

Puerto Compasivo Priest's Statement of Ethics

Prologue

As a Soto Zen priest and member of the Soto Zen Buddhist Association, I have committed myself to living an ethical life. Central to this vow is my effort to provide a safe haven in which I, my students, and all who are exploring the Zen path, may explore our true nature. The 16 Bodhisattva Precepts are the basic principle of my approach to ethics and the hallmark of Zen Buddhism

The Three Refuges

I take refuge in Buddha.
I take refuge in Dharma.
I take refuge in Sangha.

The Three Pure Precepts

I vow to refrain from harmful conduct.
I vow to practice beneficial conduct.
I vow to live to benefit all beings.

The Ten Grave Precepts

A disciple of Buddha protects life, does not kill.
A disciple of Buddha gives gifts, does not steal.
A disciple of Buddha shares life, does not misuse sexuality.
A disciple of Buddha is truthful, does not lie.
A disciple of Buddha remains clear, does not intoxicate self or others.
A disciple of Buddha speaks kindly, does not speak ill of others.
A disciple of Buddha is modest, does not praise self at the expense of others.
A disciple of Buddha is generous, is not possessive of anything.
A disciple of Buddha is loving, does not harbor ill will.
A disciple of Buddha cherishes and polishes the Three Treasures.

It is my sincere intention to align my life continually in accord with these precepts.

Ethic Standards, Teacher Relationships, and Grievance Procedures

While the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts are the foundation of my vows, I recognize that ethics standards and guidelines are needed to provide commentary and processes for addressing difficult situations that may arise in my Sangha or in inter-sangha relations.

Teacher / Student Relationships

The teacher student relationship is founded on deep trust and respect that is the mutual responsibility of both parties to honor. However, the authority of the teacher carries with it an increased responsibility to avoid situations and actions that could result in harm to the student,

the community or the teacher him or herself. I recognize that harm may result if a teacher and student become sexually or inappropriately emotionally involved, or if a teacher violates trust, or uses power or position for personal ends.

I commit to conduct relationships in accord with the Bodhisattva precepts. Because of this commitment, the responsibility for maintaining appropriate and clear boundaries always rests with the teacher. I will respect and protect the personal autonomy of all students, and refrain from sexual involvement with students. Should I as a teacher feel unable to uphold this standard, I will seek guidance and counsel from my teacher, a senior teacher in my lineage and/or a senior teacher from the broader community. It is recommended that the student involved also seek guidance.

Confidentiality

Matters discussed in individual meetings with me as the teacher are kept in confidence when confidentiality is requested and agreed to, except as may be required by law. Students are encouraged not to engage in idle talk about matters discussed in teacher-student meetings.

There may be circumstances in which it is necessary for a teacher to consult a professional for legal or psychological expertise. It may be necessary to disclose confidential information in the context of such a consultation. Such consultations are also kept in confidence and are only undertaken in the interest of the Sangha and the student.

Use of Power and Position

I recognize that individuals in positions of confidence or trust must not misuse status or authority to achieve privileges or other consideration, or to inappropriately influence others.

If I am entrusted with handling funds or assets on behalf of practitioners, I bear responsibility to provide accountable and transparent stewardship.

I recognize that in my position of authority, my behavior with drugs, alcohol and all intoxicants must be in alignment with the precepts. Abuse of intoxicants is an ethical violation and is subject to the procedures outlined below.

Procedures for addressing ethical concerns:

If a student brings forward a concern, it may be addressed directly with the teacher. It may also be wise to discuss this with senior students of the teacher, or with another qualified teacher to assist in discernment and in resolution of the concern.

Informal Ethical Process

If a matter of importance concerning ethical guidelines or practices arises, it may be brought to the attention of the Teacher and/or another qualified teacher.

Formal Ethical Hearing Process

If matters of importance are not able to be informally resolved, a Hearing Panel may be convened to implement a Formal Process. The Panel may consist of another teacher selected by me, a

teacher selected by the student and a third teacher selected by the two advising teachers, the Ethical Designee.

1. Bringing a Concern

A Formal Process is initiated by communicating in writing with the Ethical Designee. This “letter of request” must include:

- A clear statement that a formal ethical hearing process is requested.
- The name of the person(s) to whom the matter pertains.
- A description of the alleged matter sufficient enough to allow the Ethical Designee to decide whether the matter is appropriate for a formal hearing process.
- A description of prior attempts to resolve the matter.
- A statement of the resolution sought.

2. Accepting a Concern

Once the Ethical Designee has received a letter of request, the Ethical Designee, will, within 30 days convey to the requester the acceptance or non-acceptance of the matter for formal hearing. In the event the matter is accepted for formal hearing, the Ethical Designee will also notify persons named in the Letter of Request, as appropriate.

3. Convening the Hearing Panel

Once the parties have been notified, the Ethical Designee, in consultation with the Head Teacher, will convene the meeting. One panelist chairs the hearing and insures that a record of the hearing is maintained. Each member of the panel must be without actual or apparent bias or conflict of interest.

4. Hearing the Concern

The chair schedules a private hearing for the persons involved to have a full and fair opportunity to present their understanding of the matter at hearing. The Panel may ask questions and request information. The panel may consult with the Head Teacher.

5. Hearing Panel Decision

Once the Hearing Panel determines that it is sufficiently informed of the matter(s) heard, it will close the hearing and deliberate. Deliberation may include consultation with the Head Teacher. As soon as reasonably practicable, the panel will issue a written decision and distribute it as appropriate.

6. Partial List of Possible Resolutions by a Hearing Panel

This is a partial list of possible resolutions intended to encourage open-minded and creative decisions. While it is not possible to anticipate every kind of situation which might require resolution, this format hopes to ensure a process that benefits all. The findings could apply to either the teacher or the practitioner.

- Finding of no ethical breach while acknowledging the existence of a problem which needs resolution elsewhere.
- Reversal of an administrative decision or action.
- Direct or mediated private apology.
- Apology to the community.
- Follow-up meetings with the head teacher.

- Recommended education or training or intervention program (e.g. therapy or relevant 12-step program).
- Private reprimand.
- Public censure. The findings and action of the Hearing Panel as well as the reprimand, are made public to the Sangha.
- Period of probation, with probationary terms set by the Hearing Panel.
- Suspension or dismissal from position of responsibility in the Sangha.
- Suspension from teaching for a period of time. A suspension should stipulate the conditions by which a person may commence teaching.
- Limiting the decision simply to whether or not an ethical transgression occurred.

Ethical Violations and Members' Obligations to the SZBA

As a Teacher within the Zen Buddhist community I have a special responsibility to ensure a safe teaching environment for my students and sangha members.

Specifically, I, as a Member or an Associate Member of the SZBA, am bound by these principles:

- 1. Self-reporting Clause:** If a Member or Associate Member has been found by the member's sangha/temple to be in violation of its ethical guidelines, s/he must report this to appropriate authorities in accordance with state law and to the Grievance Committee of the SZBA for review. The member may be subject to suspension of Membership. Should the member not report, their sangha/temple should do so. If no sangha/temple member reports, a member not affiliated with the temple may report the violation to the Grievance Committee of the SZBA.
- 2. Illegal Activity Clause:** Any Member or Associate Member convicted of a felony will be subject to review of their membership by the Grievance Committee. When all legal obligations have been met as determined by the judicial system, the member may apply for re-instatement.
- 3. Diversity Clause:** The Members and Associate Members of the SZBA are committed to actively seeking harmony within such differences as race, class, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation, and other forms of cultural identity.

Teacher to Teacher Relationships

As a member of the SZBA I agree to create and maintain respectful and collegial relationships with my fellow teachers.

Signed

Date