

One Month Zen Practice Commitment

*Zen is an organic path. What one student is doing may be different than another, yet we are all supporting one another in our natural unfolding of an awakened life. There is always an "edge" of practice - sometimes we are called to deepen our relationship to zazen, other times to work with a karmic pattern of reactivity that is becoming clear, or to try out a new daily mindfulness ritual at home. When one is new to practice, sometimes it's hard to know what your practice is or what you should be doing outside our weekly meetings. The form below lists eight essential domains of practice: **Zazen, Mindfulness, Study, Precepts, Koan, Ritual, Service and Body**. Entering any one of these dharma gates with concentrated energy brings in the teachings of all the other domains.*

On the last Thursday meeting each month at Zen West, those who wish to make vow can bring this form and their share the vow with the group so that your intention is witnessed. Forms will be offered and remain upon the Founder's Altar. Those who made a vow from the previous month will have a chance to share what they learned. Making a short term vow is an excellent way to receive support through sangha, deepen one's relationship to practice, and gain some insight into what Zen practice actually entails.

Not everyone needs to make a vow each month - some may wish to do this frequently, others, a couple of times a year or not at all. More is not better, it is a well placed change of behavior matched to the edge of growth that is most revealing. If you are wondering what practice to undertake or want to explore your vow, making a sanzen appointment to get feedback from the teacher can be very useful. By making a vow in sangha, we learn a great deal from one another and share what matters most to us in everyday life. We also learn about how creative, deep and wide Zen practice is in relationship to our most important challenges and calling.

*With palms together,
Seido*

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What is the edge of my practice?

Eight Gates of Zen: *Choose one area and enter wholeheartedly*

- ZAZEN:** I vow to maintain zazen daily in this schedule:
- MINDFULNESS:** I vow to practice mindfulness in this way (includes creative practices):
- STUDY:** I vow to study the following sutra/liturgy/text in this particular way:
- KOAN:** I vow to investigate this Koan question (includes the study of dreams):
- PRECEPTS/ KARMA:** I vow to work with this karmic pattern and/or precept in this way:
- BODY:** I vow to take up the following body practice in this way:
- RITUAL:** I vow to investigate/ perform the following ritual in the zendo & daily life:
- SERVICE:** I vow to serve the sangha and/or greater community in this particular way:

Specific Details (What, when, where, how):

Support (How I will remind myself, seek support, return when forgotten):

Name: _____ **For Month of** _____

Witness: _____