

## THE RINZAI ZEN COMMUNITY - General Sesshin information

### What is Sesshin?

Sesshin is an intensive Zen retreat. Beginning very early each morning and lasting until late in the evening, the sesshin schedule includes meditation, work periods, chanting, calligraphy and other activities. The intention of sesshin is to completely focus and unify mind and body; the schedule facilitates concentration, and forces participants to face themselves clearly without distortion or distraction. Sesshin is an opportunity to see yourself and your life more clearly...and to emerge with new insight and strength to change old patterns of thinking, doing and being.

### Am I Ready for Sesshin?

We welcome everyone with a desire to practice Zen. Zen teachers and senior students are available to assist you throughout sesshin and to answer questions.

Sesshin is a challenging training. Please come with an open mind and resolved to give your best effort. If you have not yet attended a sesshin with us, we request that you contact us by email before registering. This will allow us to have a conversation with you to determine if sesshin is the best training option for you at this time.

### What do I bring?

During sesshin all meals (vegetarian) will be provided. Participants must sleep at the sesshin location. Please bring the following:

- Training clothes for meditation and work (gi, hakama, samue). If you do not own these traditional clothes, just wear loose, comfortable clothing without bright colors or words. No shorts or immodest clothing, please. Remember to bring extra layers (long underwear, hat, etc.) depending on the season.
- Sleeping bag.
- Toiletries, personal medications (if you take anything that might affect your clarity or level of drowsiness, please let us know).
- Indoor sandals.
- Jihatsu (eating bowls) if owned (available to borrow or purchase).
- Okyo book (for chanting) if owned (available to borrow or purchase).

### What should I *not* bring?

Use of the following is not permitted at sesshin:

- Personal computers, iPods, or other electronic or entertainment devices of any kind.
- Personal phones (if you need to give an emergency contact number to someone, we can provide this to you; if you need to make an emergency call, our staff will have a phone you can use).
- Books, other than standard texts used for training (e.g. koan materials).
- Musical instruments.
- Personal food (if you have allergies or other unique food needs, please let us know beforehand and we'll accommodate you if possible).
- Intoxicants of any kind.

### What are the rules of Sesshin?

Sesshin is a silent retreat and there is no "social" time. Talking is only done when necessary to accomplish some task or during permitted question/answer periods. Persons unable to observe this rule may be asked to leave. The specific rules governing life at Sesshin will be announced on the first evening and help to create a harmonious atmosphere conducive to training.