



NEWSLETTER

Dec 2007-Jan 2008

COMING EVENTS

HONOR THE BUDDHA'S REALISATION with zazen on Friday December 7 from 7pm - 9 pm, and again on Saturday December 8 from 6am to 9am, followed by byo community breakfast. Teacher: Gillian Coote.

ZEN ART SALE at Annandale, Saturday December 15 to 22 10am-4pm

After the wonderful exhibition at St Albans Gallery, those works which didn't sell, plus more contributions from sangha artists, will be available for sale and fundraising on Saturday 15 December. The art will be up on the walls until the following weekend. Beautiful calligraphy, oil paintings, pastels, watercolours, plus lots of ceramic gifts for yourself or friends and family! Enquiries: Janet Selby 9589 4636. Proceeds for Dana for supporting Robert Aitken.



PICNIC IN THE PARK at Annandale, Sunday December 16, 11.30am-5pm, after Zazenkai. In the shelter shed (pictured left) in Federal Park Annandale at the end of Chester Street, near the kiddies' playground. Family members are most welcome. BYO food and drink.

NEW YEAR SESSHIN Friday December 28 - Friday January 4, 2008

at Kodoji, led by Subhana Barzaghi, co-taught by Maggie Gluek. Sesshin coordinator: Tony Miller tonyphilmill@yahoo.com.au; (02) 9987 4312; 0432 566 784. Earlybird: December 14.

WOMEN'S RETREAT Friday January 25 to January 27, 2008

Contact: SZC (02) 9660 2993.

WEEKEND ZAZENKAI February 2-3

Contact: Paul Maloney 4784 2136 or 9514 2519.

REPORTS

MEMORIAL CEREMONY

On November 11, sangha members joined together to remember loved ones, a time of joy and tears which was also being observed throughout Australia as Remembrance Day. Photos of fathers, mothers, grandmothers and friends were placed on the altar with flowers. The sharing circle was truly intimate. This tender space will be held open again next November. *Gillian*

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING was held on Sunday October 21.

Election of Board. The Chairman Nigel dissolved the board, and invited the election of new members.

The people standing for election to the Board: Tony Coote, Britta Beidermann, Sally Hopkins, Nigel Pearn, Janet Selby, Allan Marett, Will Moon. All elected.

Grievance Committee Members and Sub Committee Members. The current members are willing to continue their “non-job”: Kim Bagot, Glenys Jackson and Sally Hopkins.

The sub committee is: Julie Robinson, Kim McShane and Allan Maratt who replaces Greg Try.

Co-ordinating Teacher’s Report: Gilly Coote – abbreviated (Ed.)

As coordinating teacher again this year, my agreement with SZC has included offering dokusan on Wednesdays, setting up the Roaring Stream study group, leading the Manjusri sesshin and spring sesshin, liaising with MMC editors and contributors to Zen & the Arts retreats, attending SZC Board meetings, giving public talks to university Buddhist groups, and participating in the Diamond Sangha Teachers’ Circle teisho project.

SZC was set up to support Zen Buddhist practice; for many years Aitken Roshi then John Tarrant flew in to lead just the one sesshin a year; and between visits, practice *was* sangha. Shirley Cooper, who died in August, was a link to our beginnings.

SZC has an abundance of dharma with two resident teachers and two apprentice teachers and there is no shortage of sesshin, no shortage of opportunities to work with a teacher. Our task as a group of teachers is the same as everybody’s - to embody the Buddha’s way, modelling respect and generosity.

We teachers met recently and articulated a mandala of Zen practice, a many-petaled flower with zazen - breath counting, shikantaza and koan work - at the centre. The petals include the precepts and ethics, which are our focus in the bi-monthly Full Moon Ceremony; daily life practice at work and with family, the history and background of Zen Buddhism, which is our focus during the study groups, samu or work service, the body, creativity - Zen and the arts, and Engaged Buddhism - all interdependent aspects of the Way. These will be the focus of zazenkai talks in the months to come.

Our website now has a new look which reflects the many petals of our practice. This renewal project began last October when Glenys Jackson visualized how the site could express more vividly who we are. After months of work, it was completed, with technical input from Selena Cross, her d-in-law.

It is a pleasure to arrive at Annandale and be greeted by the well-loved dojo and hojo, thanks to Sally’s flowers, Sally’s care. To find dojo leaders at the ready and senior students willing to offer orientations to newcomers. This past year has been one of steady practice and growth - there were three first-timers at our spring sesshin - and on Wednesday nights, the sutras are dynamic and zazen is strong.

There have been two energetic samu weekends at Gorricks Run, with wattles cleared, new shower cubicles built, and work to the kitchen; there was also a day of samu at Annandale. Samu is an integral part of our practice, giving time to build sangha and finding inexhaustible treasures. Kodoji would not exist without samu. It is one of the petals of our mandala.

Other petals were the Roaring Stream study groups which deepened our understanding of the teachers and their poems and texts; the bi-monthly Full Moon ceremonies where the sangha expression of ethical living has been inspiring; the art petal with the Kodoji Treasure Book retreat led by Glenys and Janet, and the women’s group which continues to offer a space for intimacy and connection.

There have been two baby-naming ceremonies, and an inaugural memorial ceremony since last AGM.

I am always grateful to those people who give their time and expertise to help with the administration of the Zen Centre - especially Sally Hopkins and Tony Coote who have served us for many years on the Board ; to Janet Selby, for her fine work on the newsletter; to the editors and contributors to Mind Moon Circle this year; and to Angela and Jean for their sesshin co-ordination. A special thanks to Sarah Walls, who retires from the Board this year.

Finally, I am one of three signatories to this letter of late September, announcing the launch of the Dana for Aitken Roshi campaign. Roshi as you may know, is now ninety and living at Palolo Zen Centre with excellent 24 hour nursing and secretarial support. Unfortunately, his assets are rapidly being depleted, hence the Dana campaign. We owe so much to Aitken Roshi. We wouldn’t be here today if it weren’t for his efforts, his generosity, his embodiment of the Way.

I encourage each of you to take a copy of the letter, which also has information in the form of Q & A, and a pledge form, and consider making your own individual pledge or donation.

The mutuality of giving is at the heart of our practice, so let's think outside the square; Roshi will benefit, and our sangha will grow all the stronger with our heartfelt efforts.

Teacher's Report: Subhana Barzaghi – abbreviated (Ed.)

Subhana proposed a more cohesive approach to our practice by outlining a more systemised map of practice – The Eight Gates of Zen.

Dharma Gates are endless I vow to wake to them

The four Noble truths and the Eightfold Path constitute the Buddha's original teachings of putting an end to suffering. For spiritual practice to be transformative it must embrace every aspect of our daily lives. Zen Buddhism has two primary goals. The first is insight into the great matter – Self nature which is subtle and mysterious. The second is the great function – the manifestation of that insight in daily life in order to take up the project of saving all beings. The eight gates of Zen have been inspired by the Buddha's original teachings and variations on the theme are a modern day expression of the Path.

The eight-fold Path is:- Right view/understanding, Right thought/intention, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration, Right Action, Right Speech, Right Livelihood and Right Effort.

Zazen: Formal seated meditation practice is the cornerstone of Zen training a foundational practice for developing insight and awakening. The practices include, mindfulness of breathing, koan practice and shikentaza 'just sitting'. Zazen is based on Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration

Body Practice: This area of training is based on the first foundation of mindfulness in the Sattipathna sutra, which explores the physical body of sensation, breath, posture and movement as a vehicle for self-realisation. As the body is a temple for our practice, it requires mindfulness, maintenance, care, kindness and attention to health, diet and well-being.

Sutra Study: As many Buddhist practitioners in the West are not familiar with the philosophical and psychological underpinnings of the tradition, the study of sutras, texts and commentaries is very important to help us establish sound religious practice. Sutra Study is often held in the afternoon following Zazenkai and has also been included in retreats.

Ethics and Precepts: This is the study and practice of the 16 Bodhisattva precepts, based on the philosophy of ahimsa, the way of non-violence, the moral and ethical teachings of the Buddha. Ethics is based on three aspects of the 8 Fold path - Right speech, right action and right intention. The community leads a full moon precept ceremony which discusses one of the 10 grave precepts each month.

Engaged Buddhism: An engaged Buddhist practice is taking our practice from the cushion to the streets, it is the embodiment of compassion as the selfless activity of the awakened mind. Buddhist Peace Fellowship has always been an example of Buddhist social non-violent action. The famous dictum, "There is no way to peace, peace is the way" guides us in how to stand up to injustices in a constructive manner.

Dharma in daily life: Focuses on how to embody these wise and compassionate teachings and integrate them into our daily life. With mindfulness, the miracle of "drawing water and cutting wood", and in fact every dimension of our lives is transformed into enlightened activity.

Work Practice & Samu: Right Livelihood is the expression of our practice at work. Work can be like sitting on our cushions, as we engage with others at work, we find we are constantly challenged to maintain our integrity and mindfulness. Samu practice at Kodoji Temple is threaded throughout the yearly calendar.

Zen & Arts: Zen has a long history of association with the Arts. The arts are an aesthetic appreciation and expression of an illuminated mind. Sydney Zen Centre fortunately has several resident artists who have hosted Zen & Arts retreats over the years.

"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed", - Albert Einstein.

NOTICE BOARD

FULL MOON CEREMONY

January 21, 23 Precepts to be discussed – I take up the way of Not discussing Faults of Others.

ZAZENKAI at ANNANDALE -

December 16 **8.30 am– 12pm** Dokusan Paul Maloney, talk Janet Selby.

January 20 **8.30 am– 12pm** Gillian Coote, dokusan, talk on samu/work practice Gillian Coote.

WOMEN'S GROUP The women's group is open to SZC female members. If you are interested in joining, and want to find out more about the nature of the group and how we operate, please just link into the group and ask any questions. Next meeting is scheduled for Friday December 14 at Glenys Jackson's in Leichhardt.

ORIENTATIONS: Monday evenings 6pm, Wednesday evenings 6.45pm

- for newcomers to receive orientation to the practice.

Monday evenings : Please email Caroline Josephs (cjosephs@tpg.com.au), Maggie Gluek magpiewarble@yahoo.com (), Tony Miller (tonyphilmill@yahoo.com.au) or Sue (suebazbi@bigpond.net.au) to book.

Wednesday evenings : Call Janet Selby on 9589 4636 or just turn up at 6.45pm for an introduction to the practice.

USE OF KODOJI ZENDO 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. Enquiries to Brendan Stewart - phone 9879 7290, email br.stewart@uws.edu.au

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 (in our case 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.

NEW WEB PAGE You may have already noticed that SZC's refurbished website is up and running. If you haven't seen it yet, please have a look.

BOOKS FOR SALE

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

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Jobs requiring volunteers: Editor for Mind Moon Circle for one edition in 2008, Sesshin food buying, Occasional hojo and dojo cleaning and flowers, Tapes on discs, An eye on the library.

Also – any regular sitter willing to take up a Leader's role for evening zazen, please see a Leader.

THANKS

Thanks from all of us to those who do these roles and the orientations: Sue Bidwell, Maggie Gluek, Glenys Jackson, Caroline Josephs, Kim McShane, Tony Miller, Janet Selby, Kim Bagot, Jean Brick, Brian Gutkin, Sally Hopkins, Andrew Judge, Belinda Kyte, Allan Maret, Angela Neville, Jill Siverson, Bruce Turner, Larry Agriesti, Simon Aylott, Britta Biedermann, Yvonne Hales, Greg Try, Jonathon Case, Doug Mason.

As a sangha, as in the world, we function through supporting each other. We are grateful for all the time and effort and wisdom of Subhana, Gilly, Paul and Maggie. We wish to thank the following who have taken up tasks for the new year - Sesshin coordinators: Angela Neville and Tony Miller, Sesshin treasurer: Bruce Turner and Karen Davis, Newsletter: Doug Mason (to June) then Jean Brick.

REGULAR DATES

Dokusan – Mondays: Subhana November 26, December 3, 10, 17, January 7, 14, 21
Maggie Gluek January 28

Wednesdays: Gilly Coote November 26, December 3, 10, 17
(No dokusan December 24, 26, 31, January 1.)

Full Moon Ceremony – November 26, 28: *I take up the way of not discussing faults of others.*
January 21, 23: Precepts recitation.: *Not discussing Faults of Others.*

Zazenkai at Annandale

December 16 8.30 – 12 noon – Paul Maloney dokusan, Janet Selby talk.
January 20 8.30 – 12 noon – Gilly Coote dokusan, Kim Bagot talk.

Blue Mountains Zen Blue Mountains Zen Group. At Patrick Kearney's place, Woodford. Contact Paul Maloney, for meeting times. Phone 4784 2136 or 9514 2519.

Canberra Zen Group Wednesday evenings fortnightly at 7.45 at the Orana School in Weston. Contact Tony Shields for details – email: tshields@netspeed.com.au, phone 6262-5150

Braidwood Zen meet weekly on Tuesdays at 5.30pm. Casual trippers through Braidwood of course particularly welcome. Contact Nicola on (02) 4846 1075 or email: geemonga@bigpond.com

Board Meetings are held on 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm (with zazen at 7pm beforehand). All SZC members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Next meetings are on December 11 and January 8.

Full minutes of every board meeting are posted on the notice board at Annandale for public perusal.



CONTACT INFORMATION

SZC (02) 9660 2993 www.szc.org.au

Members of the Board: Nigel Pearn (Chairman), Tony Coote (Treasurer), Britta Biedermann and Will Moon (Secretary), Janet Selby (Minutes Secretary), Sally Hopkins, Allan Marett, John Merson (representing Blue Mountains). **Teachers:** Subhana Bazaghi, Gillian Coote **Apprentice Teachers** - Paul Maloney (w) 9514-2519; Maggie Gluek 9987 4312 **Practice leaders** – various (Monday nights); Janet Selby 9589 4636 (Wednesday nights) **Newsletter editor** – Doug Mason dougmason@ozemail.com.au

SANGHA-RELATED EVENTS

KODOJI & ZEN ART EXHIBITION Closes December 9

Last opportunity to visit St Albans Art Gallery on Friday 7, Saturday 8, Sunday 9 December to see the exhibition of paintings, calligraphy, sculptures, textiles, photographs from sangha artists.

Enquiries [Janet janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com)

SZC Calendar December 2007-January 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
November 25	26 Full Moon Ceremony Not discussing Faults of others	27	28 Full Moon Ceremony Not discussing Faults of others	29	30	December 1
2	3 Zazen 7-9pm	4	5 Zazen 7-9pm	6	7 Honouring the Buddha's realisation (Gilly) 7-9pm	8 Honouring the Buddha's realisation (Gilly) 6-9am
9	10 Zazen 7-9pm	11 Board Meeting	12 Zazen 7-9pm	13	14 Women's Group (Glenys')	15 Zen Art Sale at Annandale (continuing to Dec 22)
16 ZAZENKAI 8.30-12 Dokusan Paul Talk Janet Selby 11.30-5 Picnic in the Park	17 Zazen 7-9pm	18	19 Zazen 7-9pm	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 New Year Sesshin	29
30	31	January 1	2	3	4 New Year Sesshin ends	5
6	7 Zazen 7-9pm	8 Board Meeting	9 Zazen 7-9pm	10	11	12
13	14 Zazen 7-9pm	15	16 Zazen 7-9pm	17	18	19
20 ZAZENKAI 8.30-12 Dokusan Gilly, Talk Gilly	21 Zazen 7-9pm	22	23 Zazen 7-9pm	24	25 Women's Retreat	26
27 Women's Retreat	28 Zazen 7-9pm	29	30 Zazen 7-9pm	31	February 1	2 Weekend Sesshin Paul Maloney

This newsletter is available on our web site: www.szc.org.au