



Encouraging Words

Janet Andino

Wise Hope

Lately a Mountains dharma buddy has been signing her email “Towards wise hope”, and it made me consider how Wise Hope is a wonderful paramita for modern times.

The phrase comes to us from the writings of Joan Halifax in which she explores suffering from the Buddhist perspective, and looks at the processes of transforming our response to it. It’s interesting that she feels the need to rigorously critique this phrase, to reassure traditional Buddhists that Wise Hope is not to be confused with optimism or any grasping wishful thinking. Joanna Macy also writes about “active hope”, a way of following a socially-engaged Buddhist path, especially in relation to social issues and ecology.

However, I would like to explore Wise Hope as an equally valuable paramita for our everyday life, for the conflicts, disappointments and difficulties we may find. Joan Halifax writes “If we look at hope through the lens of Buddhism, we discover that wise hope is born of radical uncertainty, rooted in the unknown and the unknowable.” Hope means being open to what is, in all its abundance; open to what is the next step, and the next; open to maybe taking no step, just listening and being with each person or situation; open to our own hearts.

Wise Hope is akin to Upaya, the seventh paramita, meaning “skilful means.” Aitken Roshi describes it as acting in a way that is wisely and compassionately appropriate. He writes that Upaya is also called ‘garden equipment’ in the Zen Buddhist texts. “Truly

compassionate means are likely to be quite homey and not obviously designed for great realisation.”

In Zen Buddhism we have the triad of Great Faith, Great Doubt and Great Determination. Strange as it may seem, I think that Great Doubt is an aspect of hope. We want to see the true reality, to realise our true nature. We probe and encompass that probing, and from that arises affirmation. It’s the ‘radical uncertainty’ that Joan Halifax describes, combined with great trust and persistence.

There is the story of Kuei-shan, appointed by his teacher Pai-chang to found a new monastery. He waited eight years in the forest of Mount Ta-kuei for others to help. He had just given up hope and was about to leave when a tiger, the spirit of the forest, Wise Hope herself, grasped him by the sleeve and made him wait. Soon after, three monks arrived and the rest, as they say, is history.

We are not moving towards Wise Hope. As in our vows, we are embodying it fully in each moment. The recent outcome for the custodians of Uluru is an example of that. Because of publicity over the years about the wishes of the custodians, there had already been a steady decline in people climbing Uluru, and so a ban on climbing was achieved.

Please also have a listen to Brendon Stewart’s podcast on Wise Hope in action.

As Yunmen said “Every day is a good day”. Wise Hope means taking to heart the good day and the pretty lousy day, and treating each with the same loving attention.

Jane Andino



Reports

Spring Sesshin at Kodoji



Spring Sesshin was wonderful as ever with 23 participants at Kodoji reducing to 15 for the final part of the week. Gilly's teaching was a delight and the leaders supported our practice admirably with Maggie as Tanto, Will as Jisha, Pablo as Jiki and Ameli as Ino. We had varied spring weather with some hot, some cool and some beautiful rainy days. Our early morning sittings were with lyrebirds and rest of the dawn chorus and our nights serenaded by male koalas close by hoping for a girlfriend and sugar gliders in the distance. A record of our observations were sent to the Koala project. A small and beautiful green diamond python had taken up residence underneath the furthest toilet, she came out each morning to sun herself and be admired and one day we were joined by a very large goanna climbing a tree. We had a day of complete silence midweek. On Thursday, Will took the precepts in a very moving ceremony and received Jukai from Gilly. We celebrated afterwards with two splendid cakes supplied by Helen Sanderson. The many arms of Avalokiteshvara cooked delicious meals and carried out the numerous jobs and the servers received a special Koala stamp for not forgetting to collect a single offering at the meals.

The daily schedule ended at 8.30pm which was a treat for many of us silverheads. *Jill Steverson*



Day of Bushcare and Koala sighting

Maggie, Julie and Jill had a day of bushcare at Kodoji on Friday 1st Nov to prepare for the anticipated blackberry bushcare grant and to hunt out the notorious moth vine which is still raising it's tendrils. It was thrilling to spot a young koala in the tree right between the Hojo and the cottage behind the bench.



AGM

Those who came to the AGM – thank you for turning up and offering to do many of the jobs in 2020. Your dedication to service is much appreciated by the Board and sangha. Although, the Board did notice that mostly members who have been part of the sangha for more than 10 years, many for 30 years or more, came to the meeting. The Board is concerned that newer members aren't engaged with the decision making and volunteering for jobs at the SZC. Sangha building and maintenance is an important part of our practice, so please put up your hand to help next time!

Fundraising

At the AGM, we decided to have a concert in August or September 2020, featuring the many talents of our sangha members. If you have a musical talent and would like to participate, please contact Jane Andino or the Board. Go to our website for the announcement of the date!

Diamond Sangha Teachers Meeting

Teachers from around Australia and from New Zealand will be gathering at Kodoji for a meeting in March 2020. We will need volunteers to transport, cook for and participate in organising this special gathering. So please contact the Board if you're willing to help. Also, there will be a panel of teachers talking at the Buddhist Library during this time. This should be a wonderful event, so make sure you come along. Details will be on the website.

Memorial Ceremony

Our Memorial Ceremony at Annandale yesterday was beautiful, intimate, moving. Jill, Aeven and I sat from 9 am then Sally, Tony and Janet turned up and we continued sitting through to 11 am. We placed our photos and mementos on

the Jizo altar, where Glenys had already placed a photo of her sister Marie, as she was unable to come, and shared our reflections and memories. It felt like a continuation of the women's group a couple of nights before at Cathy Lukeman's place - tears and vulnerabilities safely held - our ceremonies - whether the farewell to loved ones, or the welcome to new babies, (and once, coming of age ceremonies), all emerging from our shared lives of practice. Thank you all for supporting the Three Treasures, and in particular yesterday, the Sangha Treasure.

And a postscript to the Samu Report in the last newsletter - Glenys was there too. - *Gillian Coote*

AUTHORISING A NEW TEACHER IN THE DIAMOND SANGHA TRADITION



As teachers, part of our responsibility to future generations of Zen students rests in authorising new teachers, and I am happy to announce that I have asked Will Moon to begin teaching in the Diamond Sangha tradition. I am confident of his clarity, humility and integrity in the Dharma and will be supervising Will in this new phase of his training. Will attended his first sesshin with Robert Aitken in 1985 in the Southern Highlands of NSW, continuing to attend sesshin with Robert Aitken and the SZC sangha each year. In 1989 and 1991 he visited Hawaii to participate in the intensive training periods that were held on the island of Oahu every year. In the early '90s he attended sesshin at Kodoji held during John Tarrant's visits to Sydney. In 1994 Will moved to Tasmania to study horticulture, travelling to Kodoji each year for sesshin until 1996, the beginning of a ten-year break from his association with SZC. In 2006, he returned to regular practice with SZC, his teachers including Subhana Barzaghi,

Paul Maloney, Maggie Gluek and myself. While studying at Flinders University, Adelaide, for six months in 2014, he continued koan study with DS teacher Robert Joyner.

Many years of encountering Aboriginal rock art in remote places led to his interest in Aboriginal cultural heritage and Will went on to complete a Masters degree in Archaeology and Heritage Management. He works as a senior Archaeologist, specialising in indigenous archaeology. His experience in the bush has led to a strong appreciation for our interconnection with nature and the importance of preserving nature and biodiversity. Will lives in the Blue Mountains. His Dharma name is Spring Mountain Breeze.

May his appointment benefit all beings, past, present and future.

- *Gillian Coote*

COMING EVENTS

Mitra Conference 30 Nov - 1 Dec 2019

Socially Engaged Spiritually Aware

Spirituality is a term usually associated with a separation from the bustle of community engagement. When we think of spirituality, our current perspective of the terms leads us to a concept of coming back to nature and environment outside of the city, the campus, or the workplace and away from others. However, spirituality can be found even when communicating with other people, and is just as important in our daily lives as logic and reasoning. This applies just as well on social media platforms such as instagram, facebook and twitter. Come and join as we discover what it means to be socially engaged, but remain spiritually aware.

The 2019 Mitra Conference will celebrate the interconnected nature of reality and explore the oneness of our community like droplets of water in the ocean.

With speakers from all the major Buddhist traditions, this two-day conference will be filled with talks, performances and workshops.

Speakers include: Bhante Suddhaso, Ven. Hui Cen, Ven. Bhante Pandit, Elizabeth Mattis Namgyel, Bhante Buddhakkhita, Ayya Yeshe, Andrew William and more....

30 Nov - 1 Dec 2019 at University of Technology Sydney

Costs Adult: 1 day: \$75; 2 days: \$95, Concession: 1 day \$45; 2 days: \$65

For details: <http://www.mitraconference.com/>

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/mitra-conference-2019-tickets-68278188901>

Rohatsu Sesshin *Wednesday 4th to Sunday 8th December*

Led by Jane Andino and Paul Maloney

Rohatsu (8 December) is the day on which we, together with Zen communities throughout the world, celebrate the Buddha's realisation. Yamada Roshi once said, "the basis and central focus of Buddhism is the enlightenment experience of Shakyamuni Buddha." Rohatsu sesshin is an opportunity for us to honour and realise for ourselves the Buddha's path of liberation.

This year our four-day sesshin will begin in the evening of Wednesday 4 December, and will conclude in the afternoon of Sunday 8 December. This is a non-residential sesshin held at Annandale. The schedule will include zazen, walking meditation, teisho (talks) and dokusan (private interviews with the teachers).

Sesshin provides an opportunity for us to deepen our practice.

If you are relatively new to Zen, a non-residential retreat provides a gentle introduction to sitting extended periods over consecutive days.

And for newcomers and old-timers alike, a non-residential sesshin provides a wonderful opportunity to integrate your zazen and work / home practice. As we move between blocks of zazen and the demands of our busy lives, we experience the flow of the dance of the world.

See website for application form

http://szc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Rohatsu2019.form_.pdf

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

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Mitra Conference	2 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	3	4 Rohatsu Sesshin	5 Rohatsu Sesshin	6 Rohatsu Sesshin	7 Rohatsu Sesshin
8 Rohatsu Sesshin	9 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm	10 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	11 Dharma Cafe 7-9pm	12	13	
15	16 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	17	18 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	19	20	21
22	23 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	31				



Fun at Kodoji with Ameli and Diana

January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	7	8 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	9	10	9
12	13 ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	14 Board Meeting 6pm for 6.30	15 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	16	17	18
19	20 ZAZEN 7-9pm Maggie	21	22 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	23	24	25
26	27 ZAZEN 7-9pm Will	28	29 ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	30		



Tony, Helen, Pedro at Kodoji