

## Living in a Zen Center

### Welcome to the Gateless Gate Zen Center

Congratulations on your decision to become a resident of the Gateless Gate Zen Center (GGZC). We hope that your time here will be fulfilling and full of opportunity to practice together with the Sangha. This manual is designed to give you an overview of how the residential program works at GGZC, and hopefully, answer some of your questions about our organization.

Living in a Zen Center is a great undertaking and should not be entered into lightly. It requires a substantial commitment of time and energy to the practice (as it is done in Kwan Um School of Zen), and to the community, both residential and non-residential. Make sure you realize the depth of this commitment before you decide to move in. If you aren't sure what living in the Zen Center means, but would like to find out, we encourage you to come to practice often, or even to stay as a guest for a period of 1-4 weeks to familiarize yourself with the rhythm of life here.

Application for residency consists of several components: the completion of at least two two-day retreats in the Kwan Um School of Zen, and an interview with the Abbot and/or one of the Guiding Teachers. Residents are selected on the basis of their ability to make a significant commitment of time and energy to formal practice, and to contribute constructively to the residential community. All new residents are subject to a three month trial period, at which time their residency is re-examined.

Zen Master Seung Sahn has encouraged his students to live together in Zen Centers where they can derive strength and support from each other's continuing practice. The regular schedule of practicing, eating, and working together acts as a backdrop for seeing our karma appear and disappear.

We use the analogy of washing potatoes together in a pot of water. As the potatoes bump into one another, they clean each other more quickly than if each was cleaned one at a time.

In a Zen Center, we see clearly how our opinions create problems by coming between us and the situations in which we find ourselves. When we let go of these opinions, it is possible to live our everyday lives with clarity and harmony. As we learn to cooperate, to see clearly, and to accept people and situations as they are, our minds become strong and wide. Then it becomes possible to act for other people with no trace of ourselves.

The forms are designed to help us see our opinions, and our minds that don't pay attention, in each situation that we find ourselves. If we keep a mind that wishes to leave no trace of our passage, these forms fall easily into place.

If you have any questions about practice, talk to the Head Dharma Teacher. If you have serious questions about practice or about your relationship to this community, talk to the Abbot or Guiding Teachers.

#### **We start every day with the following "Four Great Vows":**

Sentient beings are numberless, we vow to save them all,  
Delusions are endless, we vow to cut through them all.  
The teachings are infinite, we vow to learn them all,  
The Buddha way is inconceivable, we vow to attain it.

These vows constitute the direction of GGZC. They are the underlying foundation for why we do everything we do, and for why we live and practice together.

## FOUNDING ZEN MASTER SEUNG SAHN

Zen Master Seung Sahn (Dae Soen Sa Nim) was born in 1927, near Pyongyang, now the capitol of North Korea. After World War II, he went to the mountains for a one hundred day solo retreat. Later he received dharma transmission from Zen Master Ko Bong. Afterwards he worked to reorganize the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism while serving as abbot of several temples in Korea. He also spent several years in Japan, founding temples and teaching Zen.

In 1972, Seung Sahn came to the United States. While working in a Laundromat in Providence, Rhode Island, he met some students from Brown University who would come to ask him questions about life and Zen practice. The Providence Zen Center grew out of this, then the Gateless Gate Zen Center, and the entire Kwan Um School of Zen. Today over seventy centers and sitting groups are part of the Kwan Um Zen School, located across the world. Zen Master Seung Sahn, founder of the international Kwan Um School of Zen, died on November 30, 2004, at Hwa Gye Sah temple in Seoul, Korea. He died peacefully, surrounded by his students. He was 77.

In June 2004, he had received the title “Great Master” from the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism, in appreciation for his lifetime of teaching. This is the highest honor the order confers.

Zen Master Seung Sahn has published several books, including Dropping Ashes on the Buddha, The Whole World Is A Single Flower, and The Compass of Zen. Wanting Enlightenment Is A Big Mistake has been published posthumously. He led many Zen retreats at the Abbey of Gethsemani, the Trappist monastery in Kentucky, and with other Christian groups.

### Zen Center History and Hierarchy

Gateless Gate Zen Center was incorporated in the State of Florida as a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, and was formed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a public place of practice in accordance with the teachings of Zen Master Seung Sahn. In keeping with the tradition of the Kwan Um School of Zen, the major levels of hierarchy are established by teaching position:

- Founding Zen Master, Seung Sahn
- Zen Masters
- Ji Do Poep Sa Nims
- Monks and Nuns
- Bodhisattva priests
- Senior dharma teachers
- Dharma teachers
- Dharma teachers in training
- Students who have taken five precepts
- Other residents in order of length of residency
- Non-resident members

This is consistent with all the other Zen Centers in the Kwan Um School of Zen, and applies to all matters of teaching and practice at GGZC. In terms of administrative decisions, the GGZC Directors vote with input from house members and the extended community. Input is received at weekly house meetings, long house meetings, and extended community meetings.

We ask that residents make a commitment to practice with us and to support practice in our community. This means abiding by the practice agreement, including coming to interviews and participating in

retreats. It also means respecting and cooperating with each other, and with teachers and staff. GGZC has always maintained a very open attitude towards members' individual spiritual paths, and we encourage people to feel free to practice with and learn from other schools or teachers. However, GGZC, as a community, needs the support of its resident-members with regard to practice just as much as it needs their support in the day-to-day cooperative work of running the house. This means attendance at 4 retreats (Yong Maeng Jong Jin, YMJJ) per year at GGZC or another Kwan Um School Zen center, as well as a minimum of 2 interviews with the GGZC Abbot each month. In addition it is expected that the individual will interview with visiting Zen Masters and guiding teachers.

The Gateless Gate Zen Center has a strong focus on education. All residents who do not have a professional license or an AA degree at a minimum are required to be enrolled and actively in pursuit of such a standing. When possible, the center will provide tuition assistance. A formal program of tuition is yet to be formalized.

Modification of procedures for (1) admission for residence and (2) transition in residence will be made at the sole discretion of the Abbot. Individuals who are accepted for residence without meeting the two required YMJJs criteria are required to reside in transitional rooms until their residence status is reviewed. Those individuals requiring financial assistance to meet the residence requirements and living in transitional rooms must have their status continually reviewed by the Abbot.

Zen Center duties and responsibilities listed in the Dharma Mirror are full applicable to the Gateless Gate Zen Center unless other stipulated by the abbot of the Gateless Gate. The single modification being the kitchen master reports to and coordinates with the Director.

## Residential Practice - Daily Practice Schedule

### Morning Practice:

Mon. through Saturday:

4:45 Wake up bell  
 5:10 5 min. moktak  
 5:15 4 Great Vows & 108 Prostrations  
       5:30 Wed. only 5 min. moktak  
       5:35 Wed. only Weekly Housemeeting for Residents only  
 5:55 5 min. moktak (not on Wed.)  
 6:00 Chanting (not on Wed.)  
 6:30 Sitting (not on Wed.)

### Sunday morning:

9:00 – 11:00 sitting and walking meditation

### Other practice:

- \* Interview with Bodhisattva Teacher or the guiding teacher Tuesday evening & Friday Morning
- \* Mandatory weekly house meeting **Wed at 0530 AM**
- \* weekly community work period Saturday Morning 0830
- \* YMJJ

### Evening Practice:

Monday evenings only:

6:25 – 5 min. moktak  
 6:30 - Intro. to chanting & chanting  
 7:00 – intro. To sitting & walking  
 7:30 – Dharma Talk & 4 Great Vows

Tuesday through Saturday evenings:

6:25 5 min. moktak  
 6:30 Chanting  
 7:00 Sitting  
 7:25 walking  
 7:35 Sitting  
 8:00 4 Great Vows

**Long Sit** on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of each month from Saturday Noon until 9PM and Sunday from 8AM until Noon. Come in when you can during walking meditation, go as you must, and return again when you can...

12:00 – 12:30	sitting meditation	8:00 – 8:30	sitting meditation
12:30 - 12:40	walking meditation	8:30 – 8:40	walking
12:40 - 1:10	sitting	8:40 – 9:10	sitting
1:10 - 1:20	walking	9:10 – 9:20	walking
1:20 - 1:50	sitting	9:20 – 9:50	sitting
1:50 – 2:00	walking	9:50 – 10:10	walking in gardens*
2:00 - 2:30	sitting	10:10 – 10:40	sitting
2:30 – 2:40	walking	10:40 – 10:50	walking
2:40 – 3:10	sitting	10:50 – 11:20	sitting
3:10 – 3:50	walking meditation in gardens*	11:20 – 11:30	walking
3:50 – 4:20	sitting	11:30 - 12:00	sitting & 4 Great Vows
4:20 – 4:30	walking		
4:30 – 5:00	sitting		
5:00 - 6:30	informal, vegetarian dinner by request		
6:30 – 7:00	chanting		
7:00 - 7:30	sitting		
7:30 – 7:40	walking		
7:40 – 8:10	sitting		
8:10 – 8:20	walking		
8:20 – 8:50	sitting		
8:50 – 9:00	2 chants & 4 Great Vows		

\* weather permitting  
 in case of bad weather, sitting and walking continues on a 30/10 schedule

## Practice Forms

There is a wake up bell. The person, designated to lead bows at 5:15 AM, will ring the bell in the Dharma Room at 1208 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street and will sound the 5 minute moktak at 5:10 AM in the living room at 1208 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Someone else will be designated to ring a bell and sound a moktak inside 1130 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street at 5 AM and 5:10 AM.

From the wake up bell until the end of morning practice is a time for keeping silence in the common areas of the house.

If a resident is late for the 108 bows, at the end of the group bowing wait for the teachers to leave, and then resume bowing until you have finished your 108 bows.

There is a weekly house meeting. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY FOR ALL RESIDENTS.**

There is a 5 minute moktak before chanting sounded by the duty Moktak Master. If you are late for the incense lighting, wait until everyone has bowed with the Moktak Master before entering.

You can enter the Dharma Room during the Morning Bell Chant. You may not enter the dharma room during the Evening Bell Chant.

At other times during chanting, wait for a chant to end before entering. Never put your chanting book on the floor. Preferably hold your chanting book with both hands in the hapchang position to avoid breaking the spine and tearing the pages. If you must put the chanting book down, place it on your mat, but never under the mat.

To use chanting as meditation, chant loud enough to hear your own voice and soft enough to hear everyone else in the room.

If you are late for sitting meditation, do not walk in front of seated meditators. Sit along the South wall or as directed by the Head Dharma Teacher (HDT).

During long sitting periods, the Head Dharma Teacher may walk around the room with a stick. This is done to encourage us to stay awake, sit up straight, and to allow those who have sore muscles to ask to be hit on the back to relieve the discomfort. In order to be hit, put your hands in hapchang just before the HDT passes your position.

### Dharma Talks

Dharma talks are held every Monday evening beginning with the Introduction on How to Do Meditation, and then a 20 – 30 minute meditation, and a Dharma Talk. The Introduction on How to Do Meditation can be given by the Abbot or designated to someone who is a Dharma Teacher (DT), Dharma Teacher In Training (DTIT), or someone who has taken the 5 precepts and has significant meditation experience. GGZC residents are strongly encouraged to attend these talks in order to become more familiar with Zen teaching, to support and learn from other Sangha members, and to talk with guests at the informal gatherings held immediately after each talk.

## **PRACTICE MIRROR**

Everyone does a minimum amount of group formal practice each week, and is encouraged to do additional group and individual practice. Attendance is recorded on the sheet which is posted each Monday morning by the Head Dharma Teacher.

### **Minimum Practice Requirements:**

**Accumulating at least 19 (Nineteen) practice points each week for non-student residents. Residents who are enrolled in school and actively participating in classes have a 12 point minimum.**

**All residents are expected at bows a minimum of six mornings each week.**

**All residents are expected to accumulate a minimum of 3 evening practice points**

The following 8 combinations are each worth one practice point:

1. Bows
2. Regular morning chanting period of 25 min.
3. One 25 minute period of evening chanting
4. The morning bell chant done in a 25 minute period during 3 day retreats.
5. One period of sitting of 25 – 40 minutes. one 50+ minute period of sitting would be worth 2 points.
6. The weekly mandatory house meeting.
7. The dharma talk
8. Giving “Introduction on How to Do Meditation” instruction counts as a Practice Requirement
9. Giving instruction in Zen or Meditation at another location counts as a practice point per hour of instruction.

If you miss practice and cannot meet your agreement, notify the Abbot. If you have occasion to be out of residence give advance notice to the Head Dharma Teacher in order to be excused from the weekly practice requirement. If this condition continues to affect your formal practice, make a formal agreement with the Abbot.

### **Special Remembrances**

If you know someone who is ill or who has died, you may want to have them remembered during special chanting. This is done by putting their name on the altar for a few days on either a Kwan Seum Bosal card in the case of illnesses or a Ji Jang Bosal card in case of deaths. You can obtain a card from the Head Dharma Teacher.

### **Community / Monastic Life**

Residents are required to have their own short gray sitting/bowing robes within three months. These may be purchased from GGZC or the Kwan Um School of Zen office in Cumberland, Rhode Island. The current price is \$80.

Korean Monastics, both monks and nuns, can be called by the Korean honorific, Sunim. Example one can address the monk by his name, Dae Kwang Sunim, or simply Sunim.

Residents are asked to help answer the Zen Center phone, to give directions and basic information. Residents are asked to help answer the door, especially in the evening, to make this practice available to all.

Treat all guests courteously.

Please do not leave unknown guests unattended. If necessary, ask them to schedule an appointment for another time.

## **BASIC HOUSE RULES**

These rules apply to everyone who comes to Gateless Gate Zen Center, whether a resident, retreatant, or a guest. Residents are responsible for informing their special guests. These rules apply to residences at both 1130 and 1208 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

- No meat (including fish and poultry) is brought into the Zen center
- No alcohol or illegal drugs are brought onto the property
- No firearms are brought onto the property
- Smoking is permitted only outside at least twenty feet from the building. Please do not leave cigarette butts in the yard or parking lot.
- At 1208, outdoor shoes are left neatly outside the entry door or inside on the shoe rack.
- The general environment is quiet and meditative at all times
- Please act with respect in the dharma room

### **House Meetings**

Attendance at weekly house meetings is mandatory. The HDT will hit the 5 min. moktak at 5:30AM. The house meeting will convene in the 1208 dining room at 5:35AM.

The weekly house meeting fosters good communications among the residents. This is the time to clarify schedules, make announcements and suggestions, and ask questions. Resident officials announce any matters which affect the community as a whole. The format is to go around the room twice: the first time for Zen Center matters, the second time for personal announcements. If you will be away, make an announcement to that effect, and make sure your house jobs, cooking and clean-up slots, and other responsibilities are covered.

Only issues are discussed in house meetings, not people. If there is a problem with another resident, talk privately to a Resident official. If there is a problem with a Resident official, talk to a higher official. If there is a problem with the guiding teacher, please refer to the statement of “Ethics for the Sangha”.

## **Rooms and Personal Space**

Zen Master Seung Sahn said that the condition of our physical space reflects the way we keep our minds.

All residents are responsible for keeping their rooms clean. To maintain an atmosphere for meditation, we respect each others’ needs for quiet. At any time of the day, someone may be meditating or trying to sleep in their rooms. At any time of the day someone may be meditating in the dharma room. Many residents go to bed around 9:00 PM, so after this time, be especially mindful to be quiet.

Rooms: Residents may use a futon or bed that belongs to the GGZC if one is available. Residents are expected to supply their own towels, bed linen, bed pillows, personal furniture and decorations. GGZC furnishings may be available at move-in for a short time, but these furnishings are to be used primarily for guests.

Stereos and television and other electronic equipment should be played softly at all times, so that the sound is not heard outside your room.

Personal food in your room should be kept in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.

Never enter another resident’s room without permission.

House Master will install all locks on rooms. Every lock will have a spare key stored in the Center Key Box.

Painting, building and installing shelving, or making any changes to the room requires the advance approval of the Abbot.

If a room is repainted or anything is permanently attached to the wall, the resident will restore the room to the condition it was when the resident moved in. Otherwise, cost of restoration will be deducted from security deposit.

All room assignments require approval by Abbot. Normal procedure is for senior residents to have first choice of rooms as they become available.

Common areas will not be used for private Storage. All residential storage is in assigned rooms.

## **Caretaking**

Zen Centers and monasteries throughout the world are traditionally kept very clean. Each resident is responsible for one or more regular house jobs in the public areas. These jobs are assigned by the House Master.

There is a work period Saturday morning. This is for all residents. If you cannot attend, inform the House Master in advance or at the meeting. The House Master will assign tasks to be completed during the week.

## **HOUSE**

Simple items, such as a burned out light bulb in an accessible place, should be fixed by the first person noticing the problem. This is the practice: **JUST DO IT**. Report maintenance problems to the House Master.

Alterations and improvements to the property areas must be approved by the Abbot.

Keep the public space clean, free of your personal belongings, and leave everything you use in as good a condition as you found it. **TURN OFF ALL LIGHTS, WHEN YOU LEAVE A ROOM**. Our practice is **LEAVE NO TRACES**.

Outside lights on the veranda are on just before, during, and after practice for the safety of our guests who are coming and going when it is before sunrise and after sundown.

Don't adjust the thermostat. Talk with the housemaster if a room is too hot or cold.

## **BATHS**

Leave the bathrooms in good condition for the next person. Clearly label any personal item that is left on a shelf in a bathroom. (Any items left in the immediate sink or tub area are considered to be for public use.) Leave the shower curtain pulled across the tub or shower to dry it out. Wiping dry the chrome fixtures will prevent rust. Clean your hair out of the drain cover after each shower. Dispose of trash when basket is full, even if this is not your house job...**JUST DO IT**.

## **GUESTS**

Please inform the Guest Master of all personal guests in advance.

Family members or friends may stay in your room or in any available guest room for up to three days of any month at no charge. They may stay up to an additional eleven days at half of the regular guest fees (\$15./per person/per night). There is a maximum stay of two weeks; after that time the family member or friend must apply for exceptions from the Abbot otherwise they must meet the normal conditions for residential status.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

In your absence, rooms should be locked and windows closed

Do not leave unknown guests unattended on Zen Center premises be it 1130 or 1208.

Report suspicious noise to staff so the problem can be investigated.

Do not feed raccoons, possums, and squirrels. These animals may approach, but remember they are wild animals and are not to become “pets” on our property.

Be mindful about closing and locking doors and windows AS WELL AS TURNING OFF ALL LIGHTS when leaving your room and leaving the building.

## **MEALS**

**Informal Meals:** served at a scheduled time. Food is prepared and individuals serve themselves and clean up after themselves. Designated cook cleans at specified time.

Breakfast and Lunch: Residents responsible for own meals.

Dinner: Designated cook prepares meal for requesting residents. Dinner is ready at 1700 and removed 1900.

**Sangha Dinners** are informal meals and are usually scheduled at 5:00 PM and outside sangha are welcome to share the meal with the residents. GGZC residents are encouraged to make themselves available to help guests feel welcome and provide information about the Zen Center and our practice.

There is actually a simple “together action” form of informal meals used at many Zen Centers especially during workshops and following large ceremonies. The meal is set out by the cook(s) in buffet style who the moktak. Everyone eating comes to the dining room, takes food, and sits down in a circle. Everyone does a seated bow together at the beginning and end of the meal. Everyone helps carry the food into the kitchen, and participates in the clean-up.

## **Kitchen**

Personal food will be kept in the laundry room refrigerator. Personal food items must be labeled with name and date.

After cooking, wash, dry, and put away dishes and food.

Clean up as you prepare and cook the food.

Clean Microwave every time it is used

Never leave knives in the sink or in the dish drainer; always wash and dry them and put them in the knife block appropriately.

Clean the counter tops with soap and water. Clean the stove top, sweep or damp mop the kitchen floor. Do not leave dishes in the drainer to dry.

If you have a meal preparation task, store the prepared food in closed storage containers with a note indicating the contents, date and meal for which it is to be used.

Use it, wash it, dry it, put it away. This is a leave no trace situation

## **TELEPHONES**

Residents are expected to have their own phones for individual use. Residents may receive phone calls on the "HOUSE"

line. When answering the house line say GATELESS GATE ZEN CENTER. Limit your calls to fifteen minutes. If you take a message for another resident, sign your name and date it, and put them under resident's door. Do not give out other house members cell phone numbers.

## **INTERNET PHONE CONNECTIONS:**

Where feasible, Gateless Gate Zen Center will provide internet or wifi connections. Cost of service is prorated monthly according to user base at location of service.

## FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIP

- A security deposit fee (\$250) is due at move in.
- A \$10 house key deposit is due at move in: Residents will have a key to their room, a key to 1208 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street, and a key to another GGZC residence if they are not living at 1208 NW 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> and last month's training fees are due upon move in (\$1000.00). Middle of the month moves are prorated.
- If you own a car, provide the license plate number and car registration number to the director.
- You must be a dues-paying member of the Kwan Um School of Zen in order to live at the Gateless Gate Zen Center.
- So, the total fees due at the time you move in will be first and last month training fees as well as key and security deposits.
- Training fees are due by 5<sup>th</sup> of month and payable to Gateless Gate Zen Center. A receipt is given for all payments. Advance notice to director is required for late payments.
- You will pay training fees from the 1<sup>st</sup> day that you begin to put your personal items in a room, until the last day that you have removed all your personal items from that room and restored the room to the condition that it was made available to you. Any exception to this procedure should be made by the Abbot in writing to you and the Director.
- You must provide the Gateless Gate Zen Center with a minimum of thirty (30) days notice before moving out. If 30 days notice is not given, you will be charged for the period to amount to 30 days.

The Abbot has the authority to modify any and all financial arrangements dependent on the individual situations.

## RESIDENT TRAINING AGREEMENT

### I AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING RULES AS PART OF MY RESIDENCY AT THE GATELESS GATE ZEN CENTER.

1. I agree to fulfill the minimum practice requirement of \_\_\_\_\_ points per week.
2. I agree to learn dharma room forms and help lead practice on a regular basis.
3. I agree to attend \_\_\_\_\_ interviews per month and \_\_\_\_\_ retreats per year in the tradition of the KUSZ.
4. I agree to do a regular house job as assigned by the Abbot/House Master.
5. I agree to participate in community meal preparation and/or clean-up as directed by the kitchen master.
6. I agree to attend work period meetings unless excused in advance by the Abbot/House Master. I agree to make up missed work if the work master/Abbot/Housemaster asks me to help on a particular project.
7. I agree to stay current with my financial obligations to GGZC.
8. I agree to be a current dues-paying member of KUSZ as long as I am in residence at GGZC.
9. I agree to attend weekly house meetings.
10. I agree, as a new resident, to be subject to a three month trial period.
11. I have read and understand Ethics For the Entire Sangha.
12. I have read the Residential Handbook and agree to be responsible for all information in it. I understand that this is not a "Landlord-Tenant relationship. I understand that my residence here is part of a spiritual training. I further understand that if I decide not to abide by any of the above agreements, I may be asked to leave GGZC at any time.

I have read and agree to these policies.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

ABBOT: K. C. Walpole

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_