



NEWSLETTER



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Encouraging Words from the Teacher



A primary goal of our Zen practice is to see into our self-nature, also called Buddha Nature. As the historical Buddha is said to have realised on his Awakening,

All beings by nature are Buddha, only their delusions and attachments prevent them from realising this fact.

The question, “What is Buddha?” or, “What is Buddha Nature?” is a constant theme within Zen Buddhism. Hakuin Zenji, in his *Song of Zazen*, declares that not only are all things Buddha, but also there is no Buddha apart from all things. So Buddha nature is not independent of all things, and hence immune to change and modification. Buddha Nature is empty of self-existence and shares its workings with all beings. Buddha Nature does not reveal itself IN the world but AS the world. The Currawong’s evening song is the voice of Buddha Nature, the gold of the Wattle its colour, and the sandstone cliffs its form. The Cosmos is Buddha nature singing itself as the green valley, the stars and the sky such that,

Birds and trees and we ourselves come forth in perfect harmony.

And it sings itself as you and me – each of us is a phrase, some short some long, in the great symphony of life. We are the singers and the song. As the Cosmos, and all that is in it, is a song, it can only be experienced as the present moment. And, like a song, it has no substance. It just is when it is. And we can perhaps gain a new perspective on the statements, “All is change,” “all is empty,” “all is without self,” “all is such as it is.” This describes a cosmos that is all music and only music, a music that spontaneously comes forth from Emptiness.

When we first hear this music we start to dance the Great Dance that never ends. And we find ourselves dancing with everything, from the smallest particle to the greatest galactic cluster. This means that our “singing” Buddha nature is an existential challenge to each of us, something that we face every day. We have a responsibility to tune ourselves, fashion the instrument/song that allows for the maximum realisation of our potential. Our practice is the tuning of the musical instrument – our body/mind – to bring forth the music that is Buddha nature. Then we realise the truth of Hakuin’s words that,

*Nirvana is right here before our eyes
This very place is the Lotus Land
This very body the Buddha*

Paul Seizan Maloney

Reports

Spring Sesshin 19-26 September

SPRING SESSHIN at KODOJI was led by Gillian Coote, who dedicated sesshin to the ailing Thich Nhat Hanh. Maggie Gluek was invited to give teisho and dokusan on one day. Thanks to our teachers, the leaders, Will Moon, Stuart Solzberg, Andrew Judge, Jane Andino, and especially Jill Stevenson who did so much in preparation, (helped by Sue Bidwell).

It was an intimate sesshin, quiet and harmonious, with our sole food server eating with everyone in the dojo. We were all together, everyone sharing sometimes more than one task, with joy in the sharing. The days were lovely and mild, the nights full of stars, with the added blessing of one wild storm. Veranda kinhin gave us all the chance to notice the changing lights of a full day. The paddock was full of golden buttercups, the air full of birdsong from dawn to dusk. We enjoyed the frogs' croaking down in the night creek, standing under the astonishing starry sky, walking by David Englebrecht's memorial pole and remembering other sangha members no longer with us. We contemplated the scorched Bush Buddha. Scorched too was the plastic pipe to the showers when a spark set paper and twigs alight but further damage was prevented by the very swift mindful throwing of buckets of water. We were especially honoured to be present for Jason Koh's Jukai Ceremony and hear his offering of responses to the Precepts, a solemn and special time for us all. A joyful time.

- Sally Hopkins -



DECEMBER 2014- JANUARY 2015



Photos: Tony Coote

Concert at Old Darlington School, 11 October

It was such a wonderful concert, a very special event. I felt very proud to be part of such a talented mob of musicians, poets, performers, singers. Well done, well done to all who contributed, especially all the performers who gave so generously of the time, skill , energy and effort. A special thanks to Allan Marett, the musical director, Brian Gutkin for being the producer, and his original songs, Maggie for her songbird voice, Sarah for her poetry, Jane Andino for her nimble piano fingers and her husband Ricardo Andino, guitarist, Drew for his creative percussion improvisation, Leo Kram sweet violinist, Thomas Rann for his deep cello. Peter Bursky guitarist and tea master, who performed a tea ceremony, Subhana and Janet for artistic pieces inspired by Drew's improvisational group SAAN. Michael Tierney for being stage manager and organizational support, Janet Selby for her creative design for the flyer and programme, as well as collection of donations. Thanks to all the audience, guests and members for coming and making it a special night.

About \$1,000 much needed dollars were raised for SZC.

Love Subhana.



AGM and General Meeting

19 October 2014

At the AGM and General Meeting a new Board, the Management arm of SZC, was elected after reports from Brendon Stewart (Chair) and Jason Koh (Treasurer). We all thank the members of the past Board for all their hard work on our behalf. The new Board is:

Brendon Stewart, Jason Koh, Sue Bidwell, Glenys Jackson, Larry Agriesti,, Helen Sanderson, Michael Tierney, Kerry Stewart.

In the General Meeting the Teachers gave their reports, the jobs for 2014-15 were partly filled, and there was prolonged discussion on two points arising.

One: for the second year running we are about \$7,000 in the red. This is a situation that cannot continue yet possible remedies are pretty limited. Some members just don't get around to paying their pledges, yet we cannot survive without us all doing so. ZOC no longer rent Kodoji and it is very hard to see how to make good this loss. Renting Kodoji is not easy. On the whole groups these days expect more physical comforts than Kodoji provides. Kodoji, a dream, an asset, an expense, a place so valued by us all. Rents for residents, membership fees, sesshin, charges for Orientation were spoken about. Non-residential weekend retreats run by Teachers at Annandale, perhaps more oriented towards Mindfulness, or the Arts, were suggested. All suggestions very welcome. We all value this community, and as we were reminded, we all have a responsibility for carrying on the legacy we have received, for those to come. We can't just expect it to continue without us all playing our part- we are all needed.

Two: the question of where we practice together in the future. There will come some point, Gilly and Tony ageing, that there will be an end to us being able to rent 251 Young Street. People spoke of the importance of non-material assets, of the importance of Place, of having a Hub. Will Moon is looking to hone questions to put to us all on this important matter. The future is always unknown, but this work is to make it possible for SZC to make good decisions when the time comes to move, good decisions for the continuance of the Sangha – our great Treasure, and the continuance of the Teaching passed on to us.

JOBS

Publications Committee – over seeing MMC, Newsletter, Sesshin /Events flyers etc: Michael Tierney MORE NEEDED (MMC- NEEDED editors for Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer in 2015.

Roster for Leadership Roles: Sarah Sherringham/Yvonne Hales when Sarah leaves.

Complaints and Ethics Committee: Jill Stevenson, Larry Agriesti, Diana Levy (backed up by: Janet Selby, Neryl Grady, Glenys Jackson)

Cleaning roster : Sally Hopkins

Flowers: Glenys Jackson

Webmaster: Lee Nutter

Email Enquiries: Janet Selby

Sesshin Flyers: Janet Selby

Leadership Training: Peter Bursky, Sue Bidwell, Janet Selby

Sesshin Coordinators: Winter: Lesley Treleaven. Spring:Janet Selby. Rohatsu: Jane Andino. Easter Sesshin and Transmission for Maggie Gluek: Diana Levy and Jillian Ball

Sesshin Food: Jill Stevenson

Newsletter: Diego Olivero, Sally Hopkins Info gatherer.

Library: Sue Bidwell, Glenys Jackson

Samu Coordinator: Tony Coote

Dojo Furnishings: Glenys Jackson

Artefacts: Kerry Stewart

It will be noted that some people are doing many jobs- more helpers would be appreciated. Small groups need all hands.

-Sally Hopkins-

Coming Events

ROHATSU SESSHIN

Thursdays evening 4 December to lunchtime 8 December

We will be celebrating the enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha, and will be lead by Allan Marett at Annandale. Applications closed on November 28. Zazen will be as usual on the Monday evening.

ART SALE

December 13-14 at Annandale 10am-3pm, Saturday and Sunday

Art Sale by members of Sydney Zen Centre. Including paintings, sculpture, pottery, books, hand made greeting cards, quality second hand goods.

Bring your friends, bring your wallet. Raising funds for SZC with our talented members.
Enquiries: Janet Selby 0421 369 707

INTRODUCTION to ZEN course to be held in March/April led by Paul Maloney

SAMU at KODOJI

The family friendly work practice weekend, will be over March 21-22, so put that into your diaries.

TRANSMISSION SESSHIN

April 3-12 at Kodoji

Led by Subhana Barzaghi and Maggie Gluek ,with the Transmission Ceremony for Maggie on Saturday April 11.

This is a very special sesshin leading up to the Ceremony for Maggie Gluek to make her a Full Teacher in the Diamond Sangha after all her years of dedicated work for us all as an Apprentice Teacher. There will be much more information about this in the future, but please note the dates.

Easter Sesshin and Transmission Ceremony Organisers:

Contact either Diana Levy or Jillian Ball. Please don't hesitate to use the telephone. It's a wonderful invention that enables a conversation, and that sometimes prevents muddles.

Diana - Phone: 61 02 4751 3935 Mobile: 0432 619 305 Email: diana.r.levy@gmail.com

Jill – Phone: 61 02 9665 0172 Mobile: 0407 400 126 Email: jillianball@bigpond.com

Book launch

After the AGM on Sunday October 19, Star and Mountain was introduced to the sangha. This beautiful little book, packed with treasures - poems by Sally Hopkins and brush paintings by Glenys Jackson - would be a wonderful gift and at \$20, a fundraiser for SZC. Star and Mountain can be bought at Annandale, and will soon be available on our website.

- Gillian Coote -



News from the Board

- The new Board for 2014-15 is chaired by Brendon Stewart, Jason Koh is continuing as Treasurer, and Sue Bidwell, aided occasionally by Helen Sanderson, has continued as Secretary and Minutes taker. Thank you to them (these are not little jobs!) and all the rest of the new Board, Larry Agriesti, Yvonne Hales, Glenys Jackson, Michael Tierney, and Kerry Stewart.
- The board has resolved to put in place a financial strategy to help manage our current difficulties. Jason has provided us with a comprehensive account of major and minor costs with some suggested changes. The board will now act on his suggestions. In the first instance the board will not endorse any unnecessary expenses. The cost of staying over at Gorrick's will go up to \$20 for members, \$30 for non members. The food supplies for Sesshin will be economically planned including how much is purchased (there is often a considerable wastage) and the shopping costs. No landline phone at Annandale, saving \$300 pa. The board will review, in consultation with our accountant the annual auditing fee. (The annual fee of \$2,310 can be reduced if we cease to be an Incorporated Organization). We will not buy any new books this financial year, and changes will be made to the wording of our pledge forms making it "fee for membership" not "pledge". All non-members will be asked to contribute a \$10 facility fee each time. (Orientations still free). The words will reflect that while the Dharma is free, the facility isn't; we have to meet rental and amenities costs.
- Catering and preparation for the Transmission ceremony next year will be done by sangha members.
- Sangha members are asked to keep in mind that membership fees are renewed each financial year, that is, from July to July.
- LIBRARY BOOKS to be returned. These have been out more than 10 months. *Please search your bookcases:*

My People's Dreaming: Max Dulmumun Harrison.

The Light inside the Dark: John Tarrant

Zen Mind Beginners Mind: Suzuki

Mind of Clover, and Encouraging Words: Robert Aitken

The Portable Jung: Joseph Campbell

Notice Board

Dokusan	Board Meetings
Mondays: Subhana : December: 1, 15 Allan Maret: January 12, 19	Second Tuesday of each month, 6pm zazen 6.30pm start. December 9, January 13
Wednesday: Gillian: December: 3, 17 <i>No sitting on Christmas and New Years Eves.</i> January: 14, 21, 28	Women's Group
Dharma Café	December 12 - Lesley's January 9- TBA
December 8 + 10 7-9pm	Early Morning Zazen
Full Moon Ceremony	ASHFIELD. SZC members living around the inner west are invited to join a small group that meet regularly for zazen and dokusan at Allan Maret's home in Ashfield on Tuesday mornings (6.00-7.30am) and Thursday evenings (6.30-8.30pm). Please contact either Allan Maret allan.marett@gmail.com 04097127767 or Kim Bagot kimballb7@gmail.com 0402321277 for details.
Zazenkai	
January 18, 8.30-12 Teisho and dokusan Allan Maret	

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 Aitken'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

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

Wollongong Sitting Group

Meets on Tuesday evenings, fortnightly.
Please contact Pip Atkins for more details:
0414 496 414 or email pip.atkins@gmail.com

Contact Information

Brendon Stewart (chair) stewarts34@bigpond.com, Sue Bidwell (secretary) sue.bidwell17@gmail.com, Jason Koh (Treasurer) zazender@fastmail.fm, Michael Tierney (publications) michaeltierney1@rocketmail.com, Glenys Jackson, Larry Agriesti, Helen Sanderson, Kerry Stewart, Yvonne Hales. Newsletter Editor: Diego Olivieri

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SZC Calendar December 2014-January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 zazen 7-9	2	3 zazen 7-9	4 Rohatsu Sesshin at Annandale	5 Rohatsu	6 Rohatsu
7 Rohatsu	8 Rohatsu close Dharma Café 7-9	9 Board Meeting 6pm 6.30 start	10 Dharma Café 7-9	11	12 Women's group Lesley's	13 Art sale at Annandale 10-3pm
14 Art Sale at Annandale 10-3pm	15 zazen 7-9	16	17 zazen 7-9	18	19	20
21	22 zazen 7-9	23	24 no zazen	25	26	27
28	29 zazen 7-9	30	31 no zazen	2015 Jan 1	2	3
4	5 Full Moon Ceremony not giving or taking drugs	6	7 Full Moon Ceremony not giving or taking drugs	8	9 Womens group TBA	10
11	12 Zazen 7-9	13 Board Meeting 6pm 6.30 start	14 zazen 7-9	15	16	17
18 Zazenkai 8.30-12 Teisho and dokusan Allan Marett	19 zazen 7-9	20	21 zazen 7-9	22	23	24
25	26 zazen 7-9	27	28 zazen 7-9	29	30	31