



Encouraging Words

Gillian Coote

"It is spring again. The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart."

Rainer Maria Rilke

For the last three months - all of winter - I have been practising in a different dojo, with a different daily routine and a body that must only bear weight on one leg so as not to interfere with its miraculous bone-healing powers, having suffered a tricky trimalleolar fracture of the ankle. Early one morning when taking Tilly, our young dog, out for a walk, I slid and fell on it - crack!

The sounds in the hospital dojo can be repetitive - like Philip Glass pieces - ding-dong, ding-dong interweaving from different sources, over and over, day and night, alerting staff to patients' needs - or they can be startlingly terrifying, when random lion-like roars and bellows erupt from somewhere down the corridor day or night. Or elegaic - "Please help me. Please please help me. I'm killing myself". And some are joyful, like the laughter and chatter of nurses arriving in the dark at the front door outside my room to begin the day shift.

The sangha in this dojo are young nurses, cleaners and kitchen staff from all over the world, fellow-patients with a wide range of ailments, and their families. My ward companion's muscles are wasting away; a neat older woman endlessly wanders the corridors in search of somebody, or something. On his first day, a lovely old chap slips out the door in his new pyjamas, and wanders the Longueville streets. After a long police search, he is brought back safely. In the room adjacent to mine, a beautiful middle-aged woman nears the end of her life surrounded by her loving family, one of her sons sleeping on the floor of her room. One night we all sleep soundly - no lions roar - and in the morning, I learn he has gone to a nursing home.



Friends encourage my hospital practice with cards, flowers and books, heartfelt expressions of compassion which I deeply appreciate. Family members and dear friends visit and on sunny days, Tony brings Tilly and we sit on the deck, making friends with patients and their loved ones over meals. Tilly becomes besotted with the handyman and his little dog.

After seven weeks, there is a new x-ray and the surgeon proclaims the bones have knitted and will reach full strength after a year. For several days, the physio supervises me as I walk up and down a flight of steps eight times. The occupational therapist orders devices for safe showering. I am allowed to go home! I hobble around the house, Tony drives me to local rehab twice a week and every night we sit by the fire. How wonderful.

I return to the dojo for the August zazenkai. It is good to be back and hear Jill sharing the intimate journey she has been on with her mother. I return to the dojo on Wednesday nights, grateful to Maggie for taking my place while I was in hospital. My walking gradually becomes less clunky. At home, the wonga-wonga vine covers herself with beautiful creamy flowers, the water dragons emerge from hibernation and drape themselves over sandstone rocks. It is spring again.

Our great good fortune as Zen students is that, no matter what the season, no matter where the dojo, this practice is trustworthy, dependable, breath-by-breath, the gate to peace and joy. I am grateful for its simplicity, grateful that we can sit, stand and lie down, opening to what has been there all along - we are the earth, we are the buds unfurling, the magpies carolling, 'like a child that knows poems by heart'.

Gilly Coote

Reports

Spring Samu at Kodoji



What a fantastic Samu gathering at Kodoji over the weekend of 14-15 September. It was our biggest get-together for such a long time, a reminder of the weekends spent, so many years ago when we were busy building. Sixteen of us were treated to some delicious meals prepared by Robin, even breakfast was catered!

Thanks to our reliable neighbour, Warren Bailey, the large Blackberry patch just on the side of our great paddock had been mown and so Jill, Gilly, Maggie, Kerry, Julie and the occasional bloke were able to selectively dig up and otherwise poison many of the newly shooting blackberry canes. Jill also led a major assault on any Moth Vine tendrils



that dared show itself. Our bush care group is diligent and thorough.

The lawns around the buildings have never looked so kept. We had both mowers working and a relay tag of Barry, Mike and Jason worked their way over all that grass — it was the old Victa ad come to life as they turned grass into lawn.

The windows and doors gleam so much so that Tony thought the glass must have been missing especially after seeing the work of Chiaki, a mistress of the window cleaning skill. Inventories were tallied up, thanks to Jill, Helen, Greg and Will. Alex, one by



one washed away the guano droppings from the dojo verandah and Tony seemed to find various nails and screws to adjust, I even saw him with a paint brush.

It was a great time working together, everyone seemed to do a bit of everything.

So let's thank Helen, Jill and Barry, Gilly and Tony, Maggie, Kerry and Brendon, Jason and Chiaki, Will, Greg, Robin, Julie, Alex and Mike. Then too we must say thanks to Coco, Tilly and Joey our great dog companions who chased and barked and ran around the dojo most insistently while we were sitting.



COMING EVENTS

Spring Sesshin at Kodoji with Gillian Coote *October 5 -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 Jill Steverson jillsteverson@gmail.com

AGM, Sunday 20 October

Make sure you come along to the AGM on Sunday 20th October and become involved in the decision making process of our sangha. It's a great opportunity to find out how we've been going over the last year and help plan for the future. There will be lots of wonderful ways to share your skills by taking up one of the many jobs that need to be done to keep the sangha running smoothly. We need your input, so if you can't make it, please fill out a proxy form (at Annandale) for someone else to speak for you.

Memorial Ceremony, Sunday 10 November

A MEMORIAL CEREMONY will be held at Annandale on Sunday 10th November, to honour family and friends, led by Gillian Coote. Please stay for a potluck lunch afterwards. There will be zazen from 9 - 10.30am, and ceremony at 11am, always an intimate time of remembering those we love.

Bring photos of those who you wish to honour, flowers if you have some, and food to share for our sangha lunch.

Rohatsu Sesshin 2019

‘When the bright star appeared, the Buddha Shakyamuni said “Intimately together, I and the great Earth have at this same moment attained the Tao.”’ This is Dogen’s account of the Buddha’s realisation, traditionally celebrated on the 8th of December.

Our Rohatsu sesshin is an opportunity for us to honour and realise for ourselves the Buddha’s path of liberation. This sesshin, led by Jane Andino and Paul Maloney, will begin on the evening of Wednesday December 4, and finish on the afternoon of Sunday December 8.

Together we practice the Buddha Way - sitting in our city zendo at Annandale during the day, and going home to sleep at night. This gives us a wonderful opportunity to bring our practice into our daily lives.

For details, please contact the Sesshin Coordinator Lesley Treleaven, lesley.treleaven@gmail.com or 0410 621 756

Australia/New Zealand Diamond Sangha Teachers’ Meeting March 2020.

This meeting is scheduled for Friday 13th March - Monday 16th March, 2020, and will be held at Kodoji. Many teachers around Australia and also from New Zealand have expressed strong interest in attending. The last such gathering was also at Kodoji in 2014.

Most teachers will arrive at Kodoji on Thursday 12th in the afternoon, have a supper together, and so be ready to start proceedings on Friday morning. The meeting will finish at lunchtime on Monday, and then some visiting teachers will return to Annandale to take part in an open talk/discussion panel on Monday night 16th March at Annandale, with the Sangha participating.

The SZC teachers would very much appreciate the support of the sangha in facilitating this meeting. We are preparing a list of jobs, to be finalised at the AGM in October. We would probably need two cooks at Kodoji, a food coordinator, a billets and transport coordinator, as well as the offer of billets for NZ and interstate visitors in transit, and transport to and from Kodoji.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the teachers to discuss and compare aspects of teaching, of dharma study, of the future of our sanghas in Aus/NZ, and also for the SZC sangha to meet the visiting teachers.

If you feel you could help in some way, please nominate for a job at the AGM, and/or contact Jane Andino janeandino@yahoo.com.au Mob: 0432 355 831.

Notices

Orientations for Newcomers

Next Orientations: Thursday 10 October; Thursday 7 November 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. info@szc.com.au. www.szc.org

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

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

The Board has decided to display at our city and bush zendos, acknowledgements of the traditional custodians of the land on which we sit. The wording is being refined with the help of the two Land Councils, and Glenys has agreed to offer her skills in writing them. So, watch these spaces!

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

The Board has decided to put our name and energy behind an international movement to declare an 'Environmental Emergency'. We have drafted a statement which is on our website to inform visitors of our sangha's concerns. You can read it here: <http://szc.org.au/environmental-engagement>

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 Kiora 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

October 2019

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--------|----------------------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian | 3 | 4 | 5 Spring Sesshin starts |
| 6 Spring Sesshin | 7 Labour Day ZAZEN 7-9pm Paul | 8 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30 | 9 ZAZEN 7-9pm | 10 Orientation (Kim) | 11 | 12 Spring Sesshin ends |
| 13 | 14 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Jane | 15 | 16 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 AGM 10-12pm Potluck lunch | 21 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana | 22 | 23 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana | 29 | 30 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian | 31 | | |



Samu at Kodoji, dealing with the weeds.

November 2019

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|--|---|--|--------|----------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 ZAZEN 7-9pm Maggie | 5 | 6 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian | 7 Orientation (Jill and Alex) | 8 | 9 |
| 10 Memorial Ceremony | 11 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Misusing Sex</i> Maggie | 12 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30 | 13 Full Moon Ceremony, <i>Not Misusing Sex</i> | 14 Beginners Night (Jane) | 15 | 16 |
| 17 Zazenkai 8:30-12pm Talk Phil Long, Dokusan Maggie | 18 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana | 19 | 20 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana | 26 | 27 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian | 28 | 29 | 30 |



Congenial evenings at Samu, Kodoji