

RING OF BONE ZENDO

FALL 2019

WWW.RINGOFBONEZENDO.ORG

P.O. BOX 510 NORTH SAN JUAN, CA 95960

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSTANTLY WALKING

Journal: 4/23/19

I'm off to Alice Eastwood Campground on Mt. Tam in a few minutes. I know there are no bears, so this should be heavenly. It's a Zen sesshin organized by Eric Larsen of ROBZ and the Bird Path Sangha. He has organized this sesshin every year for the past 21 years. I have wanted to participate in a Mountains and Rivers sesshin. Perhaps this shorter one, closer to home will be my path to doing that.

It's warm, so it should be fine. Night will be cold. I'm prepared.

4/26/19

I am back from the Alice Eastwood Campground sesshin with Eric, our indefatigable, down-to-Earth leader, truly; Chris Ikeda-Nash who was Tenzo and who brought lots of good simple food (candied ginger) and kitchen gear; and Kevin, Chris's good friend who used to be an editor for a professional journal. He is thinking of teaching and loved hearing what I had to say about Montessori education. He gave me some electrolytes for my water bottle which helped me climb the more rigorous trails. And Dimitry, a young man getting his PhD in mathematics. I had only to look at Dimitry to remind myself that we were here for a sesshin, even though the boundaries were limitless. He blew the conch in a funny, heroic way. I laughed and giggled to the unusual sound of a sick cow.

Maybe that's why, one morning, the first actually, he blew the conch three times and soon after a chorus of coyotes started screaming. It almost sounded like women screaming or Native Americans in the midst of a war cry before battle, or the sirens of emergency vehicles. It was long and impassioned. We all heard it and have talked about it since. It happened just that one morning.

The campsite has a large Ceanothus tree, often called California lilac, in full bloom over-spraying the outdoor sink.

The ground is all dirt, redwood leaves, twigs, and small cones of Douglas Fir. All my stuff is dirty. We even put our pots of food on the dirt for want of trays. Eventually I use the tops of our storage buckets for makeshift trays.

I did put my zabuton in a black plastic bag but I should have taped it up. The open end got really dusty. Next time I will. It wasn't as noisy getting on and off as I had imagined it might be.

We're outside so there is plenty of space for mistakes to get absorbed into the vastness of nature. I learned that Eric does creative dance as well as ballroom. Two of my favorites. Eric did insist imperially on a few things but also backed down on a few things. He did a great job as the person to keep this all together in a very meaningful way! He'll get over his authoritarian self someday, but will I get over mine?

We sat very strongly—two hours before breakfast and two hours before bed. We hiked steadfastly, in silence, never in sight of another unless we changed trails. We would bow to the person coming along and point to the direction to go. That person would do the same for the person coming along after him. It worked except once, but the side trail led to the main trail soon enough.

I found the koan, "Blue Mountains constantly walking" became dear to me. I sometimes felt so fortunate to have something to keep me focused on my meditation that fit snug like a sun hat. I did not intellectualize in any way like I am wont to do with some of my koans, especially the more obtuse ones. My koan worked when it was so hard not to want to stop at every little wonder I saw and take time with it. When people came by (this was Muir Woods) I smiled to acknowledge our mutual humanity and then forgot it and stayed with my koan. In that Muir Woods setting, the koan

UNCONDITIONAL

Willing to experience aloneness,
I discover connection everywhere;
Turning to face my fear,
I meet the warrior who lives within;
Opening to my loss,
I gain the embrace of the universe;
Surrendering into emptiness,
I find fullness without end.
Each condition I flee from pursues me,
Each condition I welcome transforms me
And becomes itself transformed
Into its radiant jewel-like essence.
I bow to the one who has made it so,
Who has crafted this Master Game.
To play it is purest delight;
To honor its form—true devotion.

~ Jennifer Welwood

Practitioner of Vajrayana, tantric Buddhism

ANNE AITKEN

Some of us were fortunate to hear David Hopkins, nephew of Anne Aitken, recount memories of his aunt at Founders' Day this September. For those who missed his eloquent talk, I've excerpted an article titled "In Spite of Myself" that Anne wrote about her Zen path, originally published in Kahawai: Journal of Women and Zen (Vol. 1, No. 2, spring 1979).

~ Deirdre Fennessy

[Here Anne relates her experience in 1957 of joining a sesshin with Yasutani Rōshi in a small, country temple named Raiko-ji, north of Tokyo. Nakagawa Sōen Rōshi was the jikijitsu and interpreter for Yasutani Rōshi during that sesshin. Bob Aitken, her husband and our future teacher, also attended:]

The temple hall was near a river, and under one of its walls ran a path that was a public right-of-way. As it was very hot, all the shoji were thrown open. I was greeted without surprise, seated on a stiff dining-room chair... facing the green bushes on the other side of the public path, watching the passers-by

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was perfect, "Blue mountains constantly walking." Sometimes, I said, "constantly talking" or "constantly moving" and would catch myself.

I saw both the mountain and myself always walking—it backward, me forward. It was no longer Mt. Tamalpais. It changed its looks, feel, and composition every second. I drew a picture here of me going forward and the mountain going backward on the Earth, but it could have been either way.

The Mountain is no longer an image, an icon—it is an ever changing, multitudinous chaos of plant, mineral, animal, fungi, insect, flower, trail, owl, coyote, and on and on.

Chris and I made tea from the new growth of the Douglas Fir. It tasted the way the woods feel. Kevin stoked the fire with fierce attention on our last night to keep it burning longer. We sang around the fire—some Freedom Singer songs, and a drinking song from Chris' family, "The Whiskey Song." We ate sesame sticks (yum) and drank Meyer lemon juice with water, agave and a splash of whiskey. Chris told fascinating stories of his family who used to make their own whiskey. Dimitry went to bed early so did not experience our party, reminiscent (we thought) of Ginsberg's, Snyder's and Whelan's parties after their 14 mile hike circumambulating Mt Tam in the old days and writing poems as they went.

The experience of walking out-of-sight of all humans was magical. I felt safe, knowing our agreed upon procedure of shifting trails worked just fine. Walking alone full of 'Blue Mountains, constantly walking' was amazing. When I did stop to recognize a wonder, I saw so much more. Being committed to the certainty that holding the koan against all other distractions will bring clarity, kept me honest and rewarded.

Zazen has changed me once again.

We did dedications the last morning. I won't share any but my own and I can say I was touched to the very bone by each person's honesty and vulnerability. Sitting in our dirt zendo for the last time, I dedicated my sesshin to several of my family members who have

health issues. We melded so well with this woodland enclave, and received so much more, I wanted the merits of our sesshin to help heal the exploitive behaviors that I and everyone else has caused to our friends, the plants and animals. To make my dedication directly to the woods surrounding us and the Earth supporting us was indeed powerful. I cried.

The ravens were there every morning to greet us, beautiful black shimmering selves.

Every evening the owls announced dusk and nighttime with their 'hoo, hoo.' We sat till light turned to dark.

Brett joined us for a night and day. He moved-in seamlessly to our intimate group. Collaboration was natural for us. One person had to control the flow of the water spigot while the other washed dishes in the flow. There was no plug to create a basin, nor did we have one to use. All the while the Ceanothus dropped lovely, blue blossoms onto our efforts. After every meal we all gathered around that spigot to help or chat while the dishes got washed. Same with cooking for dinner. We gathered round the cooks and helped where we could.

I particularly cherished the time we had to talk after seconds were served for breakfast and dinner. We sat on our cushions in our earthen zendo and after the necessary announcements shared whatever came up. We talked about how

five seemed to be a perfect number for this intimate spot, and maybe 10 would be the max.

This was my first Bird Path Sangha sesshin on Mt. Tam, and I look forward sharing another with the ravens, the owls, the coyotes, the redwoods, the firs, and my sangha friends.

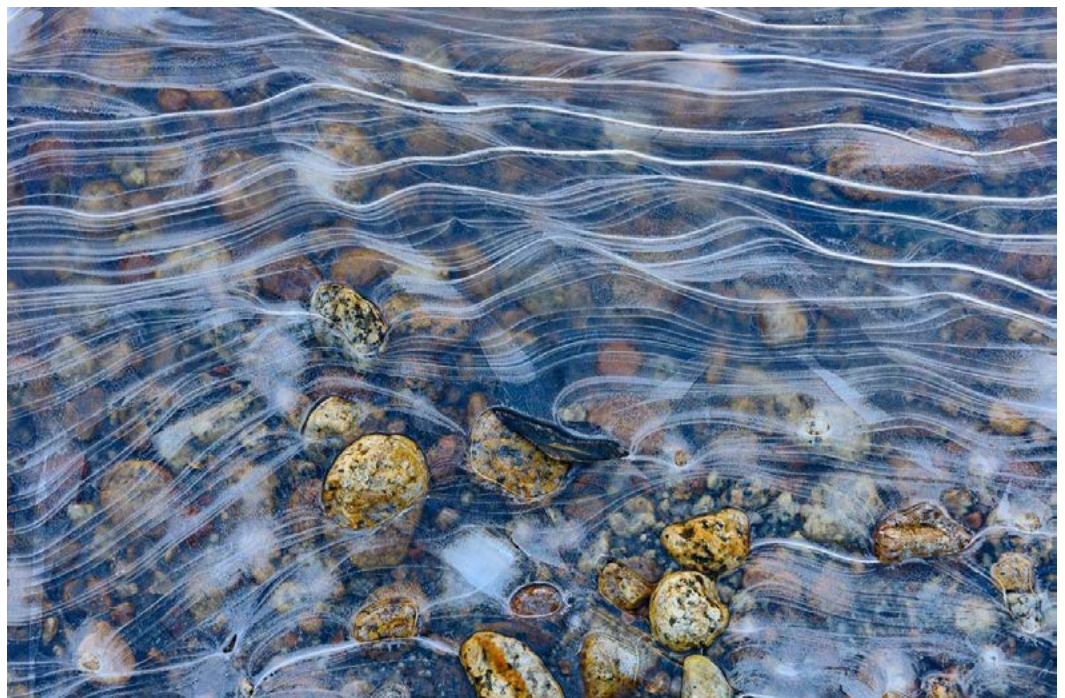
~ Deirdre Fennessy

MTS. & RIVERS DATE CHANGE

The dates for the Spring Mountains and Rivers Sesshin have been changed from May 2-9 to May 1-7. That's Friday through Thursday and a six-day trip instead of the usual seven. New and significant scheduling conflicts came up after the original dates were set during the September MPB, and we did our best to adjust, coordinating to accommodate the trail leaders' and teacher's schedules, in keeping with the spirit of the trip.

Through consultation with the Practice and Care Committee and Business and Finance Committee, we settled upon these new dates as the best alternative. It will be a backpacking trip, and the difficulty level and route remain flexible depending upon participants. When you sign up, please be clear about the level of physical challenge you feel you can handle.

~ Lynne Westerfield and Reed Hamilton



River Rock in Ice - Merced River, Yosemite, Winter 2018

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watch me. That's rather an exaggeration, really. I think the villagers were respectful of the temple and of our proceedings, but perched on that chair right above the path I did feel somewhat conspicuous.

As I remember, I didn't care. I didn't want to do zazen, I had no idea really how to do zazen, and—at least half of the time—I kept telling myself, I wasn't going to try. And yet when I would go to *dokusan* with that wonderful old man with the burning vitality, and he would focus all the energy of his frail body on what he was saying to me, it was impossible not to be moved; and so at intervals, I did begin to try.

As the sesshin gained momentum and the sangha spirit grew stronger, I began to feel more a part of it, more in harmony with the intent endeavor of these serious Zen students of all ages crowded into that one room.

Most vivid of my memories is that of Satomi San [Myodo Satomi, one of the two people honored on Founders' Day at Ring of Bone last year], the sixty-year-old nun who was Yasutani Rōshi's housekeeper. She was a tiny woman, with a round face, softly flushed, delicately piquant features, and a gay and impish smile. For those seven days she cooked delicious meals for thirty people on her charcoal braziers,

drawing water from the well not only for the cooking but also to fill the *ofuro* [traditional Japanese bath] under which she had to keep a hot wood fire burning steadily during the bath time. In addition to all this, she led the sutras, and it was not unusual for us to find ourselves waiting several minutes until, with a little giggle and the flurry of a very ancient black robe, she would come trotting across the kitchen, striking the little sutra bell as she came.

The end of sesshin was for me an unexpectedly emotional time, with the recognition of two, one of which had been totally quiet, and the other very dramatic. By partaking in the reactions of the two students involved and of the other members of the sesshin who were rejoicing with them, I could not help but to begin to be aware of the depth and the importance of what had occurred. But it was not until a year later, when Sōen Rōshi came to Los Angeles after Nyogen Sensaki Sensei's death and held the first sesshin in the United States in Sensaki's Sensei's little apartment, that I began, still rather half-heartedly, to try to do zazen. Three years later, when Sōen Rōshi returned and held his first sesshin in the original Koko An, I began working wholeheartedly. And it was 12 years before I passed my first koan.

Those twelve years moved in the zigzag pattern so familiar to us all—longings

and hopes, barren stretches, anger and frustration alternating with glimpses of wonder and startling joy. After some years, I gave up ever expecting to have *kenshō*. After all, comparative newcomers seemed to be reaching that unimaginable state as easily and frequently as leaves falling off a tree. I decided that some people were just not capable of it, and I was one. This aspect of my practice was painful indeed. I was far from the condition of one Zen student we know of, who did zazen steadily for many years, developing a wonderful character, spoken of by all including the roshi as a true Zen man, without ever having the explicit experience called *kenshō*. I had neither that faith, faith in the process, faith in the teacher, or faith in myself. I was often demoralized, and yet there would be an occasional hint, an intimation some *makyō* that seemed to move on profound levels. One time for a day I fell into Henry Vaughan's "deep yet dazzling darkness," such experiences kept me going. And always, at the end of each sesshin I would think that now, at last, I had learned how to begin do zazen.

Towards the end of this time, when I was teetering on the brink, one of the endless fantasies that beset me was that of writing an essay entitled: "How I Managed to Spend Twelve Years Preventing Myself From Getting Kenshō."

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Celtic Blessing

Deep Peace of the running wave to you;
Deep Peace of the flowing air to you;
Deep Peace of the shining stars to you;
Deep Peace of the quiet earth to you.



All Things Shall Perish



All things shall pe-rish from un-der the sky:



Mu-sic a - lone shall live, Mu-sic a - lone shall live,



Mu-sic a - lone shall live Ne-ver to die.



Anna Richmond Gold

1942 - 2019

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This was when I realized—after so long—that my teachers' words about preoccupation with condition were actually true. Among other "bad" or useless habits, I had been so preoccupied with scrutinizing the minute variations of condition in my zigzag course, that I had seldom truly focused on Mu. My fantasies were often out of hand. Even at the last, I remember sitting at the head of the *dokusan* line before the *kenshō*, unable to control the distasteful, even appalling, fantasies flooding my mind.

And then, almost without knowing it, everything fell away.

When I was eighteen, and poetry was my world and I was writing a good deal, a line had come to me which I knew to be the last line of a poem with important meaning—the climax, the goal of what would go before: "And all that we had gathered fell away."

It was meaningless to me. At eighteen my life was a magpie clutching at all the scintillating facets of experience. People, places, in love, out of love, all the beguilements of sensation and emotion, all were to be gathered and tightly held, absorbed to enrich me, to be part of the strong and brilliant mosaic that would make up my world, sustain my uncertainties, color my persona. How could it be a climax, a goal, that all this wonderful richness would fall away?

Yet so it was.

In the *dokusan* room, I was taking my last bow in the doorway when Yamada Roshi said to me, 'Anne, I acknowledge your *kenshō*.' I turned to stare at him. I understood the words, but they were on the periphery of my world; there was no reaction. In that moment, my only world was the enormous circle of bowing. It was—in that moment when it was happening—the only thing in my world. I returned to my bowing.

I have been asked to say something about "finishing" my koans, but have been reluctant to do so because the phrase is so totally misleading. There is no such thing as finishing. The idea of milestones along a path to achievement is filled with false implications. As my practice deepens I am increasingly aware of how 'vast and unfathomable' is the way of the Buddha—and how simple. It was with great joy that I began my koans again, and with gratitude beyond words to Yamada Kōun Rōshi who did his utmost to encourage me. ■



Aspen, San Juan Mountains, Colorado, Fall 2017

DANA CONTRIBUTIONS

PLEASE USE TITHE.LY RATHER THAN PAYPAL

The Business and Finance Committee has been working with the sangha's bookkeeper on problems she has been having with PayPal. We're asking folks who prefer to make donations to the sangha using digital technology to use the TITHE.LY app from now on.

The TITHE.LY app is quite easy to set up and to use thereafter. The app can be downloaded to a smartphone and/or to a computer. Once you are on the website, follow the instructions to set up a "Give To Your Church" account. (Do NOT set up a "Church Account!!") Once you've set up an account, designate Ring of Bone Zendo as the church to which you want to donate when you get to the Find A Church window. If you encounter difficulties or

have questions, TITHE.LY's support system works quite well. The folks at the "help desk" are friendly and patient.

One advantage to the TITHE.LY app is that you have the option of adding the 4% user fee to the amount you intend to donate. If you choose to exercise this option, the Zendo receives the full amount you want to donate and not have the fee deducted.

The TITHE.LY account is for donations only. Continue to use checks for membership dues, made out to ROBZ and sent to Cindy Leeson. Continue to send checks for sesshin fees (made out to ROBZ) to the sesshin coordinator.

~ Stephen Mulford



Aspendell, Eastern Sierra California, Fall 2018

THE HANDY-DANDY ZENDO EVENT FACTOID SHEET

Event	Date	Contact Name/Info	Fees			Deadline
			Core/Sustaining	Associate	Non-member	
2019						
One-Day Sesshin	Nov. 17	K	\$40	\$50	\$60	Oct 17
Rohatsu	Dec 1 -8		\$125	\$155	\$195	Oct 1
2020						
Great Cold Sesshin	Feb. 14-19		\$155	\$195	\$240	Dec. 14
Weekend Sesshin	March 13-15		\$100	\$125	\$145	Feb 13
Zendo Workday	April 12					
Spring M&R Sesshin	May 2-9		\$270	\$330	\$380	March 2
Work Party for Nelson & Masa	May 17					
Zazenkai	May 24		\$10	\$10	\$10	May 1
Seven-Day Sesshin	June 13-20		\$220	\$280	\$330	April 13
Mts. & Rivers Sesshin	Aug. 8-15		\$270	\$330	\$380	June 17
Zendo Workday	Sep. 13					
Five-Day Sesshin	Oct. 9-14		\$155	\$195	\$240	Aug 9
BMA Workday	Oct. 18					
One-Day Sesshin	Nov. 15		\$40	\$50	\$60	Oct 15
Rohatsu	Dec. 1-8			\$155	\$195	Oct 1

REPORT ON BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS IMPROVEMENTS AND EXPENSES

We've been busy the last two years working on minor capital improvements, and on maintenance and repair of our buildings and surrounding grounds.

The latest phase of replacing rotting poles that support the Zendo roof with new poles is complete. A few of the original poles are still in place and will need to be replaced some time in the future. Cost of the most recent phase was about \$5800.

The installation of railings around the zendo deck is almost complete. Most agree that they look great, add to our safety, and do not detract from the simple architecture of the zendo. The cost for the project was around \$6000.

Due to rotting wooden sashes, over the last two years we've replaced the windows in the south gable end of the Zendo, and in the south wall of the kitchen. The new kitchen windows now open and close, which will make the kitchen more comfortable in the warm months. The cost for the kitchen windows was \$600, and for the Zendo windows was \$1000. Nate and Reed volunteered their skilled labor for these two projects.

The road from the upper parking area down to the zendo was in very bad shape. Steve

worked with Gary to find folks to grade the road and spread and roll in gravel. Two culverts were added to drain runoff from the road away from the entrance to the Zendo. The rock work was done by Jim Pyle. The total cost of the project was shared equally by Gary and the Zendo. The cost to us was \$4400.

Last year we replaced the ageing batteries of the electrical system with a more effective industrial battery. This cost \$1600. We still found that we didn't have enough power during the cloudy months to meet our need for power during sesshin. Our solar folks recommended a new refrigerator, which we purchased (\$700). So far that has helped with the cloudy weather power supply. We're still evaluating the effectiveness of the electrical system. We may well need to purchase another battery and/or solar panels. We're also researching generators with an eye toward becoming independent of Gary's system.

We've been complying with requirements to harden the buildings and immediate grounds for fire prevention our liability insurance company has asked for. These include trimming trees, clearing weeds and brush around buildings, and various measures around the decks to reduce fires starting from ember piles.

Smaller projects include sprucing up the courtyard and path to the hojo with \$800 worth of new gravel, a new clothesline, and shelves in the storage closet. We're in the process of replacing the outdoor lights on paths to the Hojo, and to the outhouses.

For the future, in addition to the aforementioned improvements to the electrical system, we are looking into replacing the outhouses with vault toilets. We are looking into what is involved in making these changes, and what the cost will be.

We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful place to practice. Nelson recently used the term "vessel" during closing at sesshin. I think the term is apt as it applies to our buildings and grounds.

Our bookkeeper has asked me to add that... (wait for it)... all these projects require funds. We welcome all donations to help keep our practice place from collapsing around us. You can designate these contributions for the Building Fund if you desire. Donations should be made to Ring of Bone Zendo, PO Box 1525, Nevada City, CA 95959.

~ Steve Mulford,
Buildings and Grounds Manager



Oxbow Bend, Snake River, Wyoming, Fall 2018

RING OF BONE ZENDO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION

[1] Zazen generally occurs year-round on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, except during January and July. [2] Ten dates have been set aside for Meeting for the Practice of Business (MPB), but as few as six MPBs may actually occur, with the remaining dates utilized for other purposes, at the discretion of the Moderator. The expected use of each date will be announced well in advance. [3] View from the Hojo is an informal, semi-annual review of practice and teaching matters, delivered by Nelson Foster.

SEEDS-TO-SNOW TRAINING SEASON - 2019

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Coordinator</i>
Nov 10	Sunday Zazen/Sack Lunch Sangha Circle – (Topic-TBA)	9:30 am – noon/noon – 12:30 pm 12:30 pm – 4pm	Practice and Care
Nov 17	One-Day Sesshin	9 am – 4 pm	Kate Duroux
Nov 24	Sunday Zazen/Sack Lunch MPB	9:30 am – noon/noon – 12:30 pm 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
Dec 1	(No Sunday Zazen)		
Dec 1 –Dec 8	Rohatsu Sesshin		Marsha Stone
Dec 8	(No Sunday Zazen)		
Dec 15	Sunday Zazen/Potluck Lunch Work Hour	9:30 am – noon/noon – 1 pm 1 pm – 2 pm	Nate Popik
Dec 22	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Dec 29	Sunday Zazen/Sack Lunch MPB	9:30 am – noon/noon – 12:30 pm 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
January 2020	Zendo closed this month		

FLOWERS-TO-DUST TRAINING SEASON - 2020

Feb 2	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch/ Work Hour	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:00 pm	Steve Mulford
Feb 9	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch View from the Hojo	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm 1 pm – 2:30 pm	
Feb 14-19	Great Cold Sesshin	(led by Andrew Mason)	Sue Finlay
Feb 16	No Sunday Zazen		
Feb 23	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
Mar 1	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm	
Mar 8	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Mar 13-15	Weekend Sesshin	Cindy Leeson	
Mar 15	No Sunday Zazen		
Mar 22	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch Dharma Event (Topic TBD)	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm 1 pm – 4 pm	Practice and Care
Mar 29	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
April 5	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch/Buddha's Birthday Celebration	9:30 am – noon Noon – 3 pm	Kate Duroux
April 12	Zendo Workday	9am – 4pm	Steve Mulford
April 19	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
April 26	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
May 1-7	Spring Mountains & Rivers Sesshin		Erika Carpenter
May 3	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 p	
May 10	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch Sangha Circle (Topic TBD)	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm 1 pm – 4 pm	Practice and Care

RING OF BONE ZENDO CALENDAR (CONTINUED)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Coordinator</i>
May 17	Work Party for Nelson & Masa (bring sack lunch)	9 am – 4 pm	Greg Leeson
May 24	Zazenkai	9 am – 4 pm	Suzanna Elkin
May 31	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
June 7	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch/Work Hour	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:00 pm	Steve Mulford
June 13-20	Seven-Day Sesshin	Michael Keown	
June 14	No Sunday Zazen		
June 21	No Sunday Zazen		
June 28	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
July	Zendo closed this month		

SEEDS-TO-SNOW TRAINING SEASON - 2020

Aug 2	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch/Work Hour	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:00 pm	Steve Mulford
Aug 8-15	Summer Mountains & Rivers Sesshin (backpacking sesshin)		Eric Larsen
Aug 9	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Aug 16	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Aug 23	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch View from the Hojo	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm 1 pm – 2:30 pm	
Aug 30	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
Sept 6	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm	
Sept 13	Zendo Workday	9 am – 4 pm	Steve Mulford
Sept 20	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Founders Day	9:30 am – noon Noon – 3 pm	Kate Duroux
Sept 27	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
Oct 4	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch/Work Hour	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2 pm	Steve Mulford
Oct 9-14	Five-Day Sesshin		Sheelo Bohm
Oct 11	No Sunday Zazen		
Oct 18	Bald Mtn. Assn Workday	9 am – 4 pm	Sheelo Bohm
Oct 25	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm	Moderator
Nov 1	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm	
Nov 8	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch Sangha Circle – (Topic TBD)	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1pm 1pm – 4pm	Practice and Care
Nov 15	One-Day Sesshin	9:00 am – 4 pm	Wendy Boes
Nov 22	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch Dharma Event (Topic TBD)	9:30 am – noon Noon – 1 pm 1 pm – 4 pm	Practice and Care
Nov 29	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15pm	Moderator
Dec 1-8	Rohatsu Sesshin		Marsha Stone
Dec 6	No Sunday Zazen		
Dec 13	Sunday Zazen Potluck Lunch/Work Hour	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2 pm	Steve Mulford
Dec 20	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Dec 27	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15pm	Moderator

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 are behind in your membership dues, please send with your deposit/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 depends on membership status and the date the coordinator receives your check and is determined at the sign-up deadline. Once accepted, the coordinator will contact you with details about the sesshin or let you know if you are on the waiting list. If you are new to Ring of Bone Zendo, contact the coordinator early so that a participant query can be sent to you, and read *Taking the Path of Zen* by Robert Aitken before you sign up.

Bring a sack supper to the work meeting before sesshin begins. Long sesshin work meetings begin at 5 PM. 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 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 wilderness sesshin, held each spring and summer. We usually go backpacking but are experimenting with the river-based form described elsewhere in this issue. Destinations vary from year to year and season to season, depending on 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 be equipped for inclement weather. For the backpacking trips, it's a must to break in new boots beforehand and to 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. On the day we gather, participants meet by 5 PM at the zendo (or at an assembly point closer to the trailhead or river put-in spot) to divvy up group food and supplies, eat our sack dinners, do some zazen, and go over the procedures for M&R sesshin. Come earlier than 5 PM for visiting time.

Sometimes we do backpacking M&R in an "easy wandering" mode, which entails fewer days walking under full packs than our standard trips. If you're only interested in one of these two modes, before signing up check with the coordinator about which sort of outing 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 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. At Ring of Bone, we've always marked it as a working-person's sesshin, with weekday zazen from 4:30 to 6:30 AM, and 7 to 9 PM, including *dokusan* with Nelson Foster. Participants maintain their practice the rest of each weekday in their homes and workplaces. On the last night, we sit until midnight, and the next morning, sesshin closes with a walk to Bald Mountain and a sunrise ceremony there. Bring hats, gloves, warm footwear, rain gear, etc. in case of inclement weather. An informal breakfast and clean-up follow.

During the weekdays, Rohatsu attendance is open to all, with or without signing up. Over the weekend, however, we keep a full-time sesshin schedule, and those who wish to attend must sign up. Weekend participants usually leave after Sunday supper but are welcome to depart later (e.g., after Sunday evening or Monday morning zazen). Please work out your plans for this sesshin and specify your arrival and departure times for the weekend portion when you sign up.

We welcome people from out of the area to attend Rohatsu during the weekdays as well as on the weekend. Those who wish to stay for one or more of the weekdays, however, must either spend the time between morning and evening zazen 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 signing up from afar, be sure to indicate whether you're interested in staying for these weekday activities or will be arranging to spend those hours off-site. Just hanging out at the zendo isn't 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.



NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW FOR 2020!

Your membership category might change each year. Choose the level of participation in ROBZ activities that you will commit to this coming year. *(If you are new to ROBZ, please get actively involved in ROBZ activities for a year and then apply for membership.)*

FORM OF PARTICIPATION	EXAMPLES	SUGGESTED CORE INVOLVEMENT
1. Weekly Zazen at ROBZ	See calendar for schedule	Twice a month
2. Work	Serving on the committees, preparing the newsletter, planning Mts. & Rivers sesshin, planning sesshin meals, shopping for sesshin food, attending workdays, special projects, being a pool leader, coordinating sesshin	Three days a year (approx. 24 hours) including at least one workday
3. Sesshin Attendance	Attending sesshin	Three to four times a year
4. Meetings	For the Practice of Business	At least 6 of the 9 or 10 Meetings for Business
5. Other	Sangha Circles, Dharma Workshops, Buddha's Birthday, Founders' Day	Three to four times a year



Please read the following to decide which membership category best fits your available time & intention:

- I will maintain an ongoing but infrequent pattern of participation in ROBZ activities. I may or may not consider ROBZ my home zendo. I declare myself an associate member for the upcoming year.
- I consider ROBZ to be my home zendo & will participate regularly in at least three of the five ways listed in the table above. This will include weekly zazen (twice a month or more), at least one sesshin during the year, or both. I declare myself a sustaining member for the upcoming year.
- I consider ROBZ to be my home zendo. I will attend at least six Meetings for the Practice of Business a year. In addition, I will participate in three of the other four activities listed above at the suggested core level of involvement. I have applied to the Practice and Care Committee for core membership and been accepted. I declare myself a core member for the upcoming year.
- I would like to just receive the newsletter.

NAME _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

ADDRESS _____

I prefer to be contacted by: Phone Email Postal Service

I prefer to receive the newsletter by: Email Postal Service

It is important that you send this form along with a check payable to ROBZ (\$40 for membership or \$15 for newsletter only) to:

Cindy Leeson, P. O. Box 676, Colfax, CA 95713

SESSHIN LEADER POOLS

Sangha members interested in a leadership position should contact the appropriate pool leader. If you are listed in a pool and your availability has changed, please advise the pool leader (named in **bold italic**).

TANTO: Judyth Collin, Kate Duroux, Allan Finlay, Reed Hamilton, Eric Larsen, Greg Leeson, Cindy Leeson, **Jenny Long**, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Jim Pyle, Masa Uehara

JIKIJITSU: Sheelo Bohm, Walt Carnahan, Kate Duroux, Suzanna Elkin, Allan Finlay, **Reed Hamilton**, Michael Keown, Eric Larsen, Cindy Leeson, Greg Leeson, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Jim Pyle

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INO: Johanna Bangeman, Judyth Collin, Kate Duroux, Anne Dutton, Anna Gold, Eric Larsen, **Cindy Leeson**, Greg Leeson, Elizabeth Lewis, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Dana Turner, Masa Uehara

TENZO: Sheelo Bohm, **Judyth Collin**, Kate Duroux, Michael Keown, Andrew Mason, Chris Mulford

SESSHIN COORDINATOR: Sheelo Bohm, Judyth Collin, Reed Hamilton, **Michael Keown**, Eric Larsen, Cindy Leeson, Greg Leeson, Keith Melton, Steve Mulford, Jim Pyle, Masa Uehara, Jay Veazey, Lynne Westerfield

DĀNA

Your generosity is a gift that not only supports ROBZ, but also the teacher, the Sangha, the larger Dharma community, and your own practice. You can direct your gift to a particular fund or project, such as the Teachers Fund, General Fund, Building Fund, Sangha Assistance Fund, or make a split gift. All undesignated gifts go to the general fund. Please use "THITHE.LY" for donations. For membership fees, send checks made out to ROBZ to Cindy Leeson. For sesshin fees, send checks made out to ROBZ to the sesshin coordinator.

We appreciate your spirit of giving!

Chris Mulford, ROBZ Bookkeeper,
13224, Red Dog Road
Nevada City, CA 95959

GENERAL INQUIRIES & ADDRESS CHANGES

Please send general inquiries and changes of your contact information to:

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Submissions of original artwork, poetry, articles, photographs or anything else that might be of interest to the sangha are appreciated. Please send any materials to:

dfennessy@mac.com

The deadline for the next issue will be April 1st, 2020

If you would like to become more involved with creating this newsletter, please write to the editor at the above email address.



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