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STONE  
WATER  
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SANGHA

## **Form Guide**

# StoneWater Zen Sangha Form Guide

<b>Keizan Sensei on form</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Introduction to the Guide</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Part One: Essentials</b>	<b>5</b>
➤ <b>Entering the zendo</b>	<b>6</b>
➤ <b>Sitting in the zendo</b>	<b>7</b>
➤ <b>Kin-Hin</b>	<b>8</b>
➤ <b>Interviews</b>	<b>9</b>
➤ <b>Teacher's entrance and exit</b>	<b>10</b>
➤ <b>An Introduction to Service</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Part Two: Setting up and Key Roles</b>	<b>14</b>
➤ <b>The Altar, Layout of the zendo</b>	<b>15</b>
➤ <b>Key Roles in the zendo</b>	<b>16</b>
➤ <b>Jikido</b>	<b>16</b>
➤ <b>Jisha</b>	<b>18</b>
➤ <b>Chiden, Usher, Monitor</b>	<b>19</b>
➤ <b>Service Roles</b>	<b>20</b>
➤ <b>Ino</b>	<b>20</b>
➤ <b>Doan</b>	<b>22</b>
➤ <b>Mokugyo</b>	<b>23</b>
➤ <b>Dennan, Jiko</b>	<b>24</b>
➤ <b>Sogei</b>	<b>25</b>
➤ <b>Glossary</b>	<b>26</b>
➤ <b>Sources</b>	<b>28</b>

## **Keizan Sensei on form**

This Form Guide is intended as a template that can be used by all StoneWater Zen sangha members and groups associated with StoneWater such that we can, all together, maintain a uniformity and continuity of practice.

The form that we use in the zendo and for Zen ceremonies is an important part of our practice. Ceremony, from the Latin meaning 'to cure,' acts as a reminder of how much there is outside of our own personal concerns and allows us to reconnect with the profundity of life and to show our appreciation of it.

Form is a vehicle you can use for your own realisation rather than something you want to make fit your own views. To help with this it is useful to remember that the structure though fixed is ultimately empty. Within meditation and ceremony form facilitates our moving physically and emotionally from our usual outward looking personal concerns to the inner work of realisation and change.

The form we use is not right or wrong or better or worse than other forms, it is just what we do. By following the same procedures day after day and giving each action our full attention and care we can develop a way of being that illuminates that we are all Buddha in essence. We can then take that into all our daily activities.

May your practice go well.

**Keizan Sensei**

**September, 2012.**

NB. Thank you to John Suigen Kenworthy, other members of StoneWater and Yugen at Yokoji Zen Mountain Center for their contribution to the creation of this guide.

## Introduction

Direct observation and regular interaction with the teacher and between members of the sangha remain the essential factors in the maintenance and development of Zen form and liturgy. However, for many people in a lay sangha, opportunities to observe and practise together may only be available on retreat or sesshin, once or twice a year. Even for those who have the benefit of attending a local sitting group or Zen centre, practising the forms and service positions may only occur once a week.

This guide is an attempt to create a written record and common reference for the various forms and liturgy that are currently used in the StoneWater Zen Sangha. It draws on various sources, particularly from the White Plum traditions, and especially from Yokoji Zen Mountain Center. (See sources).

The guide is in two parts which can be used separately.

**Part One** is aimed at people who are new to formal practice or sesshin procedure.

**Part Two** is relevant to people who are managing the zendo or learning specific zendo or service positions.

**Notes:** Where specific terms are used for the first time, these appear in *italics* (followed by a short description). Otherwise, please refer to the Glossary.

For convenience the pronoun 'He' is used throughout when referring to the teacher as, so far, we only have male teachers in the StoneWater Zen sangha.

## John, Suigen

### **Maezumi Roshi and Glassman Roshi 'On Zen Practice'**

*"There are two ways of looking at rituals. On the one hand rituals are an expression of our inner state. And on the other hand we strengthen and reinforce our inner state by these external actions. Of course, in reality there are not two things, but rather a unified whole. As we practice together sincerely we become increasingly aware that such notions as internal and external cannot be separated."*



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STONE  
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## **Form Guide**

### **Part One: Essentials**

## Entering the zendo

Before entering, phones and any alarms should be switched off. Remove your shoes and place them carefully where they will not be an obstruction to others. Step to the threshold of the *zendo* (a place set aside for the practice of *zazen*) and bow in *gassho* (palms together) in the direction of the altar.

Walk to your seat quietly but at a moderate pace. When walking in the zendo, your hands should be held in *shashu* (hands folded).

It is usual to walk round the outer circle of the zendo to your seat. If you cross the *ryoban* (traditionally, the seats for the senior training and admin positions, arranged either side of the *hashiki* but for our purposes, effectively, the central axis of the zendo), make a small standing bow, hands still in *shashu*.

Never walk between the *hashiki* (teacher's bowing mat) and the altar.

On arriving at your place, bow to your seat in *gassho*. Assuming that they are already seated, your two immediate neighbours should return your bow.

Turn and bow to the seat directly opposite you. Your opposite number should return the bow.

## On sesshin or retreat

*Three prolonged runs on the clappers announce the start of a block of sittings. The exception is early morning sitting when there is one single, loud clap five to ten minutes before the teacher's entry.*

*Aim to be in the zendo for the early morning sitting at least five minutes before the teacher's formal entry. If you are late find somewhere quiet to sit outside and join during fast kin-hin (walking meditation: see section on kin-hin).*

*For other sitting periods of the day, aim to arrive in the zendo at least five minutes before the start of *zazen*, announced by the *kesu* (large bell). Again if you are late, wait until fast kin-hin to join.*

*If for any reason (such as illness) you are unable to join a sitting period you should tell the *jikido* (time keeper) as soon as possible. General tiredness is not usually seen as a valid reason for missing a period.*

## **Sitting in the Zendo**

Once seated comfortably on your *zafu (cushion)* or seat try to sit as still as possible for the full period of zazen.

Each period of sitting is marked by three strikes of the kesu and ends with two strikes to signal kin-hin or one to mark the end of a block of sitting periods. The jikido will usually announce what is due to happen next, for example "prepare for service" or "supper".

If you do need to move, for example, to relieve pain or cramp, do so as quickly and quietly as possible.

If you need to cough or sneeze, raise one of your elbows and cough into the crook of your arm. This helps to reduce the potential spread of airborne viruses.

Avoid scratching, wriggling, sniffing, heavy breathing, yawning, sleeping or snoring and certainly never look at your watch! (it's usually disappointing anyway).

Keep any necessary movement to a minimum. It is useful to remember that we meditate with eyes half open so repeated body, head or arm movements can become a real distraction to your neighbours (and yourself).

### ***On sesshin or retreat***

*Long periods of sitting over several days are a challenge for the body and mind. If you are struggling to sit comfortably, try different or additional cushions or maybe a chair. Ask for advice and don't suffer in silence!*

*Dehydration can be a problem and commonly gives rise to tension headaches. Take plenty of fluids through the day.*

*In the early morning, low blood sugar levels can create a feeling of dizziness. Taking a biscuit or piece of fruit before the first sitting usually helps.*

*Anyone experiencing problems with heating, ventilation etc in the zendo should approach the jikido rather than make any adjustments themselves.*

*Anyone who intends to leave the zendo or miss a sitting should inform the jikido as a matter of courtesy and personal safety.*

## **Kin-hin.**

Kin-hin is walking meditation and is also a welcome opportunity to stretch the legs and generally increase circulation. The aim is to maintain a meditative state whilst walking in line around the zendo. Typically we walk slowly for four minutes and then quickly for another four minutes. The jikido signals the various changes with the clappers as follows.

Either the teacher or, if the teacher is not present, the jikido, will rise first from their zafu at the end of the sitting period. This is the signal for everyone else to stand up. It is usual to turn toward your zafu, in a kneeling position and quickly straighten the *zabuton* (*sitting mat used in zazen*) and reposition the zafu (if you have time). When you have risen to standing, bow to your place and turn clockwise to face into the zendo, still in gassho.

At the sound of the first clap, turn to follow the direction of your line, still in gassho. (The initial direction of your route may take a couple of times to get used to.)

On the second clap, bow and fold your hands in shashu, the right hand folding over the clenched left hand, forearms parallel to the floor.

In slow kin-hin we move one foot slowly and rhythmically for half a foot length in time with the 'in' breath. The next foot moves with the 'out' breath. Eyes are kept lowered, as in zazen.

After about four minutes another clap signals the start of fast kin-hin. Bow and move in unison with everyone else. 'Fast' does actually mean as fast as it is safe to go without bumping into the person in front of you and without falling over yourself. The aim is to maintain the meditative state whilst moving vigorously. The fast movement also helps to restore circulation.

Now is the time to leave the zendo if you need to. Wait until you come round to the exit. You have less than five minutes. On returning, wait at the zendo entrance and wait until your space in the line comes round, bow in gassho to the person you need to step in front of and rejoin.

At the sound of the final clapper, place hands in gassho and follow the line back to your seat. Bow to your seat, then turn and face into the zendo in gassho. At the sound of the bell, bow, sit down and prepare for the next period of zazen.



## Interviews

In the time honoured tradition of Zen, both complete beginners and experienced students alike are regularly invited to interview with the teacher to help clarify and deepen their practice. It is also a chance on sesshin to introduce oneself to the teacher and, for many, to develop a personal and supportive relationship with them.

The ultimate purpose of the interview is the development of one's Zen practice but the content varies depending on the individual's needs, personal experiences and stage of practice. We may take anything from our life into the interview including, for example, personal matters, questions about form and technique, or *koans* (a '*public case*' usually but not always based on an exchange between a Zen master and student). Intellectual debates with the teacher about Zen or Buddhism are not encouraged in interview. The focus is always the great matter of our life as we live and experience it moment-to-moment and day-to-day.

At the Liverpool Centre, there is an interview list available at the evening sittings. If you add your name, your turn will come after the person above you on the list has completed their interview with Sensei. They will approach you as you sit in the zendo, bow in front of you and will say "Interview with Sensei".

Return their gassho and, as quickly but quietly as possible, go to the interview room. No need to knock on the door but, as you enter, make a standing bow to the teacher. Go to the mat, make a further standing bow and sit or kneel in front of the teacher. Usually, the student starts the interview by introducing themselves and then asking the teacher for advice or guidance on whatever matter is concerning them. If the student is new to practice the usual opening is for the student to say "My name is X and my practice is Y". 'My practice' (Y) maybe '*breath counting*', or, if presenting a koan, the koan will be recited in full from memory before the student makes their presentation.

The teacher will indicate when the interview is over, either verbally or sometimes by ringing a hand-bell. Stand, make a bow to the teacher and return to the door before making a final bow at the door. Try to avoid turning your back on the teacher. The teacher will say who is the next person they want to see. Approach this person in the zendo, make a bow in front of them, say "Interview with Sensei" and return to your seat. At your seat, simply return to sitting, no formal bows required.

### ***On sesshin or retreat***

*The jisha (teacher's attendant) will call you for interview and may say 'dokusan' or 'daisan' (depending on the seniority of the teacher). They will direct you where to wait in a line until your turn arrives. Whilst waiting, listen for the teacher's hand-bell, indicating that the interview with the person before you is over.*

## Teacher's Entrance

Whenever the teacher is going to make a formal entrance into the zendo, whether at a regular weekly sitting; at the start of sesshin or at the start of service, the jikido will ring the *inkin* (a small hand bell) twice:(ching, ching). This is a signal to everyone to 'stand up' and, unless using a chair, to move their zafus or bench to the back right hand corner of the zabuton, allowing enough room to make full bows. Hands remain in shashu.

When the teacher arrives in the *gaitan* (entrance porch or veranda) they make a number of formal bows which are marked by a series of bells rung by the *sogei* (jisha's assistant) .

As the teacher and jisha enter the zendo, the jikido then also rings the inkin three times as they approach the haishiki. Having bowed at the mat, the teacher then goes to the altar to offer incense. As he returns to the haishiki, there is an increasingly fast 'run' of bells on the inkin, indicating to everyone that we are about to make three full bows in gassho, following the teacher's lead. After the third bow, the sangha return their hands to shashu whilst the teacher makes a further standing bow to the altar before going to his seat. At his seat, the teacher turns and make a further bow to the sangha. The sangha return the teacher's bow in shashu before the jikido signals 'sit down' with two rings of the inkin: (ching ching).

Sometimes, the teacher will make an informal entrance to the Zendo when they will simply offer incense before going to their seat. In this instance there are no entrance bells and the sangha remain seated.

## And Exit

Before the teacher leaves the zendo either at the end of morning sitting, at the end of service or after last evening sitting on sesshin, the jikido rings the inkin twice, indicating 'stand up'. As the teacher approaches the haishiki the jikido starts the increasingly fast run on the inkin, indicating that we are about to bow three times in gassho, following the teacher's lead. After the third bow, our hands return to shashu. The teacher makes a further bow to the altar, steps back and bringing his arms round in a circular movement to gassho, makes one last bow to the sangha which we return in shashu.

When the teacher leaves the zendo, bells are rung in the gaitan which the jikido echoes with the inkin in the zendo. On the first of the jikido's bells in the zendo, we turn and bow to the altar in gassho. On the second, we bow into the zendo in shashu. Then to breakfast, lunch or bed!

## Teacher's entrance cont'd

### *On sesshin*

*Before the first morning sitting the teacher makes a formal entrance known as 'kentan'. On this occasion the sangha remain seated throughout and there are no entrance bells. The teacher offers incense, makes a bow at the haishiki and then walks slowly around the zendo in gassho as the sangha, also in gassho, chant the Verse of Atonement.*

*At the end of evening sitting, the 'Four Vows' are chanted whilst in gassho and the jikido ends with "Let me respectfully remind you" etc, before the final three bows and the teacher's exit.*

## Introduction to Service

Service brings together all the elements of form and liturgy in a way that reaffirms the sangha's shared experience and commitment to practice. To work well it requires focussed attention from all participants and a degree of 'choreography' which we may initially resist. However when a service works well, there is a collective raising of energy or '*Ki*' in the zendo which is palpable. To achieve this, an understanding of the meaning of the liturgy, an attention to the detail of the specific forms and repeated practice, particularly of the formal service positions is important.

In our regular weekly sessions at the Liverpool Centre we use a condensed and simplified form of service that combines some of the traditional service elements. It includes three separate elements including the chanting of the Heart Sutra, the 'Identity of Relative and Absolute' and the 'Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo' (Kanzeon) and the accompanying dedications. The third element (Kanzeon) also includes a dedication to those who are unwell or in need of support and memorials to those who have passed away. If you wish to have anyone's name mentioned in the service, ask the *ino* (*chant leader*) to add the name to the 'sick list'.

Formal service positions are assigned before the start of evening sittings at the Centre or, on sesshin, before the first sitting.

At the appropriate point the jikido announces "prepare for service". The sangha stand, hands in shashu, waiting for the teacher's formal entrance

The *hako* (*incense box*) is placed before the altar and the charcoal lit by the *jiko* (*a role specific to the hako*). The box is then taken to the gaitan by the jiko.

The jisha lights an incense stick and, together with the sogei (who rings the entrance and exit bells) and jiko, waits in the gaitan for the arrival of the teacher. The teacher then makes a series of bows, marked with bells by the sogei and enters the zendo, followed by the jisha and jiko.

The teacher's entrance, incense offering and three bows are as described under the section on 'Teacher's entrance and exit'. However, during service the teacher does not return to their seat after the third bow but makes a further standing bow at the haishiki which the *doan* (*bell ringer during service*) marks with the kesu, quickly followed by two rings on the inkin (*ching ching*) to indicate 'sit down' to the sangha.

During service, it is usual to kneel in seiza.

The *dennans* will then distribute the *sutra books* (*containing teachings of the Buddha which are chanted*). The books should be received with open hands and should be held either open at eye level or closed at waist level throughout the service. When held at eye level they should be held with both hands and with three fingers behind each cover. As a matter of respect, they should never be placed on the floor.

## **Introduction to Service cont'd**

The teacher remains at the haishiki throughout the service, but at certain points goes to the altar to offer incense.

The chants are conducted by the ino and it is important listen to their voice above your own voice and to follow their lead, including changes of speed and pitch.

After the last sutra (Kanzeon) and during the third and final recitation of 'All Buddhas throughout space and time', the dennans quickly collect the sutra books. The jikido signals 'stand up' with two rings of the inkin before the three bows and the teacher's exit. (See section on teacher's entrance and exit)

## ***On sesshin***

*Three separate services are held throughout the day on a formal sesshin. The early morning service includes all three elements described above. The mid-day service follows the same basic format for entrance and exits but only includes the Heart Sutra.*

*If there is an afternoon / evening service, only one sutra, often the 'Daishin Darani' (see sutra book) is chanted. Teacher's entrance and exits are the same except that there are no full bows and the teacher makes only one offering of incense before the sutra.*



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STONE  
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ZEN  
SANGHA

## **Form Guide**

### **Part Two: Setting Up and Key Roles**

## The Altar

The altar is the central focus for services in the zendo. There will often be other smaller altars or shrines maintained in other parts of the building such as the teacher's room, the kitchen etc.

The altar table is covered with various cloths. Colours and patterns are fine but should not be so vivid that they become a distraction.

The central feature of the altar or shrine is an image of the Buddha or one of the Bodhisattvas (either a statue or maybe a picture). In StoneWater we often use an image of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Bodhisattva of compassion, also known as '*Kanzeon*' or '*Kannon*' in Japanese or '*Kuan-Yin*' in Chinese. Kanzeon can be depicted in both male and female forms. The Buddha or Kanzeon should always be the highest point on the altar and is usually elevated by creating a small platform, covered with a cloth.

In front of this image is a bowl of water and, in front of that, an incense bowl. The bowl is filled with ash, sand, or a material that allows an incense stick to be stood in it.

To the right of the Buddha, as one faces the altar, is the candle and to the left, the flowers. Again flowers should not be higher than the Buddha and should not be too bright or large. Small flowers, taken from a hedgerow or garden, can often produce a subtle yet stunning effect. Usually there should be an odd number of flowers.

The flowers, candle, incense and water represent the four elements of earth, fire, air and water.

The *chiden* is the person who carries responsibility for maintaining the altar/s and supplies. (See under 'Key Zendo Roles').

## The layout of the zendo

The layout of the zendo and the seating positions of monitors and other key members is determined by the teacher together with the *godo* (*centre manager*) and jikido. See page 29 for the current zendo layout in Liverpool.

## Key Roles in the Zendo

### Jikido

The jikido is essentially the time keeper before during periods of zazen. The jikido announces the start and end of sitting periods with the kesu (large standing bell). Three strikes mark the start of a period, two strikes mark the end of a period and one strike marks the end of a block of sitting periods.

It is also the jikido's role to manage the space within the zendo including adjusting the heating, lighting and ventilation. Anyone experiencing problems in the zendo should approach the jikido rather than make any adjustments themselves. Anyone who intends to leave the zendo or miss a sitting should, as a matter of courtesy and personal safety, inform the jikido.

At the start of the first morning sitting, the teacher offers incense and lays their *zagu* (*bowing cloth*) on the haishiki. The teacher then makes a bow at which point the jikido strikes the kesu once, followed by a '*gatz*' (*dampening the sound of the kesu with the bai (striker)*), followed by a third strike. The sangha then recites the '*Verse of Atonement*' whilst the teacher walks around the zendo.

When the teacher returns to the haishiki, they make a bow which the jikido marks with a strike of the kesu. The teacher then goes to their sitting position and bows, marked with the second strike of the kesu. Finally, the teacher turns and makes a third bow, marked with the third strike of the kesu.

At the end of the morning sitting, the the jikido strikes the kesu once, followed by a *gatz*, followed by a further strike. The sangha then recite the '*Verse of the Kesa*'. The jikido then rings the inkin announcing the three bows and the teacher's exit. (See section on Teacher's entrance and exit)

### On sesshin

*The jikido provides the early morning 'wake up' bell. Also, ten to fifteen minutes before the start of every sitting period they will light the altar candle and a short or 'waiting' incense stick.*

*Five to ten minutes before the first morning sitting they will call people to the zendo with one loud clap with the clappers. At other times of the day, the jikido signals the approach of a sitting period with three long series of repeated strikes on the clappers or on the han (a wooden block). By the end of the last series, everyone should be seated in the zendo.*

*The strikes of the clappers follow a consistent pattern: Seven strikes at eight second intervals, ending with an increasingly fast 'run' of strikes; five strikes at six second intervals, ending with another run; three strikes at four second intervals, ending with another run and finally one moderately loud strike, one soft and one loud strike.*



### ***Jikido: On sesshin cont'd***

*Before morning sitting, the jikido greets the teacher and jisha in the gaitan. There are no entrance bells but as the teacher moves across the gaitan toward the zendo threshold, the jikido strikes the clappers three times, the first moderate, the second soft and the third loud.*

*At the end of evening sitting, the jikido strikes the kesu once, followed by a gatz, followed by a further strike. The sangha then recite the 'Four Vows' (see glossary). Finally, the jikido chants (boldly and with some feeling)*

*"Let me respectfully remind you,  
Life and death are of supreme importance,  
Time swiftly passes by and opportunity is lost,  
Let us (strive to)\*\* awaken! awaken! take heed!  
Do not squander your life!"*

*This is followed by the Teacher's formal exit. (See section on Teacher's Exit)*

*The first sitting period of the day on sesshin usually lasts forty minutes. The last sitting period of the day usually lasts twenty five minutes. All other periods last thirty minutes.*

*\*\* This is the original version but these two words have not been included in recent years at StoneWater.*

## **Jisha**

The jisha is the teacher's personal attendant and is responsible for ensuring that everything is prepared and in place for them throughout sitting periods, at *teisho* (formal dharma talk), interviews and service.

Before the teacher leaves for the zendo, the jisha lights incense and follows the teacher into the zendo, bowing in unison with the them at the haishiki and at the altar. The jisha then presents the incense to the teacher and takes a step or two back from the altar. Once the incense has been offered, the teacher and jisha bow together. The jisha then quickly returns to their seat which should be positioned close to the haishiki. This allows the jisha to adjust the position of the teacher's zagu on the haishiki between bows.

When the teacher leaves the zendo, the jisha follows. Traditionally, the sogei rings the entrance and exit bells in the gaitan. However, where there is not enough space for several people in the gaitan, the jisha may ring these bells.

When the teacher leaves the zendo to start interviews, the jisha follows, collecting the list of names for interview along the way. At the interview room, the jisha lights the candle and incense and, where there is room, bows three times with the teacher. The jisha then usually has an opportunity for interview themselves before passing on to the first person on the list. (See section on interviews). The jisha then returns to their seat though on a large sesshin, their duties are ongoing throughout interviews (see below).

### ***On sesshin***

*Teisho: The jisha prepares whatever materials the teacher requires for the dharma talk. This may include a lectern and audio equipment such as microphone. The teacher's drink is traditionally brought by the anja.*

*Meals: The jisha brings meals throughout the day for the teacher and generally attends to their needs.*

*Interviews: During a period when interviews are planned, the jisha organises a row of seats near the interview room where people can wait in turn. This may be a row of zafus or chairs depending on the teacher's requirements and the venue.*

*Once the teacher is settled in the interview room, the jisha returns to the zendo to bring the first group of people. The jisha approaches individuals and says either 'dokusan', or 'daisan' (depending on the seniority of the teacher) or simply 'Interview with teacher x' It is important for the jisha to maintain a steady flow of people, but also to be mindful of the start and end of sitting periods and to create as little disturbance as possible in the zendo. At other times the jisha waits close by the interview room.*

### ***Jisha: On sesshin cont'd***

*The jisha also needs to be mindful of people's service or kitchen roles and will arrange the interview lines in such a way that these people can perform these roles.*

### **Chiden**

The chiden is the person with overall responsibility for maintaining the altar or shrines. (Also, see section on the Altar) They may have a number of helpers, particularly on large retreats.

This role includes setting up altar/shrines in the zendo, kitchen and teacher's rooms; trimming the candles, replenishing water and flowers and preparing the incense and bowl before every period of sitting. The hako also needs to be prepared before each service.

The chiden also has the responsibility for ordering and maintaining supplies of materials. Altar cloths also need to be cleaned and repaired or replaced from time to time.

### **Usher**

At the Liverpool Centre, it has been found useful to designate one person to act as usher before sittings. This role is helpful both to welcome people and to help maintain quiet in the entrance area once people have started to sit in the zendo. People can also be directed to the changing or sangha room if they need to change or wish to speak with others before sitting.

### **Monitors**

The seating positions flanking the altar and the teachers (on sesshin) are generally reserved for senior students who are designated by the teacher as monitors. Their role is exactly that, to monitor or observe the seated rows of sangha members in front of them and to notice if anyone is having difficulty so that help or advice may be provided. They are also expected to be an example for new members.

## Service Roles

### Ino

The ino leads the chants both during service and at any time when *gathas* (*chants*) are recited, such as before work periods, before teisho, before meals, at the beginning and end of morning sitting and at the end of evening sitting.

The ino has a large copy of the sutra book with all the relevant introductions and dedications

During service, the ino coordinates the service positions, ensuring that the *doan*, *mokugyo* player, *dennans*, *sogei*, *jiko*, and *jisha* (see relevant sections below) are all in place and are well prepared before the service begins. (On sesshin the ino may also have to rearrange places on the ryoban so that the more experienced members occupy the central positions).

The ino coordinates with the movements of the teacher or other officiant but dictates the speed, volume and timing of the chants. The other service positions should always follow the ino's lead.

A useful guide for both the ino and all service participants is to follow the maxim "chant with your ears". The ino needs to have an ear for pitch and tone, a sensitivity to other voices and an awareness of the general acoustics of the room.

The ino needs to be heard above other voices so that people can attempt to match the pitch and rhythm. In some larger spaces the ino will need to project their voice to be heard clearly throughout the room.

During the introduction to each sutra, the ino sets the initial pace of the chant with the last three syllables of the introduction, that is

"Maha Prajna Paramita Heart Sutr-a-a-a"

"Identity of Relative and Absol-u-u-ute"

"Enmei Jukku Kannon Gy-o-o-o"

Using these three syllables as the introductory count 1-2-3, the doan then marks the count of '4' with a strike of the kesu, as the ino takes a breath. The ino and mokugyo player then begin the sutra following the same 1-2-3-4 tempo.

In each sutra, the pace remains moderate until the first strike of the kesu, at which point the tempo is gradually increased until it is relatively fast once the first third or half the sutra is reached. This tempo is then maintained for the rest of the sutra. (The exception is the Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo, where the tempo steadily increases throughout until it is very fast by the end).

### **Ino cont'd**

During service it is important that the ino, doan and mokugyo player have sight of each other. In particular, it is important that ino can, if need be, visually signal changes of pace to the mokugyo player, as follows: raising the hand, palm upwards signals 'speed up', lowering the hand, palm downwards signals 'slow down' and a horizontal movement of the hand, palm downwards signals 'hold the tempo'.

The ino may also sometimes mime the pace of the beat with their hand or, exceptionally, send the jisha over to the mokugyo player.

The ino holds and 'sustains' the tone of the chant between sutras, between the dedications and through 'All Buddhas, throughout pace and time'. This is important to give the Sangha an ongoing reference point for the pitch of the next chant.

Also, at the end of each sutra, although the chanting continues at the same fast pace, the ino signals the end by making the final three syllables slower and more clearly defined than the rest of the Sutra, for example

"Praj - na - Para - mi - ta - - Heart - - Su - - tra"

"I-respectfully-say-to-those-who-wish-to-be-enlightened-do-not-waste-your-time- by--night-- or-- day"

### **On sesshin**

*There are three separate services throughout the day on sesshin. (See section on 'Introduction to Service: On Sesshin.)*

## Doan

The doan's role is to signal the various phases of the service using the kesu (large bell), inkin (small hand bell) and clappers. The doan sits throughout the service.

The doan has their own copy of the service book with the specific directions and an indication of the timing of bells. However, during the sutras they must also time the strikes on the kesu to coincide with the teacher's bows and follow the ino's lead in providing the correct rhythm and pace.

Everyone in the zendo except the doan stands for the start of the service. Once everyone is in place in the zendo, the doan indicates this to the teacher with one strike of the clappers.

The teacher's entrance is marked by the sogei who rings the hand bells in the gaitan.

As the teacher steps into the zendo (followed by the jisha and jiko), the doan hits the inkin once, again when the teacher is half way to the haishiki and again when the teacher bows at the haishiki.

The teacher then goes to the altar. Once the jiko has laid the hako, the teacher offers incense, steps to the right of the altar and bows, at which point the doan hits the inkin once, again when the teacher is half way to the haishiki and again when he reaches the haishiki.

The teacher then starts to lay their zagu on the haishiki.

This is marked with an increasingly fast run on the inkin which ends to coincide with the teacher's first full bow on the haishiki. (The 'run' resembles the rhythm of a bouncing ball, getting progressively faster with each strike).

The top of the teacher's second and third bows are also marked with the inkin

When the teacher's knees touch the haishiki on the third bow the doan hits the inkin again.

When the teacher makes a final standing bow, the doan hits the kesu, quickly followed by two strikes on the inkin (ching ching) to signal to the sangha to kneel or sit.

The teacher goes to the altar again and, after offering incense, moves to the right of the altar and bows, at which point the doan strikes the kesu again.

The teacher returns to the haishiki and bows again at which point the doan hits the kesu then damps it with the striker. The mokugyo is hit once and the ino then starts the introduction to the Heart Sutra: "Maha Prajna Paramita....."

## Doan cont'd

During the introduction to each sutra, the ino sets the initial pace of the chant with the last three syllables of the introduction, that is

"Maha Prajna Paramita Heart Sutr-a-a-a"

"Identity of Relative and Absol-u-u-ute"

"Enmei Jukku Kannon Gy-o-o-o"

Using these three syllables as the introductory count 1-2-3, the doan then marks the count of '4' with a strike of the kesu, as the ino takes a breath. The ino and mokugyo player then begin the sutra following the same 1-2-3-4 tempo.

At the end of service, on the last recitation of 'All Buddhas', the doan strikes the inkin twice (ching ching) on the syllables 'Maha, Praj-na, Paramita..' to indicate to the sangha 'stand up' before starting the run on the inkin leading to the final three bows and the teacher's exit ( See section on 'Teacher's Exit')

## Mokugyo player

The mokugyo is the traditional wooden fish-shaped drum which is beaten rhythmically, marking the tempo of the chanting and always following the lead of the ino. Most of the information needed is contained in the section above on the ino's role.

The ino can visually signal changes of pace to the mokugyo player, as follows: raising the hand, palm upwards signals 'speed up', lowering the hand, palm downwards signals 'slow down' and a horizontal movement of the hand, palm downwards signals 'hold the tempo'.

Most crucial is how the mokugyo player picks up the initial tempo of each sutra from the ino's last three syllables in each introduction (see top of this page under instructions for doan). The mokugyo player needs to have clear sight of the ino throughout the service. It is more important for them to mark the correct tempo than it is for them to recite the sutra.

The mokugyo player, holds the 'bai' (striker) throughout the service, holding it between their thumbs and forefingers when in gassho. The bai is replaced in the mokugyo only at the very end of service, before making the three bows.

## Dennans

The dennans distribute and collect the sutra books at the start and end of each service. Their seating position is important and should be decided by the ino. Although the dennan's role is brief, timing and speed are important.

The books should be placed in positions in the zendo where the dennans can easily reach them during service.

After the teacher has entered the zendo and made their three bows at the haishiki, they will make a further standing bow at the haishiki, marked by a strike of the kesu. This is the signal for the dennans to collect the sutra books for distribution. Where time and space allow, the dennans should quickly bow to each other before distributing the books.

The books are then distributed as rapidly as possible. The sangha should have their hands open ready to receive the books but where this is not the case, the book can be left on the person's zabuton (never on the floor). The dennans should be back in their seats by the time the teacher has returned to the haishiki.

At the end of the service, the start of the final 'All Buddhas throughout space and time...' is the signal for the dennans to collect the books as quickly as possible. Again where space and time allow, they would bow to each other once the books are all collected. The dennans need to be back at their seats by the time the teacher returns to the haishiki for the final three bows.

## Jiko

The jiko's role is quite specific to the hako (incense box). When the jikido announces "prepare for service", the jiko prepares the hako in front of the altar and lights the charcoal. The box is then carried into the gaitan where the jiko waits with the sogei and jisha for the teacher to make a formal entrance. The jiko waits with the box held in both hands at chest height. When the teacher and jisha enter the zendo, the jiko follows, holding the box at the same height and bowing behind the teacher at the haishiki.

The jiko then follows the teacher to the altar, going to the left of the altar, before turning to the right and laying the box on the table. The jiko then returns to their seat.

At the end of service, at the start of the recitation of "All Buddhas throughout space and time" the jiko makes their three bows, so that they are ready to remove the hako as the teacher makes three bows.

The jiko then takes the box to the gaitan where they wait for the teacher to make their exit.



## Sogei

The sogei rings the inkin in the gaitan when the teacher or other officiant makes a formal entrance to or exit from the zendo. The sogei waits in the gaitan with the inkin held in front of them at eye level, the striker held vertically beyond the inkin. When the teacher enters the gaitan, he makes three standing bows which the sogei mirrors, at the same time ringing the inkin as follows:

1st bow 'ching' at top of the bow

2nd bow 'ching' at top of bow

3rd bow 'ching' at top and 'ching' at bottom of bow.

The teacher then walks past the sogei toward the zendo entrance. As the teacher passes, the sogei rings 'ching' at half way, 'ching' when the teacher reaches the zendo threshold, then when the teacher turns to face them, 'ching' at the top of the bow and 'ching' at the bottom.

It is important that all these bells are evenly spaced, so

for the bows: *ching---ching---ching-ching*

and similarly for the entrance: *ching---ching---ching-ching*.

The teacher then turns to step into the zendo at which point the doan takes over with their bells. The sogei then goes to their seat.

At the end of service the sogei starts their three bows at the start of the final 'All Buddhas', before going to the gaitan to wait for the teacher to exit.

On reaching the threshold, the teacher makes one bow which the sogei marks with the inkin at the top and bottom of the bow: *ching-ching*

The teacher then walks into the gaitan and the sogei strikes the inkin again.

The sogei waits for an answering bell response from the doan then strikes the inkin again just before the teacher turns toward them.

The sogei waits for the second answering bell from inside the zendo, before marking the teacher's final bow at the top and bottom of the bow.

Again the bells should be evenly spaced, as follows:

sogei: *ching--ching (top and bottom of bow on exit from zendo)*

sogei: *ching (half way through gaitan)*

doan: *ching*

sogei: *ching (just before teacher turns toward sogei)*

doan: *ching*

sogei: *ching--ching (top and bottom of final bow)*

## Glossary

### Roles

Anja: Assistant to jisha; brings drink for teacher at teisho (dharma talk)

Chiden: Maintains altars and supplies such as flowers, incense, candles etc.

Dennan: Distributes sutra books.

Doan: Plays bells during service.

Doanryo: Buddha Hall musicians. Members of the doanryo may play small bells, densho (hanging bell), kesu (large kettle-shaped gong), mokugyo (wooden drum), and han (wooden block).

Ino: Coordinator of services; leads chanting.

Godō: Manager, responsible for overall arrangement & supplies for the centre and zendo.

Jikido: Timekeeper during periods of zazen.

Jisharyo: Jisha, Jiko and Sogei as led by the Jisha

Jiko: Assistant to jisha in services; brings hako (incense box) in and out.

Jisha: Attendant to teacher.

Shuso: Head trainee for ango (3 month training period).

Sogei: Rings hand bell (inkin) as teacher enters and leaves zendo

Tenzo: Kitchen head, usually a monk or senior student.

## **Ceremonial Objects**

Bai: The beater for instruments.

Gaitan: Porch or veranda outside the zendo or buddha hall.

Haishiki: Mat on which the officiant bows during services.

Hako: Incense box.

Han: Wooden block used to announce periods of zazen.

Inkin: Hand bell.

Kesu: Large kettle-shaped gong used in services.

Kodai: Small table in front of altar.

Koro: Incense bowl.

Kotsu: Short wooden stick used by senior officiants at service.

Kyosaku: Awakening stick.

Mokugyo: Wooden fish-shaped drum beaten to indicate tempo during chants.

Ryoban: Official zendo & buddha hall positions.

Shokei: Small kesu.

## **Services and Chants**

Dharani: a chant (often untranslatable) made of seed syllables.

Gatha: a verse of four or more lines.

Four Vows: Chanted three times at the end of the day. "Sentient beings are numberless.."

Verse of Atonement: "All evil karma.." Chanted three times at the start of morning sitting.

Verse of the Kesa: "Vast is the robe of liberation..." Chanted three times at the end of morning sitting.

## Other terms

Avaloketeshvara; Bodhisattva of compassion.

Gassho: Hands held, palms together in front of the face when bowing.

Kentan: Senior teacher's rounds of zendo.

Kin-hin: Walking meditation.

Koan: Literally a recorded 'public document or case', often based on an exchange between a zen master and student. Used by zen teachers to bring students to realisation and to clarify their understanding.

Ryoban: Central axis of the zendo around which the main seats are arranged.

Shashu: Hands folded, right hand over left hand which is clenched in a fist, forearms parallel to the floor.

Teisho: Formal dharma talk.

Zendo: A place set aside for the practice of zazen.

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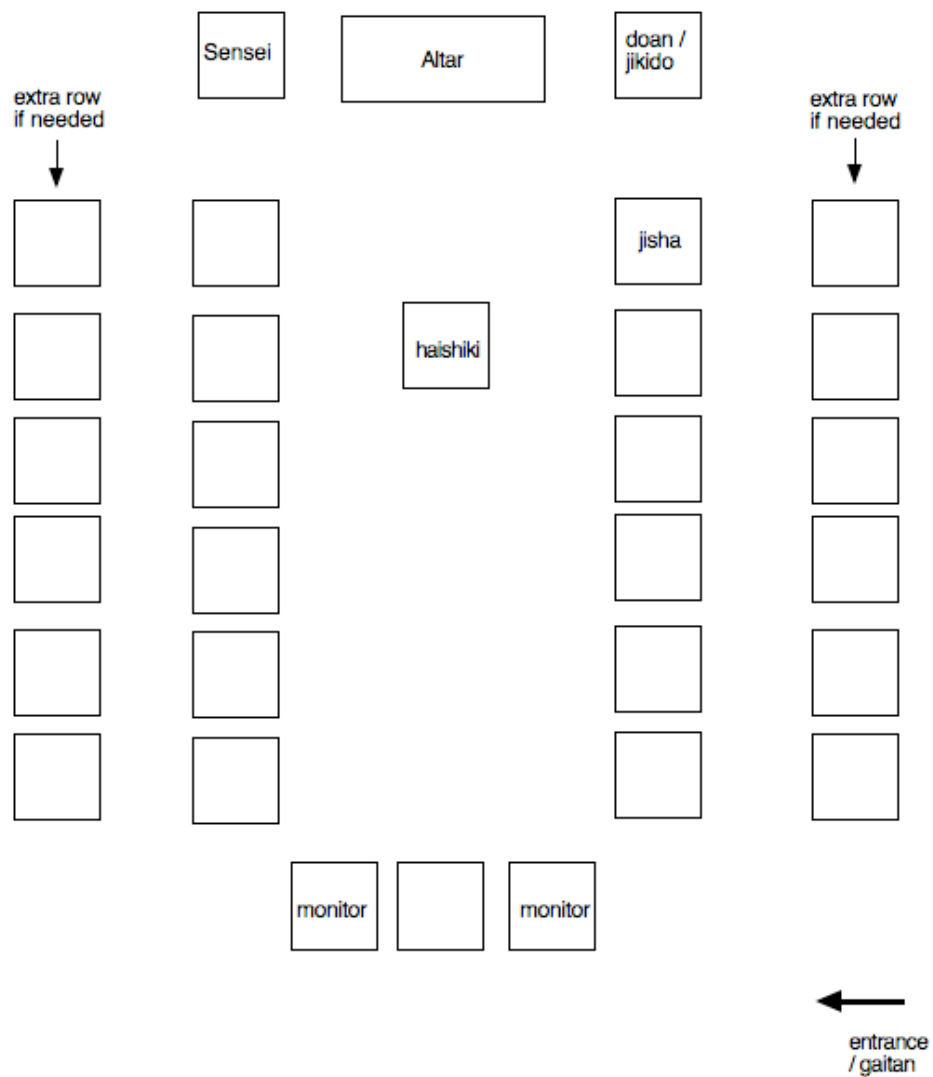
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**Layout of StoneWater Zen Centre in Liverpool**