



ENCOURAGING WORDS

Jane Andino

SPEECH

Words!

The Way is beyond language, for in it there is

no yesterday

no tomorrow

no today.

Verses on the Faith Mind

Now that we are talking more together as a Sangha with our online Zoom sessions, I'm struck by how the discussions on Dharma topics are unfailingly insightful, full of community wisdom, often humorous, and always generous. What a contrast to what passes as political discourse these days, full of malice and accusation! And how valuable to realising our interbeing is the awareness of speech.

The fourth truth of the Buddha dharma is the path that leads us to wake up from delusion. There are eight aspects to this path, all working together, just like the spokes of a wheel. In regard to speech, the first three closely influence each other: right view, right intention and right speech. Of course, "right" doesn't mean right as against wrong, but means appropriate and in accord with the Tao. The buddha view is one of attention and openness, ready to be a partner in the dance of what is happening now. Right intention means the right motivation, and a resolve to follow the Buddha way. The Classical Buddhist qualities of right speech are that it is factual, helpful, kind, pleasant and timely, all qualities to reflect on in regard to our daily conversations.

With the right view and right intention, we speak from our hearts, and we listen from our hearts too, the listening being as important as the speaking. Listening deeply is often the medicine that helps another to act for change in

their own life. The speaker perhaps isn't looking for your solutions; they want your compassionate hearing so they can solve their problem for themselves.

Fortunately, Zen practice also has a healthy dose of skilful means to counter the possibility that we could get caught up in all this "rightness", or that it's a list of attributes we can tick off as we progress towards "making it." A monk asked Yunmen: 'What are the words that transcend the Buddha and Patriarchs?' Yunmen replied: 'Kobyō.' ('Rice cake!')

We used to exchange comments and dharma stories only on Precepts or Dharma café evenings but now, at our regular meditation gatherings, we are establishing a new tradition of encouraging each other, and sharing our experiences as dharma gates for each other. And in our care for our world's ecology, for refugees and the homeless, we keep up the tradition of our founding teacher Robert Aitken in speaking up for all beings who can't always speak up for themselves.

It speaks in silence,
in speech you hear its silence.
The great way has opened
and there are no obstacles.

Shodoka



Upcoming Events

Rohatsu Sesshin

December 4 - 8



This year, the Rohatsu sesshin will be held online/offline via Zoom from Friday evening December 4 to Tuesday midday December 8. It will be led by Jane Andino, apprentice teacher, and Peter Bursky, apprentice teacher.

Rohatsu (8 December) is normally the day on which we, together with Zen communities throughout the world, celebrate the Buddha's realisation.

There are four blocks of zazen per day: Early morning, Late morning, Afternoon and Evening. Participants can sign up for any blocks, but are urged to take advantage of the weekend and sign up for the full Saturday and Sunday sittings.

The schedule will include online zazen, walking meditation, sutra recitation, optional daily yoga session, dokusan and a teisho every evening, all from the comfort of your own home.

Attending sesshin at home is a wonderful opportunity to integrate your zazen and work/home practice: we find how to be unbusy in all our activities.

Enquiries and bookings: Diana Levy diana.r.levy@gmail.com

Image: White Tara is a painting by Luna Han which was uploaded on April 26th, 2020 <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/white-tara-luna-han.html>

Reports

Spring sesshin

In August, keen to teach Spring Sesshin at Kodoji with Will Moon, I asked Drs Paul Glasziou and Helen Redmond whether they thought it would be feasible, both having sat numerous sesshin. They were positive, with reservations. I then asked further questions of the Board, and taking on their provisos, Janet made our flyer and we drafted an acceptance letter. Sesshin Cautions were adjusted as were chopping, cooking, serving and sutra ceremonies so as to be Covid-cautious.

Over this period, Covid cases in NSW rose and fell.

Don't know mind.

Covid cases lessened in late September and confidence grew. Jill Steverson, our Tenzo, agreed to be the Covid Monitor as well as First Aid person and Will Moon our Fire Monitor. We were on! The leadership team - Stephen Crump, Tanto, Ameli Tanchitsa, Ino, Pablo Scodellaro, Jiki and Janet Selby, Jisha - was mature and flexible. We threaded our way through these new conditions, ironing out glitches as we went, one of which were fridge malfunctions, which meant Jill, our Tenzo, performing minor miracles. The servers adapted really well to all the changes. One day, we held our sutra ceremony outdoors, Ameli the Ino with his instruments, on the verandah, the sesshin sangha in the paddock (see pic). During the night, male koalas called for partners, frogs sang and as the light came, the dawn chorus was deafening.

It was a sesshin of joy and ease, everything falling into place. The sangha sesshin spirit was remarkable, everybody careful with each other, wearing masks and physically distancing. Will Moon gave two well-received teisho and offered dokusan, participants benefitting from Will's fresh Dharma voice. All going well, Will and I will co-teach again next spring sesshin.

Over these seven beautiful silent days, people's practice deepened, there were powerful opening experiences and a participant described it in the sharing circle as 'the kind sesshin'.

- Gillian Coote

Spring sesshin 2020



*Covid-19 safe sesshin:
Masks off, masks on, outdoor chanting.*

News from the Board

BOARD MEMBERS

Farewell and thank you Brendon and Alex for your dedication and the generosity of spirit you offered to the very important job of being a Board member. And welcome Pablo & Joe to the SZC Board. We look forward to the special skills and gifts you will bring.

COMING HOME

The teachers have returned to our sitting practice at Annandale as well as continuing our Zoom meetings with an added Zoom night on Thursdays and early morning on Tuesdays. Some Zazenkais will be at Annandale in 2021 so please check the website for details. There are restrictions on how many people are able to come to the zendo so it's essential to register and book in with info@szc.org.au. Please don't turn up unless you get a return confirmation for your booking.

SCHEDULE

The upcoming events scheduled in December and January are dependent upon the Covid situation not escalating and advice from NSW Health Department:

Rohatsu sesshin will be online via Zoom with Jane Andino & Peter Bursky. This sesshin commemorates the Buddha's realisation. We practice the Buddha Way together –sitting in our homes while being connected online. This give us a wonderful opportunity to bring our practice into our daily lives.

<http://szc.org.au/classes/rohatsu-sesshin/>

Check 'What's On' or our website for up to date details: <http://szc.org.au/upcoming-events/>

ANNANDALE RESIDENTS

Farewell to Pip who had planned to stay with us for a short time, while her house at Narara was being built. And welcome to Daniel who has taken her room at Annandale. Daniel has been following the Buddhist path for several years and we're very happy to have his dedicated presence at our sangha home. Please say hi if you see him at the zendo or on Zoom.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome Jacques & Timothea to the sangha! It will be wonderful to get to know you and for you to get to know the other sangha members. We look forward to sharing this wonderful practice with you.

GOODBYE YAHOO

Our very old Sydney Zen Centre Yahoo group email will be disconnected in mid December, so the Board has been researching a better way of us communicating with one another, and will let you know about the new method soon.

TALKS

Don't forget that we have a huge back catalogue of talks, and more to come, available as podcasts on our website: <http://szc.org.au/podcasts/>

A MYSTERY TO BE SOLVED

A while ago, Kerry and Brendon took a deep breath and rolled up the garage door at Annandale, their goal being to clarify the junk accumulated over many years. There they found a hard-covered green Analysis Book, Collins 700 Series and on the front page, in lovely handwriting, *'This book contains references to both numbered photography albums in conjunction with the London Street map (ISBN) 09 201820 3) and also contains a personal history framework to be added to in a seperate (sic) folder.'*

There follows a painstaking forty pages of photo descriptions, relating to the writer's childhood experiences and later ones - travel, work, the music world, his interest in Buddhism, Marxism and the CND. The writer was English, working class, socialist, poor, male, born in 1946. His many jobs included milkman, brick carrier, seaman. He came to live in Western Australia in the early 1970's, where he worked at the Mt Newman mine, a committed unionist. When he had saved enough money by 1979, his wife, Lesley Maria Farey and children, Cheryl and Marcus, joined him. Mr Farey - there's no mention of his Christian name - wrote, as well as his wonderful descriptions of just getting by - of his interest in Zen Buddhism.

Perhaps here's a clue to why his fascinating autobiography ended up in SZC's garage. But who left it there and how can we reunite them with this wonderful mysterious book?

- Gillian Coote

Regular Notices

Transition back to Annandale Zendo / Continuation of on-line meditation

Please see the regular SZC email reminders for Zoom links, or email info@szc.org.au for details.

We are trialling a limited transition back to the Annandale zendo, with alternate weeks offering Monday or Wednesday meetings. This will be subject to review, depending on the easing (or not) of the COVID-19 restrictions, and our members' and teachers' circumstances.

If you wish to attend the Annandale zendo, **you must pre-register via info@szc.org.au**, and you must comply with our COVID-19 conditions of entry which can be found on www.szc.org.au/classes/zazen

The Board is also committed to maintaining an on-line meditation program, with Thursdays being the regular weekly evening. As a trial, we have begun Zoom meetings on Thursdays.

Mondays

7.00–7.25 Guided meditation
7.25–7.30 Walking meditation
7.30–7.45 Encouraging words
7.45–8.15 Inquiry and sharing about practice
8.15–8.30 Plenary and close with Great Vows

Tuesdays Mini morning meditation

6.55–7.00am Join/welcome
7.00–7.25am Meditation
7.25–7.30am Great Vows

Wednesdays with Gilly Coote

7.00–7.30 Meditation/walking
7.30–8.00 Meditation/walking
8.00–8.30 Discussion/Great Vows

Thursdays

7.00–7.30 Meditation/walking
7.30–8.00 Meditation/walking
8.00–8.30 Discussion/Great Vows

The Blue Mountains Zen Group

We will be meeting via Zoom on Sunday afternoons. All are welcome to join us for zazen with either a talk or Dharma Café. Please email Jane at janeandino@yahoo.com.au for more details.

Phone dokusan for members

Subhana is offering dokusan to SZC members on Thursday evenings.

Gilly is also offering dokusan to members by appointment.

Members of the Board



Kerry Stewart (Chairperson) stewartkerry4@gmail.com; Stephen Crump (secretary); Jason Koh (treasurer); Helen Sanderson; Zoe Thurner, Julie Robinson, Pablo Scodellaro; Joe Gaebel.

Newsletter Editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com

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

December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	3 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	4 ROHATSU SESSHIN	5 ROHATSU SESSHIN
6 ROHATSU SESSHIN	7 ROHATSU SESSHIN	8 ROHATSU SESSHIN Board Meeting 6.30pm	9 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	10 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Peter Bursky	11	12
13	14 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	15 Board Meeting 6.30pm	16 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	17 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	18	19
20	21 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	22	23 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	24	25	26
27	28 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Peter	29	30 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	31		



Mandala, Jillian Ball, Melaleuca bark

January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	5	6 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	7 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Peter	8	9
10	11 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Peter	12 Board Meeting 6.30pm	13 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	14 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	15	16
17 VIRTUAL ZAZENKAI 10am Teisho Jane	18 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Subhana	19	20 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian	21 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Peter	22	23
24	25 Annandale ZAZEN 7-9pm Peter Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not Killing</i>	26	27 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Gillian Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not Killing</i>	28 VIRTUAL ZAZEN 7-9pm Jane	29	30



Mandala, Gillian Coote, feathers and skink.