

# ZEN PRACTICE AT HOME

Daily Service  
for  
Soto Zen  
Liturgy and Meditation

A Lay Practice manual



Taiun M. Elliston, Abbot



## INTRODUCTION

This manual has been produced to meet the needs of any serious followers of Zen who wish to establish a daily practice at home. It is based loosely on protocols and rituals followed at Zen Centers in the Soto lineage and tradition as documented by the abbot of the Silent Thunder Order and adopted for practice at the Atlanta Soto Zen Center and its network of affiliates in the USA and Canada.

The purpose of the manual is to assist anyone in adopting Soto protocols and recital of liturgy supporting their home practice of Zen, and to complement regular group practice with their local center. Some verses, such as the meal chant, allow observance in daily activities.

A set of daily liturgies is suggested, organized by days of the week, alternating the Heart Sutra with the *Hannya Shingyo* (Sino-Japanese), followed by "feature" chants selected from traditional Soto Zen liturgy from ancient China and Japan.

In the monastic model, chanting is done upon awakening, during meals, and at various times of the day, such as morning, noon, and evening. The monastic version is rather complex, and so may not be appropriate for the lay follower of Zen. The practitioner is encouraged to utilize the contents flexibly, and to develop a version of a chanting service in support of daily Zen meditation (*zazen*).

## TABLE of CONTENTS

Introduction.....	01
Daily Practice Protocol.....	02
Repentance; Refuges; Merit Transfer.....	03
Heart Sutra.....	04
Hannya Shingyo.....	06

### Daily Liturgy Feature Chants

Sunday.....	08
Monday.....	10
Tuesday.....	14
Wednesday.....	16
Thursday.....	17
Friday.....	19
Saturday.....	22

Occasional Verses.....	27
------------------------	----

### Appendixes

Chanting.....	31
Meditating (Zazen).....	32
Bowing.....	33
Setting Up a Zendo.....	34

## DAILY PRACTICE PROTOCOL

The protocols of Zen practice are designed to complement and support the central and seminal practice of Zen meditation, or zazen. Simply put, there are three parts to this process, with a beginning, a middle and an end. It has an A-B-C form: A. Before; B. During; and C. After; zazen.

Matsuoka-roshi would often say that chanting before and after the sitting period formed a kind of segue from the noisy and hectic pace of daily life into the silence and stillness of zazen, and then back out into the hurly-burly following zazen. Before and after protocols can be simplified or embellished, but cannot be eliminated completely. One cannot be sitting in meditation all the time, nor can one instantly start or stop sitting without some activity, however minimal. For example, you may wish to bathe and change clothes before zazen, or perhaps just wash your hands. Keeping the area where you meditate clean and orderly is highly recommended. A simplified approach to the A-B-C:

A. Approach altar, bow (gassho); light incense, dedicate and place in incenser and bow (prostrations optional); approach and bow to cushion, turn 180° and bow; sit and turn to face wall. When settled, ring bell 3 times.

B. Sit for the time allocated (timer or incense).

C. Ring bell once if finished, twice if walking (*kinhin*) then repeat A, B & C a second time. Rise and approach altar; bow 3 times. Chant the Repentance and Refuges verses; the Heart Sutra (or *Hannya Shingyo*); Merit Transfer; bow 3 times (with bell if available).

With repetition, this approach (or a variation thereof) will become second nature to you and supportive of your practice of zazen.

## REPENTANCE; REFUGES; MERIT TRANSFER

### REPENTANCE VERSE (x3)

All my past and harmful karma  
born from beginningless  
greed hate and delusion  
through body speech and mind  
I now fully avow

### THREE REFUGES VERSE

I take refuge in buddha  
I take refuge in dharma  
I take refuge in sangha  
I take refuge in  
Buddha the fully awakened one  
I take refuge in  
Dharma the compassionate teaching  
I take refuge in  
Sangha the harmonious community  
I have completely taken refuge in buddha  
I have completely taken refuge in dharma  
I have completely taken refuge in sangha

### UNIVERSAL TRANSFERENCE OF MERIT

May this merit extend universally to all  
so that we together with all beings  
realize the buddha way  
All buddhas throughout space and time  
all honored ones bodhisattvas mahasattvas  
wisdom beyond wisdom maha prajna paramita

## HEART OF GREAT PERFECT WISDOM SUTRA

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva  
when deeply practicing prajna paramita  
clearly saw that all five aggregates are empty  
and thus relieved all suffering

Shariputra

form does not differ from emptiness  
emptiness does not differ from form  
form itself is emptiness emptiness itself form  
sensations perceptions formations  
and consciousness are also like this

Shariputra

all dharmas are marked by emptiness  
they neither arise nor cease  
are neither defiled nor pure  
neither increase nor decrease  
Therefore given emptiness there is no form  
no sensation no perception no formation  
no consciousness  
no eyes no ears no nose  
no tongue no body no mind  
no sight no sound no smell no taste no touch  
no object of mind no realm of sight  
no realm of mind consciousness  
There is neither ignorance

nor extinction of ignorance  
neither old age and death  
nor extinction of old age and death  
no suffering no cause no cessation  
no path no knowledge and no attainment

With nothing to attain

a bodhisattva relies on prajna paramita  
and thus the mind is without hindrance  
without hindrance there is no fear  
far beyond all inverted views  
one realizes nirvana

All buddhas of past present and future  
rely on prajna paramita

and thereby attain unsurpassed  
complete perfect enlightenment

Therefore know the prajna paramita  
as the great miraculous mantra

the great bright mantra the supreme mantra  
the incomparable mantra which  
removes all suffering and is true not false

Therefore we proclaim the  
prajna paramita mantra the mantra that says

Gate Gate Paragate

Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha

## MAKA HANNYA HARAMITA SHINGYO

Kan-ji-zai Bo-sa(tsu) gyo jin  
Han-nya Ha-ra-mi-ta ji sho-ken  
go on kai ku do is-sai ku-yaku  
Sha-ri-shi shiki fu i ku ku fu i shiki  
shiki soku ze ku ku soku ze shiki  
ju so gyo shiki yaku bu nyo ze  
Sha-ri-shi ze sho-ho ku so fu sho fu metsu  
fu ku fu jo fu zo fu gen  
ze-ko ku chu mu shiki mu ju so gyo shiki  
mu gen ni bi zes-shin ni  
mu shiki sho ko mi soku ho  
mu gen kai nai-shi mu i-shiki-kai  
mu mu-myo yaku mu mu-myo jin  
nai-shi mu ro shi yaku mu ro shi jin  
mu ku shu metsu do  
mu chi yaku mu toku i mu sho tok-ko  
Bo-dai-sat-ta e Han-nya Ha-ra-mi-ta  
ko shin mu kei ge mu kei ge ko  
mu u ku-fu on-ri is-sai ten-do mu so ku-gyo  
Ne-han san-ze sho Butsu e Han-nya Ha-ra-mi-ta  
ko toku a noku ta ra san myaku san bo dai ko chi

Han-nya Ha-ra-mi-ta  
ze dai shin shu ze dai myo shu  
ze mu-jo shu ze mu-to-do shu  
no jo is-sai ku shin-jitsu fu ko ko setsu  
Han-nya Ha-ra-mi-ta shu soku setsu shu watsu  
Gya-tei gya-tei ha-ra gya-tei hara so gya-tei  
bo-ji sowa-ka  
Han-nya Shin-gyo

FUEKO (MERIT TRANSFER)

Negawaku wa kono kudoku o motte  
amaneku issaini oyoboshi

warera to shujo  
tomina tomoni  
butsudo o jozen koto o...o

Ji ho san shi ishi fu  
shi son Busa  
Mo kosa moko hoja horomi

## SUNDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. GREAT COMPASSIONATE DHARANI
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

GREAT COMPASSIONATE DHARANI (Daihi Shin Dharani)

Adoration to the Three Treasures  
Adoration to the all-seeing all-hearing One  
the One who overcomes all fear and suffering  
Adoring the One of Great Compassion  
we now recite this glorious dharani  
which purifies all sentient beings  
which fulfills the wishes of all beings  
Hail to the Enlightened the Compassionate One  
who embodies the Three Bodies  
and has the transcendental Wisdom  
Hail to the Enlightened the Compassionate One  
who saves all beings without discrimination  
Hail to the Enlightened the Compassionate One  
who sustains the highest Wisdom  
and is free from all obstacles  
Hail to the Enlightened the Compassionate One  
whose deeds reveal the purity of all beings  
Hail to the Enlightened the Compassionate One  
who wipes away the three delusions

Quick quick  
Come come  
Hear hear

A primal joy springs up in us  
O Enlightened O Compassionate One  
help us enter great realization  
O Enlightened O Compassionate One  
guide us to spiritual contentment  
Testifying to the freedom and compassion  
of the Mind of the Compassionate One  
Purifying our own mind and body  
Becoming as brave as a lion  
Manifesting into all beings  
Attaining the Wheel of the Law  
and the Lotus Blossom  
we can save all beings without hindrance  
May understanding of the mysterious nature  
of the Compassionate One prevail forever  
Adoration to the Three Treasures  
Adoration to the all-seeing all-hearing One  
May this dharani be heard

## MONDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. HARMONY of DIFFERENCE and EQUALITY
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

### HARMONY of DIFFERENCE and EQUALITY (Sandokai)

The mind of the Great Sage of India  
is intimately transmitted from West to East  
While human faculties are sharp or dull  
the Way has no Northern or Southern ancestors  
The spiritual source shines clear in the light  
the branching streams flow on in the dark  
Grasping at things is surely delusion  
according with sameness is still not enlightenment  
All the objects of the senses transpose  
and do not transpose  
Transposing they are linked together  
not transposing each keeps its place  
Sights vary in quality and form  
sounds differ as pleasing or harsh  
Darkness merges refined and common words  
brightness distinguishes clear and murky phrases  
The four elements return to their natures  
just as a child turns to its mother  
When even for a moment you express

Fire heats wind moves  
water wets earth is solid  
in the light of dawn it is hidden  
It is a standard for all things  
its use removes suffering  
Although it is not constructed  
it is not beyond words  
Like facing a precious mirror  
form and reflection behold each other  
You are not it but in truth it is you  
Like a newborn child  
it is fully endowed with five aspects  
No going no coming no arising no abiding  
“Baba wawa” is anything said or not?  
In the end it says nothing  
for the words are not yet right  
In the hexagram “double fire”  
when main and subsidiary lines are transposed  
Piled up they become three  
the permutations make five  
Like the taste of the five-flavored herb  
like the five-pronged vajra  
Wondrously embraced within the complete  
drumming and singing begin together  
Penetrate the source and travel the pathways  
embrace the territory and treasure the roads

You would do well to respect this do not neglect it  
Natural and wondrous  
it is not a matter of delusion or enlightenment  
Within causes and conditions time and season  
it is serene and illuminating  
So minute it enters where there is no gap  
so vast it transcends dimension  
A hairsbreadth deviation and you are out of tune  
Now there are sudden and gradual  
in which teachings and approaches arise  
With teachings and approaches distinguished  
each has its standard  
Whether teachings and approaches  
are mastered or not  
reality constantly flows  
Outside still and inside trembling  
like tethered colts or cowering rats  
the ancients grieved for them  
and offered them the dharma  
Led by their inverted views  
they take black for white  
When inverted thinking stops  
the affirming mind naturally accords  
If you want to follow in the ancient tracks  
please observe the sages of the past

One on the verge of realizing the buddha way  
contemplated a tree for ten kalpas  
Like a battle-scarred tiger  
like a horse with shanks gone grey  
Because some are vulgar  
jeweled tables and ornate robes  
Because others are wide-eyed  
cats and white oxen  
With his archer's skill  
Yi hit the mark at a hundred paces  
But when arrows meet head-on  
how could it be a matter of skill?  
The wooden man starts to sing  
the stone woman gets up dancing  
It is not reached by feelings or consciousness  
how could it involve deliberation?  
Ministers serve their lords  
children obey their parents  
Not obeying is not filial  
failure to serve is no help  
With practice hidden function secretly  
like a fool like an idiot  
Just to continue in this way  
is called the host within the host



## TUESDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. PRECIOUS MIRROR SAMADHI
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

### PRECIOUS MIRROR SAMADHI (*Hokyo Zammai*)

The dharma of thusness  
is intimately transmitted  
by buddhas and ancestors  
Now you have it preserve it well  
A silver bowl filled with snow  
a heron hidden in the moon  
Taken as similar they are not the same  
not distinguished their places are known  
The meaning does not reside in the words  
but a pivotal moment brings it forth  
Move and you are trapped  
miss and you fall into doubt and vacillation  
Turning away and touching are both wrong  
for it is like a massive fire  
Just to portray it in literary form  
is to stain it with defilement  
In darkest night it is perfectly clear  
Eye and sights ear and sounds  
nose and smells tongue and tastes

Thus for each and every thing  
according to the roots the leaves spread forth  
Trunk and branches share the essence  
revered and common each has its speech  
In the light there is darkness  
but don't take it as darkness  
In the dark there is light  
but don't see it as light  
Light and dark oppose one another  
like the front and back foot in walking  
Each of the myriad things has its merit  
expressed according to function and place  
Existing phenomenally  
like box and cover joining  
according with principle  
like arrow points meeting  
Hearing the words understand the meaning  
don't establish standards of your own  
Not understanding the Way before your eyes  
how do you know the path you walk?  
Walking forward is not a matter of far or near  
but if you are confused  
mountains and rivers block your way  
I respectfully urge you who study the mystery  
don't pass your days and nights in vain

## WEDNESDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. KANNON SUTRA / EN MEI JUKKU KANNON GYO
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

### KANNON (COMPASSION) SUTRA (x7)

Kanzeon praise to buddha  
all are one with buddha  
all awake to buddha  
buddha dharma sangha  
eternal joyous selfless pure  
through the day Kanzeon  
through the night Kanzeon  
this moment arises with mind  
this moment itself is mind

### EN MEI JUKKU KANNON GYO (x7)

Kanzeon na mu butsu  
yo butsu u in  
yo butsu u en  
bup po so en jo raku ga jo  
cho nen Kanzeon  
bo nen Kanzeon  
nen nen ju shin ki  
nen nen fu ri shin

## THURSDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. LOVING KINDNESS SUTRA
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

### LOVING KINDNESS SUTRA (*Metta Sutta*)

This is what may be accomplished  
by the one who is wise  
who seeks the good and has obtained peace  
Let one be strenuous upright and sincere  
without pride easily contented and joyous  
let one not be submerged  
by the things of the world  
Let one not take upon oneself  
the burden of riches  
let one's senses be controlled  
let one be wise but not puffed up  
let one not desire great possessions  
even for one's family  
Let one do nothing that is mean  
or that the wise would reprove  
May all beings be happy  
May they be joyous and live in safety  
All living beings whether weak or strong  
in high or middle or low realms of existence

small or great visible or invisible  
near or far born or to be born  
may all beings be happy  
Let no one deceive another  
nor despise any being in any state  
let none by anger or hatred wish harm to another  
Even as a mother at the risk of her life  
watches over and protects her only child  
so with a boundless mind  
should one cherish all living things  
suffusing love over the entire world  
above below and all around without limit  
so let one cultivate an infinite good will  
toward the whole world  
Standing or walking sitting or lying down  
during all one's waking hours  
let one cherish the thought  
that this way of living is the best in the world  
Abandoning vain discussion  
having a clear vision  
freed from sense appetites  
one who realizes the way  
will never again know rebirth  
in the cycle of creation of suffering  
for ourselves or for others

## FRIDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. DOGEN'S VOW
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

DOGEN'S VOW (*Eihei Koso Hotsuganmon*)

We vow with all beings from this life on  
throughout countless lives  
to hear the true dharma  
that upon hearing it  
no doubt will arise in us  
nor will we lack in faith  
that upon meeting it  
we shall renounce worldly affairs  
and maintain the buddha dharma  
and that in doing so the great earth  
and all beings together  
will attain the buddha way  
Although our past evil karma  
has greatly accumulated  
indeed being the cause and condition  
of obstacles in practicing the way  
may all Buddhas and Ancestors  
who have attained the buddha way  
be compassionate to us  
and free us from karmic effects

may they share with us their compassion  
which fills the boundless universe  
with the virtue of their enlightenment and teachings  
Buddhas and Ancestors of old were as we  
we in the future shall be Buddhas and Ancestors  
revering Buddhas and Ancestors  
we are one Buddha and one Ancestor  
awakening Bodhimind we are one Bodhimind  
because they extend their compassion to us  
freely and without limit  
we are able to attain budhahood  
and let go of the attainment  
Therefore the Ch'an master Lung-ya said  
"Those who in past lives were not enlightened  
will now be enlightened  
In this life save the body  
it is the fruit of many lives  
Before Bud-dhas were enlightened  
they were the same as we  
Enlightened people of today  
are exactly as those of old"  
Quietly explore the farthest reaches  
of these causes and conditions  
as this practice is the exact transmission  
of a verified Buddha

repenting in this way one never fails to receive  
profound help from all Buddhas and Ancestors  
by revealing and disclosing  
our lack of faith and practice before the Buddha  
we melt away the root of transgressions  
by the power of our repentance  
this is the true and simple color of true practice  
of the true mind of faith of the true body of faith



Master Eihei Dogen (1200-1253)

## SATURDAY LITURGY

1. REPENTANCE (x3); REFUGES
2. HEART OF WISDOM / HANNYA SHINGYO
3. SELF-FULFILLING SAMADHI; NEEDLE OF ZAZEN
4. TRANSFER OF MERIT

### SELF-FULFILLING SAMADHI (*Jijuyu Zammai*)

Now all ancestors and all buddhas  
who uphold buddhadharma  
have made it the true path of enlightenment  
to sit upright practicing in the midst of  
self-fulfilling samadhi  
Those who attained enlightenment  
in India and China followed this way  
It was done so because teachers and disciples  
personally transmitted this excellent method  
as the essence of the teaching  
In the authentic tradition of our teaching  
it is said that this directly transmitted  
straightforward buddhadharma  
is the unsurpassable of the unsurpassable  
From the first time you meet a master  
without engaging in incense offering bowing  
chanting Buddha's name repentance or reading  
scriptures you should just wholeheartedly sit  
and thus drop away body and mind

the Buddha's seal in the three actions  
by sitting upright in samadhi  
the whole phenomenal world becomes the  
Buddha's seal and the entire sky  
turns into enlightenment  
Because of this all buddha tathagatas  
as the original source increase their dharma bliss  
and renew their magnificence  
in the awakening of the way  
Furthermore all beings in the ten directions and  
the six realms including the three lower realms  
at once obtain pure body and mind  
realize the state of great emancipation  
and manifest the original face  
At this time all things realize correct awakening  
myriad objects partake of the buddha body  
and sitting upright under the bodhi tree  
you immediately leap beyond  
the boundary of awakening  
At this moment you turn the dharma wheel  
and expound the profound wisdom  
ultimate and unconditioned  
Because such broad awakening resonates  
back to you and helps you inconceivably  
you will in zazen unmistakably drop off

body and mind cutting off the various  
defiled thoughts from the past and  
realize the essential buddhadharma  
Thus you will raise up buddha activity at  
This being so the zazen of even one person at  
one moment imperceptibly accords with all things  
and fully resonates through all time  
Thus in the past future and present of  
the limitless universe this zazen carries on  
the Buddha's teaching endlessly  
Each moment of zazen is equally wholeness  
of practice equally wholeness of realization  
This is not only practice while sitting  
it is like a hammer striking emptiness  
before and after its exquisite peal  
permeates everywhere  
how can it be limited to this moment?  
Hundreds of things all manifest original practice  
from the original face  
it is impossible to measure  
Know that even if all buddhas  
of the ten directions  
as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges  
exert their strength and with the buddhas' wisdom  
try to measure the merit of one person's zazen  
they will not be able to fully comprehend it

#### ACUPUNCTURE NEEDLE OF ZAZEN (Zazenshin)

The essential-function of buddhas  
and the functioning-essence of ancestors  
Being actualized within non-thinking  
Being manifested within non-interacting  
Being actualized within non-thinking  
the actualization is by nature intimate  
Being manifested within non-interacting  
the manifestation is itself verification  
The actualization that is by nature intimate  
never has defilement  
The manifestation that is by nature verification  
never has distinction between  
Absolute and Relative  
The Intimacy without defilement  
is dropping off without relying on anything  
Verification beyond distinction between  
Absolute and Relative  
is making effort without aiming at it  
The water is clear to the earth  
a fish is swimming like a fish  
The sky is vast and extends to the heavens  
a bird is flying like a bird



Rev. Dr. Soyu Matsuoka-roshi (1912-1997)

## OCCASIONAL VERSES

### MEAL VERSE

We reflect on the efforts  
that brought us this food  
and consider how it comes to us  
We reflect on our virtue and practice  
and whether we are worth of this offering  
We regard greed as the obstacle  
to freedom of mind  
We regard this meal as medicine  
to sustain our life  
For the sake of enlightenment  
we now receive this food

First this is for the Three Treasures  
Next for the four benefactors  
Finally for the beings in the six realms  
May all be equally nourished

The first portion is to end all evil  
The second is to cultivate every good  
The third is to free all beings  
May everyone realize the buddha way

OPENING DHARMA VERSE

The unsurpassed profound and wondrous dharma  
Is rarely met with  
even in a hundred thousand million kalpas  
Now we can see and hear it  
accept and maintain it  
May we unfold the meaning  
of the Tathagata's truth

CLOSING DHARMA VERSE (X3) [4 VOWS]

Beings are numberless  
I vow to free them  
Delusions are inexhaustible  
I vow to end them  
Dharma gates are boundless  
I vow to enter them  
The buddha way is unsurpassable  
I vow to realize it

ROBE VERSE

How great the robe of liberation  
a formless field of merit  
wrapping ourselves in Buddha's teaching  
we free all living beings

TAKKESA GE (x2)

Dai sai gedap-puku  
muso fuku den e  
hi bu Nyorai kyo  
ko do shoshu jo

TISSARANA

Buddham saranam gachami  
Dhammam saranam gachami  
Sangham saranam gachami

Dutyampi Buddham saranam gachami  
Dutyampi Dhammam saranam gachami  
Dutyampi Sangham saranam gachami

Tatyampi Buddham saranam gachami  
Tatyampi Dhammam saranam gachami  
Tatyampi Sangham saranam gachami





## APPENDIX I - Chanting

### CHANTING WITH A GROUP

That chanting with a group is different from chanting alone goes without saying. When chanting with a group, it is best to "chant with the ears, not with the mouth" as Matsuoka-roshi used to say. This means we listen to the others, especially when taking a breath, and our voice, volume and tempo come into harmony with the group. This is facilitated by the accompanying drum and gongs usually present in Zen centers.

### CHANTING ALONE

Chanting alone is largely a matter of finding one's own voice by adapting to the natural phrasing of the words in harmony with the breath. Chanting with the voice unaccompanied (a cappella) is also very different from the experience with the group.

### REPETITION

Begin by simply reading aloud the feature chants, then gradually feel out the rhythm as suggested by the phrasing. Eventually you will find a natural pace and tone, as familiarity with the chants and your confidence increase.

### POSTURE & PRONUNCIATION

Usually chanting is done formally in the kneeling (*seiza*) posture, but standing is also proper. The older chants in Sino-Japanese or phonetic Sanskrit are more difficult until you have learned correct pronunciation. (We are preparing CDs and DVDs to facilitate distance learning of these.)

### MEANING

Remember, as Matsuoka-roshi used to say, the meaning of the chanting is in the chanting itself. One does not need to understand the content; it will sink in naturally over time. Nor does one need to try to be perfect. Just do your best, and contact us for instruction.

## APPENDIX II - Meditating (*Zazen*)

It is best to get Zen meditation (*zazen*) instructions in person, from a qualified teacher. However, as a brief reminder for home practice, please remember the basics:

### SPACE

Sit in a clean and quiet place and at a time you are not likely to be distracted by telephone, visitors, et cetera.

### TIME

There is no one-size-fits-all formula, but most people seem to arrive at an average of sitting once or twice a day (e.g. morning and evening) for a half-hour to an hour or so each time. If you wonder if you are sitting enough, you are probably not.

### POSTURE

Sit upright as comfortably as you can without slumping. Sit on a cushion cross-legged or kneeling, on a bench, or on a chair. The most important thing is that the head neck and back be straight. Let the gaze become fixed on a point in space some 3-9 feet in front of you, eyes about half open, teeth touching but not clinched.

### BREATH

Breathe deeply without forcing it; find the natural breath. Count the cycles in a simple way and follow the breath into the lower abdomen and back out the nostrils.

### ATTENTION

Let the attention open up to all sensation, perception, et cetera. Let thoughts come, but also let them go. Return the attention to the posture and breath until all three come together in a unified way. This is the "real *zazen*" according to Matsuka-roshi.

## APPENDIX III - Bowing

The bows that are called for in the protocols do not represent a form of prayer or obsequiousness. They represent an attitude of respect and gratitude for being able to practice. They function to help train us in mindfulness not only of the present moment but also the meaning of this moment according to Buddhism.

### STANDING BOW

Bows can be either standing or in prostration form. For the former simply stand straight with the feet close together and aligned, the hands palm-to-palm (*gassho*) with the thumbs at about the level of the chin, and incline the body forward slightly (about 10°). The bow should not be quick or exaggerated.

### PROSTRATION

Prostration bows, or *sanpai* (3 bows) are usually done formally as part of community service protocols. They are called "5-point" bows because the elbows, knees, and the forehead touch the mat. Move as gracefully as you can when going down and rising up. Pay attention to the breath — e.g:

1. Inhale while standing
2. Exhale dropping to the knees
3. Inhale sliding elbows forward, forehead touches mat
4. Pause with hands raised palm-up at level of the ears
5. Exhale sliding elbows back
6. Inhale and rise to standing position

Each prostration bow then has three breath cycles; repeat. For further practice and instruction, please join in bowing at your local center.

## APPENDIX IV - Setting up a Zendo

For home practice it is best if you can dedicate a space for your own *zendo*, however small.

### LOCATION

Choose a place in your home that you know to be somewhat isolated and private. It can be outdoors if screened to protect from insects, clean, and in a quiet part of the grounds. Fresh air and moderatelight and temperature are of utmost importance.

### FURNISHINGS

In addition to the quietness and cleanliness of your place for sitting you may want to have certain items on hand to support your practice. Many people replicate the environment and atmosphere of the Zen center to the degree reasonable and feasible. For a few examples, you may want to include:

- Sitting mat (*zabuton*) and cushion (*zafu*)
- Kneeling bench (*seiza*)
- Timer (if not using stick incense)
- Altar with or without Buddha or other image, and:
  - Incense and holder
  - Candle(s)
  - Water bowl
  - Flower vase

These items can usually be purchased through your local center or on-line. You may wish to commission the design and building of custom zendo furnishings; if so, contact Taiun Sensei at:

[edai@earthlink.net](mailto:edai@earthlink.net)

If you have any questions or comments about Zen Buddhism, its meditation and daily practice liturgy as we have outlined in this manual, contact Taiun M Elliston at:

[edai@earthlink.net](mailto:edai@earthlink.net)

Information concerning Zen centers affiliated with the Silent Thunder Order (founding teacher Rev. Soyu Matsuoka-roshi - 1912-1997) can be found at the web site of the home temple, the Atlanta Soto Zen Center:

[www.aszc.org](http://www.aszc.org)

Typography in this manual is designed to be chanted aloud and is set in Arial Narrow 18 point typeface with content broken by phrasing, centered on the page to optimize readability; greyed-out phrases are not chanted aloud (e.g. titles are usually chanted solo by the chant leader at Zen centers)

