



Encouraging Words from the Teacher

Compassionate Zazen - a crucible for transformation



“A peaceful heart gives birth to love

When love meets suffering it turns to compassion

When love meets happiness it turns to joy”.

Dharmapada.

The ancient Buddhist Pali word for Compassion is ‘Karuna’, which means to experience a ‘trembling or quivering of the heart in response to another being’s pain’. I love that translation as it offers a very embodied felt sense of compassion. Compassion is born in us when the heart and mind is open and responsive to our own suffering and to the suffering in the world. There are three different levels of compassion that we can cultivate.

Compassion for self, dear friends and loved

It is relatively easy to cultivate compassion when we feel love, warmth and connection, and naturally want to respond and alleviate our loved ones angst and suffering.

Altruistic compassion

Compassion becomes noble when it is based on an understanding that another person’s pain could be mine, that we are not that dissimilar. All beings experience the travails of a life; sorrow, loss, grief, regrets, hardship, pain, sickness, old age and death. It is easier to feel compassion for our loved ones and friends, but altruistic compassion requires us to cross the threshold of the familiar to extending ones compassion to strangers and even to ones enemy.

Supreme compassion

The highest form of compassion is called supreme compassion, which has no thought of the self/other dichotomy. In case 89 of the Blue Cliff Records, Zen Master Yun-Men asked, Tao-Wu, ‘How does the Bodhisattva Kanzeon (Compassion) use all those many hands and eyes? Tao-Wu responded, ‘It is like a man in the middle of the night reaching behind his head adjusting his pillow.’ Tao-Wu then added, ‘The whole body is hand and eye’. The ‘eye’ here refers to the seeing eye of wisdom. Compassion becomes a natural, spontaneous, skillful activity of the selfless heart-mind, like adjusting your pillow in the night. The whole body is hand and eye reaching out, thus the self is forgotten.

Practice

We cultivate compassion right here on our mat with our own problems, the reoccurring painful dramas of our daily life, those challenging interactions in relationships, the tender parts of our inner life.

Leonard Cohen sang, *'There is a crack in everything that is where the light gets in'*.

We need to develop an attitude of turning towards the pain, our wounded side, those feelings of inadequacy, fear, anxiety, the harsh critical mind and directing a steady mindful compassionate attention into the felt sense of ones suffering. Feel the feelings, without numbing out, distracting oneself or getting overwhelmed by them. Breathe and soothe. Be the container for your pain rather than fall into the well of it. My favorite mantra is attend and befriend.

With compassion the scared tight heart becomes the sacred open receptive heart.

You need to keep paying attention to that difficulty until it is transformed and liberated. It's the grit in the oyster which when tendered becomes the pearl. This mindful tendering is a form of compassionate grace. So if we can bring a compassionate awareness to all forms of suffering, it is one of the most powerful agents of

healing and transformation. When you honor and find compassion for your own difficulties and knots of tension it evokes tolerance, kindness and a natural altruistic compassion towards others. Our vulnerability, pain and suffering is universal.

As you progress along the Bodhisattva path of supreme compassion, which is realizing the empty, selfless dimension of your being, love, joy and compassion naturally increases. Ven. Thich Nhat Han said, "When people love each other, the distinction, the limits, the frontier between them begins to dissolve and they become one with the person they love. There's no longer any jealousy or anger. That is why non-self is not a theory, a doctrine, or an ideology but a realisation that can bring about a lot of happiness." (p,51 Shambala Sun 2015)

Leonard Cohen says it in a poetic way.

"From bitter searching of the heart

Quickened with passion and with pain

We rise to play a greater part

This is the faith from which we start."

As To-Rei Zenji concludes in his Bodhisattva Vow, "May we retrain this mind and extend it throughout the world so that we and all beings become mature in Buddha's wisdom".

Subhana

Myo Un An

REPORT

Passing on the Lamp Sesshin April 3-10

It was a rich, deep, powerful sesshin held over Easter with a full dojo of thirty four people sitting in the vast paddock of Kodo-ji. Maggie Gluek and I were well supported by experienced dojo leaders; Jeff Ward as Practice leader, Peter Bursky Chanting leader and two teachers' attendants- Denise

Johnson and Michael Tierney. A host of dharma friends from Melbourne, Lismore, Bellingen, Queensland, and Canberra travelled to Kodo-ji to join our local Sangha.

It was a privilege and joy to teach with Maggie, a seamless dance of ease and joy. This co-teaching arrangement is the fruition of many years of dharma work and spiritual friendship. I loved bathing in the silence of early morning zazen and meeting heart to heart, mind to mind with so many dharma friends. I feel it is such a privilege to be in the role of the teacher, to sit in the interpersonal space, to be entrusted with a person's vulnerability and pain along with their joys and insightful experiences. I am deeply grateful for the wisdom and compassion of the dharma and the silent illumination of the mutual crucible for each other's liberation.

It was an eventful week, both physically demanding and challenging yet uplifting as zazen deepened us into the ancient ground of our own essential nature. One of the blessings of Kodo-ji's location is that it is surrounded by national park which brings us into an intimate relationship with the natural elements; the starry sky, the sodden earth and the magpie warble. We were especially entertained by mother nature's dramatic displays throughout the week. Graced by the full moon, its radiance beaming over sandstone cliffs, sailing across the southern sky, lighting up the valley amphitheater with a silvery glow. A line of students stood on the dojo veranda, evening eyes wide in awe, each reflecting a mooned landscape of shimmering grass and rising mist. An occasional nocturnal bird echoed down the valley breaking the breathy silence. Whose providence indeed is this beautiful evening?

Sesshin began with a splash and campers survived some torrential rain with the flash flooding of local creeks. The drone of the waterfall was raging on throughout the days. A stone Buddha drenched with rain marks the way. The stone Buddha sandstone sculpture has literally grown mossy lichen tangled eyebrows! Great master Chao Chou would be envious. Thunder and lightning rolled overhead, announcing and confirming those

trembling beings. Despite tents needing to be repaired from stormy nights, brief welcome interludes of sun sluiced the day to dry out clothes and bodies. Hot showers were always a godsend.

The conditions improved and the creek receded by Friday, just in time for the arrival of visitors later in the week. Thanks to Gary and his SES-trained practical skills and his four-wheel drive truck, emergency access was always possible, ferrying those in need across the waters.

Many hands contributed to a rich deep nourishing time, a special thanks to the main lunch cooks - Diana Levy and Harry Tamvakeras, to Ellen Davison the breakfast cook and to Tomoko Sugiura the supper cook. We were well nourished with those delicious nutritional sesshin recipes.

A deep bow to Jillian Ball whom I renamed, 'The Goddess Kuan Yin' - a woman with many arms and hands, as she did a juggling act of not only managing the pre-sesshin organization but burning the mid-night hours preparing her precepts. Her moving heartfelt Jukai ceremony on Thursday shed light on the inter-relationship between the cultivation of ethics and wisdom.

As sesshin ended, unlike after a normal sesshin, the majority of people stayed on to help with the preparations for Maggie's transmission ceremony the next day. Maggie and I were deeply grateful for everyone pitching in, readying and beautifying the temple in a purple, green and white decorative theme. It was a joyous, busy bee communal effort. A special thanks to Brendon and Kerry who arrived on Friday with fresh supplies and to Kerry who had organised many logistical details for the yummy feast following the ceremony.

Subhana Barzaghi

Report on Passing on the Lamp Transmission Ceremony for Maggie Gluek

**Saturday 11th April at Kodo-ji – Temple of
the Ancient Ground**

An excited group of eighty people, family, friends, Sangha members, Diamond Sangha teachers gathered to celebrate and honor Maggie Gluek's dharma transmission. Dharma transmission, 'Passing on the Lamp', is a ceremony of acknowledgment that Maggie Gluek is a fully authorized Zen teacher, a Roshi in the Diamond Sangha Lineage. Maggie gave an outstanding teisho on Wu-men Kuan Case 6 – Chao Chou's, Wash your Bowls, which emptied us out of misconceptions and filled us up with the preciousness of the moment. In true Maggie style she gave lively, dynamic presentations of the precepts in her Jukai renewal ceremony, interspersed with bursts of song.



A treasure trove of gifts expressed the tangible aloha and love that was clearly felt in the hearts and minds of those attending. A special gift of the teaching rakusu, made from purple, green and white ornate fabric, was presented by Kerry on behalf of the Zen women's group. The backdrop of the colors chosen for the Temple decorations, flowers and the rakusu had its historical roots in the early feminist suffragette movement. While this rakusu had been made ten years earlier for Maggie, (she knew about but had never seen the rakusu), it was this gesture stitched

with love that finally inspired and moved Maggie to step fully into the teaching role.

Maggie's dharma teaching name is Hermitage of the Luminous Cloud. Cloud, Mountain and Ocean names are reserved for teachers. A cloud name is a simple humble reminder that we are all like clouds passing through the vast empty sky of our essential nature. Maggie's cloud name follows on from six generations of teachers cloud names in our lineage, which has its roots in the Soto /Rinzai tradition in Japan.

Open dharma inquiry brought out humor, challenging questions and Maggie's immediate authentic natural engaging responses. One of the participants commented there was so much love present and referred to it as the 'hugging transmission ceremony'. The passing of the Lamp transmission ceremony was a ceremony of heart, an embodiment of wisdom, respect, humility, authenticity, punctuated with song, ritual, and laughter--a true celebration of our Zen community.

After a three-hour ceremony, the feast was indeed worth the wait. A big hearty thanks to all who contributed, especially to Kerry who helped to coordinate the Sangha pot luck and Harry, the coordinating chef of the day, who masterfully prepared some delicious dishes out of the rustic kitchen. Bellies, hearts and minds were filled with joyful happiness.

A deep bow of gratitude

Subhana Barzaghi

Ringling Gratitude



A marvellous inking found its way into my hands at the transmission ceremony, a gift from the Sydney Zen Centre sangha. The brass bell, a beautiful soprano tone, rings clear and long (I timed 50 seconds of vibrating resonance), and the hardwood striker slides niftily into the end of the walnut handle. All joined, as the accompanying note says, “in Shaker simplicity.”

Many many thanks, dear bodhisattvas. It will be treasured and used, sounding our sangha each time.

The transmission ceremony was a confirmation of the depth of our shared practice and the joy of sangha relations essentially complete. This carried me utterly through that wonderful day....everything was right



there. Is right here! Deepest gratitude to all of you, to the body of community, for friendship, wisdom and encouragement over the years. May I requite your trust. May we continue to ring out the Dharma together!

Maggie

COMING EVENTS

Winter Sesshin June 5-11 has been cancelled.

SAMU at ANANNADALE (in lieu of zazenkaï June 21 2015)

There will be zazen from 8.30-9.30, followed by Gilly's brief talk at 9.30 am. Samu - work practice - will begin with a work meeting at 10 am and finish around 4 pm. If you can stay all day, bring your

lunch and share with everyone. Samu is a great opportunity to meet fellow zennies and work together on our city dojo. Even an hour 's work contributed will help us all, whether it be painting, gardening, cleaning, sewing, library work or anything else that needs doing about the place. Tony Coote, our faithful samu co-ordinator, can be contacted at :<tony@tonycootearchitect.com>

INTENSIVE PRACTICE PERIOD (6-17 July) AND ZAZENKAI (18-19 July) 2015

For two weeks in July, Allan Marett will lead an Intensive Practice Period at the Sydney Zen Centre in Annandale and at his Guanyin Sangha Zendo in Ashfield. The Intensive Practice Period will be immediately followed by a two-day Zazenkaï. Participants in the Intensive Practice Period will be expected to also attend the Zazenkaï.

Both full-time and part-time participation will be available; part-timers must sign up for specific periods or blocks of zazen. This retreat provides a wonderful opportunity to increase the intensity of your practice while still accommodating the demands of your everyday life.

The schedule will be as follows:

- Early morning zazen (6.00 am—7.30 am), Monday to Friday (6 July—10 July; 13 July —17 July). Guanyin Sangha Zendo, Ashfield.
- Evening zazen (7.00 pm—9.00pm), Monday to Thursday (6 July—9 July; 13 July—16 July). Sydney Zen Centre, Annandale. Monday and Wednesday evenings will be led by Subhana and Gillian as usual.
- Dharma Workshop (1.00 pm—4,00 pm), Saturday, 11 July. Guanyin Sangha Zendo, Ashfield.
- Two-day Zazenkaï (9.00 am—9.00 pm), Saturday and Sunday, 18—19 July at Annandale zendo. While this Zazenkaï forms an integral part of the Practice Period it will also be open (subject to places being available) to people who cannot participate in the Intensive Practice Period.

Enquiries should be directed to Peter Bursky at: mowerman26@hotmail.com

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

The Passing on of the Lamp Transmission Ceremony

for Maggie Gluek, following the Autumn Sesshin, entailed an enormous amount of planning and work by many people, on and off the board. Much work was done at Kodoji by all the people at Samu, before hand. The Sesshin was large, which meant a great deal of planning on Subhana's part. Jill Ball (helped by Sue Bidwell) did wonders dealing with the many applications, Diana Levy did the food ordering. There were many who contributed to the planning for such a special occasion. Thank you to Kerry Stewart who coordinated the planning and food for the Transmission and the sangha community celebrated a wonderful ceremony and a fantastic feast. Many hands helped make a great cooperative occasion. A huge "Thank you" to all who contributed in whatever way to such a very happy occasion.



The Sydney Zen Centre is now an Incorporated Association. A Certificate of Incorporation: Sydney Zen Centre was granted by NSW Government department of Fair Trading on 24 April 2015.

Thanks to all of the Board, Teachers, and particularly Yvonne Hales who negotiated our way through the legal obligations that needed to be attended to. Thank you to Jason Koh for ably assisting Yvonne. Thank you to all from the Sangha who came along, or sent proxy votes to the extraordinary general meeting.

Larry Agriesti has resigned from the Board due to work pressures. Many thanks, Larry, for what you have contributed!

Yvonne Hales has also offered her resignation.

Thank you both for all you have contributed!

Tony Coote took part in an exhibition, at the Willoughby Incinerator Art Space called 'Japan: Australian Perspectives' displaying his architectural work for Kodoji. His work at Kodoji has previously won architectural awards. We have all greatly benefitted from what he has contributed. Thank you, Tony! (He also gave a very good talk at Annandale 17 May.)

A gift is being sent on behalf of the Sangha to long term member and friend, Ellen Davison, on the occasion of her Transmission in Lismore on 12 July.

SZC now has new bank accounts reflecting our changed name. The numbers will be provided before membership is due at the end financial year.

“OPPORTUNITY! You can all really help those in need by bringing plastic bags, recyclable carry bags, takeaway containers, used household batteries, or even laptops, mobiles and tablets, and laptop cases, and putting them in the box that will be put at the back of the bathroom. Lesley Treleaven will take them to the Asylum Seekers Centre. Thank you!”

Sangha members are urged to take on leadership roles for evening zazen. (It is good practice!) We are especially short of Inos. If you could offer to take a role even once in every three months it would be very helpful for us all. If you need training in these roles please see:

Training Ino: Peter Bursky
mowerman26@hotmail.com, **Training for Jiki:** Sue Bidwell
sue.bidwell@gmail.com, **Training for Jisha:** Janet Selby
janetselby@bigpond.com

BOOKS

There are copies of Aitken Roshi's books-“ Taking the Path of Zen,” The Mind of Clover”, “The Morning Star”, “The Dragon that never sleeps”, “The Gateless Barrier- Mumon-Kuan” and Foster & Schoemaker's Roaring Stream: a Zen Reader” at Annandale. (for sale)

Also Subhana's book of poems and “Star and Mountain” by Glenys Jackson & Sally Hopkins.

With the Easter sesshin and more than \$1,100 raised so far from sales of Glenys and Sally's book “ Star and Mountain” the financial situation of SZC is much healthier

The board has been encouraging members to pay their membership costs and a facility fee is now expected from non members when attending Monday and Wednesday zazen.

Notice Board

Dokusan

Mondays Subhana:

June 22 ,29 July 13, 20, 27

Allan Marett: June 8, 15.

Wednesdays Gillian:

June 10, 17, 24 July 1, 15, 22, 29

Dharma cafe

June 1 and 3

Full moon ceremony

July 8 "Not sparing the Dharma assets"

There will be no Full Moon Ceremony on Monday 6 July- that night will be the start of THE INTENSIVE PRACTICE period, led by Allan Marett. (see notice in Forthcoming events.)

Woman's group

June 19 Kerry's. July 10 Sarah Walls, at 7.30pm

Board meetings

June 23 and July 21 (later than usual because of Intensive.) at 6pm for 6.30.

Early morning zazen

Ashfield SZC members are interested in zazen and dokusan are invited to join in a small group that sits regularly on Tuesday (6-7:30 am) and Thursday (6:30-8:30pm). Contact either Allan Marett allan.marett@gmail.com 04097127767 or Kim Bagot kimballb7@gmail.com 0402321277.

Zazenkai

NOTE: No Zazenkai in June as that Sunday June 21 will be SAMU at Annandale 8.30- 4pm All welcome.

NOTE: Zazenkai 19th July at Annandale, will follow a different format from usual as it will be part of 2 full days of Zazenkai (18 and 19 July) at Annandale to end the Intensive Practice Period led by Allan Marett . (see note above in Forthcoming events.)

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.

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 \$20 per night for members and \$30 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 Brendon 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

Contact Information

Brendon Stewart (chair) stewarts34@bigpond.com, Sue Bidwell (secretary) sue.bidwell17@gmail.com, Kerry Stewartstewartkerry@gmail.com, Jason Koh (Treasurer) zazender@fastmail.fm, Michael Tierney (publications) michaeltierney1@rocketmail.com, Glenys Jackson, , Helen Sanderson. Newsletter Editor: Diego Oliverio oliveriodiego@hotmail.it

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SZC Calendar June-July 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	1 Dharma Café 7-9	2	3 Dharma Café 7-9	4	5	6
7	8 zazen 7-9	9	10 zazen 7-9	11	12	13
14	15 Zazen 7-9	16	17 Zazen 7-9	18	19 Women's Group Kerry's	20
21 SAMU at ANNANDALE 8.30 sit 10.15- 4 work	22 Zazen 7-9	23 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	24 Zazen 7-9	25	26	27
28	29 Zazen 7-9	30	1 Zazen 7-9	2	3	4
5	6 Start of intensive period –at Annandale	7 Intensive 7pm-9pm	8 Full moon "Not sparing the Dharma assets	9 Intensive 7pm-9pm	10 Women's Group at Sarah Walls 7.30	11
12	13 Zazen 7-9	14 Intensive 7pm-9pm	15 Zazen 7-9	16 Intensive 7pm-9pm	17 Intensive 7pm-9pm	18 ZAZENKAI Intensive 9am - 9pm
19 ZAZENKAI Intensive 9am - 9pm	20 Zazen 7-9	21 Board Meeting	22 zazen 7-9	23	24	25
26	27 Zazen 7-9	28	29 zazen 7-9	30	31	1