

Home
Haus Tao
Retreats
Teachers
Meditation Groups
Contact

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The Nine Pillars of the Sati Zen Sangha

The 9 pillars are the foundation and practice of the Sati Zen Sangha. Consider these mindfulness practices as the pole star which shows us direction, and avoid perfectionism and intolerance. They are not to be considered in isolation. They are interwoven with the five ethical principals, the **four noble truths** and the **eightfold path**.

1. Truth

Do not bind yourself to doctrines, theories or ideologies. All religions and systems of thought are only means of orientation; they are not absolute truth. Search for truth in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Avoid missionary fervor, both as an individual and as a community.

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2. Simplicity

Take love and wisdom as your true goal in life, and not power, wealth, fame or sensual pleasure. Live in a simple manner and share your time, energy and material means with those who need them. Renounce empty ritual and pursue no personality cult.

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3. Freedom

Strive for true freedom and authenticity. Give yourself and others the necessary space for development and a climate of openness and breadth. Realize that attachment brings suffering and search for the cause of your suffering in your own mind.

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4. Equality

Meet every being with affectionate respect, for each in its own way is an expression of the absolute. Success and failure are not gauges of spiritual growth. Consider with equanimity the alternating waves of praise and rebuke, gain and loss, and see them as a challenge to let go.

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5. Courage

Have the courage to change. Steps towards true transformation sometimes require taking great risks and a readiness to leave familiar cycles of behaviour. In doing so, avoid narrowmindedness and violence. Learn to deal with and withstand difficult emotions, without becoming enslaved to them.

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6. Understanding

Try to truly understand your fellow human beings. Give those close to you insight into your inner world. Endeavor to promote reconciliation and resolution of all conflicts. Learn to forgive yourself and others, and search for love, not for dependency. Do not create unnecessary suffering and division through a lack of communication.

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7. Compassion

Remain in contact with the suffering of the world. Do not allow yourself to become inured to the existence of suffering. Realize your interconnectedness with all beings and search for means and ways to commit yourself to the welfare of others and the avoidance of suffering.

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8. Openness

Be aware that methods, institutions and hierarchies are always only means and should not be an end in themselves. Learn to handle power carefully and responsibly, and be ready to give it up or

share it with others.

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9. Practice

Do not lose yourself in distraction. Your daily life is the place to practice mindfulness, from moment to moment. Stay in touch with what is healing, refreshing and full of wonder, both in and around you. Let the seeds of joy, peace and understanding grow in you, in order to foster the process of transformation in the depths of your consciousness.

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