

GENERAL INFORMATION ON ATTENDING SESSHIN

~SESSHIN GUIDELINES

Please review the following information if you are interested in attending sesshin.

SESSHIN SIGN-UP PROCEDURE

1. Heed the deadlines. Space is limited. Early submissions have priority.
2. Send a check for the full fee, your name, address, phone number, membership category, and e-mail to the coordinator. If you don't use e-mail, send a self-addressed stamped envelope.
3. Let the coordinator know if you have a special medical condition or food allergies pertinent to this sesshin.
4. Let the coordinator know if you are unfamiliar with dokusan or meal procedures.
5. If paying the full sesshin fee poses a problem, talk with the coordinator. A fee reduction may be possible.
6. If you're behind on membership dues, add the dues to your sesshin fee.

SESSHIN SIGN-UP CAUTIONS

Your check will be held for deposit until after sesshin. You may cancel up until two weeks before sesshin and receive a full refund. If you must cancel, please do so as soon as possible to help enable another to take your place. Cancellation within two weeks of sesshin may result in the loss of 25% of your sesshin fee.

Acceptance is determined at the sign-up deadline and depends on various factors, including your membership status and the date the coordinator receives your check. The coordinator will inform you if you've been accepted or placed on the waiting list and will send details about the sesshin to all those accepted.

If you've never attended sesshin at Ring of Bone, indicate that when you sign up, and a participant query will be sent to you. We also require first-time participants to read *Taking the Path of Zen* by Robert Aitken as an introduction to our style of practice.

Bring a sack supper to the work meeting before sesshin begins. For long sesshin, work meetings begin at 5 PM. For weekend sesshin, work meetings begin at 7 PM.

Plan to arrive early and stay until cleanup is finished after sesshin. Sangha relations are an important part of our practice. If you come from a long distance, please arrange your flight schedule to allow ample time before and after sesshin. We ask you to arrive no later than 2 PM to

help with zendo cleanup and other sesshin setup tasks and to settle in and visit with others.

Post-sesshin is also a very important time, especially when it follows a five- or seven-day sesshin. Plan extra time to unwind and help close down the zendo. Please do not plan to leave before 4 PM at the earliest.

SESSHIN CHECKLIST

- Bag Supper
- Bowl Set
- Sleeping Bag
- Flashlight
- Slip-on Shoes
- Towel and Toilet Articles
- Dark, Solid-Colored Sitting Clothes
- Warm Clothes
- Rain Gear
- Mosquito Gear (summer)
- Tent (optional)

If you have any questions about sesshin, contact the coordinator.

MOUNTAINS AND RIVERS SESSHIN

Mountains and Rivers Sesshin are week-long backpacking sesshin, held each spring and summer. Destinations vary from year to year and season to season, according to weather, availability of water, trail conditions, etc. We don't look for difficult circumstances, but they often find us, so it's vital to prepare physically and to equip yourself for inclement weather. Break in new boots beforehand, and minimize the weight of personal gear. Plan on carrying ten pounds of group food and supplies, more or less.

We limit M&R sesshin to fifteen people, so sign up early to make sure you get a place. Participants gather at the zendo (or an assembly point closer to the trailhead) by 5 PM to divvy up the group food and supplies, eat our sack dinners, do some zazen, and go over the cautions and procedures for M&R sesshin. Come earlier than 5 PM for visiting time.

In 2008, we instituted a less strenuous (Easy Wandering) mode of M&R sesshin, and we now alternate between that mode and our standard trips, which entail more days walking under full packs. If you're only interested in one of these two modes, before signing up check with the coordinator about which sort of M&R it will be. If you aren't certain whether you're up to it physically, ask what level of fitness the route will demand.

We take trail planning for these sesshin very seriously, aiming for places wild, relatively untraveled, and within reasonable driving range of the zendo. Usually we do a low desert, canyon, or coastal route in the spring and a high-elevation site in the summer. We make every effort to scout our routes in advance, so if you could assist in the scouting (or have destination ideas), please contact the coordinator.

ROHATSU

The eight-day Rohatsu Sesshin commemorates the awakening of the historical Buddha. It is a working person's sesshin. Rohatsu is open to part-time and weekend attendance. Please determine your commitment for this sesshin and notify the coordinator when you sign up.

The weekday schedule is 4:30 to 6:30 AM, and 7:30 to 9:30 PM. Participants carry out their practice through the rest of each day in their homes and workplaces. Dokusan with Nelson Foster will be available throughout sesshin. On the last night we sit till midnight. The next morning we close with our annual walk to Bald Mountain and a sunrise ceremony. Bring hats, gloves, warm footwear, rain gear, etc. as the weather is unpredictable. An informal breakfast and cleanup follows.

We welcome people from out of the area to attend Rohatsu during the weekdays as well as on the weekend. Anyone who wishes to stay for one or more of the weekdays, however, must either arrange to spend daytime hours away from the zendo, possibly at the home of a sangha member, or join group activities at the zendo (meals, additional zazen, light manual labor, etc.). When you sign up, be sure to indicate whether you're interested in participating in the weekday activities or will be arranging an off-site program of your own. Just hanging out at the zendo on the weekdays is not an option.

ZAZENKAI

Zazenkai are one-day sittings that also require advance sign-up. The daily schedule is as follows:

Densho at 9:00 AM, sutras, zazen, bag lunch with sutras, silent break, zazen. Dharma assembly at 2:00 PM led by a sangha member, meadow kinhin, zazen. The Zazenkai will end at 3:50 PM with a closing ceremony followed by tea and cleanup.