



dai bosatsu zendo



## Sesshin | What to Expect

“Sesshin” literally means to collect one’s heart or mind. A sesshin is an intensive seven-day meditation retreat. At Dai Bosatsu Zendo, we have six seven-day sesshins each year and a few shorter ones. Sesshin offers us a unique opportunity to be free from distraction so that we can focus all of our attention on the practice of meditation. Aside from a brief work period, we spend roughly 13 hours a day in zazen (seated meditation). Also, each participant has a chance to meet with Abbot Shinge Sherry Chayat up to three times each day. The intensity of sesshin comes from this combination of zazen and frequent dokusan (meetings with the teacher). Most people find sesshin to be the most rewarding, as well as the most difficult part of our practice.

Here are some things you can expect if you join us for sesshin:

Sesshin is strenuous and challenging. If you have not spent time at DBZ before or do not have an established personal meditation practice, it may be better for you to come to an Intro to Zen Weekend before joining us for sesshin.

Many people experience a considerable amount of pain and discomfort. The amount and the intensity of the sitting during sesshin can sometimes be painful for even the most experienced and physically fit participants.

The meditation periods will be between 45 and 60 minutes long. They are silent and motionless. Participants who are sleeping or moving may be scolded sharply by the jikijitsu (the monastic officer who leads the zazen periods).

There will be relatively little sleep. We sit until 10:30 PM each night, and wake-up is at 4 AM. Many students will keep sitting on their own, past the end of the day’s structured schedule.

All scheduled activities are mandatory for all participants. There is virtually no free time during sesshin, except for a brief break after lunch and dinner.

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## Sesshin | What to Expect continued

There will be no contact with the outside world for the duration of sesshin.

There is no talking during sesshin, and we endeavor to be quiet in all our activities.

There will be the option of private meetings with Shinge Sherry Chayat each day. Part of the preciousness of sesshin comes from the personal instruction given during these meetings.

We will follow the elements of our zendo form and eating form. Part of sesshin's profound atmosphere comes from each individual's efforts to act in concert with others. As we all observe the same form, harmony is increased and distraction is reduced.

The sleeping accommodations are relatively small, simple bedrooms shared with one to three other participants. Linens are provided. Private rooms can be reserved for an additional \$100 fee if you call two to three weeks ahead of time, subject to availability.

### Shoken

Students who are sitting sesshin for the first time at Dai Bosatsu Zendo participate in the traditional ceremony of shoken, where they formally begin a teacher-student relationship with Shinge Roshi. To celebrate and honor the significance of this first meeting, shoken students make a \$25 incense donation to the monastery. Over the course of the year, all the shoken donations are pooled together and used to purchase ceremonial incense.

The Shoken ceremony occurs on the first day of sesshin. From that point forward, first-time participants are considered to be Shinge Roshi's students, and as such they are admitted into dokusan – formal, one-to-one meetings with the abbot.



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## Seven Day Sesshin | Sample Schedule

Arrival Day	4:30 pm	Orientation for First-Time Participants
	6:00	Formal Supper
	7:30	Formal Tea, Opening Exhortations and Sesshin Cautions, Zazen
	9:00	Closing
Days 1 – 7	4:00 am	Kaijo (wake up bell, be in Zendo before 4:20)
	4:20	Fast Kinhin (walking meditation)
	4:30	Choka (morning service), Sarei (formal tea), Zazen, Kinhin (sitting meditation, walking meditation)
		Dokusan (one-to-one meetings with the Roshi)
	7:30	Shukuza (formal breakfast)
	8:00	Nittensoji (monastery cleaning)
	9:00	Sutra Chanting, Zazen, Kinhin,
	10:15	Dokusan
	12:00 pm	Saiza (formal lunch)
	1:30	Sarei, Zazen
	2:30	Teisho by Shinge Roshi, Dharma talks by others
	4:15	Zazen, optional yoga in library
	5:00	Yakuseki (formal supper)
		Optional showers: Women: Days 1, 3, 5, 7 Men: Days 2, 4, 6, 7
	6:30	Tedai Denpo Chanting, Zazen, Kinhin
8:30	Dokusan	
10:30	Kaichin (closing)	
(Day 7: Same until 7:45 pm: Dokusan, Kinhin, Sesshin Closing Ceremony)		
Departure Day	6:00 am	Newasure (late wake up, be in Zendo before 6:30)
	6:30	Short Chanting Service, Sarei, Zazen
	7:30	Monastery cleaning
	8:30	Room cleaning
	9:15	Informal brunch
	11:00	Departure