



Encouraging Words

Maggie Gluek

I'm fairly recently back from travelling overseas. I didn't sit much in that time; it was too exciting. There were so many things to marvel at, so many reasons to get up and going early. Therefore, coming home has meant returning freshly to zazen. And appreciating the radical simplicity of this practice that truly brings you home to be right where you are.

In meditation recently the word *innocence* arose. The lightness of being, the unburdening, that is uncovered, expressed on the cushion. Things—oneself no less—simply as they are without the coloring of thought or judgment, *this is good* or *this is bad*. And with no presuming to know what will arise, what will occur “next.”

Patrick Kearney tells a good Zen story about visiting Hogen, a Soto teacher up in Byron, and discussing the different kinds of Buddhist practices. Hogen asked him to describe what he did with his Insight Meditation teacher. Patrick said he had to report in precise detail his moment by moment experience during the last meditation period (or whatever). He explained to Hogen, something along the lines of: *First I was aware of breath, next I noticed feeling tired, next I felt my right leg aching, next a bird called... until Hogen jumped up and shouted:*

“NO NEXT!”

We're inclined to complicate it all. “Overthinking” might be an appropriate verb. In an interview not long before he died Peter Matthiessen, writer and Zen teacher, spoke of a character in a Turgenev story who commits suicide and leaves a note. “I could not simplify myself,” read the note. *I want to simplify myself*, said Matthiessen. *My great great aim in life. Total failure. Ha! We lose the early paradise, he went on... the non-discriminating. Instead...Opinions, anger, indignation—great, hatred, folly.*

Yet it's always there, the garden.

So, how to simplify? How to disengage with delusions about who I am and stabilise the mind, return to the mind

at peace? (Even at peace with not feeling “at peace”, with “total failure!”) That's the perennial and important question that is continually asked of you, of me, students of the Buddha Way. As in the OxHerding Pictures, it's a matter of attending to the ox that is your innocent “empty” nature, not losing sight of it, realizing intimacy with it. Again and again, disciplined and even dogged.

Noticing when you are thinking and letting thoughts dissipate, as you anchor yourself fully in your practice of presence. This is Zen *training*. And yet not erring on the side of instrumentality, *my doing* and the concomitant self-commentary. “I've got to figure it out, get it right.”

Thoughts and feelings come and go, changing like the weather. Don't worry.

Establish practice in delusion, frustration, problems, mistakes, said Dogen. And if you do worry, Dogen again: *The more you have good practice and good enlightenment, the more you feel you don't have enlightenment and your practice is not good enough!*

Have faith. If the breath is your practice, leave everything to the breath. If it is Mu, leave everything to Mu. There's a shedding, isn't there? A kind of great subtraction. When you're one with the matter at hand, the “self” disappears, not separate. Zazen is the template but everything else comes into play. In the wisdom of the Tao de Ching:

Those who pursue learning gain something everyday.

We who pursue the Tao lose something every day,

Loss after loss until we reach nothing to do—

no doing, yet nothing is not done.



Maggie

Reports

Winter Samu at Annandale

Winter Samu lived up to its name with wild and rainy weather. It proved excellent for deep water gardening. Kerry managed to recover a delightful pot which she replanted with a pink zygocactus. No one got a cold.

July Zazenki - Talk by Brendon Stewart

The July Zazenki was a wonderful chance for some of us to have a long and deep zazen. Brendon offered a short talk that reflects on his work with homeless men to explore the concept of Wise Hope. It is currently available as a pod cast on the SZC web site.

“Wake Up!” Presentation: Low Carbon Living

If you would like to follow up John Merson’s presentation at Wake Up - on calculating your carbon household footprint and becoming carbon neutral here is the link to Low Carbon Living. Even though I have solar, recycle, LED lights, efficient shower heads, changed my power supplier to Powershop that gives 100% to renewable energy projects, still I found I can do more to reduce my carbon footprint and offset it. It is a very useful calculator. It does not include car & travel, so ones carbon footprint would be greater. You can also use other carbon calculators to estimate that. It would be good to hear about other people’s response to this.

<https://lowcarbonliving.ecologicapp.com/assess/d8df51d5-d5db-423d-bb50-f34690be8d9d>

Subhana

All the details about the speakers at the Wake Up! talks, suggested websites of environmental organisations and books are listed on our website: <http://szc.org.au/environmental-engagement/>

Winter Sesshin at Annandale

The Winter Sesshin 2019 was led by Paul Maloney Roshi and Jane Andino apprentice teacher.

It started on Saturday 8th June and concluded on Wednesday 12th June. This was held at Annandale and it was a non-residential sesshin, so it was a great opportunity to integrate zazen with work and home practice.

The schedule included zazen, kinhin, dokusan and teisho. There were three daily blocks and participants could sign up for the periods that suited their commitments.



We had about 12 participants at various times during the length of the sesshin.

From the very start there was a strong sense of focus and serenity in all participants.

Paul and Jane’s teishos developed the sesshin theme which explored the connection between zazen and our creative being, to find emptiness singing itself. In Hakuin Zenji’s words: “Singing and dancing are the voice of the Law.”

On the fourth night we enjoyed a very special treat as Jane delighted all of us playing a beautiful melody on the piano. After many days of silence our minds rejoiced on this wonderful music during some really captivating moments.

Later on we learnt that she composed this piece of music and also that she improvised as she played. Truly fascinating.

As this sesshin was held at Annandale we didn’t have the customary wildlife encounter that we would have had at Kodoji. Instead of this, a wasp nest was spotted under the letter box so we remained very alert and of course mindful at all times when walking close to it.

Teishos by Paul Maloney and Jane Andino are now available on our website: <http://szc.org.au/podcasts/>

COMING EVENTS

Spring Samu at Kodoji 14-15 September

Put in your diary the spring samu 14-15 September. Kodoji in the glorious colours of spring.

Plenty to do especially a major Blackberry cull.

Contact Brendon stewarts34@bigpond.com or Alex alexbudlevskis@gmail.com.

Spring Sesshin at Kodoji with Gillian Coote October 6 -12



At Kodoji, in the valley of beauty and wilderness, practising in deep silence and letting go of ideas and preoccupations creates myriad opportunities to wake up moment by moment – to come home to the lyrebird's song, the starry heavens and the vastness of this universe. To come home to your true self.

Enquiries (Sesshin Coordinator) Jill Steverson jillsteverson@gmail.com

Notices

Orientations for Newcomers

Next Orientations: Thursday 8 August; Thursday 12th September 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. www.szc.org

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.

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

Lesley 0410 621 756

News From The Board

Weed control grant for Kodoji

Deep bow of gratitude to Jill Steverson for organising a grant to employ a professional bush regeneration company to control Blackberry at Kodoji. We don't have the money yet but all being well it will come early in the next financial year. Jill will be organising some weeding weekends soon. It's always fun to spend time together as well as helping the bush regenerate, so let her know if you're interested. jillsteverson@gmail.com

Residents

The Board would like to farewell Chris and welcome Adrian to our sangha home in 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 9879 7290

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

Contact Jane janeandino@yahoo.com.au

Canberra Zen Group

Meets on Wednesday evenings.

Contact Gary

gcaitcheon@gmail.com 0429 635 412

Sydney North

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.

Contact Maggie Gluek magpiwarble@yahoo.com.

Sydney East

The Guan Yin Sangha meets every Thursday morning at Peter Bursky's home in Matraville from 6:30-8:00am.

Allan Marett also leads the occasional zazenkai 3-4 times a year. Zafu & zabuton's are provided.

Contact Peter Bursky mowerman26@hotmail.com

Sydney South

The Wombat Sangha Miranda meets every Monday evening from 7- 9pm at *Our Lady Star of the Sea* meeting rooms, 50 Kiara Road, Miranda.

We practice deep relaxation then zazen and kinhin and a talk/discussion on the dharma. Zafu & zabuton's are provided. Contribution \$10 towards hiring the venue. Bring yoga mat.

Contact Peter Thompson 0408 507 906

joshu_7@hotmail.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

August 2019

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



*The post holes ready to build Kodoji, Gorricks Run, 1996
Photo: Caroline Josephs*

September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	3	4 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	5	6	7
8	9 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	10	11 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	12 Orientation (Stephen)	13	14 Samu at Kodoji
15 Samu at Kodoji	16 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Stealing</i>	17 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	18 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Stealing</i>	19 Beginners Night (Paul)	20	21 Spring Sesshin Early Bird payments due now
22 Zazenkai 8:30-12pm Talk and Dokusan, Paul	23 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	24	25 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	26	27	28
29	30 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana					



*Dharma sisters, Gilly and Maggie, 1992
Photo: Caroline Josephs*