?
9. Are you avoiding this conversation? Why?
10. If so, do you need support in taking this step?

Guidelines for Dialogue

1. Consider moving from framing the other as an adversary to that of a partner in this process.
2. Resolve that the experience together will be met with openness and compassion.
3. Listen from the heart.
4. Ask questions; be curious. Cultivate a willingness to go beyond what is "known" and encounter with genuine interest what arises in the here and now. Invite the wonder of not knowing.
5. Suspend judgment. Notice reactions and judgments to others and ourselves, and attempt to let them go.
6. Avoid gossip and also protect the confidentiality of the exchange.
7. Don't assume that she/he can see things from your point of view.
8. Notice any feelings of defensiveness that arise. Acknowledge these feelings in the exchange.

9. Speak from experience. Be yourself; share the confusion and clarity; look to your experience rather than your opinion. Avoid leaning on the words of experts and authorities.
10. Come from a place of not knowing. Risk showing up as you are in the moment leaving behind habit mind, and also habitual story lines, about yourself and others.
11. Pay close attention and trust the strength and wisdom of the process. This is cultivating the spaciousness Buddha Mind.
12. Refrain from the urge to “fix” or give advice. See and reflect the perfection of each person’s situation and condition just as it is.
13. We are all interconnected. Everything that arises is some aspect of the truth.
14. Acknowledgement does not imply agreement. It shows that you are listening to what the other person is saying.

Suggestions for How to Begin

If you have an issue to raise, approach the person when you are in a responsive (not a reactive) state and when you sense that he/she might be receptive to the conversation. At this point set a time to talk.

Examples of how you might open dialogue:

“I have something I’d like to discuss with you that I think will help us work/live together more effectively.”

“I’m uncomfortable with something that just happened. Do you have time to talk now?” or “Can we talk about it soon?” If they say “Sure, let me get back to you.” be sure to follow up with them.

“I need your help with something. Can we talk about it (soon)?” If they say, “Sure, let me get back to you,” follow up with them.

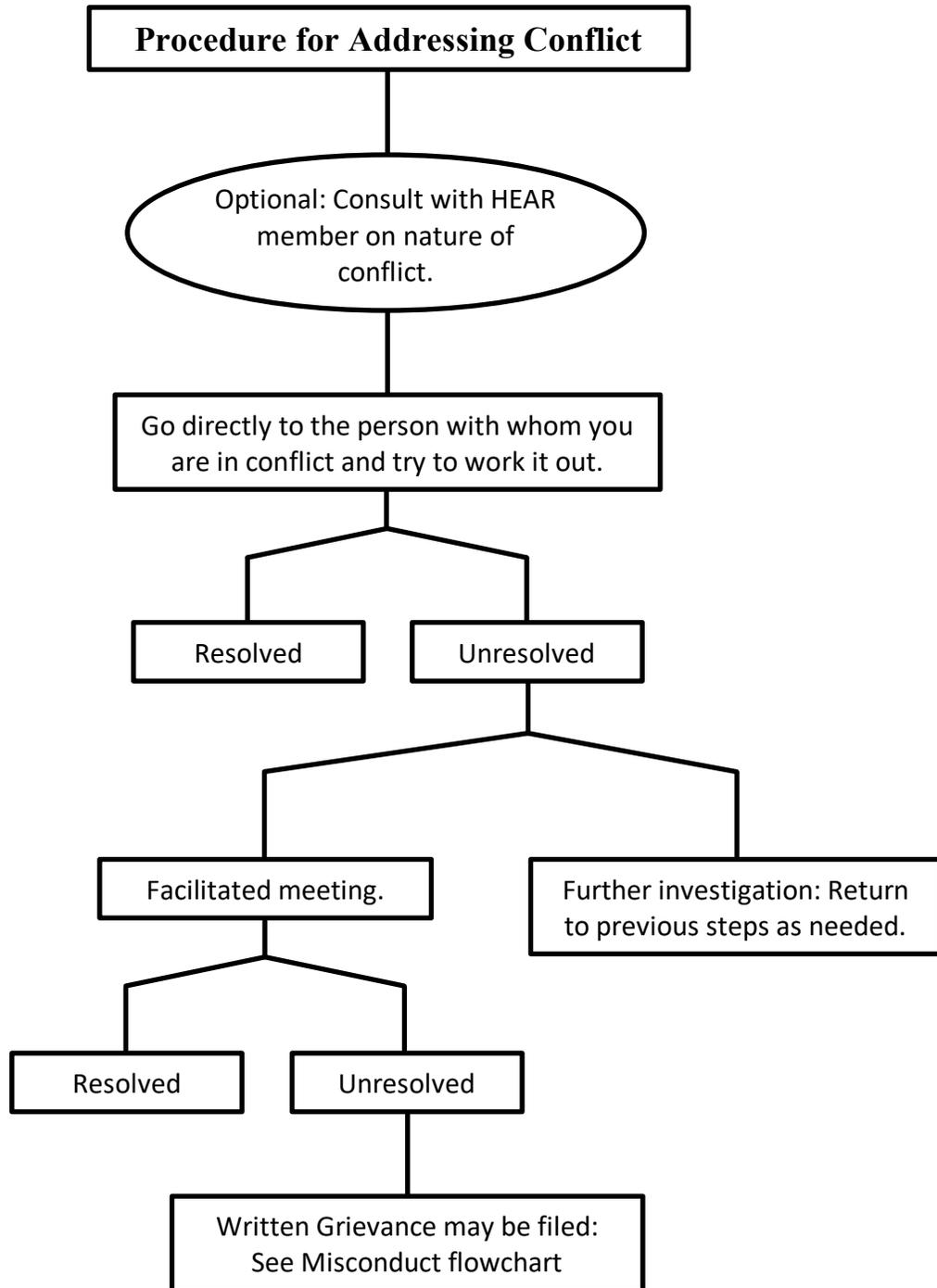
“I think we have different perceptions about _____. I’d like to hear your thinking on this.”

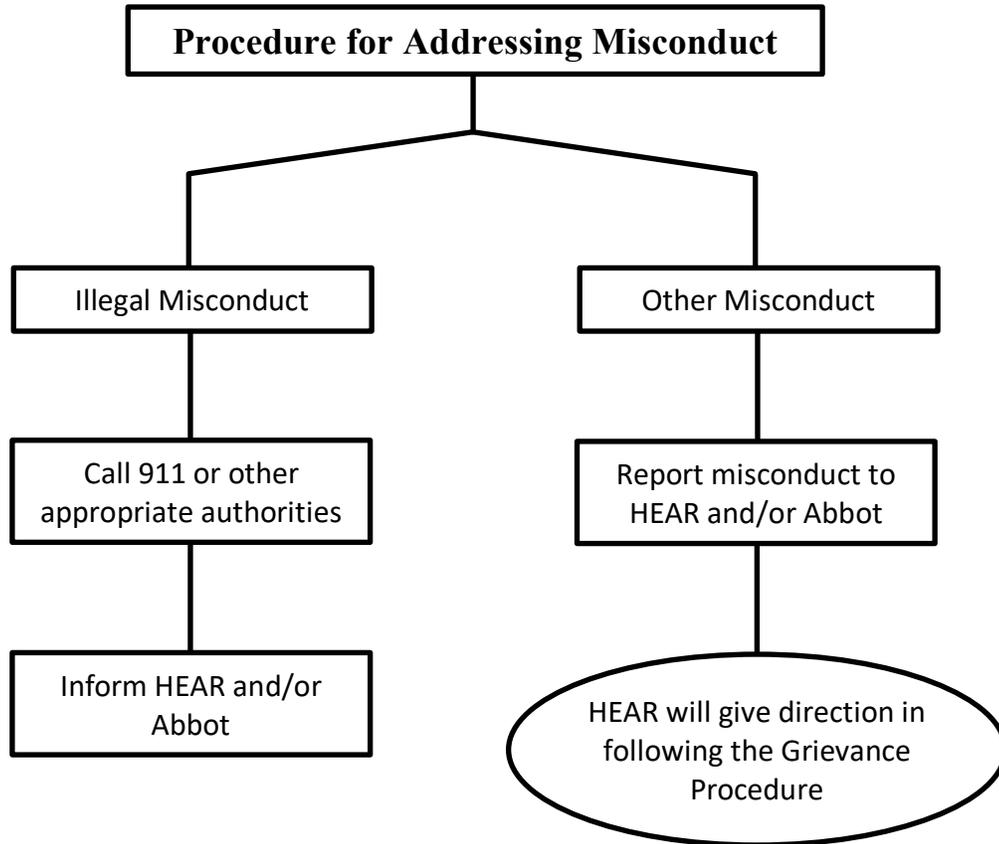
Write a possible opening for your conversation here:

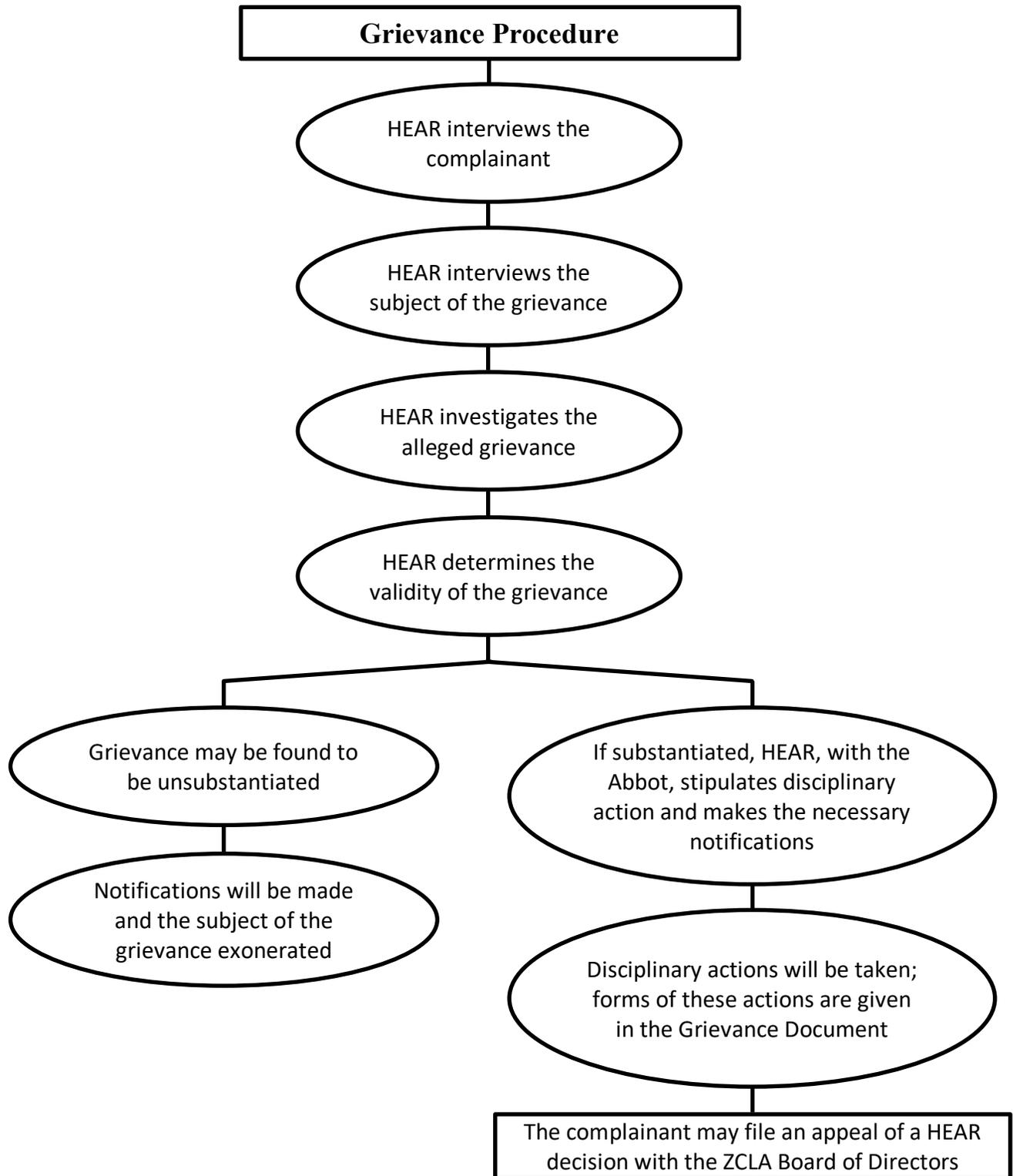
Possible Outcomes

1. **If a satisfactory resolution** for both parties is reached, good work!
2. **If agreement cannot be reached** refer to Grievance Procedure (The Steps Towards Resolution, Step Two).

Appendix B. Procedure Flowcharts







Appendix C. Resources

Books

- Barstow, Cedar. 2005. *Right Use of Power*. Boulder, CO: Many Realms Publications.
- Edelstein, Scott. 2011. *Sex and the Spiritual Teacher*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- Hoertdoefer, P. and F. Muir, eds. *The Safe Congregation Handbook: Nurturing Healthy Boundaries in Our Faith Communities*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association.
- Patterson, K., et al. 2002. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when Stakes are High*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rutter, Peter. 1989. *Sex in the Forbidden Zone: When Men in Power – Therapists, Doctors, Clergy, Teachers, and Others – Betray Women’s Trust*. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc.
- Rutter, Peter. 1996. *Sex, Power, and Boundaries: Understanding and Preventing Sexual Harassment*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Senauke, Alan, ed. 1998. *Safe Harbor: Guidelines, Process and Resources for Ethics and Right Conduct in Buddhist Communities*. Berkeley, CA: Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

Websites

- Crucial conversations: www.vitalsmarts.com
- Faith Trust Institute: www.faithtrustinstitute.org
- Right Use of Power Institute: www.rightuseofpower.org
- Safe Harbor: www.clearviewproject.org

STATEMENT OF ETHICS FOR ZCLA TEACHERS

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Preface

As Teachers of the Zen Center of Los Angeles, we uphold and adhere to the ZCLA Vision, Core Values, Core Practices and its Statement of Right Conduct and The Grievance Procedure. 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, including visiting Dharma teachers.

In addition, Senior Students who are appointed to teach by leading the Zen Center programs including zazen and sesshin and to offer Face-to-Face will agree to abide by these guidelines. Students who undertake various mentoring and instructor roles will be aware of these guidelines.

Commitment of the Teachers

As Teachers we recognize that we are the recipients of the Sangha's trust. We acknowledge that there are power differentials in our relationships and that our actions and words carry even greater weight than might be the case in other circumstances. As such, we agree to follow a code of conduct that supports the well-being of students, the organization, and the Sangha as well as our own continuing practice.

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 the 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.

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. Note that a “student” is anyone who practices Zen and who sees a teacher; a “teacher” is anyone authorized to teach at Zen Center through Dharma Transmission or a Senior Student in teacher training.

We recognize that deep personal and spiritual sharing happens within 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 teacher, 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 teaching relationship.

Sexual Relationships. We recognize that sexual relationships between a teacher and student are harmful. We also recognize that attraction between 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. If this occurs, we vow to be open and transparent to ourselves and to the other Teachers.

We vow to end any practice relationship before a sexual boundary is crossed. In the event that both parties involved wish to pursue such a relationship, they will end the student-teacher relationship. It is the responsibility of the Teachers Circle to counsel and guide the parties involved.

If a student is confused about his/her relationship with a teacher, he or she is encouraged to communicate this with another member of the Teachers Circle.

Privacy. We respect the intimacy and sensitivity of all Face-to-Face meetings (Dokusan, Daisan, and Private Practice Meetings)¹ with students. We will treat matters discussed there as private matters shared within the context of practice and training in the Dharma: we honor privacy, except in the case of necessary consultation. It is the practice of ZCLA that its Teachers may, in confidence, consult with other Teachers regarding sensitive matters brought up by students in Face-to-Face meetings. It is also the practice of ZCLA that senior students who are in training to be teachers will discuss Face-to-Face meetings with the Teachers for feedback and consultation.

Mandatory Reporting. ZCLA Clergy are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect as per CANRA: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act.² Mandated reporters of the state of California include clergy along with education (teachers) and health professionals. Basically, anybody in a professional position of authority over children are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect.

Clergy are also mandated reporters for dependent adult and elder abuse³. California law states that clergy are included in the following group: “Any person who has assumed full or intermittent responsibility for care or custody of a dependent adult or elder, whether or not he or she receives compensation.”

In addition, all ZCLA teachers will be alert to child abuse and neglect and dependent adult and elder abuse and take the appropriate action to address it.

Dual Relationships. A dual relationship is created whenever a Teacher and a Student are relating to each other in two (or more) different capacities. For example, a Teacher who is a psychotherapist may be asked by a Student to become a client/patient. Or a Student who is an attorney may be asked by a Teacher to provide legal services. Or a Teacher may be asked to serve on the Board of a Student’s organization. These and other such situations give rise to a dual relationship.

In the case of professional relationships such as with a psychotherapist, attorney, or doctor, Teachers will not enter into these dual relationships. A decision should be made to not enter into or continue an existing the Student-Teacher relationship in order to avoid conflicts of interest.

¹ The traditional terms for private face-to-face meetings are Dokusan, meeting with a Roshi, and Daisan, meeting with a Sensei. Private face-to-face meetings with other seniors are Private Practice Meetings.

² Overview: Mandatory reporting laws, <https://www.wklaw.com/what-are-mandatory-reporting-laws>
Statute: Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act,
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&division=&title=1&part=4&chapter=2&article=2.5

³ Statute: Welfare and Institutions Code,
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC§ionNum=15630#

We recognize that not all dual relationships are inherently unethical. For example, as senior students move into teaching roles, friendships with Sangha members may continue to exist. We are, however, mindful of the complexities and risks in these circumstances.

We acknowledge our shared and individual responsibility as Teachers to hold the clarity and integrity of the Teacher-Student relationship. The responsibility for guarding against the misuse of the power differential rests with the role of the Teacher. We will seek the counsel of 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. As ZCLA Teachers, we 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.

Any concern or complaint about the conduct of a Teacher should follow the ZCLA Grievance Procedure.

Teacher-to-Teacher Relationships

We will respect, support, and, as needed, counsel each other. We will address whatever issues arise between and among Zen Center's Teacher Circle members, including a sexual relationship between teachers, in a timely way. In the event that Teachers are a married couple, they will be asked to be especially scrupulous in their observance of these Ethical guidelines. 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.

Endorsement

This Teachers Ethics Statement has been revised and adopted by the Abbot and Board of Directors on January 29, 2017

Appendix. When Students Change Teachers within the White Plum

White Plum Asanga

Recommended Procedure for Handling Situations Where Senior Students Change Teachers Within the White Plum

When a senior student (shuso or above), or an ordained priest, makes a request to change teachers within the White Plum, the first and simplest procedure is for the teachers involved to speak with each other. Ideally, the first teacher would advise the second of any perceived difficulties in the student's training, state what needs to be done to appropriately end the relationship (if this is still outstanding) and give his or her blessing.

Ideally, the departing student would take an honorable leave from the first teacher by requesting such a leave and also performing any leave-taking ritual established by the teacher or Center. Each teacher/Center can establish its own leave-taking procedures. The new teacher will consider his or her own terms for accepting the new student for a trial period. It would be helpful for the student to have timelines and guidelines for the transition and for establishing a relationship with the new teacher and sangha.

Some thought should be given as to how the student is integrated or presented to the new sangha as well as to how the student is spoken of by the former teacher to the sangha they are leaving. The practice of right speech is particularly important at such times on the part of the teachers, the student and the members of both sanghas.

If there is some ill-will or difficulty between the student and the first teacher, efforts can be made to resolve it through the use of a facilitator, and if that is not possible, some form of forgiveness practice may be helpful. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to involve their senior disciples, if any, to help work through the issues.

It is recommended that the first teacher be included, and invited to empowerment services conducted by the second teacher. Both the first and second teacher involved are encouraged to work together for the student's benefit.

NB: This recommendation is intended for senior students, and for permanent changes of status, not for those who travel, explore, and follow the peripatetic life-style of ancient monks or contemporary transients.

Adopted by WPA.