

Non-Residential Training Period (NRTP)

Notes and Comments

All quantifiable figures expressed in requirements should be understood as minimums, and not as limits or ceilings.

Sitting Zen

Hours of sitting Zen can be broken up as the individual sees fit, and as works into daily life. Ideally sitting Zen practice should be evenly distributed throughout the week, rather than doing just one big sit each week. Using resources like the eZendo to support your sitting Zen practice is strongly encouraged.

- For the purposes of tracking, formal Zendo practice at Zenwest can be recorded as:
 - Standard Sunday Zendo = 2hrs sitting Zen + 1hr Chanting + Long talk + Interview
 - Monday or Tuesday Zen Evening Meditation = 40 mins sitting Zen + 15mins Chanting + Short talk
 - One-Day Intensive = 1hr Chanting + 6hrs sitting Zen + Long Talk + Interview + 1hr Care Taking at Centre

Chanting

The full chanting service takes about 45 minutes to chant. Participants can chant with the Sangha during formal practice, or at home using the Zenwest chanting recording or podcast.

Intensives

There is a one-day intensive during the training period. If it is totally impossible to participate fully in the intensive practice requirement of the training period, please discuss options with Eshu Osho.

Journal/Homework

Training period participants must maintain a practice journal, tracking practice requirements and any observations or questions about practice or the training period. Please email a one-paragraph summary of practice to Eshu Osho every Monday.

Zen Talks

Eshu Osho offers two types of Zen Talks each week.

1. Short talks are given every Tuesday at the UVic Zen Open House, and are nuts and bolts talks aimed at informing and guiding newcomers to practice, and inspiring established practitioners to keep going. Short talks are recorded, and are available on the Living Zen podcast and on iTunes, so participants can attend talks in person or listen online, or both!
2. Long talks are offered during the Sunday Zendo and Intensives and offer more depth and breadth of teaching and are usually based on classical Zen texts. Long talks are recorded, and are available to Members and Associates on our website, so participants can attend talks in person or listen online, or both!

Care Taking

“A day without work, is a day without eating.” – Baizhang Huaihai

Care taking is a way that we can bring the equanimity and wisdom that arises in formal Zen practice into action through the everyday activities of our lives. While it is true that any activity can become Zen practice, for the purposes of the training period it is best if your care taking is a simple and manual activity such as cleaning, gardening, or maintenance work.

For T3 and T4 participants, care taking at home and 1hr/mo at the Kōkizan-ji are requirements.

Kōkizan-ji care taking can be done during work period at our monthly one-day intensives (you can attend the work period, even if you are not participating in the intensive). If you are doing T3 or T4 and are distant from the Zenwest, please discuss doing an hour of local community service work with Eshu Osho.

Study

Each participant must read one of the NRTP texts. If you have already read all of the texts, or if you are a T4 level participant, please contact Eshu Osho to discuss text selection for the NRTP.

Recommended Texts

Core Texts:

[Unlearning the Basics](#) – Rishi Sativihari

[The Heart of Buddha's Teaching](#) – Thich Nhat Hanh

[In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon](#) – Bhikkhu Bodhi Ed.

Other Selections:

[Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind](#) – Shunryu Suzuki

[The Compass of Zen](#) – Seung Sahn

[Sex and the Spiritual Teacher](#) – Scott Edelstein

[Taking Our Places](#) – Norman Fischer

[Zen Women](#) – Grace Schireson

[Mud and Water](#) – Bassui Tokusho

[The Diamond Sutra](#) – Red Pine trans.

[The Platform Sutra](#) – Red Pine trans.

NRTP Check In

Interacting with a training guide is an important component of Zen practice, particularly during a training period. Having interview with Eshu Osho weekly during Sunday Zendo or Intensives is ideal, but if this is not possible a 10-15 minute “Check In” on Skype should be arranged as indicated.

“Check Ins” will be conducted by an authorized training guide. Your assigned training guide will be your resource for the duration of the NRTP.

Body Practice

Developing and maintaining flexibility, strength, balance, and endurance is tremendously beneficial and positively impacts our lives both inside and outside of formal practice. Activities like yoga or tai chi are ideal, but virtually any kind of sustained physical activity is possible, just discuss it with Eshu Osho. What we put into our bodies in terms of food and drink is also a subject for investigation through Body Practice.

Reporting

When you register, a template for weekly reports will be sent to you, appropriate for the commitment level you have chosen. To report:

- Sitting: Each level (T1-T4) has a time requirement for sitting. If you fulfilled less than half of your commitment, report a 1. If you did more than half, but did not meet the full commitment, report a 2. If you fulfilled your commitment, report a 3.
- Chanting: For this one a simple yes or no the commitment was or not met will do.
- Intensives: Attended or not. (or NA in the case of no intensive this week or if it is not required.)
- Journal/report : Send in your report.
- Zen Talks: How many short or long talks you listened to. (ie.1S+1L)
- Care Taking: If you fulfilled less than half of your commitment, report a 1. If you did more than half, but did not meet the full commitment, report a 2. If you fulfilled your commitment, report a 3.
- Study: Name of text and what chapters or pages were read, and any questions or thoughts about the reading.
- N RTP Check In: Please book a time on the [appointment calendar](#) for a Skype Check In, or indicate that you will attend Sunday Zendo or Intensive.
- Body Practice: If you fulfilled less than half of your commitment, report a 1. If you did more than half, but did not meet the full commitment, report a 2. If you fulfilled your commitment, report a 3.

After reporting the above for the particular week, then feel free to write a paragraph on anything that might be coming up in any of the aspects of practice or any questions you may be having.

So, a sample report would look like this:

From: Sally Johnson, T4

Week of January 16-22, 2012

Sitting: 3

Chanting: no

Intensive: NA

Zen Talks: 1S+1L

Care Taking: 2

Study: Unlearning the Basics p.25-38

Interview: I'll be coming to the sit on Sunday for interview.

Body Practice: 3

I am really struggling with the chanting, I find that...etc. etc.

Miscellaneous Notes and Suggestions:

Structuring your Schedule

The NRTP was conceived as a way to engage with a traditional formal training period while living remotely from the centre. The components of an immersive training period have been isolated, and quantified to allow individuals to structure a schedule in a way that will work in their personal situation. Experiential evidence indicates that **structuring** your own schedule is crucial. Take the time to create a schedule that includes your life and NRTP practice commitments for the week ahead, and then **stick to it**. Without doing this, it is very likely that you will be struggling to fit practice in daily, and it doesn't seem to work.

Care-Taking and Body Practice

If at all possible, both care-taking and body practice should take place outside of your usual work day. In the wider picture certainly integration of Zen practice and work is admirable, but for the purposes of the NRTP it is helpful to keep these distinct ie. “Now I am going to work.”... “Now I am doing care taking.”... “Now I am doing body practice.”

If you have any questions, please contact Eshu Osho eshu@zenwest.ca