

Ninety Hours of Zazen
in Ninety Days
Practice Book



Bodhidharma by Por Ju Sunim



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Practice Book for _____

Ninety Hours of Zazen in Ninety Days

The Practice. The practice is to sit one hour a day for ninety consecutive days. Please structure the hour to whatever is appropriate for you. For instance, you may choose to sit a half-hour in the morning and a half-hour in the evening. You may choose to sit a full hour, alternating periods of sitting and walking, or however an hour fits into your day. You may keep a journal by making brief notes about your sitting. Missing a day is not an option. However, if you do miss, count the days you missed and when you reach the last day, add those on to complete your ninety days.

The aim of this exercise is to establish a foundation for daily zazen practice. When you sit, just sit. When you walk, just walk. At times you may focus on the breath, at other times your awareness may be all-inclusive or diffuse. The practice is to let go of all that arises, including all thoughts regardless of content, all feelings, sensations, etc. Do not use this time to think. Cultivate an ever-deepening quality of awareness, so that you can disengage from the I-my-me-mine-making that is constantly arising. Let your self-clinging, self-centered human activities go out of business and let Buddha emerge.

Your partner. You will be assigned, or you may choose, a partner for the ninety days of zazen. The partners are there to listen and provide encouragement for each other as needed. You and your partner can make whatever arrangements that are most supportive for you both, such as a daily phone call, a monthly meeting, etc., whatever is appropriate to both, your needs and time.

Your partner is: _____

The Ninetieth Day. At the end of your ninetieth day practice period, if you would like, write a brief essay about your experience. Then make an appointment to meet with a teacher who will complete your certificate. Please do not hesitate to contact any teacher, if you need further guidance during this practice period.

Statement of Commitment

I, _____, commit to undertaking the practice of one hour of zazen for ninety consecutive days beginning _____.

Please print:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____



EIHEI DOGEN'S *PRINCIPLES FOR SEATED MEDITATION*

(an excerpt from *Fukanzazengi*, trans. by Carl Bielefeldt)

For studying Zen, one should have quiet quarters. Be moderate in food and drink. Cast aside all involvements and discontinue all affairs. Do not think of good or evil; do not deal with right or wrong. Halt the revolutions of mind, intellect, and consciousness; stop the calculations of thoughts, ideas, and perceptions. Do not intend to make a Buddha, much less be attached to sitting still.

In the place where you regularly sit, spread a thick mat and use a cushion on top of it. Sit in either the full cross-legged or half cross-legged position. For the full position, first place your right foot on your left thigh; then place your left foot on your right thigh. For the half position, simply rest your left foot on your right thigh*

Loosen your robe and belt and arrange them properly. Next, place your right hand on your left foot, and your left hand on your right palm. Press the tips of your thumbs together. Then straighten your body and sit erect. Do not lean to the left or right, forward or backward.

Your ears should be in line with your shoulders, and your nose in line with your navel. Press your tongue against the front of your palate and close your lips and teeth. The eyes should always remain open. Breathe gently through the nose.

Once you have regulated your posture, take a breath and exhale fully. Swing to the left and right. Sitting fixedly, think of not thinking. How do you think of not thinking? Non-thinking. This is the essential art of zazen. Zazen is not the practice of dhyana: it is just the dharma gate of ease and joy. It is the practice and verification of ultimate bodhi. The koan realized, baskets and cages cannot get to it.

If you grasp the point of this practice, you are like the dragon gaining the water or the tiger taking to the mountains. You should realize that when right thought is present, dullness and agitation are, from the start, struck aside.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and arise calmly; do not be hasty or rough.

**Note: It is completely fine to sit in a kneeling position with a cushion or sitting bench or to sit on a chair. Find the posture that is most stable and comfortable for you. See page four for more pointers.*

GATHA OF ATONEMENT (*recite 3 times*)

All karma ever committed by me since of old,
Due to my beginningless greed, hatred, lust, envy, and delusion,
Born of my actions, speech, and thought,
Now I atone for it all.

THE FOUR GREAT BODHISATTVA VOWS (*recite 3 times*)

Numberless beings / I vow to serve them.
Inexhaustible delusions / I vow to end them.
Boundless Dharmas / I vow to practice them.
Unsurpassable Buddha Way / I vow to embody it.

HOW TO SIT:

1. Sit on the forward third of a chair or cushion. You may also use a bench or a stool.
2. Arrange your legs in a position you can maintain comfortably. In the half-lotus position, place your left leg on your right thigh (or vice versa; you may wish to alternate each sitting period). In the full-lotus position, place the tops of your feet on opposite thighs. You may also sit with your legs tucked in close to your body. Be sure that your weight is distributed on three points: both of your knees on the ground and your buttocks on a cushion, bench, or chair. On a chair, keep your knees apart about the width of your shoulders, thighs at a slight angle downwards, and your feet firmly planted on the floor.
3. Straighten and extend your spine, keeping it naturally upright, centering your balance in the lower abdomen. You can imagine a string extending from the base of your spine through the top of your head all the way to the ceiling. Then relax, dropping your shoulders and opening your chest (lifting heart to sky). Tuck in your chin slightly, keeping the head upright, not leaning forward or backward or to the side. Sway your body gently from left to right until you naturally come to a point of stillness on your cushion.
4. Keep your eyes cast on the floor about three-to-four feet in front of your body, eyes neither fully opened nor closed. If the eyes are closed, you might start to daydream or visualize things.
5. Keep your lips and teeth together with your tongue resting against the roof of your mouth.
6. Place your hands on your lap with the right palm up and your left hand (palm up) resting on your right palm, with your thumbs directly above your forefingers, thumb-tips lightly touching, so that your thumbs and forefingers form an oval. This is the cosmic mudra of zazen, in which all things are unified. Place the sides of the little fingers against your abdomen, a few inches below the navel, harmonizing your center of gravity with the mudra.
7. Take a few deep breaths, exhaling fully each time. Let your breath settle into its own natural rhythm. With proper physical posture, your breathing will flow naturally into your lower abdomen.
8. Sit still and keep your attention on your breath. When your attention wanders, bring it back to the breath again, as many times as necessary.
9. Be fully, vitally present. Simply do your best. At the end of your sitting period, gently sway your body from right to left. Stretch out your legs, being sure they have feeling before standing. Enjoy your sitting!



Your Journal for Ninety Hours of Zazen


FIRST DAY	2nd day
3rd day	4th day
5th day	6th day
7th day	8th day
9th day	10th day
11th day	12th day
13th day	14th day

15th day	16th day
17th day	18th day
19th day	20th day
21st day	22nd day
23rd day	24th day
25th day	26th day
27th day	28th day
29th day	30th day
31st day	32nd day

33rd day	34th day
35th day	36th day
37th day	38th day
39th day	40th day
41st day	42nd day
43rd day	44th day
45th day	46th day
47th day	48th day
49th day	50th day

51st day	52nd day
53rd day	54th day
55th day	56th day
57th day	58th day
59th day	60th day
61st day	62nd day
63rd day	64th day
65th day	66th day
67th day	68th day

69th day	70th day
71st day	72nd day
73rd day	74th day
75th day	76th day
77th day	78th day
79th day	80th day
81st day	82nd day
83rd day	84th day
85th day	86th day

87th day	88th day
89th day	
NINETIETH DAY 	

Congratulations!

My experience of the practice of Ninety Hours of Zazen in Ninety Days:



Zen Center of Los Angeles
Buddha Essence Temple

In recognition that

Has successfully completed
ninety consecutive days of one hour daily zazen.

(On behalf of ZCLA)

On the _____ day in the month of _____, _____