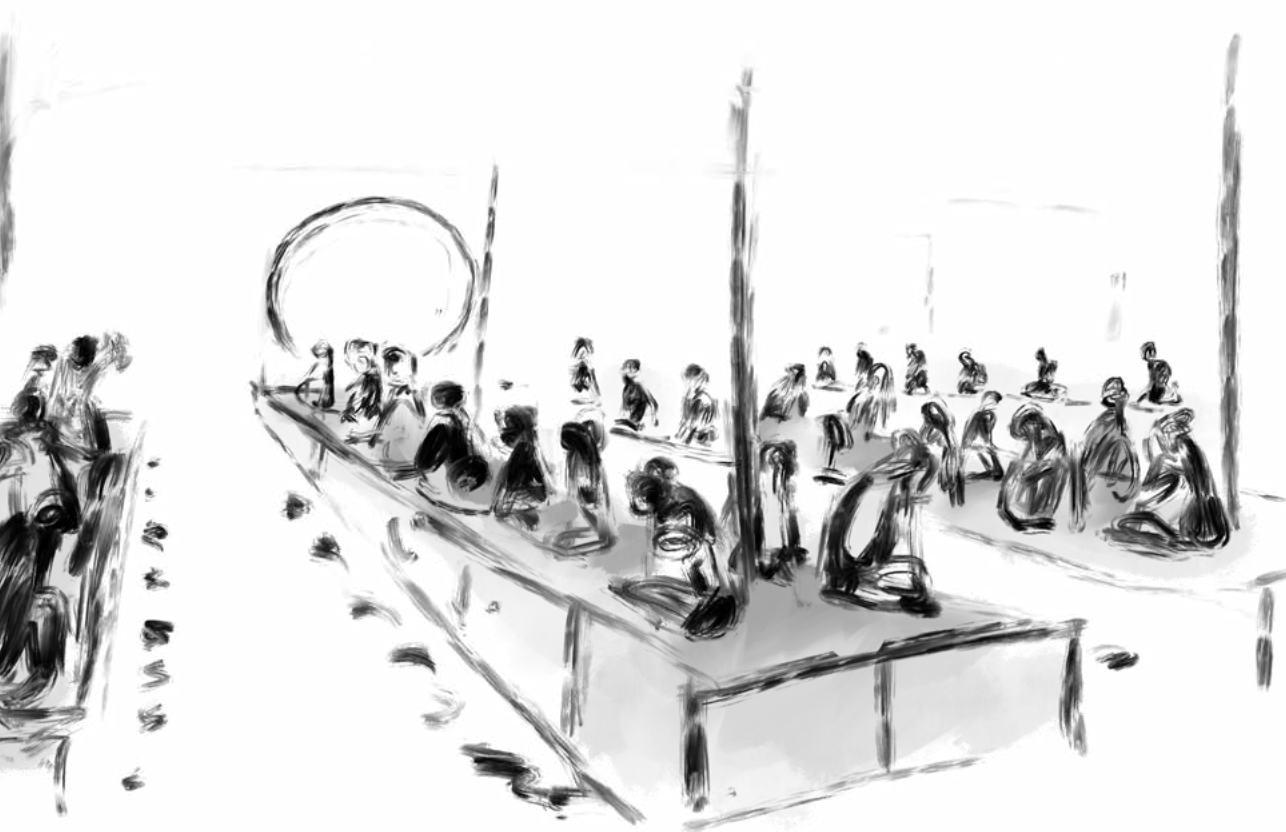


One Drop Zen

Sesshin Guide



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Sesshin Guide

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Welcome

Zen practice is about developing one's awareness. In the sitting practice, *zazen*, we face our mind in the condition it is in, straight on. Our focus is on "purifying" our mind. That is to say, letting go of preconceived ideas and learning to perceive the world, others and ourselves without judgment, from an open state of mind.

When we sit alone, we can easily believe that we have mastered this. When alone, no-one triggers our preconceived ideas and emotions. That is why we have a sangha—a group of like-minded people—who also appreciate the importance of this practice. To best support our own practice and that of the sangha working together, a few rules were established for sesshin and life in a Zen monastery. These help us to support our inner work and step out of past habits.

Thus, this booklet is meant to give you an introduction to these simple rules, even though they may be unfamiliar. In the following pages, we would like to show you how this well-developed, practice of *sesshin*—Zen retreats, proven through many generations of experience—supports quieting the mind as a group, in the best possible way.

One of the main focus points of Zen training is learning that we do not blame or want to change the world or others. Rather, we take deep responsibility for our own state of mind and emotional reactions in each moment, in each situation. Thus, taking responsibility for ourselves and our experience, we create the path to freedom: we see that the kind of world and experience of the world we create is a matter of our own perception and within our influence.

ShoE



Structure of the Sesshin Day

No matter which type of sesshin you are participating in, each day of sesshin follows the same schedule. You can find the schedule for each day on the large message board in the entrance hall of the main building, as well as a small printed version that you can keep with you for reference.

Each day of sesshin starts with the sounding of the wake-up bell and entering the zendo for *choka* (sutra chanting) followed by *baito* (a cup of digestive plum tea). After this, the morning periods of sitting, *kinhin* (walking meditation) and *sanzen* (personal interview with the Roshi) take place before breakfast. The morning meal is based around rice porridge, vegetables and condiments. After the morning meal there is a short break to change into work clothes before the *samu* period (cleaning and maintenance tasks). During a *samu sesshin*, the work period will extend until lunchtime and include a break for refreshments; during *osesshin*, the samu period will be brief and followed by sitting and *kinhin* periods until lunch. On the day when you have tea with the Roshi, you will join during the morning samu period according to your country. The midday meal is the “main” meal of the day consisting of rice, soup, side dish, salad and pickles. This meal is followed by a break for personal time before *teisho* (a talk by the Roshi in the zendo), which is then followed by a period of exercise, either a long *kinhin* period or chikung exercises before dinner. The evening meal is light, based around bread, soup, condiments, leftovers and pickles. The evening meal is followed by another long personal break before returning to the zendo for the evening sitting. The first evening sitting period is called “the golden hour” due to its extended duration. This is then followed by the evening rounds of sitting, *kinhin* and *sanzen*. This period concludes with *sarei* (sweets and tea). The day concludes with *kaichin*, a liturgical ceremony in the Zen tradition, held in front of the main building, before *yaza* (personal evening sitting) and the break for the night.



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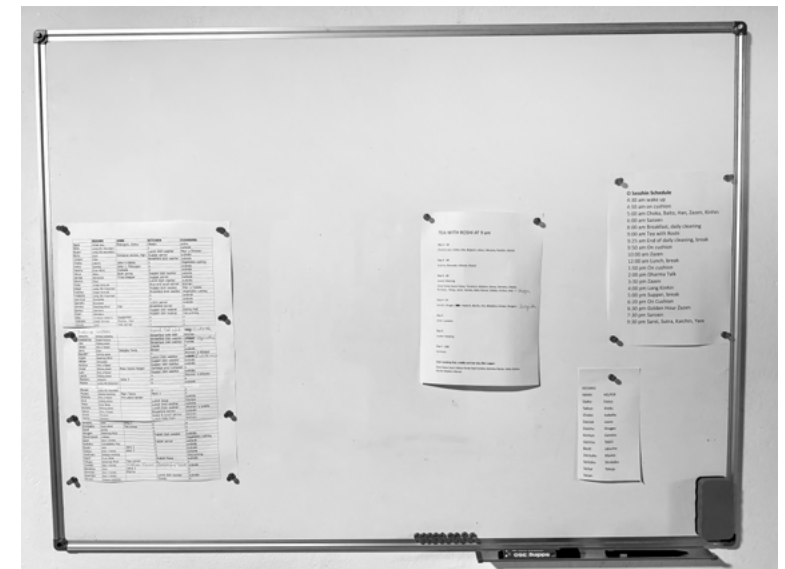
The message board in the main entrance hall.

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The room and samu list, the “tea with Roshi” list, the daily schedule, the staff list on the message board.

Messages during Sesshin

In the entrance hall of the main building you will find a whiteboard which is the hub for messaging during sesshin. When you arrive, please look up your name on the participants list to find out which room you will be staying in, which team you will join for samu (work periods) and when you have kitchen duty. Also, please consult the “tea with Roshi list” to know on which day you will be joining that gathering. Additionally, the daily schedule for sesshin is posted there. During sesshin this board will be used for any special messages of which you should be aware in addition to those given in the zen-do. During the final day of sesshin, a “departure travel list” will be posted. If you need a ride, or if you have a ride to offer, you can add your information to the list and coordinate transportation with others.



Zendo: Entering and Leaving

The zendo is the hall dedicated to zazen practice. It is exclusively used for three activities: zazen, kinhin and sarei. The *joko*, who leads the sitting periods, ensures harmony and concentration for everyone; their instructions must be followed. Other than the joko, only the Roshi and *jisharyo* are permitted to speak in the zendo.

When entering the zendo, we bow deeply with our hands in *gassho*. Walking to our cushion with our hands in *gassho*, we bow again facing the zendo before removing our shoes and sitting. We place our shoes neatly on the floor in front of our cushion. When we leave the zendo individually, we stand up, put on our shoes and bow facing the zendo. Then we walk quietly to the door with our hands in *shasshu* and bow once again facing the zendo. In group activities, like kinhin, going to sanzen or going to meals no bowing is required at the door but we keep our hands in *gassho* when entering and in *shasshu* when leaving. Entering or leaving the zendo during a period of zazen—unless for sanzen—is only permitted as a last resort. Please address your reason for leaving with the *jisharyo* and agree what is to be done together with them. During the break between zazen periods or during kinhin, entering and leaving the zendo is allowed however we do not talk nor do exercises while there. If your legs hurt, you may stand up to relieve them during the breaks between sitting periods.

Also note that personal items like books, pens, purses, jewellery and watches should not be brought into the zendo. Glasses for reading the sutra book are the only personal items allowed. Avoid wearing bright or tight clothes; sleeves should cover at least the elbows (see *samugi* and footwear below).

The Meaning of Gassho

We use the “*gassho*” gesture as a form of greeting, expressing gratitude, or showing respect. We make this gesture by bringing our palms together in front of our chest with our fingers pointing upwards.



The Meaning of Shasshu

To maintain a focused posture and prevent our hands from dangling, we adopt the “*shasshu*” position while walking or waiting. We make this gesture by placing our right palm against the base of the sternum with the left palm on top of the right hand.





Samugi and Footwear

We kindly request that you wear at least a samugi top, which is the usual workwear in a Zen monastery. This traditional Japanese clothing is typically loose-fitting, comfortable and non-distracting. Wearing a samugi supports the unity of the group, freeing you from concerns about individual appearance and allows full concentration on your practice.

It is important to wear shoes that are easily slipped on and off for zazen. When preparing for or returning from walking meditation we put on or remove our shoes quickly at our place. We also quickly remove our shoes in the line when entering the dining hall. Thus, shoes with laces, fixed straps or secured heels will hinder the smooth flow of the group. Also, whenever placing shoes in front of your cushion in the zendo, align them neatly so that they look like departing ships. Lastly, for cleanliness we do not wear shoes in the residence buildings, except for the bathing area, where slip-on shoes are provided. In addition to shoes for zazen, consider an additional pair for outdoor walks or work.



Appropriate Behaviour during Zazen

During zazen, it is essential to cultivate an atmosphere of tranquillity and focus. We do this by:

Returning to Ourselves

Zazen involves turning inward and maintaining presence with yourself. To do this we focus on the breath and the sensations in the body.

Respecting Others' Practice

Avoid disturbing others' concentration during practice by refraining from making any unnecessary movements or sounds.

Avoiding Eye Contact

To maintain introspection and avoid distractions, please refrain from making eye contact with others and looking at their faces.

Breathing and Moving Quietly

Be mindful of your breathing, keeping it silent and steady. There is no need to add sound to the breath. Any movement should be deliberate and as quiet as possible to minimize disturbance to others in the zendo and elsewhere. If you experience significant discomfort during zazen, such as pain that prevents you from sitting, it is acceptable to stand up quietly and assume a standing posture in front of the *tan* (sitting platform) with your hands in shasshu. Please remain in that posture until the end of the sitting period.

If you encounter a problem or feel disturbed by others, please only contact the jisharyo. The jisharyo will handle the matter while supporting the flow and concentration of the group, thereby avoiding unnecessary disturbance.



Correct Sitting

It is important to keep our bodies balanced and aligned, especially during zazen, where we reflect inwardly. When we are too focused on our thoughts or stuck in habits, our energy tends to go upwards to our heads, and does not remain in our physical centre. This affects how we sit and move throughout the day.

During zazen, with our eyes partially open, gazing softly towards the floor a few meters ahead, we sit still and sense inwardly. Having good posture helps us feel balanced and centred. Whether we are sitting cross-legged or in a chair, it is essential to keep the spine straight and weight low and centred. By paying attention to our breathing, making sure to exhale gently and fully and then inhaling naturally, we can feel more settled and clear. This helps us respond to life's challenges with greater ease and with simple awareness of the present moment.

Practicing zazen isn't about intellectual understanding; it's about experiencing our practice in our bodies. When we align our body and breath, we can experience simple, natural clarity of mind and live more fully in the here and now.



Sussokan

Sussokan is an ancient meditation practice where we sit in absolute silence and stillness and bring simple awareness to the breath. During practice, we silently count our exhalations up to the number ten and then start over. This helps to concentrate the mind and minimize distractions, aiming to experience simple inner silence and clarity.

We count each complete exhalation, essentially “exhaling” each number. The reason for counting up to ten and then starting over is so we can check our own concentration. If mental chatter or thoughts arise, we restart the count from one. Or, if we notice that we have counted beyond ten, this indicates that counting has become automatic and we are no longer following the breath.

While doing zazen, we breathe gently, openly and deeply, focusing on lengthening the exhalation without creating tension in the body nor the mind. Exhalation involves completely flattening the abdomen until no more air can be expelled naturally, followed by a gentle push to ensure remaining air is expelled. From there we release the diaphragm and inhale naturally without any added effort.

Sitting Positions

The aim with our posture is to align the body in a way that promotes concentration, reduces distractions in the body and supports energy flow. The full lotus position is considered ideal for this purpose. In this position, the feet are placed on the thighs, with the soles facing upward and the heels toward the navel. While the full lotus position offers many benefits, it's important to listen to your body and choose a sitting posture that is comfortable and sustainable for your individual needs and physical condition.

For this purpose, we present you with some options in the photos below. If you have any doubts, please contact the jisharyo. They will take a moment to assess the basics with you and provide tips to adapt to your physical flexibility, allowing you to fully dedicate yourself to the practice without having to struggle with your body. After all, zazen should not be about enduring the periods.



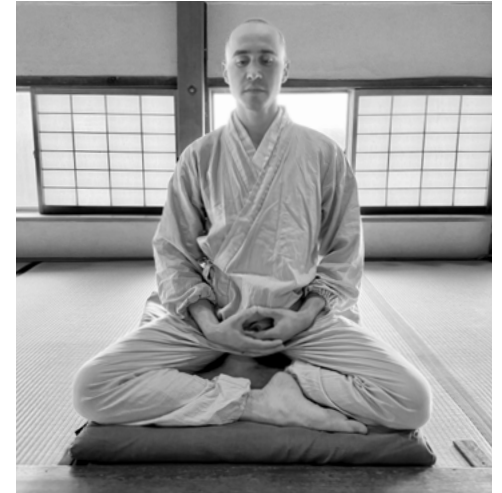
“Full lotus” position.



“Half lotus” position.



“Quarter lotus” position.



“Burmese” position.



“Seiza” position.

In our small library you will find a copy of the book “*How to do Zazen*” by our Roshi. There you will find a more detailed introduction on how best to sit zazen. There is also a video on YouTube by the Roshi entitled “*Zen—Introduction to zen practicefull version—Taigen Shodo Harada Roshi*”, in which he provides detailed guidance in many languages (via the captions).

Chanting Sutras

Purpose of Chanting Sutras

Chanting sutras cultivates our concentration and the sangha's movement in unison while connecting us to the deep roots and teachings of Zen.

Proper Approach for Chanting Sutras

We recite sutras in thankfulness and give our practice as an offering to all the teachers who came before us. Thus, chant the sutras with your ears and focus more on listening carefully than your own vocalization. In this way we will all be able to unite with the beat of the *mokugyo* (see below).

With practice, we chant the sutras whole-heartedly with a strong *tanden* voice. This comes from our true nature which is bright and without unnecessary thoughts. Thus we cut off dualistic thinking and concentrate our pure, quiet mind in the "sutra samadhi".



Prostrations

The Meaning of Prostrations

Sanpai means “three prostrations”. The symbolic significance of the position and lifting our palms in prostration lies in bowing at the feet of the Buddha and raising his feet above our heads. We are not bowing to a personal Buddha but to the Buddha nature that is equal within us all. One could say that we raise our Buddha nature above our ego, which symbolises humility and determination for our practice.

Procedure for Prostrations

In the zendo we perform three prostrations in a row after the morning sutras and again after the final sutra in the evening. Additionally, we prostrate when entering and leaving the sanzen room. The three prostrations in the zendo are announced by the joko with a sustained ringing of the inkin bell. When everyone is standing with hands in gassho, the joko strikes the inkin bell again to signal us to make the first prostration. We start by bowing in unison and then lower ourselves to our knees, placing our forehead on the ground with our hands beside our head. Then we turn our palms upwards and raise them above our ears. We keep our hands over our ears until the sound of the inkin bell ceases after a small tap. Then, we immediately stand up and wait for the signal for the next prostration. After two prostrations, the joko quickly strikes the inkin twice, signalling the final prostration. Lastly, when all are standing again, three strikes of the inkin bell signal that we all bow together in gassho and return to our seated zazen posture.



1. Standing with hands in gassho.



2. Bowing, when hearing the bell.



3. Putting both knees, both hands and then the forehead on the ground.



4. While keeping the elbows on the ground, raising the hands up above the ears. At the stopping bell bringing the hands down again.



5. Standing up and bringing palms together in gassho.

Tea

Serving, receiving and drinking tea are activities within periods of practice. Thus, tea servings are not treated as breaks or time to abandon our practice effort. We receive tea with gratitude and give the entire process our full attention.

Baito

In the morning after choka, a digestive plum tea is served. It is announced by the joko using clappers and bells. Begin by sitting in *seiza* (kneeling on your heels) and after hearing two clappers and one bell remove your teacup from your napkin and put it on the board in front of you. As the jisharyo comes towards your neighbour, hold your hands in *gassho* before lifting the cup to be served. When it is your turn, extend your cup alone if you are the first person in a line; otherwise, extend your cup leaning together with your neighbour to ease pouring. Once you have received the amount of tea you would like, signal to the jisharyo to stop pouring by raising the palm of



Extend your cup in one hand with the other palm open beside it.



When enough tea has been poured, raise your empty palm to signal the server to stop.

one hand. Once your neighbour has also been served, replace your cup on the board in front of you. After a short pause, do *gassho* and take the cup with both hands to drink.

At the close of the serving, the jisharyo will pass down the line a second time. As you are passed, bow and then afterwards, wrap your cup with your napkin and place your cup behind your cushion. After one clapper, two bells and another two clappers by the joko, please return to sitting position for *zazen*.

Sarei

When the joko announces *sarei*, take your cup and sit in *seiza*. Sweets and tea will be served using the same procedure as during the morning *baito* tea service.



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A view of the
sanzen room.

Sanzen: Role and Significance of a Master in Zen Practice

In Japanese, a master, a teacher, is someone who has walked the path ahead of you and knows its traps and difficulties well. They will show you which direction to turn and what to focus upon so as not to waste time on your way.

In sanzen you meet the Roshi individually. We have sanzen because the master's own training and development has made them able to be a mirror for our state of mind, which is very hard to perceive by ourselves. They will give hints as to how our practice should be developed, acknowledge changes and development and remind us about what is most important in life from a Zen Buddhist perspective. They will encourage you to keep going, knowing from their own experience how difficult it can be to change the habits of our mind and what it requires to do so. Traditionally sanzen is not discussed with others, because it is a deeper, personal process which is not furthered by thinking and speaking about it.

Sanzen Procedure

The sanzen procedure is as follows: upon entering the sanzen room, one performs a bow, a prostration and then another bow. Then, one approaches the Roshi, performs a bow, a prostration, and then remains seated before them. Sanzen is over when the Roshi rings the bell. When leaving, one repeats the same steps in reverse. It is important to walk backward towards the door to avoid turning one's back to the Roshi. This procedure is illustrated in the following pictures.



Entering the sanzen room in gassho and bowing at the door.



Prostrating at the door.



Bowing again at the door.



Bowing in front of the Roshi.



Prostrating in front of the Roshi before sitting in seiza.

Kinhin: Walking Meditation



Kinhin allows us to integrate motion into our zazen practice by sustaining our zazen energy and awareness while walking. About every full hour, the joko ends the sitting period and announces kinhin. It is important for all to bow in gassho and stand up right away. Once everyone in the zendo is standing, following the joko's lead, everyone bows together and files after their neighbour in the kinhin line. During kinhin please keep your hands in shasshu and do not leave a gap between yourself and the person in front of you. If you need to use the toilet, bow out of the kinhin line immediately, use the toilet and return quickly, bowing to reenter the line in your place in the line order. Because others may not yet have returned to the line when you have, it is important to notice who is a few people ahead and behind you in the line, so you can find the correct place to rejoin. At the end of kinhin, walk in the line to your cushion with your hands in gassho when you enter the zendo, then wait at your cushion with hands in shasshu. Once everyone is back in the zendo, everyone bows together and then sits down.

Keisaku

The keisaku is a special wooden stick used to hit the muscle in the area of the shoulder, twice on each side. This is done to awaken, if one is drowsy, or to release tension in the upper part of the body. Occasionally, someone will walk through the rows during a zazen period with the keisaku. When the keisaku is nearing you, you have the option to receive it by placing your hands in gassho. If you choose to receive it, you bow together with the giver. You first offer the right shoulder to the keisaku and then the left shoulder. It is important to open the corresponding muscle to the keisaku so that it can hit accurately. For this, you place your hand on the opposite shoulder, lean forward and turn your head away to maximize the opening of your muscle. You then do the same on the other side. The giver may guide you, to gently show you how to best place your shoulder. After being struck on both sides, you bow to each other again, and then the keisaku moves on.

During sanzen periods, please do not leave or enter the zendo while the keisaku is in motion.



1. The keisaku approaching.



2. Placing hands in gassho to signal the keisaku.



Bowing to the keisaku.



Exposing the shoulder muscle to receive the keisaku.



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A view of the
dining hall.

Meals and Jihatsu Use

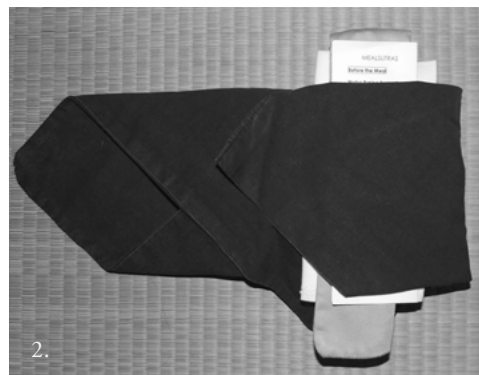
Meals are a part of a zazen period and should be regarded as part of your practice. The meal procedure is structured to allow all to receive ample food in a harmonious and quiet way in which we continue our zazen concentration. Meals should not be regarded as breaks or pauses, but as opportunities to continue to polish our minds. In this spirit, we only take what we will eat and we receive food and eat in a way that does not disturb others' concentration.

When the sangha goes to the dining hall, please bring your *jihatsu* (eating bowls, which are kept behind your place in the zendo). We always move and act as a group when going to and from the dining hall. Sit at the table in the same order as you sit in the zendo or as directed by the jisharyo. At the joko's signal, we begin the meal sutras by chanting the *Heart Sutra*. During the *Heart Sutra*, unpack your bowls in this order: the big bowl to the left, the middle one in the middle and the small one on the right side, all in one neat, straight line. Place your chopsticks on the right side of the smallest bowl, with the tips sticking out over the edge of the table. There should be nothing else on the table, with all other items neatly on your lap.

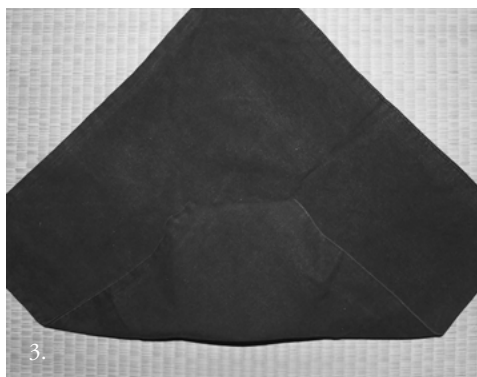
The food is passed down from the "top" of the table to the "bottom". If you wish to take from a dish, do gassho and take no more than you will eat. When taking food, consider that there are others further down the line. If you do not want the dish, bow your head to the food and help pass it down the table after those near you have helped themselves. If there are two serving utensils, place the item between yourself and the person opposite you so the food can be taken by both of you and passed on efficiently. Early in the serving, a wooden offering board will be passed down the line to you. Please place a small morsel of food on it as an offering to the "hungry ghosts" and pass it on. It will be given to the birds after the meal. While eating, bring your bowls to your mouth so that you can sit up straight.



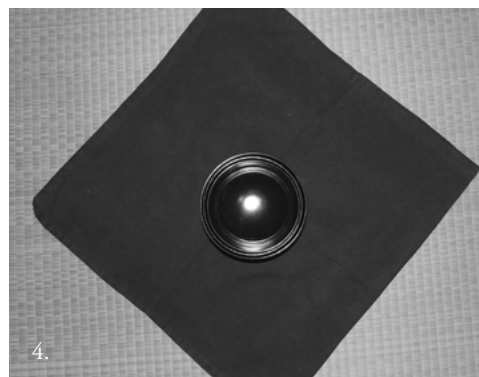
The Jihatsu package.



Opening the Jihatsu.



Loose items removed.



Fully opened covering cloth.



Unstacking the bowls.



Bowls and chopsticks placement.

An erect spine allows you to maintain meditative awareness also while eating. There is no possibility to dispose of leftovers, so please do not take any extra food. All dishes will be passed down the table three times, however the third serving is ceremonial. It is best to take the food you will eat in the first serving. As the dishes are passed, please stop eating, put your bowls down and pass the food. Do not take food at other times, only when it is being passed. Remember to take one or two pickle slices and save them to wash your bowls at the end of the meal.

At the end of the meal, hot water will be passed to you. Pour some into your large bowl to use for washing all your bowls after the clappers sound. The other bowls can be washed with the pickle using your chopsticks, dried with your cloth napkin and stacked together quietly. Leave some of the cleaning water in the large bowl for the water offering. Please be sure to eat the pickle after it has been used for cleaning and then put the chopsticks into their sleeve. When the water offering container is passed, pour some of the water from your bowl into it as an offering that will be poured on the trees and flowers, and then drink what remains. Dry the large bowl, quietly stack it with the others and put them all away in the cloth wrapper with the chopsticks, napkin and any other items. At the end of the meal sutras, a rag will be pushed down the table so that we can all take responsibility for cleaning up after ourselves. Take your jihatsu with you when you return to the zendo. While returning, move quickly to put on your shoes and maintain the order of the line entering the zendo.



Samu: Working Meditation

As we cultivate awareness during zazen (sitting) and kinhin (walking), we also incorporate work tasks into our practice. This integration allows us to deepen our mind while performing common tasks such as cleaning, cooking, or similar activities. This helps us avoid the limitation of our practice to a certain outer form: compassion unfolds moment by moment, being aware in each mind-moment of what is happening right in front of us and joyfully taking responsibility for everything.

All tools of training, including kitchen utensils, samu tools, buildings and rooms should be treated with great care. After each use, it is essential to return tools to their original place for the next user. The wisdom passed down by our ancestors teaches us to regard tools and other communal belongings as we would our own eyes—protecting them with utmost care.

During samu speaking is permitted to coordinate work, etc.

Tea with the Roshi

Each day during morning samu, there is an informal tea hosted by the Roshi. During tea with the Roshi matcha and sweets will be served. You can check your country's assigned day to join on the whiteboard in the main entrance hall. This is an opportunity for you to bring any questions that weigh on your heart to the Roshi. Please make the most of this opportunity.



The tea house
behind the main
buildings.





Reasons for and Benefits of Maintaining Silence

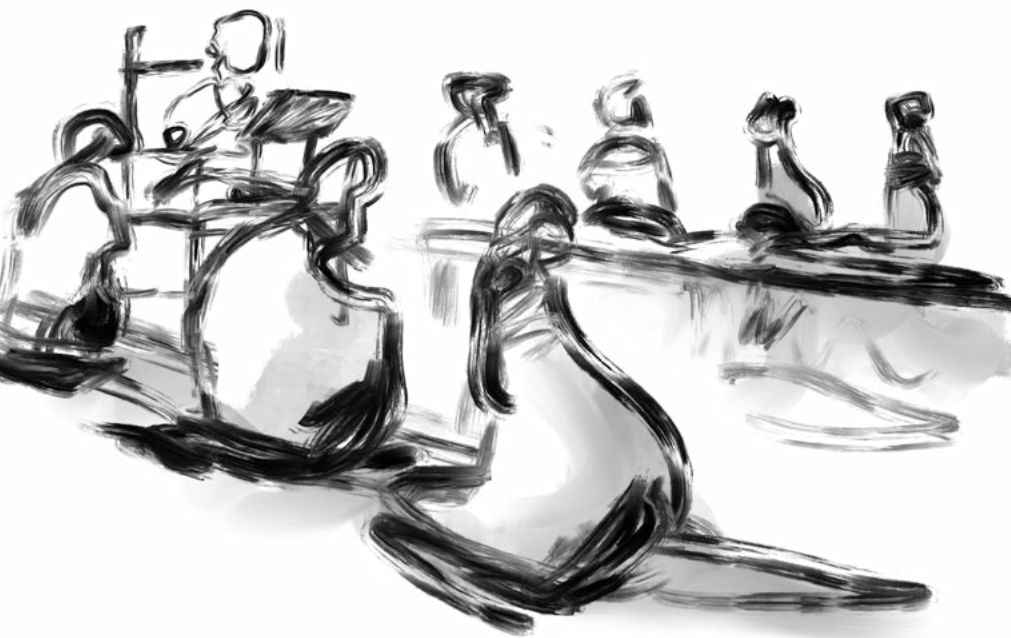
Practicing silence is of utmost importance because of our deep habit of speaking based on dualistic thinking. Thus, we practice silence during the entire sesshin in order to quieten our mind and learn to let go of speaking based on conceptual thoughts and judgements. Once this experience of inner silence becomes established, we learn to speak in a straightforward, direct, intuitive way. This usually takes many years of effort. Practicing silence does not mean adopting a new lifestyle, rather it is a fundamental, important part of Zen training.

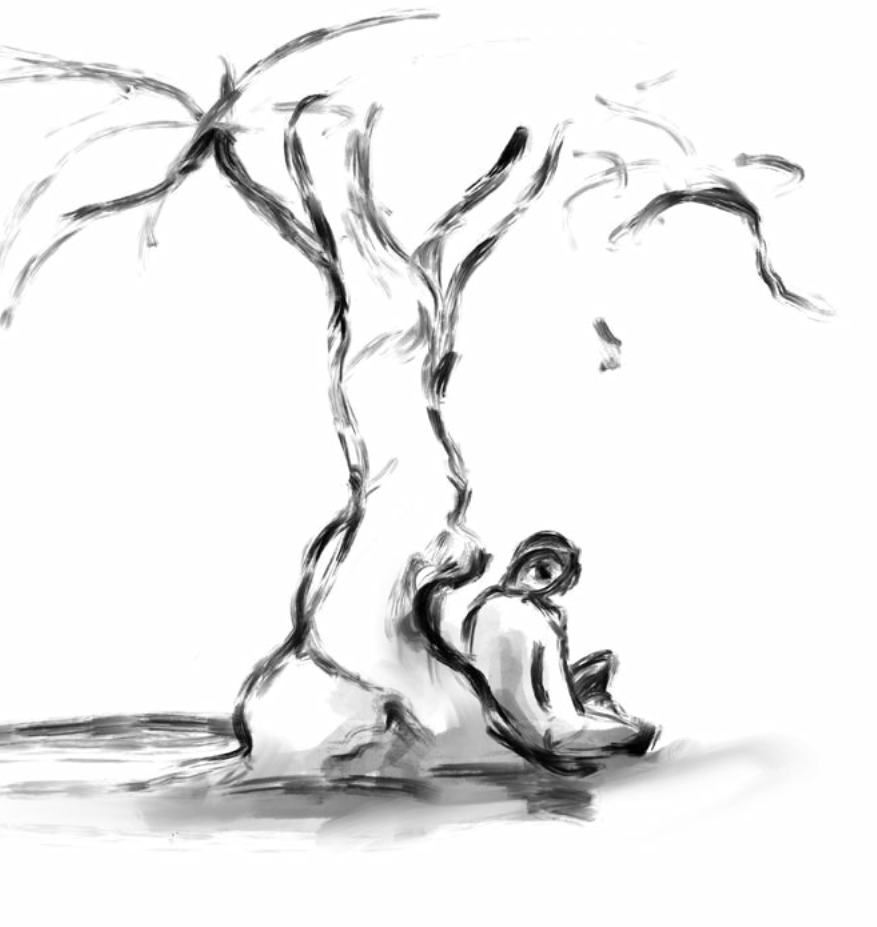
As we practice in a group, each person's practice is to be respected and not disturbed by conversation, which brings forth our mental, conceptual mind. Maintaining eye contact can also disrupt one's own and other's concentration. Therefore, we kindly ask you to respect your own and other's practice by refraining from speaking with others and looking at them unnecessarily.

If you require assistance, the jisharyo is available to help you and you may speak with them.

Teisho

Once a day we come together in the zendo for a dharma talk given by the Roshi. These talks are based on traditional Buddhist teachings and frequently include commentary on classic Zen texts or *koans*. In these talks, the Roshi is connecting these central teachings to the current state of the world and the students in his presence. It is mandatory to maintain an upright sitting position throughout the entire period. Alternatively, you may stand in front of your place. Please make any movements quietly with least possible disturbance to others' concentration. Recordings of the teishos are provided for download in the weeks after a sesshin.





Break Time

Feel free to use break times to sit in the zendo, relax, enjoy the monastery grounds, sleep or do exercises. Consider the break as an integral part of your practice, maintaining concentration and silence without interrupting others' practice. We fully discourage use of telephones and computers during this time. Tea and light refreshments are available in the designated area, and we ask that you kindly clean up after yourself.

Roles and Significance of Sesshin Staff

To ensure that a sesshin runs smoothly for everyone with minimal disturbance, specific roles and responsibilities are essential. There are eight roles that facilitate the seamless flow of activities throughout the sesshin. Individuals in these roles are experienced in their tasks, and therefore their decisions and instructions should be trusted and followed. If you have any questions or concerns, you can approach the designated person for that area or consult the jisharyo.

Joko

The joko leads the zendo and ensures that harmony and concentration prevail. The joko gives signals for the beginning and end of meditation periods and guides the group for kinhin, and meals.

Jisharyo

The jisharyos are the caretakers of the sangha. The jisharyos ensure that the flow of the sesshin is maintained, and they are the point of contact for any concerns, questions or problems. Please heed their guidance in practice procedures, flow and details.

Main Tenzo

The main tenzo is the head chef who oversees the kitchen. The tenzo gives instructions to the kitchen staff, and organizes and supervises the cooking of all meals to ensure that there is enough food for everyone throughout the sesshin.

Mokugyo Player

The mokugyo player sets the beat while the sutras are chanted. They provide the energetic rhythm which enables the sangha to chant in harmony.

Zomu

The zomu is the point of contact for all things that break or need repair in the monastery. They ensure that the monastery and tools remain in good condition.

Timekeeper

The timekeeper keeps track of the schedule throughout the day. They ring the bell each time a new activity begins. This allows the rest of the sangha to forget about time, focus on their practice and arrive on time for each activity.

Samu Leaders

The samu leaders oversee the work tasks performed during the sesshin. There is one leader for outside work and one for inside work. They allocate tasks and provide instructions during each samu period and serve as the point of contact for questions regarding samu activities.

Inji

The inji assists the Roshi. When the Roshi is having tea with the Sangha, the inji takes care of the Roshi's room.



The Altar

On the central table in the zendo, we offer the elements of water in two small cups. Incense sticks and incense powder are the offering of the air element, and a candle representing the fire element. Usually there are green pine branches and flowers in the two vases, an offering of the earthen element.

In the center you can see one, or during teisho, two wooden boards. One is always on the altar and is a memorial board with the Buddhist name of Harada Roshi's teacher Yamada Mumon Roshi on it. The other board has the name of the author of the teisho text on it. In this way we give offerings and thanks for their guidance and teachings by placing their memorial names on the altar.

There is also a book standing upright on the altar. Here you can find fotos and names of sangha members with whom we have trained together and who have died. During morning choka Roshi looks at each page and gives blessings to each person.

Before the sangha is served tea and candy, they are first offered to the altar, symbolically giving an offering to all the ancient spirits and teachers who support us on our path.



The Instruments

Han

The han is a wooden board that is struck in a specific rhythm when the daily sanzen period begins and ends. On the back of each such board, the master has painted the calligraphy “Time waits for no one”. These words, along with the rhythm of the han, illustrate impermanence and how valuable each moment is.

Mokugyo

The mokugyo, in the shape of a wooden fish, is a traditional percussion instrument played during the recitation of sutras. The mokugyo sets the rhythm and ensures that the sangha recites the sutras in unison, creating an energetic and focused atmosphere allowing people to forget themselves while chanting.

Hokku

The Hokku is a large *taiko* drum played in a specific rhythm to call the monks, laypeople and finally the master to the teisho (dharma lecture) in the correct order.

Inkin and Clappers

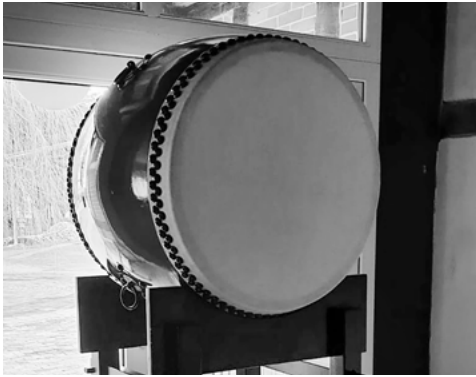
Here we have the stand with the clappers and the inkin bell, which are used by the joko to signal the beginning and end of a period of zazen. A period of zazen begins with one clap followed by four bells; a period ends with one bell and two claps. If at the beginning of a period, the bells stop after the first strike, this indicates that the keisaku will be offered during that period.



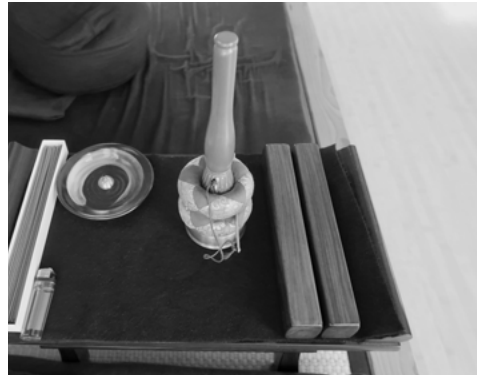
The Han



The Mokugyo



The Hokku



The Inkin and the Clappers



The Temple Bell



The Umpan

Temple Bell

This is the large bell hanging in front of the inside zendo. It is struck in the pattern: OOOoO, big big big small big. It is used to signal the different activities of the daily schedule. When you hear it, it is calling you to the zendo or signalling the beginning of samu. The end of samu is also signalled using this bell.

Umpan

This is a flat iron gong which is struck to call the group from the zendo to the dinning hall for meals. It is struck until everyone, including the Roshi, have gathered. The pattern is a slow repetition of OoOo..., big small big small, which continues as long as it takes for every one to assemble.



Rakusu and a Dharma Name

In the Zen tradition, there is the opportunity to receive lay ordination after some years of practice. The purpose of lay ordination is to directly commit yourself to the Buddha and the observance of the precepts.

If agreed with the Roshi, in the *jukai* ceremony at the close of a sesshin, you receive a Buddhist name and a *rakusu* (an outer garment, like a short apron) to wear during sesshin or when practicing.

Lay ordination is a commitment to yourself, that you will live your life in such a way that you focus on Buddha nature, on your own centre, and from there, take responsibility for every action and encounter, bringing forth compassion and wisdom, rather than being reactive to outer situations.



After Sesshin

Thank you for joining sesshin and taking these rules to heart. After sesshin, when we are back in society, we easily fall into our past habits because we have so many responsibilities and are easily distracted. Thus, to maintain the momentum of our inner concentration, we perceive all situations as an opportunity to continue our practice of awareness and responsibility from an open state of mind. This means we not only sit zazen but we practice zazen-in-action all 24 hours of the day—while we take care of our family and do our jobs. This is how we continue our training beyond sesshin. And when our cutting edge becomes dull, we join a sesshin to sharpen it once again.

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