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Last April I gave a public talk to Londoners about zen at Japan Society in London. It was soon fully booked and many people could not come because the space was too small. After my lecture I was asked to have a regular zen meeting for Londoners. Once I declined but finally I accepted that considering the situation of zen in UK. I felt that I need to provide people with the strict model of the most traditional way of zen as one of their options.

To be honest, it was a burden on me as I had very little time to spare. By the sacrifice of my overloaded schedule, last June I started zen meeting on a weekly basis in London. It was simply announced only on website, with no advertisement, no buzz marketing at all. Capacity of the venue was only about ten for zazen combining with the next room.

To begin with, I spoke to the people showing Sesshu's painting, "I welcome anyone but I don't need numbers. Capacity of my zen room is only two; myself and who?" I also said to the participants, "Come in silence, sit in silence, and leave in silence." Zazen is just to sit. No gain, no profit, and no self." I was aware the style of my zen meeting was not easily accepted by people in UK. However, I did not care.

Every time in zen meeting I gave a brief talk in English. Except for describing how to sit zazen (how to keep posture, how to regulate breathing and so on), I strictly observed the most traditional routine of zen monastery. I gave Teisho (zen talk on the cases from Mumonkan and Hekiganroku) but I intentionally made it in the same way as in the monastery whether people understood it or not.

Number of participants did not increase, always five to ten. However, I was satisfied with very sincere people sitting with me regularly. The room was filled with the composed atmosphere of serenity with strictness. One lady among the regular participants decided to go to Japan seeking for zen and she is now in Japan! Last December I determined to close zen meeting because of my visa which would be expired very soon. I announced it to the participants, "I am not sure if I can extend my visa. As the Home Office severely limits issuing visa, maybe I have to return to Japan in February. I am sorry it's time to terminate the weekly zen meeting." Fortunately as a result I could have my visa renewed in January and I am still in London. Even if I continued the weekly zen meeting, I would have quit it sooner or later, because I am not a full-time zen teacher and have been cruelly busy with my medical research. Of course, I am still keeping in contact with the ex- regular participants who are longing for restart of zen meeting.

Bodhidharma only sat facing the wall for nine years just to wait for one person. This is the origin of zen, which we must always bear in mind. Sokun in gassho

