

SOUTHWIND SANGHA

An Affiliate of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center

www.southwindsangha.org

September 2013

www.aszc.org

EXTENDED RETREAT SEPTEMBER 27-29, 21013

Southwind Sangha announces that our annual extended retreat will be led by Zenku, Jerry Smyers, Mission Mountain Zen Group in Dayton, MT. The Retreat Topic will be the Seven Factors of Awakening.

Zenku, Jerry Smyers is a Soto Zen Priest in the Lineages of **Soyu Matsuoka Roshi** and **Shohaku Okumura Roshi**. Zenku began his training as a disciple of **Kongo Langlois Roshi**, Abbot of the **Zen Buddhist Temple of Chicago** and a dharma heir of Matsuoka Roshi, in 1976. Zenku trained at the Zen Buddhist Temple of Chicago and was ordained a Zen Priest in 1982. Zenku was a Priest in Chicago until 2005, assisting Kongo Roshi until his passing in 1999, and then providing Temple leadership.

In 2005, Zenku moved to Montana and established the Mission Mountain Zen Group in Dayton, Montana.

In 2010 Zenku became a disciple of **Taiun Elliston Roshi**, Abbot of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center, and a dharma heir of Matsuoka Roshi and Okumura Roshi from the Uchiyama Lineage. In 2012, Zenku received dharma transmission from Taiun Roshi. Zenku is a member of the **Silent Thunder Order Zen lineage** founded by Matsuoka Roshi and a member of **Soto Zen Buddhist Association**.

Zenku is a strong advocate for daily Zen meditation practice. Zen practice is returning to our true nature each moment.



“Maintaining enthusiasm for our Zen practice is very important. Everything unfolds from our wholehearted effort.”

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 1	Retreat
Page 2	Retreat Schedule and “When It’s Hard to do Zazen”
Page 3	Skype Sessions, STO Conference and October Schedule
Page 4	Sesshin at ASZC, “The Answer” and “The Koan in Soto Zen”
Page 5	“Soto Zen Buddhism and Evolution” and “Rain in the Forecast”
Page 6	Sangha Finances, Keeping in Touch and More Poems by Sanki

Retreat Schedule Overview*



Friday 9/27/13

7:00-9:00 PM
Zazen, Kinhin, Chanting

Zenku Jerry Smyers:
Matsuoka Roshi and his teachings

Introduction of Retreat Topic,
The Seven Factors of Awakening

Saturday 9/28/13

6:30 AM – 2:00 PM (with breaks
for tea, lunch, and “bio”)
Zazen, Kinhin, Chanting

Morning Service: Hannya Shingyo

Dharma Talk: Seven Factors of
Awakening, with discussion or
questions

6:00 PM – Dinner at Restaurant
(TBD)

Sunday 9/29/13

8:00-9:10 AM
Chanting and Dharma Talk

9:15 Panera for Brunch

*Dokusan will be offered at various
times during the retreat.

(Detailed schedule on page 2.)

*Fall Retreat Schedule...
September 27, 28, and 29, 2013*

Friday 9/27/13

7:00PM	Zazen
7:25	Kinhin
7:30	Zazen
8:00	Chanting of the Heart Sutra
8:05	Zenku Jerry Smyers: Matsuoka Roshi and his teachings. Introduction of the topic: The Seven Factors of Awakening
9:00	Four Vows

Saturday 9/28/13

6:30 A.M.	Open Zendo and Zazen
7:00	Kinhin
7:05	Zazen
7:30	Kinhin
7:35	Zazen
8:00	Robe Chant, Japanese and English Morning Service: Hannya Shingyo, followed by Tea Break
9:00	Zazen
9:25	Kinhin
9:30	Zazen
9:55	Kinhin
10:00	Zazen
10:25	Bio Break
10:30	Dharma Talk: Seven Factors of Awakening by Zenku Jerry Smyers, followed by discussion or questions
11:50	Recess for lunch
1:00 PM	Zazen
1:30 PM	Kinhin
1:35	Zazen
2:00	Closing
6:00 PM	Dinner at Restaurant-

Sunday 9/29/13

8:00 AM	Opening of Zendo and Zazen
8:25	Chanting of Heart Sutra
8:30	Dharma Talk by Zenku Jerry Smyers
9:10	Close
9:15	Panera

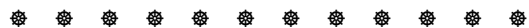
***Dokusan will be offered at various times

WHEN IT'S HARD TO DO ZAZEN, TRY THIS...

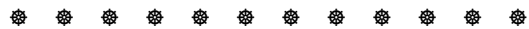
1. Let your eyes rest for a minute on the tip of your nose. Then allow your focus to soften as you become more aware of your peripheral vision. Notice the shape of your field of vision. Usually it will be the shape of a long pancake. Is your "pancake" fatter on the left or right side of the nose? Explore what it is like to have both sides more even.
2. Be aware of your posture. Stretch your spine towards the ceiling while letting the rest of your body relax. Notice the parts of your body that resist this relaxation. How about your abdomen, your shoulders, your neck?
3. If you carry a lot of tension in your face, squeeze your face into a tight ball for a few seconds. Notice any thoughts and feelings that arise. Then let the tension and the feelings go all at the same time.
4. Don't try to prevent thoughts from arising. If you were sitting at home and writing your "to do" list, you wouldn't focus on the traffic noise in the background. In Zazen, we allow our "to do" lists to become background noise, while the traffic roar, buzzing flies, and any other sensory trivia is keenly attended to.
5. Imagine your breath as a light that flows from your tailbone to the crown of your head with each in-breath and from the crown of your head to the pit of your stomach with each out-breath.

When you use any of these methods for a few minutes, let it go again and notice some other aspect of your sitting. You don't need the key anymore once you have unlocked the door, so just set it aside.

– Gekko Kathryn Riley



You are encouraged to attend the entire retreat, but if your schedule does not permit, plan to enter on the hour or half hour. If you have questions, please call Kathryn Riley, 684-8819.



A Cool Drink on the Path

Our teacher, Zenkai Taiun Elliston Roshi, kindly offers weekly dharma study and discussion through the amazing technology, "Skype." This opportunity supplements our daily dharma practice.

Currently, Sensei Elliston's teachings focus on fascicles from Dogen Zenji's *Shobogenzo*, the precepts and vows, and related chapters from Matsuoaka Roshi's *Kyosaku* and *Moku-Rai*. These discussions provide guidance and clarification, which can open new doors of thought and experience. Each of us takes away teachings that are custom fit for his or her practice.

This exceptional online gathering not only provides insights into the dharma, but also has created a unique sangha of individuals scattered throughout the U.S. and Canada. I am a practitioner who finds herself plopped down in a corner of rural Montana. The added support is greatly appreciated!

In August my practice was hot, dry, and full of bugs that bite. It was a long month. It was also ironic that I was asked to write about my experience with Skype discussions, as I missed five weeks.

My summer practice was: one foot, then another. I think I walked in a big circle.

Sensei always says, "Never give up!" —Ku Wasan Ann Glasmann

Skype dharma discussions expands my practice by taking me beyond my "self." Comments, questions, and observations expressed by the online sangha have informed, challenged, and motivated my practice to the degree that it is an established routine just like zazen. - Misugo Ni Liz Lawlor

I participate in the Dharma discussions at least once a month and they are a great asset. We can read books and articles, but the Dharma discussions give an opportunity to express in words our own views about the topic being discussed and are an opportunity to ask Michael Elliston Roshi questions, and hear the questions and answers given others. -- Nento Don Riley

Please consider joining us for these valuable online teachings. More information can be found at www.southwindsangha.org/resources/skype-teleconferences

OCTOBER SCHEDULE

Look for the details of our October Schedule on our website. The schedule will be the usual:

Sundays – 8 am service, following by brunch at the Panera.

Wednesdays – Introduction on the first Wednesday, Zazen on the other weeks, with a dharma talk on the second Wednesdays.

Third Saturday – Half day retreat.

Tuesdays – Skype sessions as described above.

REPORT OF SILENT THUNDER ORDER ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER, JULY 13, 2013

Overview: The Silent Thunder Order (STO) 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 13 affiliate Sanghas of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center and the many individuals in those affiliates.

Reports: There was an Online Communications Workshop including training for the web site. The HowTo web application was introduced which is a tool for input from multiple sources relative to planning.

There was a financial committee workshop where detail was given on the annual STO Pledge Drive, and how to become a member of STO. STO finances were discussed.

There was a communications committee workshop where the STO monthly newsletter, bulk email lists, and interactive mailing were discussed. There was an online tour of the website and instructions on how to edit the website were given.

There was a Dharma Study Committee workshop. Mitsugo Liz Lawler co-leads the committee and discussed transcribing the Skype Dharma discussions. The new format was discussed for the Tuesday Skype Dharma discussions.

Mitsugo Liz Lawlor is now on the Board of Directors of STO. Nento Don Riley is Vice Chair of the STO Board of Directors. Many nominations were made to the Board of Directors and the present Board will act on those nominations very soon. A Keynote speech was given by Teijo Munnich and an evening talk was given by her on Finding Truth in Tradition and Modern Culture. Teijo Munnich is a transmitted Zen Priest and is an Abbot of a residential Zen Center for Women.

Please consider going to the STO website, storder.org and you are urged to consider becoming a member or STO.

- Un Ku Nento Don Riley
{Southwind Sangha Practice Leader
and Vice Chair, STO}



Precepts Sesshin 2013 At Atlanta Soto Zen Center

By Mitsugo Ni Liz Lawlor

At 5:30 am a bell ringer walks around the Zen Center waking up the building and rooms. The bell also wakes retreat attendees. Bells, gongs, and clappers of various sizes continue to signal when to begin and end the day and every activity in between. Even within each "activity", bells and other clues signal when to do what. Seems very regimental and perhaps much like the military. Despite my loathing of authority and being told what to do, I found the routine freeing in a sense. There is something comforting in moving as a group and not having to "think" about what to do next. This created a situation for a different experience of zazen. Less worry about the going-ons of my daily life enabled me to settle into zazen. Of course there was the "daily life" of the retreat but that was far less complex than the details of my life outside of the retreat. Once I was in the routine of "less-thinking-of-the-complexities-of-daily-life" my zazen had a different quality to it.

Moving as a group offered other opportunities for extending my practice. The robe verse and meals were two examples. The robe verse was chanted after a period of zazen. The experience of chanting then moving as a group to put on your vestment was strikingly different than chanting the verse and slipping on my Rakusu during my home practice. A sense of community and experiencing the history of the robe verse was present each time the robe verse was chanted.

Meals were served oryoki-style. While the rules of oryoki weren't strictly followed as each meal was considered a training opportunity with Sensei giving instructions as the meal progressed. There are many rules and nuances which I didn't learn. By the end of the retreat, I found the process to be if not "no thinking" then at least "not-as-much-thinking." And as with the robe verse, meals eaten oryoki-style had more of a sense of community than those eaten at the end of the day without the ritual.

For me practicing being aware of those around me and how my actions impact those around me had an impact that extended beyond the retreat. An example of the practice at the ASZC retreat carrying over to daily life occurred in a Georgia convenience store as I was leaving the state on my way to Connecticut to visit family. As I left the store a gentleman was walking in. He held the door open for me and had a huge smile and seemed amused. It was then I realized I had walked through the door bowing and in gassho.

The Answer

Losing sleep
reading sutras late into the night
motivated by the unformed conviction
that the answer is on the next page

Is like hiking through the mountains
eager to reach the next ridge top, hoping for a vista
but finding instead a new, and steeper stretch
of long and winding trail

Reading sutras, climbing mountains
one finds many vistas to marvel at along the way
but vistas aren't the answer I'm seeking
I finally go to bed, lashed by disappointment

Next morning, who would have thought?
In the half hour facing the wall before I ready for work
I find the answer waiting for me, right here
Where I sit.

Wichita, October 2012
- Sanki Harold Schlechtweg

The Koan in Soto Zen

Most of us who are known to be practitioners of Zen have probably been asked about koan study, since many of the more well known have made their way into popular culture. (There goes that one hand again, clapping!) A brief answer usually suffices. Rinzai School of Zen emphasizes the koan as a means of sudden, thunderclap enlightenment. But in Soto Zen they are only a means to an end. As Matsuoka Roshi states: "The koan encompasses all the Universe. Anything appearing before you can be used as a koan..... In Soto Zen we do not wait for enlightenment. We do not look for it. We believe that when we sit for one minute in silent meditation, we have already been an Enlightened One for one minute. We do not separate Enlightenment and sitting in meditation."

- Yanagi Do Del Smith

(Excerpted from a recent dharma talk. I highly recommend readings in *The Kyosaku* and *Moku-Rai*, both by Matsuoka Roshi. An excellent essay by John Daido Looori Roshi, "Dogen and Koans," can be found at www.mro.org.)

Soto Zen Buddhism and Evolution
By Nento Don Riley

The disputes between evolution scientists and creationists seem never ending. Creationists want their beliefs taught in science classes for example, and science teachers resist that. Both say the other cannot prove their position with "evidence". The problem is that they do not agree on the type of evidence it would take to prove who is right. Creationists cannot even seem to agree among themselves on the definition of "God" (the Creator). Some seem to believe God put the universe in motion and usually doesn't interfere with events. Some believe God is omniscient and therefore must know what is going to happen before it happens. Thus every detail is already worked out. Many philosophers have put forth their proofs of God's existence: Plato, Aristotle, St. Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, and Kant. Other philosophers dispute these proofs. Many scientists believe in God and thus would seem to believe in evolution and creation at the same time. Possibly they believe the creator put evolution in motion.

No wonder the two "sides" can't agree. What seems evident and probably is evident from the fossil records is that evolution did occur and there has been a progression toward complexity from the simplest one celled creatures to humans (or maybe dolphins or elephants are more complex than humans). Many creationists would agree with that but say that the "First Cause" is God the Creator. Some scientists would also agree with those creationists. So maybe we could narrow down the controversy for the purpose of this presentation to cause and effect. Who or what caused evolution or is there no cause but just random events that occurred or is there some other explanation.

Science is no good at answering the question as to why something happens most of the time. Science is usually addressing the question as to what and how something happens rather than why. Religion often answers the questions of what, how, and why but the proof is very subjective.

Well, rather than continuing to try to sort out the differences between Creationists and Evolution Scientists, let's look at a common Buddhist approach. A common Buddhist belief is that the world as we know it arose when consciousness came into being and consciousness perceived the difference

between itself and other forms. But Buddha taught that we shouldn't concern ourselves with creation, why we are here, and other such questions. But Buddha and the patriarch Dogen Zenji taught that an analysis based on cause and effect doesn't make much sense. We must be aware of cause and effect as it does exist on certain levels. But in place of cause and effect is the principle of "conditioned arising" sometimes also called interdependent origination. This is the principle of "not two". We can't say that all things are "One", but we can say they are not "Two". All forms including beings are interdependent to the extent that they are collectively indivisible. This is true not only as to space and form, but is true as to all points in time. So the created is the Creator. Creation evolves and evolution creates.

Intelligent design doesn't necessarily imply a Creator. Maybe the thing designed is the Designer. In Buddhism, the creator is that which has no beginning or end, is not complete or incomplete, is not defiled and is not pure, and cannot be understood by using the intellect. I like to think of the Creator as reality itself.

This subject is probably just another Koan to the Buddhist practitioner. One would probably benefit more by concentrating more on how to live one's life. That can best be done in conjunction with Zazen.

Many of the ideas herein are those of Zenkai Taiun, Michael Ellistion Roshi (google search: Intelligent evolution Zenkai Taiun) but he can't be held responsible for my interpretation of his ideas.

Rain in the forecast

Today's soothing rain
will not end the drought;
or so says the weatherman.
I don't doubt him, not at all.
But I wonder, sometimes,
has he ever been outside?

- Sanki Harold Schlechtweg

SANGHA FINANCES

By: Don Riley, treasurer

Below please find the Southwind Sangha’s expenses and income for the Year 2012 and for the first 7 months of 2013. 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.

2012 Finances

Dana (donations).....	\$3,427.40
Contribution to Church	\$1,200.00
Supplies such as postcards and postage, copies, office supplies and Welcome Packets.....	\$ 591.38
Insurance.....	\$ 521.00
Abbot Michael Elliston for Skype presentations.....	\$ 550.00
Abbot Michael Elliston honorarium for Retreat.....	.\$ 600.00
Airline ticket for Michael Elliston for Retreat.....	\$ 251.60
Hotel for Michael Elliston for Retreat.....	\$ 157.84
Website.....	\$ 127.35
Non-Profit Corporation Fee and address change fee.....	\$ 40.00
Advertising in WSU newspaper the Sunflower.....	\$ 120.00

2013 Finances through July

Dana (donations).....	\$2,175.10
Contribution to Church.....	\$ 800.00
Supplies.....	\$ 53.13
Insurance.....	.\$ 280.50
Abbot’s Skype presentations.....	\$ 250.00
Website.....	\$ 127.35
Nonprofit Corporation fee.....	\$ 40.00
Ads in WSU newspaper the Sunflower.....	\$ 120.00
Airline Tickets for Jerry Smyers,retreat speaker.....	\$ 695.10

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 just inside the Zendo door or you can mail it to the Sangha. An envelope is enclosed for your convenience. We accept cash, too!! Let us know if you need a receipt. Thank you for your continued support of our activities.

KEEPING IN TOUCH: Most communication with friends and members of Southwind Sangha 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.

Unless you opt out, we share this information with Silent Thunder Order, but no one else.

If you have a question, a comment or a concern, please use the card and envelope for that was well.

MORE POEMS BY SANKI

No more tears*

In Crane Forest with the moon fallen,
how could dawn appear?

In a time of drought flowers wither,
and spring is not spring.

But spring is spring, and this year brings
rain.

In the backyard, roses bloom so profusely
overburdened foliage sweeps the ground.

Up early today, I watch dawn chase
the slivered-almond moon from the sky.

So I will stop these bitter tears,
and forgetting self, dwell joyfully,
among the mountains of forever
beside the flowing waters of home.

Wichita, Spring 2013

*(Inspired by Dogen’s verse about the passing of Buddha. Crane Forest was where Shakyamuni passed away. It is said, when Buddha died many flowers suddenly bloomed and turned pure white like cranes. Eihei Koroku, #486, p. 433. Leighton and Okumura, trans.)

My Question

Since time immemorial, the sound
of thunder has echoed in distant mountains.
Why then, do you cling to form?
Threads fray, cloth molders,
worms eat a hand-sewn rakusu.
Incense burns to ash; a wooden buddha
warms a fat monk’s backside; Sutra
cards are revised; and this Zendo, where
now we sit, gives way to urban
development. .

Wichita, Easter, 2013

Old Mirror

The mirror slips, shatters, and
10,000 pieces scatter on the floor.
From every shard....
my face looks back at me.

Wichita, Spring 2013