



Entering the Sangha

Members of the Vermont Zen Center, the Toronto Zen Centre, and the Casa Zen, in Santo Tomás, Costa Rica comprise our Buddhist community, or *Sangha*. Membership in the Zen Center is open to all people regardless of race, national origin, creed, sex or sexual orientation.

This Zen Center is in the lineage of Roshi Philip Kapleau. It is not subsidized by any other organization, nor does it have an endowment. The Vermont Zen Center is a nonprofit, religious, tax-exempt 501(c)3 corporation maintained by contributions of members and friends. There is no staff other than the teacher, Roshi Graef.

While attendance at most Center functions is restricted to members, non-members may join on occasion after checking with the Center. Members may attend private instruction about Zen practice, which is held once a month. Trial members are welcome to attend group instruction. Dokusan (formal Zen instruction) is available for members who become students of Roshi.

Anyone 18 and older (or younger with parental permission) may become a member of the Center through the following steps:

- *Attending an Introductory Workshop conducted by Roshi Sunyana Graef;*
- *Completing a four-week trial membership period;*
- *Requesting full membership and submitting a membership application;*
- *Making a financial pledge to the Zen Center.* The suggested minimum donation is \$45 per month. However, no one is excluded from membership because of inability to pay. If our fees are an obstacle to your training at the Center, please let us know so that we can discuss alternatives. Your first membership pledge should be paid when you submit your application. **There is no fee for Trial Membership.**

(over)

Becoming a Trial Member

The purpose of trial membership is to give you a chance to “try out” the Center to see if it is a good fit for you. If you wish to become a trial member, fill out a Trial Membership Form and return it to the Center. Trial members may attend all regular functions of the Center: sittings, workdays, talks by Roshi and senior members, study and discussion groups, ceremonies, and social activities, as well as group instruction. Prospective members will find that regular involvement in daily zazen and other Sangha activities will give them a feeling for the practice at the Center. In addition we have a “Finding Your Seat” program to help new members and trial members become more comfortable and familiar with Zen Center routines.

Kelly Story is our Trial Membership Coordinator. Please feel free to contact her at 802-488-0928 or kelly@vermontzen.org for questions, advice, etc.

Full Membership

After the trial period, if you wish to become a full member, please request a Membership Application from the Center or complete one on-line at www.vermontzen.org/membership.html. The Vermont Zen Center is owned and supported by its members. Members are welcome to attend all Center events and participate in private instruction. Members receive Zen Center mailings and newsletters and are given preference for courses, sesshins, retreats and special activities.

The Center has no endowment and is entirely supported by members and friends. We ask that your membership pledge be made at the time you submit your application. Your pledge supports the work of the Center and is an expression of selfless giving (*dana*), one of the six Buddhist virtues.

Friend of the Center

This category is for people who do not wish to formally become a member of the Center, but would like to support the Center’s work and have occasional contact with the Zen community. Friends receive mailings and may attend Sangha events from time to time after checking with the Center. Friends of the Center are asked to make a small yearly contribution to the Center.