



**ON THE ROAD: VISITING AND SHARING MID-STREAM
CHAPTER 4 SUMMER 2019
BY MARCIA LIEBERMAN**

Twenty nineteen was a good summer of travel with three sanghas on the road map—Arcata, Vancouver, and Calgary. Tall trees, mountains, and friendly faces met me at each stop.

There was lots of hard work and effort in **Arcata** zen group, as we reshaped and created a garden to honor ancestors. Through discussion, workshop, and work periods we tended to our ideas and plantings. We used the temple art of Japanese landscaping to make a garden adjacent to the temple for kinhin, quiet reflection, bell ringing, and ceremonies. There were lots of opportunities to recycle wood and build with local materials. Everyone got dirty. In the midst we had an informal way of tea offering, a solstice ceremony, and sutra copying. Nature was ever present. We called it deep ecology in the Zen practice at Arcata zen group.



Crossing the border to British Columbia, I began a 3-week visit to Mountain Rain Zen Community in **Vancouver**. Using the motif of ‘the way of the seasons: how do we keep track and stay

aware.' A day long retreat gave us the chance to talk about the history of 3 Buddhist ceremonies that rely on seasonal shifts-- way of tea, chabana, and saijiki. Immersed in a garden setting the day ended with a carefully cooked Japanese meal around a big table. Back at the temple time another workshop was offered on altar care and flowers as sentient being.



Each week we studied a singular verb from the liturgy to consider our practice and everyday life. Vancouver has a lively tea presence. We participated in a way of tea ceremony at the historic Natobi Memorial Garden Teahouse.



My last stop was in **Calgary** Soto Zen, Alberta. Oriyoki—studying, making sets, stitching cloths, using the text of the meal chant in study group--we explored over several weeks the beauty and forms of this ritual. The last weekend we had the first ever oriyoki meal at Calgary Zen Group.

Evening zazen was followed by verb study. This year, language was key on my mind especially how nouns become verbs like 'offer'. Using garden flowers grown by sangha members, we studied altar care and the how and why of 'offering' flowers in the practice.



It was a road this year that crossed the border. All of this travel depends on the kindness and good will of the sangha members I visited. It would take pages to list the sweet and endearing gestures and support offered. Again next year? Who knows. Please contact me if you have an interest in my visiting, or just to hear more about the summer teachings. <mailto:beezen@sfzc.org>