

STEP OUTLINE FOR “SIT”

(2016, written and directed by Yoko Okumura;
outlined by M. George Stevenson)

<https://vimeo.com/176520042>

1. **Buddhist Priest demonstrates and outlines the principles of Zazen. He says he was ordained as a monk in 1970.**
2. **A Woman demonstrates a form of traditional craft stitching, kakyushi, and explains that it is a form of Zazen practice.**
3. **The Buddhist Priest says that he is married to the Woman, who was unusual in being interested in Buddhism, and that after a decree against Buddhism by the Japanese government, Buddhist Monks and priests began to marry and have families and we see that the Priest and the Woman are parents.**
4. **A young man, Masaki, is shown working at a computer and in his home; Masaki says he doesn't practice Zazen and reveals that the family moved, when he was very young, from Japan to Indiana, and says that the adjustment has been very difficult.**
5. **The Priest says that Masaki at age 12 or so went to the local public schools and didn't like it and so stopped going.**
6. **The Woman, Masaki's mother, expresses her fear that Masaki will become a 30 or 40 year-old still living at home and being taken care of by his parents.**
7. **We see Masaki cook and the Woman explains that there is a Zazen text that discusses how to practice Zazen while cooking.**
8. **Masaki says that he is thinking about studying cooking as a profession starting in the spring.**
9. **We see the family (Priest, Woman, Masaki and, eventually, Sister-Filmmaker) over what appears to be the Winter holidays.**
10. **Sister/Filmmaker encourages Masaki to begin his studies, he resists, she offers to walk him through the process and he applies but won't go on a campus tour or visit.**
11. **Masaki explains his ambivalence; Sister/Filmmaker asks if he's worried about their parents' expectations and admits she wishes the Priest and the Woman would have expressed more expectations for her; Masaki agrees that this is an issue and wishes that the Priest and the Woman would communicate more.**

12. **The Priest says that he became a Buddhist monk against the wishes of his own parents because, despite the opposition, it was what he wanted. He says he wants to support his own children to be able to choose what they want.**
13. **The Priest admits that it is difficult for two quiet people to communicate with language, but that, in Buddhism, ideally there is communication within silence.**
14. **The Priest is shown cooking while Masaki observes, then attempts some of the same techniques.**
15. **The Priest explains that desire alone is a problem in everyday life, which is why his Zazen practice is important, and that he admires Masaki for his lack of materialism.**
16. **However, the Priest acknowledges that life requires us to do SOMETHING in order to be independent of others. A full life, he explains, includes both walking (work, etc), which is necessary to find meaning, and sitting (Zazen), which is necessary to find peace.**
17. **A title card tells us that Masaki is now studying culinary arts in Japan.**

THE END

Questions: How can this be divided into Three Acts? Who is the protagonist? Who has the more important character arc? Is this story more or less compelling because it is “real life.” Why?
