

Soto Zen Buddhist Association



Zen holds as a foundational truth that all beings are Buddha Nature; that we are interdependent and the suffering of one is suffering that affects us all. Viewing the world as a boundless and all-encompassing circle of connection, we realize that no one can be left out or left behind.

We, the members of the Soto Zen Buddhist Association, reject any attempt to oppress marginalized groups and treat them as outsiders who do not deserve the same rights, opportunities and respect as those in power.

We are diverse in many ways--sex, gender expression, race, ability, religion--and this is our greatest strength, a strength that should be celebrated. Marginalization, oppression, and rejection are the antithesis of Zen practice, and we oppose any attempts to make such behaviors law or national policy. We oppose the creation of a culture that deliberately normalizes marginalization, isolation or oppression of any group. We call for compassionate treatment of those who are marginalized and living in fear.

We must have compassion for all, and we must remember that compassion is wisdom in action, and compassion must never lead to apathy or passive acceptance. Therefore, we encourage opposition, not based in anger or fear or hatred but arising from our bodhisattva vows. We encourage everyone to bear witness to the cries of the world. We encourage people to march, write letters, and support organizations working to protect suffering beings. We support those who are in danger by building safe spaces or insisting that public institutions create those spaces and we encourage others to do the same. We offer emotional support and a calming presence to those who are in despair. And we offer the practice of Zen to all people as a way to cope with the world as it is.

Signed,

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