



Mission and Vision Statement, Statement of Right Conduct, and the Circle of Life of the ZCLA Organization

OUR MISSION

is to know the Self, maintain the precepts and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism.

OUR VISION

is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized and compassion flows unhindered.

CORE VALUES AND CORE PRACTICES

OUR FOUNDATIONAL (DHARMA) VALUES

We take responsibility for creating a strong foundation to protect the Dharma.
Specifically, we will:

1. take care of our buildings and grounds
2. provide safety and security
3. maintain financial stability
4. nurture close and healthy relationships within the sangha

We will:

- a) be disciplined and orderly according to established guidelines for community living
- b) extend ourselves to all others politely and with respect
- c) handle difficulties with calm and perseverance
- d) address conflicts with balance and evenness
- e) act to support one another physically and emotionally, especially in times of need

5. maintain a healthy and effective organization

We will:

- a) freely disseminate and receive information regarding the operations of the Center
- b) employ sound management practices in our day-to-day operations
- c) recognize the traditions of our lineage
- d) create training paths and liturgy
- e) practice environmental responsibility

OUR FOCUS (SANGHA) VALUES

We contribute to the peace of the world by striving to fulfill our mission and vision.

Specifically, we will:

1. take responsibility that everyone is treated equally
2. use our unique gifts and skills in the service of others
3. help to create a climate of mutual trust and confidence in which all can speak and listen from the heart
4. honor diversity and actively welcome all people, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic background
5. interface with other religious traditions
6. be open to and foster innovations in forms and styles of practice
7. expand our expression through ceremony, arts, media and ritual
8. laugh at our own imperfections
9. make amends and learn from our mistakes
10. practice generosity
11. practice non-attachment
12. seek simplicity
13. develop policies and practices that promote environmental stewardship
14. practice collective responsibility and shared stewardship
15. seek collective wisdom
16. give and receive feedback
17. create beauty

OUR VISION (BUDDHA) VALUES:

We pursue the Enlightened Way and promote global harmony.

Specifically, we will:

1. practice zazen
2. maintain the precepts
3. serve others
4. live the truth of interconnectedness
5. care for and nurture the natural world and all its creatures
6. fulfill the Four Great Bodhisattva Vows

CORE PRACTICES

We are committed to the core practices of the Five Sphere Buddha Mandala:

- Atonement: taking responsibility for our own cause and effect
- Council: speaking and listening from the heart
- Fushinzamu: working together on a common project
- Koans: inquiring into the nature of life
- Precepts: abstaining from evil, cultivating goodness, and acting for the benefit of others
- Ritual: practicing liturgy and ceremony
- Shadow Work: reclaiming our projections and repressed energies
- Shared Stewardship: co-creating with one another
- Study and Scholarship: continuous learning and unlearning
- Sociocratic method: decision-making by transparency, circle organization, and elections by consent
- Three Tenets: not knowing, bearing witness, and loving action
- Zazen: appreciating life as it is

STATEMENT OF RIGHT CONDUCT

PREFACE

Practicing in a Sangha carries with it certain responsibilities, and it is important that the proper environment be continually actualized for the practice of the Buddha Way, to which we have dedicated our lives. To this end, we renew our commitment to right conduct by endorsing the following statement.

STATEMENT

The Zen Center of Los Angeles / Buddha Essence Temple (ZCLA) is committed to providing a supportive and nurturing environment for the practice of the Buddha Way. The ground for right conduct is the practice of the sixteen bodhisattva kai, or precepts, which are:

THE THREE TREASURES

Be one with the Buddha, the awakened nature of all beings
Be one with the Dharma, the ocean of wisdom and compassion
Be one with the Sangha, the community of those living in harmony with all Buddhas and Dharmas

THE THREE PURE PRECEPTS

Do not commit evil. I will practice not-knowing, thereby giving up fixed ideas about myself and the universe.
Do good. I will bear witness to the joy and suffering of the world.
Do good for others. I will take action to effect the healing of myself and others.

THE TEN GRAVE PRECEPTS

Do not kill. I recognize that I am not separate from all that is.
Do not steal. I am satisfied with what I have.
Do not be greedy. I encounter all creations with respect and dignity.
Do not tell a lie. I listen and speak from the heart.
Do not be ignorant. I cultivate a mind that sees clearly.
Do not talk about others' errors and faults. I unconditionally accept what each moment has to offer.
Do not elevate yourself and put down others. I speak what I perceive to be the truth without guilt or blame.
Do not be stingy. I use all of the ingredients of my life.
Do not get angry. I transform suffering into wisdom.
Do not speak ill of the Three Treasures. I honor my life as an instrument of peacemaking

It is our sincere intention to continually realign our lives in accord with these precepts. Inappropriate conduct is harmful to ourselves and others. Inappropriate conduct may include such acts as violence, sexual impropriety, drug and substance abuse, malicious gossip, and abusive language. Persons who encounter inappropriate conduct from any member of the ZCLA Sangha, including its teachers and senior instructors, or themselves practice such conduct, should be aware that these actions violate the spirit and practice of right conduct and seriously undermine the harmony of the Sangha.

We are committed to working out problems and difficulties that may arise from violations of right conduct. If a situation or difficulty arises, persons who are involved should, first of all, go directly to the person in question and make every effort to work out the situation. If this step is inappropriate or fails, the second step is to contact a senior member of the community, a member of the Teachers Council, and/or the Spiritual Leader, as appropriate. When a grievance is made, steps will be taken to hear the grievance and, if desired, to meet with all parties concerned. If these steps have been exhausted and the difficulty has not yet been settled, we will set up an arbitration committee to resolve the situation. It is our hope that difficulties will be resolved well before such action becomes necessary and that an arbitration committee will be used infrequently.

Any person who violates right conduct is also expected to make every effort to realign his/her conduct with the precepts and to take the action(s) necessary to restore the harmony of the Sangha. Such atonement is an integral part of right conduct.

We recognize that the study and practice of these precepts is a life-long effort; it is the responsibility of each person who endeavors to live the Buddha Way. These guidelines are not intended as a legislation of morality, but to encourage each of us to continually examine the basic attitude necessary to accomplish the Way. As human beings struggling to accomplish the refined life of the Buddha, the responsibility rests with each one of us. We urge all who come to practice to assume this responsibility for themselves, the welfare of others and the Sangha, and the Buddhadharma. It is through such efforts that mutual trust and respect and the joy of practice will flourish in our Sangha.

This statement was first issued on October 28, 1991 and approved and endorsed by the Spiritual Leader and Board of Directors of the Zen Center of Los Angeles on March 10, 1993, in Los Angeles, CA. Changes in wording have been made to reflect the current structure and practices of the Center.

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE
OF THE ZCLA ORGANIZATION



A version of this Mandala is used for personal practice.

Version May, 2007