

## Morning bows and greeting

- Be in your seat at least five minutes before the day's first period of zazen is to begin. Bring your rakusu or okesa (if you have one) and keep it at your place. If you will need a chant book for the robe chant, pick one up from the stand next to the door. Keep your book on your zabuton or otherwise avoid putting it on the floor when you're not using it.
- Five minutes before zazen is to begin, the doshi will enter the zendo. S/he will make an incense offering and bows at the altar in the alcove and the main altar before walking the perimeter of the zendo behind each of the practitioners.
- As s/he passes behind you, put your hands in gassho. Do not bow. After s/he has passed by, return to your zazen mudra. Three bells will signal the start of zazen.



## Transition to chanting service

- At the end of the second zazen period, the jikido will ring the bell once and immediately begin the robe chant. Take your robe or rakusu out of its case, put it on your head, gassho and join in the chant. If you need to read the chant book, sit up straight and hold your book upright in front of you, with the three middle fingers on the outside and thumb and little finger on the inside; otherwise put hands in gassho.
- After the chant is repeated three times, put on your robe or rakusu, take care of your place, stand up, bow to your cushion, turn and wait in gassho. When everyone is up, the doshi will start the standing bow.
- If you will not be staying for the service, this is your opportunity to make your way out of the zendo. *Please do not leave before the group standing bow.*
- The service is held at the alcove altar at the side of the zendo. Typically everyone sits on a zabuton in seiza during a service. It's easier to make bows if you're not also managing a zafu or bench. However, if you need to sit on a cushion, bench or chair take it with you to the side altar and line up along the wall or across the space in line with the doan. Stand at the foot of your mat facing the people across from you. If you need a chant book, bring that with you as well. Wait in shashu for the service to begin.

## Morning service

- The doshi will enter the space and bow in shashu with everyone. S/he will bow in gassho to Buddha and move to the altar to make offerings of incense. S/he bows in gassho and the doan begins a rolldown on the handbell. Everyone turns toward the altar and stands in gassho while ordained sangha put down their zagu. Everyone makes three full prostrations together.
- Turn back to face the person across from you and wait, standing in shashu. The doshi returns to the altar to offer incense once again and bows. Two rings of the handbell are your signal to make a small bow in gassho and sit down.
- The doshi will make three full prostrations and the doan will announce the title of the text to be chanted. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays it's the Maka Hannya Haramita Shingyo. On Tuesdays and Thursdays it's the Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra.
- Chant with everyone, sitting up straight either with your hands in the mudra used for zazen or holding your sutra book properly.
- Following the sutra, the doan will do a deadhit on the bell. That's your signal to stop vocalizing. S/he will chant a dedication of merit (eko) to the One Buddha and Two Founders. Just before the names are read, a strike on the bell is your signal to put your hands in gassho and make a seated bow to the floor. The bell following the names is your signal to sit up again.
- When the doan's pitch drops and goes up again, begin the "Ji ho san shi . . ." or "All buddhas, ten directions . . ." chant. Stop at the doan's deadhit on the bell.
- The doan announces the Dai Hi Shin Darani. Chant with everyone as before, and at the end, listen while the doan chants the second eko. Participate with "Ji ho san shi . . ." or "All buddhas, ten directions

## Hand positions

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### 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.



### Isshu

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. Turn your hands so that the back of your hand is up and the palms are down.

## Prostrations

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- 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 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.



... “ as before. When the doan begins a rolldown on the handbell, stand up, turn yourself and your zabuton toward the altar, and wait in gassho. Make three full prostrations with everyone.

- Make a small bow in gassho, turn yourself and your mat back to face the center and wait in shashu.
- At the first bell, the doshi 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.

## Following the service

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- Return your zabuton to your sitting place in the zendo, bow to your place, turn and wait in gassho until the doan initiates a group standing bow.
- Move toward the computer for a short reading from the *Shobogenzo Zuimonki* and any brief announcements. *Please do not leave before this meeting even if you will not be staying for soji (cleanup).*
- The doshi will give everyone a *soji* assignment and the doan will ring the inkin 15 minutes later to call everyone back together to bow and close the morning's practice.

Sanshin 三  
Zen Community 心

## Practice forms for

## —Weekday mornings



This brochure tells you about the forms we follow here during morning zazen, kinhin, transition to the morning service and the service itself. 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.

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