

SOUTHWIND SANGHA

An Affiliate of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center

www.southwindsangha.org

www.aszc.org

September 2012

ZEN RETREAT WITH ABBOT OF ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER

By Gekko Kathryn Riley

This is your chance to attend an extended Zen retreat with Abbot Zenkai Taiun Michael Elliston of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center. For those of you who have only done Zen sitting for an hour or so at a time, it is a rare opportunity to experience the power of sitting with a group for a much longer period of time. It might be compared to trying to surf in your local swimming pool versus surfing in Hawaii when the surf is up.

Southwind Sangha will be offering this treat on September 21-23 at 1650 North Fairmount in Wichita. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please see the detailed schedule found on page 2 and on our website.

During the retreat, you will be given the chance to have a private, one-on-one meeting or “dokusan” with a fully qualified Zen teacher. This is your chance to bring up any question that relates to your Zen practice, and to receive a response from the teacher.

You are encouraged to attend the entire retreat if you can. But if this is not possible due to family or work schedules, please plan to enter on the hour or the half-hour. At the top and bottom of each hour, we will be doing walking meditation, and someone will check the outside door to let you into the building.

Don't miss this once-a-year chance to immerse yourself in Zen practice!



Zenkai Taiun Michael Elliston is Abbot of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center and the spiritual head of the Silent Thunder Order. He is usually called Sensei; Hojo; and rarely he is addressed as Roshi.

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Fall Retreat Schedule...
September 21, 22, and 23, 2012

Friday 9/21/12
7:00 P.M. Heart of Wisdom Sutra followed by Zazen
Kinhin on the hour and half hour
8:50 P.M. Four Great Vows and Closing

Saturday 9/22/12
8:00 A.M. Heart of Wisdom Sutra followed by Zazen
8:30 Kinhin
8:35 Zazen
9:00 Kinhin
9:05 Zazen
9:30 Kinhin
10:00 Tea Break
10:30 Dharma talk with discussion
Noon Lunch
1:00 P.M. Zazen
1:30 Kinhin
1:35 Zazen
2:00 Kinhin
2:05 Zazen
2:30 Incense offering and Four Vows
6:00 PM Dinner at Restaurant

Sunday 9/23/12
8:00 A.M. Heart of Wisdom Sutra followed by Zazen
8:30 Kinhin
8:35 Zazen
Between 9:00 and 9:30 Four Great Vows and Close
Dokusan will be offered as announced at the Retreat.

Dinner at a local restaurant Saturday evening at a place and time to be announced at the retreat.



Mitsugo Ni Liz Lawlor – August Retreat Ino

**Spreading Dharma
One Skype Session at a Time**

Zen is experiential not intellectual and yet Skype dharma dialogs, which are an intellectual pursuit, are an integral part of my zen practice. When I first began participating, I just listened and didn't say much. At that time I wouldn't have been able to tell you why I hardly ever missed a Skype session. Now, after participating consistently for over two years, I can give some reasons.

First, STO members live across time zones. Skype is one way to connect with members in meaningful dharma dialogs. Participants come from a variety of geographical areas, backgrounds, and practice experience. This variety brings a unique insight to dharma dialogs that I always find engaging. Sometimes the questions and comments highlight a different viewpoint of the teachings that I had totally missed. Other times the questions and comments validate that I am not alone in my confusion.

Second, I have found that engaging in discussions of Dogen's, Matsuoka's, and Sensei's teachings with others, who are also part of the STO lineage, deepens my understanding of dharma. Just as my zazen experience goes with me when I get off the cushion, the dharma discussions stay with me when I chant or read for self-study. The discussions from the dharma dialogs are always in the back of my mind whether I am aware of it or not. I hadn't realized this until chanting one day during my home practice. I suddenly realized what the words meant and I could hear Sensei's voice explaining a line in the chant.

Lastly, many times during Skype dharma dialogs, the teachings are read aloud. This really connects me to the oral tradition of spreading the dharma. Hearing the teachings followed by discussion has offered a type of learning that is missed when just reading. This benefit has surprised me because I don't consider myself an auditory learner. Yet time and again, I have been listening to a teaching only to "hear" something I had never "read".

If you would like to participate in Skype dharma dialogs, the STO website has information on how to join the discussions. You can also contact Southwind Sangha for more information as well.

– Mitsugo Ni Liz Lawlor

REPORT OF SILENT THUNDER ORDER ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT
ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER
July 14, 2012

Overview: There were 29 attendees from 9 states at the conference, up from 24 participants from 7 states at the event in 2011. The Silent Thunder Order (“STO”) mainly consists of all disciples and priests of Michael Elliston Roshi, although there are associate memberships for just about anyone. The Order is a service organization for the 14 affiliate Sanghas of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center and the approximately 500 individuals in those affiliates.

Reports: Jim Smith (Tesshin) of the Atlantic Soto Zen Center of Halifax, Nova Scotia, reported that STO will finalize the STO 501(c)(3) status to allow deduction of contributions on Federal Income Tax returns. He commended Zenkai Taiun Roshi (Michael Elliston) for his forty year example of consistent, selfless effort toward the benefit of all. Tesshin stated he couldn’t help but think that in this centennial celebration of Sensei Matsuoka’s birth, that Matsuoka (our founder) would be pleased.

Nento Don Riley, Practice Leaders Council Chair, reported that Silent Thunder Order bylaws provide that the Chair of the Council of Practice Leaders of Sangha affiliates be one of the officers of the Board of Directors. The role of the practice leader chair is to encourage the use of “best practices” as learned from Sensei, Zenkai Taiun Michael Elliston, and very often from each other. Monthly meetings by Skype were initiated in February. A later development is to invite a broader range of members who can listen in on Board Meetings in order to provide more transparency in the governance of the STO.

Zenku Jerry Smyers, treasurer, reported contributions of \$18,284 for 2011 which go mainly to support Sensei in his full time efforts to promote Zen and Zazen. This is more than a full time job as weekdays and all or a part of each weekend are filled with activities that he attends or leads. Wichita contributes \$50 a month with the contribution tied specifically to the monthly Skype Dharma talk.

The STO website (Kosetsu Randy Earl, webmaster) has been in place for three years. The website has a growing collection of audio files from dharma talks. It is a valuable resource and has very good content. (Just search Silent Thunder Order and you’ll get there.)

Your Practice Leader has formed many friendships with members of other Sanghas and visited the retreat in Nashville and in Atlanta since the first of the year. At Nashville there was plenty of occasion to sit, beautiful walks, dharma talks, two Tokudo ceremonies, and wonderful food. A talk was given in Atlanta on a section of Shushogi and the Shobogenzo relating to the vow that “Beings are numberless, I vow to free them.” I urge you to go to the STO website and register and even consider becoming a member of STO.

-- Un Ku Nento Don Riley [Southwind Sangha Practice Leader, STO Practice Leader Council Chair]

(Editor’s Note: The report was edited for space requirements. Full copies of our Practice Leader’s report of the Conference will be available at the zendo, in keeping with STO’s aim of transparency.)

OUR LIBRARY



Our Library is easy to use. 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 need your current address, telephone number and email address. Our check-out/return policy is quite generous, but if you have had a book out for some time, you may wish to return it. No questions asked! And no fine assessed! – Yanagi Do Del Smith

Running this morning
in the dark,
a light, chill rain falling,
my upscale (discontinued, on sale)
rain jacket breathes
(just like me).
Listen, the river is running too.
Glorious!

Sanki Harold Schlechtweg
Wichita, late summer, 2011

SANGHA FINANCES

By: Don Riley, treasurer

Below please find the Southwind Sangha's expenses for the Year 2011 and for the first 8 months of 2012. This should give you an idea where your contributions go to the support of the Sangha. We also received many in-kind contributions such as transportation and meals for Sensei, food at retreats, and cleaning of the zendo. We are grateful to all who contribute to the Sangha.

2011 Finances

Contribution to Churches	\$1,200.00
Supplies such as postcards and postage, copies, office supplies and Welcome Packets.....	\$260.00
Insurance.....	\$534.00
Abbot Michael Elliston for Skype presentations.....	\$400.00
Abbot Michael Elliston honorarium for Retreat.....	\$600.00
Airline ticket for Michael Elliston for Retreat.....	\$199.40
Hotel for Michael Elliston for Retreat.....	\$131.44
Website.....	\$127.35
Non-Profit Corporation Fee and address change fee.....	\$ 60.00
Carpet and Paint for Zendo.....	\$1,086.67

2012 Finances through August

Contribution to Church.....	\$800.00
Supplies.....	\$ 15.25
Insurance.....	\$521.00
Abbot's Skype presentations.....	\$350.00
Website.....	\$127.35
Nonprofit Corporation fee.....	\$ 40.00
Ads in WSU newspaper the Sunflower.....	\$120.00
Airline Tickets for Sensei to attend retreat.....	\$251.60

It is our hope that the Sangha continues to operate with the motto, "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 I.R.S. as a 501©(3) Religious Organization. You can put your donation in the "Donations" Box outside the Zendo door or you can mail it to the Sangha. We accept cash, too!! Let us know if you need a receipt. Thank you for your continued support of our activities.



Welcome!

CONTACT LIST

We have several ways to keep in touch with friends and members of Southwind Sangha. Most communication is done by email and monthly postcards, but once a year we make an effort to make sure our information is going to the right address in the preferred manner.

The enclosed index card and self-addressed envelope will help us manage our contact list. Use it to let us know if you wish to be removed from the list or to change your contact information.

We do not share this information with anyone.

And, certainly, if you have a question, a comment or a concern, please use the card and envelope for that was well!

On being asked to comment on "practice at a distance"

Ku Wasan Ann Glasmann



The poem on the fan in English:

Crossing over the bridge
the village wine is nice.
On the opposite of the river
the flowers in the field are beautiful.

Meaning:

Every place is the Satori-world.

The fan was a gift from Keido Fukushima Roshi (1933-2011), former head abbot of Tofuku-ji.