



ENCOURAGING WORDS

Will Moon

What is not a mistake?

Today I'm sitting at home feeling quite fatigued. My partner and daughter Lily both have Covid and I potentially have it. Apart from tiredness and the occasional cough, we are all doing ok. I'm feeling a great sense of gratitude to all those scientists, researchers and all the other people that worked so hard in a short amount of time to come up with the vaccines that have enabled us to get by with the virus and not get too sick or lose our life. And so it is with many illnesses, we can just go to the doctor and there is sure to be some sort of medicine to help alleviate our illness, or to help manage it. And with everything we experience, many hands have worked to produce our food, our homes, our workplaces, and so on. Many hands support our well-being. The living organism of which we are depends upon a billion things, our parents, our community, the air we breathe, the early lifeforms on earth that created the atmosphere we have today, the warmth of the sun, the rain. When I think of Covid, the little virus in our blood, I feel that we are shaking hands with the first person who caught the virus. How many people has the virus passed through, how many continents has it travelled through, how many people have passed away or had their lives changed? And now it is touching our lives, its roots going all the way back through the hundreds of thousands, millions of people, to that first person. By reflecting upon this we can understand the interconnectedness of all things. One person gets sick in Wuhan, and the whole world is changed, and that cause and effect, goes on endlessly. I'm sure the virus has no intention; it simply does what it needs to in order to survive. In the context of this interconnection, and interdependence, what about our own actions? Considering cause and effect, do we know where the effect of a kind action ends, or does it go on endlessly?

We see the same thing with war and aggression. Who is to say that today's wars are not the result of previous wars, where the foundations of distrust, suspicion and fear have been laid? The distrust, suspicion and fear in the world is growing. Countries are building up their militaries, countries threaten to use nuclear weapons. What if nations reached out in compassion, and sought to understand each other? At a personal level, is it really that much different? At a micro level there is the same mind states at play. Lack of a willingness to understand, distrust, fear and anger. 'Me' and the 'other'. It is our practice to be aware of our reactions, and thoughts, and to find our commonality. When we truly understand that we hold hands with the first person who had Covid, we also understand that we are holding hands with all of humanity, with all living creatures.

In Wu-men's comment on case 1 of the Wu-men kuan, when we resolve the koan Mu, we will walk hand in hand with all the ancestral teachers in successive generations of our lineage, the hair of our eyebrows entangled with theirs, seeing with the same eyes, hearing with the same ears. This is no small thing. It is not to be just understood on a conceptual level, it is to be experienced as our reality. It is the realisation of our place in the world. Naturally we become more compassionate, more understanding, when we realise the other as myself. Then naturally, each act of kindness, or compassionate response ripples out across all things endlessly.

If we want to realise this truth in ourselves, not just momentarily, but integrated as a living experience, we need dedication to our practice. Returning over and over to 'just this', the breath, the sound, our koan. Self-centeredness drops away. We become intimate with this moment, our idea of separation dissolves, and we walk hand in hand with all beings.

Upcoming Events

Walking Weekend Saturday 20, 21 August 2022

This year the walking weekend is a zazenkai, a practice weekend in the Blue Mountains. The theme is, ‘the sounds of nature’. This weekend will be a mix of walking and zazen. There will be lots of zazen and some walking. This weekend is most suitable for members who have experienced camping overnight in the bush, with the absolute basics. If a warm comfy bed, a heater, and hot water on tap, are most important to you, this is probably not a suitable weekend for you. There are no toilets, just a hand trowel and walk off into the bush.

We will initially meet on the Saturday morning, load up a couple of cars with our camping gear and our cushions and mats, drive out to the fire trail to where we will stay overnight in a rock shelter, and move our gear into the shelter. We will initially walk, practicing mindful walking practice. We will return to the rock shelter, lay down some tarps on the floor, setup our mats and practice zazen throughout the afternoon and into the night, sitting around the crackling campfire. We will rise early, and practise zazen throughout the morning, and finish with a walk up to one of the scenic high spots around the middle of the day. Meals will probably be largely BYO pre prepared and shared. We may do some minor preparation on site such as heating food over the fire and dishing it out. More details will be provided after registering interest.

The weekend will be very dependent upon the weather being favourable. If it is wet or windy it won't go ahead. We will sleep on the floor of the rockshelter on the tarps, or on the nearby rock platform (depending upon the numbers). A good thick rollup sleeping mat and very warm sleeping and sitting gear is essential. Temperatures are on average 10 degrees cooler than in Sydney. We will experience briefly what Bodhidharma experienced for 9 years, sitting in a cave doing zazen, experiencing the sounds of nature. With the call of the thrush, or the currawong, is there any time at all? There may also be an opportunity for dokusan in a less formal setting.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Will: wilmoon@gmail.com

Sydney Zen Centre Benefit Concert - Jane, 8 October

First dreamed of in 2019. Now, at last, not daunted by successive waves of lockdown, venue closures, etc., your entertainment team is finally bringing you: 卍 The SZC Benefit Concert!! We promise you a sparkling night of music, poetry, story-telling, and the chance to get together for a good time. So, type it into your diary: Saturday evening, 8 October, Upstairs Hall of the Annandale Community Centre. We will send out a flyer soon with all the information. Look forward to seeing you there!

Right: Ricardo playing at Jane's Transmission ceremony (Photo Diana Levy)



Reports

Winter sesshin 2022

The Winter Sesshin 2022 ran from Friday evening 10 June to Wednesday midday 15 June. We had 21 participants plus the three teachers, Peter Bursky, Jane Andino and Paul Maloney. Everyone could attend online during the Early Morning and Evening blocks, and either online or at Annandale during the Morning and Afternoon blocks. The teishos were online during the evening: Peter on Saturday and Tuesday, Paul on Sunday, Jane on Monday.

Peter looked after all the online side with some help from Jane, while Jane and Paul mostly took turns in being at Annandale. Pablo did a wonderful job as sesshin coordinator in what was a demanding job in keeping the attendance list updated for the two “venues.”

We had two experienced teams of leaders. The online leaders were Alex Cox from Canberra who was online Host and Jiki, and Brendon as Ino (with co-chanter Kerry). The Annandale team was Pablo as Jiki, Jason as Ino, and Zoe as Jisha.

Participants commented that they liked the variety of teachers and, depending on their needs, enjoyed both the online offerings and the in-person opportunity at Annandale. We all appreciated having Paul back again as teacher at sesshin. This sesshin then led into the Transmission Ceremony of Jane, held on the Wednesday afternoon at the Annandale Community Centre.

Annandale Samu



We had a very successful Samu at our Annandale dojo, Sunday 26 June.

James and Eran prepared the walls in the dojo which have been damaged by damp coming through the brick work. This is in preparation for painting. Zoe prepared and painted the Young Street front door, now bright and white. Joe prepared the front stoop (I think that's the right architectural term) and finished it with paving paint. Sue found some great pictures of Tony Coote in the photo albums and then joined in with the great hojo clean out. Kerry and Sue took the hojo apart, throwing away old damp stuff including a side board, the tatami mats were dried in the sun and the furniture rearranged. Glenys came to arrange the altar flowers and was pulled into the hojo party. Brendon gave advice!

Transmission Ceremony for Jane Andino - 15th June 2022

With the winter sun streaming into the grand upstairs room of the Annandale Community Centre, Jane's transmission ceremony was filled with joy and the good humour of friends.

Paul Maloney Roshi, initiated the traditional proceedings and spoke of Jane's deep wisdom, warmth and humility as dharma student, teacher and friend. Jane delivered a teisho on the importance of sangha as one of the three jewels. Her wise words resonated with many and Jane has kindly offered to provide a recording of the dharma talk.

The mystery of Jane's rakusu, traditionally bestowed at transmission was told. Paul had just discovered that it had been sitting un-named and unclaimed at 'Post Office Canberra'. It is now making the northbound leg of its journey and we look forward to seeing it adorning Jane's robes soon bearing her dharma names.

In reflecting the spirit of transmission, Ricardo Andino played an enchanting piece on the guitar. Jane's smile lit the room as she received further gifts blessing her transmission and equipping her for the next steps along the Way. Paul presented Jane with a small, beautifully crafted keisaku bought on his recent travels to Japan.

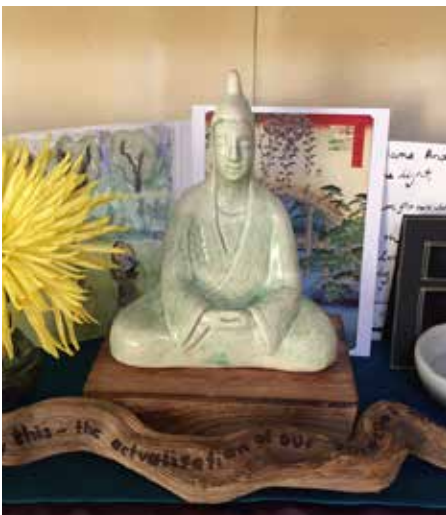
On behalf of the SZC, Kerry Stewart presented Jane with an elegant sculpture of Kanzeon from the hands of Janet Selby and accompanied by a magpie card painted by Helen Sanderson. The SZC Women's Group gathered materials and sewed an altar cloth designed by Glenys Jackson and accompanied by a Kanzeon card handmade by Emme Stone. Julie Robertson gifted Jane a water bowl and Sue Bidwell a message stick from the NT bearing gathas by Basho and Kosho Uchiyama. Amongst the joyous sounds of people gathering over afternoon tea, Helen Sanderson played a song on the piano composed for Jane.

I feel blessed to be a part of our strong dharma community. How fortunate we are to welcome Jane into our remarkable group of teachers at the SZC.

'Journeying through the world, to and fro, to and fro, cultivating a small field' -
Basho

Jillian Ball

Photos: Diana Levy, Jillian Ball



News from the Board

Membership Your membership is well and truly due so please check that you've paid. The fees have gone up slightly in accordance with the CPI so please make sure you've amended periodic bank deposits if that's the way you do it. szc.org.au/membership

New Members Welcome to three new members of the sangha – Jack, Monica and Jerath. We look forward to connecting with you at Annandale or online, and hopefully see you at the next samu, zazenkai and/or sesshin.

Samu at Kodoji 10 - 11 September Samu is a wonderful opportunity to extend your practice into your daily life, and an ancient way of giving something valuable back to the sangha through the generosity of your labour. It's also a wonderful chance to spend some relaxed time together with your dharma buddies. All samus at Kodoji are family friendly weekends. Please bring food to share for the weekend. We have a few jobs you can share in – mowing, some painting, plenty of cleaning, bush regeneration work – and having lots of fun together. Please contact Brendon if you plan to come: stewarts34@bigpond.com

Residents We say farewell to Dan and Ilona from upstairs at our Annandale house, and are pleased to have Eran as one of our new residents. When you come to the zendo please make sure you say hello and welcome him to our community.

Room for rent If you know anyone who is a practising Buddhist and would like to live at the zendo, please contact Brendon: stewarts34@bigpond.com

Welcome back to the zendo Please come along to experience sitting and chanting together once again at Annandale. Some teachers are offering dokusan in the hojo on Monday and Wednesday evenings. And Subhana is offering it via Zoom. Please email info@szc.org.au if you would like to book into dokusan with Subhana. Check on the website for the latest schedule: szc.org.au/classes/zazen

Jukai In July, Max Baker took up the precepts and vows at a wonderfully sunny Jukai ceremony led by Subhana at the Annandale zendo. It was an intimate group in the dojo, including his wife, Zoe and their boys, Lex and Rohan. We all enjoyed catching up, eating Zoe's brownies and drinking tea in the garden afterwards.



Regular Notices

Return 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.

Please go to the website for the latest information about the schedule: szc.org.au/classes/zazen

Mondays

Annandale - Subhana and other teachers on alternate weeks

Zoom - Senior students

Tuesdays

Mini morning meditation

6.55–7.00am Join/welcome

7.00–7.25am Meditation

7.25–7.30am Great Vows

Wednesdays

Annandale - Gillian and Will Moon on alternate weeks

Thursdays online

7.00–8:00pm Meditation/walking

8.00–8.30pm 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.

Dokusan for members

Annandale - Dokusan is offered to members by our teachers on some Mondays and every Wednesday

Phone - Dokusan is offered by Subhana on Thursdays and Gilly 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

August 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Maggie Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	2 Orientation	3 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	4 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	5	6
7	8 ZAZEN Annandale <i>FMC</i> <i>Not Defaming the Three Treasures</i> 7-9pm Subhana Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	9	10 ZAZEN Annandale <i>FMC</i> <i>Not Defaming the Three Treasures</i> 7-9pm Will	11 ZAZEN Zoom <i>FMC</i> <i>Not Defaming the Three Treasures</i> 7-8:30pm Peter	12	13
14	15 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Maggie Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	16 Board Meeting 6:30pm	17 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	18 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	19	20 Walking Weekend Will
21 Zazenkai either in cave or Annandale (Will) Walking Weekend	22 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	23	24 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	25 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	26	27
28	29 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Paul Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	30	31 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly			

September 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane	2	3
4	5 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	6 Orientation	7 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	8 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	9	10 Kodoji Samu
11 Kodoji Samu	12 ZAZEN Dharma Cafe Annandale 7-9pm Paul Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	13 Board meeting 6:30pm	14 ZAZEN Dharma Cafe Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	15 ZAZEN Dharma Cafe Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	16	17
18 Zazenkai Jane	19 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana Zoom 7-8.30pm senior students	20	21 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	22 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane	23	24 Spring sesshin
25 Spring sesshin	26 Spring sesshin	27 Spring sesshin	28 Spring sesshin	29 Spring sesshin ZAZEN Zoom 7-8.30pm Jane	30 Spring sesshin	