

## Weekly Zazen

If you take to it, Zen practice becomes a lifelong proposition. Most of us sit daily at home, and as many as possible gather at Ring of Bone Zendo for group zazen, often with *dokusan* (private consultations).



Usually, we meet on Sundays from 9:00 to 11:30 AM and Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. There are many exceptions to the weekly zazen schedule, though, so we strongly advise checking the calendar published in the newsletter and on our website.

## Newsletter

Each spring and fall, Ring of Bone publishes a humble but vital newsletter, including a calendar of coming events, information on how to sign up, and so on. The newsletter is mailed to members as a benefit of their membership. Subscriptions are available to non-members as well; just send your name, address, and \$15 per year to the Membership Secretary.



*An account of Ring of Bone Zendo's origins and development is available. To obtain a copy, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and \$1 to Ring of Bone Zendo.*

Cover photo: Walt Carnahan; Brochure design: Masa Uehara Design. 12-2015

## Annual Calendar

Ring of Bone Zendo maintains an annual round of events, with slight variation from year to year. Advance sign-up is required for all sesshin. See the calendar in the newsletter or on the website for details.

- Jan. and July* No group practice at the zendo
- Feb.* Great Cold sesshin (five days)
- Mar.* Weekend sesshin
- Apr.* Buddha's birthday (family celebration)  
Mountains & Rivers backpacking sesshin  
Workday (building & ground maintenance)
- May* Zazenkai (day-long zazen)
- June* Seven-day sesshin
- Aug.* Mountains & Rivers backpacking sesshin  
Zazenkai (day-long zazen)
- Sept.* Workday (building & grounds maintenance)  
Founders' Day celebration
- Oct.* Five-day sesshin
- Nov.* Workday for Bald Mountain Association
- Dec.1-8* Rohatsu sesshin (weekend plus week-day evenings and early mornings)



- Sundays 9:00 – 11:30 AM: Group zazen
- Sunday afternoons (except *Jan. and July*):
  - 1st Sunday Potluck and social hour
  - 2nd Sunday Dharma event
  - 3rd Sunday Work hour (zendo maintenance)
  - 4th Sunday Business meeting (“Meeting for Practice of Business”)
- Wednesdays 7:30 – 9:30 PM: Group zazen

### Contacts

*For general information:*

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*Membership subscriptions:*

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## Ring of Bone Zendo

*“where ring is what a bell does”*



*I saw myself  
a ring of bone  
in the clear stream  
of all of it*

*and vowed,  
always to be open to it  
that all of it  
might flow through*

*and then heard  
“ring of bone” where  
ring is what a  
bell does*

— Lew Welch

**R**ing of Bone Zendo is a rural Zen Buddhist community founded in 1974. Structured along the democratic lines of early Buddhism, without distinguishing between lay person or priest, it is governed by its most active members and staffed by volunteers.

The zendo (meditation hall) building is on San Juan Ridge, near the old North Columbia gold diggings, on the edge of a meadow in the Ponderosa pine forest. Some members live on the Ridge or elsewhere in the Nevada City–Grass Valley vicinity. Others come from Sacramento, Davis, the Bay Area, and other points close enough so that they can participate on a regular basis. A third, even more far-flung group joins us periodically for major *sesshin* (meditation retreats) and other special events.

In style, practice, and lineage, Ring of Bone Zendo has roots in both the Rinzai and Soto schools of Zen (Ch’an), as developed in the Diamond Sangha. Year-around instruction is available from Nelson Foster, a teacher in that tradition. He leads most Ring of Bone *sesshin*; others are conducted by senior members of the group. Ring of Bone also sponsors occasional talks, classes, cultural events, and celebrations.



Although it is not stated as policy, Ring of Bone members take the third of Buddhism’s Three Treasures, the Sangha (community), as seriously as the other two, the Buddha and the Dharma (teachings). We are a community of friends and companions on the Way and also parties to wider communities of neighborhood, watershed, town, county, and beyond. As individuals, most of us are active in social, environmental, and political efforts at the local, national, or international scale.

Being lay people, Ring of Bone regulars tend our own households, raise children, and work in a variety of fields—health care, forestry, the arts, business, carpentry, education, research, farming, and high technology, among others. We take daily life and the challenge of living artfully, resourcefully, and mindfully to be basic to Zen and to all such traditions of practice. As people of place, we honor the local earth deities, watershed guardians, and ancient human and animal teachers of our home continent, Turtle Island.

## Participation

You are welcome to practice with us, whether you consider yourself a Buddhist or not. Anyone who is coming from outside the county or who has little or no experience in seated meditation is asked to make contact prior to visiting for the first time so that we can arrange to meet you and to provide at least a quick introduction to our practice forms and facilities.

A number of sitting groups associated with Ring of Bone have sprung up in California and other parts of the country. We may be able to guide you to a group in your vicinity or help you locate other people near you who might like to join in starting one.

## Membership

Core members are people who participate frequently in zazen, workdays, general meetings, and other events and who are willing to accept leadership responsibilities on at least an occasional basis. Attendance at workdays



Setting out on Mountains and Rivers wilderness *sesshin*

and potlucks as well as at retreats and cultural events is necessary to keep the building maintained, the brush cut back, and members in touch with one another.

Sustaining members consider Ring of Bone their home zendo and participate in its activities regularly but not at the core membership level.

Associate members maintain an infrequent but ongoing pattern of participation in Ring of Bone Zendo activities or have been “core” or “active” members in times past. They may or may not consider this their home zendo.

Membership dues are \$40 a year, payable to the treasurer each fall. New members who pay their dues at *sesshin* time will qualify for fee reductions at subsequent *sesshin*. For more details pertaining to membership requirements or applications, contact the membership secretary as listed below.