

SOUTHWIND SANGHA

An Affiliate of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center

www.southwindsangha.org

www.aszc.org

September 2011

SEPTEMBER 23-25 ANNUAL RETREAT

Southwind Sangha's Annual Retreat with Zenkai Taiun Michael Elliston, Abbot of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center, begins at 7 pm Friday at our new zendo, 1650 N. Fairmount, Wichita, KS. We resume at 6:30 Saturday morning and will conclude at noon. The Sunday service is at 8 am. A detailed retreat schedule is found on page 5 and on our website.

Saturday morning three ceremonies will be conducted by Sensei. Mitsugo Ni Elizabeth (Liz) Lawlor will receive *Zaiko Tokudo* (Lay Ordination Ceremony) and So Nento Don Riley and Ku Wasan Ann Glasmann will receive *Shukke Tokudo* (Novice Priest Ordination). These ceremonies are at the invitation of Sensei. Don notes, "Only with the aid and support of Sensei, the members of Southwind Sangha, Kaaren Wiken (my sewing teacher), my wife Kathryn, Del and many others and since I will become a 'Novice Priest,' I will continue to need all the support I can get."

Dokusan (one-on-one teaching) will be offered as announced during the retreat. These private meetings with Sensei are a chance to bring up questions related to practice and daily life. Instructions will be given by the attendant. Most questions can be responded to in five minutes. If you don't have a question when the Dokusan announcement is made, just make a bow when the attendant taps you and remain seated.

Extended retreats provide time for a sustained effort, which will settle down the restless mind more thoroughly than during short sitting periods. This is a time when we set aside our everyday concerns and focus on zazen. Full participation is encouraged, but if that is impossible due to family or work schedules, please plan to enter on the hour or half hour during walking meditation (kinhin).

Saturday's lunch will be at the Panera at Central and Hillside. All other retreat activities will be at our Zendo.

OUR ZENDO

By Gekko Kathryn Riley

Thanks to all those who gave moral and physical support during our move this spring from the Unitarian Universalist Church building to our new Zen Center in the basement of the Fairmount United Church of Christ education building. I will not mention you by name because that would decrease your good karma for such actions, but deep gasshos nevertheless! Even if all you did was come sit with us at our new location, that alone has been a real morale-booster. If you last came to sit during times when there were paint cans and drop cloths everywhere, things are back in order now and the place is repainted and recarpeted, thanks to the financial donations and elbow grease of many sangha members.

If you have not come to sit with us since the move, don't be shy. The door of the building is kept locked for security purposes, but a Zen disciple or initiate is standing by the door to open it for you from 15 minutes before sitting time until the beginning of the chant. Then we always check the door for latecomers about 7 minutes past the start of the service, so if you're

running late, don't worry about being locked out. We also check the doors on the half hour during Saturday retreats, so people can be flexible about coming in later.

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SILENT THUNDER ORDER RETREAT/CONFERENCE

By So Nento Don Riley

The Silent Thunder Order (an Order of Disciples that serve the Atlanta Soto Zen Center and its affiliates) held a retreat and conference July 27-31st, 2011. The conference was well attended by members of affiliates, disciples, priests, members of ASZC, and of course, our Sensei, Taiun Michael Elliston, Roshi. The conference itself and lots of Zazen was the focus.

The conference itself was held Saturday afternoon. I believe there were about 20 persons in attendance with representatives from most affiliates and most of the temporary organizing group. Many more attended other parts of the retreat.

The purpose of the meeting was to bring Disciples up to date on the creation of STO, its evolution, and the next steps in STO development.

In Sensei's opening remarks he explained that the cloud, as a symbol of impermanence, should come to represent the Order, and that "un", or cloud in Japanese, will become our family dharma name. Each second dharma name given at *Shukke Tokudo* will include "un" to unite the leadership of this Sangha. "Until we run out of clouds," he said.

Sensei closed the conference by saying "Zen will get you through times of no _____; better than _____ will get you through times of no Zen!"

I attended the retreat/conference representing Southwind Sangha. There were many hours of Zazen as is usual at all retreats at ASZC. Tesshin Jim Smith led the retreat. He had been in residence at the center for about 30 days. He is a priest from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Sensei and Tesshin gave us numerous instructions on sitting that were new and helpful, and taught us many nuances of Soto Zen ceremonies and practices.

I made many new friends which was one of the purposes of this retreat. I feel that a great bond is being created between the affiliates. Now each of us can more readily identify with the others. STO will make it possible for us to learn from others' experiences.

Samu (cleaning, doing dishes, etc. around the center) was done on a regular basis. This is always a part of any extended retreat and is an important practice as those of you who helped paint the Zendo know. (Deep bows!)

Our meals were all formal Oryoki. The Tenzo (cook) was Terry Sutton and the food was excellent. Space does not permit me to describe Oryoki fully but I will be glad to describe to anyone who asks.

Results of a survey were given: Thirteen groups responded. The oldest (ASZC) formed in 1977. Five are incorporated and three have formal non-profit status. Monthly attendance ranges from 1 to 150. Median attendance and average attendance was about 40. Services per week: Seven groups have once a week services; four groups meet 2-3 times per week. One group has 10 services per week and one can only meet once per month. The needs expressed most were practice materials and videos, practice manual updates, Roshi and priest visits, and help with promotion and publicity.

The STO website was described in detail. Visit STOrder.org. It really has wonderful features.

One of the most fun features of the retreat was Dharma Combat held on Sunday. Sensei and Tesshin Jim Smith invited questions from those attending the Sunday service. People come up one at a time and pose a practice question or comment. The answers range from thorough explanation, to ambiguous narrative, to just silence. Both learning and fun come out of it.

As Sensei said to me as his parting words, "Never give up."

To study the Way is to study the self
To study the self is to forget the self
To forget the self is to be enlightened by
 all things of the universe.
To be enlightened by all things is to transcend
 the distinction of self and other and go on
 in ceaseless enlightenment forever. - **Dogen Kigen Zenji**

I WAS A BUDDHIST BOOK ADDICT

An Intervention Story – by Yanagi Do Del Smith

I don't remember when I didn't read. My grouchy first grade teacher moved my desk next to the small bookcase in the one-room country school so that I wouldn't disturb the others when I got a book to read

Like many others of my generation I discovered Buddhism through reading.... and reading..... and reading. It started with Alan Watts' paperback *The Way of Zen*, fifty cents new in the '60s. The more I read about Zen, the more I wanted to know. I was addicted. I knew no one who claimed to actually sit on a cushion, but knew many people who could talk about Zen (and Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsburg, et al) for hours – and we did. Off and on I tried zazen - by myself, with as much discipline as I could muster, for 20 plus years.

In the mid '90s I finally received first hand instruction at the Sangha of the Compassionate Heart which met at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Long Beach, California. When I took refuge in 1996 I received what amounted to an intervention.

Steve Hon was a disciple of Reverend Zengaku Soyu Matsuoka Roshi. Steve's instruction seemed unfair and difficult: "Do NOT read anything about Buddhism for the next three months. Just sit! Do not expect anything. Just sit." My next teacher in California also was a disciple of Matsuoka Roshi. When I relocated back to Wichita it seemed natural that Sensei, Taiun Michael Elliston, was Matsuoka's Dharma heir.

Soto Zen is experiential, available to practice in every day life and not an intellectual exercise. "... (M)editation is not to be practiced with an end in view. You are not to desire to meditate to become a Buddha, or to expect to become gradually more like a Buddha each day. If you do this, you will be overlooking the present moment's potential for what might be in the future. Too much reliance on Zen philosophy will cloud your mind to the reality of it, ... the life of Zen can never be contained in words. This must be found in the meditation hall and by yourself." (Matsuoka Roshi, pp 157-158, *The Kyosaku*, published by ASZC, 2006.)

Did I give up reading about Buddhism after the 3 month reading fast? No, but never to the extent of the early years. *The Way of Zen*, pages now held together by a rubber band, is still in my book case along with a number of other books about Buddhism.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

What ONE book about Buddhism would I keep if I had to choose? That book would be Nothing is Hidden: *Essays on Zen Master Dogen's "Instructions for the Cook."* This slender volume consists of three sections: Dogen's Instructions for the Cook; Practice for Your Whole Life; and Roots of Mealtime Practice. The Foreword and Introduction are instructive about the founder of Soto Zen and the essays, written by different scholars and Zen masters, illuminate Dogen's Instructions beautifully. (ed., Jisho Warner, Shohaku Okumura, John McRae and Taigen Dan Leighton, Weatherhill, 2001) – Yanagi Do Del Smith

Other members of Southwind Sangha were asked that hypothetical question: If forced to choose just one dharma book for your library, what would it be?

Here are their answers:

So Nento Don Riley: *Realizing Genjokoan* by Shohaku Okumura. This may not be the most important writing from the perspective of a Soto Zen Buddhist, but it is the one from which I learned the most. Dogen Zenji's writings are probably more important, but I could never begin to understand Dogen Zenji and others without someone like Okumura explaining the teachings.

Sanki Harold Schlechtweg: Whatever I happen to be reading now is always my favorite. Most of the books I care about I've read several times and will read again. Right now I'm reading Hui-Neng's *Platform Sutra* (Red Pine, trans.) He is a good friend I've talked with now and then over the years. He always has an answer.

Anne Harvey: *Buddha* by the contemporary mystic Osho (1931-1990) is a book I picked up as a Bargain Book somewhere. It is Osho's simple, straightforward lectures on Buddha and his teachings. The opposite of deep, its simplicity cuts to the core for me.

Mitsugo Ni Liz Lawlor: *Opening the Hand of Thought* by Kosho Uchiyama; translated and edited by Tom Wright, Jisho Warner and Shohaku Okumura. The book's glossary defines "Opening the hand of thought" as "Uchiyama Roshi's expression that graphically describes the mental posture during zazen." For me, the book describes the essence of zazen practice. It will take time, but you can. Keep trying.

Ku Wasan Ann Glasmann: My book is *As It Is* by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche (Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 1999) From Page 195: "There is a quote that goes 'All the scriptures say that everything is empty, but the fact that our nature is not empty of the kayas and wisdoms, that is the real tradition of the Buddha.' This is how it really is. In the second turning of the wheel of dharma, the Buddha said that everything, from the aggregate of forms all the way up to and including omniscient enlightenment, is empty and devoid of self-entity. Of course that is correct, but it is not the full truth; that statement emphasizes the empty quality. Liberation is only possible through realizing the basic unity of emptiness and experience. Like space, the empty aspect cannot get liberated."

Not to be Overlooked: *The Kyosaku*, quoted in "An Intervention Story" on this page, contains the sermons of the founder of our lineage, Rev. Zengaku Soyu Matsuoka, Roshi, Soto Zen Teachings Archive Volume I. Archive Volume II is titled *Moku-Rai*. (ASZC, 2008). "Moku-rai is translated as "Silence is Thunder."

The Kyosaku is titled after the oak stick used in the practice of Zen Meditation, sometimes known as the "awakening stick." The *kyosaku* is only used at Southwind Sangha upon the request of the individual meditator.

Both books are available in the Southwind Sangha Lending Library (see page 6).

Sewing Practice – by Mitsugo Ni Liz Lawlor

As I write this, I am just a few stitches away from finishing my Rakusu, the vestment used to transition from lay practitioner to disciple. I never asked anyone “What’s the significance of the sewing practice? Is this a test of my dedication to discipleship? Why can’t one just be purchased?” But I certainly asked myself these questions after measuring, marking, stitching, ripping, and then re-measuring, re-marking, re-stitching sections of the Rakusu for what seemed to be an infinite number of times. As I near the end of my sewing practice, I have slightly less ripping than stitching as I am ready to start on the Pine Stitch on the Maneki and have been advised that most folks take more than one attempt to get it right. (I am fairly certain that I am in the “most folks” category.) I find I am unable to express why I am saddened by the fact that my sewing practice is coming to a close. I can no more explain how my sewing practice has deepened my Zen practice than I can explain why I continued to practice zazen even after I realized what I was searching for couldn’t be found, regardless of whether I continued zazen or not.

Since I lack the ability to write a “What My Sewing Practice Means to Me” essay, sharing information pertaining to the sewing practice or nyoho-e seems most appropriate. According to *Study of the Okesa, Nyoho-e, Buddha’s Robe* by Tomoe Katagiri, the king of Magadha asked Shakyamuni Buddha to make clothes for Buddhist Monks because the king could not tell a Buddhist Monk from a Brahman. Shakyamuni Buddha then asked Ananda to create a Buddhist robe after seeing rice fields. Ananda created a robe which revealed an understanding of Buddha’s intention perfectly. When the robe, or okesa, is made in the traditional way, it is called a nyoho-e.

The nyoho-e was transmitted from Shakyamuni Buddha through Bodhidharma and eventually to Dogen Zenji who transmitted it to his descendents in Japan. Eshun Yoshida Roshi transmitted the nyoho-e to the San Francisco Zen Center in May of 1971. (See Katagiri’s book for a more details.) Thus, the practice has been transmitted from India, to China, to Japan, to United States.

While I have yet to wear the Rakusu during my zazen practice, I find greater meaning in wearing my wagesa as a result of my sewing practice. In the past, I did not always wear my wagesa during my home practice. Now I do and use the verse of the okesa which best answers the question “What is the significance of one’s sewing practice?”

The verse of the okesa as listed in Katagiri’s book:

*Great robe of liberation!
Virtuous field far beyond form and emptiness
Wearing the Tathagata’s teaching
We vow to save all beings.*

The Silent Thunder Order *Zen Practice at Home** booklet also provides a robe verse.

*How great the robe of liberation
a formless field of merit
wrapping ourselves in Buddha’s teaching
we free all living beings.*

Gassho, and many bows of gratitude to my sewing teacher, Kaaren Wiken.

*Editor’s note: Copies of STO’s *Zen Practice at Home* are available at Southwind Sangha for a suggested donation of \$7.00.

FROM THE TREASURER:

The Officers and Board of Directors are grateful for all the contributions including money, in kind contributions, and “labor.” Of course, the greatest contribution our members can make is their presence.

Contributing to the Sangha is one form of “Dana.” Dana is a Buddhist concept involving giving to others. In the absolute sense, one can neither give nor receive. Stick around and you will find out why that is if you don’t already know.

In the practical sense, Dana is important to the Sangha. Contributions are usually low in the summer and this summer we have had unusual expenses such as new carpet and painting materials. Again, some members contributed a lot of time in preparing the walls for painting and doing the painting, but our bank balance is a little low and will be lower after the expenses of the fall retreat.

So, please consider making a contribution or increasing your contribution to the Sangha for a while.

Our motto is “No donation required. No donation refused.” We want to keep our activities free to all and that donations to us be free-will. If a monetary gift is within your means and you would like to contribute, please make a check payable to Southwind Sangha. Your donation is deductible from taxable income as provided by law: the Sangha is recognized by the IRS as a 501c(3) Religious Organization. You can put your donation in the “Donations” box at the zendo or you can mail it to the Sangha. Let us know if you need a receipt.

Thank you for your continuing support!
-- So Nento Don Riley

Thinking of Others

Fairmount United Church of Christ offers a Food Pantry one Friday a month. We can support it as individuals by placing items in a basket placed near the small refrigerator. Non-perishables only! It’s a way to support the church which has been so welcoming to our Sangha.

**BE CAREFUL FOR WHAT YOU WISH...
YOU JUST MAY GET IT.**

BY Ku Wasan Ann Glasmann

A year has passed since we moved to the land of mostly snow. Between November and June this mountain pass becomes large and white and, at the same time, small and confining. Neighbors are near, yet far.

The snow lasts past the point of jolly tolerance. Summer comes all at once...flowing streams, green, flowers, birds, bears, tourists, cars, visiting family and friends...and skeeters. All are getting "everything" accomplished before the world goes to seed. Heat and dust erase the memory of ice.

Habits and memory of our known community of dharma practitioners (1,299 miles from us) have blurred.

The grounded feeling of familiarity in our practice left about the same time the sky turned gray and the earth turned white.

One of my dharma teachers has begun his third three-year retreat. However, for the duration of this retreat, he is wandering through the mountains without maintaining contact with his monastery, family, and students. His only possessions are the clothes on his body. With his physical absence, something changed for me.

Distance is an idea, a concept perceived as solid and true. Time is a grid on which all the lines between what is named "Here and There" are drawn.

The Southwind Sangha and its familiar ground have not reappeared for me. Sensei Elliston once commented that at any given moment, somewhere someone is engaged in dharma practice.

The recognized faces are not the bond. The dharma binds the faces of practice.



OUR ZENDO (continued from page 1)

The bathrooms in the new location require some explanation. For instance, the door marked "Rest Rooms" on the basement level means actually "Men's Room" as a few disgruntled women testify after they noticed urinals against the wall. The women's room is across from the entrance door and is marked "Women." For ventilation, the door is always propped open with a brick. If you want to use the women's rest room, just move the brick to shut the door and replace it to prop the door open again when you leave the room.

All people of whatever faiths are welcome to our sitting periods at any time. Please come join our small but hardy band of sitters! Many find this kind of group sitting experience to be mysteriously more powerful than meditating at home alone.

RETREAT SCHEDULE

Friday, 9/23/11	
7 pm	Heart of Wisdom Sutra followed by Zazen.
	Kinhin on the hour and half hour
8:30	Four Great Vows and Closing
Saturday, 9/24/11	
6:30 am	Heart of Wisdom Sutra - Followed by Zazen with Kinhin on the hour and half hour
8:00	Tea/breakfast break
8:30	Zazen with Kinhin on the hour and half hour
10:00	Tea break
10:45	Ceremonies
11:55	Four Great Vows and Closing
	Lunch at Panera
Sunday, 9/25/11	
8:00 am	Heart of Wisdom Sutra - Followed by Zazen and Kinhin.
Between 9:00 and 9:30	Four Great Vows and Closing
	(Dokusan during retreat: as announced)

DID YOU KNOW?

Southwind Sangha has a library. It is a self-service lending library, easily accessible in our new zendo. We have books, magazines, recordings and videos.

Just fill out a card found in the front of the item you wish to check out and place it in the file box. We do require that we have your current address, telephone number and email address on record. Please date the card as well.

Our regular schedule includes a half day retreat on the third Saturday of the month, with a mid-morning tea break followed by a dharma talk. Zazen instruction is given on the first Wednesday (7 pm) of the month. A topic talk by one of the disciples is given on the second Wednesday, preceded by chanting and one round of zazen. On other Wednesdays we do chanting, kinhin and zazen. Sunday services are at 8 am and include a dharma reading after the sit.

Sutra of the River Path

(by Sanki Harold Schlechtweg)

You ask me my favorite sutra?
Once, it would have been mountains.
But now, it's the river path
and the wild fox
who sometimes, when I'm mindful
watches me run by
his yellow eyes gleaming in the moon's light.
Hui-Neng saw his nature.
Me, I see a fox.

Who's Who: Board of Directors
and
Others Who Make Things Possible

Gekko Kathryn Riley, Senior Teacher/President
So Nento Don Riley, Practice Leader/Treasurer
Yanagi Do Del Smith, Communications/Secretary
Ku Wasan Ann Glasmann, Board Member Emerita
Shindo Robert Glasmann, Webmaster
Wato Roman Gheesling, Facebook Administrator

CONTACT LIST

We want to serve the members and friends of Southwind Sangha in the way most convenient for you. Most of our communication is done by email and postcard, but at least once a year we do a first-class mailing. We want to keep the contact list up to date. We do not share the information with anyone.

Additionally, inclement weather notices are done by e-mail as well as notifying the television stations. Another reason for keeping current!

We don't want to pester you with unwanted mail, either. Therefore we're enclosing an index card and a self-addressed envelope for your convenience. If you wish to be removed from the contact list, just let us know.

If there has been a change of address (postal or electronic) use the card to let us know.

And, of course, if you have a question, a comment or a concern, please feel free to use the envelope for that. Either bring it to the zendo next visit or send it to:

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Wichita, KS 67218