

Tassajara Zen Mountain Center

Pure Standards (Guidelines of Conduct) for Summer Zen Training

Since the birth of Zen training in China over a thousand years ago, it has been common practice for each monastery to compose “pure standards” that support the residents to live with each other in mutual respect, peace, and harmony. This way of life is the body and mind of Zen training and practice. Please follow these guidelines completely and wholeheartedly.

These guidelines are grounded in the Ten Major Bodhisattva Precepts of the Soto Zen school:

- Not killing
- Not taking what is not given
- Not misusing sexuality
- Not lying
- Not intoxicating mind or body of self or others
- Not speaking of others' faults
- Not praising self and belittling others
- Not being possessive of anything
- Not indulging in anger
- Not disparaging the Buddha, Dharma, or Sangha (the Awakened One, the Teachings, the Community)

ZENDO ATTENDANCE AND DECORUM

- Please make a commitment to completely follow the *zendo* (meditation hall) schedule. This means attending morning and evening zazen, morning and evening service, *soji* (pre-breakfast temple cleaning), lectures, and all special ceremonies.
- Be on time for all scheduled events; arrive early enough to be settled at your place before an event begins.
- If you cannot attend an event because of work or illness, write a note on the *tenken* (attendance taker's) pad behind the zendo or tell the *Ino* (Meditation Hall Manager). Due to the work schedule, some crews will need to miss some zendo events.
- Do not leave the zendo during zazen, except for Practice Discussion or in case of an emergency.
- Muffle sounds such as coughing, sneezing, blowing the nose, yawning, or clearing the throat.
- Wear clean clothes to the zendo and be sure that your face, hands and feet are clean. Appropriate zendo clothing is neutral and subdued in color, and extends beyond the shoulders and below the knees.
- If you have long hair, tie it back and wear it off the neck.
- Refrain from wearing scented lotions or perfume, jewelry, watches, or mala beads in the zendo.

THE PRACTICE OF BOWING

- Stop and bow in *gassho* (with palms joined) when passing other practitioners outside (however, not in the courtyard, the bathhouse, on the zendo walkway, or in other enclosed spaces).
- Stop and bow to the bathroom altar when entering and leaving toilets.

THE PRACTICE OF SILENCE

- Observe silence from evening zazen through the breakfast silent period the following day.
- If it is necessary to speak during this time, do so in a way that supports the communal silence and does not disturb others.
- Observe the period of silence at breakfast and lunch after the meal chant, ending at the double hit of the clackers.
- Observe silence in and around the zendo, in the bathhouse during silent bathing time (4:30-5:35 p.m.), and at the back door snack area in the kitchen.

- Refrain from playing musical instruments within hearing distance of Tassajara.
- Use portable audio devices only with headphones or earbuds, and listen in private or away from the central area of Tassajara.
- Refrain from singing, humming, or whistling within Tassajara; do not call to others from a distance.
- Refrain from running in the central area of Tassajara.

DHARMA DISCUSSION

- The Abiding Teacher, the Tanto (Head of Practice) and other Practice Leaders are available for formal or informal discussions regarding Zen practice, other aspects of life at Tassajara, and any difficulties that arise.
- All long-term students – three months or longer – are asked to be in regular communication with a Practice Leader.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA)

- Tassajara welcomes people of every gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, political belief, and physical ability.
- San Francisco Zen Center is committed to becoming a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist institution where Buddhist practice is made as accessible as possible. Zen Buddhism teaches that everyone has the capacity to awaken, and our own liberation is bound up with that of all other sentient beings. We want to create an environment where everyone who comes to Tassajara can feel welcomed, included, and treated equitably.
- Tassajara / SFZC welcomes and invites feedback about any experiences related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Our intention is to listen and learn, so that we can take action and make changes as appropriate.
- If you feel you have been harmed by the words or actions of another, or if you observe a harmful situation, please speak to the Tanto, Director, a Practice Leader, Senior Staff member, or member of the Tassajara DEIA Committee, or you may submit an anonymous online DEIA Feedback Form.

GUIDELINES FOR RELATIONAL AND SEXUAL CONDUCT

The following guidelines are intended to support all students in finding their practice in the realm of relationships and sexuality, both potential and actual. Not following these guidelines may result in being asked to leave the monastery, not earning practice period credits, and/or not being accepted to Practice Periods.

- Do not touch or hug anyone without their consent.
- Be aware of how sexual energy is communicated through speech and non-verbally through touch, eye contact, body language, and attitude. Be mindful about your energy and communications.
- Do not begin a new sexual relationship in which either person has been in residential practice at Tassajara / SFZC for less than six months. Furthermore, do not express romantic or sexual interest to anyone who has been here less than six months. The “six-month rule” is intended to support new students to be able to fully engage with the practice, teachings and community without the distractions and complexities of exploring a new relationship.
- Do not engage in casual sexual relations.
- Do not begin a sexual relationship in which either person is under 18 years of age under any circumstances. Sexual relations between an adult and a minor are unlawful.
- If considering a relationship with someone at Tassajara, please speak with a Practice Leader first.
- If you are in a relationship, do not isolate yourself from the community. Respect silent times, and be sensitive about how affection is expressed in the presence of others.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

- It is traditional for priests to shave their heads; laypeople are requested not to do so.
- For your own safety, do not go barefoot on paths. Wear closed-toe shoes in the kitchen and shop.

- Wear a bathing suit at the swimming pool and the Narrows. Put on additional clothing when leaving the pool area.

CLARITY OF MIND AND HEALTH

- Do not use or possess alcohol or any illegal drugs. Marijuana is permitted only if used for medicinal purposes. Not following this guideline may result in being asked to leave the monastery and not being accepted to Practice Periods.
- The use of tobacco at Tassajara is discouraged. Smoking is allowed in the smokers' area only.

PRACTICING WITH ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The monastery grounds and the wilderness offer a respite from the distractions of the internet and electronic media.

- Do not use electronic devices for entertainment (e.g., movies, TV, video games). However, electronic devices are permitted for listening to dharma talks, reading, or taking photos.
- In the summer, music is permitted with headphones or earbuds. Please listen in private or out of earshot of the monastery grounds (e.g. across the creek or up the road).
- Internet access is allowed on Tassajara devices only. Personal use of the internet is limited. Internet use should be functional in nature.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Living Off the Grid

Tassajara is off the grid. Living off the grid requires a judicious use of our limited solar electricity. Excessive load engages the generator, which burns fossil fuels to provide energy. Therefore:

- Do not bring non-rechargeable electrical equipment to Tassajara without permission from the Director.
- Personal electrical devices with a heating element are strictly forbidden (e.g., irons, blow dryers, hot water kettles, toasters, etc.)
- Recharge electrical devices in your room during daylight hours only to avoid using fossil fuels.
- Turn off all lights when you are the last to leave a room.
- Be aware that spring water may be very limited in the summer. The community may be requested to conserve water by taking shorter showers, etc.
- Use only the telephone in the booth near the Stone Office for personal calls. The back porch phone is available from 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 a.m.
- End phone calls within ten minutes if someone else is waiting for the phone.
- All calls to Tassajara residents are received at Jamesburg. Messages will be posted on the message board in the mailroom.
- Leave Tassajara grounds and surrounding wilderness as you find them. Refrain from creating structures, earth art, altars, stupas, etc.

Hiking

- Prepare for a long hike on an unfamiliar trail by consulting with someone who knows the trail.
- Tell someone at Tassajara your expected route and return time.
- Be aware of poison oak, rattlesnakes, and ticks.
- Be aware that the trails in the Ventana Wilderness area surrounding Tassajara may not be well marked or maintained, and that it is very easy to get lost. If lost, do not deviate from your planned route. If it is nearing evening, find shelter for the night.

Awareness of fire danger

- Smoking is permitted only in the smoking area. Smoking is prohibited everywhere else in Tassajara (including inside any building), on the trails, and in the Ventana Wilderness.
- Refrain from using candles in living spaces.
- Extinguish incense when leaving living spaces.

KITCHEN AND MEALTIME PRACTICE

- Refrain from entering the working area of the kitchen without permission.
- Keep silence at the kitchen “back door” snack area.
- Take snacks offered for breaks to the porch behind the Stone Office, not the courtyard.
- Sit down to eat or drink anything (standing to drink water is permitted).
- Notify the *Ino* if you become ill and need food brought to you.
- Speak with the *Tenzo* (Head of the Kitchen) if you have questions or needs related to food or diet.
- Go to the kitchen to help bring food to the student eating area when the *umpan* (the gong hanging outside the kitchen) sounds before meals.
- Maintain silence during the food offering as the drum sounds and then join in the chanting that precedes breakfast and lunch.
- Accept the meal prepared and offered by the kitchen. Eat in the student eating area, except on your personal day.
- Do not take food from the walk-in or other storage areas without permission of the *Tenzo*.
- Refrain from reading during meals or snack time.
- Do not give food to Tassajara pets or to wildlife.

WORK PRACTICE

- Arrive at the work meeting on time, in work clothes, and ready to go to work. Work meeting is signaled twice a day with a drum roll-down, at 8:25 a.m. and 12:55 p.m.
- Refrain from bringing food or drinks to work meeting.
- Enter wholeheartedly into the work that has been assigned. [See the document *Work as Practice*.]
- Maintain silence as much as possible during work time, especially in the morning.
- Notify the Work Leader or your crew head if you are unable to work.

BATHHOUSE PRACTICE

- Observe silence in the bathhouse during silent bathing time (4:30-5:35 p.m.).
- Before entering the bathhouse, make three standing bows to the altar, reciting the bath verse silently. When leaving, bow once to the altar.
- Shower thoroughly with soap before using the “plunges” or the steam room.
- Bathe on the side of the bathhouse that corresponds to your gender. We want to acknowledge that the labeling of a "men's" and "women's" side regrettably does not speak to all members of our community, especially those who are transgender, gender non-conforming, intersex, lesbian or gay.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- If a conflict arises, try to work it out one-on-one, ask the Crew Head for help, or ask the Tanto, Director, or a Practice Leader for help (this could include facilitating a conversation).
- Tassajara / SFZC prohibits verbal, physical, and sexual harassment. This includes refraining from contact with a person who repeatedly requests no contact. Please speak with the Director or Tanto if you believe that this policy has been violated.

THE PRACTICE OF SIMPLICITY

- First-summer and short-term students are to remain at Tassajara during their entire scheduled time, except for vacations, medical emergencies, or local hikes.
- Those who have practiced in residence at SFZC for six months or more may go out on their personal day, no more than once a month. If you wish to go out for the day, request permission from the Director, inform the *Ino* before leaving, and return by the end of evening zazen.
- Take care of your living space and clean it thoroughly before leaving Tassajara.