

HONOLULU DIAMOND SANGHA

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PRACTICE SCHEDULE AT PALOLO ZEN CENTER

Monday – Friday	Early morning zazen- See bulletin board announcement for times
Wednesday	7:00pm – 9:00pm (Tea is served after zazen)
Mon., Tues., Thurs.	7:00pm – 9:00pm (informal except during Practice Intensives)
Sunday	9:00am – 11:00am (Tea is served after zazen)
Monthly	Samu or Work Party: Work ceremony. Zazen and work practice followed by lunch
	Orientation: Introduction to Zen practice: posture, breathing, focusing the mind
	Either zazenkai (all day zazen) or sesshin (multiple days of zazen)

Other Events:

- Question and Response: Opportunity to ask the teacher questions related to practice in group setting.
- Social events: Parties, picnics and fun together.
- Quarterly Meetings: Sangha business meetings usually held on Sundays

OPPORTUNITIES TO INTENSIFY AND DEEPEN YOUR PRACTICE

Sesshin

Sesshin means to touch, receive, and convey the [Buddha] mind. Sesshin are 3, 5, 7, or 8 day periods of continuous intensive zen practice. During sesshin, participants live at the temple and engage in a rigorous daily schedule of zazen, kinhin (walking zen), dokusan (private meetings with the teacher), samu (work practice), sutra recitation, Dharma assembly (zen presentation by the teacher), and formal ceremonial meals. Periodic sesshin along with regular daily zazen and samu are key elements of a vital Zen practice.

Zazenkai

Zazenkai are one-day Zen intensives held each month unless there is a sesshin that month. The schedule runs from 8:30am to 4:00pm with a lunch break from 11:30am to 12:30pm (bring your own brown bag). The day includes zazen, sutra recitation, dokusan, and a Dharma talk by a zendo leader.

Hiking Zazenkai

A hiking zazenkai is an all day (9 am – 4 pm) practice that includes zazen, kinhin or walking meditation, and a Dharma talk, held on a local trail.

Practice Intensive Periods

Practice intensive periods are approximately six weeks in length and feature many opportunities to intensify and deepen your Zen practice. These include ceremonies, increased frequency of formal zazen, and dokusan plus dharma discussions, zazenkai and sesshin.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Please wear loose fitting, dark, solid-colored clothing that covers the knees and shoulders. Please avoid wearing jewelry including watches (except for leaders) and do not use scents in the zendo. Cell phones should be turned off and left outside the zendo.

FOR QUESTIONS AND GUIDANCE

Teacher

Michael Kieran is the teacher at the Palolo Zen Temple. He worked for many years with our founding teacher Robert Aitken Roshi and then, after Aitken Roshi's retirement, with Nelson Foster. Michael was authorized to teach in 1999 and received full transmission from Nelson Foster in 2004. He regularly holds dokusan and sesshin throughout the year.

Dokusan

Dokusan is a face-to-face encounter with the teacher. It is a chance for creative Dharma interaction and mutual deepening. It is Michael's intention to guide students in the Dharma in accordance with their purpose in practicing. Dokusan is offered periodically during zazen periods; you will hear the teacher's bell calling and the student bell responding. If you have been practicing zazen with us regularly, and wish to explore the possibility of working with Michael, talk to one of the Tantos or to Michael. An initial informal meeting with Michael will be arranged for you and he to get acquainted. After this initial meeting you may begin going to dokusan.

Tanto

Traditionally, the Tanto is the person who oversees training and practice matters in the zendo. Several people have been appointed Tanto by our teacher. Each month one of the Tantos serves as training leader. This individual serves as Tanto during regularly scheduled zazen, zazenkai and sesshin (zazen retreats) and sets the tenor of group practice. They are available to answer your questions about practice or other matters. Subjects could include posture, breath practice, coping with pain and upset, training forms and ritual, recommended reading, practice outside the temple in daily life, and personal issues of many kinds. Feel free to call any of them.

Tantos			
Susan Brandon		Susan Shimokawa	
Brian Baron		Clark Ratliffe	
Kathy Ratliffe			
Teacher – Michael Kieran			

RESIDENTIAL OPTIONS

Resident

Experienced Zen students who wish to maintain an intensive practice while working outside the temple or attending school may apply for residency at the temple (2 months or more). There is a temple keeper who lives full time at the temple and coordinates residents' work and other needs.

MEMBERSHIP

Everyone is welcome and may participate in any of the temple's activities. Members are those who have been practicing Zen with the Honolulu Diamond Sangha for at least 3 months and have filled out the membership application form in which they affirm that they consider the Honolulu Diamond Sangha their immediate Dharma home. Members agree to participate in its programs twice a month or more, on average, and to contribute financially on an annual basis.