



SINGING TO THE WATERS

~Robert Tindall, Mendocino, Turtle Island

On August 2nd in the early afternoon, we were gathered in the meadow on my land in Mendocino singing "Happy Birthday" to my daughter, Maitreya. She had just turned 12. As the cake was being sliced, one of the children in attendance spoke up: "Is that fog?"

I took one glance into our ancient redwood forest and broke into a run. "That's smoke!" I cried out. "We've got a fire!" Drawing closer, I saw the interior of one of the towering old trees, already hollowed out by a long-ago conflagration, blazing. Whipping my phone from my back pocket and calling 911, I raced over to the neighbors and banged on their door crying out, "Fire!" and then plunged down into the woods. By the time I got there, the flames were ascending the interior of the tree like a snake and were aggressively climbing upwards. Our whole forest was threatened. Our whole neighborhood was threatened.

Through my daze of adrenaline, I tried to do my bit in rallying our response, but garden hoses were useless. It was only when our friends from the local volunteer fire department pulled up in their 4,000-gallon tanker that the fire could be extinguished.

We were lucky that day. There was no wind to spread the fire, we caught sight of the smoke in time, and the fire department was swift in their response, but I was in an adrenaline haze for a couple of days afterward. Our forest is our life – six acres of redwood trees, some of whom were already sailing aloft when the stones of the Norman cathedrals were being laid in England. Without them, how would I live?

Beneath our land runs a stream, an underground watercourse that feeds these soaring pillars and keeps our woods emerald-green, even in the heart of summer. As I watch the water levels

(I can literally gaze down into our well) drop inch by inch during this drought, I wonder if we'll make it through. I look up at the sky every day. Check the weather report. We've ordered huge capacity water tanks and are preparing to drill far deeper than the mere 30 feet of our present well.

Ring of Bone

after & for Lew Welch

It's an old one, remember?
With the rōshi in the pickup
and the poet puzzling through
the countryside like a lone goose?

I saw myself
a sagebrush troubadour,
sporting skirt and six-gun,
fresh off the bus from downtown.

I took silence like a drug,
drank it off, walked sideways,
hid my vows like tracks.

Yes, the earth will take us all,
monks and drifters each.

There will be no boxes for the body.
The hushed globe will wait.

~ from Michael Mlekoday's forthcoming book
All Earthly Bodies.

Some days I'm seized by a low-grade panic. What happens to us, to our forest, if the rain ceases to come?

Stalking just over the horizon are war and disease, refugees and the homeless. Economic, social, and ecological systems evidence their slow-motion collapse. Dictatorship looms on the Right, and the Left becomes progressively fanatical and silly.

What to do? Having grown up on the streets with no family, one of my primary motivations in moving to this remote area of the coast was to provide a safe

haven for my daughter, a "paradise" in its old Indo-European meaning of a "walled garden or fortification." Indeed, the name of the land when we purchased it was already "Saranam." "Refuge" in Pali, the language of safety in the Buddhist tradition.

Yet the world is on fire everywhere.

Nowadays, I find my practice of zazen and ceremonial work with plant medicine revolving even more around the Four Limitless Vows. Our vows to carry over all beings, overcome all obstacles, master all good paths, and follow through on awakening all distill down, for me, to my commitment to stay radically open to change – to move in the most fluid, adaptive way I can for the sake of my daughter's, and all beings', future.

And yet between myself and that hopeful grace all too often lies a heavy veil of fear, grief, anger, depression, and fatigue. At such times, my left brain will rear its ugly head and my thinking lose its nuance and flexibility. Instead of perceiving the richness and hope that lies in the next inch of ground to be covered, I seem to get caught up in eschatological visions, as if I were already a victim of the Anthropocene extinction.

This is when I go to ground. In recent decades, an important element in my practice has become my ceremonial work in the Native American Church and the vegetalista tradition of the Amazon rainforest. These shamanic traditions, although historically and culturally distinct from Buddhism, in my experience have deep affinities with Zen practice (and vice-versa). In fact, in ceremonies of ayahuasca I sing sutras – which my friends in the rainforest call "the icaros of the Buddha." They love them!

Although this "animistic" way of prayer, which holds the entire cosmos as sentient, alive, responsive, and aware is not commonly held, at least explicitly, among Western Buddhists

-“Singing To The Waters.” continued from page 1

(my first teacher, Robert Aitken Roshi, was a secular Humanist in outlook), it is evidenced throughout our Buddhist texts, including the koans that we study. Mountain spirits come to visit, old teachers transform into foxes, etc.

For me, it is a fruitful way. Sitting in ceremony this weekend, I sang an icaro to the waters that I learned from my teacher Juan Flores, whose home sits alongside a wonder of the world: a boiling river that erupts from deep within the earth like an open vein. As I sang, I felt my connection with the waters of my own land, and reaching deep down I sang to them, loving them, calling them to burst forth.

Is this magical thinking? No, I don't think so. Instead, I hold it as a part of my Bodhisattva Vows: to nurture the land as well as sink deeper wells, build catchment systems, and purchase huge water tanks. Indigenous peoples have been trying to teach us to sing to Creation for generations now. It's part of that deep instinct of reciprocity that our Western society has lost and is, for me, the root cause of our ecological woes.

The Hopi have a prophecy stone that, for them, depicts the time of Great Purification. Upon it is seen a two-forked road. Those who follow the upper road are “two-hearted,” seek self-gratification, and treat the world as a commodity to be exploited: a dead, mechanical thing. One sees their bodies fragmenting and drifting off into space. On the lower road are those who are “single-hearted.” They remain whole, following a deity, a master of prayer, who plants corn with digging stick.

In my zazen and prayer, I have chosen to follow that way, to work towards a fusion of Western scientific understanding and the “forgetting of self in the act of becoming one with all things” that Yamada Koun Roshi described as the practice of Zen.

This practice sustains me as we inch forward into a radically destabilized world. And it is my only hope for my daughter's future. ■

WHO WE ARE

~Joy Weaver

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you whom I have yet to meet.

I was born in Minnesota, but raised in Wyoming, which I credit for planting the seeds of my love for natural beauty, wide spacious places and quietude. After graduating high school, I moved to Seattle where I lived for ten years and eventually completed a degree in Environmental Studies from Western Washington University. By the time I finished college, I felt crystal clear that I wanted nothing to do with offices, desks, or computers, so I packed my essentials into a van and headed down to the Southwest to study straw bale home construction and earthen plasters. It was my work in that field that brought me to California, first to Lake County and then to Grass Valley in 2001. I've almost always been self-employed, as I find that I am the only employer around who offers a flexible enough schedule and adequate vacation time. Not having had children has made this choice more practicable. I now live on an acre of land in North San Juan. My mom, a lovely person, lives in an adjacent house. We have three cats, a veggie garden, and several fruit and nut trees. My primary occupation these days is taking care of the land and learning how to make the best use of the abundance it creates.

My first formal spiritual training was in the Lutheran church, but at age 13 I discovered Carl Sagan via his PBS show, “Cosmos”. It's fair to say it blew my little mind, and set me on a path of passionate spiritual curiosity that eventually led me (40 years later!) to ROBZ. I also thank my dear friend, Wendy Boes, for sharing her early experiences of the zendo with me and inviting me to come along.

I finally made it here on a Wednesday night in November of 2019. I was the only student that night, and Nelson kindly gave me some introductory instruction. It did not take long for me to see that I was in the right place. I've always avoided structure, but the structure of Zen feels spacious enough to contain “me” without repressing who I essentially am (which was my issue with Lutheranism, the educational system, and the economic system). My experience of life has been enriched in many ways by the spacious structure that daily practice provides. And as I get to know my fellow sangha members, I feel inspired to keep exploring this endless and ever changing path.

I offer sincere gratitude to the founders, the sangha, our teacher, and the zen ancestors for the living gift of ROBZ. I am so happy to be here.

MOUNTAINS & RIVERS SESSHIN, AUGUST 2021

~George Kiely

Wake to smoke in the foothill night in the bunchgrass meadow downhill from the zendo. "Particulate" from our old language roots for a "little bit or part, grain" and weirder, older still "to grant, allot" and its other side "to get in return." Yikes! Sit a morning round on the courtyard pallets, air quality gauged by taste and smell and distance of visible pine tree tops; the usual euphony of the daybreak pine-oak opening not there, just smoke and summer heat. So—not so many names of birds to note appearing and gradually quieting down as sesshin unfolds. In Jody Gladding's poem about bark beetles:

*They came down out of the hills,
stepping over the cracks where the light
broke through the wood.*

*Wood said one and they remembered
how to name the matrix*

was also to address it.

We jump in our handful of cars and head downhill too, thick smoke clearing to haze as we make our way from where the Central Valley tilts from Sacramento to San Joaquin drainages, and then up through the oak savannah, pine belt, fir and higher pines of the Stanislaus River. Stop by the roadside to parley and untangle concern regarding what I can only guess are ancient questions: Should we go on? and How? There's worry over the quality of the air, over agency and propriety in expressing apprehension, over the difficulty and disappointment in changing hard-won plans. It's blue above the sugar pines out here and we decide to head into the woods, set up a base camp not too-many-miles' walk from the parking lot, and set our sights on day hikes with attention to the sky and air and each other to more quickly note a change in the weather.

Headwaters often like to park themselves up high, and with so many American Wilderness Areas designated above the elevation of "saleable timber", you'll tend to run into one or two on a wilderness walk. The Emigrant Wilderness houses parts of the upper Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers. After a

late-day provisional base camp aside a shallow pool in Horse and Cow Meadow, wake to the surprise of a genuinely cold morning and set up our zendo amongst the frosty sedges and granite. Downhill 400 feet to Cooper Meadow, we delineate our home camp and practice ring for the next few days. OK—zendo circle in the lodgepoles in a shady spot clearly favored by the cows who narrowly squeaked by the Wilderness Act's proscriptions. Hojo on the far side of a granite knob; fire pit buffed out to cook for fifteen; bear bags slung over a high-up pine branch; bedrolls and tents spread out in the duff and rocks. Water drawn from a series of sheltered pools along the mostly dry meander of the upper South Fork. The first couple holes full of dozens of holdout trout in this dry year. Ours a little further down in the willow and tiny trickle over an old check dam, just a few fish here. A little lower, the upper Stanislaus was once a base camp for Chinook and Steelhead on their spawning returns and swan songs. Below a series of dams, the lower Stanislaus still carries a few of the fall run of both species, connecting the California lowlands to Alaska just as the wild thread of crag and forest along the Sierran spine, Cascades, Coast mountains could walk you up there inland. Nearly all the juvenile Chinook salmon in the Sacramento River were predicted to die this year with the exceptionally high water temperatures. Gladding again on bark beetles:

They practiced walking off their anger.

They dug holes to mark how far they walked.

Then they could come back to the farthest point.

They could compare the lengths of their angers and which was the greatest.

Back at camp there's good cheer in the day's chores, and plodding or brisk walks, zazen in the dawn and into the night, chatter in the spaces between. Every evening—or was it morning?—sometime in the changing light a flock of birds would WHOOSH over, echoed by the bats at human head-level flitting

through our zendo. The delicate work of placing one's seat just so in an orrery of dried cow shit. In the quiet of the hot days our companions were often on the plant side of things: gentian in the grass, parsleys along the trail, suddenly the awareness of passing by a behemoth red fir, white pine, mountain hemlock, sierra lodgepole. Curious volcanic knobs in the distance and at night a clear view to the Milky Way and the summer constellations. The relief of blue sky in the morning.

Gladding:

*When the first line divided earth from sky
that was when they began to count.*

They counted 1: horizon.

but soon they got bored

because 2 was only two lines

whereas 1 had marked what was

from

what

was

not.

Our luck changes form during the last full day. And with a wall of smoke creeping up-valley to 8,000 feet, we beat as hasty a retreat as possible back to the cars, passing by bear tracks, a mom and cub, in the last mile of dust. Down to the valley again in the night and then up to a porch deck in Nevada City for morning zazen and closing ceremony. From zendo to highway to mountain meadow to suburban home—our Mountains and Rivers Sesshin this year—old forms working with *something* and that something permeating the forms. Our uphill bardic neighbor once said, "An artist is a total switch-hitter", and I guess we all need to be—bears in drought, salmon in their hot home, us. Closing with our chanting were a couple jays in the incense cedars and I heard Robert Sund's poem:

What else is here nearby?

Blending certainty and song,

hidden in the light.

HOW I CAME TO RING OF BONE

~Bob Speiser

Some time in the 90s I parked in the lot above the zendo, strapped on my pack and started walking down the hill. Smell of cedars, wind rustling the oaks. First past Kitkitdizze on the left, and then, bearing right, I saw the zendo for the first time. Gooseflesh! So much life had come together at that moment.

In 1957, fourteen years old, at a tiny bookstore downhill from my school, a first surprise: I picked up a copy of *Evergreen Review* #2 (*San Francisco Scene*) just off the press, started reading and then bought it on the spot. Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, Duncan, Rexroth... and Gary Snyder, then all almost unknown. Snyder's poem, "A Berry Feast", stuck with me all these years. Each line—when will the next surprise pop up?

*In bearshit, find it in August
Neat pile on the fragrant trail, in late
August, perhaps by a larch tree,
Bear has been eating the berries,
high meadow, late summer, snow gone
Blackbear
eating berries, married
To a woman whose breasts bleed
From nursing the half-human cubs.*

A kid from rough streets in the Bronx, hoping to roll west like boxcars from the freight yard just beyond the trolley track, I split in college between math and poetry, moved upstate for grad school in math, bought a backpack and kept reading Snyder. Zen was in the air.

In 1966, home for a visit, next surprise: T'ang dynasty wood sculpture at the Met museum, the first time I saw the word Bodhisattva. People sitting, big as life. Some at ease with one leg up, some meditating, carved wood weathered over centuries, cracked rough, still vividly alive. In shock, I chose to take those people as examples. To become, in some way, more like them.

Back upstate, a new bookstore opened just downhill in town, centered on Asian religion. I bought one book with Yasutani's lectures about how to practice, and sat down. More surprises, but I wasn't drawn to any teacher yet. I finished grad school, built a rough career, practiced here and there, and kept eyes open for a teacher.

In 1993, in Berkeley at loose ends, I walked into Shambhala Books. A clerk was setting copies of *Encouraging Words*, by Robert Aitken, on the new arrivals table. I picked one up, opened to a page at random, and read these words about Sesshin as dream:

It is a dream of the other as no other than myself, of all time as this time now...

Bang! Not wanting to waste his time, I sat every single day for a full year before I wrote to him. Back came rough pencil on a postcard from Pālolo: "How soon can you come out here?" I booked a flight and sat with Aitken faithfully as often as I could. I came to Ring of Bone at Aitken's urging, with encouragement from Nelson, and joined fully when Aitken retired.

Today I looked again at Gary's poem, my dear companion through so many years. And smelled the cedar by the now-familiar deck at Ring of Bone. ■



Calligraphy by Bob Speiser

*(translation)
People follow earth.
Earth follows heaven.
Heaven follows tao.
Tao follows self-so.*

THE HANDY-DANDY ZENDO EVENT FACTOID SHEET 2022

| <i>EventDate</i> | <i>Contact Name/Info</i> | <i>Core/ Sustaining</i> | <i>Associate</i> | <i>Non- member</i> | <i>Deadline</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Great Cold Sesshin | Feb. 18-23 Sheelo Bohm – members@ringofbonezendo.org | \$155 | \$195 | \$240 | Dec. 18, 2021 |
| Weekend Sesshin | March 18-20 Rossy Tzankova – members@ringofbonezendo.org | \$100 | \$125 | \$145 | Feb. 18 |
| Spring Workday | April 10 Joy Weaver – 28299 Sweetland Rd, North San Juan CA 802-349-2305 or joyweaver8@gmail.com | | | | |
| Spring M&R Sesshin | April 30-May 7 Erika Carpenter – PO Box 1057, McCloud, CA 96057 530-941-2802 or erikacarpenter@gmail.com | \$270 | \$330 | \$380 | Feb. 30 |
| Work Party for Nelson & Masa | May 15 Greg Leeson – PO Box 1742, Colfax CA 95713 530-346-7782 or gleeson804@gmail.com | | | | |
| One-Day Sesshin | May 22 Sue Finlay - PO Box 576, North San Juan CA 95960 530-277-6247 or 1suxena@gmail.com | \$40 | \$50 | \$60 | June 22 |
| Seven-Day Sesshin | June 11-18 Michael Keown - 2639 NE Community Lane, Bend OR 97701 541-848-9907 or michaelkeown375@gmail.com | \$220 | \$280 | \$330 | April 11 |
| Mts. & Rivers Sesshin | July 23-30 Reed Hamilton – 13310 Nanna’s Way, Grass Valley CA 95949 530-210-4216 or reedhamilton2@gmail.com | \$270 | \$330 | \$380 | May 23 |
| One-day Sesshin | August 21 Wendy Boes - members@ringofbonezendo.org | \$40 | \$50 | \$60 | July 21 |
| Fall Workday | Sep. 18 Steve Mulford – 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6267 or smulfordca@gmail.com | | | | |
| Five-Day Sesshin | Oct. 14-19 Chris Mulford - 13224 Red Dog Rd, Nevada City, CA 95959 916-346-6265 or cmulfordca@gmail.com | \$155 | \$195 | \$240 | Aug. 14 |
| BMA Workday | Oct. 23 Sheelo Bohm – members@ringofbonezendo.org Wendy Boes – members@ringofbonezendo.org | | | | |
| Rohatsu | Dec 1 -8 | \$125 | \$155 | \$195 | Oct. 1 |

RING OF BONE ZENDO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> | <i>Time</i> | <i>Coordinator</i> |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Oct 31, 2021 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Nov 7 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Nov 14 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Nov 21 | One-Day Sesshin | 9 am – 4:30 pm | Cindy Leeson |
| Nov 28 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Dec 1-8 | Rohatsu Sesshin | | Marsha Stone |
| Dec 5 | No Sunday Zazen | | |
| Dec 12 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Dec 19 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Dec 26 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for the Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon 12:30 pm – 2:15pm | Moderator |
| January 2022 | Zendo closed this month | | |
| FLOWERS-TO-DUST TRAINING SEASON - 2022 | | | |
| Feb 6, 2022 | Sunday Zazen Potluck | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 1:00 pm | |
| Feb 13 | Sunday Zazen View From the Hojo | 9:30 am - noon 1:00 pm – 2:30 | |
| Feb 18-23 | Great Cold Five-day Sesshin | | Sheelo Bohm |
| Feb 27 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| March 6 | Sunday Zazen Potluck/Sangha Circle | 9:30 - noon Noon – 2:30 pm | Practice & Care |
| March 13 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 – noon | |
| March 18-20 | Weekend Sesshin | | Rossy Tsankova |
| March 27 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| April 3 | Sunday Zazen Potluck/Buddha's Birthday | 9:30 – noon Noon – 2:30 pm | Kate Duroux |
| April 10 | Spring Workday | 9:00 – 3:00 pm | Joy Weaver |
| April 17 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Dharma Event | 9:30 – noon Noon – 2:30 pm | Practice & Care |
| April 24 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 - noon Noon – 2:15 | Moderator |
| April 30 – May 7 | Spring Mountains & Rivers Sesshin | | Erika Carpenter |
| May 1 | Sunday Zazen Potluck | 9:30 – noon Noon – 1:00 pm | |
| May 8 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 – noon | |
| May 15 | Work Party for Nelson and Masa | 9:00 am – 3:00 pm | Greg Leeson |
| May 22, 2022 | One-day Sesshin | 9:00 am – 4:30 pm | Sue Finlay |

RING OF BONE ZENDO CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> | <i>Time</i> | <i>Coordinator</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| May 29 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| June 5 | Sunday Zazen Potluck | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 1:00 pm | |
| June 11 – 18 | Seven-day Sesshin | | Michael Keown |
| June 19 | No Sunday Zazen | | |
| June 26 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| July | Zendo closed this month | | |
| SEEDS-TO-SNOW TRAINING SEASON - 2022 | | | |
| July 23-30 | Summer Mountains & Rivers Sesshin | | Reed Hamilton |
| August 7 | Sunday Zazen Potluck/View from the Hojo | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:30 pm | |
| August 14 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| August 21 | One-day Sesshin | 9:00 am – 4:30 pm | Wendy Boes |
| August 28 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Sept 4 | Sunday Zazen Potluck | 9:30 am - noon Noon – 1:00 pm | |
| Sept 11 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Sept 18 | Fall Workday | 9:00 am – 3:00 pm | Steve Mulford |
| Sept 25 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Oct 2 | Sunday Zazen Potluck/Founders' Day | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 3:00 pm | Kate Duroux |
| Oct 9 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Oct 14 – 19 | Five-day Sesshin | | Chris Mulford |
| Oct 23 | Bald Mountain Association Workday | 9:00 am – 3:00 pm | Sheelo Bohm |
| Oct 30 | Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Nov 6 | Sunday Zazen Potluck/Sangha Circle | 9:30 - noon Noon – 2:30 pm | Practice & Care |
| Nov 13 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 – noon | |
| Nov 20 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Dharma Event | 9:30 – noon Noon – 2:30 pm | Practice & Care |
| Nov 27 | Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 am – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Dec 1 – 8 | Rohatsu | | Wendy Boes |
| Dec 11 | Sunday Zazen | 9:30 am – noon | |
| Dec 18 | Sunday Zazen Sack Lunch/Meeting for Practice of Business | 9:30 m – noon Noon – 2:15 pm | Moderator |
| Dec 25 | No Sunday Zazen | | |

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, 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 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.

NOW IS THE TIME TO RENEW FOR 2022!

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, Nate Popik, Jim Pyle, Masa Uehara

JIKIJITSU: Johanna Bangeman, Sheelo Bohm, Kate Duroux, Allan Finlay, Sue Finlay, **Reed Hamilton**, Eric Larsen, Cindy Leeson, Greg Leeson, Chris Mulford, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Jim Pyle, Davis Reeves, Joy Weaver

JISHA: Sheelo Bohm, Judyth Collin, Kate Duroux, Anne Dutton, Suzanna Elkin, Sue Finlay, Eric Larsen, **Cindy Leeson**, Greg Leeson, Elizabeth Lewis, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Davis Reeves, Dana Turner, Masa Uehara

INO: Johanna Bangeman, Judyth Collin, Kate Duroux, Anne Dutton, Suzanna Elkin, Sue Finlay, Eric Larsen, **Cindy Leeson**, Greg Leeson, Elizabeth Lewis, Jenny Long, Andrew Mason, Steve Mulford, Nate Popik, Davis Reeves, Dana Turner, Masa Uehara

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

SESSHIN COORDINATOR: Sheelo Bohm, Judyth Collin, Reed Hamilton, Michael Keown, Eric Larsen, Cindy Leeson, Greg Leeson, **Chris Mulford**, 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 "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

CREDITS

Editor: Reed Hamilton

Layout: Ken Schumacher

Proofreading: Jamie Hunyor, Bob Speiser

Mailing: Greg Leeson, Cindy Leeson

BUSINESS & FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Reed Hamilton - reedhamilton2@gmail.com

Erika Carpenter - erikacarpenter@gmail.com

Ed Sheffner - edsheffner@gmail.com

PRACTICE & CARE COMMITTEE:

Chris Mulford - cmulfordca@gmail.com

Nate Popik - natepopik@gmail.com

Sue Finlay - 1suxena@gmail.com

MODERATOR:

Greg Leeson - gleeson804@gmail.com

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS:

Steve Mulford - smulfordca@gmail.com

BOOKKEEPER:

Ed Sheffner - edsheffner@gmail.com

CALENDAR PLANNER:

Cindy Leeson - cleeson611@gmail.com

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:

reedhamilton2@gmail.com

The deadline for the next issue will be

April 1st, 2022

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