

Soto Zen Buddhist Association



SZBA Forum Usage Policy

- 1 **Introductions:** Even though you may be well-known in the group, please send a message to introduce yourself. For your introduction, you might note your name, temple and/or professional affiliations, lineage background, where you live and practice, why you joined the list, and any requests or questions you might have.
- 2 **Signatures:** Include a signature on all messages. Your signature typically includes your name, as you wish it to be known, your home temple or center, and your general location (Austin, Texas, for example). If your temple or center has a website, it's helpful to include it in your signature.
- 3 **Posting to the forum:** Respect the forum's intention to provide a platform for discussion by the group. Please consider whether the SZBA forum is the best venue for some conversations. A phone call or private email to an individual may be more effective.
- 4 **Identify your topic:** State concisely and clearly the topic of your comments in the subject line. This allows members to respond more appropriately to your posting and keeps replies connected to their topic. This makes it easier for members to search the forum by subject.
- 5 **Be concise:** Trim your posts. Cut and paste only information relevant to your response. Large texts may be better shared as an attachment to a brief descriptive post.
- 6 **Replies create topic threads:** There is an arrow and drop-down menu in the upper right corner of each post which allows you to choose how you respond to a message on the forum. Just clicking the arrow posts a reply to a post that is visible to everyone on the forum. If you select the triangle next to the arrow, you will see more choices, such as "Reply privately to author," "Forward," "Link to post." Personal replies should be directed privately to specific individuals rather than posted to the forum. Only send a message to the forum when it contains information that benefits everyone. Send messages such as "Thanks for the information," "Gassho," or "Me, too" to individuals—not to the entire discussion group.
- 7 **Respond to the topic of a post in your reply:** Stay on topic and avoid "hijacking" threads. Hijacking a thread is when you change the subject when responding to a previous poster's comments. If you want to start a new topic, create a new message and subject line and then post it to the forum.
- 8 **References:** If you refer to something a member said earlier in the discussion, quote just a few key lines from their post so that others won't have to go back and figure out which post

you're referring to. This will now be much easier, as replies will be grouped with their original topics.

- 9 **Respect copyrights:** Don't post copyrighted material to the list; instead describe the material or include a very brief quote and provide a link to it. This includes text, images, video, graphics, music, and all protected categories.
- 10 **Style:** Don't type in ALL CAPS! Typing in all caps is considered yelling.
- 11 **Right Speech:** Please adhere to the principles of [right speech](#). The discussions on the SZBA Discussion Group are meant to stimulate conversation, foster personal and professional development, share discoveries, and cultivate shared wisdom, not to create conflict or contention. Do not "flame" or attack others. Flaming includes the making of derogatory personal comments, ridicule, excessive sarcasm and innuendo. Please keep in mind, however, this guideline is not intended to dampen lively discussion and debate from differing perspectives.
- 12 **Moderation in commenting:** Practice stepping up/stepping back. SZBA forum participants should be aware of how much they are commenting. If you have commented numerous times on a particular discussion topic, step back for a while to allow others members' comments to be shared. Likewise, if you do not often comment, try to contribute some comments, ideas or suggestions. All SZBA members' comments and opinions are important.
- 13 **Respect the opinions of others.** If you disagree, do so respectfully. Acknowledge that others are entitled to have their own perspective on the issue. Keep criticism on an objective basis that is factually verifiable and skip commentary about character, competence or motive.
- 14 **Reposting:** Do not repost or otherwise share anything from this SZBA Discussion Group with anyone who is not an SZBA member without writers' express permission.
- 15 **Use wisdom when posting:** Even though this forum is private to its members, do not post anything in an SZBA forum that you would not want the world to see or that you would not want anyone to know came from you. SZBA forum comments are subject to applicable law, including defamation and libel laws; in the event of legal proceedings, the entire forum could be subject to subpoena.
- 16 **Inappropriate posting:** In the event that inappropriate posts or replies are brought to the SZBA Board's attention, the SZBA Board reserves the right to take appropriate action in response. Use of the SZBA forums constitutes agreement to abide by these guidelines and the SZBA reserves the right to terminate SZBA forum access to any user who does not abide by these SZBA forum guidelines.
- 17 **Managing abuses:** Should any user of the SZBA forums believe that another user has abused the guidelines by abusive or otherwise inappropriate language or conduct, that user should first approach the person they feel has been inappropriate and attempt to resolve the matter informally. Should such informal resolution prove ineffective, the user may bring the matter to the attention of the SZBA Board and ask that they investigate and adjudicate it according to their procedures. The SZBA Board may suspend or even revoke the SZBA forum privileges of any user found to have violated these guidelines.