

## STILLPOINT 2017 FALL SESSHIN WITH SHOHAKU OKUMURA – ROSHI



**“Zazen is good for nothing”**

Dear Friends in the Dharma:

August 16th 2017

Shohaku Okumura-Roshi will be in Pittsburgh in just a few weeks to once again lead our annual Fall Stillpoint retreat.

Due to some unavoidable time and energy constraints I will be unable to devote the time and energy to organize and run the retreat this year. Carrie Roberto and Mickey Lydon (longtime Stillpoint members) have generously offered to volunteer for the job. I have included their contact information below.

The retreat will be held during the first weekend of October. The dates of the retreat are from October 6th to October 8th, 2017 at the location we used last year, Villa Maria retreat facility <https://www.vmesc.org/> which is located about fifty miles north of Pittsburgh. Especially if you are coming from out of town, it is recommended that you arrive on the evening of Thursday October 5th. We are very happy with this facility for our retreat. It is a fine facility, rather large, which means that there probably will be other groups at the complex, however past experience has been that we will be away from the “madding crowd”. We will maintain silence in the middle of a perhaps not so silent environment.

We will not be preparing our own meals since the food service has an exclusive provider agreement with Villa Maria. The cost is very reasonable even if we request a special menu at a 20% surcharge, which I think we should in order to ensure a vegetarian menu. There are presently 20+ bedrooms available to us, so if you have to have a private room you should apply as early as possible. I have been told that the availability of rooms with a private bathroom may be possible, but unlikely.

Okumura-Roshi is the Abbott and head teacher at Sanshin-ji, a Zen community which he founded in Bloomington Indiana eleven years ago. He has travelled widely throughout Asia, Europe and South America, as well as various retreat centers in the USA sharing the Dharma and is one of the world's foremost scholars of Dogen Zenji's teachings as well as being a dedicated life-long practitioner of those teachings.

He has led numerous Stillpoint retreats here in Pittsburgh since 1996 and has provided inspirational spiritual guidance to our community for many years. He has a very special connection with our sangha, and despite the fact that his travels are being reduced to safeguard his health, we are very fortunate that he wishes to continue his annual retreats with us.

I am sending this first notice and application form as attachments via e-mail to past attendees and to subscribers on the Stillpoint Notes List. If you know of anyone who might be interested in attending but is not on our mailing list, please forward this e-mail to them. Please download the attached application form and send it to the listed address with your check as soon as you can. If you would like to have a hard copy of the application form sent to you, please let us know by replying to this e-mail.

Please let Carrie and Mickey know as soon as possible whether you will be attending. You can reach them at the following if you have any questions. Please note: **The deadline for reservations which assures you of a room is September 25th, 2017.**

Gassho  
Don Dozan Orr (412-780-8480)

Mickey Lydon: [micklydon@comcast.net](mailto:micklydon@comcast.net) (412-417-0004)  
Carrie Roberto: [carolineroberto@comcast.net](mailto:carolineroberto@comcast.net)