

RING OF BONE ZENDO

FALL 2023

WWW.RINGOFBONEZENDO.ORG

P.O. BOX 1525 NEVADA CITY, CA 95959

SITTING ON A ROCK

~ Robert Tindall

The first time my 14-year-old son Caedmon attempted formal zazen, it was on the back deck of my cabin looking down into the redwood trees. I rang the bell, and we sat motionless listening to the bubbling spring and the caws of ravens. Five minutes. 10 minutes. 15 minutes...

"Aaaaagh!" Caedmon cried out, collapsing into a pile. "I can't do this!"

The first time we spontaneously meditated, we were on the slopes of Mt. Shasta. That day had been a relief for me. As a kid going through a bout of depression and anxiety, my son had been withdrawn, his high spirits and the easy smile in abeyance. Watching him run through the snow like a boy again brought tears to my eyes. At one point we'd sat looking down the great slope of the mountain following our breath, sitting upright.

"You see all that space, all that beauty?" I spoke. "That's your mind. That's you."

We took up jogging and would sit on the headlands looking out over the ocean. I would guide his dropping more and more into his senses, feeling into the present moment. Our meditations would end with tears and divulgements of how hard it is to be an adolescent.

We held on.

Then one day Caedmon spoke up and said, "I want to join you on that retreat you're going to do in the mountains." I was astonished. He'd always laughed and declared, "My dad's going off to sit on a rock," whenever I departed for sesshin. But then he'd also observe how I'd look 10 years younger when I returned, so maybe I shouldn't have been so surprised.

What he was proposing was strong medicine. Which was exactly what he needed, and he knew it. The trip leaders were consulted. Nelson gave his imprimatur after speaking with Caedmon, under the condition that my son sat every day before our departure.

He would not be excused from zazen because of youth or inexperience.

So, the formal zazen began.

While not nearly as regular as I had hoped, he did gain traction. Before we left, Caedmon sat a full two hours without deflating with a despairing wail. He passed the test. I figured we were ready.

What we weren't ready for was walking into the fringe of a hurricane. One of Nelson's concerns for me was that I'd be so preoccupied with my son's well-being that I wouldn't be able to settle into my own zazen. As we hiked into the heaviest rainfall ever experienced upon a Mountains and Rivers sesshin, I was about to get tested, too.

Yet the group performed its magic, the result of years of practice in the wildest terrains we can access in California

(although the little forest beneath my cabin in Mendocino is more populated with wildlife than the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness). As the Jiki kept us steady on course with our schedule and the tenzo and cooks valiantly prepared meals in the midst of the downpour, Caedmon and I lay pinioned in our little tents beneath the sheets of falling rain. When we were summoned forth for our first meal huddled beneath the tarp that had been strung up over the fire, I had barely slept for anxiety.

Yet Caedmon appeared with a minimum of encouragement and joined us in the meal gathas. He remained in good spirits.

The first couple of days are a blur. Rain. Snatches of zazen in our circle. Short walks. Zazen under the extended tarp structure ("Nelson sits like a rock," Caedmon whispers to me), my own

WHO WE ARE

~ Ken Schumacher

ROBZ is the first, and only, formal spiritual practice I had ever chosen to study. Growing up in a devoutly Protestant family with three older brothers, I had no choice in the matter of attending church. First it was Sunday school, and then sitting (and fidgeting) beside Mom, Dad, and brothers every single Sunday morning, always in the third left pew from the front. Discovering science in school, I began to question the Christian beliefs I had been exposed to, especially regarding the origin of life and evolution. I realized, however, that discarding Christianity would also require rejecting the concept of heaven and an afterlife. This was a disturbing thought, but eventually reason won over

indoctrination, and I began to consider myself an atheist (and still do).

Informally, however, I was intrigued with Eastern philosophy. I enjoyed reading Alan Watts, and liked all those short, funny Zen stories ("... are you still carrying her?") but never really did any serious directed reading or study. I began to meditate on my own occasionally, and found it somewhat refreshing, maybe because I'm "intellectually focused"

and found trying not to think a fun exercise. Eventually I developed a custom of meditating during my lunch hour, typically sitting on a big rock in the forest on the beautiful campus of Grass Valley Group, my employer.

As a side business, I'm a location audio recording engineer, specializing in music of all types, from dive-bar rock-and-roll gigs to formal classical concerts. I learned that Gary Snyder was going to perform

TO REMIND MYSELF

"I have not forgotten the Way, but a little, the way to the Way."
~ Mary Oliver

Clothes hang on the line in a light rain, haphazardly strung up in a brief respite from the sky's outpouring. Bamboo, that ambitious grass, cheers on the flow of wind. I watch the half-dry fabric rehydrate in the partial light of sunset.

How could I have forgotten, with Suzuki's essays face down atop the blankets we shared three days ago? Even when I have wandered off, the Way waits patiently by my side.

~ Jamie Hunyor

- "Sitting on a Rock" continued from page 1

constant preoccupations about keeping my son dry and warm. Will this rain ever frickin' stop?

Best of all, Caedmon getting to witness the humor and collaboration of ROBZ under such circumstances.

As the weather began to clear, our walking meditation began in earnest. I set an example of the outdoorsman's skills for my son by misreading the relay's cue and wandering off in the wrong direction at least once, but Caedmon stayed on course and discovered the joy of walking. It was



a revelation for him to wander among the flowers, "hummingbird moths," waterfalls and streams, and vast landscapes of the Sierra.

He also stuck to the meditation schedule without complaint, although swathed in layers of protective garments against the clouds of mosquitoes that descended upon us after the rains ("A mosquito breeding ground," Jay dubbed our campsite). One day I drove Caedmon with a stick to dokusan. He sat before Nelson and declared his dad had made him do it. I don't know what else they talked about, but he came back with his zazen more solid. Each morning, Caedmon prepared breakfast with Reed, which consisted of my son drinking a coffee while leaning against a tree trunk, occasionally stirring the oatmeal. "Reed has a really kind face," Caedmon commented about his fellow cook.

And maybe that was the best teaching he received on our trip: Kindness. That

and a taste of the mind of bushes and grasses and the many beings of world.

The easy smile began returning to his face. As he reported, "At first it was really hard, but after not being stimulated for a number of days I didn't even have to concentrate on not thinking. Meditation became easy then. I got a really simple kind of happiness being in nature and hiking. It's not like I got something out of it, like getting a gift or something. Or it kind of was. I feel like you receive it, but it's not personal gain. It's happiness that is simpler. It's not just for you."

Caedmon chose to make some changes in his life. One of them was to abruptly move out of his mom's home. I had barely dropped him off at her house in the upper part of our land when he reappeared at my door with a bag slung over his shoulders.

"I told mom I'm moving in with you, Dad."

My son's depression and anxiety are subsiding, although he has his flare ups. I am now his full-time parent, undergoing a crash course in adolescent psychology. Even as I write this, Golden Breeze sesshin is underway at Ring of Bone Zendo and I'm at home taking care of him. I don't know when I'll next be able to take up my Zen training in retreat again.

I want to thank the Ring of Bone sangha for making space for my son on Mountains and Rivers sesshin. May more children take refuge in our practice. I hope my son Caedmon returns to it for his entire life. ■

- "Who We Are" continued from page 1

a first complete reading, with musical accompaniment, of his *Mountains and Rivers Without End* at the North Columbia Schoolhouse, and asked live sound engineer Rich Mead if I could record it. Rich asked Gary and he approved. So I borrowed an ADAT 8-track audio recorder from GVG and captured the entire event (as I recall it lasted six hours). When I learned the tracks were to be mixed at Flying Whale Recording, a small local studio, I was allowed to sit in on the sessions. There I got to spend a little time with Gary, and mentioned to him I was interested in meditation. He immediately suggested I visit ROBZ. I replied I would need time to prepare myself before I could even imagine doing anything like that. Daniel Flanigan, one of the musicians for the event, overheard the conversation and said, laughing, "There's no need to prepare, you should just go." But I didn't believe him and failed to follow up on the invitation.

Some time later, while walking to the rock for my lunch meditation, I turned around, glanced up, and saw a forked cedar tree. Something happened. Everything suddenly looked beautifully different, and I felt odd in a very pleasant way. In this peculiar state, I continued to the rock, meditated happier than usual, and while walking back to the GVG building, noticed the feeling persisted. After resuming my technical writing work, the feeling gradually faded away, returning me to "normal".

I decided I had to figure out what had happened, and began exploring local meditation groups. One meditation leader said I shouldn't disregard the experience. Another said his practice of visualizing the Buddha as a mandala during meditation was the fastest way to enlightenment. Finally, I found Nelson Foster's phone number, called him, and he suggested meeting one-on-one at the Zendo for a chat. When the scheduled time arrived, I walked down to the Zendo and found Nelson lounged on the outside deck, patiently waiting for me. I told him my story, with tears in my eyes and he invited me to attend Monday evening zazen, asking me to arrive early the first time to receive some basic practice guidelines, and to read *Taking the Path of Zen* by Robert Aitken.

After that I participated for several years, including weekly zazen, a few Summer Mountains and Rivers jaunts, and formal

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zendo sesshins including Rohatsu. Lately, I am taking a break from the practice, why I don't exactly know, but I continue to hold respect and appreciation for ROBZ and the entire sangha.

I never figured out what happened when I saw that cedar tree, and now I realize I never will. But that isn't a tragedy. It's just not understandable, and that's the way it is. However, I can attribute one thing to my Zen practice. I have absolutely no fear of death. I just don't want it to occur sooner than it has to. ■

YOUR PRACTICE & CARE COMMITTEE; WHAT DOES IT DO?

~ Cindy Leeson

During the September 24th Meeting for Practice of Business, a responsibility of our Practice & Care Committee was mentioned that many folks didn't realize existed, namely reviewing requests for possible sesshin fee refunds. As described elsewhere in this issue, the committee recently revised that policy.

Because many newer sangha members might not know what the Practice & Care Committee does, some insights into that committee's responsibilities are presented here.

You may have noted that a good deal of the committee's time and energy in the last few years has been helping the sangha make choices about how we practice together during the pandemic. Not so evident are other care responsibilities, much of which is done in consultation with Nelson, such as monitoring the spirit and vitality of the Sangha and offering encouragement to individuals or the entire group as

ROBZ VENMO ACCOUNT

ROBZ has set up a Venmo account for those who prefer to make donations or sesshin fee payments digitally.

The Venmo account is: @ROBZ_NC.

If you will be paying a sesshin fee via Venmo, please also inform the sesshin coordinator. For ROBZ donations, please identify which fund your donation is for (i.e. the Sangha Assistance Fund).

needed; helping sangha members with health concerns, family stress, practice questions, and financial hardship; and providing a conduit for members to air and resolve problems arising in their relationship with the teacher or with another member. We also have more nuts-and-bolts responsibilities that include supporting the work of pool leaders and leadership pools; receiving, considering, and deciding on requests for membership or changes in membership level; receiving requests to be married in the care of the Sangha; and receiving, considering, and acting on requests for memorial services. In short, the committee is here for the sangha to help in any way we can.

As you can see, the Practice & Care Committee is committed to helping the sangha in a myriad of ways, and it's our hope that if a need arises you will let us know. If we don't have the knowledge or expertise to help, we will do our best to find someone who can. We're here to serve the Sangha in any way we can, and it is our great honor and privilege to do so. ■

SESSHIN FEE NEWS

At the September 24th Meeting for the Practice of Business, the sangha voted to adopt the following policy regarding refunds for sesshin, and will take effect beginning January 1, 2024:

- Sesshin fees are fully refundable if the request is made 14 days prior to the start of sesshin.
- In the 14-day period prior to the start of the sesshin, fees are refundable if the seat can be filled.
- No refund requests will be considered once the sesshin starts.

SANGHA ASSISTANCE FUND

Did you know ROBZ has a Sangha Assistance Fund to help sangha members in financial need? It is disbursed by the Practice & Care Committee as needed and is sustained by donations. To make a donation, send a check made out to Ring of Bone Zendo (or Venmo), to

Ring of Bone Zendo, ATTN: Ed Sheffner
PO Box 1525, Nevada City CA 95959

Please note that the donation is for the Sangha Assistance Fund. Thank you! ■

ROBZ NEWSLETTER FLASHBACK

Editor's Note: I received a suggestion to have the newsletter occasionally include pieces from the archive. I've heard talk of the famed Valentine's Day dances of the past, and know some folks are interested in drumming up enthusiasm for the event to return.

DANCE HALL HEAVEN: VALENTINE'S DAY DANCE

by Daniel Flanigan, Spring 1999

... At about four o'clock, the first truck pulled up. And before long the zendo was buzzing with unusual activity. Mountains of speakers and meadows of cord were shuffled into order. Above, a galaxy of lights coalesced around the Grand Disco Ball, which hung with regal elegance in the uppermost realm.

Balloons twisted into heart shapes and strung into chains were woven amid crepe paper ribbons to constitute the strata of the middle realm where lived the Victorian clown child, enshrined on a poster board heart embellished in white paper doilies. Such a scene was set as to entice Orpheus himself to take the stage.

In the lower realm, people slowly gathered as the mellow shades of Coltrane gave way to the ultra sedate piano wisps of Sun Ra. And then to the forefront of this newly created world came a strange fellow dressed in Oaxacan clam diggers and a salmon sports coat; and spoke "Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Ring of Bone Zendo's Saint Valentine's Day Dance!

... And with that, the band sent forth a sound so sublime that the Grand Disco Ball itself was charmed into revolution, sending swarming sperm-like luminosities to every corner of the dance hall heaven. At this the people were stirred to their feet and, as if conducted by that grand celestial orb, began to dance. By the middle of the set, the zendo was full to capacity.

.. After several hours of great music delivered by Barry, Cedar, Sean, and Theo with all they could muster, the music came to an end. The party tapered to a calm social gathering; tapered further to a fireside cuddle; tapered further to that strange fellow in a salmon sports coat sweeping in the cold dark of five a.m.; and finally to a brief fireside slumber in the deep silence of that forgiving meadow. ■

RING OF BONE ZENDO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Note: Zazen on Wednesdays, 7-9 pm, except during Blue Sky Sesshin and immediately following the Great Cold and Golden Breeze sesshin. Zendo closed January and July.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Coordinator</i>
SEEDS-TO-SNOW TRAINING SEASON - 2023			
Nov 5	Sunday Zazen Potluck and work hour	9:30 - noon Noon - 2:00 pm	
Nov 12	Sunday Zazen	9:30 - noon	
Nov 19	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Dharma Event	9:30 - noon Noon - 2:30 pm	Practice & Care
Nov 26	Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:15 pm	
Dec 1 - 8	Rohatsu		Wendy Boes
Dec 3	No Sunday Zazen		
Dec 10, 17, 24	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am - noon	
Dec 31	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am - noon noon - 2:15pm	
Jan. 2024	Zendo closed this month		

FLOWERS-TO-DUST TRAINING SEASON - 2024

Feb 4. 2024	Sunday Zazen Potluck and work hour	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:00 pm	
Feb 11	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/View from the Hojo	9:30 am - noon noon - 2:30 pm	
Feb 16-21	Great Cold Sesshin		Chris Mulford
Feb 18	(No Sunday Zazen)		
Feb 25	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:15 pm	
March 3	Sunday Zazen Potluck/Sangha Circle	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:30 pm	Practice & Care
March 10	One Day Sesshin	9:00 am - 4:30 pm	Chris Mulford
March 17	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am - noon	
March 24	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Dharma Event	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:30 pm	Practice & Care
March 31	Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/ Meeting for the Practice of Business	9:30 - noon Noon - 2:15 pm	
April 7	Sunday Zazen Potluck Buddha's Birthday	9:30 - noon noon - 1:00 pm 1:00 - 3:00 pm	
April 14	Sunday Zazen	9:30 - noon	
April 21	Zazenkai	9:00 am - 4:30 pm	Chris Mulford
April 28	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 - noon noon - 2:15 pm	
May 4 - 11	Spring Mountains and Rivers Sesshin		Reed Hamilton
May 5	Sunday Zazen Potluck and work hour	9:30 - noon Noon - 2:00 pm	
May 12	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am - noon	
May 19	Work Party for Masa and Nelson	9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Sheelo Bohm
May 26	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:15 pm	

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RING OF BONE ZENDO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Coordinator</i>
June 2	Spring Workday	9:00 am - 3:00 pm	Steve Mulford
June 8 – 15	Blue Sky Sesshin		Sue Finlay
June 9	(No Sunday Zazen)		
June 16, 23	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
June 30	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm	
July	Zendo Closed this Month		

SEEDS-TO-SNOW TRAINING SEASON 2024

August 4	Sunday Zazen Potluck/ View From the Hojo	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:30 pm	
August 10 – 17	Summer Mountains and Rivers Sesshin		Davis Reeves
August 11, 18	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
August 25	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm	
Sept 1	Sunday Zazen Potluck and Work Hour	9:30 am - noon Noon - 2:00 pm	
Sept 8	Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Sept 15	Zazen Sack Lunch/ Founders' Day	9:30 am – noon noon—3:00 pm	Ed Sheffner
Sept 22	Fall Workday	9:00 am—3:00 pm	Steve Mulford
Sept 29	Zazen Sack Lunch/ Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30—noon noon—2:15 pm	
Oct 4 – 9	Golden Breeze Sesshin		Peter Bohnert
Oct 6	(No zazen)		
Oct 13	Bald Mountain Association Workday	9:00 am – 3:00 pm	Sheelo Bohm
Oct 20	Zazen Sack lunch/Dharma Event	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:30 pm	Practice & Care
Oct 27	Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm	
Nov 3	Sunday Zazen Potluck and work hour	9:30 am—noon Noon – 2:00 pm	
Nov 8 – 10	Weekend Sesshin		Sue Finlay
Nov 17	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Sangha Circle	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:30 pm	Practice & Care
Nov 24	Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm	
Dec 1 – 8	Rohatsu		Wendy Boes
Dec 1, 8	(No Sunday Zazen)		
Dec 15, 22	Sunday Zazen	9:30 am – noon	
Dec 29	Sunday Zazen Sack lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business	9:30 am – noon noon – 2:15pm	

THE HANDY-DANDY ZENDO EVENT FACTOID SHEET

<i>Event</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Contact Name/Info</i>	<i>Core/ Sustaining</i>	<i>Associate</i>	<i>Non- member</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Rohatsu 2023	Dec 1-8, 2023	Wendy Boes - 21802 Purdon Rd., Nevada City CA 95959 530-559-6314 or wlbcarrort@gmail.com	\$125	\$155	\$195	Oct 1
Great Cold Sesshin	Feb 16-21, 2024	Chris Mulford - 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6265 or cmulfordca@gmail.com	\$155	\$195	\$240	Dec 22
One Day Sesshin	Mar 10	Chris Mulford - 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6265 or cmulfordca@gmail.com	\$40	\$50	\$60	Feb 18
Zazenkaï	April 21	Chris Mulford - 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6265 or cmulfordca@gmail.com	\$10	\$10	\$10	Mar 21
Spring Mountains and Rivers Sesshin	May 4-11	Reed Hamilton – 13310 Nanna’s Way, Grass Valley CA 95949 530-210-4216 or reedhamilton2@gmail.com	\$270	\$330	\$380	Mar 9
Masa & Nelson Work Party	May 19	Sheelo Bohm – PO Box 553 North San Juan, CA 95960 530-263-6431 or sheelo.bohm@gmail.com				
Spring Workday	Jun 2	Steve Mulford -- 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6267 or smulfordca@gmail.com				
Blue Sky Sesshin	Jun 8-15	Sue Finlay -- PO Box 576, North San Juan CA 95960 530-277-6247 or 1suxena@gmail.com	\$220	\$280	\$330	April 27
Summer Mountains and Rivers Sesshin	Aug 10-17	Davis Reeves – 3525 SE Floss St., Milwaukie, OR 97222 619-993-2545 or davisreeves@ymail.com	\$220	\$280	\$330	June 14
Fall Workday	Sep 22	Steve Mulford -- 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6267 or smulfordca@gmail.com				
Golden Breeze Sesshin	Oct 4-9	Peter Bohnert— PO Box 267, Nevada City, CA 95959 617-642-5165 or pbohnert@gmail.com	\$155	\$195	\$240	Aug 9
BMA Workday	Oct 13	Sheelo Bohm – PO Box 553 North San Juan, CA 95960 530-263-6431 or sheelo.bohm@gmail.com				
Weekend Sesshin	Nov 8-10	Sue Finlay -- PO Box 576, North San Juan CA 95960 530-277-6247 or 1suxena@gmail.com	\$100	\$125	\$145	Oct 18
Rohatsu 2024	Dec 1-8	Wendy Boes – 21802 Purdon Rd., Nevada City CA 95959 530-559-6314 or wlbcarrort@gmail.com	\$125	\$155	\$195	Oct 1



SESSHIN GUIDELINES

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

NOTE: Please be fully vaccinated at least two weeks prior to 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, include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Or send a payment via Venmo (@ROBZ_NC), and also be sure to inform the coordinator.
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 will result in the loss of your sesshin fee unless your seat is filled.

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 have also experimented with a river-based form. 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. ■

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, Cindy Leeson, Greg Leeson, **Jenny Long**, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Jim Pyle

JIKIJITSU: Johanna Bangeman, Sheelo Bohm, Kate Duroux, Allan Finlay, Sue Finlay, Brian Ginsberg, **Reed Hamilton**, Eric Larsen, Cindy Leeson, Greg Leeson, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Chris Mulford, Nate Popik, Jim Pyle, Dmitry Shemetov, John Tecklin, Joy Weaver

JISHA: Sheelo Bohm, Judyth Collin, Kate Duroux, Allan Finlay, Sue Finlay, Reed Hamilton, Eric Larsen, Cindy Leeson, **Greg Leeson**, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Chris Mulford, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Jim Pyle, Robert Tindall

INO: Judyth Collin, Kate Duroux, Anne Dutton, Sue Finlay, Brian Ginsberg, Eric Larsen, **Cindy Leeson**, Greg Leeson, Elizabeth Lewis, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Dana Turner, Masa Uehara, Joy Weaver

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

SESSHIN COORDINATOR: Wendy Boes, Erika Carpenter, Sue Finlay, Reed Hamilton, Cindy Leeson, **Chris Mulford**, Joy Weaver

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 "tithe.ly" for donations.

Donations can also be mailed to:

ROBZ, PO Box 1525, Nevada City, CA 95959

We appreciate your spirit of giving!

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.

GENERAL INQUIRIES & ADDRESS CHANGES

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

Cindy Leeson, Membership Coordinator
P.O. Box 676, Colfax, CA 95713
530.346.7782
members@ringofbonezendo.org

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NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

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:

jamiehunyor@gmail.com

The deadline for the next issue will be

April 1st, 2024

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



Address Correction Requested

Nevada City, CA 95959
P.O. Box 1525

RING OF BONE ZENDO

NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW FOR 2024

Your membership category might change each year. Choose the level of participation in ROBZ activities that you will commit to for the 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 six of these meetings
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 time & intention for this year:

- 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 this year.
- I consider ROBZ to be my home zendo & will participate regularly in at least three of the five ways listed in the table below. 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 this year.
- I consider ROBZ to be my home zendo & will participate regularly in four of the five activities listed below at the suggested core level of involvement. I have applied to the Practice & Care Committee for core membership and been accepted. I declare myself a core member for this year.
- I would like to just receive the newsletter this year.

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