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Dragon Gate

RYUMONJI ZEN MONASTERY



Time's Passing . . .

Time passes swiftly! A life time passes before you know it.

The other day I was driving back to Ryumonji from a weekend in Minneapolis. I wanted to get back to Decorah so I could say good-bye to Jikan Kondrick who was leaving the same day for Minneapolis. She was moving to assisted living quarters. Jikan-san was resident priest of Decorah Zen Center and Vice-Abbess of Ryumonji. As it turned out, she had already left and we passed on the road.

After 15 years of working together to establish monastery in the Midwest, we passed on the road in a moment of transition. Time moves swiftly. I can remember in the beginning of our time together during phases of construction Jikan-san sleeping on a piece of plywood laid over a claw foot bathtub. Then later she lived with me in a granary on a farm outside of Decorah, IA. It was our first zendo before moving into Decorah and establishing the Decorah Zen Center. She also cooked for me as tenzo while I commuted to the newly donated monastery land where I was working on a farmhouse which became Ryumonji's first zendo.

Jikan-san was the first person that I had ordained as a Zen priest. We talked often that "the whole world is the monastery" wherever you are. She is now happily living in the "monastery" of new assisted living quarters in Minneapolis near her daughter. She continues to manifest her practice with heartfelt enthusiasm.

Meanwhile we are continuing the effort at Ryumonji to build monastery. It was our founding teacher Katagiri Roshi's vision to establish monastery in the Midwest. He said that sooner or later he wanted to have a monastery. (Returning to Silence, p. 115) In this case, it was later! Time passes . . .

All time is present in the moment at hand. The past is present in the moment at hand. The future is also present in the present moment. How we live influences the future and is the result of previous conditions.

Presently we have the good fortune to be building a Sodo monk's hall. The Sodo is a meditation hall where all beings can practice. It is for everyone. Everyone is called to be a monk of the universe and steward of the earth wherever you are. Time is precious...

In the Fukanzazengi (13th C.), Dogen Zenji says, "You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not use your time in vain. You are maintaining the essential working of the Buddha Way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from the flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, destiny like the dart of lightning—emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash."

Now when I go to Decorah something is different. I miss Jikan-san's presence there. Time passes us on the highway at every turn. Don't waste time. Make use of this precious life.

In gassho,

Shoken Winecuff

Ryumonji Happenings . . .

The New Ryumonji Ball has been installed and was dedicated at the New Year's Day Open House on January 1. To our knowledge it is the first traditional Japanese temple bell to be made in this country. It marks the transition of Zen Buddhism from East to West. We greatly appreciate the generosity of the donors and everyone who worked to make this effort possible.



Rev. Jikan Kondrick relocated earlier this year to assisted living quarters at Jones Harrison Retirement Home, 3700 Cedar Lake Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55416. She was resident teacher of Decorah Zen Center and Vice-Abbess of Ryumonji. She continues to be a great support to Ryumonji.

Ryumonji Winter Gala dinner and silent auction was held this year on March 13. This was the Third Annual Winter Gala. Everyone enjoyed "mocktails" and a delicious Indian dinner prepared by sangha members. Music was provided by Paul Hogen Docken and Pine Wilson. There was also a raffle and a wide assortment of silent auction offerings. It was a very successful evening and provided wonderful community outreach.

New Developments . . .

Construction of the new Sodo Monks' Hall is expected to begin this month, as soon as the ground settles and weather permits. Concrete foundations were already poured this last fall for the 46' x 46' hall. Gravel was added to the interior dimensions of the foundation wall. It is ready for the concrete slab with in floor geothermal heating.



The timber framing structure will be the first stage of construction. The timbers are in the process of being fashioned. The entire structure will go up and be assembled in one day. Come watch the action!

The Sodo and Shuryo buildings are the final stage of Ryumonji's development of monastery buildings. Your support has made this possible.

Thank you for your continued effort.

Shuso Ceremony will be held Saturday, June 19 as part of the June weekend sesshin. There will be Shuso Tea Ceremony and dharma discussion on Friday evening, June 18.

Shuso is acting head monk for the Summer Practice Period (Ango). This year's Shuso will be Rev. Kalen McAllister.

Rev. Shohaku Okumura will be in attendance as representative of the Soto Zen International Community. Senior priests from Midwestern Zen Centers will also be in attendance.

Lay Ordination Jukai Ceremony will take place on **October 17, 2010** at Ryumonji as part of the October weekend sesshin. If you would like to receive the precepts and sew rakusu, please speak with Shoken-san at 563-546-1309 or contact shoken@ryumonji.org. Students who plan to participate must sew rakusu (informal Buddhist robe) in preparation for receiving the precepts during this ceremony.

The Women's Retreat will be offered by Rev. Ryoten Lehmann at Ryumonji on the weekend of November 5-7. This will be the second women's retreat at Ryumonji and is a time for women to come together in community. Further information will be forthcoming. Mark your calendars!

RYUMONJI ZEN MONASTERY



Ryumonji Zen Monastery 2010 Schedule

Sat. May 1	Spring Work Day
May 21-23	Sesshin
June 18-20	Sesshin
June 18-Aug.22	Summer Ango
July 16-18	Sesshin
Sat. Aug. 21	Summer Work Day
Sept. 17-19	Sesshin
Sun. Oct. 3	Taste of Ryumonji
Oct. 15-17	Sesshin
Nov. 5-7	Women's Retreat
Nov. 19-21	Sesshin
Dec. 1-8	Rohatsu Sesshin

Weekly Public Sitzings

Thursday Evenings 7:30 p.m.

Sunday Mornings 9:00 a.m.

(For orientation arrive 15 minutes early)

To register for sesshin retreats

please e-mail

office@ryumonji.org

or call 563-546-1309

If you would like to receive future issues of the newsletter electronically, please E-mail: office@ryumonji.org