

## Encouraging Words

Peter Bursky

### Yunyan Sweeps the Ground

One quiet day, Yunyan was sweeping the temple grounds, his broom a silent dance. Daowu said, “You’re working hard sir!” Yunyan smiled softly, “There is one who does not work hard.” Daowu pressed, “And so there is a second moon?” Yunyan lifted his broom, “What number of moons is this?” he asked. Daowu remained silent. Later on, Xuansha said, “That is precisely the second moon.” Yunmen said, “The man-servant greets the maid-servant politely.”

This exchange encapsulates some core Zen themes: the relationship between activity and stillness, form and emptiness, duality and unity, and that which goes beyond. First we have Yunyan, where sweeping is more than just labor; it is a metaphor for clearing the mind of illusions—sweeping away concepts, wiping away the dust of attachment. His words hint at effortless awakening—where effort and ease dance as one. Daowu’s question about the “second moon” probes duality—does awakening stand apart from ordinary life? You may know the two poems Shen-hsiu and Hui-neng wrote in order to receive dharma transmission from the Fifth Ancestor. Shen-hsiu’s poem went “The body is a bodhi tree, the mind is like a standing mirror, always try to keep it clean, don’t let it gather dust”. Hui-neng then composed two of his own; “Bodhi doesn’t have any trees, this mirror doesn’t have a stand, our buddha nature is forever pure, where do you get this dust?”. Then he wrote, “The mind is the bodhi tree, the body is the mirror’s stand, the mirror itself is so clean, dust has no place to land”. Shen-hsiu’s verse likened the body to a bodhi tree, the mind to a shining mirror, to be kept pure. Hui-neng’s reply dismissed trees and stands, asserting Buddha-nature is eternally pure, dustless, beyond form.

These poems are twin moons—different paths illuminating the same sky. One recognizes form and practice; the other sees through it all. Both lead under the same moonlight, radiant and true.

Yunyan’s act—lifting the broom and asking, “What number of moons is this?”—cuts through distinctions—neither many nor one, real nor unreal. Dogen Zenji echoed this, and said that Yunyan’s actions embody the universe itself, where dualities of light and dark, form and emptiness dissolve. The moon, in this realm, is neither separate nor one—simply *\*is\**.

Yunyan’s reply aligns with Wansong’s insight: “Like the second moon, who will say it is the moon, who will deny it?”—a reminder that conceptual grasping clouds this luminous reality. The reflection in each drop of water shows infinite forms; yet, all are woven into the same fabric of truth. Many appearances, one reality, and yet beyond one, beyond two.

Xuansha’s words resonate further: “That is precisely the second moon”—a recognition that dualities are woven into the fabric of existence. Murakami’s ‘1Q84’ speaks of “two moons working together to bathe the world in strange light,” capturing the paradox—unity and multiplicity dancing in harmony, dancing beyond each other.

Yunmen’s final remark—“The man-servant greets the maid-servant politely”—symbolises the inherent harmony of each encounter. The way of the Way is revealed through genuine interactions, where form and emptiness meet seamlessly, endlessly.

This story invites us to see that every act can be charged expressions of awakening. Sweeping the ground, raising the broom, — the same moon shining in different forms, or perhaps different moons shining the same form. “What number moons is this?”\* — first moon?, second moon?, beyond all moons?. Reality is a vast, boundless sky. May your own sweeping reveal clearly the endless moons of awakening.

## Upcoming events

### Spring sesshin

Saturday 4 October - 11 October  
with Gillian Coote, roshi and Will Moon

Spring comes with flowers, autumn with the moon,  
summer with breeze, winter with snow.  
When useless things don't stick in your mind,  
That is your best season.

*Wumen Hui-k'ai (d.1260)*



At sesshin, we let go into vastness and silence and settle into our depths. Here we can be gentle with ourselves and embrace the present moment without thoughts of realisation, without ideas of goals. Here is radical simplicity, seeing what is, seeing when the flow of living is blocked - lovingly, intelligently, compassionately.

**Application form and more details on the website:** [Spring Sesshin form](#)

**For more information, please contact:** [Janet Selby](#)

### Transmission Ceremony for Will Moon

Saturday 11 October, 1 pm – 4 pm, 2025\*

Last day of Spring Sesshin, arrive 12:30pm at Kodoji



In this ceremony, Gillian Coote roshi will recognise Will Moon as a fully authorised master of our lineage. Will has been a committed and generous member of the Sydney Zen Centre sangha over many years and an Apprentice Teacher for six years. He embodies the Dharma of wisdom and compassion with integrity and clarity in his interactions with students at Annandale, sesshin and zazenkai, and his kind words and actions. Please join us in celebrating Will's Dharma journey. The ceremony will be immediately followed by an afternoon tea celebration.

Enquiries and RSVP by Friday 19 September: Janet Selby [janetselby@bigpond.com](mailto:janetselby@bigpond.com)

\*In the event of flooding at Kodoji, the ceremony will be held at SZC, Annandale from 2 pm on Sunday October 12, 2025

### Samu at Kodoji for Spring, 20-21 September

Please put into your diaries the dates for Spring Samu at Kodoji, 20-21 September. Hopefully we will have our new water tanks and stands to celebrate. We plan to have another samu probably sometime in late winter to paint the building.

## Reports

### Winter sesshin at Annandale and online

The Winter Sesshin at Sydney Zen Centre, held from 6-11 June 6 was a deeply enriching retreat led by teachers Jane Andino and Peter Bursky. Attended by 17 practitioners—comprising seasoned students and newcomers—the retreat was conducted both in person at the Annandale centre and online, fostering a sense of unity across time and space. The theme drew inspiration from Zen Master Dongshan Liangjie's teachings, emphasizing the profound nature of thusness. Dongshan's words resonated deeply: *"The dharma of thusness is intimately transmitted by buddhas and ancestors; now you have it; preserve it well,"* highlighting the importance of embodying the teaching in daily life. The retreat coincided with cold, windy days that complemented our inward journey, inviting participants to embrace the spacious silence within. In the wind's howl, we surrendered to the suburban soundscape, dissolving boundaries between self and other. As the days progressed, smiles brightened and the silence of sesshin deepened. An added benefit of holding the retreat online and in person was the opportunity for practitioners to carry their practice home each day, merging it seamlessly with their everyday work and relationships. Evening teisho offered Dharma teachings that illuminated Dongshan's metaphor: "form and reflection behold each other," encouraging us to see beyond surface appearances. Special thanks to Ameli, the dedicated sesshin coordinator, whose careful planning and warm heart kept everything running smoothly, and to the steady leadership team whose quiet guidance fostered a serene environment. With our collective turning to "Just this," we revealed true practice in the immediacy of each moment, illuminating silence toward greater clarity and harmony in daily life.

### Samu at Annandale



On the first Sunday/weekend of June we got together to tidy up our Annandale Dojo; thanks to Kerry, Zoe, Subhana, Sean, Glenys, Kellie, Brendon.

We painted the front door to our Zendo and the external sills on the street facing windows. Sean also patched some of the ceiling in the zendo. The hedge was pruned and the garden tidied, gutters were cleaned and all of the zafus were dusted and a good number repaired as were some of the sutra books. Over the next couple of weeks we have managed to have our old and battered garbage bins replaced and a bigger green bin included.

Thanks to everyone who came, it's so important to look after our city Zendo.



## News from the Board

### New member

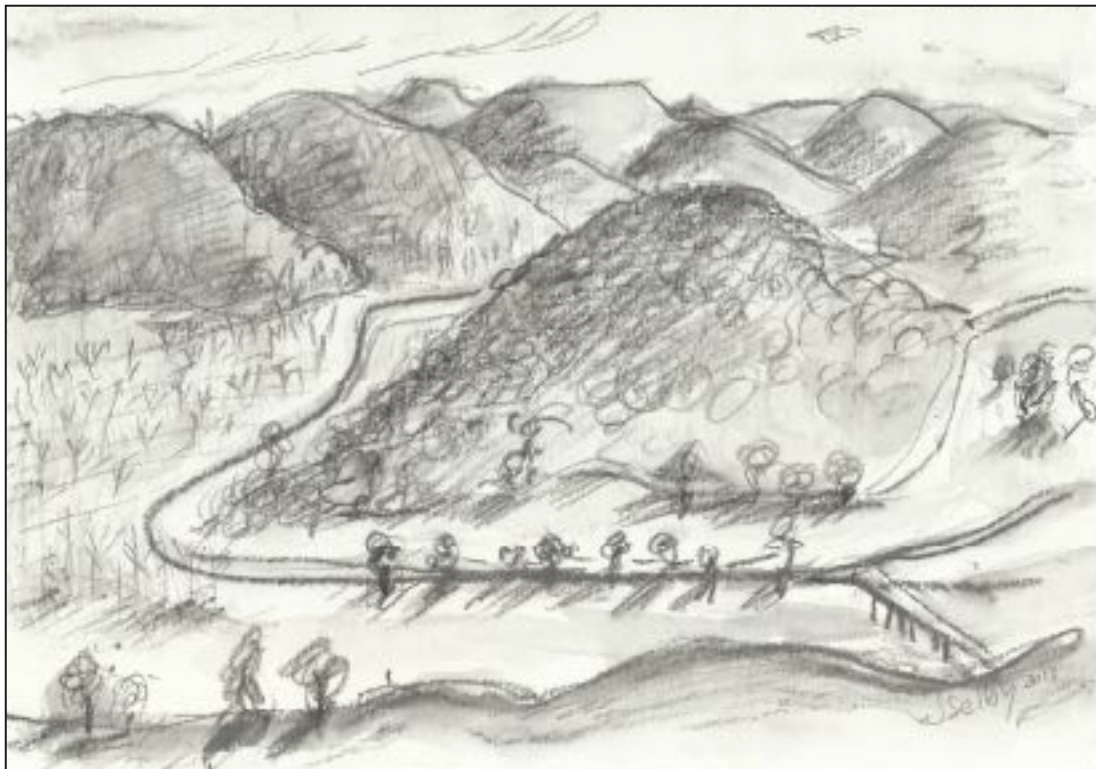
We have welcomed Monika onto the Board to train as our new treasurer. She will replace Joe as treasurer at the next AGM, as Joe is now living interstate and very busy with his work. Although, thankfully, Joe will stay on the Board.

### Membership

The Board has slightly increased member's fees for the next financial year in keeping with the CPI. Please amend your payment to the new fee from July 1. Details can be found on our website: <http://szc.org.au/membership>

### Safe keeping

We are further down the complex process of changing banks from the Commonwealth to Bank Australia. We have also retrieved the beautiful and ancient paper deeds for our Gorricks Run property from the safety deposit box, as all proof of ownership is now in digital form.



On the road to Gorricks Run, 2013, charcoal, Janet Selby

## Regular Notices

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 or Will Moon

### Thursdays online

With Jane Andino or Peter Bursky,

7.00–8.00pm Meditation/walking,

8.00–8.30pm Discussion/Great Vows



Ino - chant leaders' equipment, 2018, watercolour and pen, Janet Selby

### 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 usually meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, 3-5 pm.

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.

### Wahroonga Friends, Upper North Shore

**The Meeting House** is located at 59 Boundary Road Wahroonga

**Inquiries to Maggie:** 0413 018 100, [magpiwarble@yahoo.com](mailto:magpiwarble@yahoo.com)



## Members of the Board

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

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# August 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	5 Orientation	6 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	7 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	8	9
10	11 ZAZEN FMC Not Praising myself while abusing others Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	12	13 ZAZEN FMC Not Praising myself while abusing others Annandale 7-9pm Will	14 ZAZEN FMC Not Praising myself while abusing others Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	15	16
17 Zazen kai	18 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	19	20 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	21 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	22	23
24	25 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Peter	26	27 20 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	28 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	29	30

# September 2025

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31 August	1 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	2  Orientation	3 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	4 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	5	6
7	8  Dharma Cafe Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	9	10  Dharma Cafe Annandale 7-9pm Will	11  Dharma Cafe Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	12	13
14  Zazenkai	15 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	16	17 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	18 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	19	20  Samu at Kodoji
21  Samu at Kodoji	22 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	23	24 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Will	25 ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Jane	26	27
28	29 ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Subhana	30	1 October  ZAZEN Annandale 7-9pm Gilly	2  ZAZEN Zoom 7-8:30pm Peter	3	4  Spring Sesshin Begins