

YZMC Guidelines and Code of Conduct

All Yokoji-Zen Mountain Center guidelines come out of the sincere desire to realize and actualize our true nature. We understand that it is sometimes difficult to follow the rules, and that everyone occasionally will slip up. However, we hope that everyone will approach these rules in the spirit of support for practice and to maintain harmony within the community.

They ensure:

1. That the Way can be practiced without distraction.
2. That certain basic conduct is in place so interpersonal conflict is minimized.
3. That there is respect for junior and senior alike.
4. That health standards are maintained.
5. That there is respect for the natural ecology, and the buildings, grounds, and other donations of labor and money made by the global Buddhist community to support ZMC.

The guidelines have been grouped into a number of headings pertaining to formal procedures, care for the natural environment, community living, and administrative details. All these guidelines are based on the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts as laid out by Dogen Zenji.

Formal Procedures

Arrivals and Departures

Please check in with the office upon arrival and departure. When you check out, remember to leave your room or cabin in the same state you found it. Return linens to cleaning closet, sweep the floor, shake out rugs, and tidy up your space.

During the training periods, residents are encouraged to remain on the grounds, including days off. If you leave to go hiking, please leave a note on the community board in the dining room which explains where you went and the time you expect to return.

Practice Schedule

The practice schedule has been designed to help us to maintain a mindful attitude at all times. By following a daily routine of this nature, we are able to free our minds from the mundane concerns of life and pour all of our energy into practice.

You are required to attend all scheduled events. In cases of illness or any other emergency, please have someone notify the Head Trainee. This is very important for safety; we will send someone to look for you if you are unexpectedly missing.

The schedule will be posted in the following places:

- Dining Room
- Office Bulletin Board
- Buddha Hall Bulletin Board or Zendo

You may also request a copy of the schedule for yourself, and you should feel free to ask monitors for information about the schedule at any time.

Zendo Practice

Zendo Attire

- Wear dark colored clothing with long sleeves and pants (t-shirts are permissible in summer time). Clothing should not sport slogans or bright colors. Robes or samue are encouraged. Please do not wear long jewelry, or scents such as perfume or aftershave to zazen.
- Clothing, body and feet should be clean.

- Long hair should be neatly combed and tied back.
- Turn off all watch alarms.

Entering Zendo

The following procedures have been developed based on age old temple practices. They are there to help us maintain mindfulness through every moment of zazen. Feel free to ask monitors about any and all zendo procedures.

- Enter the zendo through the side entrance and the Buddha Hall through the main entrance. Trainees should be in the zendo five minutes before the start of a sitting period. In the morning, trainees should be seated before the Head Trainee enters.
- Step over the threshold with left foot. Make a standing bow in gassho. Walk in shashu along the line of the zabutans, bowing as you pass the teachers' seats. In the zendo, walk behind the altar as well as the teachers' seats. Kneel down to adjust your cushion when you reach your place, stand up, bow in gassho to your place, turn around and bow to the room, then sit down.

Zazen

Zazen is the bedrock of our practice. By sitting still and allowing our minds to settle, we make it possible for our true nature to be revealed to us. The following guidelines have been developed to maintain an atmosphere which is peaceful and conducive to sound practice.

- Be on time for zazen. By the time the second round of the Han has ended, you should be in your seat. If you arrive late for a period, sit in the gaitan and enter when fast kinhin begins at the end of that period.
- Do not leave the zendo during a scheduled period of zazen unless you are going to dokusan, or are ill.
- At the end of zazen, you may take some time stretch your legs. Wait for the teacher to stand up, and then turn around to kneel down and adjust your cushion. Next, stand up and bow in gassho to your space before turning around in gassho. Fluff up your zafu before leaving the zendo at the end of a period. Remember to leave your seat clean and the tag of your zafu facing outward and centered.
- Everyone should go to dokusan (interview with the teacher) at least once a week. This is an essential part of Zen practice.
- Please remember that you are in the presence of others, and your behavior may disturb them:
 - Please try to sit as still as possible during a period. If you must move your legs, make a short gassho, then change your position as quietly as you can.
 - Breathe quietly.
 - To reduce noise and avoid spreading germs, cover your nose and mouth with the crook of your arm when coughing or sneezing. Carry a tissue in an easy to reach place, and wipe the end of your nose if you have a runny nose.
 - If you need to yawn, please keep your mouth closed or cover it with your hand.
 - Bad breath is disturbing to others. Please brush your teeth each morning and evening.
 - Bathe regularly and keep your clothing and robes clean to avoid body odor.

Kinhin

Kinhin is Zen walking meditation conducted between sitting periods. Although it is tempting to treat kinhin as a time for a break, try to maintain your focus throughout the walking period. The following are guidelines concerning kinhin:

- Remain in the zendo during kinhin unless you need to use the toilet.

- You may leave to use the toilet at the beginning of slow kinhin, or during fast kinhin. Please do not leave in the middle of slow kinhin. Reenter to your place in line during fast kinhin. If the clappers have struck to end fast kinhin, please wait to enter until the sit down bell has rung.
- Move at the same speed as everyone else. This means that you should not race ahead, nor should you hold up the line.

Service

Service is another very important part of the practice. Ceremony and chanting help us bring our minds into focus and bring us into contact with our Buddha nature.

- Do not leave Buddha Hall during service.
- All trainees should attend service except the kitchen staff.
- If you have to enter late for service, do three full bows at your place when you enter.
- Chant the sutras with awareness, following the pace and sound of the Ino.
- When you have to leave early, do three bows before you leave.

Meals

Trainees should attend all formal meals. Kitchen crew should try to attend formal meals if possible. Use oryoki bowls and utensils quietly.

Silence and Quiet

Part of our aim is to learn how to sit with silence. In a world of loud voices, we are cultivating quiet contentment. Here are some basic guidelines to help you work effectively with silence.

- Do not speak in the Zendo or in the gaitan.
- During training periods, observe silence from the start of evening zazen until the end of breakfast the following morning.
- Keep voices down in the vicinity of the Buddha Hall and zendo, especially since others may be sitting.
- During Sesshin, be silent at all times, unless you need assistance.

Work

As a Zen community, work is an integral part of our mindfulness practice. By focusing on the task at hand - whether it be cleaning the floor or entering numbers into a database - we are able to find meaning and joy in our daily work. We also deeply appreciate the energy and effort that people here put into their work. Here are a few rules regarding work practice:

- Be ready for work and be at the work meeting on time.
- Do not let excessive talking interfere with work.
- Check with your crew leader if you have questions or have completed a task.
- Always clean and return tools and equipment at the end of work.
- Do personal work during free time.

Community Living

Yokoji-Zen Mountain Center is a community of like-minded individuals who are coming together for a specific purpose - that is, to practice Zen meditation. This can be very rewarding and also very challenging. We have identified activities which have caused conflict in the community and distracted us from our practice. The following guidelines have been put into place:

- Trainees must avoid forming romantic relationships during the first three months of residence. This guideline is designed to help trainees focus on their own practice, as well as

to allow their fellow residents to experience Zen training without distraction. If a relationship is formed after the first three months, please respect the feelings of other members of the community by openly announcing the relationship and as much as possible not forming a partnership that excludes other community members from your circle of friendship.

- Couples who enter YZMC are held to the same responsibilities as all trainees. If a couple should experience difficulty within their relationship, YZMC strongly suggests seeking outside counseling along with practice to provide stability for the couple and within the community. If a couple should resolve to split, it is YZMC policy to request that each member leave YZMC for a period of time so that each individual, as well as the Sangha, has the space to heal.
- Spouse or family staying longer than one week are required to follow and uphold YZMC code of conduct rules and follow the required schedule. If a spouse or family member is unable to maintain the rules or schedule, they will be asked to leave.
- We encourage direct communication among residents. If you have a conflict with someone in the community, speak to them directly about it. Avoid gossiping about others, as this can lead to division in the community. If the conflict cannot be resolved, ask one of the teachers or residents to act as a mediator and use one of the processes such as Council or Compassionate Communication to resolve the issues.
- There is no public drinking allowed at Yokoji-Zen Mountain Center, and intoxication is also not allowed. Use of illegal drugs will lead to immediate dismissal from the training program. Firearms and any other weapons are strictly prohibited. If applying for residency, any drug or alcohol addictions, past or current, must be noted in the application. We ask for at least 6 months of total non-use before residency can be considered. This is for the sake of the individual and the community. Also, any resident dealing with addiction must be involved in either ongoing local AA or NA programs whilst in residency at YZMC.
- If you own a radio or cd player, keep the volume down to avoid disturbing others. If you are in shared housing, please be considerate of others who are trying to rest or study. There is no music to be played during outside of hossan days, either on instruments or recorded. Also, the use of personal computers or media players for entertainment outside of hossan time is forbidden.
- Please wear shoes outside and bare feet or socks inside to avoid tracking dirt and mud onto the carpeted areas.

Student-Teacher

Sometimes it is necessary for the teacher or Abbot to request a student to leave the community based on what the teacher feels is best for a student's well being and practice. It is the responsibility of the teacher or Abbot to maintain confidentiality and to suggest another teacher to help facilitate healing and continued practice. The teacher or Abbot may request dismissal for a period of time, at anytime should the relationship between student and teacher become increasingly difficult or uncomfortable.

Residential Housing

Housing availability is based on paying students, seniority, age and length of stay, in that order. YZMC will always do its best to comfortably accommodate older students as well as families. All residential housing will be used (including absence due to vacation) based on need of the center. No structural changes to housing are permitted without consent of Abbot.

Dietary Concerns

If you have dietary concerns, speak with the Tenzo to see if your diet can be supported. While YZMC promotes a vegetarian and healthy diet, please be aware that everyone has different issues concerning what they eat. Try not to use your personal beliefs as a source of disagreement.

Hygiene

Promote hygiene. Keep the kitchen and communal areas clean and tidy. No meat or fish are to be cooked or stored in the kitchen. BBQ'S are available. Exceptions may be made on holidays with the consent of Abbot.

Office Use

Please don't use the office phones or computers for private use. Use the public phone for incoming and outgoing calls. We need to keep the office lines open for YZMC business at all times.

Environmental Guidelines

Mountain Living

- We are at an altitude of 5500 feet so be aware that you may feel a little out of breath at times. Take it easy walking around the property and be sure to drink plenty of water to stop dehydration. Please let us know in advance if there maybe guests with health conditions at risk, and/or if they are bringing in medical equipment that require electrical power.
- During the winter it may freeze overnight and walkways and stairs can become icy, so watch your step.
- There are mountain lions occasionally in the canyon but they are very secretive and seldom seen. The California Department of Fish and Game suggests the following: do not hike alone; keep children close to you; do not approach a mountain lion; do not run from a lion; do not crouch down or bend over; do all you can to appear larger; fight back if attacked.
- The most common snake present at YZMC in the warmer months is the rattlesnake. These snakes, though very timid, are poisonous, and should be treated with respect. In the event you see one, move away and notify a staff member. Be careful when moving logs or rocks which could hide a snake and keep an eye out when walking or hiking on trails around the center. There is information posted in the dining hall regarding what to do in the event of a snake bite.
- Please avoid feeding any wildlife such as deer, raccoons, skunks and birds. If these animals become over-reliant on human handouts it reduces their ability to survive on their own.
- Please do not pick any wildflowers around the center grounds.
- Please keep all doors closed in order to keep the wildlife out of the buildings.

Electricity

YZMC runs on alternative energy. We have as a goal to be 100% powered by solar, wind, and other alternative means without the need for generator power. To achieve this aim we must conserve electricity by being careful with our use of power, using only low power appliances, and encouraging guests and visitors to reduce their electrical consumption.

Here are the guidelines for power use:

- Please be extremely conscious of lighting. Use only the light you need, and shut off all lights once you leave a room. A single light left on overnight can drain all our available power.
- Stereos, computers, battery chargers, VCR's and TV's, and surge controllers draw power even when they are not turned on. They should be unplugged or plugged into a power strip which is turned off when they are not in use. Battery chargers and rechargeable flashlights should be unplugged when the batteries are charged. It is, however, preferable to use non-rechargeable.
- Do not use any items that generate heat such as hair dryers, heaters, etc. The use of personal computers is limited to YZMC staff only. Trainees are not allowed to use personal electrical items during their stay. Essential items must be cleared for use with the YZMC Administrator.

Heating

Please be conservative with heating. Turn off the heat when you leave a room. During winter wear more clothes so we can turn the heating down, and use more blankets at night. Do not place anything on top of the heaters as they get extremely hot!

Cleaning products

Be conservative with the use of cleaning products that harm the environment. Much cleaning can be accomplished with warm water and cloth.

Recycling

Please use the YZMC recycling wherever possible. Check the kitchen for items that can be recycled in Idyllwild. Compost should be taken to the compost heap in the garden.

Paths

Please stick to the established paths around the Center.

Fires and Smoking

YZMC is in a high fire-risk area and fire service is at least 20 minutes away. We ask that everyone is extremely careful about fire safety and that they observe the following precautions:

- Do not use any open flames either inside the housing or outdoors.
- Smoking should be restricted to smoker's rock and smoker's log.
- Make a note of where the fire extinguishers and fire hydrants are and know how to use them. Please ask if you are unsure.
- If you see fire, ring the alarm bell, which is situated over the bridge next to smoker's log across from the Buddha Hall.

Water Use

Please be conservative with water. Our water supply comes from horizontal wells located at the end of our property. The wells draw on water deep in the granite bedrock, which falls as rain and snow in the higher elevations and is sensitive to the amount of precipitation we get over the winter. Dry years could mean a reduction in flow, so please be careful to turn off faucets and be conservative with water when bathing.

Laundry

There are washing machines in the laundry room for resident use. Laundry should only be done on days off and not during the regular training week. The machines use a lot of power so if you have a small load, please combine it with someone else or preferably hand wash. Remove items promptly from the machine once they are washed and hang on the line. Remove clothing from the line once it is dry so others can use the space. Please don't leave any laundry on the lines during the training week.

Hazardous Waste

Place all hazardous waste such as waste oil, paints, and toxic chemicals, in the storage containers behind the shop. Do not put these items into the trash or down the drain.

Vehicle Use

We encourage carpooling. If you need to go somewhere, ask if there is anything other people need from the stores, or if other residents would like to come along. The Center vehicle is available for

resident use during days off. Check with the Administrator before using it, and take someone with you. Be sure to refill the gas tank before you return.

Park your car facing out into the parking lot to facilitate fast evacuation in case of a sudden emergency.

Domestic Animals

Please do not bring pets to YZMC. The Abbot has two pet Labradors who live on the grounds. For this reason, please do not leave any belongings, especially shoes, outside as the dogs may take them. Please do not feed the dogs.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of a threatening wildfire requiring evacuation, the alarm bell situated between the Buddha Hall and Zendo will be struck loudly and continuously. Drop whatever you are doing and come quickly to the assembly point beside the bell to await instructions. Please check in dining hall or office for information on emergency procedure and fire extinguisher locations.

Kitchen Guidelines

The kitchen is a place of practice, no different from the zendo in this respect. Consequently, everything we do there should be done mindfully, being especially aware of issues that affect safety, health, and the efficient functioning of the kitchen. These guidelines are to help us remember these issues.

Hygiene & Safety:

- Please don't work in the kitchen if you have a contagious disease.
- Wash your hands before handling food and kitchen equipment that comes in contact with food.
- Don't pick food out of serving container or storage container with your bare hands or a utensil that has been in your mouth.
- When washing dishes:
 - Be sure to clean them thoroughly.
 - Keep the wash and rinse water relatively hot and clean.
- Leave dishes to air dry thoroughly before putting them away. Wet dishes can breed bacteria.
- Label all left-overs and put dates on the containers. Masking tape is available for this purpose.

Organization:

- Clean up after yourself completely, when using the kitchen.
- No alcohol to be stored or consumed in the kitchen.
- If you're working on a dish crew, don't leave until all the tasks are performed completely. The list of tasks for the various dish crews is posted in the kitchen.
- Be mindful of recycling materials whenever possible and how to dispose of them correctly. Recycling is out in a bin under the prep sink and then transferred to a blue trash can behind the kitchen. This is emptied on a weekly basis, as it is taken to the recycling center in Idyllwild.
- Everything has its place in the kitchen. If you don't know where something goes, please ask someone who knows. If such a person is not available, leave the item out somewhere conspicuous, rather than putting it somewhere it can't be found easily.
- The kitchen is off-limits to those not working in it, except at times when we all prepare our own meals (such as days off and some meals during interim period).
- Apart from the Tenzo and the assistant tenzo, no one is to sit in the kitchen or eat in the kitchen. Once you have prepared your food on days off, take it to the dining hall or outside.

If there are already more than 3 people in the kitchen, wait until later so you can prepare food or ask to share what is being prepared already.

- Don't take anything from the kitchen or pantry without checking with the Tenzo (except for food you may use in preparing your own meals).
- Some food needs to be saved for the preparation of planned meals. It's important that you not use this food, and the Tenzo will let you know how to identify it.
- Use older food first. The Tenzo will give you more information about how to identify the older food. Compare expiration dates, if necessary.
- If you want to open a package of food, be sure there isn't one already open.
- We have limited fridge space. Be efficient with how you store food (i.e. don't put a little bit of food in a huge container). Use containers that have tightly fitting lids.
- Make sure that you close fridge doors properly.

Information for the Tenzo:

- *Spices should be used in side dishes and not in main dishes, or at least a non-spicy alternative should be available. One juice drink maximum made per day.*
- *During zazen in the Buddha Hall, the kitchen staff must remain silent and refrain from making loud noise, which includes washing the dishes.*
- *The kitchen service should be performed before every meal served by the Tenzo and kitchen staff.*

I promise to comply with the above guidelines.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this part to YZMC office.

I promise to comply with the above guidelines.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____