

## Zazen

---

- Enter the zendo at left side of the door, stepping in with your left foot. Bow from the waist with hands in gassho.
- In shashu, walk along the row of cushions or chairs until you reach an open place. Face your seat and bow in gassho as a greeting to the people on either side of you (whether anyone is there or not). They will also gassho and bow.
- Turn to the right to face the room, and gassho and bow. If someone is standing across from you, he or she will bow in response.
- If you will be taking a cross-legged position (full lotus, half lotus or Burmese), sit down on your cushion, then turn around clockwise to face the wall.
- If you will be taking a kneeling position (seiza), turn clockwise to face your seat, pick up your zafu or bench, kneel down on your zabuton and arrange your zafu or bench under you.
- If you will be sitting on a chair, move around the left side of the chair and sit down.
- Three bells will mark the beginning of the zazen period; one will mark the end. After the ending bell, bow in gassho and prepare to get up.
- Turn to the right until you face the room, and stand up slowly, taking care if legs or feet have gone to sleep. Turn clockwise again and kneel down to quietly plump up your zafu and brush off your zabuton. If you've used a chair, place it close to the wall. Bow in gassho to your cushion or chair, then turn to the right in gassho. Wait in gassho until the leader initiates a bow with everyone.
- The timekeeper will announce a ten-minute break before the dharma talk. You may wait at your place or leave the zendo informally.

## Dharma talk

---

- If you don't have the opening chant memorized, take a chant book from the table near the zendo door. Keep it on your zabuton, or otherwise avoid putting it on the floor.
- Stand in front of your place in shashu. The teacher will go to the altar and make an offering, and a bell will begin to sound. Gassho and turn to face the altar. Do three full prostrations with the sangha.
- After the third bow, gassho and bow to the altar and stand in front of your place again in shashu.
- The teacher will do a standing bow to his or her seat, turn and bow with the sangha. Two rings of the handbell is your signal to sit down and open your chant book to the Sunday page, if needed.
- Hold the book upright, with the three middle fingers on the outside and thumb and little finger on the inside. If you're not using a book, put your hands in gassho.
- The timekeeper will lead the opening chant, which ends with a seated bow in gassho.
- After the talk, the timekeeper will lead three recitations of the Four Bodhisattva Vows. Use your chant book as before, or put your hands in gassho.
- The teacher will get up, do a standing bow to his or her seat, turn and bow with the sangha. Two rings of the handbell are your signal to stand up and face the altar in gassho.
- Make three prostrations with the teacher as before.
- A series of four standing bows ends formal practice. At the first bell, the teacher bows to the Buddha, while the rest of the practitioners just stand in shashu and wait. At the second, s/he bows in shashu to all the practitioners, who also bow in shashu, and s/he goes out. At the third bell, all practitioners gassho and turn to bow to Buddha, then turn back. At the fourth, all bow together in shashu.
- The timekeeper will make some announcements and then everyone helps with setup for teatime.

## World Peace ceremony

---

On the Sunday closest to the 15th of the month, we do a short service following the dharma talk.

- Move to the alcove altar and take your place in one of the lines on either side of the bowing mat. Try to line yourself up with the person directly across from you.
- If you don't have the Heart Sutra memorized, take a chant book from the computer shelf on your way to your place.
- Bow in shashu with the officiant when he or she arrives. The officiant will offer incense at the altar and the chant leader will start a rolldown on the handbell. Turn toward the altar and put your hands in gassho. Complete three full prostrations with everyone and turn back toward the center.
- Chant the Heart Sutra and dedication with everyone.
- At the first bell, the teacher bows to the Buddha, while the rest of the practitioners just stand in shashu and wait. At the second, s/he bows in shashu to all the practitioners, who also bow in shashu, and s/he goes out. At the third bell, all practitioners gassho and turn to bow to Buddha, then turn back. At the fourth, all bow together in shashu.
- The chant leader will invite everyone to offer incense at the altar. When it's your turn, move to the foot of the bowing mat and wait in shashu. When the person at the altar finishes offering and bows in gassho, gassho and bow at the same time, step to the left as he or she steps to the right, and walk up to the altar in shashu.
- Bow in gassho at the altar, take a bit of powdered or chip incense with the right hand, bring it to your forehead, and put it carefully on the hot coal in the box burner. Take a bit more and put it directly on top. Then step back a bit, put your hands in gassho, bow, step to the right and return to your place.
- When everyone has made an offering, it's time for informal tea.

## Hand positions



### Gassho

Put your palms together, with fingertips at eye level. Hands are one hand-width from your nose. Elbows are held out slightly from the body.



### Shashu

Fold your left thumb into your left palm and curl your fingers over it to make a fist. Cover your left hand with your right and hold your hands in front of you against the body, with forearms parallel to the floor.

## Prostrations

- Bow slightly, then drop gently to your knees, allowing the right knee to meet the floor slightly before the left. Keep your back straight and your eyes forward.
- Bend forward and move your hands apart, allowing the back of the right hand to meet the floor just slightly before the left. Touch your forehead to the floor between your palms.
- Keeping your palms parallel to the floor, raise your hands to the level of your ears (raising the feet of the Buddha over your head in respect), then lower them.
- Sit up, returning your hands to gassho, shift your weight back onto your feet, and stand up.



## Work days

On the second Sunday of the month we often engage in work practice rather than hearing a dharma talk.

- The 9:10 zazen period takes place as usual, and then timekeeper will make a few announcements.
- Everyone changes into work clothes if necessary and meets at the designated time at the Avalokitesvara shrine on the north side of the front yard.
- The work leader offers incense and leads three standing bows before making work assignments.
- If work practice is scheduled for the entire day, lunch will be served at about 12:30, most likely outside on the picnic tables if the weather permits (otherwise in the zendo). A rolldown on the large clappers will indicate that its time to put down tools, wash hands and come to eat. Please be as quick as you can about this, as the hungry group is waiting for everyone to arrive.
- Following the informal meal, help with cleanup as appropriate and return to your work assignment for the remainder of the day.

## A few more things to know

- It's helpful to be in your seat at least five minutes before the zazen period begins so that you can arrange yourself.
- If the bell has rung three times, zazen has begun. Please wait to enter the zendo until the period has ended and the door opens.
- Try not to move around or make noise while you are sitting zazen. If you must change your position, make a small bow in gassho to thank your neighbors for their understanding, and then move quietly. There is no need to bow after you've finished your adjustment.
- Check our homepage for information about the upcoming Sunday: who's speaking, or whether there is something else happening.
- In August there may be no dharma talk or tea on Sundays. Instead, we sit two periods of zazen only.



## Practice forms for *Sunday mornings*



9:10 Zazen • 10:00 Break  
10:10 Dharma talk • 11:30 Teatime

This brochure tells you about the forms we follow here on Sunday mornings for zazen and dharma talks. The forms themselves are not as important as the opportunity they give us to put aside self-involvement and pay attention to our actions in and around the zendo.

Please ask questions about things you don't understand so that you feel comfortable practicing here. Do your best to follow along with what's happening, but don't worry about making a mistake. All practitioners were once beginners too.

1726 S. OLIVE ST. • BLOOMINGTON, IN 47401  
WWW.SANSHINJI.ORG • ADMIN@SANSHINJI.ORG  
812-339-2635