

Pure Standards for Practice Periods At Zenshinji

All students should be like milk and water – more intimate than that even, because we are all good friends from past lives, sharing eternal Buddha Nature as each one's own.

The *Pure Standards* and the *Practice Period Schedule* are our communal body of practice. Please observe and follow them completely.

Typical Practice Period Schedule¹

3:50 am	wake-up bell
4:20	zazen/kinhin/zazen
6:10	Morning Service, followed by breakfast in zendo
7:55	study
9:00	soji or Dharma Talk or class Zazen
11:20	Noon service, followed by lunch in zendo
1:15 pm	work
4:15	bathing and exercise
5:50	Evening Service, followed by dinner in zendo
7:30-9:00	zazen/kinhin/zazen

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Plan to stay at Tassajara during the entire practice period (unless asked to go out on Tassajara business). If a medical or personal emergency arises, ask the Director for permission to leave, and inform the Ino.
- Upon arriving at and leaving Tassajara, please check in with the Director and Ino. Those students who have sat *tangaryo* and entered the monastery may offer incense in the zendo upon arrival and pay their respects to the Head of the Practice Period. Incense may also be offered upon departure.
- Observe silence from evening zazen until after lunch the following day.
- Bow (in *gassho*) when passing others.
- If you are unable to attend any part of the monastic schedule, communicate the reason, and any needs to the Ino. If you are unable to notify the Ino personally, send word with someone or leave a note on the *tenken* pad.
- Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, or any other intoxicant is not permitted.
- The use of tobacco is discouraged. If you do smoke, use the smokers' area. This is a silent area; do not use it for socializing. Due to great fire danger, smoking inside buildings or in the woods is prohibited.
- Do not play musical instruments or listen to music within Tassajara, with or without headphones.
- Do not bring electrical equipment to Tassajara without permission from the Director.

¹ Actual schedule may vary.

- Do not run in the central area of Tassajara.
- Practice 'kind speech.' Do not call loudly to others from a distance.
- Personal pets are not allowed at Tassajara.
- Never leave a lit lamp unattended.
- Before going on a hike, notify someone regarding the trail and expected return time. Do not go on unfamiliar trails alone.
- By evening firewatch, be in your room with lights out.

GENERAL ZENDO DECORUM

- Be on time for all zendo events.
- Carry okesa, rakusu, and oryoki at eye level in the zendo and at heart level outside the zendo, using both hands. If necessary, robes may be placed on top of oryoki.
- Maintain quiet in and around the zendo. Do not speak on the engawa.
- Walking, bowing, sitting, and rising from your seat should all be done quietly. Muffle sounds such as coughing, sneezing, blowing the nose, yawning, and clearing the throat.
- Feet should be clean.
- Do not place your feet on the meal boards.

ZENDO ATTIRE

- Wear monastic robes for all zendo activities. Keep your robe clean and in good repair.
- Walk in shashu while wearing your robes.
- Always wear at least one layer of clothing under your robe.
- Change in and out of robes in private.
- In cold weather, neutral colored slippers or socks may be worn in the zendo, and then removed for zazen.
- Do not wear scented lotions or perfume in the zendo.
- If you have long hair, tie it back and wear it off the neck for all zendo events.
- Do not wear jewelry, watches, or Buddhist beads in the zendo.

ENTERING THE ZENDO

- Remove shoes before stepping onto the engawa, and place them on the shoe rack.
- Enter and leave through the front door. Step over the threshold with the foot closest to the hinge side of the door. Take two steps forward and bow in gassho.
- If late, and when entering or leaving between periods, use the back door.
- Never cross in front of the altar.
- Bow in shashu as you enter the tan area behind the altar.
- Be in the zendo by the end of the 2nd rolldown.
- If late, go to the back door and wait for the tenken.
- If the tenken has already entered the zendo, it is too late to enter. In this case, sit in the kaisando.
- Do not leave the zendo during zazen, except for dokusan or practice discussion, or in case of an emergency.

SERVICE

- Attend service unless you have been assigned work during this time.
- If you are late, enter through the back door. Do three bows before going to your place.
- Chant with your ears, listening to others and to the pace set by the mokugyo.

KINHIN

- Kinhin is walking meditation, not a break time; do not leave the zendo unless it is necessary.
- Walk in the same order in which you were seated. Maintain the same pace as others, spacing yourself evenly between those in front and behind. When the bell rings to end kinhin, walk rapidly back to your place.
- When returning to the zendo at the end of kinhin, enter after the three bells that signal the beginning of zazen.

MEALS

- Attend all meals unless you are sick.
- After serving in the zendo, attend servers' meals.
- Do not enter or move around in the zendo during the Buddha drum and food offering.
- Use oryoki quietly.
- Clean oryoki on four and nine days.

DOKUSAN & PRACTICE DISCUSSION

Zen practice includes hearing the Dharma, studying it, meditating on it, and expressing our understanding with a teacher. The Head of the Practice Period is available for dokusan, and the Tanto and other Practice Leaders also offer private interviews. All students are asked to be in regular communication with one (or more) practice leaders.

STUDY PERIOD

- Be in study hall in time to recite the opening verses with everyone.
- Read books related to Buddhism and practice.
- All books in study should be wrapped in a sutra cloth.

WORK

- Be ready for work when the work drum sounds and go directly to the work meeting.
- Do not bring food or drinks to work meeting.
- Maintain silence as much as possible during work time.
- Do personal work during free time.
- Always clean and return tools and equipment at the end of work.

KITCHEN

- If you have special dietary needs &/or need to use the kitchen, speak with the Tenzo to make arrangements.
- The “back door” snack area is “open” from after lunch until the densho begins for evening service. Fruit and leftovers are available after dinner.
- Maintain silence in the snack area. Take food and leave the kitchen before eating.
- Sit down while eating or drinking. Do not eat or drink while walking around.
- When sick, get your own food if you are able, and eat silently in the dining room. If you are too sick to get food, inform the tenken by sending a messenger or leaving a note on the tenken pad.
- Wash your hands before handling food or doing any kitchen work.
- Do not use the kitchen as a passageway.

BATHING

- Bathe during scheduled bath time.
- Before bathing, do three standing bows at the altar and recite the bath gatha silently. When leaving the baths, bow once to the altar.
- Observe silence at the bathhouse. Those (e.g. kitchen crew) who bathe at times other than the scheduled bath time, also do so in silence.
- On 4 & 9 days, quiet talk is permitted.
- Do not read at the baths.
- Men and women bathe in their respective sides of the bathhouse at all times.

RELATIONSHIPS

- If you are part of a couple, please maintain a decorum which supports the monastic practice; i.e., do not isolate yourself from the community, respect silent times, and be sensitive about public displays of affection.
- If you come to Tassajara as a single person, it is expected that your intention is to remain single while at Tassajara.
- If you find yourself entering into a relationship, please speak to a practice leader to clarify your intention. Generally, a new couple will be asked to leave Tassajara in order to have the time and support to take care of their relationship. If they have already been practicing for a considerable period of time, exceptions are sometimes made.
- Do not begin a new relationship in which either member has not been at Tassajara for at least six months.
- Do not engage in non-committed or casual sexual relationships.

Just sit and see what happens....Following the rules lets you find yourself....The rules are not something to restrict you, but something to support your practice.²

² Suzuki Roshi, in *Not Always So.*, p. 70