



## Encouraging Words

### The Heart of Practice

by Paul Maloney

Upon his Awakening, the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni said,

*“Wonderful, wonderful, now I realize that all beings are buddha, only their ignorance and attachments prevent them from realizing this fact.”*

The term Buddha means “one who is awake,” and it is this experience that is the very heart of our Zen practice, in fact all Buddhist practice. So, if the Buddha is one who is awake, then it means that the rest of us are in some way, asleep lost in a deep dream. And this dream we mistake for reality.

Changsha said:

*Students of the Way do not know the truth;  
they only know their habitual states of mind.  
This is the source of endless birth and death;  
A fool calls it the original self.*

Nelson Foster translation, HDS internal publication, *Gateless Barrier*, Case 12 verse

The *Surangama Sutra* tells us:

*From the beginning-less past right up to your present existence you have mistakenly regarded a thief as your own child and your changeless original nature has thus been lost to you. Because of that you have been transmigrating through the cycle of birth and death.* (Quoted in Hakuin p. 67)

Think of that:

*“your changeless original nature has thus been lost to you”*

How can that be? How can we lose that which is fundamentally us, our self-nature? Well, it is not so much that we lose it, as that we lose sight of it. That is the ignorance to which the Buddha refers. There is nothing lacking in our nature, what is lacking is understanding.

Yung-chia Hsuan-chueh, a disciple of the Sixth Chinese Patriarch Hui Neng, tells us in his Shodoka,

*People do not recognise the Mani jewel.  
Living intimately within the Tathagata garbha,  
It operates our sight, hearing, smell, taste, sensation,  
awareness;*

While it is always there, we can't see it.

Why? Because we have fallen under a spell; we have been enchanted by the magic of our mind. The mind has created the fiction of a self-substance – the ego - that finds itself alone in an alien world. This ego-self employs its dualistic consciousness to fabricate a private world, with itself at the centre, a world which it then embellishes with concepts and beliefs. And it is these beliefs that are based on ignorance that generate the sense of unsatisfactoriness that is the basis of all our ills. And so Hakuin in his Song of Zazen states:

*Lost on dark paths of ignorance  
We wander through the six worlds*

The six worlds of Samsara are Hell, Hungry Ghosts, Animals, Fighting Demons, Humans and Celestial Beings.

Because the mind has spun a web of deceit in which our attention has become entangled, a fundamental aspect of practice is to free our awareness from this entanglement. The practice of Zen is focused on seeing through this veil of ignorance and dissolving the sense of self that binds us. And it is possible to do this because the self that we think we are is not a substantial entity, but a dream figure.

In the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, Sogyal Rinpoche defines ego as,

*the absence of true knowledge of who we really are,  
together with its result; a doomed clutching on, at all costs, to a cobbled together and makeshift image of ourselves*

that has to keep changing in order to “keep alive the fiction of its existence.” Ego is grasping. It is not something which grasps, it is the grasping. p. 116

Our practice is not a matter of struggling with a substantial self, or ego, that we have to overcome and discard, as we might throw out the rubbish from our home. The practice is not to do battle with the ego, but to see through it. To see that it is a fabrication, a set of ideas and attitudes that have frozen into a rigid form.

You can, by all means, use meditation as stress relief technology to make the ego feel more comfortable. But to do so would be, in a real sense, wasted effort. There is little point in using your time and energy in attempting to “fix” the non-existent entity that you believe yourself to be. It is far more productive to use meditation/awareness, and koan practice to see through such beliefs, and to awaken to your self-nature.

The world fabricated by the ego is, to use a modern parlance, only a virtual reality, one that cannot satisfy our deepest needs. And that is why the human condition is characterised by “Unsatisfactoriness.” There is, however, another world called the essential world that is available to us. That essential world is that our self-nature. One’s self-nature is variously termed, Buddha-Nature, The Original Face, Your Face Before Your Parents Were Born. A warning here about the language; while substantives are used here, one must not form the idea that they are referring to some substantial being.

Dōgen Zenji tells us, quite clearly,

*Unless we risk ourselves to choose to act the Buddha nature never becomes visible, audible, tangible. Buddha Nature and becoming a Buddha always occur simultaneously.*

For Dōgen, Zen practice is not simply a matter of seeing things differently: his concern is with transforming our life. This transforming work takes the form of moral activity and the creativity of daily life. Buddha-nature is not to be conceptualized or contemplated, rather it is to be actualized in our lives.

*Paul Maloney*

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## Reports

### Annandale Kitchen

You may have noticed the refreshed, gleaming white Annandale kitchen, thanks to Nick Denington and his team, Ollie and Inks, who transformed it in just over a couple of days. Great work!

*Gillian and Tony*

### Annandale Samu 17 June



Our samu drew a group of dedicated samuans - Jason, Zoe, Robin, Bren, Kerry, Sean, Jason, Glenys, Jill, Tony, Gilly and their new puppy Tilly.

The day began with sutras, zazen and a talk on work practice, while Tony introduced Tilly to the wider neighbourhood including a couple of local dogs.

After a work meeting, the various teams set to work - new blinds were hung in the dojo (which now looks very schmick) as well as gardening, cleaning, brushing and airing zafus and zabutons and constructing the bulkhead in the inside bathroom for a new exhaust fan (subsequently hooked up by electrician, Wayne Ross, and now working).

The hojo was thoroughly cleaned and, after a marvellous lunch, Nick began repainting the entrance foyer ceiling while we

washed up; most people then went home, though a few walked along the canal to lend a hand at the Whites Creek Valley Food Forest’s monthly working bee. It was a wonderful day.

Many people have remarked on the bright fresh kitchen, which Nick and his team transformed recently. Nick has now been contracted to repaint the inside bathroom.

*Tony and Gilly*



## Coming Events

### Kodoji Samu

September 8 & 9

Why not join us for a great weekend at Kodoji helping prepare the place for the September sesshin? We'll be doing all the usual things - mowing, weeding, track fixing, cleaning, mending, painting etc together with zazen and sutras in the Dojo.

If you've never been before, it's a great opportunity to get to know people in the sangha and to enjoy being off grid, under the stars and warmed by a wood burning stove.

Come up on Friday night if you like and join Gilly and Tony who will be there by then.

You will need to bring the following:

- Sleeping bag

- A tent if you don't want to sleep in the upstairs dorm or on the verandah

- Food and drink to share

- Work clothes

Let Brendon know if you are coming, if you have any questions or if you need instructions about how to get to Kodoji in Gorricks Run St Albans.

It's important to confirm your plans with him so that you can be advised of any problems - e.g. the water height at the river crossing.

Email Brendon Stewart, phone 9879 7290, email [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)

If it's not in your phonebook already the phone number at **Kodoji is 4568 2232** in case you need to get in touch on Friday evening or during the weekend.



## SPRING SESSHIN

### September 29 - October 6

at Kodoji, with Gillian Coote

“Sesshin” means “to settle the mind, to touch the mind, to convey the mind” and, in a hidden valley 3 hours north-west of Sydney, surrounded by ochre cliffs, eucalyptus forests, brilliant starry skies, and the songs of frogs, birds and crickets, we are reminded to come back to our true home.

(Note: includes public holiday, Monday October 1)

Contact: Janet Selby, [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com)



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## News from the Board

### GRATITUDE

After 40 years of tireless service, Tony Coote, resident architect and builder has decided to hand over the job of Samu coordinator. Tony is happy to continue contributing to particular construction or maintenance work for the buildings at Annandale and Gorricks. Brendon has agreed to take up the coordinator role for the next samu before Spring sesshin, then the Board has decided to add it to the list of jobs at the AGM in October. The Board and the sangha would like to deeply thank Tony for the gift of his skills and his ongoing attention to detail of our built environment. The Board has sent him some flowers as a small thank you on behalf of the sangha

### MEMBERSHIP

Make sure you've renewed your membership for this financial year. Early bird prices are only till 31st August! Details and the membership form are on our website.

# Notices

## Book Review

### 'The Crow Flies Backwards and Other Zen Koans' by Ross Bolleter

*The Crow Flies Backwards and Other Zen Koans by Ross Bolleter, [publ. Wisdom, 2018]*

Ross has been a Diamond Sangha teacher in W.A. and musician for many years, and with this book he makes a major contribution to Zen practice in the West and, in particular, contemporary koan practice. He writes with marvellous fluency and ease, offering 108 new Zen koans, many of them arising from the stories he tells. In his chapter, 'Dust on a Ruined Piano', (Ross finds ruined pianos out in the country and makes music with them), he writes that his life as a musician has been informed and shaped by his Zen practice, and that much of the music he has created would have been unthinkable without it. In conclusion, he asks, 'How can dust ever settle on a ruined piano?'. And, at the end of his essay, "When You're Making Love", he asks:

'When you're making love, who is the other?' Amongst many other inspirations for new koans, Ross offers us the words of Shakespeare, Aeschylus, Gary Snyder and many more. Recommended. *Gillian Coote*

## Film Screening

### 'A Singular Woman'

My film biography of Marie Byles, pioneer lawyer, conservationist and Buddhist, will be shown during the National Trust's open weekend (September 15-16) at Marie's bushland, Cheltenham property, Ahimsa, 67 Cobran Road. I'll be introducing the film from 4.30-5.30 pm on 16/9/18. *Gillian Coote*

## Orientations for Newcomers

### Next Orientations: Thursday August 23, September 20 from 7-9pm

The extended format for offering orientations to newcomers, or indeed as a refresher, has been successful and effective. There are limited places and if you are unable to attend without notice, it might deprive others of a chance to attend. Therefore we require people to confirm their participation a few days before the orientation.

Any questions, email [info@szc.com.au](mailto:info@szc.com.au). See website for more details.

## Leadership Call

Dojo leadership is not only a fantastic way to actualise caring for the sangha and merging one's practice with the vast field we all share, it's also a great way to guarantee you'll turn up. For those interested, please contact the following leaders who can guide you in the form of the roles.

**Ino:** Peter Bursky [mowerman26@hotmail.com](mailto:mowerman26@hotmail.com)

**Jiki:** Sue Bidwell [sue.bidwell17@gmail.com](mailto:sue.bidwell17@gmail.com)

**Jisha:** Janet Selby [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com)

## Books for Sale

Robert Aitken books for sale at Annandale include:

*The Ground We Share, The Practice of Perfection, Zen Master Raven, The Morning Star, Original Dwelling Place.*

And don't forget the books and CDs by SZC members Sally Hopkins and Glenys Jackson, *Star and Mountain; Zen Leopard* by Brendon Stewart; *Swimming in Sound* by Caroline Josephs.

## Asylum Seekers Centre Donations

The need for basic survival services by those who receive no government help, cannot work and are waiting indefinitely for visa decisions is increasing dramatically, and each week there are 750 clients.

The Centre relies only on donations of:

**Staples:** rice, canned tomatoes, beans, lentils

**Personal hygiene:** shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, shaving cream, toothpaste.

**Devices:** Mobile phones, laptops and iPads can help keep in touch with separated families.

All data is wiped by an IT specialist.

Unfortunately the Centre can no longer take anything electrical (with a plug).

The SZC women's group continues to make a donation each month which is really appreciated.

If you're not sure, please contact Lesley (0410621756) before leaving anything upstairs at the SZC, Annandale.

# Regular Notices

## 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 \$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. 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](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)

## Blue Mountains Zen

The Blue Mountains Zen Group meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, from 2pm - 4.30pm in Lawson. Our teacher is Paul Maloney 9045 3897

or contact Jane at [janeandino@yahoo.com.au](mailto:janeandino@yahoo.com.au)

## Canberra Zen Group

Meets on Wednesday evenings.

Please contact Gary for more details: [gcaitcheon@gmail.com](mailto:gcaitcheon@gmail.com) 0429 635 412

## North Shore Zen Group

Meets on Thursday nights 7-9pm at the *Quaker Meeting House*, 59 Boundary Road, Wahroonga.

Please bring your own zafu/stool and zabuton.

Contribution \$5 - \$10 towards hiring the venue.

Please contact Maggie Gluek for more details: [magpiewarble@yahoo.com](mailto:magpiewarble@yahoo.com).

## Ashfield Morning Zazen

SZC members interested in morning zazen and dokusan are invited to join a small group that sits regularly on Wednesday mornings from 6.30am - 8.00am.

Please contact Allan Marett [allan.marett@gmail.com](mailto:allan.marett@gmail.com) 0409 712 767

or Peter Bursky [mowerman26@hotmail.com](mailto:mowerman26@hotmail.com) 0405 042 236



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## Members of the Board

Kerry Stewart (Chairperson) [stewartkerry4@gmail.com](mailto:stewartkerry4@gmail.com); Steven Crump (secretary); Jason Koh (treasurer); Jillian Ball; Alex Budlevskis; Helen Sanderson; Brendon Stewart.

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## August 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	2	3	4
5	6 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Subhana	7	8 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	9	10 Womens Group Helen's	11
12	13 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Maggie	14 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	15 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	16	17	18
19 Zazenkaï 2 - 5pm Talk Brendon Dokusan Maggie	20 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Subhana	21	22 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	23 Orientation	24	25
26	27 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Subhana	28	29 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Gillian	30	31	Sept 1



## September 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Subhana	4	5 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	6	7	8 Samu at Kodoji  <i>Early Bird discount for sesshin</i>
9 Samu at Kodoji	10 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Subhana	11 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	12 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	13	14	15 Womens at Diana's
16 Zazenkai <b>2 - 5pm</b> Talk and Dokusan Maggie	17 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Subhana	18	19 ZAZEN 7-9pm with Gillian	20 Orientation	21	22 <i>Last chance for sesshin applications</i>
23	24 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not discuss- ing faults of others</i> (Subhana)	25	26 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not discuss- ing faults of others</i> (Gillian)	27 Beginners night	28	29 SPRING SESSHIN starts
31	October 1	2	3	4	5	6 SPRING SESSHIN ends

