

## Guidelines for New Trainees

A person accepted into the resident training program is provided with room and board by the Center. In order to maintain a strong training environment, all trainees are required to live and take their meals at the Center, unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the Head of Zendo.

If you are new to the Center, please note that alcohol and flesh foods are not permitted, and that, if you smoke, it should be done outside the building. Since we can't know in advance how well new trainees will adapt to the training schedule and guidelines, the Head of Zendo will check in with you after two or three days to confirm your continued stay, and you'll get a longer and more detailed set of staff guidelines then.

### Zendo

Attendance at all formal sittings as well as all ceremonies and other special activities is required. If you can't come, let the Head of Zendo know. Be in the zendo at least five minutes before the sitting starts (by the time the big bell is struck).

*The Stick* – At sittings outside of sesshin, the stick is generally used only at the request of the sitter as the monitor is walking through the zendo. However, a trainee in residence has the option of arranging with the monitors for them to use the stick at their discretion, as in sesshin, so that the sitter can be freed of signaling the monitor every time he or she would like to receive it. So talk with the Head of Zendo if you'd like to leave it up to the monitors to decide when to use the stick on you. (You can try this out, and always retract it later if you change your mind.)

*Dokusan* – Outside of sesshin, dokusan is generally offered three times a week: during the Monday and Thursday evening sittings and the Wednesday morning sitting. As a trainee, you can go to dokusan even if you're not a regular member of the Center.

*Kinhin* – At formal sittings everyone is required to join in for kinhin (unless their legs or feet are asleep). The exception is Tuesday evenings, when the rounds are only 25 minutes long. It's okay then to sit straight through for two or even all three rounds. If you do decide to sit through the kinhin, do so without changing your posture.

On mornings and evenings when there is no formal zazen (which includes periods when the Center is closed for break), staff and all resident trainees are urged to get in some sitting on their own. What the Polish pianist and statesman Ignacy Paderewski said about his need for daily practice applies to any meaningful practice of Zen: "If I don't practice for one day, I know it; if I don't practice for two days, the critics know it; if I don't practice for three days, the audience knows it."

## **Work**

The regular Zen Center work schedule is Tuesday through Saturday, from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm with a lunch break from 12:30 to 1:30. Workdays, except Tuesdays and Saturdays, end with a short chanting service in the zendo at 3:30.

If for some reason you are not able to come to work, please get word to your supervisor and the Head of Zendo without delay.

During work there should be no unnecessary talking, and no whistling, humming or singing, as this is distracting to others and incompatible with doing your work in an alert, focused, and attentive manner.

## **Hours**

Trainees are required to sleep at the Zen Center. Evening curfew for new trainees is 10:30, except on Saturday and Sunday when it is 11:30. Please either be in bed with the lights out or sitting in the zendo. You may stay up to do zazen as late as you wish, but you must be on time for the morning sitting the next day.

Don't use the showers above the zendo (Baths 4 and 5) before morning sittings.

Silence is observed in the staff kitchen after 6 p.m. on nights when there is a formal sitting. One may get a light snack (such as a drink or a piece of bread or fruit) soon after 9 p.m., but not anything more substantial – this applies to all nights of the week.

## **Housing and Laundry**

The dormitories should be kept clean and orderly at all times, with bedding neatly arranged and clothing put away when not in use. Trainees are responsible for cleaning and vacuuming the dormitories, including the bathroom and foyer.

Do not eat food in the dormitories.

The Center's laundry facilities may NOT be used until you have checked with the Head Housekeeper regarding use of the machines, times for doing laundry, etc. Please launder your own sheets and towels if you stay for more than a week.

**WARNING:** If you have driven to the Center, keep your car locked at all times and be sure not to leave any items visible from outside. This is an invitation for thieves to break in.