

Notes for sesshin 2005

Sesshin is a very special experience, offering you the chance to free yourself from daily obligations and deepen your practice with the silent support of your fellow sangha members.

Achieving the apparent simplicity of form and routine at sesshin takes considerable organisation, all of it done willingly and voluntarily by members of Zen Open Circle. This organisation is kept as unobtrusive as possible but as the sangha grows so does the amount of advance planning that is needed to get everyone to the chosen venue and sustain them during sesshin.

The organisers try to honour the principle that the opportunity to sit outweighs all other considerations and not cloud that with rigid adherence to rules. This is not always easy to honour in practice and we tread delicately between accommodating people's particular needs without losing sight of the needs of the many.

Commitment

Your commitment to sesshin starts from the moment you make the decision to attend. Just as the form is honoured during sitting so the simple registration process before sesshin needs to be honoured by everyone who is serious about attending.

If you make a late decision to attend, or you withdraw after you have registered, your actions affect other people in the group. Buying food and arranging transport, for instance, are dependant on knowing how many people are coming and being able to depend on having those numbers by the closing date for registration.

Registration

You will be advised well in advance of the dates for sesshins and weekend retreat so you can plan leave and make necessary arrangements.

The registration form is circulated by email several weeks before sesshin and is available in hard copy at the Buddhist Library. Reminder emails are sent out and you will be prompted at each Friday sitting.

Please read the notes accompanying the form as they give you the dates for registration and payment and details of payment. Complete the form in full and return it to the person nominated as the contact for that sesshin.

You must complete the form, sign it and return it by the closing date. If you have attended sesshin before it may seem unnecessarily bureaucratic to have to submit the same information each time, but it is a legal requirement that the organisers have your signature and details on the form.

The closing date for payment and registration will be the Friday night two weeks before the date sesshin is due to start. No registrations are accepted after this date.



Payment

Payment is made to the sesshin treasurer and can be by cheque, cash or electronic transfer.

Some sesshins require a deposit to be paid to secure your place. Others require payment in full. The form will give you this information and the final date for payment.

- A late fee will apply if for any reason you pay after the final date (this is \$50 for a seven day sesshin and \$30 for a weekend).
- If you have not paid for a previous sesshin by the time the next one takes place you will not be able to attend.
- If you do not submit your form and pay by the closing date you are not able to attend sesshin. Please be mindful of this and commit fully and promptly.

Payment plans

If you are experiencing financial hardship you can talk to the sesshin treasurer about a payment plan that allows you to pay your sesshin fee in installments.

You should talk to the sesshin treasurer as early as possible. Any discussions you have with the treasurer and any subsequent financial arrangements are confidential.

It is your responsibility to honour the payment plan and keep the treasurer advised of any changes to it, for instance if you may be late with a payment or are forced to vary the arrangement.

- If you have not paid for a previous sesshin by the time the next one takes place you will not be able to attend.
- If you do not keep to your agreed payment plan you will also be asked to pay up front for any future sesshins.

Transport

If you are unable to drive yourself to sesshin, the sesshin coordinator will put you in touch with someone who can give you a lift. The sesshin organisers will make no transport arrangements until they have received your form and payment.

- It is your responsibility to contact the driver and make the arrangements (and to offer the customary \$10 contribution for petrol and wear and tear).

Please give yourself and the driver plenty of time to arrange the lift and let the sesshin organisers know as early as possible if there are difficulties.

Expect the unexpected

The organisers' aim is to make getting to sesshin as easy as possible for everyone. However, nothing ever goes quite according to plan, all planning work is volunteered, and a degree of patience and flexibility is required of everyone involved.