

# **BIPOC Embodied Refuge Community Agreements**

## **-- A Working Document**

1. To **respect the privacy, consent, and confidentiality** of our community and not share the names or personal stories of anyone else. We will not record or take pictures of participants or their shares without consent. We can offer resources as is supportive; a resource document is available to help compile these resources.
2. To **not assume the identities** of anyone else including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or ability. We can share pronouns if it feels supportive and we will collectively respect pronouns.
3. To engage in **dialogue using mindful listening**, we will listen deeply, listening to understand rather than respond and be open to learning something new. We will speak one at a time and engage in the practice of [wise speech](#). We will engage with dialogue in the chat box in a way that also supports mindful listening. We can pass whenever that feels supportive.
4. To **practice care and co-create our shared practice container** by participating in what feels right and sharing needs and concerns as they arise. We will ask for consent before offering feedback or advice to others. The facilitators will start and end our meetings on time; we are welcome to arrive and leave as is most supportive for us.
5. **Speak from our own experiences using "I" statements** and not speaking for a whole group or expressing assumptions about others' experiences.

6. **Openness to explore new ideas, viewpoints, or ways of doing things** that might not be our preference or what we are familiar with. Explore and honor that there are multiple truths and multiple realities by using the word “and” instead of “but.”
7. We will **understand and acknowledge impact** rather than focusing only on our intent.
8. Being mindful of any of our privileged identities and who is speaking in the group and who is not, **support all who are present to participate by taking or making space** with your speech and presence.
9. Our community is offered permission to show up as you are and in all the states of messiness that may be present. **Practice radical acceptance and refrain from shaming or blaming** yourself or others. Know that you are enough exactly as you are, always have been and always will be.

## Acknowledgements, Resources, References, Input

- BIPOC Embodied Refuge Community
- One Love Sangha Community Agreements
- Brooklyn Zen Center's Community Agreements
- East Bay Meditation Center, Agreements for Multi-Cultural Interaction, adopted from Visions Inc's Guidelines for Productive Work Sessions: <http://visions-inc.org/>
- Arao, B. & Clemens, K. (2013). "From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces." *The Art of Effective Facilitation*. Stylus Publishing.
- Ferguson, G. (2016). *Natural Bravery*. Shambhala Publications.
- Kaite, L. (2018). Where Everyone Can Thrive. *Lion's Roar*. Retrieved from <https://www.lionsroar.com/where-everyone-can-thrive/>
- "Right Speech: *samma vaca*", edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight (BCBS Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/samma-vaca/index.html>

## **FIVE PRECEPTS**

We will consider these precepts and ethical guidelines as additional guidelines to support our practice and community.

Refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha: A disciple of Buddha does not abuse the Three Treasures but rather cultivates and encourages awakening, the path and teaching of awakening and the community that takes refuge in awakening. ([Soto Zen](#))

1. I undertake the training to refrain from killing and harming living beings. (Insight)

A disciple of Buddha does not kill but rather cultivates and encourages life. (Soto Zen)

“Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I am committed to cultivating compassion and learning ways to protect the lives of all beings. I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life.” (Thich Nhat Hanh)

Aware of the violence in the world, and of the power of nonviolent resistance, I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth and future generations, and vow to cultivate the compassion that seeks to protect each living being. (Caitriona Reed; Manzanita Village)

2. I undertake the training to refrain from taking that which is not given. (Insight)

A disciple of Buddha does not take what is not given but rather cultivates and encourages generosity. (Soto Zen)

A disciple of Buddha is not possessive of anything but rather cultivates and encourages mutual support. (Soto Zen)

“Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, social injustice, stealing, and oppression, I am committed to cultivating loving kindness and learning ways to work for the well-being of all beings. I will practice generosity by sharing my time, energy, and material resources with those who are in real need. I am determined not to steal and not to possess anything that should belong to others. I will respect the property of others, but I will prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Aware of the poverty and greed in the world, and of the intrinsic abundance of the earth, I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth and future generations, and vow to cultivate the simplicity, gratitude and generosity that have no limits. (Caitriona Reed; Manzanita Village)

3. I undertake the training to refrain from causing harm through sexual misconduct. (Insight)

A disciple of the Buddha does not misuse sexuality but rather cultivates and encourages honest and caring relationships. (Soto Zen)

"Aware of suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I am committed to cultivating responsibility and learning ways to protect the safety and integrity of individuals, couples, families and society. I am determined not to engage in sexual activities without love and commitment. To preserve the happiness of myself and others, I am determined to respect my commitments and the commitments of others. I will do everything in my power to protect children from sexual abuse and to protect couples and families from being harmed by sexual misconduct." Thich Nhat Hanh

Aware of the abuse & lovelessness in the world & of the healing that is made possible when we open to love, I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth and future generations, and vow to cultivate respect for the beauty and erotic power of our bodies. (Caitriona Reed; Manzanita Village)

4. I undertake the training to refrain from false speech, harmful speech, gossip and slander. I vow to cultivate loving speech and deep listening. (Insight)

A disciple of Buddha does not lie but rather cultivates and encourages truthful communication. (Soto Zen)

A disciple of Buddha does not slander others but rather cultivates and encourages respectful speech. (Soto Zen)

A disciple of Buddha does not praise self at the expense of others but rather cultivates and encourages self and others to abide in their awakened nature. (Soto Zen)

A disciple of Buddha does not harbor ill-will but rather cultivates and encourages loving-kindness and understanding. (Soto Zen)

“Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful speech and the inability to listen to others, I am committed to cultivating loving speech and deep listening in order to bring joy and happiness to others and relieve others of their suffering. Knowing that words can create happiness or suffering, I am determined to speak truthfully, with words that inspire self-confidence, joy and hope. I will not spread information that I do not know to be certain and will not criticize or condemn things of which I am not sure. I will refrain from uttering words with the intention of causing division or discord. I am determined to make efforts to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Aware of the falsehood and deception in the world and of the power of living and speaking the truth, I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth and future generations, and vow to cultivate the ability to listen; and clarity and integrity in all I communicate by my words and actions. (Caitriona Reed; Manzanita Village)

5. I undertake the training to refrain from the misuse of intoxicants that cause carelessness or loss of awareness. *I vow to ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being and joy.*  
(Insight)

A disciple of Buddha does not intoxicate self or others but rather cultivates and encourages clarity. (Soto Zen)

“Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption, I am committed to the cultivation of good health, both physical and mental, for myself, my family, and my society by practicing mindful eating, drinking, and consuming. I will ingest only items that preserve peace, well-being, and joy in my body, in my consciousness, and in the collective body and consciousness of my family and society. I am determined not to (mis)use alcohol or any other intoxicant or to ingest foods or other items that undermine spiritual growth such as unwholesome TV programs,

magazines, books, films and conversations. I am aware that to damage my body or my consciousness with such poisons is to harm all beings. I understand that a proper diet is crucial for self-transformation and for the transformation of society.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Aware of the contamination and desecration of the world, and of my responsibility for life as it manifests through me, I stand in the presence of the ancestors, the earth and future generations, and vow to cultivate discernment and care in what I take into my body and mind. (Caitriona Reed; Manzanita Village)