

## **Karenji Code**

### **Zen Center of New York City - Fire Lotus Temple**

**(Revised 4/16/21)**

For centuries, Zen training has been conducted within the framework of a distinctive monastic style that creates a conducive container for dharma study, meditation, and the actualization of the teachings in daily life. Master Pai-chang created the Zen monastic code that has shaped Zen training since Tang dynasty China. This model is still relevant to the formation of our practice here at Karenji, Fire Lotus Temple. All students and Temple residents are expected to practice and abide by these guidelines.

**DEPARTMENT** - The Temple is a training center. The general prevailing attitude is one of introspection and silence. Support your own practice as well as that of others by making the atmosphere in the Temple one of contemplation, study, and meditation.

**SERVING** - Part of residency at Karenji is service to others: the teachers, seniors, the sangha, and particularly to guests and visitors. Your practice as a resident is to assist in making guests and visitors feel welcome and comfortable. Residents of the Temple are householders together and serve each other and the sangha in part by tending to the daily chores and maintaining the space together.

**ROOMS** - Rooms are simply furnished and to be kept neat and clean. Please use headphones when listening or watching something so as not to disturb others. Use only UL approved extension cords. No alteration of the building or changes to any room should be made. Our living space reflects the condition of our personal practice. Learn to live simply and mindfully.

**DRESS** - Zazen robes will be made available for all residents and this is to be worn during all zendo activities and ceremonies. Dress should be modest in living together with an attitude of respect, rather than to call attention to yourself.

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** - Alcohol and recreational drugs are not permitted on Temple property at all and are not to be consumed at any time during the scheduled training week.

If you choose to use alcohol on off days please do so in moderation and do not come back to the Temple under the influence.

**PETS** – No pets are to be brought to the Temple, although there may be a Temple cat.

**COMING AND GOING** - The Temple's daily schedule informs the day's routine for all residents who have made a commitment to daily zazen, weekly caretaking, attending the Sunday program, and attending each month's zazenkai. In the evening at 9:00 pm we go into silence.

There will be a daily schedule for the non- resident sangha. Residents are required to attend some Temple events and should take responsibility for being clear about this commitment.

**CARETAKING** - Residents that remain in the building for work are encouraged to do at least an hour of caretaking practice for the buildings and grounds that provide shelter, nourishment, and support our practice. Caretaking is conducted in silence, mindfulness, and reverence; this quality of attention can also inform our work in the world and our interactions with others.

**ILLNESS** - Inform the teacher and other residents if you are ill and if a scheduled event will need to be missed. Residents who are sick should remain in their rooms unless other arrangements have been made, and their needs will be taken care of. Serious illness should be referred to a medical practitioner. Residents suffering from extended or repeated illnesses need to discuss their situation with the teacher or staff person to evaluate whether remaining in residence is appropriate and beneficial to the harmony of residency.

**RELATIONSHIPS** - Residential training at Karenji requires single-minded attention. It is critical that each person feels they are part of a residential community with clear boundaries and can be free of concerns about sexual advances. Residents are to be mindful of training as an introspective and deeply spiritual way of life. In this spirit all residents are asked to be mindful of not creating a sexualized environment or of falling into intentional or unwitting sexual harassment. Be aware of not touching others in a way that is unwelcome to them and mindful that the line between joking and sexual harassment is often a fine one. Residents should not engage pornography on-line on the temple property. Be mature and sensitive in dealing with the diversity of sexuality. If you experience unwanted sexual attention and do not feel comfortable or able to deal with it directly please speak with the teacher or a member of the Ethics Committee (see guidelines on line) You may also consult with a member of the MRO Guardian Council at the Monastery; 845-688-2228 or [zmmtrain@dharm.net](mailto:zmmtrain@dharm.net)

**COMMITMENT** - Commitment and agreement form the foundation of both social responsibility and sangha life. We depend on each other to make the situation work. Those who are entering residency need to be clear on their agreements and fulfill their commitments. This strengthens both our personal lives and the life of the sangha. All resident practitioners need to clearly understand their agreements while living in the Temple and be responsible for their fulfillment. Each resident is encouraged to seek guidance from one of the Teachers or Council members when their commitment is being tested or feels unclear.

**BEING ASKED TO STEP OUT OF RESIDENCY** – If the harmony of the community is being jeopardized a person may be asked to leave immediately by the Training Staff, Ethics Committee or Teacher.

**PRECEPTS** - The Sixteen Buddhist Precepts form the basis of ethical conduct and moral commitment in all aspects of training at Karenji, whether or not the practitioner has formally received the precepts or not.

LIVING IN A PLACE OF PRACTICE - Living at the Temple is a unique experience in the midst of a bustling city with many events and possible distractions. As a place of refuge, living here requires a healthy degree of stability and self-motivation because residents may be without a teacher's presence on a daily basis. A person needs to clearly understand their role in training to help cultivate a practice environment with the other committed householders.

We live in a period of great shifts and conflicts on personal and international levels. This temple and the guidelines exist to provide a context within which we may practice our lives in peace and harmony with each other, our environment, and the community that contains us. It can only work if there is practice, mindfulness, honesty and good communications. Each resident of the Temple needs to maintain these agreements and commitments for the duration of their residency.

Please strengthen your own practice as well as the sangha's by practicing with a most sincere heart all of these guidelines and communicating clearly while in residency.

Thank you,

Jody Hojin Kimmel, Sensei; Teacher  
Patrick Yunen Kelly, Senior Staff Person  
Geoffrey Shugen Arnold, Roshi