



Encouraging Words

Engaged Buddhism – A tribute to Bernie Glassman Roshi

Subhana Bazarghi

Perhaps more than ever before, we need to take wise action in our fractured world with its global problems of climate change, rise in natural disasters, refugee crisis, economic and political instability. Wise action requires both an inner and outer revolution, not just more reactivity based on the old paradigm. If we do not attend to the inner roots and transform our greed, hatred and delusion, then sadly we will repeat the same old problems in our organisation, our social, economic political systems all over again. So there is an imperative more than ever to heal ourselves and step up with courageous, clear, non-violent actions for the greater good, for the dear mother earth and its inhabitants.

One of the great towering inspiring figures for me was a highly regarded and deeply loved Zen teacher, Bernie Glassman Roshi who died in November 4, 2018. He was an American Zen Buddhist Roshi and founder of the Zen Peacemakers, an organization established in 1980. Bernie was a pioneer in social enterprises and socially engaged Buddhism and “Bearing Witness Retreats” at Auschwitz and on the streets of New York. Both Gilly and I have walked the path of Engaged Buddhism for many years and have along the way been inspired by Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, Joanna Macy, and Bernie’s work. We lead our own ‘World as Self, World as Lover’ retreats in Sydney some years ago. We recited each day of our street sesshin the Bodhisattva Peacemaker Vows, which provide a philosophical and ethical underpinning for wise action in the world. I have added some commentary for each Peacemaker Vow.

Bodhisattva Peacemaker Vows are dedicated to: oneness, healing, diversity, peace and harmony.

I vow to penetrate the unknown. As a peacemaker, I commit myself to embracing the openness, receptivity and spaciousness of the not-knowing mind.

I vow to bear witness. As a peacemaker, I commit to keeping my heart and mind open to the joys and suffering in my life, family, community and the world. I vow to awaken to the wholeness of life, to the world as self.

I vow to heal myself and others. As a peacemaker, I take up the way of practicing compassion and transforming suffering into liberation and freedom for one and all.

I vow to be diversity. As a peacemaker, I commit to seeing the world of form in all its variety of race, colour and difference as my true self.

I vow to live in harmony with others. As a peacemaker, I will look deeply inside to release the afflictive emotions of fear, anger and ill will, and release attitudinal divisions that cause community discord. I commit myself to practicing tolerance and promoting harmonious relationships.

I vow to live peacefully. As a peacemaker, I take up the way of non-harming, to practice being peace.

I vow to abide in the present moment. As a peacemaker, I take up the way of living mindfully, to bring my awareness back to the present moment. In the present moment there is no baggage, no concepts, no rigid fixed views, no self-centeredness ...only the vast immensity of life as it is.

Subhana

Reports

Rohatsu Sesshin at Annandale

Rohatsu Sesshin 2018 was led by Paul Maloney and was held at Annandale. It began on Monday evening December 3 and finished on Friday evening December 7. We had 3 blocks of sitting, Morning, Afternoon and Evening, with a teisho from Paul every afternoon. Participants could sign up for whichever blocks fitted into their schedule.

For this reason our sesshin had the character of a jazz improvisation: people flowed in and out of the dojo according to their schedule and circumstances, and the sesshin evolved according to the sitters and leaders available. Many people commented that they appreciated being able to easily juggle their commitments and coming to sit in zazen. Like an improvisation, we all seemed to follow the principle of listening to each other, and letting each person shine in their own way.



We also had remote sitters, people living in Tasmania, Canberra and also in Sydney who couldn't attend in person but participated with a regular schedule in their home.

For the final Friday evening, Paul devised a closing ceremony with candles. Just at dusk we lit candles in the dojo, Alex Budlevkis played the shakuhachi, and we enjoyed sitting with its haunting sound in the candle glow.

Saturday morning, the eight day of December, many of us sat at home with the dawn and the Morning Star to honour the Buddha's Awakening. You can see Maggie Gluek's photo of it.

Jane Andino

Closing Guanyin's Zendo



It was with a good deal of sadness that the Guanyin Sangha, which had met at Allan's house in Ashfield since 2013, gathered for the last time on 19 December. At the end of our regular early morning zazen, Allan led a short ceremony to close the dojo, which was followed by a communal breakfast on the deck of 77 Bland St.

The Guanyin Sangha had met regularly for early morning zazen and dokusan since June 2013. From 2014 to 2017 Allan, with the support of the sangha, also led an annual Intensive Practice Period, which comprised daily morning and evening zazen at Ashfield and Annandale and included a weekend zazenkai. In addition Allan has led a monthly dharma study group, and a smaller study group that focused on the Book of Serenity.



Although Allan and Linda have now moved to Adelaide together with their eponymous cat, Guanyin, it is hoped that the Guanyin Sangha (perhaps under another name) might continue to meet at Peter Bursky's place, and that Allan will return from time to time to lead zazenkai and study groups for the sangha.

(Allan speaking here) would like to express my deep

gratitude to the small band of men and women who comprised this small but deeply committed sangha and held our practice in their arms. I'm also deeply grateful to my wife Linda for allowing the sangha to flourish in our home, to the Sydney Zen Centre for its ongoing support and encouragement, and to the teachers' collegium for its wise counsel and love. A deep bow of gratitude and love to all.

Allan Marett, Adelaide, January 2019

Children at Play in a Burning House

by Nelson Foster

It was a metaphor originally. Lotus Sutra, chapter three. A wealthy old man living with his many sons (and presumably many daughters, too) in a vast compound. Counting his retainers, he sheltered perhaps as many as five hundred people there, within a wall that had just one narrow gate. The building was old, too, and when fire suddenly broke out, it burned hot and fast.

The old man immediately saw the danger and the need to escape, but the children, caught up in their games, didn't notice anything. He thought first of carrying them out, but with so many of them and the gate so narrow..... He shouted for their attention, hoping to explain the situation, but—you know, kids—"They merely raced about this way and that in play and looked at their father without heeding him."

Sigh.

Then he hit on a stratagem, the "expedient means" of promising them what they wanted: cool toys! In particular, carts drawn by goats or deer or oxen, their very own. Roughly equivalent to a fast, new smartphone. That did it! The kids swarmed out the gate, all safe and sound, and the old gent rewarded each with a cart even better than he'd promised: a giant carriage arrayed with jewels and flowers, canopied, made comfortable with an abundance of cushions, and yoked to—yes!—a swift, powerful, pure-white ox.

I wish it had remained a metaphor. But this summer, as the children continued playing, it shifted category. Here we dwell. The grand old house has gone up in flames, no question, and the wise are screaming for the kids' attention. Do the kids hear? Not much, it seems.

It surely isn't accurate or fair to depict them—make that "us"—as completely consumed in games, oblivious to everything except the lure of cool stuff. Obviously, some of us are awake to the inferno raging on all sides, and not everyone is a sucker for the next fancy goat-cart. Yet a great many of us do seem disastrously preoccupied, if not with games then with social media or with what a young German attorney identified as perhaps the essential element in the Nazis' rise to power: the "automatic continuation of ordinary life." Doing the laundry. Shopping. Getting to work. Watching the Big Game. Keeping on keeping on.

Like many sangha members, I see this as a time of political crisis in the United States and of dangerous trends in the politics of numerous other countries. But I've come to see the fire this time as much bigger than that, as a total cultural and ecological phenomenon that puts the Earth household as a whole in jeopardy. Of course, if our planet's sixth great extinction goes forward, taking our species with it, some stout forms of life will survive and

eventually evolve into a new assembly of beings perhaps just as wondrous as the set that we've been privileged to know, a set itself the result, after all, of the fifth extinction. But I find that cold comfort.

If the world as we know it is going to hell in a handbasket, I feel obliged by my love for it, and by membership in it, to impede that process. This sense of obligation persists despite very reasonable doubts about the usefulness of such efforts as I can make; considering the magnitude of the destructive forces now in play, my capacity to affect the outcome seems puny indeed. But concern for effectiveness, at least my concern for effectiveness, pales next to the urgings I feel to protect what remains. Or to state the point in patently Buddhist terms, neither the vows we make explicitly nor the values implicit in practice and realization have much to do with feasibility and "realism." How realistic or quantifiable is a bodhisattva's commitment to forgo final awakening until other beings have all awakened?

The question I'm asking myself now, and want to ask you, too, is whether we've reached a point where changing our ways—discontinuing the "automatic continuation of ordinary life"—has become imperative. You and I may have different perceptions of the conflagration licking at the foundations of the house, how far it's progressed, how swiftly it's growing, what chances our current countermeasures have of extinguishing it, and so forth. But do we agree that the time has come to accept full responsibility for it and to revise our behavior in correspondingly urgent and far-reaching ways?

If so, what might those ways be? A number of sangha members have felt moved to step up their activity in the political process, hoping that the mid-term elections will precipitate much-needed changes in Washington. I share that hope, of course. Yet even the best electoral outcome seems unlikely to produce change of the scope, the profundity, and rapidity that our predicament calls for. Our worst problems lie beyond the bounds of legislation: our ever-swelling population, our seemingly insatiable desires for convenience and comfort, our gross insensitivity to the needs of other beings, our willingness to destroy mountains and rivers and otherwise to exploit "natural resources" for human benefit, our callousness toward members of even our own species, and our continuing failure to cooperate in the common cause of life on Earth. Not to mention our age-old fondness for games and our apparently infinite distractibility. I understand all of these as cultural problems at root, not amenable to political solutions but certainly open to solution through other avenues—if, and only if, enough of us get serious about it. Soon.

As for the wondrous ox-cart of the Buddhadharmā, what role might it play now? It's still ready to roll, I hope,

but the old image needs an important correction: the cart isn't waiting for its takers "outside the gate." Unless you buy into the fantasy of escaping to Mars, our tradition, like everything else in our old home, stands to get crisped in the explosive, kalpa-ending firestorm we collectively have set and fueled. Finally, I think we'd better ask ourselves one more question: are the cushions of our fine cart too comfortable? I hope not.

Quotes:

Burton Watson, translator. *The Lotus Sutra*. Columbia, 1993. p. 57.

Sebastian Haffner (Raimund Pretzel) quoted in Cass R. Sunstein, "It Can Happen Here." *New York Review of Books*, June 28, 2018, p. 65.

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Upcoming Events

Zazenkai, February 17

8.30 – 12 Gillian Coote, dokusan following Dharma talk by Helen Redmond at 10 am.

Zen Practice and Environmental Activism: Springing from the same Source.

Helen Redmond has been involved in Zen for over 30 years, has been a doctor for 25 years, and has been an environmental activist for Doctors for the Environment Australia for 9 years. In her dharma talk, Helen explores how her love of nature brought her to Zen practice and how her practice in turn has deeply inspired and informed her work protecting the environment. She asks the question - how do we live an embodied practice in a time of environmental loss and change? How do we respond and act? Is there anything we can do?

Womens Retreat At Kodoji, March 9-10

This is a wonderful opportunity to be together with birds and trees and weather. People often go up on the Friday afternoon. This is open to all Women Sitters, not necessarily SZC members. We take food to share for the weekend, sleeping bags, and money (it is \$20 a night for SZC members and \$25 dollars a night for others. We also usually make offerings for the Asylum Seekers Centre). You can sleep on the verandah, or take a tent if you wish. There are a few beds. We sit together, share together, usually sing, do whatever we decide we wish to do. A timetable is drawn up when we get there, jobs like meal making allotted. Remember it can be hot, and cold.

Any enquiries, Sally Hopkins: s.and.c.hopkins@ gmail.com or 040 3214 772.

Autumn Samu At Kodoji, March 30-31



Our first Samu for 2019 deep in the valley at Kodoji will be over the weekend of March 30-31. This is a wonderful chance to come along to a fantastic sangha community event, to enjoy the gradual shift into autumn that is there to be felt and embraced and to help out with the many tasks that must be done getting Kodoji ready for sesshin. This is a time when new-comers can meet with other sangha members and when we have a relaxed space to be together.

Jobs will include lawn mowing, bush regeneration, building maintenance and a big tidy up after the summer.

Please let Brendon or Alex know if you are coming. For those who have never been to Gorricks we can help plan a motor convoy and / or give directions.

Buddha's Birthday At Annandale, April 7

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY and Baby Naming Celebration (when there are new sangha babies) will be held at Annandale on Sunday April 7, from 11 am, followed by a potluck lunch. This is a family-friendly event, as both children and adults enjoy bathing the Baby Buddha and offering flowers. After the bathing and sharing, we'll have a potluck lunch, so bring food to share. And please let us know if you are coming, if you are introducing a new baby to our sangha, or have any other enquiries. Contact Janet: janetselby@bigpond.com

Notices

Orientations for Newcomers

Next Orientations: Thursday February 14 & March 14, 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: Aitken & Steindl-Rast

The Blue Cliff Record Vol 1 & III

The Roaring Stream: Foster & Schumacher

Vegetable Roots Discourses: Caicentan (Aitken)

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

In 2017/18, with your help, ASC supported over 3,200 people. More than 1,000 new people were new to our centre including 200 children.

With both NSW and Federal elections, ASC will actively engage with politicians calling for the reinstatement of income support for people seeking asylum.

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.

2017/18 at a glance



Unfortunately the Centre can no longer take clothes, kitchen goods, linen or 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.

News From The Board

Tenants

We wish a fond farewell to our tenants Stephen & Rebecca, and Brendan, who have moved to other lodgings and on to new adventures. Thank you for creating such a harmonious sangha home. And welcome to Ameli & Georgie, who will be moving into the middle room for some days each week.

Workshop Success

The 'Living & Dying' workshop run by Subhana in November was very successful with 15 people attending. We also raised about \$900 for SZC. Deep bow of gratitude to Subhana, and Helen for doing the organising.

Smelly Gas?

Kodoji has needed some repairs over the last couple of months with a roof leak in the cottage and a rusted top of a water tank – both fixed. Also, the mystery smell of gas in the kitchen has been identified as coming from the oven. The Board will discuss getting a new one at our next meeting.

Use the Library!

Our librarian, Sue, has been doing a wonderful job of sorting out our books upstairs at Annandale. So please take the opportunity to borrow anything that looks interesting and may enrich your journey along the Way.

Newbies

Orientalizations have been going well, with lots of new people interested in finding out about Zen practice and our sangha. We had so many people interested at the end of last year that we had to hold an orientation in December, which we normally leave free because it's such a busy time of year. Thanks to all the dedicated orientators!

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.

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

February 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	5	6 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	7	8	9
10	11 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	12 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	13 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	14 Orientation	15	16
17 Zazenkai 8:30-12pm Talk Helen Redmond, Dokusan, Gilly	18 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Subhana	19	20 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Gillian	21	22	23
24	25 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	26	27 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	28		



March 2019

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17 Zazenkai 8:30-12pm Talk and Dokusan, Maggie	18 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Indulging in Anger</i>	19	20 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Indulging in Anger</i>	21 Beginners Night (Paul)	22	23
24	25 ZAZEN 7-9pm Maggie	26	27 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	28	29	30 Samu at Kodoji
31 Samu at Kodoji						

