



WORDS FROM THE TEACHERS

Taking Refuge in the Dharma

In life's journey we will all encounter life's beauty, joy, and painful travails, grief & sorrow, the ups and downs. Given our vulnerability as human beings to the forces around us, and these worldly winds of change, where can we take refuge in this fleeting world of dewdrops? What can we have faith in when everything falls apart?

Taking Refuge in the Dharma is taking refuge in the wise and compassionate teachings of liberation. It is taking refuge in the whole Body of knowledge that acts as a map of the territory of a spiritual life and guides and informs us how to practice. What we do on the cushion is related to the teachings and the teachings instruct our practice. Having faith in the dharma is having faith in noble silence, the way of practice, sitting down on the ground, calming the restless mind, letting go, having faith in the great questions that move through the human heart - formal koans that sincere men and women down the generations have taken up and wrestled with. They can open the mind and liberate you. Mu, What is your original face? Who's Hearing?

In painful difficult times I have relied on the dharma teachings and my practice. They are a powerful resource, they offer solace, comfort, guidance, strength of heart and mind. They are so uplifting in trying times. To be honest I don't know how people manage without a practice and path to point the way.

For the most part, we are searching for some security, control and certainty of some kind when actually we have very little control over life events. The recognition that there is no security and certainty, is indeed quite scary, but it is an opportunity to mature and wake up to the bare impermanent reality of life as it is. It may not be the way we want things to turn out, or the way we dreamed, or what is actually right and fair. It's our chance to realise that this mundane life is all there is, and we could see it with new eyes and at long last wake up from our ancient sleep of preconceptions and delusion.

As we dig deeper, it becomes obvious that there is nothing that is stable, or permanent in our experience, inside or outside, nothing that is not touched by the forces of change. The truth that we face is that there is no ground to stand on at all, no base to rely upon. When we see clearly, we see the groundlessness of our being and our dharma practice helps us to abide with equanimity and embrace this transience.

"The next time there is no ground to stand upon, don't consider it an obstacle. Consider it a remarkable stroke of luck. We have no ground to stand on, and at the same time it could soften us and inspire us." (p.117, Chodron (1997).

The middle way teachings invite us to face the truth and grow up. We can find peace wherever we are. Right here and now by neither grasping nor rejecting life, we can discover wakefulness and freedom in the midst of the joys and sorrows of our life. *Subhana*

Ref: Pema Chodron (1997) "When things Fall Apart" – Heart Advice for difficult times, Shambhala, Boston

REPORTS

AUTUMN SESSHIN, KODOJI March 29-April 5

Blessed with good weather and a warm start to the Autumn, this year's Easter sesshin kicked off without a hitch. For some it was their first time sitting sesshin and with a nice healthy mix of the young and old and not much in between, the cautions were settled and we bedded down in our tents for what was the first of many balmy nights.

On the first morning tea was served, or should I say peppermint tea was served and although I saw a few fuming heads around the room, I'm sure it was only due to the early morning wake up. Next up was breakfast and with missing chopsticks and spoons oryoki acquired a metallic, modern flavour which was a hit with the young crowd. Ino instrument's had to be fashioned out of trees and a wasp's nest caused one of the shitters to go out of action for a few days, until we figured out the nest was abandoned. But we weren't done for yet it seems. Lazy Jeff kept our zazen from falling into confusion with his lovely shikantaza insights, guided meditations and quotes from old master Hongzhi. With the onslaught of keen and eager practitioners, Lindy accomplished the impossible, maintaining two

dokusan lines at once, bells and all, and with time slowly dropping away two or three days in everyone settled into the magical samadhi of the forgotten valley.

Subhana guided us with her boundless heart and wisdom and Allan, his first full sesshin as a teacher, showed us the way with beautiful teishos on Mu, Pai-chang's Fox and Chu-chih's One Finger.

Due to the whole hearted effort of everyone involved the rest of the week ran very smoothly but before long the final days were upon us, bringing rain and leech and the accompanying sadness that we had to pack up the tents and zafu's and head home.

It was a sesshin of great love, single fingers and for some a career highlight I'm sure, showing us fully and completely why sesshin is always the best gig in town.



On my return from preparing the biscuits and tea for the sharing I found everyone dancing and singing to one of Maggie's chart topping zen hits and before long Brian was up and at it with his gateless limerick's (please ask one of the leaders for you-tube video links). We'd lost ourselves in the whirling dervish of zen and after final farewells we rolled out of Kodoji with our Easter sesshin show bags full of soy milk, out of date rice cakes and dehydrated peas.

Gassho, Peter Bursky

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY April 14



BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY was celebrated as usual as a family day, with Janet helping the little children make paper cranes in the garden, followed by a ceremony of offerings, flowers, and bathing the Buddha, and especially the naming of the tiny new son of Judy Belnick and Mark Morris. A joyful day!

"We dedicate the virtues of our ceremony, the Kannon Sutra of compassion and this universe of flowers, to you, Shakyamuni Buddha, Dai Osho, and to you, Lev Sam Morris, bright flower of this universe."

Welcome to the Mahasangha of all beings, This vast and fathomless Net of Indra, This world of dark and light This life of joy and pain.

We offer our comfort and support, The mind of clouds and flowers, And the heart of wisdom and compassion." Photos: Tony Coote

LECTURES IN MAY

Dr Wendi Adamek (pictured, wearing a beautiful scarf made by Gail) gave us two stimulating talks at Annandale in May, the first on the 'air-brushed out of Ch'an history' Zen Master Wuzhu, and the second on Ch'an practice and women in the T'ang. You can find out why Wuzhu was air-brushed in Wendi's book, 'The Teachings of Master Wuzhu' which she kindly gifted to our library. And if you missed the talks, both were recorded. *Gillian Coote.*

(Paul's talk on Zen and The Ways on the succeeding Thursday was postponed due to his illness. Get well Paul!)

Photo: Maggie Gluck





April in the Valley We had such a lovely visit to Kodoji. The weather was beautiful, the landscape miraculous, the peacefulness profound. We all loved it. It was rather emotional really, very moving to be there not during a retreat and get to know Kodoji in a more intimate way. We had the pot belly stove going in the evenings. Leo loved running round and round the verandah and we had so many lovely little moments. Just sitting on the verandah having tea was beautiful. Such a dedicated time removed from many distractions to be able to be solely present for Tara and Leo, just wonderful! Tara was very moved by the place and has a deeper understanding of my practice and perhaps her own. I wish to thank you and all those who have made such a place possible to enjoy and to practice. *Stuart Solzberg*

COMING EVENTS

Introduction to Zen Meditation

July 18 and 25 at 7pm at Annandale, Thursday Evenings 7- 9pm

Paul is again offering his excellent 'Introduction to Zen' evenings- a wonderful way, especially for new comers and enquirers to find out more. Contact Paul Maloney paul.maloney@internode.on.net

Samu at Annandale 16 June 8.30 am – 12pm

In lieu of Zazen there will be a SAMU day at Annandale on June 16 , beginning with zazen at 8.30 with a Dharma talk at 9.30. Then there will be Samu until 4pm. Bring food to share for lunch and have fun working and getting to know your fellow meditators. Enquiries: Tony Coote: 9812 3466

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

A decision was made within the teaching collegiate that the tasks of the teachers would be changed and now Gilly and Subhana are sharing all the tasks. The board has noted this and there has been an amendment in the teachers stipends; both Gilly and Subhana receive the same monthly allowance as of now. We are grateful to Gilly for her many years of acting as Coordinating Teacher.

Thursday evening discussion and talks have been a great success. The board is interested that the sangha use the Thursday evening more fully and Maggie has expressed an interest in supporting this idea. Another matter for the teachers to discuss.

SZC is now a member of the social media strategy 'Meet up'. This is at the initiative of Michael Tierney. It is a way of putting our various programmes on a social media platform. There has been considerable interest and some of that interest has resulted in an increase of people coming for orientation to Monday and Wednesday Zazen.

The collegiate group of teachers for the SZC have organised a roster of attendance to the monthly Board meetings. As a matter of process after each monthly Board meeting the teacher present will email any relevant info or necessary action that is required to the teacher's collegiate.

The following items will be discussed at the teacher's meeting on 31 May:

- Coordinating teacher role. If no one person is taking this role, how are the jobs and responsibilities which coordinating teacher sees to, to be divided up?
- Thursday nights lecture series.
- Upgraded SZC website. Discussion on teacher's teishos for the web site.
- Letter to Board after each sesshin detailing anything that needs to be noted re sesshin, and especially repairs or anything else required at Kodoji. Jisha's responsibility?

AGM: PLEASE NOTE The date of the AGM has been changed from 20th October to 27th October to enable Subhana to attend.

KEYS The board would like to recover all keys to Annandale that non residents might have. Unless there is some constant and particular reason to be able to open the Annandale dojo apart from being a resident, the board would like to call all other keys in.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Members of the Board: Brendon Stewart (chair); Lee Nutter (assistant chair); Meghan Hay (treasurer); Michael Tierney (assistant treasurer); Sue Bidwell (assistant secretary); Harry Tamvakeras; (assistant secretary); Kim Bagot; Adrian Clement; Jason Koh

Teachers: Subhana Barzaghi, Gillian Coote, Paul Maloney

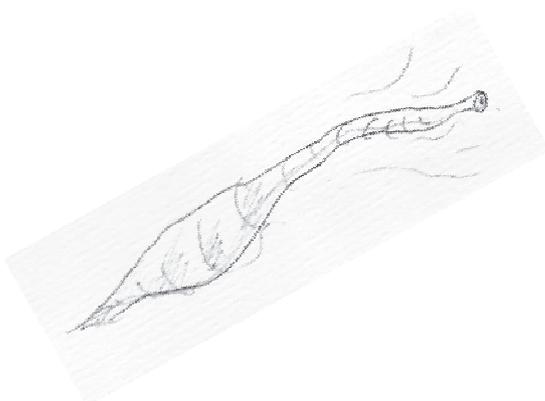
Apprentice Teachers: Maggie Gluek, Allan Marett

Newsletter editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com



Left:
Lev's Naming Day
Photo: Tony Coote

Below Left:
Women's Retreat at Kodoji
Below Right:
Roshi, Sally and Weeny
Dancing Leech by Janet Selby
Photos: Jill Steverson



SZC Calendar JUNE - JULY 2013

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|-----------|
| 2 June | 3 Zazen 7-9pm | 4 | 5 Zazen 7-9pm | 6 | 7 Mountains and Waters Sesshin starts → | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 Board meeting 6pm sit for 6.30 meeting | 12 | 13 | 14 Mountains and Waters Sesshin ends → | 15 |
| 16 Samu at Annadale 8.30-4pm | 17 Zazen 7-9pm | 18 | 19 Zazen 7-9pm | 20 | 21 Women's Group Mari's | 22 |
| 23 | 24 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm | 25 | 26 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 1 July Zazen 7-9pm | 2 | 3 Zazen 7-9pm | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 Zazen 7-9pm | 9 | 10 Zazen 7-9pm | 11 | 12 Women's Group Sarah's | 13 |
| 14 | 15 Zazen 7-9pm | 16 Board meeting 6pm sit for 6.30 meeting | 17 Zazen 7-9pm | 18 Introduction to Zen, Paul Maloney 7-9pm | 19 | 20 |
| 21 Zazenkai 8.30-12 Gillian Coote teisho and dokusan | 22 Full Moon Ceremony Not Discussing Faults of Others | 23 | 24 Full Moon Ceremony Not Discussing Faults of Others | 25 Introduction to Zen, Paul Maloney 7-9pm | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 Zazen 7-9pm | 30 | 31 Zazen 7-9pm | 1 August | 2 | 3 |