

Please adhere to the following guidelines while attending practice with the Original Mind Zen Sangha

Etiquette

The Dharma room is the central location of meditation practice. It is important that all students and visitors treat this space with the utmost respect. Divisive and offensive speech and behavior are not permitted. All attendants should strive to be respectful, patient, and courteous while in the Dharma room. Please avoid wearing distracting or inappropriate clothing; this includes articles that are physically revealing or contain explicit or offensive content.

Students are expected to engage seated meditation wholeheartedly, with their entire bodies and minds. This means sitting as still as possible and remaining silent. By all means, if you are uncomfortable or need to leave the Dharma room due to an emergency, feel free to adjust your position or to step out of the room entirely. Safety is always our highest priority.

Visitors are expected to leave \$5 in the hallway offering bowl, which goes directly to our host location.

Entering the Dharma Room

Before you enter the Dharma room, please remove your shoes or sandals. Stop at the doorway, place your hands together above your heart and bow. This shows respect to the Dharma room, the Buddha's teachings, fellow attendants, and the teacher.

Since our space at Fellowship in Prayer is limited, and the Dharma room is the largest room, members may enter the room before practice. Feel free to talk to others until formal practice begins; then please observe silence.

Meeting with the Teacher

Interviews are a wonderful opportunity to engage the Buddhadharma on a one-on-one basis with the teacher. In Zen, the teacher represents a direct line of Dharmic succession to the historical Buddha himself.

When entering the interview room, open the door, bow as you did when entering the Dharma room, enter, and close the door behind you. Sit on the cushion and mat opposite the teacher. The teacher will begin the conversation with an introduction or general query. Feel free to ask any questions you may have about Zen, Buddhism, practice, etc. Please respect the teacher and his time, and be aware that other students are waiting, often with pressing spiritual and/or personal matters.

When the interview is over, stand up, bow, walk to the door, turn to face the teacher, bow one more time, and then open the door and return to your cushion downstairs.

Visitors are offered three interviews before they are expected to give back to the Sangha by becoming a member (see below).

Students and OMZS Membership

In addition to adhering to all of the above, serious practitioners should read and consider the following:

Becoming a Student

Visitors are offered three interviews before they are expected to give back to the Sangha by becoming an official member. If, after the third interview, practitioners would like to continue meeting with the teacher, they should formally request to become the teacher's student and member of the Sangha.

This is an important part of spiritual practice in that it encourages humility, demonstrates personal commitment and purpose, and lastly, it fosters sincerity on the part of the student.

Practitioners must be willing to

1. attend Zen practice regularly.
2. make a financial or service-based commitment to the sangha (see below).
3. uphold a lifestyle consistent with Buddhist values.
4. dedicate themselves to sincere Zen practice.

Role of the Student

Students are expected to carry themselves with the utmost dignity, the nobility befitting those who walk the Buddhist Path. They should respect themselves, the Sangha, and the teacher. This applies to conduct in the Dharma and interview rooms, as well as at work, home, and even on the Internet.

Dana (Generosity)

The Dharma is free but rent, electricity, and heating are not. All OMZS students are expected to contribute a minimum of \$20 per month to help pay expenses. Payment may be given directly to the teacher, placed inside of the offering bowl, or paid at the OMZS Paypal account.

Funds are used to pay for insurance, candles, incense, cushions and mats, and to repay our host location for its generosity in allowing us to meet in their space.

If you cannot afford dues, please speak to the teacher about making other arrangements, such as donating time towards volunteer projects, in order to satisfy this requirement.

Additionally, students are encouraged to make donations in the offering bowl. Remember, the first Mahayana virtue is *dana*, generosity. If you value the Buddhadharma, please support it.

Kong-an Study

Only those who have declared their intent to become official sangha members and students of the teacher may engage in kong-an study. In addition to seated meditation, kong-ans represent the lifeblood of OMZS. Kong-ans, in the form of interactions between ancient Zen Masters and their students called “cases,” are distillations of the Dharma. They represent the deepest insights into reality, the depth and breadth of Buddhist wisdom. When students successfully answer a kong-an, their mind, the teacher’s mind, and all of the Buddhist ancestors’ minds are in accord.

Taking the Precepts

The Buddha established an ethical code of conduct, called the Precepts, for students to embody the Buddhadharma. The Precepts represent practical ways for us to live in accordance with the Buddha’s teachings. While they are not commandments strictly to be adhered to, the Precepts should be held in the highest regard, as they express the Buddhadharma in action.

Students should deeply consider their commitment to walking the Buddhist Path before asking their teacher to transmit the Precepts to them, as they are a precious gift bestowed by the Buddha and Zen teacher.

Generally speaking, the Precepts may be divided into three categories:

Lay Precepts

The First Precept: I vow to support all living creatures and to refrain from killing.

The Second Precept: I vow to respect the property of others and to refrain from stealing.

The Third Precept: I vow to regard all beings with respect and dignity and to refrain from objectifying others.

The Fourth Precept: I vow to be truthful and to refrain from lying.

The Fifth Precept: I vow to maintain a clear mind and to refrain from harming myself or others with intoxication.

Novice Precepts
(which include the first five)

The Sixth Precept: I vow to be kind and encouraging with my words and actions, and to refrain from discouraging myself or others.

The Seventh Precept: I vow to speak honestly and critically about myself, and to refrain from being boastful and self-centered.

The Eighth Precept: I vow to be generous, to be grateful for what I have, and to refrain from yearning for things that do not belong to me.

The Ninth Precept: I vow to promote harmony and to refrain from acting in anger or hatred.

The Tenth Precept: I vow to affirm and uphold the three jewels—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

The 58 Bodhisattva Precepts
(which include the first 10)

11. I vow to respect my teachers and friends in the Dharma.

12. I vow to abstain from entering into intoxicating situations or consuming substances intended to distract from this moment.

13. I vow to be conscious of what I consume, the way in which it was produced, and what harm might result from my consuming it. I vow to bring awareness to the impact of what I ingest and to take care not to harm myself or any other beings in the process.

14. I vow to maintain the integrity and sanctity of the teacher-to-student relationship by never entering into a sexual or otherwise inappropriate relationship, which would violate the trust of the student or teacher, as well as that of the entire sangha.

15. I vow to encourage others to view past mistakes as learning opportunities that enable them to make better choices in the future.

16. I vow to study the Dharma whenever possible and to make offerings to visiting teachers who have come to share the Dharma.

17. I vow to attend Dharma talks and events that will open my heart and mind, thus enabling my practice to grow stronger and allowing me to be of better service to others.

18. I vow not to divide the Dharma into separate vehicles or doctrines by placing one classification as higher or better than another.

19. I vow to give care to the sick and the needy.

20. I vow to abstain from the storing of weapons used to intentionally take away life.

21. I vow to abstain from serving as an emissary of the military, except in non-violent roles such as chaplaincy, medical positions, and other roles that do not directly engage in the violent expression of military service.

22. *I vow not to discriminate against Dharma teachers based on their appearance, income, race, sexuality, gender, or other superficial reasons.*
23. *I vow to communicate in a way that is true, accurate, and helpful, and to refrain from speech meant to plant seeds of doubt, misinformation, or gossip.*
24. *I vow to support life by behaving in a way that respects and protects the environment, as well as all beings, and to refrain from activities that may cause harm.*
25. *I vow to teach the Dharma in a manner that inspires awakening and well-being for myself and others.*
26. *I vow to fully understand the Dharma so that I may teach it in a manner that is true, accurate, and helpful.*
27. *I vow to share the Dharma as freely as I have received it, with no personal gain as my motive.*
28. *I vow to serve others with commitment, kindness, and integrity.*
29. *I vow to communicate in a direct and compassionate manner that promotes harmony, and to refrain from speech that contains hidden or implied messages meant to cause harm or unhappiness.*
30. *I vow to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and the causes of suffering.*
31. *I vow to treat others with respect and to refrain from behaving in a manner that violates, harms, or imposes revenge on others.*
32. *I vow to conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the Dharma, to remain humble and accessible, and to refrain from arrogant or self-important behavior.*
33. *I vow to teach the Dharma with generosity and an open heart.*
34. *I vow to put the teachings of the Buddhadharma into practice in my everyday life and to teach others how to do the same.*
35. *I vow to be a Sangha member who acts with integrity and accountability.*
36. *I vow to share all offerings made to the Dharma or the Sangha.*
37. *I vow to give equal invitations to all others and to refrain from accepting invitations that exclude anyone based on gender, race, religion, physical condition, age, or sexual orientation.*
38. *I vow to share the Dharma with all people equally, regardless of gender, race, religion, physical condition, or sexual orientation.*
39. *I vow to conduct my livelihood in a way that is helpful to myself and others, and to refrain from business practices that limit the freedom or happiness of others.*
40. *I vow to give all Sangha members equal consideration and respect, and to refrain from engaging in any actions that might cause division or conflict.*
41. *I vow to treat all beings with the same amount of respect as I do fellow Sangha members, and to care for the world and all objects as though they were sacred Dharma artifacts.*
42. *I vow to extend loving-kindness indiscriminately to all sentient beings and to greet all experiences with openness, curiosity, and acceptance.*
43. *I vow to approach all beings with respect and dignity, and to refrain from objectifying others.*
44. *I vow to keep a clear and open mind.*
45. *I vow to make great vows to save all sentient beings.*
46. *I vow to make and maintain firm resolutions.*

- 47. I vow to keep myself safe whenever possible and to refrain from putting myself or others in environments where harm is likely.*
- 48. I vow to respect all members of the Sangha equally.*
- 49. I vow to cultivate wisdom and good judgment.*
- 50. I vow not to unfairly discriminate against others when conferring the Precepts.*
- 51. I vow equanimity in teaching the Dharma, and not to enter into teaching arrangements for the sake of profit.*
- 52. I vow to offer the Precepts only to those who wish to take them with a sincere and open heart.*
- 53. I vow to consistently reflect upon these Precepts and to learn from my mistakes when I fall short of upholding them.*
- 54. I vow to value the sutras and the ethical guidelines set forth by the Buddha.*
- 55. I vow to teach and serve all sentient beings in ways that are appropriate for them (sentient beings).*
- 56. I vow to teach the Dharma in ways that are helpful and to refrain from teaching in ways that cause harm.*
- 57. I vow to support the Dharma in my daily life.*
- 58. I vow to keep the Dharma fresh, alive, and vibrant, and to refrain from any actions that might cause its destruction.*