



## ENCOURAGING WORDS

Will Moon

### Just this, Just this.



Daily routines don't always follow a predictable schedule. Though if we can stick to some sort of schedule where we can

fit in our daily practice it certainly makes it easier. I've been contemplating how to integrate practice into daily life when there is no routine or schedule. Plenty of zen practitioners encounter this aspect of how to practise when they become a parent and a newborn arrives. Our usual routine and time to ourselves needs to become more flexible and accommodating to the needs of the child and spouse.

I'm presently sitting in a small cabin in a campground at Weipa on Cape York. Up until a few days ago, we never planned to be here. But in the world of pandemics things can change rapidly. My brother had a dream and had been planning for a number of years to travel to the Kimberley with his boat and then go exploring the coast, visiting rock art sites, the variety of ecosystems along the coast, and camp in some great spots. My friend Bruce and I would join him for the adventure.

A week before we had planned to leave covid infections had started in the community in Sydney's eastern suburbs and watching the numbers unfold each day we realised it was going to be a race against time to leave the mountains before greater Sydney might be affected and also come under lockdown. None of us had been in Sydney in the areas where infections were occurring and we had not been in contact with anyone who had, so we made our arrangements and left 5 days ahead of schedule.

On day one we left at 4.30am crossing the border into Queensland that evening. As the virus quickly spread in Sydney, the border restrictions of other states came into effect fairly quickly as we travelled. WA closed its borders to anyone from NSW. This was followed not long after by the Northern Territory and then Queensland.

The plans were in a shambles and we found ourselves revising them a number of times before arriving on Cape York. It was interesting that despite our best intentions and planning, this trip did not look or feel anything like

we had planned or imagined. I'm reminded of a quote I've heard sometimes, 'life is what happens while we are making plans'.

Zazen has not been easy, long days on the road, late meals, shared cabins, and travelling with people who don't practise Zen. A daily schedule has been non-existent. Practice has not been easy under the continually changing circumstances, but I have been able to find ways to do it. In the midst of what seems like continual change and not knowing when I will be able to find a peaceful moment to sit, it is important to touch that which is unchanging in the midst of all the change. This moment is always here, and our challenge is to become intimate with this moment.

While travelling we take turns in the backseat of the car. This is a good spot to settle into just this sitting. Sometimes it's just sitting, sometimes it's just sitting with 'mu', or another koan. Despite the conversation there are always quiet times during long periods of travel, so these are opportunities to straighten the back and focus. Usually we awaken early and are up and getting ready. But if I wake first, I just lay still and practise sleepy zazen. Or stir quietly and sit on the bunk on my pillow before the others wake up.

Throughout the day, there are so many moments to practise being present, and even to deeply enquire. But it takes a level of determination. The scattered nature of things when our days don't follow a predictable schedule or routine can make practice more challenging, no doubt about it. But it is possible. Even when we have a regular predictable schedule, often large parts of our day won't follow a regular pattern or sequence.

So how can we practise with these parts of our day? As Hakuin Zenji says, 'this very place is the lotus land, this very body, the buddha'. It is always right here, we just need to look. In a regular predictable routine, it is right here. In a chaotic unpredictable routine, it is also right here. Either way, "just this, just this".

*Will Moon*

# Upcoming Events

## Walking Weekend, 14-15 August

A walking weekend at Kodoji is planned for August 14-15, depending of course on Covid restrictions. People will need to have a reasonable level of fitness and also will need to be prepared to walk in untracked bush. We will be practising mindful walking and brief periods of zazen in some locations. You will need to carry at least 2 litres of water, lunch and snacks, spare warm clothes, sturdy boots, long pants and sleeves, wet weather jacket, hat, sunscreen. We will probably aim to do the walk on the Saturday. Please stay tuned for further announcements. If you have any questions, please get in touch with Will Moon: [wilmoon@gmail.com](mailto:wilmoon@gmail.com)

## Spring Sesshin, Kodoji, 2-9 October

SZC Spring sesshin will be led by Gillian Coote, roshi and apprentice teacher, Will Moon.

“Over the silent peaceful days, breath by breath, as the ochre cliffs, eucalyptus forests, brilliant starry skies and the songs of frogs, crickets and birds advance and confirm the self, birds and trees and stars and we ourselves come forth in perfect harmony.” Our founding teacher, Robert Aitken, Dawn Cloud, 1917-2017.

Sesshin is an invitation to leave the tumbling, noisy, incessant world behind. At Kodoji, in the valley of beauty and wilderness, practising in deep silence and letting go of ideas and preoccupations creates 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.

*Sitting quietly  
doing nothing,  
Spring comes,  
the grass grows by itself.*

– Basho



Traditional sesshin offers countless opportunities for practice –

zazen, kinin, walking meditation in the bush, dokusan, teisho, sutras and samu (or work practice). Old timers and new students are most welcome. As traditional Zen sesshin involves seven or eight hours a day of zazen – sitting meditation – it is not suitable for people without previous meditation experience.

COVID safe: This sesshin, for safe distancing there will be a limit of 17 participants. There is very limited indoor accommodation so students will pitch their own tents, bring their own masks and yoga mats. We will be COVID careful, with social distancing, taking great care preparing food, washing and sanitising hands, and when we sit we’d like you to wear a face mask. Importantly beforehand, if you have any cold/flu symptoms in the days leading up to the weekend please don’t come. Anyone who develops respiratory symptoms during sesshin will be asked to leave.

Image: “Hibiscus with Haiku” by Bashō

<https://www.theschooloflife.com/thebookoflife/the-great-eastern-philosophers-matsuo-basho/>

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## Reports

### Annandale Samu

On a cold rainy Saturday morning Aeven and Brendon set to and pruned back the wild fig vine that grows along the brick fence at our Annandale dojo. Aeven clambered onto the roof of the hojo and pulled back the vine that had started to make its way across the tin and on down the far side of the building. Together they managed to cut it all back, mow it into green bin size pieces and tidy up. Then a cup-o-tea and that was the end of our Annandale samu.

### In Loving Memory

We remember with love and affection Yayoi Maloney, wife of Paul, who passed away on 23 May, 2021. She made an extraordinary contribution to cultural life in Australia, especially at the Art Gallery of NSW. As a tea master, she passed on the knowledge and practice of Chanoyu to many Australians, and helped generations of schoolchildren to understand Japanese culture. The Art Gallery estimates that during her time there she made 10,000 cups of tea, prepared and served with warmth and mindfulness. We honour her elegant charm and generous nature, and will miss her greatly. Our thoughts are with Paul at this time of loss.

## Winter Sesshin, Annandale

The Winter sesshin 2021 took place between Friday June 11 and Wednesday June 16. It was led by Jane Andino and Maggie Gluek. The sesshin theme was “At home in the world”.

Every evening there was a teisho offered by Jane or Maggie which developed this theme and explored the connection between zazen and the rest of our practice at home, at work and in the wider world. This theme was a perfect fit for an online sesshin where there is a constant change of environment from the formal Zen practice to our normal day to day life.

Apart from teishos the schedule included zazen, kinhin and dokusan. A typical day would start at 5:30am and finish at 9pm. There were four blocks of zazen per day : early morning, late morning, afternoon and evening. The different blocks were a mixture of online and offline. Outside kinhin and some zazen were done offline at set times. Dokusan was offered twice daily in one hour blocks and was conducted online. We used Zoom to connect online which ran really smoothly.

We had eighteen participants, five of them full time. We had students from the Blue Mountains, the Hawkesbury, Melbourne, Canberra, Queensland, Perth and Athens. So, while we missed sitting in our dojo at Annandale, this forum made sesshin accessible to those limited by distance or circumstance.

In summary, this was an energizing sesshin with a great participation from students.



## News from the Board

### Changing Times

How wonderful it was to be sitting together and seeing all our wonderful members and newcomers in the flesh at Annandale over the last couple of months. And how things changed overnight. The Board is committed to staying safe so we closed the zendo during the lockdown and went back onto Zoom. This reminded us we can bring our community into our homes – a very important understanding of our practice. The many beings are here in our lounge rooms feeling the warmth of the heater and the sounds of a household – not separate.

### New Member

Welcome, Daniel! We look forward to connecting with you at Annandale or online, or hopefully at the next samu and/or sesshin at Kodoji.

### Contribute Now!

We urgently need some more leaders in the zendo – Ino, Jiki and Jisha - so if you'd like to take up this very important job and contribute to the sangha please talk to Alex so he can arrange some instruction [alexbudlevskis@gmail.com](mailto:alexbudlevskis@gmail.com)

### Bushwalk

Will is organising another fabulous walk on the land near Kodoji – an opportunity to intimately know our country. It's scheduled for August 14-15, so put your trekking shoes on and get your body ready! And let Will know if you plan to come. <http://szc.org.au/classes/walking-weekend/>

### Samu Kodoji

Please put in your diary a trip to our bush retreat for a working weekend on 11-12 September. This is a wonderful

opportunity to extend your practice into your daily life, an ancient way of giving something back to the sangha through the generosity of your labour, as well as having a chance to spend some relaxed time with your dharma buddies. There'll also be a bush regeneration 'Weed Identification Day' for residents of Gorricks Run with our local Landcare coordinator on Saturday 25th September. <http://szc.org.au/classes/samu>

### Spring sesshin

One of the important elements of maintaining a meaningful practice is doing one 5-7 day retreat a year. So this is your opportunity, if you haven't done one yet, to sign up for Spring sesshin at Kodoji – 2-9 October <http://szc.org.au/classes/spring-sesshin>

### Musical Concert

The Board is in the process of organising, with Jane Andino and Brian Gutkin, an evening fundraising concert on 30 October at the Annandale Community Centre. The performers will be our talented members offering their marvellous musical skills, creating a richly diverse program. Keep your eye out for the publicity and flyer so you can book and make sure you get a seat. We'll need helpers to set up and pack up afterwards and some members to make cakes for interval – so please contact Kerry if you can help. [stewartkerry4@gmail.com](mailto:stewartkerry4@gmail.com)

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## 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](mailto:info@szc.org.au) for details.*

Zazen will be offered at the zendo at Annandale every Monday and Wednesday evening led by our teachers or senior students. There will also be zazen on Zoom on some Mondays and Wednesdays, as well as every Thursday evening and Tuesday morning.

Zazen at the zendo will be changed according to the latest Covid advice from the NSW Department of Health. Please go to the website for the latest information about the schedule: <http://szc.org.au/classes/zazen>

#### Mondays

**Annandale-** Peter Bursky and senior students on alternate weeks

**Zoom** - Subhana Barzaghi every second week

#### Tuesdays

##### Mini morning meditation

6.55–7.00am Join/welcome

7.00–7.25am Meditation

7.25–7.30am Great Vows

#### Wednesdays

**Annandale** - Gillian Coote and Will Moon on alternating weeks

**Zoom** - Gillian Coote on the first of the month

#### Thursdays online

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](mailto:janeandino@yahoo.com.au) for more details.

#### Phone dokusan for members

Dokusan is offered to members by our teachers on Mondays and Wednesdays at Annandale.

Phone Dokusan is also offered by Subhana on Thursdays and Gilly by appointment.

Please email [info@szc.org.au](mailto:info@szc.org.au) for details.

## Members of the Board



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

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## August 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Subhana  Annandale 7-9pm Senior students	3	4 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Gilly  Annandale 7-9pm Will	5 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	6	7
8	9 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Peter	10 Board meeting 6:30pm	11 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gillian	12 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	13	14 Walking weekend
15 Walking weekend	16 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Subhana  Annandale 7-9pm Senior students	17 Orientation	18 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	19 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	20	21
22	23 ZAZEN Annandale Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Peter	24	25 ZAZEN Annandale Dharma Cafe 7-9pm Gillian	26 Dharma Cafe Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	27	28
29	30 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Subhana  Annandale 7-9pm Senior students	31				



*Lino cut, Janet Selby*

## September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Gilly  Annandale 7-9pm Will	2 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane	3	4
5	6 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Peter	7 Board Meeting 6.30pm	8 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gillian	9 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Peter	10	11  Kodoji Samu
12  Kodoji Samu	13 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Subhana  Annandale 7-9pm Senior students	14 Orientation	15 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	16 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane	17	18
19 ZAZENKAI Annandale 10am Teisho Peter	20 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Peter Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not taking drugs</i>	21	22 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gillian Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not taking drugs</i>	23 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Peter Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not taking drugs</i>	24	25  Weed Identification Day at Kodoji
26	27 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Subhana  Annandale 7-9pm Senior students	28	29 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	30 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane		



*Doodle, Janet Selby*