

Announcing the meals

Overview

Exactly five minutes before the meal starts, one of the tenzo's announces the meal by ringing the big bell in the hallway leading to the zendo, immediately followed by ringing the *umpan*, the small gong from the kitchen. The tenzo keeps on ringing the umpan until the Roshi gives the sign to stop.



The umpan

Note that the times for breakfast, dinner and lunch differ from season to season, so look carefully at the sesshin schedule for the right time.

Ringling the big bell

Exactly five minutes before the meal starts, one of the tenzo's announces the meal by ringling the big bell in the hallway. The pattern for ringling is 'big-big-big-small-big':



Right after the last stroke, you can hear the *jisha* (zendo-leader) ringling the *inkin*, announcing the end of the zazen period.

The right rhythm

Take about 3 or 4 seconds in between each of the strokes. Don't worry if the fourth 'small' strike is too loud or too soft. It's quite difficult to hit it the right way.

Ringling the Umpan

Immediately after ringling the big bell, the tenzo starts ringling the *umpan*, the small gong from the kitchen. This means you have to carry the umpan with you to the hallway. (Alternatively, you can also ask one of the other tenzo's to ring the umpan for you. It doesn't really matter who rings it, as long it is done in the right way!)

The pattern for ringling the umpan is as follows:



Count the time between the strokes, not the silences. Many people are inclined to count the duration of silences between the strokes, but that is not the right way. This makes the rhythm very uneven, because the silence after a 'small' stroke is much shorter than the silence after a 'big' stroke.