



## Encouraging Words

**“Greed, hatred and ignorance rise endlessly.  
I vow to abandon them.”**

Jane Andino

Our vows at first seem to be impossible contradictions but each time, as we say them with trust, the impossible finds some translation into our daily life.

I find the word “abandon” interesting. It’s possible to imagine the valiant bodhisattva in shining white robes dispelling evil desires, just saying “no more!” to greed and hatred. Abandoning ignorance is a more difficult thought experiment. In our tradition ignorance refers to being ignorant or mistaken about the true nature of reality, in particular having the belief of possessing a permanent self which gives rise to grasping and aversion. How to abandon a state which completely fills your view of the world?

Of course, there are many and varied translations of the Four Great Vows.

In a previous Encouraging Words edition, Allan Marett noted that “to cut off” delusions is the more literal translation, but “abandon points to a gentler practice of letting go.” Indeed, to cut off and to abandon are really two sides of the one practice. We choose whichever approach is going to work at that particular moment, fearless exploration with gentle letting be.

We have this great gift of zazen which, by continuous practice, gradually does allow us to let loose the clinging hands and open the fearful door of our hearts. It allows us

to live “with no hindrance in the mind” or in Red Pine’s translation “without walls of the mind.” Zazen is the means to melt away those walls simply by seeing what is, and by turning the gaze inwards.

There is the mythic story, a story which has many versions, of the Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree when Mara came to tempt him with self-doubt. “What makes you think you will cut through ignorance?”

In response, the Buddha touched the earth and called on the earth to bear witness to the rightness of his aspiration. In zazen we keep coming back to our sitting on this earth, whatever thoughts or fantasies keep appearing in our mind, with great trust that those delusions will drop away in each moment, again and again, and with great faith that we are doing this for all beings.

I think we sometimes lose sight of how simple and effective zazen is. No need to download an app to do it, no need to charge up anything except your enthusiasm, completely suited to our DIY age. Just sit and see what is, that “Nirvana is here before your eyes.”

The crickets are chirring in the dusk. The last light is fading from the cliff tops.

The darkness of night flows in. Yes, it’s a little video of Kodoji, and time to think about going to Autumn sesshin to enjoy zazen with the Sangha.

*Jane Andino*

# Reports

## Womens retreat 8 - 10 March at Kodoji

Fourteen women met at Kodoji over the weekend 8-10 March for the 28th such meeting of the Zen women. There are deep friendships in this group. We were welcomed by dry creeks and a brown paddock, though hills and trees remained as usual, and still the starry night, the darkness, the quietness with no traffic. We organized our programme with help from Kerry- silent mornings, sitting until breakfast. More sitting before meals, in the evening. Janet taught us to make small bonsai pots with clinging lizards. Jill S led bushcare removing weeds. Maggie led singing. Caroline offered a song about refugees.



There were bushwalks, including exploring the whole of the 40 acres owned by SZC. Except for the trees practically everything in the bush was wilting. Dry Dry Dry. A wombat was seen. Four gang gangs. Three minute bats plus a dead one in the dojo. Three magpies patrolled the paddock. Native bees fed on yam flowers. Water was rescued from a leaking tank. People made delicious meals from what all had brought up to share. We had our usual sharing circle each saying something about our so varied lived- always intimate and enlarging.

We thought of those not present. A wonderful refreshing time together.

*Sally*

## Students Climate Change March, Friday 15 March, Sydney



A few members SZC members joined thousands of school kids to help spread the message with our banner *The Earth Is Our Body*. Kerry is photo-bombed by a random student protester. Some T-shirts are available for sale at the Zendo in Annandale - *Climate Action Now - No Jobs on a Dead Planet*.

## A Message from Christchurch, NZ

From Southern Insight Meditation in Christchurch Sangha, 15 March 2019.

“Like all of you we are shocked and heart broken at today’s events in Otautahi Christchurch. Our hearts are especially with our Muslim communities at this horrendous time.

May our responses be of kindness and compassion to those so terribly affected, and may self-compassion support our own bewildered minds and hurting hearts.

Please take good care of each other, and be in touch if you need support.”

*With metta, Julie and Di*

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## Upcoming Events

### Wake Up

A Call to Engaged Social Action to address the Climate Crisis

A series of four talks and presentations on Thursday 6.30pm - 9pm, 2 - 23 May

at Annandale

The Sydney Zen Centre will facilitate a series of 4 evening talks and presentations on Thursday nights from 6.30 - 9pm from 2nd - 23rd May, focusing on an engaged Buddhist response to Climate Change.

The aim of these four evenings is to hear an update on the latest scientific information about climate change, discuss

and focus on solutions and draw together and share the sangha's active involvement in addressing climate change. We will explore how our Zen practice offers inner transformation and healing as well as providing resilience, clarity and strength in the face of change and difficult times.

Zen teachers Subhana Barzaghi and Gillian Coote will facilitate a series of four evenings. The program will cover; video presentations, discussion forums, guest speakers and experts in the field, as well as an opportunity to share the diversity of local responses that our sangha is already actively involved in.

**2nd May - Update on Climate Science.** The evening will address the latest information and research from a video from climate scientists about global warming. Guest speakers and local scientists Dr. Rosalie Chapple from UNSW Masters of Environmental Management Program and Blue Mts. World Heritage Institute and an update from Dr Helen Redmond from Doctors for the Environment.

**9th May Despair and Empowerment - Meditative Resources.** The evening will focus on the need for both our inner spiritual work of waking up and outer work in the world. We will explore how Buddhist teachings and emotional processes that support wise non-violent action. Zen teachers Subhana Barzaghi & Gillian Coote will draw from Joanna Macy's work on despair and empowerment, compassionate communication skills, stories and examples of non-violent action. Guest speaker Sally Gillespie will talk about the psychological experience of ongoing climate change engagement drawing on her doctoral research and upcoming book *Climate Change and Consciousness: Re-imagining ourselves in our world*.

**16th May 'Drawdown' - The top 100 solutions.** We will focus on a video presentation of the launch of "Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming", an inspiring book edited by Paul Hawken, followed by a discussion. We will be joined by Guest speakers; Sue Holmes an economist, a former Assistant Commissioner of the Productivity Commission, coordinator of Get-Up North Sydney and an active participant in the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change; Kenneth McLeod who will speak about Anthropocene Transitions; and Neil Gunningham, a professor of climate and energy governance at the ANU and an active member of Get-Up! His recent work asks: can the climate movement achieve transformational social change?

**23rd May - Community networking and supporting one another.** We will provide an opportunity to share sangha members' engagement and involvement in social, political and environmental projects and organisations, providing an opportunity to support, network and liaise together to forge stronger alliances. We will be joined by Beth Hill, Ph.D., who did her thesis on Climate Change and Janet Laurence renowned artist and environmental activist.

To register your interest please contact Brendon Stewart email: [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)

For non-SZC members there is a \$10 facility fee.

## Buddha's Birthday and Baby Naming Ceremony, Sunday 7 April

Please arrive by 10.45 am for our annual celebration, which this year will include baby naming and welcome to our sangha for Pip Atkins' youngest grandchild, Nina. Clare's two older children, who were welcomed some years ago, will be there. This is a family-friendly event where the Baby Buddha is bathed and offered flowers and there's sharing, songs and stories, followed by a potluck lunch; bring food and a flowers. If you would like a baby naming for one of your young ones, or have any questions, contact Janet Selby: [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com)

## Autumn Sesshin At Kodoji, 19-26 April

The Autumn sesshin, led by Subhana Bazarghi and Maggie Gluek, will be held at Kodoji from Friday 19-26 April. The theme of the sesshin will be the four Bodhisattva vows and their relevance to the world today. Subhana writes: "Right now, with our earth household under threat and with extinctions occurring rapidly, how can I usefully manifest the wisdom and compassion of the Bodhisattva?"

Please go to the website for the application form, and return it to me at [janeandino@yahoo.com.au](mailto:janeandino@yahoo.com.au)

The early bird date is April 5.

If you have any queries, please email me, or ring or text 0432 355 831.

*Jane Andino*

## Bushwalking at Kodoji/Gorricks, 11 - 12 May

A couple of years ago a small group of us made our way to the amazing art cave up in the hills to the west and north from Kodoji. The weekend was inspired by Brendon and Kerry and at the end of a great walk and weekend in the valley, we all agreed that it would be good to do another walk sometime. We almost got one off the ground last year however due to some confusion around the nature of the walk, and difficulty finding a suitable path we decided to delay things. This May we will try again. The following is a bit of background to bushwalking in the country around Kodoji.

Walking around the valley has its challenges. Whilst the valley floor is easy going up to Kodoji, it starts to become difficult past this point. Generally the ridge tops aren't too bad. They gently undulate. It is leaving and returning to the valley that has its challenges. To gain the ridges requires steep and slippery ascents, and returning to the valley is the same, except the legs are by that time pretty tired. There aren't really any other options for the immediate environment around Kodoji. However, the hard work is often worth the effort. There are great views, and we get to explore the mysterious country that is beyond the trees and ridges that we look upon when sitting mindfully gazing up during our sesshins. A chance to become intimate with the Turpentines, Bloodwoods, Angophoras and the ancient sandstone laid down more than 200 million years ago. So a few things to think about for those who might want explore some of the wilderness around Kodoji with its little hidden treasures.

First thing, it can be hard work and often the walk includes the best part of the day, including the climbs out of the valley and return descent. We may end up doing a walk that has no tracks, so sometimes wading through the undergrowth may be required.

If you are ok with that then your gear should include sturdy footwear, long sleeves and long pants, hat, small backpack, wet weather gear, spare warm clothes, sufficient water to keep you going throughout the day. Aim for 2 litres. Some high energy goodies to eat and share. Chocolate brownies are always welcome. A sense of humour for when you find yourself entangled in a lawyer vine, or have become best buddies with a leech, or slipped over on your bum for the tenth time. You may want to bring a camera, or a pad to write or sketch with.

We will probably aim to do the walk on Saturday and have a chill out on the Sunday before returning home. Maybe do something short and easy on the Sunday to cater for the less agile and less adventurous.

If you are interested you can email me on [wilmoon@gmail.com](mailto:wilmoon@gmail.com) or call 0400 106 163.



## Winter Sesshin at Annandale, 8-12 June

The Winter sesshin, led by Paul Maloney and Jane Andino, will be held at Annandale from Saturday 8 June to Wednesday 12 June. Friday 7 June, 7:00pm -9:00pm will be Sesshin Introduction for participants.

Being non-residential each day will consist of three blocks:

Morning 9:30-12:00

Afternoon 2:00-5:00

Evening: 6:30 - 9:00.

Dokusan will be offered in each block. Participants can sign-up for the whole sesshin, or individual blocks.

It is hoped that sangha members will take advantage of the Queen's birthday long weekend, by signing-up for whole days over the weekend, if they are able to do so. That way, you will support the practice of your fellow meditators, while strengthening your own practice.

More information and application forms will be on the website closer to the application date. If you have any queries, please email Julie Robinson ([julesandco@live.com.au](mailto:julesandco@live.com.au)), or ring or text 0403192814.



# Notices

## Orientations for Newcomers

### Next Orientations: Thursday April 11 & May 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](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: 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.

## T-shirts 'Climate Action Now' for sale

Sangha member Peter Thompson has put in a lot of effort over some time to get action on climate change. In his latest effort he designed a series of t-shirts that are available for sale in the foyer at Annandale.

Orders: Janet Selby, [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com), Facebook: Wear a T-Shirt for Climate Action Campaign.

## Library Upstairs at Annandale for Members

Sue and Glenys work together sorting out the library upstairs available for members to access. Just in case there are any enquires both Sue and Glenys can be contacted. Glenys: [grosej@gmx.com](mailto:grosej@gmx.com), Sue: [sue.bidwell17@gmail.com](mailto:sue.bidwell17@gmail.com)

## 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.

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

**Stepping Back** Deep bow of gratitude to Paul Maloney for his years of devotion to SZC and the sangha. He has decided to pull back on his commitments to Sydney Zen Centre. He's not retiring, just handing over some of the administrative jobs so he can focus on more important things like teaching and connecting with sangha members.

**Welcome** to Chris who has moved into our sangha house, joining our other residents, Lily and Ameli.

**Kodoji** has undergone some transformations over summer. On a recent trip up there to remove the old stove we found a black wattle had fallen on the roof of one of the toilets. Tony Coote and Carl Hooper chopped and removed it. The fall knocked the solar power wires and sent the inverter crashing to the ground. And the hand basin mirror had broken into many pieces. It also was removed. On another trip several keen bush regenerators went up to control the fleabane which was in flower – thank you Jill S, Gilly, and Maggie. The new stove has been bought, delivered and plumbed into the kitchen. Now we can make melted cheese on toast! One of the water tanks is leaking which has affected the tank stand. At the next samu we'll be removing the tank and rebuilding the stand, under the guidance of Tony. So, the Board would like to encourage everyone to come to samu to help.

**Bush care** Thank you to Jill Stevenson for applying for and working toward obtaining a grant from Landcare to control noxious weeds on our property on Gorrick's Run. Jill has reported that the recent assessment of our land went well with the Landcare Officer, and we'll hear shortly if we've been successful. Fingers crossed.

**Welcome notice** The Board and the teachers have just decided to put up a clear notice acknowledging the traditional owners of this country, in the foyer of our Annandale zendo and on one of the buildings at Kodoji. We're working out the wording with the two Land's Councils and will have the notices made over the next couple of months. So keep your eyes peeled!

**New zafus** Thank you to the Women's Group, for your recent efforts and over many years, for making and maintaining the zafus and zabutons we use at Annandale and Kodoji. There was a wonderful sewing bee in February which, so far, has provided 10 new very plumped-up zafus for Annandale. There will be more to come over the next few months.

## 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).

## 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, Zoe Thurner.

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

**SZC:** [info@szc.com.au](mailto:info@szc.com.au), [www.szc.org.au](http://www.szc.org.au)

## April 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	2	3 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	4	5	6
7 Buddha's Birthday 11am	8 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	9 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	10 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	11 Orientation	12	13
14	15 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Subhana	16	17 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Gillian	18	19 Good Friday Autumn Sesshin	20 Easter Autumn Sesshin
21  Autumn Sesshin	22 ZAZEN Autumn Sesshin	23  Autumn Sesshin	24 ZAZEN Autumn Sesshin	25 ANZAC Day Autumn Sesshin	26  Autumn Sesshin	27
28	29 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	30				



*Jill and Marianne performing important bush care at Gorriks, Women's Retreat.*

## May 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	2	3	4
5	6 ZAZEN 7-9pm Paul	7 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	8 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	9	10	11 Family Walking Weekend, Gorricks Run
12 Family Walking Weekend, Gorricks Run	13 ZAZEN 7-9pm Paul	14 Orientation	15 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	16	17	18
19 Zazenkaï <b>8:30-12pm</b> Talk and Dokusan, Subhana	20 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Defaming the three treasures</i>	21 Beginners Night (Paul)	22 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Defaming the three treasures</i>	23	24	25
26	27 ZAZEN 7-9pm Paul	28	29 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	30	31	



*Clay Masterclass at Womens Retreat led by Janet - frogs and lizards and pinch pots.*