

Dharma Teacher Job Description

Introduction

We dedicate this booklet to Zen Master Seung Sahn. It is a tribute to his teaching, a tribute to his relentless efforts to help us to see the way and consequently to help others. I can see him now, straightening the cushions, correcting our chanting, encouraging us to go on as many retreats as possible. How many times did I hear him shout, “Time will not wait for you! Nobody guarantees your life!”

He also always said this practice is “not only for me.” Learning the forms, attending retreats, staying in close contact with your guiding teacher are the foundations of our practice. Let us never assume we already understand this. I trust we will all continue to bow very deeply to Zen Master Seung Sahn’s memory and to his instructions.

It is not a coincidence that the sutras and other suggested readings are in the last section. This rich tradition insists on live speech, direct understanding: “A special transmission outside the sutras.” A slow cultivation and understanding of the teachings of past teachers can be skillfully used to touch the hearts and minds of our wide Sangha.

This manual is offered to you. Use it well. Know when to open it, know when to close it.

Try, try, try, for ten thousand years, non-stop.

*Zen Master Soeng Hyang
School Zen Master*

On the Relationship to Our Tradition

- Has a clear commitment to Zen Master Seung Sahn’s teaching as practiced in the Kwan Um School of Zen
- Understands the value and application of all Kwan Um School of Zen practice forms
- Has a clear and ongoing relationship with his/her guiding teacher and Zen Center
- Is dedicated to sincere practice and helping others to practice
- Maintains a clear financial relationship with their Zen Center and the Kwan Um School of Zen

- Represents the Zen Center and the Kwan Um School of Zen with integrity to the local community



On Practice

- Completes dharma teacher training program and continues with “ongoing education” and training
- Is involved with regular ongoing daily/weekly practice as well as retreats in home Zen Center under the guidance of guiding teacher
- Performs various dharma room jobs, and is available for Zen Center staff positions
- Attends ceremonies
- Attends (biannual) dharma teacher meetings
- Understands that we never finish our training

Teaching Responsibilities at the Zen Center

(As Assigned by Guiding Teacher)

- Gives meditation instruction
- Gives (introductory) dharma talks
- Instructs others in dharma room forms (bowing, moktak, bell, etc.)
- Contributes to special workshops
- Conducts various ceremonies (weddings, funerals, etc.)
- Is a (silent) example to others in the dharma room

General Considerations and Responsibilities

- Observes and follows the ten precepts
- Contributes to a positive and harmonious atmosphere at the Zen Center
- Does together action
- Approaches practice and teaching responsibilities with humility and patience
- Understands and appreciates the importance of one’s public behavior as it affects the Zen Center’s relationship with the extended community
- When teaching outside of the Zen Center, consults with the guiding teacher
- Because “dharma teacher” has different meanings in different Buddhist traditions, appreciates this when interacting with people from other schools
- Accepts and heeds advice and direction from guiding teacher
- Follows temple rules
- Supports the Zen Center with time and money as is possible

Dharma Teacher in Training: Training Requirements

- Establishes a daily practice and attends the Zen Center regularly
- Attends at least four Yong Maeng Jong Jin retreats per year for a minimum of two years
- Establishes and maintains a clear relationship with Zen Center guiding teacher
- Consults the Dharma Mirror and experienced dharma teachers for pointers on forms and protocol



- Learns all dharma room practice forms including:
 - Bowing
 - Regular chanting (memorize if possible)
 - Morning bell chant (memorize if possible)
 - Meal form
 - Sitting meditation
 - Walking meditation
 - Special chanting
 - Evening bell (memorize if possible)
 - Giving meditation instruction
 - Moktak master (without the book) and the five-minute moktak
 - Walking with the stick (kyosaku)
 - Leading sitting (hitting chugpi)
 - Giving introductory dharma talks
- Well versed in Zen Master Seung Sahn's books:
 - Dropping Ashes on the Buddha
 - Only Don't Know
 - Compass of Zen
 - The Whole World is a Single Flower

Ongoing Continuing Education for Dharma Teacher and SDT

- Versed in basic Buddhist teachings on:
 - Dependant Origination
 - Four Noble Truths
 - Eight Fold Path
 - Ten Precepts
 - Six Paramitas
 - Five Desires
 - Three Poisons
 - The concepts of: interpenetration, emptiness, mind only
 - Basic content and origins of our chants
 - Names and characteristics of Bodhisattvas common to our tradition

- Familiar with life stories and teaching of:
 - Shakyamuni Buddha
 - Bodhidharma
 - Hui Neng
 - Lin Chi
 - Kyong Ho
 - Man Gong
 - Ko Bong
 - Seung Sahn



- Other Buddhist stories to be used in dharma talks etc.
- Familiar with:
 - Heart sutra
 - Diamond sutra
 - Platform sutra
 - Mu Mun Kwan
 - Blue Cliff Record
- Learn how to conduct ceremonies:
 - Wedding
 - Funeral
 - Memorial
- Learn about traditional iconography:
 - Buddha statues
 - Bodhisattva statues
 - Altar Paintings (Taeng Hwa)
 - Altar items
- Learn about our Kwan Um Zen tradition and its unique approach to teaching and practice. Be able to discuss the significant differences between our School's teaching style and Japanese Soto and Rinzai Zen, and Vipassana.

*A suggested reading list is available at
www.kwanumzen.com/misc/readinglist.html*