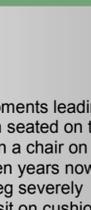


Happy 10th anniversary!

In November 2013 it will be ten years since Sun Mountain Zen (SMZ) was founded in Brisbane by Mervyn and Cecillie Lander, dharma successors of Roselyn Stone. Today SMZ includes a third teacher (dharma successor of Mervyn) Arno Hess, and an assistant teacher Sue Wolter. SMZ has grown from humble beginnings in East Brisbane to become a vibrant and active Zen community with four groups throughout Brisbane and Kenilworth involving members from not only Queensland but also interstate and overseas.

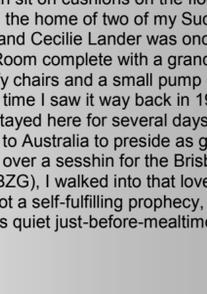
This edition of Mat chat is dedicated to Sei'un An Roselyn Stone the teacher who traveled from Canada each year to bring the dharma to Brisbane and teach, among others, our teachers and the founders of SMZ Mervyn and Cecillie. This period is an interesting and important part of our lineage and I hope you enjoy reading Roselyn's account of it.

The Sun Mountain Zen Sangha thanks you Sei'un An.



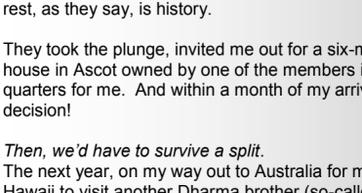
"Last night I saw the reflection of the moon in a cool clear crystal pond, and nothing else happened at all."

Ken Wilber, One Taste



Mountain Moon Sangha, a brief history

by Sei'un An Roselyn Stone



It is the moments leading to the mid-day meal. I am seated on the Teacher's cushion. Well, I'm on a chair on top of the cushion as for some ten years now a problem with my lower left leg severely limits the amount of time I can sit on cushions on the floor. This zendo in the home of two of my Successors, Mervyn and Cecillie Lander was once the Family Room complete with a grand piano, TV comfy chairs and a small pump organ. The first time I saw it way back in 1991, when I stayed here for several days on my first visit to Australia to preside as guest teacher over a sesshin for the Brisbane Zen Group (BZG), I walked into that lovely, big, airy room and said. "This would make a great zendo!" Not a self-fulfilling prophecy, that, for there was much to happen between that moment and this quiet just-before-mealtime one in sesshin (June 2010).

First of all...

The BZG would have to decide after taking part in that first sesshin in 1991 that they did, after all, want to extend the invitation to me to be their full-time — and only — Zen teacher. 'Til then, for some twelve years they'd run their own show, so to speak, with considerable verve, bringing in such well-known guest teachers as Robert Aitken Roshi and Joko Beck to lead their annual sesshin. They had been advised, however, by AMA Samy, my Dharma brother and at the time Cecillie and Mervyn's teacher, that if they were really serious about their practice they needed to find and commit to a full-time teacher. He suggested me and the rest, as they say, is history.

They took the plunge, invited me out for a six-month residency in 1992 and set me up in a house in Ascot owned by one of the members in which they created a zendo and living quarters for me. And within a month of my arrival, most of them greatly regretted the decision!

Then, we'd have to survive a split.

The next year, on my way out to Australia for my second six-month residency, I stopped in Hawaii to visit another Dharma brother (so-called because we had trained under and were authorized by the same Zen Master), Robert Aitken Roshi, at his still-under-construction Palolo Zen Centre in Honolulu which I was keen to see. He'd known the Brisbane group since its inception and when we went for lunch together he leaned toward me his eyes glinting mischievously and asked, "Well, how did your time go with the BZG?"

So I told him of the 'defections' — long-time members who'd decided it was more fun, if that's the word, when they ran things themselves. Yielding to me, the teacher, decisions about who would serve as Tantô, Jikidô, Inô, Tenzô and Jisha (which, many years later I would discover my students with characteristic Aussie irreverence to call 'Santa's little helper') and the chants to be used was not something they'd expected to have to do. Others, who felt drawn to the teaching of Joko Beck's 'Every Day Zen' left because they found my classical Zen teaching not as attractive as her modern take on Soto-school teaching and started sitting with a senior BZG member who had formally become Joko's student. Bob smiled consolingly and said that in his now-considerable experience this was characteristic of groups that decided to get a teacher after having functioned on their own for some time. It had happened to him more than once. "They bring you in," he said, "and then decide it was better without you. Too stuck in their egos."

In the event, the group had voted 13 to 12 to invite me back. I suggested at a meeting of all just before I left at the end of that first residency that, in the light of the two groups that had taken shape — mine and those wishing to practice Every Day Zen, the BZG had perhaps done its work of fostering Zen in Brisbane. Why not dissolve it and let two phoenixes arise from the ashes: the Mountain Moon Sangha and the Every Day Zen Group? And that's what they did — admirably amicably.

..And another split.

At the end of the second residency, a long-time BZG member and now disciple of mine, departed. Keen to have a monastic-type practice established in Brisbane, he had discussed the matter with me during the previous residency, even acquired a house he thought suitable in Coorparoo. "Like my teacher and his teacher", I told him, "I am committed to making serious Zen practice available to 'householders' (to use the ancient term), practitioners who are out in the world. I am, therefore, not interested in establishing a monastery." Besides, in my judgment, setting up and enforcing all the rules that monastic life requires would be done at the cost of the practice. So, he found a Korean master based in the United States, Seung Sahn Sunim, who would authorize him to have — in fact, lead — a monastery and took a few of my now-very-small sangha with him. The remaining members retired to the nearby MacDonald's to consider their options, took a deep breath and invited me back a third time — and we never looked back.

As well.

They would have to be willing to commit funds, time and energy to bring me back over and over. They would have to keep at the practice, fitting it into very busy lives in order to a) realise and b) keep on with post-kensho practice to personalize that realization. That latter can be even harder than the former for all too often people fall into the trap of thinking that by having had kensho confirmed they've done the 'Zen Big Thing' and can now move on to some other big thing. Huge error, for kensho is but the beginning of Zen practice.

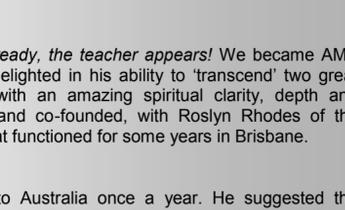
And finally,

At least one disciple would have to become sufficiently ripened and accomplished in the practice as to allow me to decide her or him ready to receive Dharma transmission and become my Successor and, therefore, authorized to start teaching and receive disciples of his or her own. Those would be my 'Dharma grandchildren'.

Well, there were ten six-month residencies in all followed by six three-month ones when I felt it was time, step by step, to train likely successors and give them opportunities for supervised teaching. Over the sixteen years there were the usual tugs and pulls of any group. Wonderful moments, difficult moments. I would learn to listen, listen, listen.

And now, here I was sitting in the Teacher's seat in the Family Room that has for several years now been a dedicated zendo in which two of my Successors teach and preside over their own sangha, the Sun Mountain Sangha, watching as Tantô (another of my Successors — there are six, in all, here in Brisbane) smoothly and silently sets the zendo up for the meal. Present at that meal were five Dharma Successors — Cecillie and Mervyn, Li-yea Bretz, Garry Cam, Jean Wilson (the sixth, Matt Love, was home with the 'flu), other students of mine, now working with my Successors, and new students of theirs. Three Dharma generations. I admit it — I was proud of what they and I had accomplished together in those years.

Mountain Moon Sangha was the name I gave to the folder on my computer, that first residency, in it were the names of the BZG members who were continuing to work with me. The others, who continued to fulfill their commitment to finance that first 1992 residency, were in the BZG folder. What to all this new file that held the names of those I deemed to be my sangha? There I sat in the breeze porch on Sparkes Street listening to the shouts and splashes of the Ascot State School pupils in the pool and thought. In Buddhism, the full moon in its roundness means perfection and is used to denote the essential truth, Buddha-nature. It also figures in the Dharma name given me by my Yamada Ko'un Roshi: Chigetsu Myôkô [The Subtle Light of the Moon of Satori Wisdom] and is implied in my Teaching name: Sei'un An [lit. "clear skies cloud" or "Clearing Away the Clouds", said Yamada Rôshi]. And when the clouds clear, the moon appears.



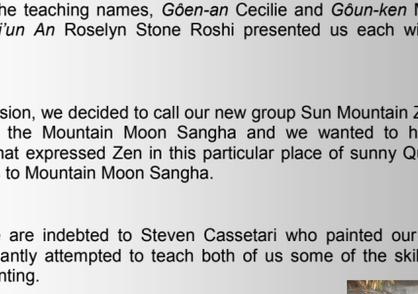
Mountains figure in two of my three most favourite koans: Go straight along a mountain road with ninety-nine curves. [No. 11 of the Miscellaneous Collection] and "Carrying my staff across my shoulders, I pay the others no heed and go straight into the thousand peaks." [Blue Cliff Record Case 25 The Hermit of Lotus Peak Holds Up His Staff]. (In case you were wondering, the third favourite is Blue Cliff Record Case 80, Jôshû's Newborn Infant.)

So, Moon is the object of the practice and Mountain, it's way and fruits; hence, Mountain Moon. And of course, "Sangha" is the company of excellent companions.

You will recognise one of your Glasshouse Mountains in the logo.

Here in Brisbane, the Mountain Moon Sangha has given rise to Sun Mountain Sangha and Mountain Moon Zen Society.

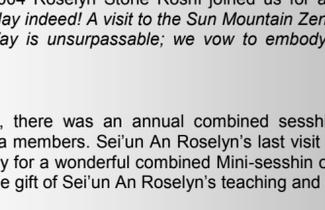
This is my body of work, as the scholar, artist auteur, writer may say.



On the 29th November 2013, Sun Mountain Zen will be 10 years old!

The Sun Mountain Zen Sangha – a short history

By Gôen-an Cecillie & Gôun-ken Mervyn Lander



Was it really with teacher that we happened to hear a Sunday afternoon interview with Fr AMA Samy SJ and Zen Teacher on the ABC radio as we sat outside Redcliffe Hospital one late Sunday afternoon in mid 1989? AMA Samy had been trained in the Zen tradition and authorized by the renowned Yamada Kôun Roshi in the Sanbo-Kyodan Lineage in Kamakura.

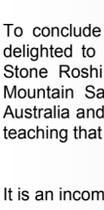
There is a zen saying: *When the student is ready, the teacher appears!* We became AMA Samy's students for some three years. We delighted in his ability to 'transcend' two great religious traditions without conflict, indeed with an amazing spiritual clarity, depth and simplicity. We followed his annual retreats and co-founded, with Roslyn Rhodes of the Brisbane Zen Group, the Agape Zen Group that functioned for some years in Brisbane.

However, Fr AMA Samy could only come to Australia once a year. He suggested the possibility of his Dharma sister, Sei'un An Roselyn Stone coming to Australia. You will see that Sei'un An takes up her story of the development of Mountain Moon Zen Sangha at this point. Once she started a six month residency in Brisbane, we sat with her and with AMA Samy's permission, went to dokusan with her. A year later on her return visit to Australia, we asked if we could each become her student as this gave us opportunity for both the practice of zazen and also for regular dokusan, the individual dialogue between Zen Master and student. Perhaps because it was such a unique opportunity to have a Zen Teacher available at such close range, our dokusan line was always quite competitive. While Roselyn tried to run a strict zendo, there was always lots of laughter, occasional tears – and all of us valued such a precious time.

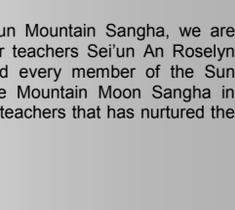
Because we had frequent and intense zen training, [it was "full on" zen during each six month residency] we both completed *shitsunai* (Examination in the room) with our teacher, Sei'un An Roselyn Stone Roshi in the Mountain Moon Sangha in Brisbane in November 1999. Then we were invited to attend the annual Sanbo-kyodan Zen Teacher's *kenshukai* which was usually held in Europe in those early years. These kenshukai are marvelous opportunities to get to know the Sanbo-Kyodan zen network around the globe as well as to experience excellent teaching and dokusan with the Abbott, Yamada Rôun Roshi. We also, with the permission of our teacher, attended sesshin in Madrid (with Anna-Marie Roshi) and in Kamakura (with Kubota Roshi). In 2007, Mountain Moon and Sun Mountain groups combined to host the 2007 Sanbo-kyodan Kenshukai event in Brisbane.

We were Assistant Zen teachers for three years in the Mountain Moon Sangha. On 17th August 2003, we were both authorized as Zen teachers of the Sanbo Kyodan lineage by the Abbott and given the teaching names, Gôen-an Cecillie and Gôun-ken Mervyn. On the 31st August 2003, Sei'un An Roselyn Stone Roshi presented us each with the Certificate of Succession.

After much discussion, we decided to call our new group Sun Mountain Zen Sangha. We had been nurtured in the Mountain Moon Sangha and we wanted to have *something old, something new* that expressed Zen in this particular place of sunny Queensland but which also connected us to Mountain Moon Sangha.



We are indebted to Steven Cassetari who painted our Logo. Stephen has valiantly attempted to teach both of us some of the skills of Chinese Brush painting.



29th November 2003 is the Foundation Day of the Sun Mountain Sangha when the first Zazenkaï at Aspley was held with six attendees. An 'event' guest book was placed in the zendo – and it now proves to be a useful *aide de memoir!*

On the 29th August, 2004 Roselyn Stone Roshi joined us for a Zenkaï at SMZS and she wrote: *"An auspicious day indeed! A visit to the Sun Mountain Zendo of Go'un Ken and Go'en An. The Awakened Way is unsurpassable; we vow to embody it fully! Gassho and love, Sei'un An."*

From 2004 until 2007, there was an annual combined sesshin with Sun Mountain and Mountain Moon Sangha members. Sei'un An Roselyn's last visit [so far] to Brisbane in 2010 provided the opportunity for a wonderful combined Mini-sesshin over the June long weekend where we celebrated the gift of Sei'un An Roselyn's teaching and guidance.

The SMS Zen calendar has incorporated a one day Zenkaï or a 2 day Intensive each month together with an annual sesshin. Since 2006, an annual three day *mini-sesshin* is held across the long weekend in June. A week of summer *Flexi-sesshin* was added to the calendar in January 2009. This is a week's program with regular sitting with dokusan morning and evening; participants come and go (e.g. to work) each day; there has been a different theme each year – e.g. The Ox Herding Pictures, the Precepts; the Diamond Sutra; Zen in the market place had participants practice on buses and shopping centers around Brisbane! It commonly incorporates a trip to the Modern Art Gallery GOMA.

Regular Monday night sitting commenced in 2004 and continues in the St Paul's Church hall in Vulture St, East Brisbane. A smaller group meets for zazen and dokusan on Thursday nights at Aspley. Regular Tuesday night sitting was established by Arno Hess at the Old Catholic Church hall at Samford Village in April 2009 and in the same year, Glen & Sue Wolter established a sitting group in the Catholic Church hall in Kenilworth on Wednesday nights. We have had various programs over this decade teaching the Introductory Zen lectures; we are especially indebted to Arno Hess and Sue Wolter and to other Sangha members who continue this important teaching program.

Sun Mountain Zen Sangha has as its primary purpose the facilitation of Zen meditation practice which also includes socially-engaged outreach. The Inside Zen group, initiated and facilitated by Arno Hess, commenced in the Woodford High Security Prison in 2009. It is supported by members and teachers of the Sun Mountain Zen Sangha and by the Mountain Moon Sangha. It continued in this format for three years. Currently, the Inside Zen group at Woodford is undergoing a substantial change in program delivery but the aim is to expand our offering as a result of our experience over the last several years.

The Sun Mountain Zen Community incorporated as SMZ Association Inc, a non-profit organization on the 13th April, 2006. It is managed by a committee of elected members who carry out various responsibilities to facilitate a harmonious and efficient organization.

Throughout these ten years, it has been our great privilege to offer teaching and to continue our practice in the excellent company of our Sangha members. Such is the nature of practice that on the 11th June, 2012, Arno Hess was appointed as an Authorized Zen Teacher of Sun Mountain Sangha and Gôun-ken Mervyn Lander's Dharma Successor. At the Annual kenshukai in Essen, on the 11th August 2012, Arno Hess was appointed an Authorized Zen Teacher of the Sanbo-Kyodan and given the teaching name *Shu'un-ken*. Arno's teaching is based in the Samford area. It is also delightful to report here that Sue Wolter has completed her *shitsunai* [Examination in the room] and she was appointed an Assistant Teacher of Sun Mountain Sangha by Gôen-an Cecillie on the 8th June 2013.

We continue to welcome so many people who come to explore Zen and to see if it speaks to their *kokoro* [heart-mind] at this time. SMZS has a small but solid core of regular practitioners. We have seen many folk who look, perhaps join for a while then pass through. We hold a 'revolving-door' approach: folk are very welcome to come and see and taste zen for themselves. Likewise they are very free to leave if it is not for them at this time – they go with our blessing and good wishes, and in the sure knowledge that, [to quote Alan Knightley's book title] *"Into every life, a little zen must fall"*. Nothing is wasted!

To conclude this short history of the first decade of the Sun Mountain Sangha, we are delighted to record here our profound gratitude, firstly to our teachers Sei'un An Roselyn Stone Roshi and AMA Samy Roshi; secondly to each and every member of the Sun Mountain Sangha and to the teachers and students of the Mountain Moon Sangha in Australia and in Canada; and finally, to the historic lineage of teachers that has nurtured the teaching that we have received.

It is an incomparable gift.

Gassho
Gôun-ken and Gôen-an
28.5.2013

Dates to remember!!

July 13: Zenkaï

August 5th—9th: Annual Sesshin. (Mercy Place)

If you would like to submit an article for Mat Chat please email it to m_mwilliams@bigpond.com.

