

Celebrating Buddha's Enlightenment (Rohatsu) Sesshin December 1 – 3, 2017 (Friday – Sunday)

“The purpose of sesshin is to be completely one with our practice. We use two Chinese characters for sesshin. *Setsu* [which shortens to *ses* in conjunction with *shin*] means to treat something the way you treat a guest or the way a student treats his teacher. Another meaning of *setsu* is to control or to arrange things in order. *Shin* means mind or heart. So sesshin means to have proper functioning of mind. It is our five senses and our will, or small monkey mind, which should be controlled. When we control our monkey mind we resume our true big mind. When monkey mind is always taking over the activity of big mind, we naturally become a monkey. So monkey mind must have its boss, which is big mind.

However, when we practice zazen, it is not that big mind is actually controlling small mind, but simply that when small mind becomes calm, big mind starts its true activity.

-Suzuki Roshi, from the book Not Always So.

For the first time Valley Streams Zen is offering a multi-day non-residential retreat. This is an opportunity to set aside the concerns of daily life for two and a half days, giving all our attention to our sitting practice and taking care of ourselves as we would a guest.

The schedule for this retreat will be 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, December 1st and 2nd and 9 a.m. to noon on Sunday. In addition to a schedule that includes sitting and walking meditation, break periods and Dharma talks, we will serve oryoki-style meals for lunch and dinner on the first two days of the retreat. Oryoki is the traditional practice of serving and eating meals together in silence. Linda Dekker will serve as Tenzo (Head Cook) for the sesshin.

Participation in the full schedule of the sesshin is the usual way and your first option. A second option is to sit for certain blocks of the sesshin, which are noted below. Please sign up by November 21, by completing this form and returning it to Jim Hare. The cost will be \$60 for the whole sesshin, \$30 per full day, \$15 per half day.

- _____ I will sit the full sesshin schedule
- _____ I will sit Friday morning through lunch
- _____ I will sit Friday afternoon through dinner and evening zazen
- _____ I will sit Saturday morning through lunch
- _____ I will sit Saturday afternoon through dinner and evening zazen
- _____ I will sit Sunday morning until noon (no lunch)

Signed _____ Email: _____