

# **Zen River Sangha**

## **Procedures for the Reconciliation of Grievances**

### **Reporting of Grievances**

This procedure for the reporting, investigating, and adjudicating of grievances is intended to manifest our bodhisattva path and to provide an alternative to unskillful responses to conflict such as justification or rationalization, turning away, encouraging guilt or shame, invalidating or minimizing and assigning blame.

Whenever possible, conflicts should be resolved informally and directly by the parties involved. If this does not seem to be the best course of action, the parties are encouraged to invite counsel and mediation from a Zen River Sangha teacher or peer to help resolve the conflict.

In the event of a conflict that cannot be resolved thusly or a grievance that is urgent, concerns egregious behavior, or involves the conduct of one or more Zen River Sangha teachers, a formal grievance may be submitted to the Board of Directors. This grievance will remain confidential to the Board unless disclosure is mandated by local, state or federal law.

This may be done in writing to any teacher or member of the Board of Directors and must contain the following:

- A clear statement that a formal grievance is being filed.
- The name of the person filing the grievance.
- The name of the person or persons whose behavior the grievance concerns.
- A description of the alleged behavior sufficient in detail to allow a decision as to the appropriateness of adjudicating the complaint as a formal grievance, including any attempts made to informally resolve the conflict.
- A general statement about the resolution desired.

The Board of Directors will then convene within thirty days to hear the relevant details of the grievance directly, to investigate as needed, speak to all parties involved and to come to a decision regarding their findings and their recommendations for compassionate action. The person submitting the grievance and the person against whom the grievance has been filed may bring others with them for support to any meetings with the Board.

As long as all parties remain engaged in the process of reconciliation, the Board of Directors will continue to support all mediation and discussion necessary for the resolution of the grievance.

Unless the party filing the grievance makes a specific and reasonable request for maintained complete confidentiality, the Board of Directors will include in their decisions the level of public discussion and disclosure that the investigation and resulting actions merit.

### **Compassionate Action**

Compassionate Action recommended by the Board of Directors or the Ethics and Grievance committee are limited only by the legal authority of Zen River Sangha and may include:

- A finding of no ethical breach while acknowledging the existence of a concern that requires further resolution
- A recommendation for mediated resolution of the matter
- An administrative decision or action or reversal of a standing administrative decision or action
- The amendment of an existing Zen River Sangha policy or procedure or the adoption of a new policy or procedure
- A private or mediated apology
- A public apology to the aggrieved party or the sangha as a whole
- Recommendation that a formal Hollow Bones Truth and Reconciliation Ritual be conducted
- Reparations as appropriate and possible
- A series of follow-up meetings on the topic with a teacher, priest, or Roshi from Zen River Sangha or the larger Hollow Bones Sangha
- Referral to the Hollow Bones Truth, Ethics, and Reconciliation Council (TEAR) process
- A request that a party consider outside psychological therapy or participation in a recovery program or process
- Public disclosure of the grievance, findings, actions, and/or public censure
- Period of probation or absence with terms set as appropriate
- Suspension of certain responsibilities or positions with terms set as appropriate
- Suspension from Zen River Sangha for a period of time with terms set as appropriate and conditions to be fulfilled for re-integration
- Expulsion from Zen River Sangha
- A finding of unethical behavior with no specific recommendations for necessary compassionate action, to be forwarded to the appropriate committee, board, teacher, abbot, or sangha for further recommendations and action

### **Requests for Amendment**

Any sangha members may at any time request amendment to this document. The request must be made in writing to one or more members of the Board of Directors. If the request is not found to

require immediate action, the amendment will be added for consideration to the agenda of the next Board of Directors meeting.