



# NEWSLETTER

www.szcz.org.au

## Encouraging Words from the Teacher

Gillian Coote Roshii



*Why do you do zazen? What is your purpose?*

*Normally our lives organise around some purpose or other, whether on a macro scale - doing good for others, advancing in our profession - or a micro scale, remembering to buy the milk or pay off*

*the credit card, getting to work on time.*

*And we judge how we're doing. Though we might say our zazen is organised around getting somewhere peaceful or gaining some insight, we know we're still running on adrenalin and are rarely calm or patient.*

*We might say 'I practise to get enlightened', like Ma-tsu did when Nan-yueh found him sitting alone in the zendo doing zazen and asked, 'What is your purpose in doing zazen?' Ma-tsu's 'I seek to become a Buddha' prompted Nan-yueh to pick up a tile and start polishing it on a rock. 'What are you doing?' Ma-tsu asked. Nan-yueh said, 'I'm polishing this tile to make a mirror.' Ma-tsu asked, 'How can you make a mirror by polishing a tile?' to which Nan-yueh responded, 'How can you become a Buddha by doing zazen?'*

*Nan-yueh and Dogen remind us that zazen*

*is not a means to an end, not a technique for realisation - practice and realisation are inseparably one and the same. And more recently Soto teacher Sawaki Roshii said that zazen is 'wonderfully useless'.*

*How counter-intuitive and liberating it is to step outside means-to-an-end thinking, gaining thinking, goal-oriented thinking, when what we're doing has no point outside of itself, outside of the moment itself. We just are, we just sit. When what we're doing can't be justified by something outside of itself, by what it's going to get us or where it's going to take us.*

*Dogen again: 'Zazen is not a meditation technique. It is simply the Dharma gate of joyful ease; it is practising the realisation of the boundless Dharma way. Here, the open mystery manifests and there are no more traps and snares for you to get caught in.'*

*Right here it is eternally full and serene,  
If you search elsewhere, you cannot see it.  
You cannot grasp it, you cannot reject it.  
In the midst of not gaining,  
In that condition you gain it.*

*- Shodoka*

*Enjoy your useless practice!*

*Gassho, Gillian Coote*

### Reports

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Women's Retreat at Kodoji*

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Week Intensive in Ashfield*

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## Reports

### *Australia/NZ Diamond Sangha Teachers Meeting, Kodoji March 13-17*

*This was a rich gathering. Eleven teachers attended, the SZC mob being joined by Ross Bolleter from Perth, Ellen Davison from Lismore, Justine Mayer from Darwin, Susan Murphy from NSW south coast, Glen Wallis from Dunedin and Arthur Wells from Christchurch. The four days were a feast of learning and joyful exchange--examining koans, discussing various aspects of teaching, posing and answering questions, sharing personal experiences. Not to mention just hanging out*

*together.*

*And eating and eating. Nori rolls, anyone? Kodoji was green and welcoming*

*, as ever, offering us the*



*treasure world of the wild mahasangha. Saturday and Sunday night zazen included full moon-viewing on the verandah, with crickets and mopoke--son et lumiere of the literally highest order.*

*The final treat for all of our sangha was on Monday night at Annandale when a panel of teachers-- Arthur, Justine and Ross-- offered memorable presentations, followed by a Q&A session. What lively energy in the room! All thanks*

*to Brendon and Jill for their fetching and organising and shopping, essential to making the meeting happen. Ripples will surely flow out from the*

### *Australia/NZ Diamond Sangha Teachers Forum March 17 at Annandale*

*On this night three Diamond Sangha teachers, Arthur from Christchurch, Justine from Darwin and Ross from WA gave a Q&A session at Annandale attended by about 40 people packed into the dojo.*

*These teachers each gave us a brief introduction to their approach.*

*The day unfolds for Ross from zazen-- being a householder and practicing. He told us of Great Aunt Meditation, an elderly friend who sits looking into the fire for hours on end, yet knowing exactly how many chickens are scratching around outside and precisely where the mice are nibbling on the rye in the pantry.*

*Justine's focus was on inquiry - what it is to be free, what it is to be complete, we are one with the whole, how where there is suffering and we are one with it, we are compelled to action.*

*And Arthur spoke of the miraculous power of the ordinary, of employing the moment to hold people in the light as the Quaker tradition from which he comes, enables holding them in silence whilst letting go of story, waiting for clarity.*

*A meditative night said one newcomer.*

*Leslay Treleaven*

## Introduction to Zen

Thursday night talks on March 20, 27, and April 3 taken by Paul Maloney have been going well.

*Mens Retreat scheduled for May 16-18 has been postponed.*

## Womens Retreat 7-9 March at Kodoji

There were eight at Kodoji. The green paddock starred with brilliant yellow yams flowers, another of the chestnut trees dying in a blaze of gold, the night sky ablaze with stars. There was sitting and sharing, tai chi led by Gail, masks of the Three Poisons led by Diana, pot warmers to ensure hotter meals at sesshin made on Jill's initiative with help from Gail, and delicious meals contributed by everyone.



*Mask making, embodied, and pot warmers for warm pots.*

*Photos: Jill Steverson*



## Coming Events

### *Buddha's Birthday 13 April 9.30 Craft, 11am Ceremony*

The celebration of the Buddha's Birthday is a family day especially for young children. A very joyous occasion! Helen will offer craft work in the garden at 9.30 for the children, and then there is a ceremony in the dojo at 11, followed by a shared potluck lunch. If there are any babies to be named - always very special for everyone, please let Gilly know. [gillian@gilliancoote.com](mailto:gillian@gilliancoote.com)



### *Easter Sesshin 2014*

*18-25 April at Kodoji with Subhana and Maggie Cluek*



*Sesshin means to touch, receive and convey the heart-mind. In other words, so much more than you can say! It's like diving deep and swimming in the ocean of the Dharma. Experiencing that which is potent, joyful, vivid and uncompromised. Sesshin provides an opportunity to deepen your practice and return to your original dwelling place.*

*Applications can be found on the website [szc.org.au](http://szc.org.au) or hard copies at Annandale and should be sent to the Sesshin Coordinator at Annandale or emailed to Sue Bidwell [sue.bidwell17@gmail.com](mailto:sue.bidwell17@gmail.com) by 4 April for the Early Bird fee. No applications will be accepted after 11 April and there will be an additional 10% cost that last week. Part time is possible from day one, check with Sue.*

### *Two-Week Intensive Practice Period 23 May-5 June at the Guan Yin Zendo, Ashfield with Allan Marett*

*Allan Marett will be leading an intensive practice period at the Guan Yin Zendo (at his home in Ashfield) in the two weeks leading up to the Winter sesshin. This provides an opportunity to deepen your practice through engaging in a more intense daily schedule. Participation is not dependent on your attending the Winter sesshin. You can join it as a stand alone event, though of course, combining the intensive practice period and sesshin provides a unique opportunity for sustained practice.*

*The form of the practice period is as follows:*

- \* Early morning zazen and dokusan each weekday morning from 6.00-7.30am at Ashfield.*
  - \* Evening zazen at Ashfield on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6.30-8.30. Mondays and Wednesday night zazen will, as usual, be at Annandale from 7.00-9.00pm.*
  - \* Weekend study groups at Ashfield on Saturday 24 May and Saturday 31 May from 1-4pm.*
- The training period will begin with a ceremony of commitment on Friday evening, 23 May and end*

*with a closing ceremony on Thursday evening, 5 June.*

*There is no need to attend every activity, but you will be asked to commit to a schedule that suits you and to stick to that schedule. Attendance at the opening and closing ceremonies is compulsory (please contact Allan if this present a problem to you).*

*The Guan Yin Zendo is very small, so places are limited. Please contact Peter Bursky ([mowerman26@hotmail.com](mailto:mowerman26@hotmail.com)) or Allan Marett ([allan.marett@gmail.com](mailto:allan.marett@gmail.com)) as soon as possible if you are interested in attending. If you are unable to attend the zendo in Ashfield, but would still like to participate, we will also be providing a 'virtual zendo' via the web, which will allow you to commit to all or part of our schedule and sit with us in spirit each morning and evening.*

## Winter Sesshin 2014

June 6-13 at Kodoji with Paul Maloney and Allan Marett

Deep winter is the time when, in China and Japan, the most significant retreats of the year are traditionally held. It is a wonderful time to engage with what is: cold in the morning, the steam rising in the paddock in the morning, warm sun at midday (perhaps), the cold drawing down in the late afternoon, cosy *zazen* in the dojo in the evening. The ebb and flow of the day is particularly dramatic at this time of the year and we retreat to the mountains to enjoy it. This sesshin will combine silent sitting and extended walking meditation in the vicinity of Kodoji.

Applications can be found on the website [szc.org.au](http://szc.org.au) or hard copies at Annandale and should be sent to the Sesshin Coordinator at Annandale or emailed to Janet Selby [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com), phone 0421 369 707. Applications close 16 May for the Early Bird fee. No applications will be accepted after 30 May and there will be an additional 10% cost that last week. Part time is possible from day one, check with Janet.

## Announcement of Mari Rhydwen's Transmission

Ross Bolleter will give Transmission to Dr Mari Rhydwen Sensei on 4 October 2014 in Perth WA.

From a letter by Ross: "What shines through for me, and for those who work with Mari, are her love of the Way and her ability to convey it eloquently and vividly. She also brings to the tasks of teaching the energy and love that arise from long practice, and extensive training. It is now Mari Rhydwen Sensei's turn to become a teacher in the fullest sense, and to enlighten people everywhere."

## News From the Board

### Random Acts of Kindness

Thanks to Glenys Jackson for truly refreshing the notice board at Annandale.

The social media profile of SZC is in good shape, thanks to Michael Tierney, Jason Koh and Lee Nutter.

The ANZDSTC required much preparation - Brendon Stewart and Jill Steverson are to be particularly thanked. Sue and Barry Bidwell, and Brendon and Kerry Stewart went to Kodoji, and mowed the grass, tidied and straightened things. Sue did a fantastic job of organizing the medicinal supplies, getting them all in one spot, with sheets of instructions. Everyone is requested to try and keep these in order so that in emergencies everything is easily found. When using, please write down what is taken and why, and replace the boxes as you found them.

Sue Bidwell has been helping Paul Maloney with his "Introduction to Zen" talks by welcoming people and making tea. Glenys Jackson has offered to do the same for Maggie's Gluek's series June 19, 26 and July 3.

Thank you to everyone who helps out in any way:- cleaning (Jane, Helen, Larry, Kim, Julie, Sally); taking leadership roles; washing up, everything helps us all! Look in the Annandale kitchen - NEW (second hand) refrigerator! Brendon and Kerry are donating their mower for Kodoji, as the one up there does not like starting. Jill Steverson covered the *zafus* that the Women made, and organised the making of pot warmers for Kodoji. A huge help! Thank you from us all.

### New members

Georgina Reid, Alex Budlevskis, Thomas Rann and Vanessa Acero Perdomo are very warmly welcomed.

# Notice Board

## Dokusan

### MONDAYS:

Subhana April 7, 28 May 5, 19, 26  
 Allan Marett March 31

### WEDNESDAYS:

Gillian Coote April 2, 9, 30 May 7, 21, 28

## Dharma Café

April 14, 16 7-9pm

## Full Moon Ceremony

May 12, 14 Not Killing  
 Note: Easter Sesshin means no dokusan April 21, 23

## Zazenkaï

May 18 Subhana talk, dokusan  
 No zazenkaï in April as there is Sesshin and Buddha's

## Board Meetings

Birthday on 13 April

Second Tuesday of each month, 6pm sit for 6.30 start:  
 April 8, May 13

## Women's Group

April 11 at Kerry's  
 May 9 at Gillij's

## Early Morning Zazen

Ashfield. SZC members living in or close to the inner west who are interested in early-morning zazen and dokusan are invited to join a small group that sits regularly on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 6-7.30am in Ashfield. Contact either Allan Marett [allan.marett@gmail.com](mailto:allan.marett@gmail.com) 04097127767 or Kim Bagot [kimball67@gmail.com](mailto:kimball67@gmail.com) 0402321277.

# Regular Notices

Gift recipient status for SZC Building Fund  
 The Australian Tax Office has confirmed that we are a DGR, or Deductible Gift Recipient for a fund (the Sydney Zen Centre Building Fund). This restores the status of gifts to the building fund as tax deductible for the donor. If you would like to make a donation to the building fund, simply flag it as such and we will issue a receipt against which you can claim a tax deduction from your income.

### Books for sale

*The Roaring Stream. A New Zen Reader*, ed. Nelson Foster and Jack Shoemaker is on sale at Annandale, along with Robert Atken's books: *Taking the Path of Zen*, *Mind of Clover*, *The Dragon that Never Sleeps*, *Encouraging Words*, *The Morning Star*, *Vegetable Roots Discourse*, *Zen Master Raven* and *The Gateless Barrier*, plus new titles.

### 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 \$15 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 Brendan Stewart, phone 9879 7290, email [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)

### Blue Mountains Zen

The Blue Mountains Zen Group meets on the second and fourth Sunday of each month, from 3-5 p.m., at Paul Maloney's home, 19 Russell Road, Leura. Phone 4784 2136. The meeting is occasionally held at another venue, so it is best to check some days before.

### Canberra Zen Group

Meets on Wednesday evenings.

Please contact Gary for more details: 0429 635 412 email [gcaitcheon@gmail.com](mailto:gcaitcheon@gmail.com)

### Wollongong Sitting Group

Meets on Tuesday evenings, fortnightly from Feb 4.

Please contact Pip Atkins for more details: 0414 496 414 or email [pip.atkins@gmail.com](mailto:pip.atkins@gmail.com)

# Contact Information

Brendon Stewart (chair) [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com), Sue Bidwell (secretary) [sue.bidwell7@gmail.com](mailto:sue.bidwell7@gmail.com), Ameli Tanchitsa (assistant secretary) [Ameli.tanchitsa@gmail.com](mailto:Ameli.tanchitsa@gmail.com), Jason Kohi (Treasurer) [zazender@fastmail.fm](mailto:zazender@fastmail.fm), Michael Tierney (publications) [michaeltierney@rocketmail.com](mailto:michaeltierney@rocketmail.com), Glenys Jackson, Larry Agricesti, Helen Sanderson. Newsletter Editor: Janet Selby [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com)

Sydney Zen Centre, 251 Young Street Annandale NSW 2038 (02) 9660 2993

## SZC Calendar April - May 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 30	31 Zazen 7-9	April 1	2 Zazen 7-9	3	4	5
6	7 Zazen 7-9	8 Board Meeting 6.30	9 Zazen 7-9	10	11 Women's Group Kerry's	12
13 Buddha's Birthday Celebrations 9.30 craft, 11am Ceremony	14 Dharma Cafe 7-9	15	16 Dharma Cafe 7-9	17	18 Easter Sesshin starts at Kodoji	19
20	21 no sitting	22	23 no sitting	24	25 sesshin ends	26
27	28 Zazen 7-9	29	30 Zazen 7-9	May 1	2	3
4	5 Zazen 7-9	6	7 Zazen 7-9	8	9	10
11	12 Full Moon Ceremony Not Killing	13 Board Meeting 6.30	14 Full Moon Ceremony Not Killing	15	16 early bird Winter sesshin	17
18 Zazenkaï 8.30-12 Subhana dokusan and talk	19 Zazen 7-9	20	21 Zazen 7-9	22	23	24
25	26 Zazen 7-9	27	28 Zazen 7-9	29	30 Winter sesshin deadline	31