



## Encouraging Words

Will Moon

### Willing to do the Work

There is a case in the Blue Cliff Record, Case 16 where a monk says to Jingqing, “I am pecking from the inside, I beg you master, please peck from the outside”. Jingqing says, “But will you be alive?”

The monk then says, “I am vigorously working this way, if I were not alive, I would be laughed at”.

Jingqing responds, “You half-baked fellow.”

In this case it sounds a bit like the monk is thinking in a processual way to achieve awakening. If you peck and I peck, we will get there. Get where? It is difficult not to think of things in this way in our practice, as each step along a timeline that we take, the closer we get to our goal. We don’t feel that we are experiencing it now, so therefore it must be somewhere in the future. But thinking like this is an obstacle, what we awaken to has always been here, right here in this moment, not progressed along the timeline of pecks or steps. This is difficult to understand when coming from our usual concept of what progress means. But how can we progress towards what we already are? It doesn’t make sense.

Jingqing responds to the monk with a question, “But will you be alive?” There’s a peck that goes right through. What he wants to see is, is the monk completely free from the trap he is in? Can he be liberated from these ideas of getting it, not getting it, progress, and no progress, and be fully alive and free in this moment?

But the monk doesn’t get it. He says, “I am vigorously working this way, if I were not alive, I would be laughed at”. He is saying that he is vigorously pecking from the inside of the shell. It is ok to practice vigorously at times and it can be important for our practice if we seek to awaken to our true nature, to awaken to who we are. In the Shodoka we read, ‘students of vigorous will hold the sword of wisdom’. But even so, we need to be careful. If it is our thought that we will get what we want by exerting great effort, this isn’t it. What is it you are going to get? Perhaps a better way to think about it is that we will have great resolve. If awakening is important to us, we can’t be too comfortable. Absolute resolve does not mean we are half hearted. It means that we are willing to do the work. Also, in addition to great resolve, we need to have faith. It is faith that enables us to step beyond the limits of the intellect and to be open to the essential nature of all things. Faith enables us to remain open so an act of grace may occur.

If our effort is misdirected we are wasting our energy. When the monk says, “I am vigorously working this way”, it is like saying I am vigorously working within the confines of my ideas about it. Getting, not getting, inside, outside. It is like he is in a shell chipping away at the wall with all his energy, not knowing that the shell doesn’t actually exist, and it is just his ideas at work. So, Master Jingqing says, “you half-baked fellow.” It is a rejection of the monks approach, what else could the master say or do? “That’s not it, that’s not the way, wake up.”

If we want to be vigorous, be vigorous about being right here. When we ask the question, “Who am I?”, we are not asking the question who am I next year, or who am I next week, or after 30 steps? We want to know right now. And who is going to answer this? No amount of pecking from anyone else is going to do it, which is what the monk seems to be asking of Jingqing.

## Upcoming Events

### Spring sesshin

Kodoji September 30 - October 7 (includes public holiday 2 Oct)

led by Gillian Coote

“Sesshin” means “to settle the heart mind, to touch the heart mind, to convey the heart mind”, each moment providing myriad opportunities to continue our practice. Essentially, each moment contains everything we need. In this hidden valley surrounded by ochre cliffs, wake up to the eucalypts, the starry skies, the songs of frogs and birds and crickets. Come home to your true self.

Contact: For queries, please email Julie Robinson [julesandco@live.com.au](mailto:julesandco@live.com.au)

## Kodoji Bushwalking weekend

Saturday 19-20 August

There will be a day's walk into Yengo National park from our bush zendo, Kodoji on Saturday. This is a wonderful way to learn about the land surrounding our property and connect with sangha members.

Given that the days are pretty short at this time of year we would need to start the walk reasonably early. So best to arrive on Friday night if possible.

Driving up to Gorricks for the Friday night also means you can have a relaxing evening with friends before the walk. We will leave on Sunday after lunch. Please bring enough food to share for 2 dinners, 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches. There are a limited number of beds upstairs in the cottage, and mattresses to put on the verandah or in the dojo. Bring a tent if you want your own sleeping space.

If you are interested in joining us please contact Brendon: [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com) Please let him know if you're coming on Friday or early on Saturday morning, so we can await your arrival.

Walking around the valley has its challenges. However, the hard work is often worth the effort. There are great views, and we get to explore the mysterious country that is beyond the trees and ridges that we look upon when sitting mindfully gazing up during our sesshins. A chance to become intimate with the Turpentine, Bloodwoods, Angophoras and the ancient sandstone laid down more than 200 million years ago. So a few things to think about for those who might want to explore some of the wilderness around Kodoji with its little hidden treasures.

Your walking gear should include sturdy footwear, long sleeves and long pants, hat, small backpack, wet weather gear, spare warm clothes, sufficient water to keep you going throughout the day. Aim for 2 litres. Some high energy goodies to eat and share. Chocolate brownies are always welcome. And we'll each take a packed lunch - sandwich and fruit, or whatever you like to eat. It's important to bring a sense of humour for when you find yourself entangled in a lawyer vine, or have become best buddies with a leech, or slipped over on your bum for the tenth time. You may want to bring a camera, or a pad to write or sketch.

Contact: Brendon [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)

## Reports

### Winter sesshin

Winter Sesshin was held concurrently at the Annandale Zendo and online via zoom, and was led by Jane Andino and Peter Bursky. It began on Friday 9th June, the start of the long weekend, and finished on Wednesday 14th June. The Winter sesshin is non-residential and so aims to cater for participants who can only attend sesshin online because of distance, health or family reasons, and also those who like the flavour of a sesshin that is held right among the ebb and flow of work, study, friends and family. We also had people attending from interstate and overseas.

There were four blocks per day. The Early Morning, Morning and Afternoon blocks could be attended either online or at Annandale. The Evening blocks were held only online so that all could hear the teishos and participate in the following discussion and sharing. Peter was at Annandale for Saturday/Sunday while Jane looked after the online students, and then they swapped for Monday/Tuesday.

The teishos explored the Rinzai side of our Diamond Sangha tradition, presenting the direct pointing of Linji's shout and Hakuin's teachings and calligraphy, as well as looking at ways to find the Bodhisattva Path in our daily life.

We were supported in sesshin by our dedicated leaders (all fairly new to their roles), and by the energy and enthusiasm of the participants.

As a postscript, here is a poem from Diana Levy inspired by an outside kinhin walk to the nearby White's Creek Community Gardens.

GIVE WAY  
the sign declares  
to the overgrown tree

*Winter sesshin, Diana Levy*



Bonfire at Kodoji, Memorial weekend for Tony Coote

## Remembering Sally

Our beloved Dharma sister and elder, Sally Hopkins died on 21 May 2023. She was 89 years old. Younger members of the Sangha may not have known Sally but she contributed greatly to the Sangha for decades. Sally and her husband Colin were residents at Annandale for many years and she was a regular practice leader.

Although Sally would have absolutely not wanted 'any fuss', we held a Memorial Service for her on Sunday 2 July at Annandale Community Centre. Many people wanted to come together to be thankful and recognise Sally's contributions, humility and kindness. In all, 45 people came including Sally's family and SZC folk.

Subhana officiated for the service and Sally's husband Colin, son Bruce and daughter Darian all gave interesting and varied eulogies. Glenys provided the beautiful flowers on the altar. Diana and Gilly read three of Sally's poems. Following the formal elements of our service, there was space for people to share memories and reflections. After that we had a splendid morning tea provided by the Womens' group. It was a morning of sadness but also of love and gratitude. Sally was exemplary, living as person of 'no rank' but giving all the time. Personally I was very glad we all got the chance to 'make a fuss' although Sally would have shaken her head at the idea of a ceremony and said something like "*Oh heavens please don't worry, it's all fine.*" Importantly, Colin reported he felt greatly supported by the sangha, and the expressions of deep appreciation for Sally.

A very few remaining copies of the book *Star and Mountain*, poems by Sally Hopkins and artwork by Glenys Jackson, are still for sale at Annandale.

Evening  
at last light  
mopokes and kookaburras meet  
the white arms  
of the fallen chestnut  
radiate like a sun  
dissolving into the darkness  
when the earth is black  
the sky is alive with stars  
processing through our hearts

*Sally Hopkins*





## Tony Memorial, Kodoji

Here follows a summary of the community comments on the wonderfully moving weekend at Kodoji in memory of Tony Coote, on 23 July, with words from Subhana, Caroline.

To Gilly:

It was an incredible moving tribute and memorial service for dear Tony. Thank you for your heart felt words, sharing Tony's notes on the history and architecture of the building of Kodo-ji, and your loving presence. It was a powerful moving ceremony and treasured moment scattering Tony's ashes to the wind and earth, I felt his spirit, the essence of Tony there - intimately in the place of no birth and no death, and no ending of birth and death. Meeting one another in that place is profound. Scott playing the bagpipes totally undid me, such a haunting emotional sound across the empty paddock. The Queen went out with the sound of the bagpipes, so fitting for Tony too.

Know that you too are held in the arms of this warm-hearted community as you grieve the loss of your beautiful soul mate, good man, lover, friend, larrikin, cartoonist, architect, father and husband.

With love, Subhana

Oh, what a deeply satisfying and beautiful weekend we had -- to visit the memories of Tony Coote and all that has transpired in decades of our history...

Gilly's talk on the history of Kodoji and the land and building projects, leading us into the honouring of Tony and his masterful and multi-dimensional legacy, Kym's superbly completed blackbutt pole with inscriptions – and a fabulous community sharing by so many unique individuals. And the significant scattering of Tony's ashes, which was so beautiful...Awe-inspiring and profoundly moving! Ending with Maggie's beautiful song (Blackbird), and Scott playing the bagpipe tunes (Mist in the Mountains, and Flowers of the Forest. Ed.) to lead us back to the dojo, in silence.

The place! The sun shone, the mountains surrounded us, the bush statuesque, quiet, still...It had been minus 7° in the night (frost on our tent)...but 17° of clear skies in the day...

The Form and the Emptiness!

Thank you to Julie Robinson and to Jill Steverson for their fantastic organising of so many aspects of food, cleaning, work needed...so simply, so precisely, and so warmly, done.

And to all who we met again, after so long, or met for the first time, so freshly... We *loved* encountering your stories.

Much love, and deep gassho to all, Carolina/Caroline Ann and Donald Allan

And from Gilly:

A deep bow to all who contribute your creative energy, skills and time to our community, especially making this weekend, and the ceremony on Sunday, unforgettable. We have thanked Tony in the most beautiful, nourishing way.



Photos: Julie Robinson, Jill Steverson, Peter Law



Morning frost covers the remnants of Saturday evening's bonfire

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## News from the Board

### Membership fees overdue

If you haven't already paid your membership fee it's definitely time to recommit to your Dharma life and community. Apart from signing up for leadership roles and coming along to retreats, samus, ceremonies and other events, it's also necessary to financially support our Sangha and all that it offers. The Board has increased the membership and sesshin fees to help stabilise our finances which have not been meeting our costs for the last 5 years. So, fill out the form: [szc.org.au/membership/](https://szc.org.au/membership/)

Send it to Kerry: [stewartkerry4@gmail.com](mailto:stewartkerry4@gmail.com)

Deposit the sum: Sydney Zen Centre BSB: 062 182

Account number: 1013 7103

Please include your last name and the tag "MMB" in the description line.

### Gratitude

In the spirit of giving and receiving the Board would like to deeply thank all those people who have paid their membership fees, ensuring the viability and future of our Centre. We would also like to acknowledge the substantial added financial donations that members have made, and the selfless service that many of you have contributed, over decades, to the running and flourishing of our Sangha.

### Kodoji bushwalking weekend – 19 & 20 August

This weekend is a great opportunity to have fun, share some laughs and delicious meals, learn about and explore the bush surrounding Kodoji with your Dharma buddies. So, make sure you put the weekend in your diary.

Contact: Brendon [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)

### Kodoji samu weekend – 2 & 3 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 time with our community.

Contact: Brendon [stewarts34@bigpond.com](mailto:stewarts34@bigpond.com)



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



Call to the sangha to ceremony on the special drum by jiki, Janet



Return to the dojo to the haunting sound of the bagpipes



## Members of the Board

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

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# August 2023

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



# September 2023

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