

Marriage Ceremony

Note: Every state has different regulations governing marriage, so be sure to know what they. All Dharma Teachers are eligible to perform weddings. Depending on the state, may need to be certified by the Kwan Um School of Zen in order to obtain a clergy license. Make sure you find out well in advance of the wedding what is legally required.

SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BE USED

Dharma Room Bell
Official papers for state
Zen Center Wedding Certificate
Moktak
Flowers for the altar
Fruit for the altar
Flowers for bride and groom
Chairs for family and guests of the bride and groom

WEDDING PERSONNEL:

Officiate
Person to hit the moktak and ring the bell
Ushers

SUGGESTED ROOM SET UP

1. Set up an altar with candles, incense burner, flowers and incense.
2. Approximately 10 feet in front of the altar, put two bowing mats for the bride and groom, facing the altar.
3. Arrange chairs and mats for guests and family behind the mats for the bride and groom.

COORDINATION BETWEEN OFFICIAL AND COUPLE

The couple and the officiate performing the wedding should clarify the couple's financial responsibilities to the Zen Center and to the officiate.

The following ceremony is a suggestion. The officiate and couple should feel free to modify it to suit their preferences. The couple and officiate should clarify whether the couple or the Zen Center will provide printed programs for the wedding.

It is up to the officiate and couple to decide what the couple wear at the ceremony. There is no requirement that robes be worn.

WEDDING PLANNING AND THE ZEN CENTER

If the wedding ceremony or the reception are held at at a Zen Center, please remember that traditional temple customs need to be observed. This means not serving alcohol or meat.

Please remember to clarify who is responsible for providing altar flowers and fruit, chairs, and food.

SUGGESTED WEDDING CEREMONY

(pre-ceremony music for guest arrival)

(light candles, incense)

Opening Bell

Opening Speech

(everyone stand)

The Three-Fold Refuge (all together)

Homage to all the Buddhas
Who are present in their glory
At this assembly

Homage to the dharma
Which is present in its glory
At this assembly

Homage to all the sangha
Who are present in their glory
At this assembly

Kwan Seum Bosal Chanting (all together)

(Everyone please be seated, except the officiate and the couple. The officiate faces the assembly. The couple face each other across their mats with their hands in hapchang and the cushions placed to the right.)

(The Official says:)

The bride and groom will now bow to each other.

Bride and Groom Bow to each other

(Following the moktak, the couple do a standing bow, 3 prostrations and a standing bow. The mats should be far enough apart to avoid bumping heads. See page 4.16 for the moktak form for 3 prostrations. After the prostrations are complete, the bride and groom replace their cushions and stand behind their mats facing the altar.)

(The officiate says:)

The couple will offer incense to the Buddha.

Couple offer incense to the Buddha

Main Talk (officiate)

Marriage Vows:

(Bride and groom stand between the two mats, facing the altar and repeat the vows after the officiate. It is not necessary to read the headings.)

Views We vow in our married life together to continually break through our pre-conceived views of each other and see clearly.

Thoughts We vow to let go of feelings that arise from selfish desires, attachments, and fears, so that we can open our hearts to one another.

Conduct We vow to be compassionate with one another and with all beings.

Speech We vow to refrain from speaking harshly or deceptively to each other or about one another to others.

Livelihood We vow to practice peaceful and ethical occupations and to support each other in our work.

Effort We vow to support one another in creating a compassionate and loving home.

Mindfulness We vow to always be mindful of each other and to let go of our ideas and beliefs so that we can see each other clearly.

Meditation We vow to encourage each other to walk the bodhisattva path together.

(The officiate says:)

And the final vow...

Exchange of Rings

Congratulatory Speeches (about 5 minutes each)

(Given by family and friends of couple and introduced by
the officiate)

(Please stand for the Four Great Vows)

The Four Great Vows

Sentient beings are numberless
We vow to save them all.

Delusions are endless
We vow to cut through them all.

The teachings are infinite
We vow to learn them all.

The Buddha Way is inconceivable
We vow to attain it.

(The officiate says:)

Please sit. The closing remarks will be made by _____
and the ceremony will be over with the extinguishing of
the candles.

Closing Remarks

(At the end of the closing remarks, the officiate puts out the
candles and does a standing bow to the Buddha.)