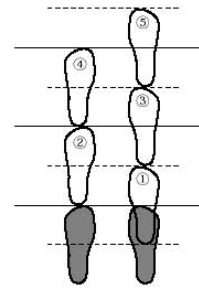


ZAZEN

- If the zendo door is closed, zazen has begun. Please wait to enter the zendo until the kinhin period.
- Step into 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 using 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 using 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.
- Try not to move around and make noise during zazen. If you must change your position during zazen, 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.
- After the ending bells, 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.
- If two bells have ended zazen, turn to the left and begin kinhin. If one bell has ended zazen and everyone has done the robe chant, move to the side altar in the alcove and prepare for service.

KINHIN

- Having turned to the left in front of your sitting place, with hands in isschu begin to walk slowly around the perimeter of the zendo
- From the waist up, your posture is the same as that of zazen. While keeping your eyes down at a 45-degree angle, make sure your back is straight and your head is up.
- Take half a step with your right foot as you inhale and exhale, then half a step with your left foot with your next breath and so on.
- Walking slowly and smoothly, as though you were standing in one place, without dragging your feet or making noise.
- Do not walk between an altar and a bowing mat. Walk around the tatami in front of the main altar.
- One ring of the handbell is your signal to stop, make as standing bow in shashu, and walk at a normal pace back to your seat.
- Gassho and bow to your seat, turn to the right and wait in gassho until the leader initiates a bow.
- Take your seat and return to zazen. Three bells will begin the period.
- If you need to leave the zendo during kinhin, wait until everyone has bowed together after zazen and turned to the left before doing so. Bow discreetly in shashu and leave carefully and quietly. There is no bow when stepping out of the zendo.
- You may return to the zendo while kinhin is in progress. Enter the zendo as usual and return to your place in line or take another open space if more convenient. Bow discreetly in shashu and start kinhin.
- If you prefer, you may enter the zendo at the conclusion of kinhin. Wait outside the zendo door until you hear the handbell, open the door and carefully enter the zendo once practitioners have finished filing past. Walk to your sitting place in shashu, bow to it in gassho, turn to the right and bow with everyone. Sit down and return to zazen.



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 and close the door. 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.*
- 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.

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.



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

- 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.



MORNING SERVICE

- The doshi will enter the space and bow in shashu with everyone before proceeding to the altar and offering incense. At the first ring of the inkin, turn your mat to face the altar and wait in gassho while those wearing okesa put down their bowing cloths. Make three prostrations with everyone. Make a standing bow and turn your mat back to face those across from you.
- The doshi will make another incense offering and at two rings of the inkin everyone sits and chants the Maka Hannya Haramita Shingyo (MWF) or Heart Sutra (TTh). Hands are in the universal mudra or holding a chant book.
- The doan will read the eko (dedication) and at the sound of the bell, everyone puts hands in gassho and does a sitting bow to the floor. At the second bell, everyone sits up and resumes the mudra.
- The doan leads everyone in the Dai Hi Shin Darani, reads the eko and begins a rolldown on the inkin. Stand up, face the altar as before and do three prostrations.
- 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.
- Return your cushions and chant book to their places, bow to your seat, turn and wait in shashu. The doan or vice abbot will lead a standing bow. Leave the zendo in order, starting with the person closest to the altar on either side of the room. There is no bow when stepping out of the zendo. File out through the door and up the stairs to the common room and line up across from the doshi for announcements and soji assignments.



Practice forms for *Weekday mornings*



This brochure tells you about the forms we follow here during morning zazen and liturgy. 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.