



## Summer Ango 2023 - Commitment Form

If the above sounds (as it often does to me) like you are consenting to be committed, please don't worry. A commitment is a vow, or a set intention. A vow is like a landmark used to navigate when sailing: you may never actually aim directly at it, instead tacking to use the available winds to approach your actual goal. A vow may also be like the North Star, used to guide our earthly progress, but with zero expectation of reaching it. (We'd be toast if we did!)

That said, please set some priorities for your practice this Ango, and think about what specific actions will serve those priorities.

Our practice text will be Dogen's *Mountains and Rivers Sutra* (or, as some scholars render it, *Mountains and Rivers As Sutras*). Please, at a minimum, commit to the goal your high-school teachers drummed into you: read the assignment before class! Dogen is notoriously poetic and mystical for a Zen writer. I suggest you read the text through, quickly, almost skimming, not analyzing at all, and then put it aside. Then, before you come to sesshin, read it again, paying attention to what arises in response. Inhabit it as you might a favorite poem.

Dogen writes:

山

"Mountains have been the abode of great sages from the limitless past. Wise people and sages all have mountains as their inner chamber. Mountains belong to the people who love them.

When you take one view, mountains are flowing; when you take another, they are not flowing."

川

"On the other hand, from ancient times wise people and sages have often lived near water [where] they catch fish, catch human beings, and catch the Way.

You should know that even though all things are liberated and not tied to anything, they abide in their own phenomenal expression. However, when most humans see water they only see that it flows unceasingly."

What aspects of your practice are solid, and which are too solid, in need of more flow? When do you find it easy to 'go with the flow,' and when is all that wishy-washy energy eroding your best attempts? Please consider how you can best use sesshin to deepen both stability and flow in your practice, and set an intention to take steps in that direction. If you wish, discuss your intention with senior students or teachers; and write it down to serve as a guide before, during, and after sesshin.

bows  
Kimu

Practice text:

[Mountains and Waters Discourse](#)

Translation by Arnold Kotler and Kazuaki Tanahashi, 1995

588 Broadway, suite 1108, New York, New York 10012

[www.villagezendo.org](http://www.villagezendo.org)

[info@villagezendo.org](mailto:info@villagezendo.org)