



REPORTS

ROHATSU December 8-11, 2011



This Rohatsu Sesshin, led by Maggie Gluek, started on the evening of 8th December, the traditional day for ending the sesshin, and continued on over the weekend. This worked well. Sixteen people sat in the midst of Annandale, absorbing Maggie's very helpful teishos and her strong, gentle presence, and supported by the intense practice of all. Thanks are due to Gail Burrell-Davis for organising, and Allan Marett for help with logistics, and the leaders, Allan Marett, Lee Nutter and Janet Selby, and especially Maggie.

SAMU at Kodoji in November 2011 *Report by Tony and Gilly Cooté*

You can generally expect to have some sort of adventure whenever you go to Gorricks Run and last weekend was no exception.

Gilly and I went up on Friday after picking up a load of timber to complete the lining of the kitchen and teacher's room. We got there at around 5pm, just in time to see a strange red dog on the track up to the zendo - it looked like a pup and we had a number of other sightings of this dog and another much darker one while we were there (this was reported to appropriate authorities).

Greg and Carl arrived about 20 minutes later together with Britta and Raph, who had decided that the creek was too deep for their Golf to safely navigate. What amazing timing - Greg and Carl had arrived just as they were about to turn back. Britta and Raph left their car next to the road on the flat before the creek crossing.

Next day work began in drizzling rain, which eventually eased off. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to us, an enormous volume of water was heading down the Macdonald River from the Hunter Valley. On Sunday morning we got a phone call from our neighbours from down at the river to say that a car belonging to one of our members was bogged on the road down to the crossing - It was Sue and Barry's car, which had stalled and become flooded. They were lucky to get out of it because the car's doors and windows had automatically locked when the water got into the engine. Luckily they were able to climb out through the rear door. Sue might expand in more detail about the retrieval of the car, the hospitality and care extended by our neighbours, Warwick and Jane Blacker, the write-off of the car and their eventual return to Sydney. She has photos of her waterlogged car too.



Following that phone call we all set off down to the river in Greg's car to see what we could see but were stopped by the creek crossing which was completely impassable even on foot - it was backed up from the river which, according to Warren Bailey, was at one point on Saturday night 3 metres over the crossing. It was still very high on Sunday morning. We could see the Golf on the other side of the river sitting in a lake of water about half-way up its wheels.

The end result of all this was that we stayed at Kodoji until Tuesday afternoon. When we

made it out the crossing was still running quite strongly (see photo). It was OK for Greg's car and our Outback but probably too strong for the Golf, which was damp but not damaged, so we left it there on slightly higher ground.

The good side of the flood was that we had two more working days of samu, and an enormous amount was achieved, including:

- Massive tree removal from behind the showers and toilets (thanks to Greg Carty's extraordinary swordsmanship in wielding the chain saw (and later the bow saw after he'd run out of chain oil) with amazing precision)
- Cutting and stacking about two years supply of firewood (it needs to dry out for about 12 months before it can be split and used in the stoves)
- Completion of the plywood lining to the walls and ceiling of the kitchen extension and the partial completion of the cover strips and door and window architraves.
- Mowing a really good cleared area around the buildings
- Cleaning windows
- Repairing oryoki cloths, zafus and cushions
- Weeding and trimming rootstock growth from the extraordinarily flowering chestnut trees
- Cooking (fabulous food, which miraculously lasted right up until Tuesday) and washing up
- A trip to the swimming hole on Tuesday morning - there is a real need to clear a proper track between the creek crossing at the end of the road and the beginning of the track.

The rain also meant that the waterfall was roaring so, like the monks in the odd Korean movie, we were able to get in some traditional nude-waterfall-meditation practice.

The other good side of being stranded was meeting neighbours Ant and Sam Luck, from Boree Bills at the head of the valley (owned by Sam's mum, Eve Harmon), and new neighbour Nola who moved into Birdsford Cottage three weeks ago, with her two lovely donkeys Rosie and Jitterbug.

The Bureau of Meteorology has put the increased rainfall and flooding down to La Nina, which is currently in full swing and will continue for the whole of summer. Paradoxically, this wetness increases the fire danger.



A front page article in this morning's SMH states:

Record-breaking rains have created a perfect storm for the Rural Fire Service, which is facing dangerous grassland conditions not seen for 40 years. Just one hot, dry day will be enough to ignite vast spans of grassland across western and central NSW. Last night a grassfire sparked by a lightning strike at Jerilderie, in the southern Riverina district, was still burning.

"You've got to go back to the early '70s when we had the last big drought-breaking rains to find similar conditions in terms of the abundance and continuous nature of grassland," said the RFS commissioner, Shane Fitzsimmons, "That's the real challenge for us. Once grass grows and it dies off, it's tall, it's dead, it's very dry and it'll spread three times faster than a bushfire."

The zendo is now much better prepared for a fire. We may also consider having the paddock slashed later.

Tony and Gilly Coote

Evening with FATHER AMA SAMY

On Friday 16 December Father Ama Samy, a Zen master with Ancestors in common with the Diamond Sangha, and a Jesuit priest, gave a talk at Annandale that was much appreciated.

COMING EVENTS

AUTUMN SESHIN at Kodoji April 6-13 (Easter holiday)



led by Subhana and Maggie Gluek

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.

Early Bird March 23, applications close on 30 March. See www.szc.org.au or application forms on the table at Annandale.

TEACHER'S CIRCLE February 24-27

Australian and New Zealand Diamond Sangha Teachers Circle will be meeting at Kodoji on February 24-27 followed by a Teachers' Panel at Annandale on 27th February. SZC is hosting this event so anyone who can help with transport, food buying and transport, or accommodation please contact: Brendon Stewart br.stewart@uws.edu.au or Allan Marett allan.marett@gmail.com or Gillian Coote gillian@gilliancoote.com

SAMU at KODOJI March 30 - April 1

This Samu will prepare Kodoji for Easter Sesshin. Tony Coote, Works Coordinator, will let us know nearer the time, exactly what will be happening. A great opportunity for Work practice, Sangha friendship, and intimacy with grasses, stars, and birds.

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY and Baby NAMING CEREMONY April 15

The Annual Buddha's Birthday celebrations start at 9.30 with fun for the young making art things in the garden with Janet. The Ceremony begins at 10.30 when any little babies can be NAMED. This is always a joyful day of families and children, laughter, songs, poems, and much love. A potluck lunch follows.

Anyone wishing their child to be included in the Naming, please Contact: Gilly Coote: gillian@gilliancoote.com

NEWS from the BOARD

Thank you to all who are offering their time on the Board for the benefit of us all:

Chair: Brendon Stewart

Assistant Chair: Lee Nutter

Treasurer: Meghan Hay

Assistant Treasurer: Gail Burrell-Davis

Secretary: Gordon Waters

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. Try giving the family a wonderful weekend, or yourself a few days of private retreat? Enquiries to Brendan Stewart - phone 9879 7290, email br.stewart@uws.edu.au

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. The address is 19 Russell Road, Leura. Phone 4784 2136. The meeting is occasionally held at another venue, so it is best to check some days before, should one think of joining us for a sit.

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

Laughing Kookaburra Meditation Group (Woy Woy): Join us for a sit and a cup of tea, we meet 1-2 times per month on Thursday nights from 7-9pm, dates TBA, at Stuart and Tara's house in Woy Woy. Please contact Stuart for details: email: ssolzberg@gmail.com mobile: 0424 623 800

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Members of the Board: Brendon Stewart, Meghan Hay, Gail Burrell-Davis, Lee Nutter, Gordon Waters, Sue Bidwell, Harry Tamvakeris, Will Moon, and Kim Bagot. **Teachers:** Subhana Barzaghi, Gillian Coote, Paul Maloney **Apprentice Teacher:** Maggie Gluek.

Newsletter editor Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com



SZC Calendar February – March 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 January	30 Zazen 7-9pm	31	1 February Zazen 7-9pm	2	3	4
5	6 Full Moon Ceremony- Not indulging in Anger 7-9pm	7	8 Full Moon Ceremony- Not indulging in Anger 7-9pm	9 Board Meeting 7pm	10 Womens Group Culburra	11 Womens Group Culburra
12 Womens Group Culburra	13 Zazen 7-9pm	14	15 Zazen 7-9pm	16	17	18
19 Zazenkai 8.30-12.00 Zen in China with Subhana, David Bubna- Litic & Allan Marett	20 Zazen 7-9pm	21	22 Zazen 7-9pm	23	24 Diamond Sangha Teachers Circle Feb 24-26 At Kodoji	25
26 →	27 Teachers' Panel 7pm At Annadale	28	29 Zazen 7-9pm	1 March	2	3
4	5 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm	6	7 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm	8 Board Meeting 7pm	9 Womens Retreata At Kodoji	10
11 →	12 Zazen 7-9pm	13	14 Zazen 7-9pm	15	16	17
18 Zazenkai 8.30-12.00 Talk and Dokusan Gillian Coote	19 Zazen 7-9pm	20	21 Zazen 7-9pm	22	23 Autumn Sesshin early bird deadline	24
25	26 Zazen 7-9pm	27	28 Zazen 7-9pm	29	30 Samu at Kodoji Building and Bushcare March 30- April 1	31