



Kwan Yin Chan Lin Zen Beginners' Handbook

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1. Kwan Yin Chan Lin's Objective

Kwan Yin Chan Lin Zen Centre (KYCL) was founded by Venerable Chi Boon in 1991. Its objective is to spread the Buddha's true teaching so that we may attain our true selves and help all sentient beings to relieve from suffering. The spiritual teacher of KYCL is the great Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn. The Zen Master founded the Kwan Um School of Zen and has established more than 100 Zen centers all over the world.

The name of our Zen Centre, "Kwan Yin Chan Lin", carries a deep meaning. "Kwan" means to perceive and "Yin" means the sound of the world. "Kwan Yin" (in Korean, "Kwan Um") means to perceive the sound within us, to remove our ignorance, attachment and incorrect mindset, and to practice the correct path. In addition, we should also perceive the sound of all sentient beings and help them to relieve from suffering and gain happiness. "Chan", which is the Chinese word for Zen, represents simple and pure life. At present days, our lives are becoming more and more complicated, and many sufferings are made as a consequence. Zen practice can help us return to simple life and let our minds return to peace, tranquility, holiness and freedom. "Lin" means many tree. The many trees that make up a forest give it strength, and cannot be blown away by strong wind. "Chan Lin" represents many people practicing together so we can help each other and give each other strength to fulfill the great Buddhist vows.

The first words of the Buddha after he attained enlightenment were: "This is amazing! This is wonderful! All sentient beings already have Buddha Nature. But, they are obscured by their deluded thinking and attachment, and are unable to attain their true nature." By practicing the correct meditation, we can find the correct direction of our lives and attain our true nature. We can also clearly perceive our correct situation, relationship and function at every moment, live in wisdom and compassion, to help our families, our friends, our country and this whole world to gain peace and happiness.

2. What is Zen?

Zen is very simple... *What are you?*

In this whole world everyone searches for happiness outside, but nobody understands their true self inside. Everybody says, "I" — "I want this, I am like that..." But nobody understands this "I." Before you were born, where did your I come from? When you die, where will your I go? If you sincerely ask, "what am I?" sooner or later you will run into a wall where all thinking is cut off. We call this "don't know."

Zen is keeping this "don't know" mind always and everywhere.

When walking, standing, sitting, lying down,
speaking, being silent, moving, being still,
At all times, in all places, without interruption —
what is this?
One mind is infinite kalpas.

Meditation in Zen means keeping don't-know mind when bowing, chanting and sitting Zen. This is formal Zen practice. And when doing something, just do it. When driving, just drive 100%; red light stops, green light goes. When eating, just eat; when working, just work.

Finally, your don't-know mind will become clear. Then you can see the sky, only blue. You can see the tree, only green. Your mind is like a clear mirror. Red comes, the mirror is red; white comes the mirror is white. A hungry person comes, you can give him food; a thirsty person comes, you can give him something to drink. There is no desire for myself, only for all beings. That mind is already enlightenment, what we call Great Love, Great Compassion, the Great Bodhisattva Way. It's very simple, not difficult!

3. Our Teachers

Zen Master Seung Sahn: Founder of Kwan Um School of Zen and our Spiritual Teacher.



Zen Master Seung Sahn was born in 1927 in Seun Choen, North Korea and became a Buddhist monk in 1948. He received Dharma Transmission from Zen Master Ko Bong at the age of 22 and became the 78th Patriarch in his line of succession in the Chogye order of Korean Buddhism, which traces all the way back to Zen Master Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Chinese Zen Buddhism. To spread the Dharma, Zen Master Seung Sahn went to the United States and founded the Providence Zen Centre, the first center of the Kwan Um School of Zen, which now has more than 100 Zen centres all over the world.

Ven. Chi Boon: Abbot of Kwan Yin Chan Lin Zen Centre.



Ven. Chi Boon, also known in Korean as Gye Mun Sumin, JDPS, was given 'inka' in November 1998.

'Inka' means an acknowledgment of accomplishment in Zen practice. It is given by Zen Master Seung Sahn to senior students called Ji Do Poep Sa (Guides to the Way, or Dharma Masters), who are authorized to teach Zen.

4. Contents of KYCL Zen Meditation Class

The Zen Meditation Class in KYCL consists of six lessons held on Saturdays starting at 7pm and ending at about 9:30pm. However, when there are many students, the classes may end later. The lessons include sitting meditation, walking meditation, Dharma talks, interview, Kong-An practice, and Hua Tou practice.

Sitting and walking meditations are formal meditations in which we learn to relax our bodies and concentrate on breathing naturally to focus our minds. Once our minds have settled down, we can do the Kong-An and Hua Tou practice while we are doing sitting or walking meditation. Kong-An are usually dialogues between ancient Zen Masters and their students or the questions that Zen Masters post to their students while teaching them. Hua Tou is usually a phrase, or sometimes, just a word in a Kong-An. The goal of these practices is to cut off our thinking mind. As our practices mature, all thinkings are cut off, and we will be able to perceive the true substance of everything in the universe. Our minds will become clear like a mirror and we will attain our original faces.

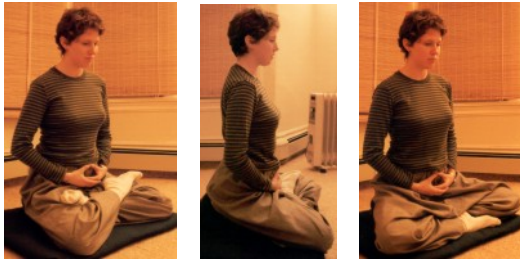
Interview is a question and answer session with Shifu (i.e., Teacher). During the interview, Shifu will teach us how to put down our discriminating minds and attachment, and experience Zen. Shifu will also give the students a question, a Kong-An, or a Hua Tou to meditate on, which will become their homework during meditation. To participate in the interview, a student must attend every session of the meditation class. If a student is absent for a session, he/she cannot participate in the remaining interviews, and can only participate in sitting meditation, walking meditation and Dharma talks.

5. Forms and Postures

5.1. Sitting



Sit in a cross-legged position. Keep the spine straight, shoulders loose; tip your head forward slightly, tuck in your chin so that you can see the floor about 3 feet in front of you. Your eyes should be half open, looking down. Place your hands in your lap in the Mudra posture with your left hand over your right hand and both thumbs touching lightly.



(1)

(2)

(3)

1. Full-lotus: Put your left foot on your right thigh and then your right foot on your left thigh. You can also cross your right foot first.
2. Half-lotus: Put your left foot under your right thigh and your right foot on your left thigh. You can also exchange left and right.
3. "Burmese" posture: Cross both feet and put them on the mat.

5.2. Paying Respect to All Buddhas

Bowing to Buddha means paying respect to all Buddhas. Bowing to Buddha carries the meaning of repentance, meditation, paying respect and showing gratitude. Bowing to Buddha and Zen Masters is a way of expressing our politeness to them, our respect of their wisdom and our gratitude for their teaching. It also represents our self-examination and repentance of wrong deeds committed in the past. As we bow to them, we are also removing our arrogance and becoming humble. So, bowing is a very good form of practice for our bodies and minds.

The Korean form of bowing is slightly different from the traditional Chinese form. Here, we introduce both forms of bowing to the beginners.

Greeting/Standing Bow (Chinese Form)

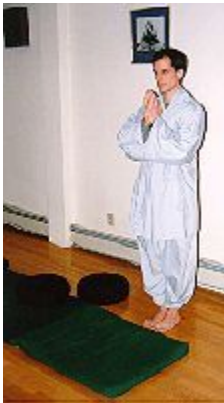
1. Put your hands in hapchang (palms together), focus on the tips of your middle fingers, and relax your body and mind.
2. Bow fully towards a 90-degree position, keeping your neck straight. Your head should not droop down.
3. As you return to the vertical position, fold the three small fingers of your right hand and wrap them with the three small fingers of your left hand, leaving your thumbs and index fingers straight. Now, your hands look like a lotus bud just about to blossom.
4. Straighten your waist, bring your hand across your chest and up to the level of your eye-brows. There is no need to touch your forehead with your finger tips.
5. Gently bring your hands down to your chest and return to hapchang.

Prostration (Chinese Form)

1. Put your hands in hapchang in front of your chest. Your soles should be roughly two inches apart, with your toes pointing outward. Focus on the tips of your middle fingers.
2. Put down your right hand, with your left hand remaining in hapchang posture. Lower your waist, straighten your right arm, and put your right palm in the middle of the cushion (or in front of your right knee). Drop to your knees with your left hand in hapchang posture.

3. After you have kneeled down, put your left palm on the left side of the cushion and ahead of your right palm.
4. Bring your right palm from the middle of the cushion (or your right knee) to the front, level with your left palm and roughly six inches apart.
5. Place your forehead in between your palms, gently make two fists, then turn over and open your hands with your palms facing up.
6. As you bring up your head, gently make two fists, then turn over and open your hands with your palms facing down. Once your head is in the upright position, bring your right palm to the middle of the cushion (or in front of your right knee).
7. Bring your left palm back in front of your chest, push your body up with your right palm, straighten your waist, and stand in hapchang. Do not move your feet.

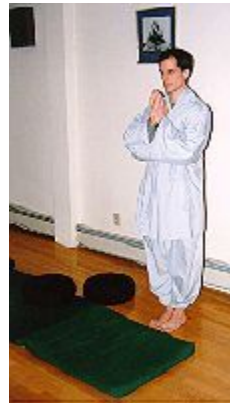
Standing Bow (Korean Form)



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3

1. Put your hands in hapchang (palms together), feet together.
2. Bow fully from the hips, keeping your back straight so your chest is parallel to the floor. Your head should be bowed and your hands will drop to the level of your knees as you go down.
3. As you return to the vertical position, your hands will also return to chest height.

Greeting Bow (Korean Form)

Like standing bow except that you bow from the waist and make an angle of about 45 degrees.

Sitting Bow (Korean Form)

Like standing bow except that you bow while sitting.

Prostration (Korean Form)



Step 1, 7



Step 2, 6



Step 3, 5



Step 4

1. Start in a standing position with the feet together, and the hands in hapchang.
2. Drop gently to your knees, but still stay in a vertical position sitting on your heels with your hands in hapchang.

3. Drop forward to all fours so that the right hand is in front of the right knee and same for left.
4. Rock back and down so that your rear is touching your heels and your forehead is touching the floor. In this position, your hands should be turned over (palms up), touching the mat next to your ears and your left foot should be crossed over the right one. Remain for a moment in this position.
5. Rock forward and up so that you return to the “all fours” position.
6. Sit back on your heels and come to a vertical position with your hands in hapchang, resting on the balls of your feet again.
7. Return to the upright standing position.

Alternative Form:

- Pushing off from the kneeling position with the hands to return to the standing position. This is sometimes necessary if our bodies are not well or we have bad knees or our balance is not good.

6. Etiquettes

6.1. General Etiquette

Be punctual for the meditation classes and do not leave early. It is advisable that you reach KYCL at 6:45 pm so that you have enough time to prepare for the class. Please wear loose-fitting shirt and long pants. This will make your sitting meditation more comfortable.

6.2. Etiquette of Sitting and Walking Meditation

Five minutes before the meditation starts, the moktak will be hit to signal everybody to get ready. The sitting period begins when the chug-pi is hit 3 times. During sitting meditation, refrain from walking in and out of the Dharma Room so as not to interfere with others' meditation practice. If you wish to go to the toilet, please do so during walking meditation.

If your feet are numb while sitting, you may change your sitting posture quietly. If you are unable to sit properly because of excessive pain, you may stand in hapchang behind your mat, and return to sitting when the pain has subsided.

If you wish to leave the walking meditation group, please follow the group until you reach the door of the Dharma Room. Then, step out of the group, do a standing bow to the Buddha and leave the room. When you return, you should go back to the same location in the group as you were before you leave. First, do a standing bow to the Buddha at the door of the Dharma Room. Then, wait until the person just in front of you in the group passes by, and step into the group. It is not necessary to hapchang or bow again when entering the group.

Both the beginning and ending of the walking meditation periods are signaled by 1 hit of the chug-pi. When the walking period starts or ends, it is not necessary to bow before standing up or sitting down.

At the end of the last sitting period, the chug-pi is hit 3 times and everyone does a sitting bow. At the end of group meditation and meditation class, we will perform three prostrations to the Buddha.

6.3. Etiquette at Interview

Interview is normally conducted in groups of five students. While a group of students are having their interview with Shifu in the Interview Room, the next group of students will sit in meditation in the Waiting Room. Once the bell is rung by Shifu, the students in the Interview Room will leave, and the students in the Waiting Room may enter and stand behind the cushion. The last student to enter the Interview Room will close the door. Then, the students will perform a standing bow, a prostration and another standing bow to Shifu. Now, the students can sit down to begin the interview.

After the interview, Shifu will ring the bell. The students will perform a sitting bow, then stand up behind the cushion to perform a standing bow, a prostration and another standing bow to Shifu before leaving the room.

While entering and leaving the Interview Room, be polite and avoid facing your back to Shifu.

7. Group Meditation and Retreats

What do I do after finishing the 6 lessons in the Meditation Class?

You can take the same Meditation Class again if you are still unsure of Shifu's teaching. Otherwise, you can practice Zen Meditation either by yourself at home or with us in KYCL. Group meditation is especially important and useful because we tend to have more determination while practicing in a group. Group meditations are held in KYCL on Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm, and on Saturday at 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm when there are no Meditation Classes. When Meditation Classes are being conducted, you are still welcomed to listen to Shifu's Dharma Talks and practice meditation with the new students.

KYCL also organizes 1, 3, and 7-day retreats, during which we practice continuously for the duration of the retreats. During retreats, we perform 108 prostrations, chanting, sitting and walking meditation. Dharma talks and interview are also included. For the schedule of the retreats, please check at the counter.

8. Conclusion

To pass through this gate, do not attach to any thinking that arises in the mind.

Once upon a time, a scholar wanted to visit a Zen Master to learn about Zen. The scholar was very famous for his scholarly achievements. He could answer many questions that people asked and everybody knew about him. When he reached the Zen Master's temple, the Zen Master did not say a single word. He just gave the scholar a cup and started pouring tea into the cup. Soon, the cup was full to the brim. But, the Zen Master kept pouring. He kept pouring even when the cup was overflowing with tea! The scholar was very puzzled. He waited for a while, and the tea kept flowing out! Then, he could wait no more, and asked the Zen Master: "Why do you keep pouring tea when the cup is already full?" The Zen Master smiled and replied: "You are like the cup. If your mind is already full, how can you learn anything at all?" The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch says: "The Buddha nature and self

nature are originally clear and pure. Just use this mind to directly perceive the true nature and become Buddha.”

May you find your true self soon, and help all sentient beings to relieve from suffering and gain happiness.

The Four Great Vows

Sentient beings are numberless; we vow to save them all.

Delusions are endless; we vow to cut through them all.

The Teachings are infinite; we vow to learn them all.

The Buddha Way is inconceivable; we vow to attain it.