



Encouraging Words

All Moments are the Time-Being

by Gillian Coote

Time can be measured in seconds, minutes, hours, weeks, months, semesters, years and, more poetically, by the full moons, the seasons, what trees are in flower, what animals and birds are breeding or migrating, and our birthdays. But although measuring time is useful, what is being measured, really?

Digging into this question might heal us from the epidemic of sickness in our society that arises from time-pressure, exhausting our adrenals and kicking in anxiety and depression. When Tony and I were on pilgrimage with Thich Nhat Hanh in India, I vividly recall him saying to our group, when some were desperate to go sari-shopping in the local market, ‘Why be in such a hurry? We’re all heading for the same destination!’

Heading for the same destination, indeed, but how will we travel – what will we see and hear? What will we be deaf and blind to? How will we embody the Buddha’s Way? Each of us makes our Bodhisattva Vows. Each of us has the intention to slow down, to practice compassion and loving kindness, to respond rather than to react.

Slowing down is a practice, especially in the time-poor universe most of us live in - hurry, hurry, hurry - so inured to the pressure of time that we’re unaware of the accelerator triggering adrenalin that surges through our bodies. We’re too intent on beating the clock, ticking off the to-do list, cutting it fine. What we forget is that under pressure of time, our responses become reactions, and that we may lash out in reaction - forgetting that actions – verbal or physical – which erupt from a place of greed, hatred or ignorance, add to the toxins in our society. We vow to abandon them, but let’s not forget what primes them – what conditions give rise to them.

Let’s notice the greed arising for experiences or things, knowing how an over-busy life engenders impatience and irritation, and vow to do less, to consume less; on the roads, let’s vow to be mindful of Thay’s words: ‘Why are you in such a hurry? We’re all heading for the same

destination.’

Let’s vow to rest more, to pause, to breathe and to smile. To recognise when we’re overdosing on social media and watch less, listen less, read less. The media cycle will continue without us.

Let’s vow to recognise when we feel impatient - even when we’re doing zazen there may be moments when we think, ‘I could be doing – whatever - instead of sitting here wasting time on a cushion.’ Wasting time? Wasting time is impossible because you ARE time. All that we can waste is ourselves, our precious lives. Why would we do that? Each moment of our life is the only time we are actually alive. We have time because we are time.

Joanna Macy, the American Buddhist scholar and change-maker, and still teaching in her late 80’s, has created these five vows, or commitments, which may resonate with some of you as the New Year approaches. They are essentially no other than the Bodhisattva Vows and Precepts, created for participants in her ‘Active Hope’ workshops. Moving towards another New Year, I vow to myself and each of you:

To commit myself daily to the healing of our world and the welfare of all beings.

To live on Earth more lightly and less violently in the food, products and energy I consume.

To draw strength and guidance from the living Earth, the ancestors, the future beings, and my brothers and sisters of all species.

To support each other in our work for the world and to ask for help when I feel the need.

To pursue a daily practice that clarifies my mind, strengthens my heart and supports me in observing these VOWS.

Our practice opens up the capacity to absorb whatever comes our way and hold it so that we don't endanger others. That's why we maintain our daily practice of zazen.

Dogen Zenji said, "Don't think that time merely flies away. Don't see flying away as being the only function of time. If time merely flies away, you would be separated from time. The reason you do not clearly understand the time-being is that you think of time only as passing. In essence, all things in the entire world are linked with one another as moments. Because all moments are the time-being, they are your time-being."

This moment!

Gillian Coote

Reports

Spring Sesshin

Conditions were ripe for a fruitful and inspiring spring sesshin. Kodoji welcomed three newcomers, some relative newcomers, seasoned students, and fellow-teachers Jane Andino and Carl Hooper from Bodhi Mount Zendo.

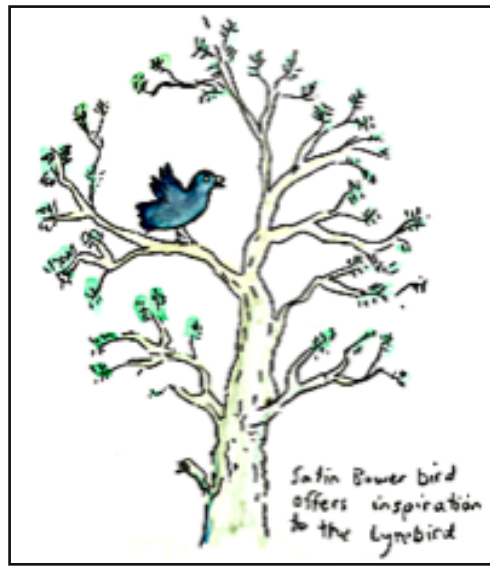
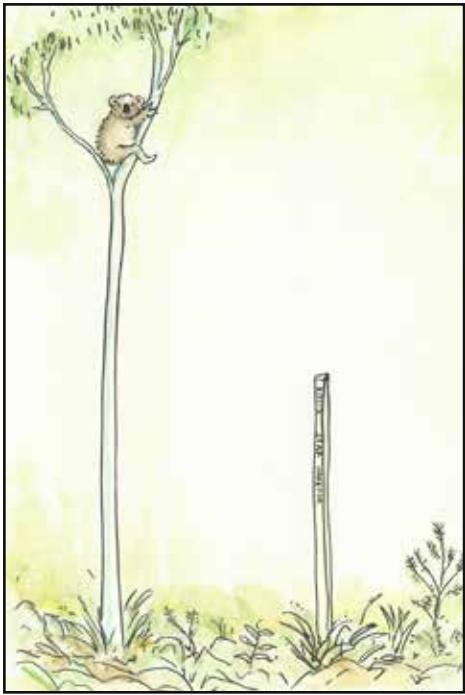
Janet Selby and Jill Steverson were crucial in their roles as sesshin co-ordinator and food planner, our cooks made delicious meals, and the sesshin sangha worked together in harmony.

Our leadership team comprised Will Moon, Janet Selby, Nick Denington, who took the sangha on some wonderful bush kinhin, and Diana Levy, who offered greatly-appreciated yoga stretches each day.

Kerry Stewart took Jukai in a moving ceremony, after which we congratulated Kerry while enjoying tea and Persian Love Cake cooked by Jill.

Once again, we responded to a call in Living Heritage, (a local newsletter for community volunteers), to record the distinctive grunting calls male koalas make during the mating season from September to November. These calls were heard most nights and, on one of Nick's energetic bush kinhins, Jane alerted folks to an actual koala sitting up high in a slender eucalyptus tree along from David's Pole; on the same walk, a large goanna was seen, birdsong filled the valley and satin bowerbirds enjoyed the hungry ghosts' offerings. The mahasangha of many beings seemed in excellent health, despite the drought.





Welcome, Kerry - Myozan, Luminous Mountain

Memorial Service, 100th Armistice Day, 11 November

Gillian Coote

This year our ceremony took place from 11 am on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Armistice, which ended World War 1. We began with a minute's silence, an idea which came to Melbourne-born Edward Honey in 1919, after being angered by the way people had celebrated with dancing in the streets on the day of the Armistice in 1918, and who believed a period of silence would be a far more appropriate gesture in memory of those who had died at war. The idea gained traction and the first two-minute silence began in 1920.

In our quiet, intimate circle, we remembered sisters, fathers, great-uncles and grandfathers, sangha members who have died. We remembered First Nations people who gave their lives for their country, and the many beings giving their lives today. And we remembered the beings of the mahasangha whose habitat has been, or is being destroyed, whose lives are given up, for us.



Left: A page from Janet Selby's family heirloom, her grandmother's autograph book as she left England to come to Australia. This was painted by Floss's little brother. Three other brothers died in France in WW1.

News from the Board

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thank you everyone who came along to the meeting and offered their time and skills to fill our schedule. Sesshin coordinators, MMC editors and many other jobs have been taken up for another year. Gassho!

We welcome another member onto the Board, Zoe Thurner.

At the AGM the members decided to increase the SZC teachers' stipends by a small amount to keep in line with the CPI. This will come into effect in January 2019.

We also have a new leadership training coordinator, Ameli Tanchitsa, who will organise a couple of sessions each year for people who are keen to learn the roles of Ino, Jiki and Jisha. We have a shortage of people who can do these essential jobs, so please talk to Ameli if you're interested in learning how to help: Ameli.tanchitsa@gmail.com
We're hoping the next one will be early in 2019.

Notices

Orientations for Newcomers

Next Orientations: Thursday December 13, 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. 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

Jiki: Sue Bidwell sue.bidwell17@gmail.com

Jisha: Janet Selby 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

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

Canberra Zen Group

Meets on Wednesday evenings.

Please contact Gary for more details: 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.

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 0409 712 767

or Peter Bursky mowerman26@hotmail.com 0405 042 236



SYDNEY ZEN CENTRE

www.szc.org.au

Members of the Board

Kerry Stewart (Chairperson) stewartkerry4@gmail.com; Steven Crump (secretary); Jason Koh (treasurer); Jillian Ball; Alex Budlevskis; Helen Sanderson; Brendon Stewart, Zoe Thurner.

Newsletter Editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com

SZC: info@szc.com.au, www.szc.org.au

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 ROHATSU (Paul) ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	4 ROHATSU (Paul)	5 ROHATSU (Paul) ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	6 ROHATSU (Paul)	7 ROHATSU (Paul)	8
9	10 ZAZEN 7-9pm Allan	11 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	12 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	13 Orientation	14	15
16	17 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Subhana	18	19 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Subhana	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	3	4	5
6	7 ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	8 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	9 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	10	11	12
13	14 ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	15	16 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	17	18	19
20 Zazenkaï 8:30-12pm Talk and Dokusan,- Jane	21 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Sparing the Dharma Assets</i> (Maggie)	22	23 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Sparing the Dharma Assets</i> (Gillian)	24	25	26
27	28 ZAZEN 7-9pm Australia Day	29	30 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	31		

