

# *The Zen Group of Western Australia*

## *Orientation Notes*



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## *Introduction*

Welcome to the Zen Group of Western Australia (ZGWA). ZGWA is a community, - a sangha - that follows the Great Way of the Buddha in the tradition, teachings and cultural heritage of Zen Buddhism. This booklet provides an overview of the rituals and meditation practice of Diamond Sangha Zen as performed in the meditation hall and within the lives of the Zen sangha in Western Australia. These notes are not intended to be an introduction to the philosophy of Buddhism. They are practical instructions for the practice of Zen within a committed sangha and with an authorised teacher.



## *About the Group*

ZGWA started in 1983 with a small group of people sitting in a private home in Mt. Claremont, Perth. It is affiliated with the Diamond Sangha tradition of Zen Buddhism, which was founded in Hawaii in 1959 by Robert Aitken Rōshi. His book, "Taking the Path of Zen", is a wonderful introduction to Zen Practice, available for purchase from the Zendo. Our lineage comes from the Sanbo Kyodan (the Order of the Three Treasures), started by Harada Rōshi in Japan in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Harada Rōshi taught a unique method of Zen practice. He amalgamated the heart teachings from the two main schools, Soto and Rinzai, to make a practice suitable for lay students. The Diamond Sangha tradition uses rituals from the Soto and Rinzai schools, with mediation practices of Shikantaza from the Soto school and koan training from the Rinzai school.

Aitken Rōshi was one of the first Western students of Zen Buddhism. He studied with Senzaki Nyogen Sensei in Los Angeles in the late 1940's, travelling frequently to Japan to practice in monasteries and lay centres. He studied with Nakagawa Soen Rōshi and completed his formal Zen training with Yasutani Haku'un Rōshi, and Yamada Ko'un Rōshi. In 1974, he was given authority to teach by Yamada Rōshi, the Abbot of the Sanbo Kyodan school in Kamakura. Yamada Rōshi gave Aitken Rōshi full Dharma transmission in 1985.

The Diamond Sangha tradition follows the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism, practiced and passed on from Shakyamuni Buddha in India, through China and Japan, from Japan to Hawaii, and now to Australia. Diamond Sangha communities integrate this ancient tradition into their lives in contemporary cultures throughout the world. Drawing on the great Japanese schools, our sangha offers a rich and authentic environment for the study of Zen Buddhism. Our senior teacher is Ross Bolleter Rōshi, who supervises new Zen teachers and assists with

the founding of new groups throughout Australia and New Zealand. Bolleter Rōshi received transmission from Robert Aitken Rōshi in 1995. Ian Sweetman Sensei is the resident teacher in Perth, authorised in 2001 by Bolleter Rōshi.



The group holds formal meditation (zazen) every week and regular intensive Zen meditation retreats (sesshin) several times a year. Orientation is held for newcomers, open and welcoming to all who want to find out more about Zen Buddhism. The ZGWA has its own meditation hall (the dojo) and premises (the Zendo) in the Fremantle Port Authority precinct on the first floor of the building just behind the FPA fire Brigade. For further information, please contact us on (08) 9430 9255 or by visiting our website at: <http://www.zgwa.org.au/>

#### ***Weekly Meditation Times***

The ZGWA holds sitting meditation every Wednesday evening from 7.00-9.00pm and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday morning of the month, from 5.30-7.30am at the Zendo in Fremantle.

#### ***ZGWA Membership***

The group is funded by membership fees, weekly dana donations and by a network of members who pledge. Sesshin and zazenkai (one day only) retreats are charged separately. Concessions are available. Membership allows us to pay our teacher a small amount and to have our own venue, with a library. Membership entitles you to borrow books, have a voice on the Zen Group of Western Australia Council, copies of our magazine 'The Wobbly Pot', and priority for places in over-booked sesshin.

#### ***What is Zen Buddhism?***

Zen practice is a way of being with what is, of going into whatever presents and finding your true home. In that place you find, mysteriously, the great blue sky, the laughter of children, the pine tree with its carking crow, and indeed all beings are right there. Zazen (sitting meditation) is a way to open into what has always been present, but has been obscured by beliefs and attitudes.

Zen practice reveals that which is central to our core experience of life. In a world

of rapidly increasing change and flux, Zen practice is as relevant and dynamic today as it was 2,500 years ago, when Shakyamuni Buddha taught in North India. Through time and place, the essence of Zen remains vital and immediate – how could it ever not be! It relies on personal experience and encounter rather than on scriptures or dogma. The various practices that Zen students learn and use include breath counting, mindfulness practices, walking meditation (kinhin), “shikantaza” (sitting with ‘what is’) and koan study. A koan is a word, verse, or story from the Zen tradition that is used as a lens to see into our True Nature. Each of these meditation practices enables us to develop the ability to concentrate and experience a deeper encounter with everyday life. In this way we come to trust our own depths and to understand who we truly are.

Essentially, sincere practice is itself the teacher. We are fortunate to have a resident teacher, Ian Sweetman Sensei, who offers private interviews during meditation. These interviews (dokusan) support the student's efforts and are a source of guidance and encouragement for the Way. The sangha and teacher together help a new student begin a life-long journey of growing insight and understanding, a life of beauty.

### ***Why practice Zen?***

Zen Buddhism is a branch of Buddhism that emphasises a direct personal experience of the Buddha's teachings. The focus in Zen is on engaged practice by incorporating insight into everyday life. Shunryo Suzuki, one of the pioneer teachers who brought Zen to the West in the 1950's, said that “Zen is not some kind of excitement but concentration on our usual everyday routine”.

What is the purpose of Zen practice? Robert Aitken considers the experience of true intimacy to be the central activity of Zen. Although it has sometimes been characterised as such, Zen is not an ascetic discipline and neither is it a type of passive indulgence. As with all formative human endeavours, Zen practice involves rigour and perseverance, with an inherent quality of gentleness and beauty. In this sense it is a middle way that is not the midpoint of two extremes, rather a transformative path of balance.

Awareness of the body and its sensations play an important part in Zen practice. This is not simply a noticing of bodily aspects of experience, but rather an integration of the world of sensations and perceptions into a consciousness that is embodied and physically present. Full awareness heightens sensations, and fully felt sensations in the body increase awareness. All physical action, sensation, and perception become part of the practice. The various practices of Zen integrate the body, the physical world and the senses into conscious experience. As expressed in one Zen poem:

*If you would walk the highest way do not reject the sense domain.  
For as it is, whole and complete, this sense world is enlightenment.*

This integration enables the Zen student to be intimate with what is present. As the thirteenth century Zen master Dogen Zenji wrote:

*When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body and mind,  
you grasp things directly.*

Intimate contact with what is present brings with it freedom and potency. As a

contemporary Zen master has said: "In the zazen posture your mind and body have great power to accept things as they are". This entails a heightened awareness of the somatic dimension, and the fragility of this life.

*Life and death are a grave matter  
All things pass quickly away!*

The process of accepting reality, working with difficulty, and commitment to renewal and openness to change are central to Zen practice. It is often said that the goal of Zen is not to reach some particular experience in meditation but it is simply to follow the path. The Chinese Zen teacher Huanglong of the 11th century expressed this as: "you walk on the Way at every step, beyond that there is no Way to seek".'

The Zen practice of zazen encourages us to be present to each moment and brings us into intimate contact with what is actually experienced. Zen involves the "task of keeping yourself undivided, for it is thinking of something other than the matter at hand that separates us from reality".

*Muffled  
Through dishpan suds  
the sound of crystal*  
Irina Harford

### ***Teacher and student***

ZGWA offers dokusan, a teaching method unique in Buddhist schools. It is an opportunity for open and honest dialogue in a formal interview process with an authorised teacher. In this "meeting of two universes", there is growth and insight through encounter. Robert Aitken Rōshi has said:

*The heart of Zen Buddhism ... lies in dialogue. Such dialogue is designed for the purpose of awakening ... It is not designed to support the self esteem of either party.*

This dialogue is one where spontaneity and honesty are paramount. One of the most important words in Zen texts is the word "shin" which means heart/mind, an expression that points towards a spontaneity and honesty in thought, speech, and behaviour.

Zen students are encouraged to form a direct and personal relationship with their teacher. In time the bond may deepen, and in acknowledgment of this the two may enter a formal relationship called 'Shoken'. A shoken student has a permanent bond with a particular teacher, a bond based on Zen practice and the determination of the student to follow the Zen way as taught by that teacher. While dokusan and shoken are formal and open, the bond between teacher and student remains essentially mysterious, like a great mountain hidden by cloud.

### ***Further Information and Learning about Zen***

While direct training with a teacher and practice within a sangha is the foundation of Zen practice, there are other sources of information that may be helpful to you in getting started. Apart from these notes, a meditation recording with instructions and two timed rounds of zazen is available on cassette. The

timed rounds are lovely to use in your morning and evening practice at home. The tape is called "Zen Meditation: A Guide to the Way", available for purchase at the *Zendo*. The Zen Group has available for sale copies of "Taking the Path of Zen", which is required reading for first timers sitting a retreat. It gives an excellent grounding in Zen in a Western context. We recommend that you begin by reading the following books, and any of the other publications by these authors.

Robert Aitken: *Taking the Path of Zen* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982)  
Shunryu Suzuki: *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Weatherhill, 1997)  
Charlotte Joko Beck: *Everyday Zen* (London: Thorsons, 1989)  
Philip Kapleau: *The Three Pillars of Zen* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980)  
Thich Nhat Hanh: *Old Path White Clouds*.

We also have an extensive book and tape library of talks by our teachers that are available to members. Meditation cushions (*zafu*) of the recommended size, colour and shape are available for sale.

*Though we find clear waters ranging to the vast blue sky in autumn,  
How can it compare to the hazy moon on a spring night?  
Some people want to have it pure white,  
but sweep as you will, you cannot empty the mind.*

*Keizan Jokin*

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### The Ten Oxherding pictures (see endnote)



#### 1. The Search for the Bull

*In the pasture of this world, I endlessly push  
aside the tall grasses in search of the bull.  
Following unnamed rivers, lost upon the  
interpenetrating paths of distant mountains,  
My strength failing and my vitality exhausted, I  
cannot find the bull.  
I only hear the locusts chirring through the forest  
at night.*

*Comment:* The bull never has been lost. What need is there to search? Only because of separation from my true nature, I fail to find him. In the confusion of the senses I lose even his tracks. Far from home, I see many crossroads, but which way is the right one I know not. Greed and fear, good and bad, entangle me.

## *Where and when to practice zazen*

Daily zazen in a set place at a set time is essential for Zen practice. This is the root from which other aspects of Zen life grow and develop.

Sit at least once a day. In the beginning sit for short periods: 25 minutes at a stretch is a sensible limit. Alternate sitting with kinhin (walking meditation, see description below). To do zazen one can use a firm cushion, 30cm or more in diameter, stuffed with kapok, or a meditation bench. Place your cushion or bench on a heavy mat, at least 1 metre square, so that when you cross your legs your knees are on the mat. You can also use a chair (without the mat). When you use a chair, put a cushion behind you to support your back and keep it straight, and you may need another support under your feet.

Practice zazen in a clean, tidy room or space, not too hot or too cold (Zen is not asceticism), nor too dark or too light. Zazen does not aim at rendering the mind inactive but at calming and focusing it in the midst of its activity.

There are opportunities to practice away from your cushion. Giving attention to the person to whom we are talking or to the task at hand is practice; at one with the breath, at one with the person, at one with the task, our true nature is always revealing itself.



### **2. Discovering the Footprints**

*Along the riverbank under the trees, I discover footprints!*

*Even under the fragrant grass I see his prints.*

*Deep in remote mountains they are found.*

*These traces no more can be hidden than one's nose, looking heavenward.*

*Comment:* Understanding the teaching, I see the footprints of the bull. Then I learn that, just as many utensils are made from one metal, so too are myriad entities made of the fabric of self. Unless I discriminate, how will I perceive the true from the untrue? Not yet having entered the gate, nevertheless I have discerned the path.

## How to do zazen

The following diagrams and instructions are intended as a general postural guide for practicing zazen (sitting meditation). If you have any medical problems that might cause you concern about sitting for long periods you should consult with the appropriate medical professional.



**Full Lotus**

**Half Lotus**

**Burmese**

### Posture

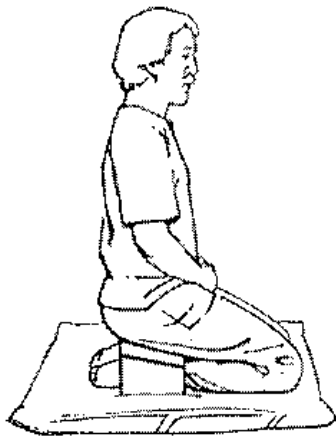
- Several postures can be used – full or half lotus, Burmese, Seiza, meditation stool or chair.
- Your legs, bottom and spine should support your upper body. Your knees should be lower than your hips when sitting on a zafu (cushion).
- We take as our model the posture of a sitting one-year-old child:- bolt upright except that the spine curves forward slightly at the waist, the belly is relaxed, while the bottom sticks out behind.



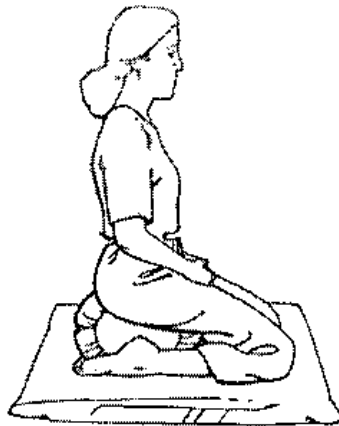
### 3. Perceiving the Bull

*I hear the song of the nightingale.  
The sun is warm, the wind is mild, willows are  
green along the shore,  
Here no bull can hide!  
What artist can draw that massive head, those  
majestic horns?*

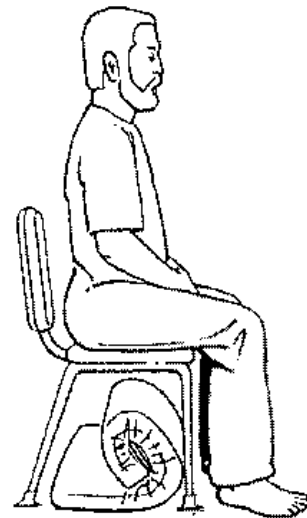
*Comment:* When one hears the voice, one can sense its source. As soon as the six senses merge, the gate is entered. Wherever one enters one sees the head of the bull! This unity is like salt in water, like color in dyestuff. The slightest thing is not apart from self.



**On a stool**



**Seiza**



**On a chair**

- d) No belts or over-tight clothing should be worn during zazen.
- e) The head is up, perhaps bent forward very slightly. The chin is gently held in; ears are in line with the shoulders, and shoulders on line with the hips.
- f) Your legs can be folded in various ways. It is a matter of finding one which suits. Great care needs to be exercised in the early stages not to injure the legs. If you are stiff, spend some time doing stretching exercises. This is especially necessary if you are doing the full lotus position (see Taking the Path of Zen, p. 17).



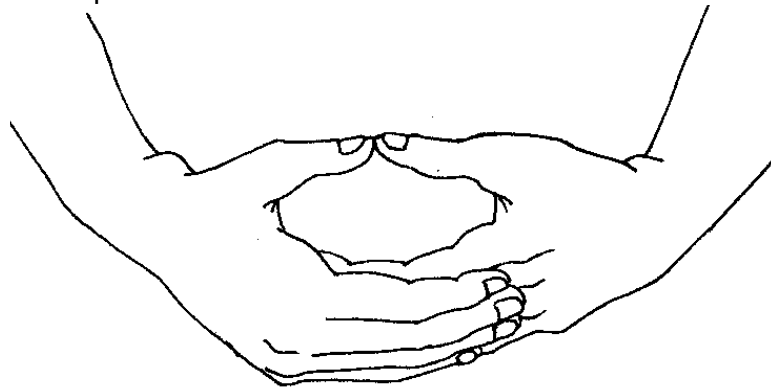
#### **4. Catching the Ox**

*I seize him with a terrific struggle.  
His great will and power are inexhaustible.  
He charges to the high plateau far above the  
cloud-mists,  
Or in an impenetrable ravine he stands.*

*Comment: He dwelt in the forest a long time,  
but I caught him today! Infatuation for scenery  
interferes with his direction. Longing for  
sweeter grass, he wanders away. His mind still  
is stubborn and unbridled. If I wish him to  
submit, I must raise my whip.*

## ***Beginning Practice***

1. When you sit down, place your feet in position, thrust your bottom back and sit up. Rock in ever decreasing arcs and lean back and forward until the body feels balanced. Check your head position.
2. Your eyes should be cast down, about 2/3 closed, and focused on a point about a metre in front of you (the hooded gaze). After a while your eyes may go out of focus - this is normal. If the eyes are closed one becomes dreamy. If the eyes are wide open one becomes distracted.
3. Place your left hand on your right with the thumbs just touching, forming an oval (the zazen *mudra*). Your hands should rest in your lap and your elbows should project a little. The zazen mudra is very important because it reflects the condition of your mind during meditation. When your attention strays your mudra tends to collapse.



**Zazen Mudra**

4. Take three deep breaths to begin a round of zazen. Then begin your practice, allowing the breath to breathe itself.

At the end of a round of zazen (25 minutes) come out of your posture and very gently and carefully stand up. If your foot is asleep wait until you can stand safely.



### **5. Taming the Bull**

*The whip and rope are necessary,  
Else he might stray off down some dusty road.  
Being well trained, he becomes naturally gentle.  
Then, unfettered, he obeys his master.*

*Comment:* When one thought arises, another thought follows. When the first thought springs from enlightenment, all subsequent thoughts are true. Through delusion, one makes everything untrue. Delusion is not caused by objectivity; it is the result of subjectivity. Hold the nose-ring tight and do not allow even a doubt.

## Ways to do zazen (forms of practice)

Please discuss these practices with the teacher or a senior student.

### 1. Counting the Breath

After taking three deep breaths at the beginning of the sitting round, sit with your back straight and count "one" for the inhalation, "two" for the exhalation, "three" for the next inhalation, "four" for the next exhalation and so on up to "ten", then return to "one" and repeat for the duration of the round. Each breath is just as it is. Some are long, some are short, some are deep. There's no attempt to make the breath rhythmic. Place your attention in the solar plexus (*hara*) about 2-3cm below the navel, or the area around the nostrils.

Although breath counting is natural, you cannot dream at it or just let it happen. Truly to meet the challenge of your rampaging mind, you must devote all your attention just to "one", just to "two". When you are breathing "one", that is all there is - when you are breathing "two" that is all there is. When (not if!) you lose the count and you finally realise you have lost it, return *gently* back to "one" and continue with the count.

When thoughts and feelings arise, acknowledge them and let them go; zazen involves neither the annihilation nor the indulgence of thoughts and feelings. Sounds pass right through. Zazen is an open practice; it goes on in the midst of daily life, and is sustained by it. When you feel confident with counting "one" for the inhalation and "two" for the exhalation and so on, try counting only the exhalations and then only the inhalations.

Even with just a month or so of practice we can focus more clearly on work, study and recreation. This begins the task of keeping oneself undivided, for it is thinking of something other than the matter at hand that separates us from reality and dissipates our energies.

Breath counting isn't the kindergarten of Zen. It is a full lifetime practice.



### 6. Riding the Bull Home

*Mounting the bull, slowly I return homeward.  
The voice of my flute intones through  
the evening.*

*Measuring with  
hand-beats the pulsating  
harmony,*

*I direct the endless rhythm.  
Whoever hears this melody will join me.*

*Comment: This struggle is over; gain and loss are assimilated. I sing the song of the village woodsman, and play the tunes of the children. Astride the bull, I observe the clouds above. Onward I go, no matter who may wish to call me back.*

## 2. Following the Breath

When you feel confident counting your breath, you can experiment with following the breath. Maintain awareness on the focal point, either the belly or the nostrils. Here you simply follow each breath with your mind's eye without allowing your attention to become diverted. That is all there is to it. "Follow" simply means to experience or to become one with.

## 3. Shikantaza

Shikantaza is a practice in which the mind is intensively involved in 'just sitting'. The attention is not specifically focussed on the breath, sound, body, feelings or thoughts. Shikantaza is a heightened state of concentrated awareness wherein one is unceasingly watchful and attentive. Simply be attentive to whatever arises. With experience this zazen ripens into relaxed yet fully attentive meditation.

## 4. Working on a Koan

In Zen a koan is a phrase or an old encounter dialogue. It is usually in the form of a question, to facilitate the arising of inquiring spirit (great doubt). Koans cannot be resolved by logical reasoning, but only by awakening a deeper level of mind. A student involved in coming to realisation normally works on a koan with a teacher. The chapter "The Koan Mu" in Robert Aitken Roshi's book "Taking the Path of Zen" is an excellent introduction to koan study.



## 7. The Bull Transcended

*Astride the bull, I reach home.  
I am serene. The bull too can rest.  
The dawn has come. In blissful repose,  
Within my thatched dwelling I have abandoned  
the whip and rope.*

*Comment: All is one law, not two. We only make the bull a temporary subject. It is as the relation of rabbit and trap, of fish and net. It is as gold and dross, or the moon emerging from a cloud. One path of clear light travels on throughout endless time.*

## *Zazen and the Way*

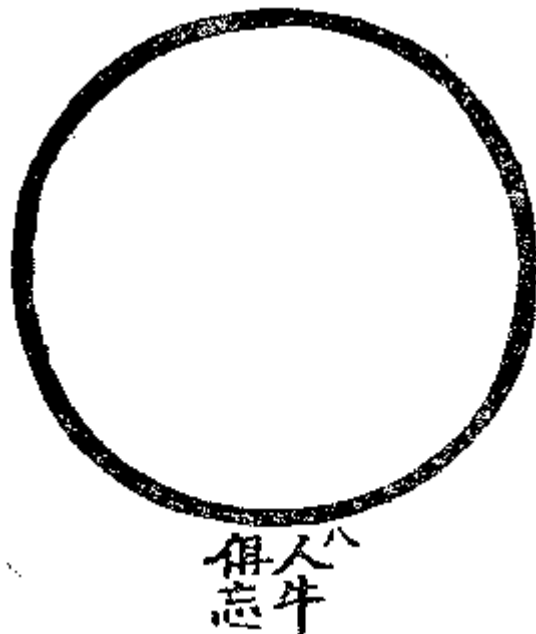
The practice of zazen develops:

- effortless concentration and the ability to focus on whatever arises;
- a richer and deeper experience of everyday life because things are set right at the centre;
- an increasing ability to trust our own depths, and to come to know ourselves.

Zazen is the means of settling the mind for the realisation of one's essential nature. Zazen is not merely a means, any more than eating, sleeping or hugging your children are a means or a method. Dogen said, "zazen is itself enlightenment. This unity of ends and means, effect and cause, is the way of the Buddha, the practice of realisation."

The points outlined above, are taken from Robert Aitken Roshi's book *Taking the Path of Zen*, especially the chapter on Method (pp. 13-25) and Yasutani Roshi's lecture on the theory and practice of zazen, pp 27-67 of *The Three Pillars of Zen*, (edited by Philip Kapleau Roshi). The reading of our notes is no substitute for studying these books, both of which are an excellent introduction to Zen practice.

Please discuss your zazen practice with the teacher.



### **8. Both Bull and Self Transcended**

*Whip, rope, person, and bull - all merge in No-thing.*

*This heaven is so vast no message can stain it.  
How may a snowflake exist in a raging fire?  
Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.*

*Comment:* Mediocrity is gone. Mind is clear of limitation. I seek no state of Enlightenment. Neither do I remain where no Enlightenment exists. Since I linger in neither condition, eyes cannot see me. If hundreds of birds strew my path with flowers, such praise would be meaningless.

## Rituals and Practices

### Entering and leaving the Dojo

Step into the dojo with your hands in gassho, make a standing bow in the direction of the main altar (Buddha), and walk briskly to your seat with your hands in the kinhin position. Bow in the direction of your cushion (Dharma), then turn in the direction of the altar and with your back to your seat, bow across the room (Sangha). Now turn around again and sit down. When leaving the dojo turn and face into the room at the door and gassho, then leave briskly. Whenever you turn in the dojo, turn in the direction towards the altar.

### Full Bow

Full bows are performed at the beginning and end of the evening sutra service, and in dokusan with a senior teacher. First make a standing gassho bow. Then straighten up and go down on your elbows and knees, forehead on the floor, with your hands resting palm-side up. Raise your palms above your bent head. (There are two stories told here. One is that we raise the Buddha above our prostrate form. The other is that we prostrate ourselves, and give up all delusions and false concepts by this gesture of throwing away.) Then get up from your knees to a standing position, with your hands again in gassho. In the dojo bows are done in threes at the beginning and end of the evening.



### 9. Reaching the Source

*Too many steps have been taken returning to the root and the source.*

*Better to have been blind and deaf from the beginning!*

*Dwelling in one's true abode, unconcerned with that without -*

*The river flows tranquilly on and the flowers are red.*

*Comment:* From the beginning, truth is clear. Poised in silence, I observe the forms of integration and disintegration. One who is not attached to form need not be reformed. The water is emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creating and that which is destroying.

## Kinhin : moving zazen

Stand up at the end of the round (signalled by two bells) and face in. When the clappers are struck, gassho, turn left and step right out. Maintain the distance between you and the person in front of you.

Hands are held in the kinhin position - right thumb in the closed palm of the right hand, and this fist covered lightly by the left hand at the level of the solar plexus, forearms held parallel to the floor. Keep your hands in the kinhin position when walking in the dojo. Your head is held erect, eyes are cast down as in sitting zazen. Zazen is continued during kinhin. It is good practice to key the steps with the breath.

## The Kyosaku

You might notice that there are two flat, narrow sticks on the altar. These are called the kyosaku. Traditionally the kyosaku is used to keep students alert through the application of two firm whacks on the shoulder muscles of the back. In the Diamond Sangha the kyosaku has been used only upon request to help students remain alert and in our dojo the kyosaku are used only to open and close the dojo and to symbolise the sword of Manjushri that cuts off concepts and delusion. They are not used to relieve muscle strain. We offer acupressure instead of the kyosaku to do this.



昭和辛卯夏  
富吉郎  
画並刻摺

十入  
金手  
鄰

## 10. In the World

*Barefooted and naked of breast, I mingle with  
the people of the world. My clothes are ragged  
and dust-laden and I am ever blissful.  
I use no magic to extend my life;  
Now, before me, the trees become alive.*

*Comment:* Inside my gate, a thousand sages  
do not know me. The beauty of my garden is  
invisible. Why should one search for the  
footprints of the patriarchs? I go to the  
marketplace with my bottle and return home  
with my staff. I visit the wine shop and the  
market, and everyone I look upon becomes  
Enlightened.

## **Acupressure**

You may notice that occasionally during a round of zazen that the kyosaku is “walked” by the monitor or dojo leader. It is at this time that you can request acupressure. Acupressure can help relieve tension in the shoulders, clear the mind and aid awareness of posture. To request acupressure perform a tea ceremony bow by placing your hands on your thighs and leaning forward as the leader walks behind you. After the acupressure is over, gassho and continue your zazen.

## **Posture**

Posture is routinely adjusted in our dojo. If you do not wish to have your posture adjusted, please let the leaders know in advance. You may have a particular reason for sitting as you do, for example, for health reasons.

## **Chanting: Sutras**

Sit facing in for chanting holding the sutra book at eye level with the thumbs and little fingers inside the book and the three middle fingers of each hand on the outside. The seiza (kneeling) position is the most suitable posture for chanting.

Zen chanting is another form of zazen. Conscious awareness of the meaning of the words is unimportant. Of primary importance is the state of the mind created by the chanting, namely absolute oneness to the point of self-forgetfulness. We chant on Wednesdays and Fridays and during all formal ceremonies. Many members come to love the chants and know them by heart.

## **Dokusan**

Dokusan is an interview with the teacher where you can discuss your practice. At the Zen Group of Western Australia, there is an opportunity to do dokusan with Ian Sweetman Sensei during most occasions where formal zazen is practiced, e.g. during the weekly zazen evenings and Sunday morning zazen. Dokusan is offered during sesshin.

The procedure for dokusan is as follows:

There is a formal queue for attending dokusan called the dokusan line. You can join the line at the following times:

- when the bells sound at the beginning of dokusan;
- when someone returns from dokusan to the Dojo
- at the beginning or end of kinhin
- when the Jisha indicates for you to join the dokusan line

Take your cushion with you when you join the dokusan line. When you are at the head of the line and the bells ring it's your turn to go to the dokusan room. If you need to speak to the Jisha for any reason while you are on the line, gassho to the Jisha who will take you to a quiet spot so you can speak without disturbing the others.

During sesshin dojo leaders and cooks have priority as they need to get back to

their jobs. If someone stands beside you at the head of the line, let them go first. Sit down again if you wish.

When you are at the head of the line, wait in place and do not walk kinhin or go to the toilet. When you hear the teacher's bell, go directly to the dokusan room. On entry, do the first bow to Kwan Yin (the Buddha) and the second to the teacher (the Dharma). Take your seat in front of the teacher. When the teacher rings the bell for you to leave, bow in a tea ceremony bow and then stand. Do a third bow to the Sangha in the direction of the dojo. Open the door for the next person to enter and close it after them as you leave.

Dokusan is a chance for creative interaction and mutual deepening. It is the teacher's intention to guide us towards realisation, not to judge us. You don't need a reason to go. Say what is in your heart. If you have nothing to say, say so; that is your presentation. All Dokusan interviews are completely confidential. Please resist the temptation to discuss your dokusan with others. The teacher's words to you may be inappropriate and confusing to someone else.

## **Conclusion**

We hope these notes help you in understanding the practices, forms and rituals that make up the outward aspect of the Diamond Sangha Zen way. They all help to dedicate one's whole attention to the real task at hand, which is to become completely intimate with the true matter of our lives.

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## **Endnote: The Ten Oxherding Pictures**

The ten ox-herding pictures shown on the preceding pages vividly show the stages in the realisation and embodiment of our true nature and reveal the deepening of insight and development of character over time. In true Bodhisattva spirit the realised person returns to the marketplace, into all everyday events and circumstances, bringing others to enlightenment. At the same time, with each step we take, all the other steps are present; as we search for the ox, we are entering the marketplace with our wine bottle and returning home with our staff.

May these pictures and texts orient us to true practice and the realisation of our true nature in the depths and shallows of the world. They can be found in "*Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*", a collection of Zen and pre-Zen writings compiled by Paul Reps [Charles E. Tuttle, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan, 1957].

Illustrations: Tomikichira Tokuriki (proprietor of the Daruma-do Teashop, Kyoto).  
Text: Kakuan (1100-1200), Translation: Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps.

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