



Encouraging Words from the Teacher

FAITH IN MIND

Subhana Barzaghi

The opening paragraph in a much loved text Faith in Mind by the Third Zen Patriarch, Seng T'Sang, are very affirming and have direct implications for our practice.

The Supreme Way is not difficult
it simply avoids picking and choosing.
When love and hate are both absent,
everything becomes clear and undisguised,
Make the smallest distinction however
and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.
If you wish to see the truth
then hold no opinions for or against anything.
To set up what you like against what you dislike
is the disease of the mind.
When the deep meaning of things is not understood
The mind's essential peace is disturbed to no avail.

If we have faith in these encouraging words, we can sustain an attitude in meditation of not picking and choosing to whatever is arising moment to moment. When we practice dropping any preference and attachment to any duality, we find the great Way is not difficult, it is always right here, over flowing and abundant.

In the second Noble Truth, the arising of any suffering, unease, dissatisfaction called dukkha (in the Ancient Pali language) is due to the movement of mind of grasping and aversion. We can notice our tendency to push away the unpleasant and painful, and cling and attach to the attractive and pleasant. This typical push and pull of the mind creates agitation and suffering. Dukkha requires clinging and where there is clinging, we must be clinging to one polarity, that is, desiring one pair of the duality over its opposite. For example, silence and noise is a pair of opposites.

There is a wonderful and challenging practice opportunity every evening when we sit at our Annandale dojo which is situated right under the flight path. It's peak hour for the East /West runway. Sandwiched between a blanket of clouds and the red tiled rooftops the planes drone overhead every 5 minutes. The windows rattle in unison as the

noisy tin bullets of aircraft line up and pelt down towards the airport. If you sit longing for that poised silence and if there is a degree of contraction in the mind around noises, then the dukkha of irritability will soon follow. Can you let the sound of the plane go right through you with nothing sticking.... no preference?

We live in the midst of a constant stream of polarities in the world of phenomena; light/dark, self/other, here/there, security/insecurity, fear/calm, joy/sorrow, pleasure/pain, praise/blame. In any of these examples, the more we cling to one pole the more we are thrown back into the world of duality and hence suffering.

Practice 'No clinging to preferences'.

If we wish to embody the great way of freedom, the non-dual wisdom mind,

- sit in an open spacious awareness with things as they are,
- notice where you are experiencing suffering and inquire into 'where am I clinging now?'
- Try and identify what pole of duality you have seized upon,
- can you drop any preference for one pole of that duality over another?
- can you come back to a view of 'no attachment to preferences'; no picking and choosing.
- practice the art of letting go or holy disinterest, also called the virtue of disenchantment.

If you practice in this way you will experience the great Way of ease and joy.

*"To live in this faith is the road to non-duality,
because the non-dual is one with the trusting mind".
(Seng T'sang)*

Reports

International Womens Day 8 March



Thanks to Glenys Jackson for creating a commemorative mandala in the dojo made out of incense sticks, fragrant rosemary, flowers, gum leaves, and bits of paper. It was subsequently destroyed as in the tradition of impermanence.



Thursday Evening Talk 16 March

Tara Choying Lhamo is a remarkable western dharma practitioner from Austria, who has been living in retreat for over twenty years. Twelve of those years she spent high in the Nepalese mountains near Lapchi, in one of Milarepa's caves. Tara agreed to speak publicly for the first time last year (2016) in London and she is now here with us in Sydney to share her remarkable story.

We had a very interesting and informative talk as well as a fascinating Q&A with Tibetan Buddhist Tara Choying Lhamo. She told the story of how and why she entered into her spiritual journey, the rigors and joys of years of solitude spent in a remote cave in Nepal and what it's like now for her in the West. About 30 people came along, most of whom weren't zennies, which gave our Centre a chance to shine into parts of the broader Buddhist community. Many thanks to Brendon for organizing the event and setting up the dojo. And also thanks to members of our sangha who came and made the place so welcoming.

Samu at Kodoji 25-26 March

Coordinated by our stalward Tony Coote, it is too late in the month to be included in this Newsletter as the editor is going to Japan. It will be reported in the June/July Newsletter.

Womens Retreat 11-12 March

This year our annual retreat coincided with International Women’s Day. Oivi drove up from Batlow, joining Julie, Caroline, Liz, Lily, Kerry and me. The valley was lush and green, the silence and zazen on Saturday profound, and our haiku bush walk, and sharing circle, a joy. But after our evening meal on Saturday, when we all went out onto the dojo verandah to view the golden moon rising between the hills opposite, a huge fire could be seen in the bush across the creek, and everything changed. Kerry dialled 000 and reported it. Julie and I drove across the creek to the Balmain Teachers’ block to have a closer look at the fire, and ascertain whether anybody was home, calling repeatedly - nobody was home - then came back to Kodoji and let the Fire Emergency people know the extent of the fire. We packed up quickly. One fire truck with sirens and two vehicles had already arrived and, on our way out, we passed three more fire trucks. On Sunday 12th, the NSW fire website had the fire recorded as “out of control” but their quick response must have enabled them to reach it with their hoses as, by the morning, it was recorded as “under control”. Gilly



Photos: Caroline Josephs, Gilly Coote

How fortunate we were a small number and not at sesshin and fantastic that the Firies were onto it so quickly - many causes for gratitude. *(Sally)*

*Baby acacias and blady grass
emerging on the track -
but not for long.*

*Frilly mushroom skirts
waltz the dew off their hems
with ladybird friends.*

*Tasting stillness,
savouring silence,
crow calls: “Awkkkkk!”*

*New music - shirring –
all the trees move together
in the fresh breeze.*

*The old post lies down,
native grasses hold the wire,
the gate is open!*

*Metropolis of ants
random scatter towards
two corporate sinkholes.*

- Gilly

-Kerry

- Caroline

Coming Events

Buddha's Birthday and Baby Naming Ceremony

Annandale 9 April, from 9am with Gillian Coote

This is a special family event honouring the birth of the Baby Buddha. Sangha children are invited to come early and make some flowers or paint a picture, which they will put on the altar at the start of our ceremony at 11 am. This year, Shawna Murray will be offering simple craft activities in the garden from 9 am. She and Mani's new daughter, Saorise, will be welcomed into our sangha during the ceremony.

Please bring fresh flowers and something to share for a potluck lunch afterwards.

Autumn Sesshin at Kodoji 14-20 April

led by Subhana Barzaghi and Maggie Gluek



The Way of Peace

Where is your place of peace? In troubled times, in the face of individual life challenges and the challenges facing our world, how do you move forward with a heart that is undisturbed?

How do you respond intelligently?

Sesshin is essential for this inquiry, affording a unique opportunity to deepen and broaden practice.

It's an adventure too. Who ever knows what will manifest in the Dharma realms?

Having said that, we can know that there'll

be lots of zazen ("the dharma gate of great ease and joy" as memorably described by Dogen), that feet will walk inside and outside the dojo, that meals will be savoured with focused attention, that teachers will offer regular interviews and teisho, that the beauty and power of Kodoji will hold and inspire us all.

Pick up your diary and block out these dates! (Note that this year, we finish on Thursday instead of Friday.)

Application forms are available on the SZC website and in hard copy at the Annandale zendo.

Costs: SZC members \$340, Non-members \$440

Inquiries: Jane Andino, sesshin coordinator: janeandino@yahoo.com.au, 0432 355 831

New Course in Zen Deepening One's Practice

6 Week Zen Course at Annandale Zendo, Thursday evenings April 27 - June 1, 7 - 9pm

with Subhana Barzaghi and Brendon Stewart

This 6-week course is aimed at deepening ones understanding of the Path of Zen, both it's philosophical framework, it's practices and embodying this understanding in our daily lives. The weekly course will cover the following topics:- Cultivating the garden of practice, Love, Cultivating Compassion, Awareness & the Mirror Mind of Samadhi, Emptiness & Ethics. Each week we will explore and discuss the Buddhist teachings, offer guidance in practices and deepen our understanding through experiential inter-active exercises.

This course is suitable for beginners who have done an orientation and experienced practitioners.

Cost \$150 for members, \$200 for non members, which only covers expenses for the SZC.

The teachers in accordance with the Buddhist tradition provide their teachings as a gift (dana) and rely on your return of that gift (dana) in the form of financial support.

Places are limited so please book in early. Inquiries and Registration: Brendon Stewart: stewarts34@bigpond.com

Notices

Trip with Uncle Max to Gulaga

Saturday-Sunday 27-28 May

Caroline Josephs is organising a trip with Uncle Max, Dulumunmun, Yuin Elder, to Gulaga (sacred mountain for men and women) near Tilba, south coast NSW, on weekend of Saturday 27 - Sunday 28 May. Please contact Caroline if you are interested in attending a full day in Country -- an extraordinary sacred site -- with Uncle Max's stories. It may be the last opportunity to visit for some time.

We will probably be staying in Narooma (so workers could come down on Friday evening from Sydney), all day on the mountain, and drive back Sunday. More details on cost, accommodation etc, to come later.

Caroline: cjosephs@tpg.com.au

Orientations for Newcomers

Next Orientation Tuesday 2 May, 7-9pm

The extended format for offering orientations to newcomers, or indeed as a refresher, has been successful and effective. There are limited places and if you are unable to attend without notice, it might deprive others of a chance to attend. Therefore we require people to confirm their participation a few days before the orientation. Any questions, email info@szc.com.au. See website for more details.

Leadership Call

Dojo leadership is not only a fantastic way to actualise caring for the sangha and merging one's practice with the vast field we all share, it's also a great way to guarantee you'll turn up.

For those interested, please contact the following leaders who can guide you in the form of the roles.

Ino: Peter Bursky mowerman26@hotmail.com

Jiki: Sue Bidwell sue.bidwell17@gmail.com

Jisha: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com

Books for Sale

There are Robert Aitken books for sale at Annandale. Some have not been around for quite some time, like *The Ground We Share*, *The Practice of Perfection*, *Zen Master Raven*, *The Morning Star*, *Original Dwelling Place*. Very worth checking out. These books can be read, re-read and again re-read through the years, so it is worth owning them - and the money will help SZC.

And don't forget the book of poems by SZC members Sally Hopkins and Glenys Jackson, *The Morning Star*.



Donations

Donations to Asylum Seekers Centre, Newtown need to be put in the special box upstairs in the library at Annandale. There is a list on the noticeboard in Annadale Zendo. If you have other things that you think could be useful PLEASE CHECK with Lesley, email lesley.treleaven@gmail.com or 0410 621756

Summer 2016-17 Edition

The full colour version of our quarterly magazine, Mind Moon Circle, is now ready to view online. Expertly edited by Philip Long, a printed black and white version will be sent out to all members. The next issue of Mind Moon Circle (Autumn 2017) still awaits an editor and a theme. Perhaps you would like to volunteer to take up the yoke. It is a very informative and rewarding job.

News from the Board

Room Rented

Brendan and Jess have moved into the front room of the zendo and report that it already feels like home. Lily is also very happy to have a wonderfully warm couple to share with. Farewell and best wishes to Oskar who is moving. At the end of March the middle room will be taken up by long term Blue Mountains sitter Steve Crump, as a place to rest and engage with the sangha during his working week.

Gatherings

The Board is arranging some weekends at Kodoji to invigorate our sangha relations and introduce our loved ones to the community. Because many new members haven't been to the aboriginal cave on the ridge, Will Moon has agreed to lead a walk on the weekend of 13th & 14th May. Everyone is welcome, but please note this is a fairly rigorous walk and climb. Also, in October/November we are planning a family weekend that will involve a Sunday picnic and games with the St Albans Valley community at Kodoji. SZC kids and partners will be an important part of this gathering.

New Course

Subhana and Brendon will be conducting a 6 week course called "Deepening One's Practice" at Annandale. It will be on Thursday nights from 6.30pm till 9pm starting on 27th April and ending on 1st June. The cost will be \$150 for members and \$200 for non members. To accommodate this wonderful course the Orientation and Beginners' nights for April have been cancelled and May orientation will be on Tuesday 2nd, not Thursday 5th. Deep thanks to Subhana for the time and energy she is putting into helping the sangha deepen their practice.

Dana

Many thanks to Sabina Rabold who has generously offered many items to the SZC, including single bed sheets (for Kodoji), a projector (which has us thinking about film nights at Annandale), coffee plunger, water urn and first aid kit (for Annandale). We gave her a copy of 'Star and Mountain' in gratitude.

Website

The Board members have provided feedback on the exciting new website. Georgina and Ameli are addressing our suggestions for minor changes and are fine tuning the look and content of each page. Going 'live' is getting closer!

Emergencies

The Board decided that at every event at Gorricks a Fire Warden should be nominated. This person will have a list of procedures (being drafted at the moment) that should be followed in case of fire. The warden will help to keep a potentially anxious situation calm and will gather everyone together for assessment of the situation and a coordinated evacuation if necessary



*Images from Mind Moon
Circle Summer 2016.
Photos Glenys Jackson*

Notice Board

Dokusan

Mondays

Subhana: April 3, 24 May 1, 15, 22, 29

Allan: May 8

Wednesdays

Gillian: April 5, 19, 26 May 3, 17, 24, 31

Full Moon Ceremony

April 10 + 12

Not Sparing the Dharma Assets

Dharma Café

May 8 + 10

Zazenkai

None in April- too close to sesshin

May 21, 8.30-12 Will Moon (talk) with

Gilly Coote (Dokusan)

Orientations for Newcomers 7-9pm

Tuesday May 2

See website for more details www.szc.org.au

Board Meeting

April 11 + May 9

6pm for a 6.30 start. All SZC members very welcome.

Womens Group Open to all Women Members

April 7 Sarah's

May 12 Kerry's

Regular Notices

Use of Kodoji

Kodoji is available for use by members of the SZC and guests (if accompanied by a member). It can also be hired by other groups if approved by the Board. Fees are \$20 per night for members and \$25 for non-members. There is a \$100 booking fee for non-member groups. Booking of Kodoji is essential and it is also essential to receive instructions about use of the facility before going there. Please note that the local Fire Brigade has advised restrictions during summer.

Try giving the family a wonderful weekend, or yourself a few days of private retreat.

Enquiries to Brendon Stewart, phone 9879 7290

email stewarts34@bigpond.com

Blue Mountains Zen

The Blue Mountains Zen Group meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, 2 - 4.30pm in Lawson. Our teacher is Paul Maloney, 9045 3897 or contact Jane at janeandino@yahoo.com.au

Canberra Zen Group

Meets on Wednesday evenings.

Please contact Gary for more details: 0429 635 412 email gcaitcheon@gmail.com

North Shore Zen Group

Meets on Thursday nights 7-9pm at the *Quaker Meeting House*, 59 Boundary Road, Wahroonga. Please bring your own zafu/stool and zabuton.

Contribution \$5 - \$10 towards hiring the venue.

Please contact Maggie Gluek for more details:

magpiewarble@yahoo.com.

Ashfield Morning Zazen

SZC members interested in morning zazen and dokusan are invited to join a small group that sits regularly on Wednesday mornings from 6.30am - 8.00am.

Please contact Allan Marett allan.marett@gmail.com 0409712767 or Peter Bursky

mowerman26@hotmail.com 0405 042 236

Members of the Board

Kerry Stewart (Chairperson) stewartkerry4@gmail.com; Helen Sanderson (secretary); Jason Koh (treasurer); Sue Bidwell; Alex Budlevskis; Georgina Reid; Ameli Tanchitsa; Brendon Stewart.

Newsletter Editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com

SZC: info@szc.com.au, www.szc.org.au

SZC Calendar February-March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 2	3 ZAZEN 7-9pm	4	5 ZAZEN 7-9pm	6	7 Womens Group - Sarah's	8
9 Buddha's Birthday + Baby Naming 9 Craft, 11am ceremony	10 Full Moon Ceremony "Not Sparing Dharma Assets" 7-9pm	11 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	12 Full Moon Ceremony "Not Sparing Dharma Assets" 7-9pm	13	14 Easter Sesshin, Kodoji	15
16	17 ZAZEN 7-9pm (no teacher)	18	19 ZAZEN 7-9pm	20 End of Easter Sesshin	21	22
23 <i>No zazenkai</i> due to ses- shin recently ending	24 ZAZEN 7-9pm	25	26 ZAZEN 7-9pm	27 COURSE <i>Deepening One's Practice</i> 7-9pm	28	29
30	May 1 ZAZEN 7-9pm	2 Orientations 7-9pm	3 ZAZEN 7-9pm	4	5	6
7	8 DHARMA CAFÉ + Precept Cere- mony 7-9pm	9 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	10 DHARMA CAFÉ + Precept Cere- mony 7-9pm	11	12	13 Walk with Will Moon, Gorricks
14 Walk with Will Moon, Gorricks	15 ZAZEN 7-9pm	16	17 ZAZEN 7-9pm	18	19	20
21 ZAZENKAI Talk Will Moon, dokusan Gillian Coote 8.30 - 12pm	22 ZAZEN 7-9pm	23	24 ZAZEN 7-9pm	25	26	27 Winter firewood working bee at KODOJI
28 Winter firewood working bee at KODOJI	29 ZAZEN 7-9pm	30	31 ZAZEN 7-9pm	June 1	2	3