

Training Manual
For
Buddha Hall Service Positions

Version 3.0.5

Outline for Buddha Hall Service Position Manual

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:

This document is an attempt to capture how services and service positions are currently performed at Buddha Essence Temple. They have been done very differently in the past; the tendency over recent years has been to simplify and make them more appropriate to our circumstances. For example, the services performed in the 1960s and 70s were far more complex than they are now and much of what was once done in Japanese is now done in English. Also, each temple will, over time, evolve services and procedures that are specific to its unique physical and cultural circumstances. As a consequence, this document is not an attempt to define what is “right” or how things “should” be done. This too will evolve over time.

While it is important to learn and maintain these forms and procedures well, the mindfulness with which they are practiced, the respect with which they are approached, and the devotion with which they are performed is equally important. You are encouraged to take them on as a form of practice and to put your whole self into them, just as you would your zazen. Your service is a wonderful offering to the Sangha.

It is also important to appreciate these service rituals as a wonderful example of our interconnectedness and interdependence. For those doing service positions, the ritual is an opportunity to train in how each is interrelated to all the other positions as well as the service as a whole. Traditionally, Zen monks hold these positions. Here at ZCLA, all service positions (with the exception of the Officiant) are open to everyone as practice. You are encouraged to take advantage of it.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES:

Services are conducted every day at Buddha Essence Temple. The structure of the service(s) and the content of them (i.e., the specific sutras and dedications used) will vary depending on the training and Temple schedule. As a general rule:

- During Intensive Training (Ango) Periods and Sesshin, we conduct three services daily, morning, noon, and evening.
- During non-intensive periods, we conduct both a morning and evening service on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, as well as a morning service on Saturday and Sunday.
- On hosan days (days the Temple and Office are closed, usually Monday and Tuesday, as well as holidays and break periods), only an abbreviated morning service is conducted.
- We also conduct special memorial services as the need arises as well as services on important Buddhist holidays (e.g., Buddha's Birthday).

In the Buddha Hall, there are binders which contain the specific contents (sutras, dedications and cues) for each service. There is a separate binder for both the doan and the chanter. There is one set of binders for normal daily services which is used during non-intensive periods and another for ango/sesshin periods. If ever you wish to know what sutras will be offered on a given day, you may refer to the appropriate binder. There are also binders for special services, such as our Sunday service, the Gate of Sweet Nectar, and seasonal services as needed.

One final note: The Soto School has made some considerable efforts over time to create a "standard" set of services and liturgy so that people going from one temple to another would be able to understand the services and participate in them. While parts of services are certainly familiar from temple to temple, the fact is that each temple develops its own style and practice. ZCLA is no exception to this.

Morning Services:

The normal morning service consists of three separate services.

- In the first service, we chant either the Heart Sutra in Sino-Japanese or English and it is dedicated to Shakyamuni Buddha.
- In the second service, we chant either the Song of the Jewel Mirror Awareness or the Identity of Relative and Absolute. It is dedicated to the ancestors of our lineage, as well as special memorials for contemporary people and people killed in events throughout the world.

- In the third service, we chant either the Enmei Jukko Kannon Gyo (Prolonging Life Sutra) or the Sho Sai Myo Kichijo Dharani (Protection Sutra). This service is dedicated to our Abbots, the living Sangha, and those who are suffering and need our prayers.

Noon Service:

In the noon service we chant either the Life Span of the Thus Come One (Lotus Sutra Chapter 13) or The All-Sidedness of the Perceiver of the World's Sounds Kanzeon Bodhisattva (Lotus Sutra Chapter 25). This service is dedicated to the Buddha, the founders of the Soto School, the earth and all its creatures, and the peace and sound practice of our members.

Evening Service:

In the evening service, we chant the Daihishin Dharani. The merits of this service are dedicated to all sentient beings.

The normal flow of a service is as follows:

- During the first round on the densho, the altar is set up and the Buddha Hall prepared for the service.
- During the second round on the densho, the Ryoban (the positions on both sides of the haishiki – traditionally occupied by the monastery officers) are filled by the Chanter. The Chanter also checks that everything is in order for the service.
- During the third round on the densho, the officiant and his/her attendants (Jisha, Jiko, Sogeï) approach and enter the Buddha Hall.
- After doing a standing bow at the haishiki, the officiant goes to the altar and offers incense.
- The officiant returns to the haishiki and we all do three full bows together (*fudosampai*), except during the evening service in which we do no bows.
- The officiant returns to the altar to offer incense, and returns to the haishiki, and,
- The chanting of the first sutra begins. Twice during the sutra chanting, the officiant will go to the altar to offer incense. As we approach the end of the sutra, you will hear two hits on the small kesu.

- At the conclusion of the sutra, the chanter will chant the dedication which is followed by the refrain, “All Buddhas throughout...”
- In the morning service, this will be followed by two additional sutras, dedications and refrains.
 - During the chanting of the second sutra, the Officiant, accompanied by the Jisha, will go into the Founder’s Room, offer incense and three bows to the ancestors and then return to the main hall.
- During the final refrain, the officiant will go to the altar to offer incense and upon his/her return to the haishiki, the Doan will give the cues for fudosampai and we will all do three full bows together (except for the evening service).
- The officiant then exits the Buddha Hall, joins the attendants who are waiting outside, and they return to their beginning point.
- During the exit, the Doan signals for the final bows in the Buddha Hall and the Ryoban exits, followed by the rest of the participants.
- Those in service positions remain behind briefly to close up the altar, turn off the lights, Etc.

Exceptions:

- On the second Saturday of the month (or the Saturday closest to the 14th), we do what is called a “combined 1st and 2nd service.” The Officiant will go to the Founder’s Room during the 1st sutra to offer incense and return. This service combines the usual dedications of the 1st service to Shakyamuni Buddha and the 2nd service to the Ancestral Lineage. This is followed by the usual 3rd service. At the conclusion of the 3rd service, the Founder’s Service is announced, and we are all invited into the Kaisando for the service and food offerings. Sometimes, in the event of a memorial service for a member or other special person, this format will be followed except that rather than go to the Kaisando, we remain in the main hall for the chanting of the Daihishin Dharani and memorial dedication.
- On Hosan days, we also do a combined 1st and 2nd service.
- On Hosan days and non-ango/sesshin days, the morning service is followed by a service at the Hakuryusan (White Dragon Protector) Altar on the north side of the Dharma Hall. This service is a prayer for the protection of the temple, its grounds and its members. When the Officiant exits the Buddha Hall, he/she and his/her attendants go to that area to be joined by the Chanter, the Doan and others in attendance. During ango, the service is done at the end of the noon service on Fridays.

NOTES & INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH POSITION:

The Doan:



The Position: At present, the Doan here at ZCLA is only responsible for the bells during services. In the traditional Japanese monastery, the Doan is the “Vice-Ino,” and is also the disciplinarian in the zendo. He or she is responsible for training and overseeing the Doanryo – or Doan Team – which consists of the Doan (bells), Mokugyo (wooden fish drum), Shosu (hits the densho), the Sogei (inkin), and the (taiko) Drummer (for special services such as the Gate of Sweet Nectar, New Year’s service, Shuso Hossen, Etc.).

The Procedure: The procedures and cues for the Doan are clearly spelled out in the Doan Service Binder, so we will not attempt to duplicate them here. Because the Doan is the person who provides the majority of the percussive cues to the officiant and participants in the service, it is essential that you be well versed in the various symbols you need to follow. Please take the initiative to go to the Buddha Hall during non-service times and practice with the instruments, walking through the entire service. To gain experience, you may want to speak to one of the Day Managers to sign up ahead of time for a particular service.

Each of the instruments – the large and small kesu, the inkin, etc. – has a way of being struck and a place to strike it that results in a harmonious sound. Please ask a senior person to work with you.

Also, since you will be busy during most of the service, you should do your bows upon arrival at the Doan station and again during the chanting of the names on the prayer list. When you are not hitting the bell or using another instrument, your hands should be in the position held by the group (e.g., gassho or shashu). If you are striking a bell or using an instrument with only one hand, the other hand should be in gassho while hitting or using it.

Miscellaneous Notes:

1. In the early part of the service, after the fudosampai (three bows), the officiant goes to the altar to offer incense. There is a  when the officiant bows at the haishiki, when he/she bows at the right of the altar, and again when he/she bows at the haishiki. There is a  when the officiant stands straight up with his/her hands in gassho. Wait until the Officiant’s body is straight up! There is a tendency to hit the kesu too soon.
2. If you are a priest, after completing your three bows before the service begins, pick up your zagu and move it so that it faces the kesu, and sit on it during the service. Before making three bows during the reading of the prayer list, turn your zagu toward the altar. After the bows, turn it again to face the kesu. You may pick it up when service is complete.

3. The doan is the person who gives the signal for the Jisha to exit the Buddha Hall at the beginning of the service and join the Jisharyo to await the end of the first round on the densho. The signal (“klack” with the wooden clappers) should be given when the altar has been prepared and the Jisha is standing, facing the kodai, holding a stick of lit incense. The Chanter will tell you when to strike the inkin, signaling the end of the second round on the densho. Make sure though, that the officiant is in place, either by direct observation or by checking with the Chanter before giving the signal.

The Densho (Shosu):

The Position: The person who plays the densho (the large hanging bell outside the Buddha Hall) initiates the entire sequence of events that results in the service. The “tune” played by the Densho consists of a set of introductory hits and three rounds, each of which consists of a period of tolling and ending hits. The introductory hits should begin at ten minutes before the schedule time of the service. During the first round, the other service positions will be setting up the altar and preparing the Buddha Hall for the service. During the second round, the Chanter will be filling the Ryoban positions and, during the third round, the Officiant and his/her attendants will process to and enter the Buddha Hall. At the conclusion of the entry, you may enter the hall and join in the service.

The Procedure:

(Shosu) Densho Procedure

(∅ = SOFT, ∅ = MEDIUM ∅ = LOUD)

When you are tolling, wait until the ringing of the Densho has almost stopped before the next hit.

Introductory Round:

∅ ∅ ∅ ∅

Round one: Altar is being prepared

Start **TOLLING** ∅... until

Clack (of wooden blocks by Doan)

∅

Clack

Gradually and evenly – not abruptly – begin to speed up for the first run.

Time the length and speed of the run with the Jisha’s movements. When Jisha and Sogei are in line:

∅ Jisha and Sogei bow and proceed to officiant

Round Two: Ryoban is being filled

TOLLING ∅ until:

Ching (by Doan)

∅

Ching

∅

Begin to speed up for 2nd run

Finish with a **brief pause**, then ∅ ∅

Round Three: officiant procession

Pause while the Sogei signals bowing for the Officiant and begin tolling the third round

∅

Keep tolling as Officiant is being led to the Buddha Hall.

∅

Ching (does not need to interspersed)

∅

Ching

Begin to speed up for (ching-ching) 3rd run

Time length and speed of run with officiant placing shoes by door and preparing to enter

Brief pause

∅ = Officiant steps into Buddha Hall & bows

ching (by Doan)

∅ = Officiant is half way to Haishiki

ching

∅ = officiant bows **at the** Haishiki

Return striker to holder; enter Buddha Hall and leaving it open except in very cold weather. If you do need to close it, make sure it is unlocked so that latecomers are able to enter.

The Sogei:

The Position: The Sogei is the person who leads the Officiant's procession and signals their location to those in the Buddha Hall. The inkin is held vertically so that the top of it is level with the shoulder. The handle should rest on the little finger and the other fingers are wrapped around the handle. When striking it, the wrist should be loose, making a "flipping" motion, holding the striker between the first two fingers and the thumb (ask for a demonstration). When waiting, hold the striker in a horizontal position with the tip between the thumb and forefinger of the hand holding the inkin.

The Procedure:

During the first round on the densho, pick up the inkin and stand outside the Buddha Hall in the designated spot (ask for instruction if in doubt). Leave the striker in between the cushions and wait for the Jisha to exit at the end of the first round. When the Jisha is standing at your side, the Shosu will finish the run on the densho with a brief pause and a single hit \emptyset . That is the cue for you and the Jisha to bow and proceed to the Officiant's location. Upon arrival, the Jisha should stand directly in front of the Officiant and you should position yourself to his/her right.

At the end of the second round on the densho, there will be two hits $\emptyset \emptyset$. This is your cue to begin the procession. Coordinate your hits with the bow of the officiant, striking the inkin while in a vertical position and then bowing.

Ching & bow

Ching & bow

Ching – ching & bow, then turn and walk toward the Buddha Hall.

Ching at one-third of the way to the hall

Ching two thirds of the way, and,

Ching – ching when the Officiant comes in front of the Jisha and bows.

At this point you may follow the Jisha and/or Jiko into the hall and place your inkin on the sutra bookshelf.

At the end of the service, during the fudosampai, do only one bow, then exit the hall, picking up the inkin on the way, and wait outside with the Jisha for the Officiant to exit. (There will be exceptions to this, especially when participants are invited to offer incense; be sure you offer incense early enough to exit in time.) When the officiant exits,

Ching – ching & bow, then turn and lead the way to where you first met the officiant

Ching at the one-third point

(Doan **chings** for Buddha Hall participants.)

Ching at the two-thirds point (listen for Doan ching)

(Doan **chings** for Buddha Hall participants.)

Ching – ching (after Doan ching) & bow upon reaching your destination. This time you should end up at the left (your left) of the Officiant, with the Jisha standing on your right, directly in front of him/her as before.

The Jisha:

The Position: The Jisha is the Officiant's attendant and attends to his/her needs. Traditionally, the Dennans are responsible for preparing the altar for service, but in our situation here at ZCLA, the Dennans are often not identified until just before the service begins. Consequently, the preparation of the altar most often rests in the hands of the Jisha.

The Procedure: To prepare the altar, turn on the light above the altar and open the Butsudān. Light the candle on the altar and the votive candle on the Founder's Altar as well. Light and place two short waiting sticks at 9:00 o'clock and 3:00 o'clock in the two incense bowls. Place two regular sticks on the side of the altar for use during Officiant's entry and offering in the Founder's Room. Also set out a short stick if there is to be a Hakuryusan Service. Remember to break off the tip of the incense sticks so that they will enter the ash bowl in a straight manner. If the charcoal for the hako has not yet been lit by the Jiko (if there is one assigned) or someone else, you will need to do this as well. (See notes in Jiko section for handling the hako.) When the altar is prepared, light one regular stick of incense (free hand in gassho) and stand facing the kodai (the low table on which the hako sits).

Your cue to exit will be a **clack** of the wooden blocks by the Doan. Do a standing bow facing the kodai and turn toward the door.

The incense is held at the bottom of the stick with the tips of the thumbs and first two fingers of each hand. The third and fourth fingers are curled back into the palm. Hold the incense in shashu and when you bow, move your hands slightly away from your body so that you don't poke yourself in the eye. Keep it vertical and level.

There will be a second **clack** as you begin moving toward the door. Exit and wait outside with the Sogei until the single hit at the end of the first round.

⊘ This is the signal for you, the Sogei and the Jiko (if any) to bow and proceed to meet the Officiant.

At the end of the second round on the densho, there will be two hits:

⊘ ⊘ The Sogei will begin striking the inkin in unison with the Officiant's bows. You and the Sogei will bow in unison.

Ching

Ching

Ching – ching Upon conclusion of the third bow, all of you will turn toward the Buddha Hall and process there. Sogeï leads, followed by the Officiant, the Jisha and the Jiko (if any). Upon arrival at the Buddha Hall, the Sogeï will again signal a unison bow:

Ching – ching


At this point the Officiant will remove his/her shoes by the door and step into the main hall. Follow the Officiant, doing a standing bow as you step into the hall and then move quickly to a position about four to five feet behind the Officiant and slightly to the right of the haishiki, even with the space between the haishiki and the Ryoban. Do a standing bow in unison with the Officiant.

The Officiant will step to the left and proceed to the left side of the altar where he/she will bow. You should move to the right and proceed to the altar, going around behind the Ryoban. Pace yourself so that you do not get ahead of the Officiant, except at the last, you will have to put on a burst of speed so that you arrive at the altar and do a standing bow in unison with the Officiant, facing the kodai (i.e., facing south, towards the Dharma Hall).

After bowing, hold the stick upright and hand the incense to the officiant directly in front of the altar at a level at which the Officiant would naturally reach for it, your free hand in gassho. This will require that you bend your wrist so that the tips of the thumb and two fingers holding the incense stick are pointing at the Officiant. Imagine that you are placing the incense directly into the Officiant's hand. This may take some practice; please ask a senior person to coach you. The Officiant should not have to turn or reach for the incense. Remember to hold the stick at the bottom as the Officiant will naturally reach for the middle of the stick. Once the Officiant has taken the incense, step back in gassho, bow in unison with the Officiant, and return to your position (behind and to the right), slightly trailing the Officiant (it's important not to get ahead).

After the three bows, the Officiant will go to the altar to offer incense. Move to the right side of the haishiki, bow, then kneel and quickly – without elaborate gestures – straighten out the Officiant's zagu (bowing cloth); a slight pull at the edges is usually adequate. You will need to complete this task, stand, bow and return to your position before the Officiant returns to the haishiki.

During the first service dedication (morning service only), at the “May our sincere vows...,” step to the right and approach the altar as before to light the second regular stick of incense. When lit, stand facing the kodai and bow in unison with the Officiant, then return to your position with the incense, slightly trailing the Officiant as before.

A short way into the second sutra, there will be a  on the large kesu which is the Officiant's cue to go to the Founder's Room. Do a standing bow and follow the Officiant, going around behind the Ryoban on the left side of the haishiki. The Founder's Room is entered in three steps (normally in gassho, but you're carrying incense): one

before the threshold, one crossing the threshold, and one inside the room, facing the Buddha Hall altar.

Move to your position to the right and behind the Officiant, do a standing bow in unison, then approach the altar in the same manner as you did in the main hall, do a standing bow and hand the incense to the Officiant. Step back, make a standing bow in unison, and return to your position.

The Officiant will do three full bows (stand in gassho and make standing bows in unison with the Officiant's bows), pick up his/her zagu, make a standing bow, and exit the room. Extinguish the candle on the altar, turn out the lights, and exit through the north door using the same three-step method facing the Buddha Hall altar. Leave the doors open. Return to your position.

After the 2nd service dedication, the names of the lineage or the Women Ancestors are chanted. When the Women Ancestors are chanted, the Officiant may, after making full bows, want a sutra book to chant from. Be attentive and ready to supply one if wanted.

During the 3rd service dedication, after praying for the long life of Roshi Bernie and Roshi Egyoku, do a standing bow and go to the bookshelf and pick up the sambo with the prayer list book on it. Carry the sambo with your two middle fingers through the holes, the emblem on the cloth facing away from you. Step to the right side of the Officiant, holding the sambo at waist level, open the book and turn toward the Officiant. The Officiant should not have to reach or turn backwards to pick it up. Stand a couple of steps behind the Officiant during the chanting of the names and, during the offering of individual names, return to the Officiant's side as before so that she/he is able to replace the book on the sambo. Return the sambo and book to the shelf, rotating it so that the emblem is facing south, away from the wall.

During the "All Buddhas..." at the end of the 3rd service dedication, the Officiant will go to the altar to offer incense. Approach the haishiki as before and straighten out the zagu. (It is only necessary to straighten out the zagu twice, at the times indicated, unless it becomes really messed up. If it does, go forward and straighten it out at an appropriate time.)

As the Officiant returns to the haishiki, the Doan will signal the three bows. Do just one bow, then exit the hall with the Sogei and Jiko, taking up your position outside to await the Officiant. While on the way, place Roshi's shoes outside the threshold, in the center of the doorway, and the Officiant's shoes just to the right of Roshi's.

When the Officiant exits, he/she will move to a point in front of you and the Sogei will signal unison bows:

Ching – ching

After bowing, all of you will turn and process to where you originally met the Officiant, Sogei leading, followed by the officiant, yourself and the Jiko (if any).

Upon returning to the beginning point, there will be a final **Ching – ching** and bow to the Officiant.

Return to the Buddha Hall and enter as best you can (others are exiting) and assist with the closing up of the altar and the hall.

NOTE ON INCENSE:

In our services here at ZCLA, we use four different sizes of incense sticks in addition to the powdered form. They are referred to as short, regular, long and very long. The short (5 3/8”) and regular (8 3/4”) are used in normal daily services and the long (13”) is used for the Gate of Sweet Nectar on Sundays, for Founder’s Service and for other special services. The very long (21 3/4”) comes in both round and square forms and is used only for very special services such as Buddha’s Parinirvana and Obon.

The Jiko:

The Position: The Jiko is the person who is responsible for the hako or incense box. In the recent past, with the exception of the monthly Founder's Service, we have been performing most services without a Jiko. These instructions are included here so that we may be ready for the day we choose to make this position a regular part of the service.

The Procedure: Upon arrival at the Buddha Hall, pick up the hako and take it to the Chiden area just off of the main hall. Light a pellet of charcoal and place it in the middle of the ash box. Make sure there is adequate powdered incense and that it has been shaped into a ridge.

- When lighting the charcoal, make sure it is well lit before placing it in the ash box. Also, make sure the cup side is up to receive the incense and **DON'T FORGET TO PUT OUT THE CANDLE!**

When holding the hako, your thumbs should be on the side facing you, your top two fingers straight along the sides, and your lower two fingers curled beneath the hako through the cut away portion of the bottom edge. Please ask a senior person to demonstrate this for you. Hold the hako at eye level.

When ready, take the hako back into the Buddha Hall and wait facing the kodai, along with the Jisha. (If you need to set it down on the kodai, see instructions below.) When all is ready and it is time for you to exit, you will hear a **clack** of the wooden blocks by the Doan. You and the Jisha should bow together and turn toward the door. As you begin to move toward the door, there will be a second **clack** which tells the Densho to begin the run at the end of the first round.

- When carrying the hako, the ash box should be on your right and the incense box on the left. Imagine that there is an emblem or crest on the side facing away from you (this will be important later). Carry the hako at eye level.

At the end of the first round on the densho, there will be a single hit **Ø**. You, the Sogei and the Jisha will do a standing bow and then process to where the Officiant is waiting, Sogei first, Jisha second and Jiko last. Upon arrival, you and the Jisha will have to pass behind the Sogei and to the left so that the Jisha ends up directly in front of the Officiant and you are to the Jisha's left.

At the end of the second run on the densho, there will be two hits **Ø Ø**. This is the signal for the Jisharyo to make unison bows with the Officiant as the Sogei strikes the inkin:

Ching Ching Ching – ching. Upon the final bow, the three of you will turn and process to the Buddha Hall. You will follow the Jisha.

Upon arrival at the Buddha Hall, you will all drop your shoes at the door (in a neat and orderly fashion) and enter; the Sogei enters last. Upon entry, proceed to your position behind and to the left of the Officiant.

After bowing at the haishiki, the Officiant will go forward to the altar to offer incense. You should move to the left and pass behind the Ryoban, walking at a speed that just slightly trails the Officiant. At the last moment, you and the Jisha will need to put on a burst of speed so that the two of you arrive at the altar, facing the kodai, in time to bow in unison with the Officiant. Following the bow, place the hako on the kodai and step back in gassho.

- When you place the hako on the kodai in front of the altar, drop to one knee and rotate the hako by extending your left arm and pulling in on your right so that the emblem (front) faces the Officiant. Remain at the side of the kodai, not in front of it. When picking up the hako, do the reverse so that the emblem is facing away from you. Be sure the hako is centered on the kodai.

Bow in unison with the officiant after the incense offering and return to your position in gassho.

Remain in your position through the service. When doing fudosampai at the end, do only one bow, then go to the altar in shashu and pick up the hako (go down on one knee at the side of the kodai, not the front of it). Exit the hall and wait with the Sogei and Jisha for the Officiant's exit.

- Exception: When the assembly is invited to offer incense as in a memorial service, you and the Jisha should be the last ones in line. After offering incense, pick up the hako and exit along with the Jisha.

When the Officiant exits, you, the Jisha and the Sogei will do a unison bow with the Officiant (**ching – ching**), turn and process to where you first met the Officiant. Upon arrival, you will remain in the same order as you processed: Sogei, Officiant, Jisha and Jiko. The three of you will make one last bow to the Officiant (**ching ching**). At this point, return to the Buddha Hall and replace the hako on the kodai, remembering to replace the lid on the incense box.

The Mokugyo:

The Position: The Mokugyo is the wooden fish drum that is struck with a mallet to provide a pace for the chanting.

The Procedure: When you enter the Buddha Hall, go directly to the Mokugyo position and prepare it for use during the first round on the densho. Prepare it by folding the cover into a neat square and laying it on the floor a little above and to the left of the cushion; the crest should be visible. Remove the mallet and the two pegs from the opening of the Mokugyo and place them on the folded cover. Then stand in shashu on the zabutan, facing the altar, and await the beginning of the service.

When it is time for the three bows, make them standing on the zabutan (or other open space) and when they are finished, sit down in position and pick up the mallet. After the bows, the Officiant will go to the altar to offer incense and upon returning to the haishiki, will bow (○) and when he/she straightens up, there will be a gatsu (△) on the large kesu which you should respond to with a “pok” on the mokugyo. This tells the Chanter that you are ready.

The Chanter will then announce the sutra. Pay attention to the pace set by the end of the announcement of the sutra title as it tells you how fast to begin the sutra. The pace at the beginning of the sutra is similar to an old steam locomotive leaving the station. You will gradually increase the pace until the first ○ on the large kesu.

- At the end of the announcement, the final ...oh oh oh ○ pok pok pok ... should be evenly spaced (slow for the first four hits). Learn to hit with your ears.

Look to the Chanter for guidance on pace. If you are going too slowly, the Chanter will signal you to speed up by raising his/her hand, palm up. If too fast, he/she will lower the hand, palm down. It is important to not get lost in the sutra book. The hits on the small kesu will tell you when you are approaching the end. With the second hit •, we begin to slow down and the last three syllables should be slow. Please ask for a demonstration.

Hold the mallet loose and comfortably in both hands. You may strike the mokugyo with a slight forward motion, not clubbing it straight up and down. It should be a light motion in which you are assisting gravity a bit by helping the mallet “bounce” off of the mokugyo so that the tone is not flat. It is kind of a clean, snapping motion. For a faster rhythm, move your hands further up on the handle.

Normally, during the morning service, the 2nd service is chanted without the aid of the mokugyo. It is used again for the 3rd service and the procedure is the same as for the 1st. During the 2nd service, remain seated, in zazen mudra, and participate in the chanting. You may also hold the sutra book if you prefer.

- Point to note: When we are chanting the Heart of the Perfection of Great Wisdom Sutra, we stop using the mokugyo and slowly chant, “Gate! Gate!”

Paragate! Parasamgate! Bodhi svaha!” three times. Following the third time, be ready to continue the striking of the Mokugyo for the final “Prajna Heart Sutra.”

- When the mallet is not in use, place it on the floor beside you. Do not hold it in gassho position.

At the conclusion of the 3rd service sutra, you may close up the mokugyo by replacing the two wooden pegs (they keep the wood from swelling shut), the mallet and the cover. Close your sutra book and prop it up against the wall. You may stand on the zabutan for the completion of the service.

- If you are a priest, lay out your zagu facing the altar for your bows; turn it to face the mokugyo and sit on it during the service.

The Ino:

The Position: The Ino is the traditional head of the Sangha and guest relations as well as the Buddha Hall, the person in charge of the services held there. The Ino is also normally the person who leads the chanting. Here at ZCLA, we have separated the two jobs, having instead a Steward of the Buddha Hall and a Chanter, which allows for more people to serve as the latter. Here at Buddha Essence Temple, the Ino assigns people to service positions.

The Chanter:

The Position: The chanter is the person who provides vocal leadership during the service and is responsible for ensuring the Buddha Hall is prepared before the service begins, including the filling of the Ryoban. When chanting, it is important that your voice be the dominant one and that others can hear you. However, pay attention to the Officiant who may wish to set a different speed. While you will be chanting slightly louder than normal, please use your normal pitch and voice; keep the tone level and continuous. When one tries to chant higher or lower, it is often hard for others to hear you. For the same reason, please do not hold the sutra book in front of your face. The Chanter does not hold the book in gassho at any time. Also, please check with the person making the assignments, the schedule or the Chanter's book to see what sutras will be chanted and if there are any special dedications; make sure this is coordinated with the Doan. Finally, the Chanter is the person who will make any necessary announcements to the assembly when the service or protocol will vary from a normal service (e.g., Founder's Memorial Service, Buddha's Parinirvana Service, etc.). When necessary, offer instruction on how to hold the sutra book. This is good to do whenever there are lots of new people present.

The Procedure: During the second round on the densho, fill the Ryoban. As a rule, begin with priests or senior lay people, then people who have had jukai, and then others, generally more senior people first. If there are visiting teachers or other special visitors, please consult with Roshi regarding their placement in the hall. It is okay to say names out loud when inviting people into the Ryoban. Instruct people on how to enter the Ryoban, if necessary, after all have entered.

- The first position on the right (north) side is for the Abbot. If Roshi is officiating, leave her position open, except for the Gate of Sweet Nectar; fill it then with a senior person.
- The third position on the right (north) side is for the Chanter.
- The first position on the left (south) side is for the Shuso/Head Trainee. If that person is not present, anyone who has served in that role may occupy the space.

Once the hall is ready, signal the Doan who will signal the Densho that all is ready.

Ching Ø ching Ø

Try to do this as close to the stated starting time as possible. The Densho will begin the second run and signal the Jisharyo to begin the Officiant's procession to the Buddha Hall.

The Officiant and Jisharyo will enter the hall, bow and go to the altar to offer incense. This is followed by fudosampai and another incense offering by the Officiant.

When the Officiant returns to the haishiki after offering incense, there will be a ○ on the large kesu and then a gatsu (△) on the large kesu, followed by an initial **pok** on the mokugyo. This is your cue to announce the first sutra. Use the ending to signal the pace. (e.g., Maka Hanya Haramita Shin gyo-oh-oh vs. ...Shingyo ohhhhh ohhhhh)

- Consistent with the pace you have set, the announcement will be followed by a ○ on the large kesu. The sutra should

start out a little slow and build up to the desired pace – like a steam engine leaving the station – and reach the desired pace at the point of the first ○ which is the Officiant’s cue to go to the altar and offer incense. The last three syllables will slow down to an easy stop.

When you are the Chanter, there should be no gap between the end of the sutra and the dedication, the dedication and the refrain, or the refrain and the announcement of the next sutra. What is desired is a continuous flow of sound from beginning to end, including the chanting of the lineage.

- This brings up the point of breathing. Basically, try to breathe when others are not. For example, in the middle of a line or between an ancestor’s name and “Honored One.” We also try not to cut off names such as Buddha, Prajna, Paramita, or Kanzeon, for example.
- When the group is large enough to carry itself, you can drop out of the last syllable or two, take a breath, and begin the dedication as they are winding down.

The sutras, dedications and refrain are all clearly laid out in the Ino Books so you should have no trouble leading the service through to the end. Please note that there is a matching set of books for both the Doan and the Chanter (Ino) for ango/sesshin periods and another for non-ango/sesshin periods. Please make sure that you are using the appropriate book and that the Doan is using the same one you are.

- As part of the dedication for the 2nd service, the Chanter is to supply a dedication for someone (or a group of people) who has/have died as a result of an accident or other notable situation somewhere in the world; leave out “recent,” “yesterday,” and so forth. Please make sure you are ready with one.
- From time to time, special memorial service inclusions will be designated by Roshi and/or the Buddha Hall Steward.
- For the 3rd service dedication, notice if there are guest teachers and/or sangha present and include them in the dedication.

At the conclusion of the service, after the **ching – ching** by the Sogei when the Jisharyo has made it’s last bow to the Officiant, the Ryoban exits first, beginning with the Abbot or Head Teacher, then the Shuso or Head Trainee. The Chanter is the last of the Ryoban to exit.

On non-training and hosan days, we do a short service at the Hakuryusan altar outside. The SHO SAI MYO KICHIJO DHARANI and the BEN ZAI TEN JIN SHU are to be chanted fast and loud to wake up the protectors of the temple. The Doan should occupy the 2nd position on the right (west) side and the chanter the 3rd position.

The Dennans:

The Position: Traditionally, the Dennans are the people who attend/set up the altar as well as serve as hosts in the Buddha Hall and Zendo. At this time at ZCLA, they act only as hosts in the Buddha Hall. They hand out the sutra books and help people unfamiliar with our services find a place to stand, to find their place in the sutra book, and to hold the book properly.

The Procedure: Upon entering the Buddha Hall, take your box of sutra books and place it against the wall at the Dennon position. If in doubt, the Chanter or the person making the assignments will show you where to locate yourself and the box.

When the Officiant stands and bows at the haishiki following the fudosampai (○), pick up your box of sutra books, holding it about chest high, and stand slightly behind and to the left of the first Ryoban position (to the right on the north side of the hall).

- Make sure the books are facing in a manner that will allow the people to pick them up easily and open them without having to turn them around. If you are the Dennon on the north side of the hall, the side the Chanter is standing on, be sure the Chanter's book is right side up and near the top of the box.

When the Officiant bows to the left side of the altar, bow to your opposite on the other side of the hall, in unison with the officiant, and begin passing out the books. Pass them out first to the Ryoban on your side and then to the other participants. If there are not enough books to go around, ask people to share (there are usually extras in the cabinet on the wall).

- When passing out the books, the box should be held waist high and at your side, slightly behind, so that the box is trailing you. Face in the direction you are walking. Ask a senior person to demonstrate this.

When finished, return to your position and set the box down.

During the service, help newcomers locate the sutra (give page number). Also, look out for latecomers. If necessary, instruct them to do three bows and then hand them a sutra book. Please instruct people on how to properly hold the book.

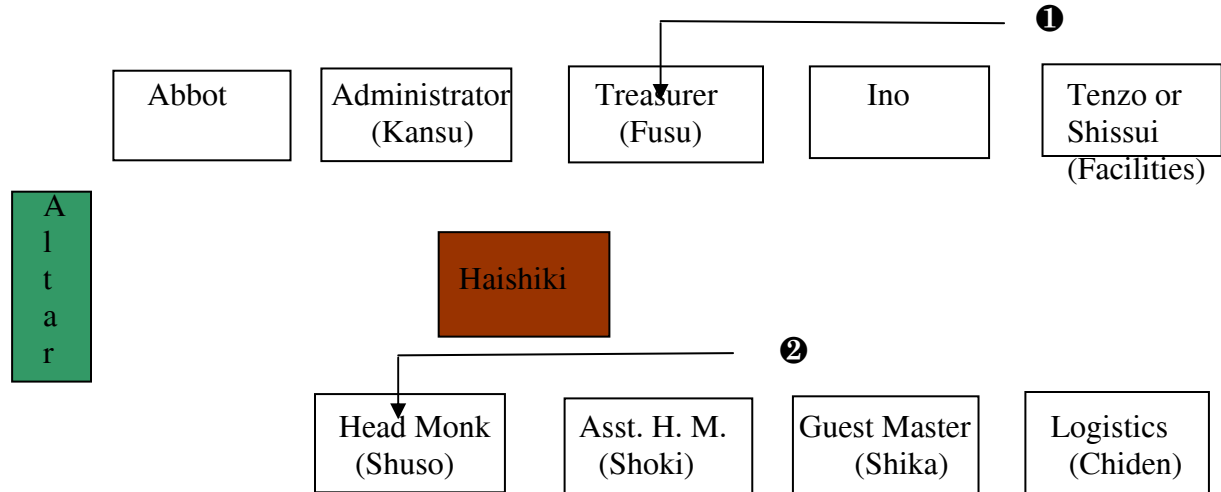
At the end of the service, the final line in the dedication is, "May we realize the Buddha Way together..." The "May we" is your cue to pick up the box and move into position as before, slightly behind and to the left (right on the north side) of the first person in the Ryoban. At the first ○, begin picking up the sutra books starting with the Ryoban, holding the box as before. Do this quickly as the Officiant needs to get to the altar to offer incense and is waiting for you to pass by.

Return to your position and put down the box. After the Officiant's exit is concluded, replace the box of books in the shelf near the door.

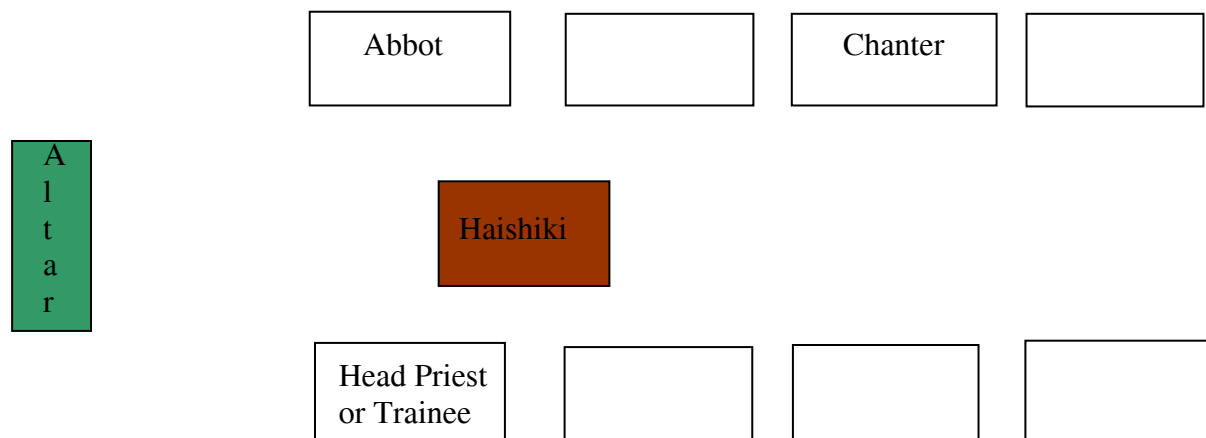
NOTES ON THE RYOBAN:

The Ryoban consists of four “seats” or positions on the sides of the Officiant’s bowing mat (haishiki). Traditionally, the people who occupy these positions are the officials of the monastery (see below – drawing not to scale). Today, at ZCLA, this is not usually the case and the Ryoban is filled according to the guidelines on page 21.

The Traditional Model:



As it is done at ZCLA:



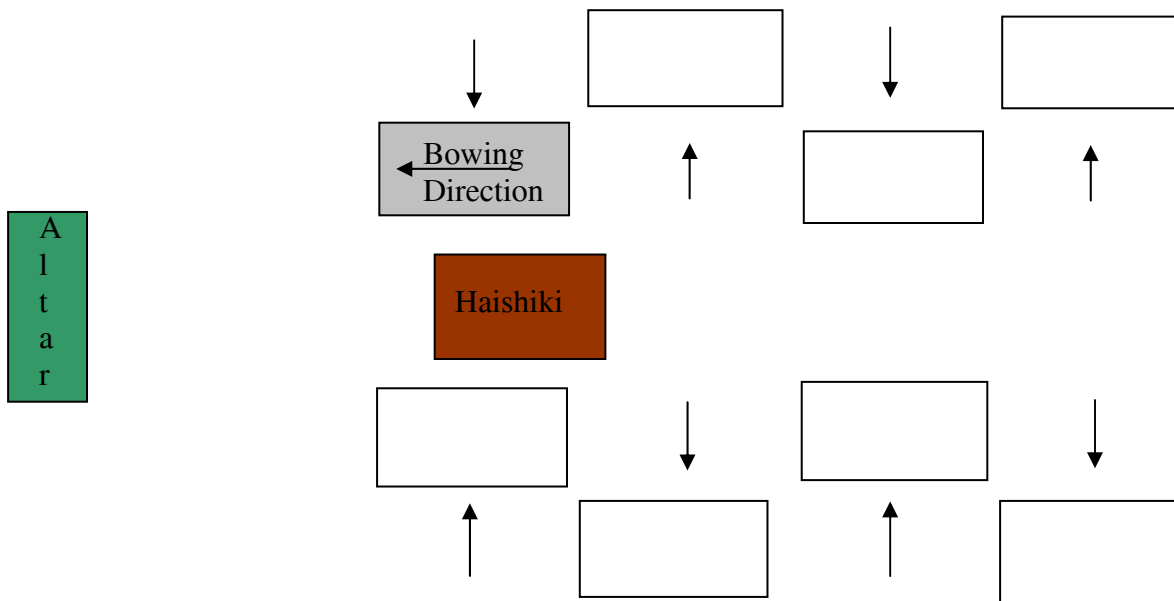
Entering the Ryoban:

1. If the person to occupy a given position is not currently serving in the role assigned for that position, the person should approach from behind the Ryoban, step into the position, bow in gassho to the altar, then bow in shashu to the person or position opposite. (See ❶ above.) This will be the case for most of us most of the time.
2. If the person to occupy a given position is currently serving in the role assigned for that position, the person approaches from the inside of the Ryoban, back steps into it, bows to the altar in gassho, and then bows in shashu to the person or position on the opposite side. (See ❷ above.)
3. Normally, the Abbot and the head Monk/Trainee will align themselves with the forward edge of the haishiki. Others in the Ryoban will stand a comfortable distance apart and aligned with the person opposite. Stand far enough back from the haishiki so that the officiant can pass easily going to and coming from the altar when you are holding a sutra book.

Bowing in the Ryoban:

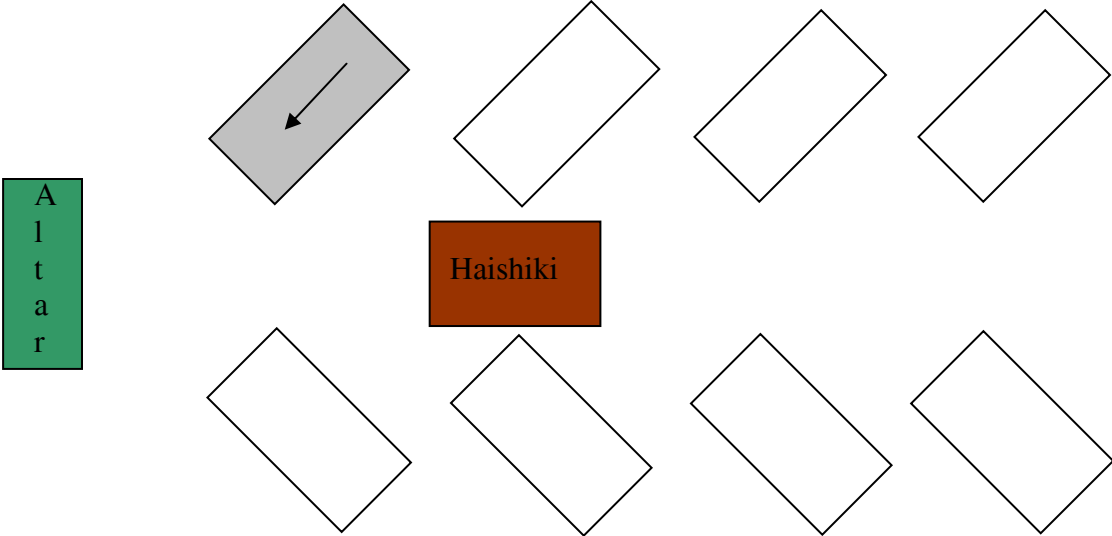
Making full bows while in the Ryoban can be done in two ways. In both cases, you should take your cue from the Abbot or the person standing in that position. If the position is not occupied – as it sometimes isn’t – then take your cue from the Shuso/Head Trainee. Priests should lay out their zagus in the direction indicated; each person should step to the left or right as indicated by the arrows. Also, try to coordinate your bowing with the officiant so that all of us are bowing together.

Option A:



This (Option A) is the regular and preferred manner of bowing at ZCLA as it works better for our space. It is also correct to bow directly toward the Buddha. If you have any questions, please ask a senior person.

Option B:



This option is not generally used at ZCLA, but you should be aware of it in case it is in use at another temple or a visiting teacher occupies the first position and does it this way.