

# SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 41

Summer 2011

## UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2011 - 2012

All retreats are suitable for both new and experienced meditators and are accessible to people of any or no religious affiliation. The cost of each retreat covers all food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.

**Dharma Gathering**                      **Sun Jan 22 – Sun Jan 29 2012**                      **\$280 (\*140)**  
**with Subhana Barzagli, Jeremy Logan, and Arthur Wells**                      **Staveley Camp**  
also available as a weekend only option, at a cost of \$125 (\*65).

This seven day gathering is offered by Southern Insight in conjunction with the Diamond Sangha Zen Tradition. Join us for a week of meditation, workshops, bodywork, poetry, group art projects, music, walks, and great vegetarian food. A celebration of the Buddha's teachings and an opportunity to discover how to stay in your heart as you interact with the world. Explore your relationship to everyday experience: social pressures; stress; interacting with others (parents, children, workmates, friends, partners); the desire for security (health, wealth, status); taking action for change; becoming who you really are. For more information see further in this newsletter

**Queen's birthday retreat**                      **June 2012 dates TBA**                      **\$TBA**  
**with Jeremy Logan**                      **Staveley Camp**

**Spring retreat**                      **October 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> 2012**                      **\$280 (\*140)**  
**with Eric Kolvig**                      **Staveley Camp**

After the highly successful visit by Eric Kolvig to New Zealand earlier in 2011, Southern Insight has invited Eric back to run our spring retreat in 2012. Eric is an Insight teacher with over 30 years experience who has specialised in bringing dharma to times of trauma in people's lives. See our website for further details about this retreat.

**\*Sliding scale:** the actual cost of the retreat is the higher figure, however it is possible to pay a subsidised rate anywhere from the actual cost down to the bracketed figure.

**The Closing Date for registration is one week before the retreat starts.** Information about registration is inside the back cover of the newsletter.



The Whole Teaching  
No past,  
No future.

Open mind,  
Open heart.

Complete attention,  
No reservations.

That's all.

*Scott Morrison*

### Future retreat events:

Southern Insight has a number of events coming up that have yet to be finalised. Many of these are with favourite teachers for people who come on our retreats— so pencil the dates in but for up to date information check our website or E-mail Southern Insight.

March/April 2012 – one day workshop  
*with Sharda Rogell*

June 2012 - Queen's Birthday retreat  
*with Jeremy Logan*

Jan 2013 summer retreat  
*with Yanai Postelnik*

### Enquiries:

[Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com)

Greetings all,

The summer is beginning and the end of the year is approaching. This is a time when we can find ourselves looking back on the last months— sometimes with some relief that it is passing or surprise that it has gone so quickly. It is also a time for thinking about the projects and plans for the “busy season”.

Summer is also often our chance to have a good break from our normal routines and to spend time with family and friends. The normal format of a meditation retreat wouldn't necessarily fit with this. However, this January Southern Insight, in conjunction with the Diamond Sangha Zen group are offering a one week Dharma Gathering retreat.

Unlike normal silent and inward focused retreats the Gathering includes a mixture of activities – contemplative sittings, workshops, and social activities. It caters for families and is a wonderful and festive opportunity to combine an interest in the dharma with relaxation and fun – and a good chance to actually meet with and talk to the great people you who come on our retreats. There is more information about the Dharma Gathering in this newsletter.

In 2012 we will also be offering two residential retreats and some non-residential workshops. Keep an eye on our website for details of these as you plan your new year.

May you be well and happy and may your practice bring you peace and fulfillment

*Enjoy*

**Southern Insight Meditation** is a non-profit, non-sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats, courses and talks.

Our website is in transition to a new hosting site  
**the new site....**

<http://Southern-insight.org.nz>



## DHARMA GATHERING: CLEAR MIND, OPEN HEART

Cultivating a Mindful Engagement  
with Life

*With Subhana Barzaghi (Aus), Jeremy  
Logan (NZ) and Arthur Wells (NZ)*

**When:** 22-29 Jan 2012

**Where:** Staveley Campsite, Inland Canterbury

**Cost:** \$280 (see information on sliding scale)

**Closing date for registration:** 13 Jan 2012

**How to book:** Download a registration form from our website at

<http://southern.insightmeditation.org.nz/RegistrationForm.html> or phone Paul on 03 381 0444 for a paper copy. Send completed form and \$50 deposit to Paul at 6 Trent Street, Linwood, Christchurch

**Getting there:** We may be able to help arrange transport or put you in touch with others in your area so that you can share rides.

**Info:** Arthur 03 348 4656 or Dermot 03 381 4617.

The Dharma Gathering in New Zealand uniquely presents teachings and practices from both the Zen & Insight Buddhist tradition. The three primary teachers include; Arthur Wells, Zen teacher from Christchurch, Jeremy Logan from the Insight tradition in the North Island., and Subhana Barzaghi, Insight and Zen teacher from Australia. This exploration and dialogue between traditions, enriches, deepens and broadens our understanding of the Buddha dharma. Teachers facilitate discussion groups and experiential sessions, exploring themes such as; the application of Buddhist teachings in daily

life, cultivating the boundless heart of love and compassion, dealing with fear and anger, grief and loss, the nature of awareness, studies of Buddhist texts, exploring practices and pathways to freedom and liberation. Long-term dharma practitioners Julie Downard and Sean Weaver will contribute to the rich and varied workshop program.

### **A Dharma Gathering is a fantastic introduction to the Dharma! –**

If you've been getting this newsletter for a while and thinking it would be good to sit a retreat but haven't quite mustered up the courage, a Gathering is much easier – everything is optional, there's not so much sitting, you're able to talk to other participants (so you find out much sooner that everyone is experiencing much the same thing you are!) and to the teachers, the workshops are stimulating and relevant, and creative/artistic expression of the dharma is explored – among other things we'll be making (and destroying) a mandala.

The Evening Programme will vary, and will include deep inquiry sessions, poetry sharing, chanting, loving-kindness meditation and possibly a dharma concert! There will be plenty of time over the meal breaks for conversation and the meditation hall will be silent at all times for those wishing to do formal practice.

### **A Typical Dharma Gathering Daily Schedule**

<b>6.00am</b>	<b>Early Morning Yoga</b>
<b>7.00am</b>	<b>Sitting Meditation</b>
<b>8.00am</b>	<i>Breakfast – silent time ends</i>
<b>9.00am</b>	<b>Work Period</b>
<b>10.00am</b>	<b>Choice of Workshops</b>
<b>11.00am</b>	<b>Sitting Meditation</b>
<b>12.30 pm</b>	<i>Lunch</i>
<b>2.00pm</b>	<b>Choice of Discussion Groups</b>
<b>3.00pm</b>	<b>Sitting Meditation</b>
<b>4.00pm</b>	<b>Dharma Talk</b>
<b>5.00pm</b>	<i>Dinner</i>
<b>7.00pm</b>	<b>Evening programme</b>
<b>8.00pm</b>	<b>Closing sitting meditation</b>
<b>9.00pm</b>	<b>Silence begins</b>

*"I thought the Dharma Gathering was excellent – a great opportunity to connect with others, to learn and develop personally. I found the mix of silent times and talking worked well. I loved having the children around - I believe this added to the experience. Thanks."*

### Attending for part of the event?

The Dharma Gathering is an 8-day (7 night) event, beginning on evening of Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, ending Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January.

You may also join the gathering on:  
Evening of Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> (cost \$230)  
Evening of Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>. (cost \$160)

The cost per adult excludes dana for teachers but covers the cost of accommodation, meals and running the retreat. Please do not allow cost to be a reason to not attend – there are sliding scale reduced fees available (see later in this newsletter).

### Families & children

The Dharma Gathering welcomes families, and children friendly activity will be seamlessly included. As a parent you'll be expected to participate in the coordination and facilitation of children's activities. However, other participants at the Gathering may also contribute to catering for children and this will be facilitated over the week. We really want to give parents the opportunity to share time with the sangha and to practice.

Costs for children are age dependent:  
Full retreat: 12+ (\$91), 5-12 (\$70), under 5 (\$35)  
Tues 24<sup>th</sup> Jan: 12+ (\$65), 5-12 (\$50), under 5 (\$25)  
Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> Jan: 12+ (\$39), 5-12 (\$30), under 5 (\$15)

David is organising this, so for any questions – call David on 03 960 3987.

Note **families need to register early** so things can be organised. Please let David know if you are planning on coming by **December 15<sup>th</sup> 2011**

### Why would I go on a dharma gathering when I can go on holiday?

*"It IS a holiday! With a really lovely group of people who like talking about the things in life that truly matter."*

Julie

### Who are the teachers?

**Subhana Barzaghi** has practised meditation for over 20 years, is an acknowledged teacher in both the Insight Meditation and Zen Buddhist traditions. She teaches seven-day intensive retreats in India, Australia and New Zealand. In 1996 Subhana became the first Australian Zen Roshi and is the spiritual director of the Sydney and Melbourne Zen centres. She is also the founder of the Kwan Yin Zen Centre in Lismore. Subhana is the mother of two children and works as a counsellor and psychotherapist in Sydney.

**Jeremy Logan** has been involved in insight meditation for the last twenty-three years, spending several years in the east and in Europe learning and practicing meditation. He has been teaching retreats since 1991 in New Zealand and has taught in India. He lives in the Wairarapa, working as a counsellor and facilitating Stopping Violence programmes for men.

**Arthur Wells** is a Christchurch based counsellor and social worker, and has worked in Lifeline, the Family Mental Health Service and Stopping Violence Services. He began meditation practice in various Hindu traditions in the 70's, and in the early 80's took up Zen, becoming a student of John Daido Looi Roshi and later of Ross Bolleter Roshi, who authorised him to teach Zen in February 2008. He has a university teaching background (and an MA in religious studies), which has given him a similar enthusiasm for a Buddhism wider than Zen.

*"I loved my first Gathering and made many connections with people there. I also discovered there is a group happening near where I live so I can continue to connect into the Dharma tradition - to learn more about it and to have people to ask questions of. I found the workshops, discussions and inquiries very helpful and learnt more than enough to take the next step in the evolution of my practice. I especially liked that I was able to join in or not, and thus take things at my own pace."*

## Arthur Wells Sensei reflects on the apparent craziness of Zen

In his comments on the koan Mu, the 13<sup>th</sup> Century Master Wumen says:

*“Suddenly Mu breaks open. The heavens are astonished, the earth is shaken. It is as though you have snatched the great sword of General Kuan. When you meet the Buddha, you kill the Buddha; when you meet Bodhidharma, you kill Bodhidharma. At the very cliff edge of life and death, you find the Great Freedom.”*

How do we square this apparent instruction to break the first precept -- in the worst imaginable way -- with our regular practice in Zen of bowing three times to the floor in reverence and gratitude before the image of the Buddha?

Is Zen just a whole bunch of crazy inconsistencies? Did the old masters say outrageous things like this just to get our attention? No, actually they were very serious about this, and their language is much more passionate than crazy.

Here is the point -- what happens if you even entertain the thought that the Buddha's enlightenment is outside of you, different from your own vivid life in this moment? You turn it into an idea, and ideas separate us from the reality.

This precious life of each of us will never happen again, even if the rest of the universe lasts a thousand billion years. Where exactly is “the cliff edge of life and death,” after all?

When Mu “breaks open” you are more fully than ever yourself in that moment – it's just YOU, fully awake, as a whole body, a whole being who is not separate in any way from everything that exists!

Zen and the whole Mahayana tradition teach that all beings, *exactly as they* have the Buddha-nature already. Buddha is not as they might become through virtuous behaviour or religious

practices. It is what you are, even if you haven't awakened yet to the fact.

So in Zen we don't think of an enlightened person but of enlightened practice. In the very moment of truly practicing you are already a Buddha. When you practice, it's the Buddha you already are who is doing the practice. Everyone can do it! All of us can participate in this “practice-enlightenment” that the great Japanese master Dogen spoke about. It's not something arcane or remote at all.

However there's no resting on our laurels here, no smug falling back on the idea of oneself as an enlightened being. Don't think of attainment, don't think of completion. There is only the wonderful possibility of *practicing* enlightenment opening out in front of us. Enlightenment is something you do, not something you are. It's like practicing a musical instrument or practicing being in a relationship. It unfolds endlessly for as long as you are alive.

### Why is it an important part of practice to go to dharma gatherings in addition to retreats?

*The emphasis at a dharma gathering is on being with people rather than just being in your head. Dharma Gatherings can help us to break through the trivial and superficial way we usually communicate with each other and to find a deeper place of connection. Workshops with skilled teachers create a supportive environment in which we can safely explore our needs and anxieties around living (and dying!).*

Dermot

## Bringing The Dharma Into Our Life

Jeremy Logan

Many in the West who engage in a spiritual journey, have chosen to do so not as monks and nuns, but this does not mean that we do not aspire to finding ways of living a genuine spiritual life with depth whilst in the midst of daily life, jobs, relationships, families etc.

Yet what we find in the West is that forms, supports that let the spiritual life flourish can be hard to find. The culture that surrounds most of us is a culture against awakening, against developing mindfulness, in many ways it is a culture of distraction, a culture where rather than face our lives fully, we are encouraged to shop, to take a pill, to distract ourselves in busyness and superficiality.

One of the main supports for people wanting to deepen in their spiritual practice has been the silent, intensive meditation retreat. The opportunity to attend retreats on a regular basis for many of us has been incredibly valuable, giving time for slowing down, developing mindfulness, deepening our sensitivity and connection to and with ourselves, others and our environment, listening to teachings and giving time for inquiry and reflection on life.

For many the challenge has been in integrating the new understandings, depth of awareness and openness that is possible on retreat, into our daily lives in a genuine and liberating way.

In recent years new forms have been developing to support this integration. One particular form has been the dharma gathering, where times for meditation and silence are balanced with times for communicating, interpersonal relationships, family life, the studying and discussion of teachings, exploring creativity and friendship in a supportive community environment.

The matter of exploring spirituality in ways other than through silent meditation is of particular interest to me. I am interested in particular how we might bring the same awareness, presence and inquiry that is nurtured in meditation into our interpersonal relationships, in a way that may support and strengthen our openness, our authenticity, our spiritual understandings and inquiry, the momentum for liberation.

In an environment that nurtures awareness and inquiry both through meditation and connection with others we may find ourselves exploring

patterns, judgements, defences, helpful and unhelpful ways of relating that are not so easily seen or explored in intensive silent meditation retreats. Not only as a way to bring understanding of ourselves, but also to expand our connection to and understanding of others. Our work is that of deepening into our nature, ground of being and bringing that into relationship.

Genuine spiritual practice is never about fixing ourselves, because we're not broken. It's about becoming awake to who we really are, to the vastness of our true nature. As practitioners we learn to honestly and relentlessly observe our thoughts, emotional reactions, strategies and fears increasingly in a space of a non-conceptual silence, or knowing of reality as it is. With intensive meditation practice this becomes more and more possible or available to us, the challenge I believe is how we might bring this exploration into our interpersonal relationships.

Interpersonal exploration has been an invaluable support in my own life and I am genuinely excited at the prospect of seeing how we may explore this further, amongst many other things, on a Dharma Gathering. I have not attended a Dharma gathering before so I look forward to participating in the gathering not only as a teacher but also as a participant interested in exploring the dharma, the truth in a wider context to see what might or might not emerge for each of us.

### ***What would the Buddha say if he saw a Dharma Gathering?***

**Subhana Barzagli:**

Holy Cow!... look what's happened to my song Ma! Or maybe he would say, "How wonderful that the dharma is flourishing in the great southern land". Actually, I think the dharma gathering is not unlike the old debating gathering that occurred in the Buddha's time, where teams of monks would gather in the forests or by the rivers and they would then hoist the flag, which was the signal that the debate was now on. These philosophical and spiritual debates, discussions and teachings would sometimes go

on for days, if not weeks. It was an important aspect of the monks training and practice to hone their understanding and to deepen their practice in the spirit of inquiry. We are continuing this tradition in a contemporary form...it's that wonderful. I feel we owe a deep bow to Christopher Titmuss, a senior Vipassana teacher, for his creativity in developing the dharma gatherings, which are another innovative way of sharing and exploring the dharma.

*"The Gathering was a blissful journey – from uncertainty to warmth and connectivity and an opening of heart and mind. Enormous value for the cultivation of spiritual practice on a global level through community – thank you. Let's do it again! Here's to Southern Insight."*



## Reflections - Combining Meditation & Qi Gong in spring

Anton Eastick & Mark Bouckoms ran a truly wonderful retreat for twenty or so participants in the typically variable spring atmosphere of a Staveley in September. The combined teaching and grounded wisdom of both these long term practitioners opened us up to the idea of what it is to "allow". To open and allow. Allow all things to unfold. In hard times what a powerful message this is.

To both of these teachers – (what a great combination these two were) – my heartfelt thanks.

Meg

In Oamaru of all places

Going into a dairy

Expecting just an ice cream

I was given the chance

To "Please close the door gently"

To be transported to a mystical landscape

By delightful Chinese music,

To show off my newly acquired Chi Gong moves.

Such gifts. I can easily forgive the nice young man

For saying Chi Gong is for old people.

Lindsay

## Steering Group news

We are very pleased to welcome Chrys Horn as a new member of the Southern Insight steering group. Many of you may know Chrys as one of those wonderful people who have taken part in lots of our retreats and most importantly – often cooks for us on them! Chrys joins 6 other people who volunteer their time to run the organisational end of southern insight. There is also an army of folk out there who help us in many ways – thanks very much to all of you.

If you have any questions about retreats or other events here are the contact details of the Steering group, all of whom would be happy to talk with you:

<i>Di</i>	338 7070
<i>Meg</i>	328 8052
<i>Dermot</i>	381 4617
<i>Rachel</i>	379 2548
<i>Sarah</i>	027 669 3824
<i>Chrys</i>	338 0313

**E-mail:** [southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)

## All is a Miracle

I like to walk alone on country paths, rice plants and wild grasses on both sides, putting each foot down on the earth in mindfulness, knowing that I walk on the wonderous earth. In such moments, existence is a miraculous and mysterious reality. People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is not to walk either on water or in thin air, but to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child - our own two eyes. All is a miracle.

Thich Nhat Hanh



## Sitting Group

Our "two venue" format for Sitting Group is working well. All are welcome to join us.

**First Weds of the month:** -Ferndale School  
**Second Weds of the month** Opawa Zendo  
**Third Weds of the month** - Ferndale School  
 (facilitated session )  
**Fourth Weds of month:** Opawa Zendo

If there are **five Wednesday's** in a month – the default for the 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday will be Ferndale School.

Addresses:

**Ferndale School** , 104 Merivale Lane in the school staffroom

**Opawa Zendo** is located at 4 Kennedy Place, on the corner of Opawa Rd opposite the Hillsborough Domain.

## INSIGHT AOTEAROA

Insight Aotearoa is an e-newsletter for New Zealand's insight meditation practitioners and communities. Posted monthly, it includes articles by and interviews with dharma teachers from around the world as well as a comprehensive listing of events in the insight meditation network across New Zealand. To subscribe (free) visit: [newsletter@insightaotearoa.org](mailto:newsletter@insightaotearoa.org) or write to PO Box 6626, Wellington 6041, Aotearoa New Zealand.



This Is It!

Try: Reminding yourself from time to time: "This is it." See if there is anything at all that it cannot be applied to. Remind yourself that acceptance of the present moment has nothing to do with resignation in the face of what is happening. It simply means a clear acknowledgement that *what is happening is happening*. Acceptance doesn't tell you what to do. What happens next, what you choose to do, that has to come out of your understanding of this moment. You might try acting out of a deep knowing of "This is it." Does it influence how you choose to proceed or respond? Is it possible for you to contemplate that in a very real way, *this* may actually be the best season, the best moment of your life? If that was so, what would it mean for you?

John Kabat-Zinn

## Getting our newsletter and hearing about local events

If you did not receive this newsletter by mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please phone Dermot on (03) 381 4617. Any donation towards the cost would be appreciated.

### Get it by e-mail!

In addition to the regular mail-out of the newsletter we send out the newsletter as a PDF attached to E-mail. If you think you would like to be on our e-mail newsletter circulation list all you need to do is send an e-mail to [Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com) with the words “**subscriber**” in the title.

If you would like to replace your hard copy with this E-version – include your name and address in the body of the e-mail and state “**remove from hard copy list**”.

### Hear about local events!

If you would also like to go on the local sangha contact list to receive updates of local events in the Christchurch area – also state “**add to local list**” in the e-mail.

### Unsubscribe

If at any time you want to be removed from our e-mail contact list – just send us an e-mail with the words “unsubscribe” in the title.

## Retreat Booking Procedures

Please phone **Paul** on **381 0444** for a retreat registration form – or download a form from our website. **The completed form and a deposit of \$50.00 should** be sent to **6 Trent St, Linwood, Christchurch**. Please make cheques payable to **Southern Insight Meditation**. Stamped addressed envelopes are appreciated when booking. Further information will be sent to you on receipt of your deposit. Please note that retreats will only run if there are sufficient registrations.

### Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$5.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date, and the money will be put into the Top-Up Fund.

### Top Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who are unable to afford the cost of a retreat. Southern Insight aims to make retreats as accessible as possible to all, and it is possible to pay less than the lower amount in the sliding scale for a retreat. We encourage people to make use of this fund, which, thanks to the generosity of others who attend our retreats, is currently in a healthy state.

### Location

Our retreats are generally held at Staveley campsite at the foot of Mt Hutt. This is approximately 1.5 hours south west of Christchurch. For directions see our website

## Contact Details for Southern Insight

**E-mail:** [southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)

**Post:** 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

**WebSite:** <http://southern-insight.org.nz>

E-mail is generally checked weekly. For a more immediate response call one of the numbers of the steering group members listed above.

If undelivered, please return to:  
13 Dacre Street  
Christchurch