



ENCOURAGING WORDS

Gillian Coote

Found in Translation

Buddhism took about 500 years to peregrinate to China and another 500 or so to evolve towards Ch’an via Taoism. One of my heroes is Xuanzang, whose epic twenty-year journey from China to India and back in the 600’s was impelled by his goal to bring back sutras and translate them, a journey that later became a 15th century Chinese novel, then a kids’ tv series called *Monkey*. Tony and I made a pilgrimage to the site of his translations, the Wild Goose Pagoda in Xian, where we bought a small folding book with calligraphy of his translation of the Heart Sutra of 635. (see photo)

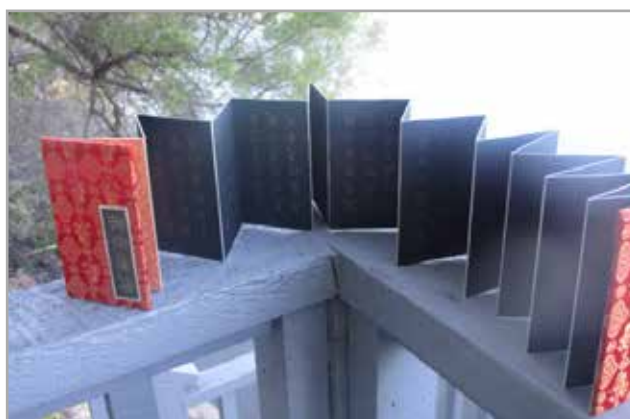
The translation of Zen has created countless pilgrims over thousands of years. Dogen’s pilgrimage to Japan in 1223 revealed Zen to him and he returned to his homeland ‘with empty hands and a bit of gentle-heartedness’. At the same time, Ch’an went to Korea and Vietnam and, 900 years later, pioneering pilgrims travelled to the US from Japan and planted seeds. During World War II, Nyogen Senzaki’s *mentorgarten* flourished in an aliens’ camp on Heart Mountain, Wyoming. At the same time, Aitken Roshi’s internment in Japan created the accidental trigger for his lifelong study of Zen when a guard gave him R. H. Blyth’s ‘Zen in English Literature’. Then “by chance, or by some cosmic design, Mr. Blyth and I were interned together towards the close of the war in this very camp.” (1)

After the war, Roshi sat with Nyogen Senzaki in L.A in 1947, then attended sesshin in Japan; his and Anne’s commitment created the Diamond Sangha, and those first green shoots were inspiring and energising - it’s in the early years that visions and dreams are voiced and realised. Nothing is too much trouble. Sangha pioneers give their all to the Dharma and pay close attention to their own teachers – for us,

Aitken Roshi - maintaining the forms handed down from their teachers. But the complex magic of translation is a work in progress and Aitken Roshi was also clear about maintaining the sangha’s democratic processes, rather than following cultural practices of Japan that are not intrinsic to Buddhism. Women and men would both take up leadership roles in the dojo. Indeed, the vigorous investigation of the history of women in Zen began in the Diamond Sangha with the Kahawa’i Collective, which examined Zen practice in women’s lives – nothing was left out. This was the precursor to later explorations of Zen women such as *Women of the Way* by Sallie Tisdale and *Zen Women: Beyond Tea Ladies, Iron Maidens and Macho Masters*, by Grace Schireson.

Roshi’s translating included giving Subhana Dharma Transmission (jointly with John Tarrant), the first woman teacher in the Diamond Sangha. This August, Michael Kieran, who teaches in the Honolulu Diamond Sangha, announced his first appointment of an Apprentice Teacher (though Nelson Foster and Michael prefer to name the role ‘Dharma Guide’). Michael writes eloquently of this momentous step:

“It is said by our Zen Ancestors: “When the source is deep the stream is long.” There is no question that the source of the Buddha Way is unfathomably deep and utterly unknowable. The question for each of us is, how thoroughly can we appreciate and trust this unfathomable source to animate and liberate our lives and the lives of



all beings. For as long as I’ve known her and long before that, Kathy (Ratliffe) has dedicated her life to sounding these unfathomable depths and letting them guide her seemingly indefatigable efforts to support others in the practice and realisation of the Buddha Way.” (2)

While the Diamond Sangha was developing in Honolulu, Zen Buddhism was translating to the West in mainland sanghas, some giving less attention to democratic process and certainly with differing emphases. Now, after 70-80 years of translation, the honeymoon period for Zen Buddhism in the US is over. Inevitably, there have been mistakes in translation, for example some teachers have abused students' innocent trust that a teacher's actions will necessarily be those of a 'realised' person. Learning from these and other mistakes, the Diamond Sangha Teachers Circle has drawn up Ethical Guidelines for teachers to follow.

Translations adapt to the times. During the pandemic, a necessary translation has seen sanghas establish virtual dojos, making the transition from sitting with human beings in a dojo to practising with familiar faces on a screen. Though ritual, chanting and ceremonies are

problematic in a virtual dojo, the screen does offer a welcoming space for long-term students and newcomers, who are guided towards steady practice from their first encounter with a senior student on-line. The pandemic and lockdown has also revealed the attenuated sangha, waiting to come alive, waiting to become embodied, and the mysterious and profound subtleties of connection and intimacy.

So - let's venerate the Three Treasures and be thankful for this pandemic - as we become one with the brilliance of Shakyamuni Buddha, with the pioneering pilgrim spirit of Xuanzang, the humility of Nyogen Senzaki and the scholarliness and integrity of Robert Aitken. Let their realisation, commitment and love become our own. Then, no matter what the future may bring, the seeds we plant will flourish and grow into mighty trees.

Gillian Coote

Notes:

1) Videotaped interview with Robert Aitken, 29/9/00 - Gillian Coote

2) Honolulu Diamond Sangha Newsletter, Summer 2021 edition.

3) The Iron Flute: 100 Zen Koans, translated and edited by Nyogen Senzaki and Ruth Strout McCandless, Case 18, p. 43, pub. Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1961

Upcoming Events

Spring Sesshin, Kodoji, 6-13 November

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



At sesshin we are free to be true to our hearts. We are free to transcend the background chatter of our busy minds and see into the fact of our own nature. Here, everything - the fog, the dew, the birdsong, the encircling cliffs - conspires to wake us up.

*In a profound valley
beneath high cliffs,
zazen is peaceful, lonely
and truly comfortable.*

(from Song of Realising the Way by Yung-chia)

Traditional sesshin offers countless opportunities for practice – zazen, kinhin, 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: The sesshin will be run on COVID-safe principles. There will be a limit of 15 participants (plus the two teachers) and preference will be given to full-time participants. To meet NSW Government requirements, participants will need to provide proof of their double vaccinated status. 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.

Enquiries: Janet Selby – janetselby@bigpond.com _Mobile: 0421 369 707

Early bird date: 23 October 2021. Payment after this incurs a 10% additional cost.

Samu, Kodoji, 23-24 October

Please see note in News from the board, below.
Enquiries: Brendon Stewart stewarts34@bigpond.com



News from the Board

Changing Times

The Board will continue to take NSW Health Department advice and notify members when we can go back to the zendo. In the meantime, Zoom has been a very successful way of connecting - with our 4 sessions a week and zazenkais full of smiling faces.

Please make sure you're vaccinated to keep your Dharma buddies and teachers safe.

New Members

We had 7 new members join in August! Welcome Annelise, James, Carsten, Myvanwy, Alex, Jacob & William. We look forward to connecting with you at Annandale or online, or hopefully at the next samu and/or sesshin.

AGM - Sunday 17 October

Don't forget to log onto Zoom for our Annual General Meeting so you can hear reports from the Board and the teachers, offer your time and skills for the many jobs that keep our Centre functioning, and make suggestions about our future. If you can't make it please fill out a proxy form so someone else can vote for you

Environmental action

In association with the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change we have hung a banner on the outside of the zendo for their international days of action – 17th & 18th October. Our banner is: “The Earth is Our Body” and we are registered on their international map as a site of action.

Samu Kodoji

There will be a samu two weeks before sesshin (23 & 24 Oct) to move one of the toilets to a newly dug hole, clean up and prepare, so we will need lots of strong and willing workers to come and help. The dates may change according to health advice so check with Brendon beforehand: stewarts34@bigpond.com <http://szc.org.au/classes/samu>

Spring sesshin

Spring sesshin is planned for November 6th to 13th at Kodoji - dependent upon NSW Health Department restrictions. Numbers will probably be limited so get in early and keep your eyes on the 'What's On' and website for details: <http://szc.org.au/classes/spring-sesshin>

Musical Concert

Unfortunately, we had to postpone our fundraising concert that was scheduled for 30th October. We would like as many people as possible to attend and engage with the musical talents of our members, so the concert is now booked for 14th May 2022. Hopefully by then we can gather again in large numbers.



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.

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 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 for details.

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.org.au, www.szc.org.au

October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Senior students	5 Orientation	6 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Gilly	7 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	8	9
10	11 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Subhana	12 Board meeting 6:30pm	13 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Will	14 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	15	16
17 AGM Zoom	18 ZAZEN Zoom Dharma Cafe 7-8.30pm Subhana	19	20 ZAZEN Zoom Dharma Cafe 7-8.30pm Gillian	21 ZAZEN Dharma Cafe Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	22	23 SAMU Kodoji to be confirmed
24 SAMU Kodoji to be confirmed	25 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Subhana	26	27 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Will	28 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	29	30
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November 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	2 Board Meeting 6.30pm	3 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	4 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Peter	5	6 Spring Sesshin Kodoji starts
7 Spring Sesshin	8 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Subhana Annandale 7-9pm Peter Spring Sesshin	9 Orientation Spring Sesshin	10 Spring Sesshin	11 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane Spring Sesshin	12 Spring Sesshin	13 Spring Sesshin Kodoji ends
14	15 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not discuss- ing faults of others</i>	16	17 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gillian Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not discuss- ing faults of others</i>	18 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Peter Full Moon Ceremony <i>Not discuss- ing faults of others</i>	19	20
21	22 ZAZEN Zoom 7-9pm Subhana Annandale 7-9pm Peter	23	24 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	25 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane	26	27
28	29 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	30	Dec 1 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	2 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane		