



## Practical information about the zazenkai

The one day retreat – or zazenkai in Japanese – is a time of intense Zen practice when we turn our awareness inwards. When you have committed to this day, you may be sacrificing your free time or time with your partner or family. So will the other participants – the most important thing we're asking of you is to have respect for yourself and others by observing a few simple rules:

1. Keep silence as much as possible during the zazenkai. Instructions how to meditate – practice **zazen** - will be given in the beginning of the day. Speak only when necessary, for example when you have to clarify any points about Zen practice or something unexpected has cropped up. This would help you to keep your awareness and being inward-focused as much as possible. Be mindful and offer your help to others unobtrusively. Remember that if you chat you may destroy your and others' chances of deep insights.
2. Whether you are new to or an old hand at retreats it is recommended not to have any expectations. Just be open and do your best.
3. The exception of 'no talk' is the very beginning of the day when you may want to introduce yourself to people you haven't met before or to catch up with old friends. Also the farewell tea is a happy occasion when we talk freely.
4. Dress code: please wear dark and subdued colours – black, brown, grey, navy blue, dark green etc. This helps to keep distractions to a minimum as bright colours attract attention. Please remember to wear comfortable clothing as one of the key points about zazen is abdominal breathing – so tight jeans will obstruct.
5. Please bring some food for lunch to share – vegetarian or vegan.
6. The meditation room is warm, we wear no shoes inside but please bring good shoes and warm outer wear as (weather permitting) we'll have periods of walking meditation in the garden and work period (samu). Warm socks in dark/grey colours can be worn inside to keep your feet warm.
7. During the day there will be an opportunity to have sanzen, one-to-one interview with Zen Master, Barbara Jikai Gabrys Roshi. We will guide you through the process.
8. Do not hesitate to ask for help – senior members will be happy to answer your queries.