

DHARMA BUDDY CRITERIA AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. The dharma buddy will meet the criteria set forth by the MHAE-Prison Circle (MHAE-PC), which includes the following:
 - a. Is willing to take on this responsibility.
 - b. Is approved as a ZP1 or ZP2 Instructor or the equivalent.
 - c. Is approved by the Teachers Circle and Roshi.
 - d. Has 3-5 years of consistent practice with a Zen teacher (who can give a recommendation).
 - e. Is knowledgeable about Zen practice.
 - f. Is knowledgeable about the ZCLA Mandala and familiar with ZCLA and MHAE procedures.
 - g. Has preferably, but not necessarily, been familiar with the former inmate for a year.

2. As the dharma buddy functions in this role with the person, guiding questions for the dharma buddy's consideration may include:
 - a. Does the person attend Zen Center regularly and have at least one face-to-face monthly?
 - b. Does the person have a physical address (this is a requirement for practice at the center) and phone number? E-mail?
 - c. What is your intuition about the person? For example:
 - i. What is your gut feeling about the person?
 - ii. In what ways is this person teaching you about yourself?
 - iii. In what ways are you serving this individual?
 - iv. What are your opinions on the crime(s) this individual was convicted of committing? In what ways do these opinions arise in your thoughts when interacting with this person? How are you working with them?
 - v. Is there something that you are picking up on?
 - vi. Are you dreading the interaction?
 - vii. Are you not hearing what you need to hear?
 - viii. What are you noticing about the person's attitude?
 - d. What is your knowledge of their:
 - i. Living situation?
 - ii. Work situation?
 - iii. Relationship to their probation officer?
 - iv. Economic situation?
 - v. Transportation situation?
 - vi. Support system (family system)?
 - e. Does the person have a pro-active relationship with you as their dharma buddy?
 - f. How well is this individual integrating into the Sangha?

- g. In what ways do you guard yourself from this individual?
- h. What is your level of commitment (time, effort, consistency) in being this individual's dharma buddy?
- i. Who is the giver, who is the receiver and what are the gifts in this relationship?
- j. How is the relationship between you and this individual evolving over time?
- k. If this person is from a different racial, ethnic or socioeconomic group from you, how are you working with and what are you learning from the differences?