



Encouraging Words from the Teacher

Paul Maloney

EMBODYING THE PRACTICE The Buddha Way of Dōgen and Hakuin

There are two main schools of Zen Buddhism in Japan. One is the Soto tradition as passed down from Dōgen Zenji (1200-1252), and the second is the reformed Rinzaï tradition passed down from Hakuin Ekaku (1685-1768). Although they are separated by five hundred years of Japanese history what Dōgen and Hakuin have in common is an absolute dedication to the practice of zazen as the Way of Awakening and salvation from suffering.

Dōgen followed the example of his teacher Ju-ching who he said, “ used to practice zazen until eleven o’clock in the evening and start it towards dawn as early as two-thirty or three; and this he never failed to practice even in a single night. (Zuimonki 3) Hakuin also was not slack when it came to zazen. In his autobiography he recounts many occasions when, becoming stuck in a problem, he would do zazen without moving for seven days and nights. Even as an old man he did not sleep in a bed. Instead he would wrap himself in his futon and sit in the zazen posture while sleeping. In his song in praise of zazen Hakuin states the human condition and asks the question:

*Lost on dark paths of ignorance
we wander through the six worlds,
from dark path to dark path we wander,
when shall we be freed from birth and death?*

Ignorance (Avida – Not Clear, or delusion) is the first link in the chain of dependent origination and birth and death the last. It is ignorance that has to be overcome by Awakening if we are to be free from birth and death.

And the answer he gives to his question is:

*For this the zazen of the Mahayana
deserves the highest praise:
offerings, precepts, paramitas,
Nembutsu, atonement, training--
the many other virtues--
all rise within zazen.*

For both Dōgen and Hakuin the zazen of the Mahayana is the alpha and omega of the Buddha Way. Furthermore both insisted on the necessity of Awakening, which is an integral aspect of Mahayana Buddhism. Hakuin insists on the absolute need for kenshō, seeing into self-nature. He tells us:

*Everyone who belongs to the school of Zen
should understand: there exists in our school
an essential matter that can only be penetrated in great
awakening.*

*I want all of you to be aware that the study of Zen can
effect a miraculous transformation that will change you
to the very marrow of your bones.*

The term “kensho” consists of two characters, “ken,” - to see -, and “sho”- nature. To see into self-nature, is to realise self-nature, which is Buddha-nature. The ultimate aim of Zen practice is to develop a new religious personality through the kensho experience, and to live Zen at every moment.

Hakuin was a passionate advocate of the efficacy of koans in the process of achieving kenshō. For Hakuin freedom lay in the authentic realization attained through kensho that comes through koan study. He advises us:

*If you work on (a koan) relentlessly, with unflagging
devotion, you will penetrate it whether you want to
or not. And there is nothing that could bring you such
intense joy and satisfaction.*

That is the point. Our lives are, generally speaking, unsatisfactory. This is what the Buddha meant by Dukkha (unsatisfactoriness) when he spoke of it a characterizing the human condition. Because of Dukkha we are constantly looking beyond our present circumstances, seeking for something else. We believe that heaven truth and nirvana lie elsewhere. So we keep searching. Our

gaze is fixed on something beyond the horizon, never where we are. But it does not have to be that way. Hakuin and Dōgen, as orthodox Buddhists, maintain that zazen brings liberation. When we sit in silence we have a chance to listen to our heart. In our busy lives there are few opportunities for this to happen. But as we centre ourselves in zazen we can find rest, and the opportunity to hear what our heart is saying, rather than what the busy world is shouting at us.

Most of our life is taken up with thoughts of the past or dreams about the future, and all of these focus on the “I” as ego. In concentrating on the ego, and its desire for security, we lose sight of our true nature.

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 son 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)

Because we are ignorant of our true nature, we resort to what Sogyō Rinpoche calls, “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.” In the process we become more and more impoverished, lonely, cut-off, alienated. The ego, with its hard protective shell must, at some time, be left behind. It is a state that must be transcended, if our nature is to realise its full potential. Otherwise the ego becomes a prison. If we remain locked in our shells, we crawl around in the darkness

of the dank earth, while up above is the warm light of the sun and the endless sky in which to fly. And we are drawn to the light if only we pay attention to its call.

Dōgen is no less insistent on the need for kenshō. Dōgen’s Awakening came when doing intense zazen under the direction of his Chinese master Ju-ching. Dōgen had an experience that he later described as “the mind and body cast off,” (*shinjin-datsuraku*), and this later became a hallmark of his practice. Dōgen tells us if we sit long enough and hard enough we too will have the experience of “falling away of body and mind – *shinjin datsuraku*. The literal meaning of the Chinese character *datsu* means “to take off,” or “slough off,” and *raku* means “to drop off,” “cast off,” or “fall down.” So all the accumulated artificial attributes are sloughed off, as a snake sloughs its skin, or a lobster its shell. Then we are liberated.

Zazen puts reality into focus by its purity and directness. By melting and dissolving the frozen ego zazen gets us flowing again as we regain our “non-abiding mind”. Zazen enables us to realize the Self that is the reality of life. By letting go of our thoughts about “I” when doing zazen, we wake up to the reality of life which pervades the whole universe. So when Gautama the Buddha attained enlightenment he was able to say,

I attained the Way simultaneously with the whole world and all sentient beings. Everything - mountains, rivers, trees, grass, attained Buddhahood.

Paul Maloney

Reports

RILEY LEE SZC BENEFIT CONCERT 29 July 2017

in memory of Aitken Roshi, who would have been 100



and vases, and Jason and Lily personned the book table alongside Riley’s student David, who was selling Riley’s CDs. Thank you.



For all of you who couldn’t come along to the Old Darlington School on July 29, Riley Lee’s shakuhachi concerts were wonderful. He’s such a warm, loving presence, his words as wise and generous as his shakuhachi playing. Alex did a meticulous job organising everything right up to the concert and beyond, presenting Riley with amazing chocolates and a bouquet and our gratitude. A huge thank-you, Alex! And Allan, too ill to come on the day, who set the whole thing in motion, thank-you too.

In between entrancing us with his extraordinary music, Maggie, Diana, Caroline, Kim and I shared stories about Roshi and, after the first sitting, Kerry and Sue offered tea, scrumptious cakes and biscuits. Helen provided flowers

And throughout it all, Aitken Roshi (via Brian Slapp’s lovely portrait, usually hanging in the cottage at Kodoji) was beaming, clearly enjoying the music and stories in his honour, and celebrating, in Riley’s words, ‘the manifestly inseparable actions of giving/receiving, and the fruit of those actions, which is gratitude’.

Deep gassho. Gilly Coote



SAMU at KODOJI 26-27 August

A small crew of Zen folk bustle out of the city and arrive at Kodoji for a week-end of Samu. Gorricks amphitheater greets us with the first blushes of golden wattle. Glistening dew dances on the tips of the ghost gum branches that line the valley creek bed. Echoes of the Pied Currawong's song bounce off the sandstone cliffs.

Who's providence is this beautiful day? While 'every day is a good day', this is especially another good day for mindful work at Kodoji. Masterful Tony, first class orgniser, gathers tools, prepares jobs and let's people marry themselves to tasks. Gilly and Sue the bush regeneration queens tackled the tenacious blackberry vines. Gloves on for that thorny affair. Helen and Subhana juggle tins of protective grey paint up ladders and are mightily pleased with themselves as they paint the north facing exterior dojo walls.

As the sun heads behind the hill, temperatures plummet south to zero overnight. A blazing new pot belly is eagerly stoked and warms up the cottage. A shared meal of abundance nourishes our bellies and laughter fills our hearts around a jovial evening table. While the milky way sails across the heavens, men, women, child and dog bunker down to rest. All snuggle down under layers of doona covers to ward off a cold laced blanket of stardust. My bladder goes on a midnight strike, it decides it's too cold to get out of bed.

Coffee kick starts the day. The grassy paddock, browned off from a dry winter thaws from a frosty night. Morning breaks open to blue skies. Out of the silence of the dark erupts a dawn chorus of bird song. Pitter-patta of tiny feet run around the veranda as Lilly takes Coco the dog for a walk. Greg Carty, ace fixer and a big gem of a man, seems to know how to fix everything, especially the leaking gas cooking rings. Mega thanks. Jason gathers the kindling while Will Moon heads out across the paddock, chainsaw in hand to cut up the next lot of firewood.

Kodoji Temple, stands steady through the seasons. A refuge and hearth for the many beings. This Ancient Ground offers refuge from the chattering narratives of a busy world. I'm feeling blessed that we have a dojo to tender and care for, a precious place to sit and a caring, loving, joyful community that nurtures a deep sense of belonging and home coming. *Subhana*



Greg found the cause of the gas smells at May Samu. Now when anyone finishes using the cooking top, the red lever is turned vertically to cut off the gas supply, and so- no more gas smells. On the Sunday he mowed all around the buildings, a mighty job, and worked out why the mower was not working - contaminated fuel. There's now a sign at the compost area to let people know it is being rested, and that there's a new compost bin. There's a new sign on the drive in, to alert folks not to drive down to the straw bale house instead of Kodoji, as people have been doing lately. *Tony*



*New bed for the hojo formed out of the old futo base and scraps of timber around the place - frame still to be stained
See also the tatami mats in the Dokusan area - gift of Paul Maloney. Gilly + Helen, Great Woodpile, Gilly +Sue.*



Subhana, Tony, Will and Helen doing samu.



Coming Events

FAMILY WEEKEND & PICNIC DAY at Kodoji October 21 + 22

This weekend at our country property is a chance to introduce your family to the sangha and meet our neighbours. Zen practice isn't just about sitting on your cushion, so come to Kodoji for a family weekend full of fun while preparing for a picnic. On Saturday 21st we'll take the time to smell the gum blossoms and show our loved ones around.

The picnic with our neighbours on Sunday 22nd will start at 10am, with a tour and explanation of our practice at 11am, followed by a potluck lunch at noon. Bring something delicious to share! There will be games for the children, and please bring your favourite musical instrument for a singalong. Come for the whole weekend or just the picnic. If you're coming please let Kerry know: stewartkerry4@gmail.com

SZC SYDNEY ZEN CENTRE

**Picnic Day
Sunday 22nd October**

SZC invites you and your family to a picnic and games day. Bring your favourite dish to share for lunch and we'll supply games for the kids. You're welcome to have a tour of our property and find out about Zen too.

Date: Sunday, 22nd October
 Times: 10am to 2pm, tour at 11am, lunch at noon
 Where: Kodoji, Gorricks Run, Upper MacDonald Valley
 What to bring: Picnic lunch to share, musical instrument for sing along
 RSVP: Please email Kerry if you are coming
stewartkerry4@gmail.com

AGM 15 October

Please mark this date in your calendar, so you can participate in the running of our Centre. We are hoping many of you are able to join us for the AGM on Sunday October 15. This is your opportunity to vote in a new Board, hear reports from the Treasurer, the Chairperson, and the Teachers, and offer any ideas about harmonizing and strengthening the Sydney Zen Centre and its sangha. Zazen from 9 to 10am, Meeting at 10.30am, followed by a shared Potluck lunch. See you there!

MEMORIAL DAY 12 November

This year we celebrate our Annual Memorial Day on 12 November, remembering especially our founder Aitken Roshi who would have been 100 this year. This is an opportunity for everyone to remember family, friends, or pets who have died and whom we hold in our hearts. We sit zazen from 9. At 11 we hold a special ceremony led, by Gilly, offering flowers, sharing the person or pet we grieve for with everyone with words, poems, songs. Weeping, laughing. If you have a photo you could bring it to put on the altar. Following this intimate time, we share a potluck meal together. Come and join us for a very special day.

Reports on Zen Roots Workshop given by Paul Maloney 23 September Spring Sesshin September 30-October 7

It is too late for inclusion in this Newsletter. See reports next time.

Notices

Asylum Seekers Centre

The Womens group sent \$830 to the Asylum Seekers Centre this financial year. Warm coats, jackets and jumpers especially appreciated in the cold weather-oil, bismati rice and things like shampoo always needed. Donations can be put in the special box upstairs in the library at Annandale.
Enquiries: Lesley, email lesley.treleaven@gmail.com or 0410 621756

Leadership Roles

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.

News from the Board

Riley Lee Fundraising Concert 29 July

Thanks to all those people who organized the event, sold tickets and books, arranged chairs, told stories of their encounters with Aitken Roshi, baked cakes and cleaned up afterwards. Special thanks to Riley Lee for donating his time and sharing the beautiful music. The two concerts were sublime. Also thanks to Allan and Alex for setting everything in train and keeping the concert on track. We raised about \$4,500! And it was a fabulous opportunity to reflect on the life and times of the founder of the Diamond Sangha.

Jeff Ward, Roshi

Jeff recently received Dharma transmission from Subhana in an intimate and heart-felt ceremony in Canberra. Jeff acknowledged the patience and guidance of his teachers, including Paul Maloney, who wasn't able to make it to the ceremony. We wish Jeff and the Canberra Zen Group all best wishes. At the ceremony the SZC gave him a beautiful statue of Manjushri, made by our own talented sculptor, Janet Selby.

AGM Sunday 15 October

Please mark this date in your calendar, so you can participate in the running of our Centre. We are hoping many of you are able to join us for the AGM on Sunday October 15.

Zen Leopard book

Please grab a copy of Brendon's travel diary and reflections on his relationship to Japan. It's at Annandale now, only \$20 and all profits go to the SZC.

Swimming in Sound CD

We have another offering from one of our talented membership. Caroline Josephs has offered her CD of poems and stories '*Swimming in Sound*', as a fundraiser for SZC. They are \$20 and the profits go to us, so please pick one up from the zendo when next you're there.

Paul and Subhana prepare Jeff's special Rakusu, and Janet's Manjusri statue made of clay to look like bronze.



Notice Board

Dokusan

Mondays

Subhana: October 2, 9, 16 November 20, 27

Allan: October 23

Paul: November 13

Wednesdays

Gillian: No October dokusan –

Cootes off celebrating 50 years married

November 1, 15, 22, 29

Full Moon Ceremony

October No full moon ceremony – due to sesshin

Dharma Café

November 6 + 8

Zazenkai

November: Sun 19 Zazenkai 8.30-12

Paul Maloney Teisho + dokusan

Orientations for Newcomers 7-9pm

Thursdays: October 12, November 9

See website for more details www.szc.org.au

Board Meeting

October 15 AGM + November 14

6 pm for 6.30 start.

All SZC members very welcome.

Womens Group Open to all Women Members

October 13 Lesley's

November 11 Caroline's (Saturday)

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, 2 - 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: 0429 635 412
email gcaitcheon@gmail.com

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
0409712767 or Peter Bursky
mowerman26@hotmail.com 0405 042 236

Members of the Board

Kerry Stewart (Chairperson) stewartkerry4@gmail.com; Helen Sanderson (secretary); Jason Koh (treasurer); Sue Bidwell; Alex Budlevskis; Georgina Reid; Ameli Tanchitsa; Brendon Stewart.

Newsletter Editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com

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

SZC Calendar October-November 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Oct 1	2 ZAZEN 7-9pm	3	4 NO ZAZEN Sesshin	5	6	7
8	9 ZAZEN 7-9pm	10 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	11 ZAZEN 7-9pm	12 Orientation 7-9pm	13 Women's group Lesley's	14
15 AGM Zazen 9-10, AGM potluck	16 ZAZEN 7-9pm	17	18 ZAZEN 7-9pm	19 Beginners' Night 7-9pm	20	21 Family weekend at Kodoji
22 Picnic Day at Kodoji	23 ZAZEN 7-9pm	24	25 ZAZEN 7-9pm	26	27	28
29	30 ZAZEN 7-9pm	31	Nov 1 ZAZEN 7-9pm	2	3	4
5	6 DHARMA CAFÉ 7-9pm	7	8 DHARMA CAFÉ 7-9pm	9 Orientation 7-9pm	10	11 Women's Group at Caroline's
12 Memorial Ceremony, zazen 9am, Ceremony 11. Potluck	13 ZAZEN 7-9pm	14 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	15 ZAZEN 7-9pm	16	17	18
19 Zazenkaï 8.30- 12 Talk and dokusan Paul Maloney	20 ZAZEN 7-9pm	21	22 ZAZEN 7-9pm	23	24	25
26	27 ZAZEN 7-9pm	28	29 ZAZEN 7-9pm	30	Dec 1	2