

**Zenshinji**  
*Zen Mind Temple*  
*Tassajara Zen Mountain Center*

***Pure Standards***  
***(Guidelines of Conduct)***  
*for*  
***Practice Periods***  
*(revised November 13, 2022)*

These *Pure Standards (Guidelines of Conduct, Monastic Practices)* along with the *Bodhisattva Precepts*, the *Practice Period Schedule*, and other monastic forms and ceremonies, create a container of support and nurturance for everyone. This is the body and mind of Zen training and practice. Please follow them completely and wholeheartedly.

*“To train constantly...requires unstinting support. The structure of the three-month Practice Period provides such support. It is the head and face of Buddha Ancestors. It has been intimately transmitted as their skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.”*

— Eihei Dogen Zenji

*“Just sit and see what happens ... Following the rules lets you find yourself ... The rules are not something to restrict you, but something to support your practice.”*

— Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

**TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE**

3:50 am	Wake-up bell
4:20	Zazen / Kinhin / Zazen
6:10	Morning Service
6:45	Oryoki Breakfast
7:55	Study
9:00	Soji (cleaning) or Dharma talk
9:50	Zazen / Kinhin / Zazen
11:20	Noon Service
11:30	Oryoki Lunch
1:15 pm	Work
4:15	Exercise / Bath
5:50	Evening Service
6:00	Oryoki Supper
7:30	Zazen / Kinhin / Zazen
9:00	Three Refuges
9:30	Firewatch / Lights out



## ZENDO PRACTICE

### GENERAL ZENDO GUIDELINES

- Be on time for all scheduled events: allow enough time to arrive and settle at your place before any event begins.
- Maintain quiet in and around the zendo. Do not speak in the zendo or on the zendo walkway.
- Walking, bowing, sitting, and rising from your seat should all be done silently. Muffle sounds such as coughing, sneezing, blowing the nose, yawning, and clearing the throat.
- Make sure your feet are clean before entering the zendo.
- Do not place your feet on the meal boards.
- Do not leave the zendo during zazen, except for dokusan or practice discussion, or in case of an emergency.
- If you are unable to attend any part of the monastic schedule, communicate the reason and any needs to the Ino. This may be done in person, by sending word with someone, or by leaving a note on the tenken pad.

### ZENDO ATTIRE

- Wear monastic robes for all zendo activities.
- Always wear at least one layer of clothing under your robe.
- Change in and out of robes in private.
- Keep robes clean and in good repair.
- Walk in shashu while wearing robes.
- It is traditional for priests to shave their heads; laypeople are requested not to do so (the closest setting on clippers is fine).
- If you have long hair, tie it back and wear it off the neck.
- Do not wear scented lotions or perfume.
- Do not wear nail polish.
- Do not wear jewelry, watches, or malas in the zendo.
- In cold weather, neutral colored slippers or socks may be worn in the zendo (remove for zazen).
- White socks (bessu or tabi if you have them) may be requested for special ceremonies.

### ENTERING THE ZENDO

- Remove shoes before stepping onto the walkway, and place them on the shoe rack.
- Carry okesa, rakusu, and oryoki at eye level in the zendo and at heart level outside the zendo, using both hands.
- During the han or densho, enter through the front door. At any other time, use the back door. Step over the threshold with the foot closest to the hinge side of the door. Take two steps forward and bow in gassho.
- Do not cross in front of the altar.
- When walking to your seat, as you pass the end of the tan behind the altar, stop and bow in shashu.
- Be in the zendo by the end of the second rolldown on the han or densho.
- If late, go to the back door and wait for the tenken. If the tenken has already entered the zendo, it is too late to enter.
- If too late, note it on the tenken pad and sit in the kaisando (if no one is in the kaisando, you may sit in the library).

### KINHIN

- Stay in the zendo for kinhin unless it is necessary to leave. Do not make coffee or tea during kinhin.
- Walk in the same order in which you were seated. Maintain the same pace as others, spacing yourself evenly between those in front and behind.

- When the kaishaku (clackers) are struck to end kinhin, walk rapidly back to your place.
- If you leave the zendo during kinhin, after using the toilet return to the zendo walkway and do kinhin there. You may re-enter the zendo after the three bells that signal zazen.

#### **SERVICE**

- Attend service unless you have been assigned work during this time.
- If you are late, enter through the back door. Do three bows behind the altar before going to your place.
- “Chant with your ears,” i.e., listen to and blend in with others and to the pace set by the mokugyo.

#### **ZENDO MEALS: ORYOKI PRACTICE**

- Receive all food as an offering.
- Attend all meals unless you are sick.
- Priests use traditional Soto Zen oryoki sets. Lay practitioners use three nesting bowls with white cloths. All wiping cloths are to be solid white. All utensils are to be wooden or lacquered and setsus are to be cloth-tipped.
- After the Buddha tray has been offered, it is too late to enter the zendo.
- Use oryoki bowls and utensils quietly.
- Clean oryoki on 4 & 9 days (i.e., personal days), and change setsu tip as necessary.
- After serving in the zendo, attend servers’ meals.

#### **DOKUSAN & PRACTICE DISCUSSION**

- The Abbot, Abbess, or Senior Dharma Teacher leading the Practice Period is available for dokusan, and the Abiding Teacher, the Tanto and other Practice Leaders are also available for practice discussion.
- All students should be in regular communication with one (or more) practice leaders.
- Phone or Zoom dokusan or practice discussion is permitted during study period by permission of the Tanto. Phone meetings must be conducted in the phone booth. Please arrange details of Zoom dokusan with the Tanto.

#### **STUDY HALL PRACTICE**

- Be in study hall early enough to chant the opening verses with everyone (the verse is chanted five minutes after the railroad bell is rung).
- Read books related to Buddhism and Zen practice.
- All books in study should be wrapped in a sutra cloth and treated respectfully.
- Okesa and rakusu sewing may be done during study.
- If unable to be in study, please communicate with the doan taking attendance for that day, either personally or by note left with the attendance sheet in study hall.

#### **KITCHEN PRACTICE**

- If you have special dietary needs or need to use the kitchen, speak with the Tenzo to make arrangements. Do not take food from any storage areas without permission from the Tenzo.
- Do not use the kitchen as a passageway at any time.
- Refrain from entering the working area of the kitchen without permission.
- Wash your hands before serving or handling any food, or doing any kitchen work.
- The “back door” snack area is available from after lunch until the densho begins for evening service. Fruit and leftover medicine bowl are available after supper. Take food and leave the kitchen before eating.
- Refrain from taking food from the walk-in or other storage areas without permission of the Tenzo.
- Maintain silence in the snack area.

- Sit down while eating or drinking.
- Refrain from giving food to Tassajara pets or to wildlife.

### **WORK PRACTICE**

- Be ready for work when the work bell sounds and go directly to the work meeting.
- Maintain silence as much as possible during work time (maintain functional speech).
- Do not bring food or drinks to work meeting.
- Always clean and return tools and equipment at the end of work.
- Do personal work during free time.

### **BATHHOUSE PRACTICE**

- Bathe during scheduled bath time.
- Before bathing, do three standing bows at the altar and recite the bath *gatha* (verse) silently. When leaving the baths, bow once to the altar.
- Shower thoroughly with soap before using the “plunges” or the steam room.
- Observe silence at the bathhouse.
- On 4 & 9 days (personal days), quiet talking is permitted and baths are open after Manjushri’s bath following breakfast until evening service.
- Do not read at the baths.
- Men and women are to bathe only on their respective sides of the bathhouse.
- 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.

### **PRACTICING WITH ILLNESS**

- When sick, you may get your own food if you are able and eat silently in the dining room. If you need food, hot water, or other help, inform the tenken or Ino by sending a messenger or leaving a note on the tenken pad.
- When you have recovered sufficiently to rejoin the monastic schedule, begin by attending zazen or service, a zendo meal, or other Dharma event.

### **PRACTICING WITH RELATIONSHIPS**

- 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.
- It is strongly recommended that you not begin a new romantic or sexual relationship during Practice Period, especially during one’s Tangaryo Practice Period.
- Do not begin a new sexual relationship, at any time, in which either person has not practiced residentially at San Francisco Zen Center for at least six months. This includes refraining from expressing your romantic or sexual interest to that person.
- 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.
- Do not engage in casual sexual relations.
- Do not touch or hug anyone without their consent.
- Having followed these guidelines, those considering starting a new romantic relationship are asked to see a practice leader for help in reconciling the often conflicting demands of a new relationship and the Tassajara schedule and its impact on the community.

## **GENERAL MONASTIC PRACTICES**

### **SAFETY**

- Due to great fire danger, never leave a burning lamp unattended. Candles are not permitted.
- Extinguish burning incense before leaving your room.
- Before going on a hike, notify someone regarding the trail and expected return time. Do not go on unfamiliar trails alone.

### **CLARITY OF MIND AND HEALTH**

- Do not use or possess alcohol or any illegal or other inappropriate drugs. Not following this guideline may result in being asked to leave the monastery.
- The use of tobacco is discouraged. Smoking is allowed in the smokers' area only (near front gate). The smoking area is silent during scheduled silent times. Smoking inside buildings or in the wilderness is prohibited.

### **PRACTICING WITH ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

- 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.
- Internet access is allowed on Tassajara devices only. Personal use of the internet is limited, and should be functional in nature.

### **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. Please speak with the Director or Tanto if you believe that this policy has been violated. Any requests to have no contact with someone (due to their speech or behavior) should be made to both the individual and also a supervisor or member of senior staff.

### **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 everyone who comes to Tassajara to feel that they are 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.

## **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, especially in drought years. The community may be requested to conserve water by taking shorter showers, etc.
- Personal telephone calls may be made in the phone booth or in the office during free time when silence is not being observed. If someone needs to make a business call in the office, end your call as soon as possible. End calls within ten minutes if someone is waiting for the phone.
- All calls to Tassajara residents are received at Jamesburg; messages are brought in and 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.

## **OTHER**

- When arriving at and leaving Tassajara, please check in with the Director and Ino. At either time you may offer incense in the zendo.
- Plan to stay at Tassajara during the entire practice period. If a medical or personal emergency arises, speak to the Director for permission to leave and for help in travel arrangements. Inform the Ino if leaving.
- Observe silence from evening zazen until after lunch 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.
- Refrain from singing, humming or whistling within Tassajara. Do not call to others from a distance.
- Do not play musical instruments or listen to music during Practice Period, with or without headphones.
- When passing others, stop and bow in gassho (except in the courtyard, the bathhouse, on the zendo walkway, or in other enclosed spaces).
- Do not run in the central area of Tassajara.
- Stop and bow to the toilet altar when entering and leaving toilets.
- By evening firewatch, be in your room with lights out.

If you have questions about, or difficulties with any of these practice guidelines, please speak with a practice leader.

*“The assembly of practitioners in the hall should blend like milk and water to support the activity of the Way. Although now for some period you are guest and host, later you will be Buddha Ancestors equally throughout time. Therefore, you should not forget the feeling of gratitude. It is rare to meet one another and to practice what is rare to practice. This is called the body and mind of Buddha-Dharma.”*

*—Eihei Dogen Zenji*