



Zazen+

Nothing More



Here is our form for zazen (sitting) and a brief Zen service.
This form offers a container and context for sitting.
It is a simple reflection of some traditional Soto Zen forms.

No element of this form is mandatory — it is your intention that matters.

When entering a room used as a zendo the form is to bow in gassho at the door. Then walk to your place, bow to your seat, turn clockwise and bow to those you are sitting with. Then sit. It is customary to bow to neighbours as they arrive to sit.

To mark the beginning of zazen, the inviting verse of the Han may be read out.

Great is the matter of birth and death Awake, awake
All is impermanent, quickly changing Do not waste this life

The following verse is said before the meditation bell (*which is rung 3 times*):

Sharing Merit *(said x3)*

May our intention
Equally permeate every being and place
With the true merit of Buddha's way

The merit of our sitting and practice is offered for the benefit of the whole world.

With hands in the "cosmic" mudra, we generally sit for 30 minutes. One bell marks the end of the chosen period (*bow in gassho*). Sometimes we do a walking meditation, *kinhin*, and sit for a second period. After sitting this verse is said:

The Robe Chant *(said x3)*

Vast is the robe of liberation;
A formless field of benefaction.
Wearing the universal teaching
I realise the one true nature
Thus harmonising all being

This is one of the oldest chants in the Soto Zen tradition, and asserts our commitment in zazen to the liberation of all being. (Bow in gassho after third repeat)

After standing up, this brief service may follow (*hands in shashu*)

Clarifying the Way *(said x3)*

All my ancient twisted karma,
From beginningless greed, hate, and delusion,
Borne through body speech and mind,
I now fully avow.

This is a confession of how the three poisons, greed, hate and delusion, are manifested in our lives. We avow to take responsibility for our inheritance, responses and actions.

Profound Acceptance

(Taking Refuge) *(said with hands in gassho)*

I take refuge in Buddha,
Before all Being,
Immersing body and mind deeply in the way
awakening true mind

I take refuge in Dharma,
Before all Being,
Entering deeply the merciful ocean of
Buddha's way

I take refuge in Sangha,
Before all Being,
Bringing harmony to everyone,
free from hindrance

(Bow in gassho)

These precepts affirm the basis of our practice in the three jewels of Buddhism — the teacher, the teachings, the community of students.

The Heart of Practice *(said once, hands in shashu)*

Caught in the self-centred dream, only suffering;
Holding to self-centred thoughts, exactly the dream;
Each moment, life as it is, the only teacher;
Being just this moment, compassion's way.

The Four Noble Truths lie at the heart of Buddhism and Zen practice. This expression of them was formulated by Zen teacher, Joko Beck.

Bodhisattva's Vows *(said 3 times, with changes as noted)*

Beings are numberless:

I vow to save them. {2: We... 3: This vow saves...}

Delusions are inexhaustible:

I vow to end them. {2: We... 3: This vow ends...}

Dharma gates are boundless:

I vow to enter them. {2: We... 3: This vow enters...}

Buddha's way is unsurpassable:

I vow to become it. {2: We... 3: This vow embodies it}

These vows comprise our commitment to the path of Mahayana and Zen practice.

At the end of the Robe Chant or the service, bow in gassho to your seat,
turn and bow to the others in the zendo.

When the form is complete leave the zendo,
or take a seat for dharma discussion.



"Cosmic" mudra



Gassho



Shashu



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Gassho



Shashu