

## DAIYUZENJI POLICY ON TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

It is recognized that members of the Daiyuzenji community, as in any community, may at times decide to initiate personal friendships or romantic relationships with one another.

Because of the potential power differential that may exist between Zen teachers and students<sup>1</sup>, however, it must be acknowledged that certain relationship pairings can present unique challenges, and therefore require the utmost care and sensitivity. This is in order to ensure that neither the two parties nor the harmony of the Daiyuzenji community are harmed. At the same time, we acknowledge examples of such relationships that are healthy and enriching, including teachers and students who have successfully married or established long-term friendships grounded in their mutual commitment to Zen practice.

Judging relationships of any kind to be neither “right” or “wrong”, therefore, Daiyuzenji has instituted the following policy to protect all persons involved:

1. Persons who have received a precept enjoining celibacy are expected to keep it. If they are unable to do so, they are expected to openly relinquish that precept prior to engaging in any act which would be in violation of it.
2. Visitors to Daiyuzenji are expected to refrain from sexual activity or romantic display, regardless of their personal vows or relationship status, while on the premises. Infractions of precepts or the rules for visitors are to be referred to the Daiyuzenji abbot for examination and appropriate action.
3. Zen students who are new to Zen practice are not suitable candidates for romantic relationship with any teacher. “New” here is defined as having been a Zen trainee in the Daiyuzenji community for less than one year.
4. Should a Daiyuzenji Zen teacher and a member of the community who is not his/her formal student<sup>2</sup> wish to initiate a romantic relationship, they must first notify the president and secretary of the Daiyuzenji board of their intention. Both parties will be reminded by these board members of the Daiyuzenji harassment policy and its grievance procedures.
5. Should a Daiyuzenji Zen teacher and a member of the community who is his/her formal student wish to initiate a romantic relationship, they must first notify the president and secretary of the Daiyuzenji board of their intention. Both parties will be reminded by these board members of the Daiyuzenji harassment policy and its grievance procedures. The formal teacher-student relationship is then to be suspended for a three-month period of reflection, following which both parties will re-evaluate the situation and report again to the board president and secretary. These board members will examine the situation, and make recommendations as they deem appropriate.

Afterward, for as long as the romantic relationship continues, both parties are requested to frequently discuss and re-evaluate their relationship as teacher and student, and to maintain good communication with the board president and secretary regarding any issues that may arise. Should the couple marry, or should they demonstrate over a reasonable period of time the healthy and stable nature of their relationship, the board will cease to have any role in monitoring them.

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1 “Teacher” at Daiyuzenji refers to persons who have received Rinzai Zen dharma transmission (*inka shomei*), either ordained (*Roshi*) or lay (*Rokoji*); it also refers to any other person designated by the Daiyuzenji abbot to have a formal instructional role. “Student”, for the purposes of this policy, refers to any person participating in Zen practice at Daiyuzenji or at a Daiyuzenji-sponsored event.

2 A “formal student” is a person who has performed the shoken *ceremony* by which commitment is made to the practice of Zen under the personal guidance of a particular *Roshi*. Teachers who are not *Roshi* do not have or take formal students.