



Encouraging Words

Maggie Gluek

Gifts from the Ancestors

One of the joys of studying the Dharma, particularly in the context of Zen Buddhism, is to become acquainted with the words of the old teachers, individuals ever creative in their ability to express the inexpressible.

One such was Hsüan-sha (835-908). He was a fisherman until at age thirty he took up the Buddha Way. As an ascetic he wore straw sandals, a patched robe and paper underclothes. He studied intensively with Hsüeh-feng, then set out to travel and visit other teachers. He was walking down the mountain when he stubbed his toe on a rock. This occasioned bleeding, extreme pain and a sudden awakening. *If this body does not exist, he said, where does this pain come from?* His pilgrimage thus completed even as it began, he returned to study exclusively with Hsüeh-feng.

Subsequently he would instruct people with this statement: *The whole universe is one bright pearl.*

How marvelous and simple and illuminating and infinitely helpful, these words. There's nothing outside the one bright pearl. To acknowledge this may be a matter of faith, to be then realised in experience. You can always return here.

Some three and a half centuries later Dogen returned to Hsüan-sha's expression. In his essay *Ikka Myōju*, he playfully elucidates the spacious universal reality that is One Bright Pearl. Dogen's words are joyful, a never-fail corrective, a pick-me-up. **There is no reason**, he writes, **to doubtfully think that you are not the pearl because you perplexedly think "I am not the pearl."**

Perplexing thoughts, doubts and our accepting or rejecting are but passing, trivial notions. It is moreover only the Pearl appearing as a trivial notion.

Or, in other words (ha!), don't worry! The pearl includes everything. Hello there.

Recently a friend and I were both troubled by significant self-doubt. Cue a few more lines from *Ikka Myōju*. ***The bright pearl...is your enlightened nature. However, you and I, unaware of what the bright pearl is and is not, entertain countless doubts and nondoubts about it, and turn them into indubitable fodder for the mind. But Hsüan-sha's expression has made it clear that our own minds and bodies are the one bright pearl, and so we realise that our minds are not "ours."....Even if there is doubt and anxiety, they are the bright pearl.***

"Indubitable fodder for the mind" speaks volumes to useless, circular, self-focussed thinking. It's a memorable and humorous bit of translation too.

Speaking of which, I bow to the translators who make it possible for us to read the words of the old teachers, using their own unique shadings of meaning. I have quoted from two excellent renderings of Dogen's essay, one by Norman Waddell and Masao Abe, one by Francis H. Cook. I recommend *Ikka Myōju* in its colorful and—this being Dogen—sometimes opaque entirety. It's not a long piece, opening with biographical details about Hsüan-sha, a few of which I have included here.

Many minds guide us along the path. And remind us that our minds are not "ours". The whole universe is one bright pearl.

Upcoming Events

Winter Sesshin

Annandale & Online 9-14 June

The winter sesshin will take place between Friday June 9 to Wednesday June 14 (including Kings's Birthday June 12).

This sesshin is led by Jane Andino, roshi and apprentice teacher Peter Bursky. It will be held concurrently at the zendo and online via Zoom. As lay practitioners, we will have the opportunity to explore the connection of our zazen to our work, our home life, our place in the wider world, and our response in compassionate action.

There are four blocks of zazen per day: Early morning, Late morning, Afternoon and Evening. The Annandale dojo is only open for Morning and Afternoon blocks.

Participants can sign up for any blocks, but attending the opening of sesshin on the Friday evening (online) is mandatory.

Application forms are already available on the SZC website. For queries, please email Pablo Scodellaro pablo.scodellaro@gmail.com.



Baby Naming Ceremony

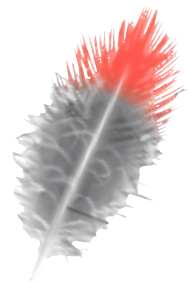
Sunday 25 June, 11am

This is a family-friendly event - we bathe and offer flowers to the Baby Buddha and welcome new babies to our sangha with stories, poems and songs, followed by a potluck lunch. Please bring food and flowers and plan to arrive by 10.45am. This year, the baby naming and welcome to sangha will be for Maggie Gluek and Tony Miller's grandchild, Matthew - Phoebe and Andrew's son. There may be other babies - please let us know. Contact Janet Selby: janetselby@bigpond.com

Memorial for Sally Hopkins

Sunday 2 July, 10am

On Sunday 2 July a ceremony at Annandale will remember and honour Sally Hopkins. Sally was a long-time and much loved sangha member. She and her husband Colin were residents at the zendo for many years. There will be a period of zazen from 9.30am for anyone who wishes to sit. The memorial ceremony will begin at 10 am and run until approximately noon.



Sally Hopkins - 1933 - 2023

"A flower does not use words to announce its arrival to the world; it just blooms." (Matshona Dhiwayo)

Sally was a bodhisattva, mature in Buddha's wisdom, compassion and service; those of us who knew and loved her will always honour her life. She began sitting with us when she and Colin were at Clandulla, population 197, where the women's group made a pilgrimage, astonished by their productive vegetable garden. She and Colin had moved there from Nullo Mountain, where they worked the land - until they couldn't anymore. After Clandulla, they moved to Forestville to care for Colin's parents - always caring - and then to Annandale, the heart of our sangha where, for over ten years, they quietly tended the house and garden. Sally contributed to the smooth running of the sangha in every possible way, constantly offering service, always unobtrusive and allergic to praise. Her poems were Dharma teaching treasures. After Sally was diagnosed with cancer, she and Colin moved to their unit in Bexley North and, for as long as she was able, she caught public transport to sit at Annandale, and attended sesshin until she was 84. She suffered a broken hip some months ago but pulled through. Her life energy ebbed away on Sunday, May 21. We are fortunate that Sally enriched our community for so many years. She will be honoured at her Memorial Ceremony at Annandale on Sunday July 2, along with family and sangha. Please come and share your memories.

- Gillian Coote

Reports

Autumn Mountains and Waters Sesshin – Kodoji

We had a truly wonderful heart felt sesshin at Kodoji. We were blessed to have access to Kodoji Temple this year and sit sesshin given the widespread damage from the floods and road closures last year. The extensive samu at the end of March made the place feel so welcoming, clean, tidy and ready for all the new and old Bodhisattvas.

A very big thank you to Stephen Crump for not only being an unflappable sesshin organiser and transport co-ordinator but also generously, solidly and reliably took up the role of Jikki which really held the dojo. He also proved to be a fabulous default yoga teacher as Diana was unable to make it at the last minute. It was Lindy Lee's maiden voyage as an Apprentice teacher in sesshin, offering regular dokusan and giving an inspiring teisho. She is a gifted natural teacher with only 30 years of training in the making! While Lindy was originally only offering some assistance to Maggie and myself, after Maggie pulled out, she ended up giving generously of herself and stepping more fully into the teaching role. Peter Bursky added his support as part-time Ino from Monday to Thursday and offered a Teisho on Who's Hearing? It was wonderful to have Paul as Tanto, with his depth of experience and words of wisdom. Taido was our fabulous lunch cook, a chef by trade, so we were well nourished. Due to her experience, she runs a tight efficient kitchen dojo.

The teachings for this sesshin were based on Dogen's Mountains and Waters Sutra which is

a rich dense metaphoric and philosophical study of the inter-penetration of emptiness and form. We took up some of the poetic lines as koans to contemplate – “The mountains and waters of the immediate present are the ancient way of all Buddhas”. “Green Mountains are forever walking... ..Stone woman gives birth to a child by night”. Some of the audio teisho’s are available on our web site.

We had several new young people at sesshin which was very heartening, particularly the residents at Annandale. The servers, Ameli and David were a dynamic smooth team, serving us so gracefully, dealing with everyone’s idiosyncratic signals. As usual the mountains and rivers, sandstone cliffs and vast paddock put on their best face, (our essential nature) over the days. We practised in the midst of extremes with temperatures plummeting down to 5 and then 1 degrees overnight for a few days, to warm brilliant sun-baking weather during the day. The extra woollies and blankets in the box upstairs in the cottage were deeply appreciated.



The closing circle was one of the most heartfelt sharing circles that I have been part of, with expressions of gratitude, tenderness, vulnerability, tears, joy and laughter and deep insights.

- Subhana Barzaghi Roshi



Contemplating Green Mountains Are Forever Walking – zazen on the verandah.

Clay-zenkai workshop

Sunday 21 May

Janet led a clay workshop on a lovely Sunday morning with 7 people getting into making mindfulness pinch pots and a few Jizo statues. Janet took us through a guided meditation on giving and relinquishing as represented by the bowl.



News from the Board

Membership

Don't forget to pay your membership for the next financial year beginning July 1. The Board has been clarifying with members if they pay a standard or limited/concessional fee and when they pay it – annually, bi-annually, quarterly or monthly. This information makes it much easier for Joe, our amazing treasurer. If you arrange with your bank to make a regular payment, it will make it much easier for you too. Please check out our membership webpage for any increases in the fees: szc.org.au/membership/ and don't forget to adjust your direct debit accordingly.

Samu at Annandale 4 June

In preparation for Winter sesshin, there will be a samu at Annandale on Sunday 4th June. We will be cleaning, gardening and have fun together. Please bring some food to share for lunch. All welcome!

Buddha babes 25 June

All new babies and small children are invited to engage in a special naming ceremony in our flower filled child-friendly dojo. So, if you'd like to celebrate and name your little one please contact Janet: janetselby@bigpond.com

szc.org.au/classes/baby-naming-ceremony/

Tony Coote's memorial ceremony

Tony's memorial ceremony at Kodoji and the citing of his pole on the paddock near the old chestnut tree was cancelled in late March and has been rescheduled for late July.

Kodoji

The Board has been taking advice from Brendon, our Kodoji coordinator, to make more repairs to our bush zendo, Kodoji. The next thing on our list is the guttering.



Sally and Colin hosting Women's Group in Clandulla, 1995

Regular Notices

RETURN TO ANNANDALE ZENDO /

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

Mondays

Annandale - Subhana

Tuesdays online

Mini morning meditation

6.55–7.00am Join/welcome

7.00–7.25am Meditation

7.25–7.30am Great Vows

Wednesdays

Annandale - Gillian Coote

Thursdays online

With Jane Andino or Peter Bursky

7.00–8.00pm Meditation/walking

8.00–8.30pm Discussion/Great Vows

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 Gillian by appointment

The Blue Mountains Zen Group

We meet via Zoom on Sunday afternoons.

All are welcome to join us for zazen with either a talk or Dharma Café.

Email Jane janeandino@yahoo.com.au for more details.



Some Giving/Receiving bowls basking in the glorious morning sunshine.



Members of the Board

Kerry Stewart (Chairperson) stewartkerry4@gmail.com, Zoe Thurner (secretary), Joe Gaebel (treasurer), William Verity, John McLean, Helen Sanderson, Julie Robinson.

Newsletter Editor: Janet Selby janetselby@bigpond.com

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

June 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	2	3
4 Annandale Samu	5 ZAZEN Annandale <i>FMC</i> <i>Not Drugs</i> 7-9pm Subhana	6	7 ZAZEN Annandale <i>FMC</i> <i>Not Drugs</i> 7-9pm Gilly	8 ZAZEN Zoom <i>FMC</i> <i>Not Drugs</i> 7-9pm Jane	9 Winter Sesshin	10 Winter Sesshin
11 Winter Sesshin	12 Winter Sesshin	13 Winter Sesshin	14 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly Winter Sesshin	15 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	16	17
18	19 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	20	21 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	22 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	23	24
25 Baby Naming Ceremony	26 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	27 Orientation	28 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	29 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	30	
30						

July 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Dharma Cafe Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	4	5 Dharma Cafe Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	6 Dharma Cafe Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	7	8
9	10 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	11 Board Meeting 6:30pm	12 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	13 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	14	15
16 Zazenkai Gilly	17 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	18	19 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	20 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	21	22 Tony Memorial Kodoji
23 Tony Memorial Kodoji	24 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	25 Orientation	26 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	27 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	28	29
30	31 ZAZEN Annandale <i>FMC</i> <i>Not</i> <i>Discussing</i> 7-9pm Subhana					