

## Zen Buddhist Order of the Lotus Blossom

### Our Zendo Etiquette

#### *Preliminary Note*

While meditation etiquette may not matter to some, for us here at Lotus Zen Temple everything we do – though you may not understand all details at this point – are intended to aid and support successful meditation practice. Like in all trades and disciplines, we adhere to structure, such as meditation under the direction of a master, specific postures during sitting and walking meditation, breathing techniques, individual guidance, dharma talks, chanting, etc. – Unlike in other forms of Buddhism or various religions, Zen meditation rules by no means resemble rituals, nor are they intended to do so (and thus objectively could not be perceived as such). Though Zen Buddhism maintains ceremonies – like Jukai, tea ceremony, Oryoki, weddings, funerals, etc. – they are rather utilitarian and yet another direct experience of enlightenment nature. Zendo etiquette is not uniform, yet ubiquitous with some cultural, geographical and practical adjustments. The following is what we do at Lotus Zen Temple. We ask all visitors and participants to follow this etiquette, as well as traditional Zazen and Kinhin meditation practice.

1. **Anyone without Zen training or prior Zen meditation practice in the Soto and/or Rinsai styles, must receive at least brief orientation before being allowed to participate in zazen and kinhin.**
2. **Please wear comfortable clothing of neutral colors, conducive to sitting meditation. Refrain from wearing T-shirts, jackets and sweaters depicting designs, messages or advertisement, unless you wear a meditation robe over it.**
3. **Especially in the colder season, you may wear a meditation robe, such as the traditional Chinese Hia-Ching, or similar robe; or a meditation shawl; or any other approved garment. Those who have taken the Buddhist Precepts are encouraged to wear their Rakusu. For questions, please check with one of the Doans or the temple priest.**
4. **Coats and purses are not permitted in the Zendo. Coats should be hung up downstairs and purses stored appropriately. Please ask, if you need directions.**
5. **Shoes already must be taken off upon entering the building.**
6. **Cell phones are not allowed in the Zendo. They need to be turned off prior to entering the room. If you need to make a phone call, please do so downstairs where you have more privacy and cannot be heard in the Zendo.**
7. **Please refrain from socializing in the Zendo.**
8. **Food and beverages, outside an official tea ceremony, are not permitted in the Zendo. Cough drops will be provided as needed.**
9. **Head covers (other than for some ceremonial purposes) are not permitted in the Zendo.**
10. **Small personal items, such as glasses, Kleenex, etc. should either be kept in your pocket or stored under the cushion.**

11. If you need to use the toilet between meditation times, you can do so during Kinhin (walking meditation) by following the exit and re-entry etiquette: Walk with the group until you reach the door. Bow forward (remaining in sashu) very briefly. Then exit. Upon re-entry, follow the etiquette (#17 below) and join in the walking again.
12. You are welcome to offer incense in the customary manner you are used to. If you would like instructions, please ask.
13. Incense offering should only be done at the beginning, i.e. before meditation starts; or right before leaving the Zendo; or during the appointed time at a dharma Service.
14. The bowing cloth in the center of the room is typically used by the temple priest, but may also be used at our temple by those who have taken the Buddhist Precepts (whether at LZT or elsewhere).
15. The adjacent Dokusan room & the small office space are not part of the public area of the Zendo. Please do not enter, unless asked to do so.
16. The seating directly in front of the Buddha shrine is reserved for one Doan (meditation assistant) and the temple priest, respectively. Otherwise you are free to wherever you wish to sit.
17. Please enter the Zendo with your left foot first. Then after a few steps when you reach the circle, stop briefly and bow in Gassho toward the middle of the room.
18. Always walk clockwise in the Zendo and always in sashu.
19. When arriving at your cushion, face the cushion while waiting in sashu.
20. Upon exiting the Zendo, turn to your right and again walk clockwise. Step outside with your right foot first.
21. Everyone is welcome to participate in dharma talks. Comments, such as sharing personal experiences or asking questions, are always welcome. Keep in mind that dharma talk is not a dialogue between two people or a few involved. Thus all comments should be of relevant interest and be directed to everyone in the group.
22. Before speaking, please bow in Gassho — and when finished as well.
23. Everyone is welcome to participate in chanting.
24. During Dharma Service, chanting, Dharma talk and training or classes you may sit in any way you like, but please do not lean against the wall. At the end, please straighten out your Zabuton and Zafu; then remain standing in sashu while facing the Zabuton.
25. After the final bows, we exit the Zendo clockwise, walking in a normal step with hands in sashu.