



WORDS FROM THE TEACHERS

Gordon Waters Jukai Ceremony: 9.30am Christmas Eve

This was a true Jukai, Gordon and Anna's sitting room a dojo, the chanting strong. And there was laughter, provoked by some of Gordon's vows, his eyes sparkling, his commitment to the Dharma vivid and joyful. Subhana, Maggie, Allan, Sue Bidwell, Sally and Lee, as well as Gordon's wife Anna, her daughter Jess and grand-daughter Ellie filled the room; later, Gordon said he could feel the sangha supporting him - 'welcoming, gentle, abundant'. A deep gassho to *Sekishin Genkai* - Sincere Heart, Profound Ocean. *Gillian Coote* Photos: *Lee Nutter*



The Year of the Snake: Sloughing It*, Gillian Coote

In 1227, Dogen returned to Japan from four years of study in China, aged 27. He was asked, 'What did you learn?' and said, 'I come back to my homeland with empty hands and a little bit of gentle-heartedness' - gentle-heartedness arising from the realisation that what was understood as 'self' with all its defences and projections is completely empty, with all those familiar delusions and attachments sloughed. Dogen later wrote of this experience of sloughing:

To study the Way is to study the self.

To study the self is to forget the self.

To forget the self is to be actualised by myriad things.

When actualised by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away**.

No trace of realisation remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly. (1)

For Dogen, for us and for the snake, of course, sloughing never ends. On February 10, another Year of the Snake begins. Let's make a commitment to foreground our Zen practice with regular zazen and moment-to-moment practice in daily life and, like Dogen, come back to our homeland with empty hands and a little bit of gentle-heartedness. *Gillian Coote*

Notes:

*slough (rhymes with rough/verb: 1) (of an animal, especially a snake) shed an old skin
 2) get rid of something that is unwanted. Origin perhaps from German *sluwe* 'husk, peel'
 ** In Japanese, 'sloughing off body and mind' is *shinjin datsuraku*.

1) Actualising the Fundamental Point - Genjo-koan, Dogen Zenji, translated by Robert Aitken and Kazuaki Tanahashi.

Image: Zen Brush Year of the Snake by Seiko Morningstar, <http://img1.etsystatic.com/>

Introduction to Zen Meditation Classes, Paul Maloney

For the past several years I have been giving a course on the subject of Meditation for Modern Living, for the Sydney Community College. It is a basic guide of beginning meditation in a Buddhist context, and it attracts people who have various personal reasons for being interested in meditation. The course runs for six weeks, 1.5 hours per week, from 6.00 - 7.30 pm.

In the past there has been some concern that the majority of people who first come to Annandale don't come back, or drop out after a few weeks. In discussions with members of the Board and the other teachers, it was decided that an abbreviated version of this program could serve as a useful introduction to our practice at the Sydney Zen Centre, thereby giving beginners a deeper understanding of our practice, with the possible outcome of increasing our retention rate. So, a pilot program was put on at Annandale in November last year.

There were six participants, three who were already sitting with us, two from the program being run by Peter and Janet in Miranda, and one person who is a professional colleague of another of our members. I am pleased to report that all but one stayed for the whole time. The one who did not attend the fourth week was unable to do so as she was performing at the Sydney Opera House. I guess the opportunity to perform at the Sydney Opera House will always trump listening to me talk.

The pilot program was scheduled to consist of four meetings of 1.5 hours duration, giving a total of six hours, taking place once a week from Thursday 4 October until Thursday 25 October. However, because I felt that what I had done in the time was insufficient, I added one more session, on Thursday 8 November. Following each evening's presentation I emailed extensive follow-up notes to each of the participants. This enabled them to study the theory in their own time.

Participants were encouraged to sit at Annandale while also doing the course.

That meant that during the course I was able to address the participants' needs in appreciating the rationale of our practice and to demystify what we are doing.

Following feedback from the participants, and my own reflections, I proposed that the next course be for two hours, 7 – 9 pm, once a week for three weeks. This will give ample time for introducing the theory and practice of meditation, as well as participants being able to have their questions addressed in a relaxed environment. The next course will start on Thursday 4 April.

Paul Maloney

COMING EVENTS

Women's Weekend at Kodoji, 8-10 March All women members welcome. Contact: Sally Hopkins 9554 9587 hopkins_sally76@dodo.com.au

Samu at Kodoji, Friday 22 - 24 March This is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family, partners, yourselves, to spend the weekend at Kodoji, sitting/working /eating together, while preparing the place for the Autumn Sessin. Contact: Tony Coote 9817 3466

Autumn Sesshin at Kodoji Friday March 29 - April 5

This will be led by Subhana Barzagli and Allan Marett. Easter is very early this year, so your applications will need to be lodged earlier than usual. The **EARLY BIRD cut off is March 15**, and applications **close on March 22**. A limited number of Scholarships (reduced sesshin fees) are available through the Anne-Marie Buescher Scholarship programme to which conditions apply. Scholarship applicants should contact the Treasurer (Gail McCall agaimccall@bigpond.com) and Sesshin Coordinator Jane Andino. Details of the Sesshin will be emailed to all members and will also be on the website (www.szc.org.au) where you can download the application form. Enquiries: Jane Andino janeandino@yahoo.com (02) 4251 4861, Mobile: 0432 355 831

Introduction to Zen Meditation, Thursday Evenings 4, 11, 18 April

Paul Maloney will be offering 3 classes on Thursday 4, 11 and 18 April at Annandale. These will be informal, Q &A, and will cover the fundamentals of Zen practice, such as koan practice, Emptiness, The Great Vows. Notes will be emailed to participants each week on request. Suggested donation \$20 for all the three classes. Bookings: Paul Maloney paul.maloney@internode.on.net

The Buddha's Birthday and Naming Day Celebrations 14 April

This is a joyous family and friends day to celebrate the Baby Buddha, usually starting with craft work in the garden for the young children, (about 9.30am) then a shared ceremony (11am) and a shared potluck meal. Anyone wishing their baby named contact Gillian Coote gillian@gilliancoote.com.

DSTC Cordoba, Argentina 2013

The Diamond Sangha Teachers' Circle is held approximately every 2 years, and this year will be in Cordoba, Argentina from 4-8 February. Gillian Coote and Maggie Gluek will be going. Daniel Terragno, a Chilean, who came out here as an apprentice teacher in 1996 for Subhana's Transmission Sesshin, lives in California but has sanghas also in Chile and Argentina, and they are hosting the meeting. The DSTC was held here in 2006. The Australian/New Zealand teachers also meet every few years.

REPORTS

Rohatsu Sesshin 6-9 December 2012

This sesshin was not held, due to the few numbers applying.

However, six students sat all or part of Monday the 10 December to remember the Buddha's awakening. They were joined by the normal sitting at 7 pm and a Teisho on Rohatsu from Allan Marett.

Frank Dumoo, Marrityevin elder, dear teacher and friend, passed away recently at Wadeye. It was Frank who has nurtured and authorised the evolution of our Ancient Ground song. He was a wise person, who engaged generously with our Way. Mamak Old Man. May you return safely to your home at Perrederr. May you rest in the deep Samadhi of your Dreaming. *Allan Marett*

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Dear Sangha Members,

Your board would like to invite members to join in with a conversation concerning how to plan and think about SZC with a mind to our future structure. The SZC's article of association need some revision especially with regards our relationship to the Hawaii sangha and with regards our teacher arrangements. For these to be changed the sangha will have to convene a special general meeting. The board would like to hear back from members how you think we might strategically plan for the future.

After the AGM the board has asked some people in the Sangha to help with their thoughts as to how we may gently push along our informal conversation about long term strategic planning. No one likes change unless they are driving it, so a lot of thought has to go into the way the change is planned for. The Sangha does have a good working history of change and planning for change: incorporating as a Board governed institution, the gradual building of Kodoji, the decision to seek a teacher, the acceptance and encouragement given to our 'home grown' teachers, planning for annual sesshins to continue into the future. All of these activities imply long-term strategic thinking. They are also fundamental to our core activity.

These notes are developed by way of ideas offered by Andrew Judge, Larry Agriesti, Stuart Solzberg, Kim Bagot, Gordon Waters, Tony Coote. The shared thinking of Michael, Lee and Adrian is also drawn upon.

The Memorandum of Association has all that one would expect concerning a-not-for-profit association. *(There are also some important clauses concerning our relationship with A Teacher (the Roshi) which are now in need or review)* In the event of SZC coming to an end ... any property (after debts) shall not be paid or distributed among members but ... given or transferred to the Diamond Sangha Inc. Hawaii or if that organization was to have come to an end property would be given etc to any bodies whose objectives were similar to SZC's. (words to this effect) Should we reconsider the Hawaii option?

Topics:

Access to teachers and more engagement with teachers

Quite a few people have mentioned this. When it comes to our SZC profile the teachers are clearly a huge asset. Regular Dharma articles in the SZC journal MMC and shorter blog style web publication could come from the growing teaching faculty.

Can the teacher interview structure be organised so as to make for more regular meetings apart from formal dokusan? This might help cater to students who live away from Sydney. Maybe this is a situation of

rethinking 'the teachers' in line with a different use of our social media profiling. Zen blogging, MMC blogging.

Limiting the number of people in the sangha

This might be relevant if we have limited dojo space, especially in the city. (Interestingly our articles of association limit membership to 100). It makes complicit the question of income and maintaining the relevance of SZC to more members. See the web site http://www.dharma-rain.org/?p=stillpoint10_07-July-strategic-planning

Using Gorricks more collaboratively

In previous discussions we have noted that there are now quite a few Zen groups operating in and around Sydney. Kodoji is the only wilderness retreat centre specifically designed for Zen practice. Should we invite other groups to use this facility? And to be part of its management?

Rationalising the Gorricks property

The Gorricks property is quite big, more than 40 hectares, much of this land we never use and rarely visit. (The other side of the creek). Is this an asset if left to return to scrub? Is it an asset to exploit? Could it be subdivided?

Tony Coote responds: A correction: The area of our land at 374 Gorricks Run is **40 acres** (less the area of the public road that bisects it), not 40 hectares. 40 acres is 16.19 hectares.

Further information from the Hawkesbury City Council Local Environmental Plan and the Minimum Subdivision Map:

Zoning: E4 - Environmental Living

Subdivision: *Zoning Map No 11* shows our land coloured red with the notation AB3, which means that the minimum Lot size for subdivision is **40 hectares**

Zone E4 Environmental Living

1 Objectives of zone

- * To provide for low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values.
- * To ensure that residential development does not have an adverse effect on those values.
- * To restrict development on land that is inappropriate for development because of its physical characteristics or bushfire risk.
- * To ensure that land uses are compatible with existing infrastructure, services and facilities and with the environmental capabilities of the land.
- * To encourage existing sustainable agricultural activities.
- * To ensure that development does not create or contribute to rural land use conflicts.
- * To promote the conservation and enhancement of local native vegetation, including the habitat of threatened species, populations and ecological communities by encouraging development to occur in areas already cleared of vegetation.
- * To ensure that development occurs in a way that does not have a significant adverse effect on water catchments, including surface and groundwater quality and flows, land surface conditions and important ecosystems such as waterways.

2 Permitted without consent

Bed and breakfast accommodation; Environmental protection works; Extensive agriculture; Home occupations

3 Permitted with consent

Animal boarding or training establishments; Boarding houses; Boat sheds; Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Camping grounds; Caravan parks; Charter and tourism boating facilities; Child care centres; Community facilities; Dual occupancies (attached); Dwelling houses; Educational establishments; Entertainment facilities; Environmental facilities; Farm buildings; Flood mitigation works; Food and drink premises; Forestry; Health consulting rooms; Helipads; Heliports; Home-based child care; Home industries; Hospitals; Intensive livestock agriculture; Intensive plant agriculture; Jetties; Landscaping material supplies; Moorings; Passenger transport facilities; Places of public worship; Plant nurseries; Public administration buildings; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (indoor); Recreation facilities (outdoor); Registered clubs; Respite day care centres; Roads; Roadside stalls; Rural supplies; Rural workers' dwellings; Sawmill or log processing works; Stock and sale yards; Tourist and visitor accommodation; Transport depots; Truck depots; Veterinary hospitals; Water recreation structures; Water storage facilities

4 Prohibited

Industries; Service stations; Warehouse or distribution centres; Any other development not specified in item 2 or 3

Annandale

We don't have a 99 year lease.

There is a need for a city dojo that can cater for city based sesshins. Does this mean different premises to rent and/or buy?

The rental income from tenants at Annandale is an important component of our annual income.

Could we survive without renting the rooms?

Annandale as a Zen Resource Centre with only a caretaker tenant. How would that be financed as membership and tenants provide much of our income? Like Kodoji, our Annandale dojo has become a purpose designed Zen centre with a library, meditation hall, hojo and a history of running Zen practice in the Sydney region. Again, it is quite possibly the only such place in Australia. Can it work somewhat like the Buddhist library and be a venue and resource for other Zen groups?

Would teachers be prepared to work from the centre on a daily (full time/part time) roster?

Financial asset. We have already invested heavily in the Annandale dojo.

Financial viability

We require sufficient, reliable funds to pay for whatever vision or mission that may be crafted for ourselves. A key question that underlies the viability of any plan for the future must answer these questions: Where will future funding come from? How much will the future cost? What can we afford or not afford?

Social media presence and reach

How to do this effectively and constantly? What is the best platform?

http://www.dharma-rain.org/?p=stillpoint10_07-July-strategic-planning

REGULAR DATES

Dokusan *Mondays:* Subhana: February 4, 11, 18 March 4, 11, 18
 Wednesdays: Gillian Coote: March 6, 13, 20

Full Moon Ceremony: “I take up the way of not lying”, March 25 and 27.

Precept Recitation and Dharma Café: February 25 and 27

Zazenkai: 17 February Paul Maloney offering teisho and dokusan
 17 March Jean Brick offering Dharma talk and Subhana offering dokusan

Women’s Group: 8 February, Sally and Janet at Annandale Zendo;
 8-10 March Weekend at Kodoji (Enquiries Sally 9554 9587)

Orientations: Monday evenings 6pm, Maggie Gluek, magpiewarble@yahoo.com
Wednesday evenings 6.30pm, Janet Selby 0421 369 707, janetselby@bigpond.com

Dojo Leadership Roles: Sue Bidwell is hosting Jiki instruction along with Gail, and she would be happy to teach Jisha to anyone who wishes on a Monday night.

NOTICE BOARD

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.

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.

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 at Wat Dhammatharo on Wednesday evenings. Please contact Gary for more details: mobile 0429 635 412; email gcaitcheon@gmail.com

Laughing Kookaburra Meditation Group (Woy Woy): Maggie Gluek is planning on visiting us every 2-3 months depending on our schedules, 7.30-9pm at the Woy Woy Environment Centre, 267 Blackwall Road. Enquiries: StuartSolzberg ssolzberg@gmail.com

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Members of the Board: Brendon Stewart (chair); Lee Nutter (assistant chair); Meghan Hay (treasurer); Gail Burrell-Davis (assistant treasurer); Gordon Waters (secretary); Sue Bidwell (assistant secretary); Harry Tamvakeras; (assistant secretary); Kim Bagot; Adrian Clement
Teachers: Subhana Barzaghi, Gillian Coote, Paul Maloney
Apprentice Teachers: Maggie Gluek, Allan Marett
Newsletter editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com



Photo: Lee Nutter, Altar at Gordon's Jukai Ceremony

SZC Calendar FEBRUARY - MARCH 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 February	4 Zazen 7-9pm	5	6 Zazen 7-9pm	7	8	9
10	11 Zazen 7-9pm	12	13 Zazen 7-9pm	14	15 Women's Group Annadale	16
17 Zazenkai 8.30-12 Paul Maloney teisho, dokusan	18 Zazen 7-9pm	19	20 Zazen 7-9pm	21	22	23
24	25 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm	26	27 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm	28	1 March	2
3	4 Zazen 7-9pm	5	6 Zazen 7-9pm	7	8 Women's Weekend at Gorricks —————→	9
10 —————→	11 Zazen 7-9pm	12	13 Zazen 7-9pm	14 Board Meeting 6pm sit	15 Early Bird for Autumn Sesshin	16
17 Zazenkai 8.30-12 Jean Brick Dharma talk, Subhana dokusan	18 Zazen 7-9pm	19	20 Zazen 7-9pm	21	22 No more applications for sesshin	23
24	25 Full Moon Ceremony Not Lying	26	27 Full Moon Ceremony Not Lying	28	29 Autumn Sesshin Starts —————→	30
31 —————→	1 April	2	3	4	5 Autumn Sesshin Ends —————→	6