



# **Delaware Valley Zen Center**

## **One Day Retreat Handbook**

## **One-Day Sittings**

One-day sittings are a great opportunity to deepen your practice with a short time commitment. This retreat form is very well suited to beginners and those with busy schedules.

A Zen retreat is a wonderful opportunity to clear the mind of habitual thinking and find the wisdom to help all sentient beings. Zen Master Seung Sahn has a saying -- “you make, you get.” So, if you make a retreat difficult, then it will be difficult. So don’t make anything. It is important to find one or more sitting postures that you can use during the retreat. Many people alternate between various postures to avoid leg and back pain. *You should not sit in a posture that causes you undue pain or injury.* You may sit in a chair or stand as much as needed. You may ask the Head Dharma Teacher for advice on sitting postures during the retreat orientation.

## **The Daily Schedule**

Everyone participates fully in the daily schedule. If you are ill or have another emergency that makes you miss any part of the practice schedule, please leave a note for the Head Dharma Teacher. The Head Dharma Teacher is in charge of the Dharma Room and formal practice. Kong-an interviews are given during sitting periods as determined by the Zen Master or Ji Do Poep Sa Nim leading the retreat.

## **The Dharma Room**

Everyone helps maintain an atmosphere of quiet in the Dharma Room. Please don't move during sitting periods. If you are sleepy, or in a great deal of pain, you may do a sitting bow, get up, and then stand quietly behind your cushion, with your hands in hapchang (prayer position). *Before you get up to stand, please make sure your legs are not asleep.* Before sitting back down again, do a standing bow, and then settle quietly. During chanting, please hold the chanting book between your hands in the hapchang position.

When entering or leaving the Dharma Room, stop just inside the door, face the altar Buddha statue and bow. During sitting periods, please enter or leave the Dharma Room only during walking meditation, except for an emergency. If you are late, sit on a cushion outside the Dharma Room until the chugpi (clapper) is hit and enter during walking meditation. You may enter the Dharma Room during bows and between chants.

During walking meditation, you may leave to use the bathroom; walk in line until you come to the door, then bow and leave. When you re-enter, either return to your place in line, or wait until everyone is standing in back of her/his mat and enter quickly.

## **Kong-an Interviews**

Everyone participating in the retreat usually has at least one interview per day with the retreat leader. The teacher helps participants with their individual practice and questions. Interview order usually begins with the cooks, the moktak (chanting) master, and the Head Dharma Teacher, and then on around the room as indicated by the Head Dharma Teacher. When it is your turn, bow, get up, and leave immediately, bowing again at the Dharma Room door. Go to the interview room.

When you get to the interview room, open the door, and do a standing bow facing the teacher. Close the door, then stand behind the cushion and do a standing bow, a prostration, and a standing bow. Then sit. Follow this form in reverse when leaving. Do not turn your back to the teacher while leaving.

When your interview is over, re-enter the Dharma Room immediately so that the next person will know it is his/her turn to go.

## **Head Dharma Teacher**

If you have questions or problems during the retreat please talk to the Head Dharma Teacher.

The Head Dharma Teacher will walk with the stick during sitting periods to help everyone stay awake and alert. You may ask to be hit by holding your hands in hapchang. The hit consists of a slapping sound on the back twice on each side (not near the spine). The procedure for this will be demonstrated at the retreat orientation. The person carrying the stick also corrects posture and mudra (hand) position.

The retreat leader will walk with the stick at the end of the retreat. Everyone will receive a hit at these times.

## **Bows**

The retreat starts with 108 bows, or full prostrations. If you never done them before, or if you don't do them regularly be careful not to fall into the temptation of doing them all: your legs will pay the price later! Remember, you do not have to do all the 108 bows. You can do every other one, you can do ten and rest ten, etc. In the spirit of "together action" please do, if you can, the first and last bow with the group. If you are skipping a bow do a standing bow instead. During bows follow the teacher.

## **Keeping Silence**

During retreats, we keep silence in all areas of the retreat. If you need to communicate with the Head Dharma Teacher about formal practice or work, write a note; notepaper and pencils are on tables around the house. Speak with another retreatant only if you see them doing something that could be harmful to themselves or others. Otherwise, write the Head Dharma Teacher a note.

## **Reading**

It would be best to avoid all reading during retreat. If you must read, please read Zen Master Seung Sahn's books. Please do not keep journals or diaries.

## **Meals**

Attend all meals, even if you are fasting. The meals are part of the formal practice and are eaten silently. The silence of the meal includes handling the plates and utensils quietly. A meal bell is rung signaling the beginning of each meal; when you hear the bell, please go to the dining room. All meals are vegetarian.

## **Work Period**

You will be given a work period assignment. A work bell signals the beginning and end of the work period. Work period is part of formal practice; please do your assigned job thoroughly and meticulously. If you finish your assignment before the time is through, please see the work master for a new job so that the full time is used. Please ask the work master any questions about your work period job.

## **What To Bring**

Please bring anything you will need to have a successful retreat. This includes special sitting cushions, back-supports, etc. For your comfort, please wear loose-fitting clothing during the retreat. Meat, alcohol, illicit drugs, weapons and firearms are not permitted on the retreat.

## **End of Retreat**

The retreat ends with a circle talk that starts about 3:30 p.m. We are done by 4:00 p.m.

## One Day Sitting Daily Schedule

06:00 am	Bow To Teacher, Recite Four Great Vows, 108 bows
06:20 am	Break
06:30 am	Chanting
07:15 am	Read Temple Rules
07:25 am	Morning Sitting
08:00 am – 08:30 am	Breakfast (formal style)
08:45 am – 09:15 am	Work Period
09:30 am – 12:00 noon	Morning Sitting
12:00 noon	Lunch (formal style)
01:00 pm – 3:20 pm	Afternoon Sitting
03:20 pm	Chanting Recite Four Great Vows
03:30 pm	Circle Talk
04:00 pm	Bow To Teacher