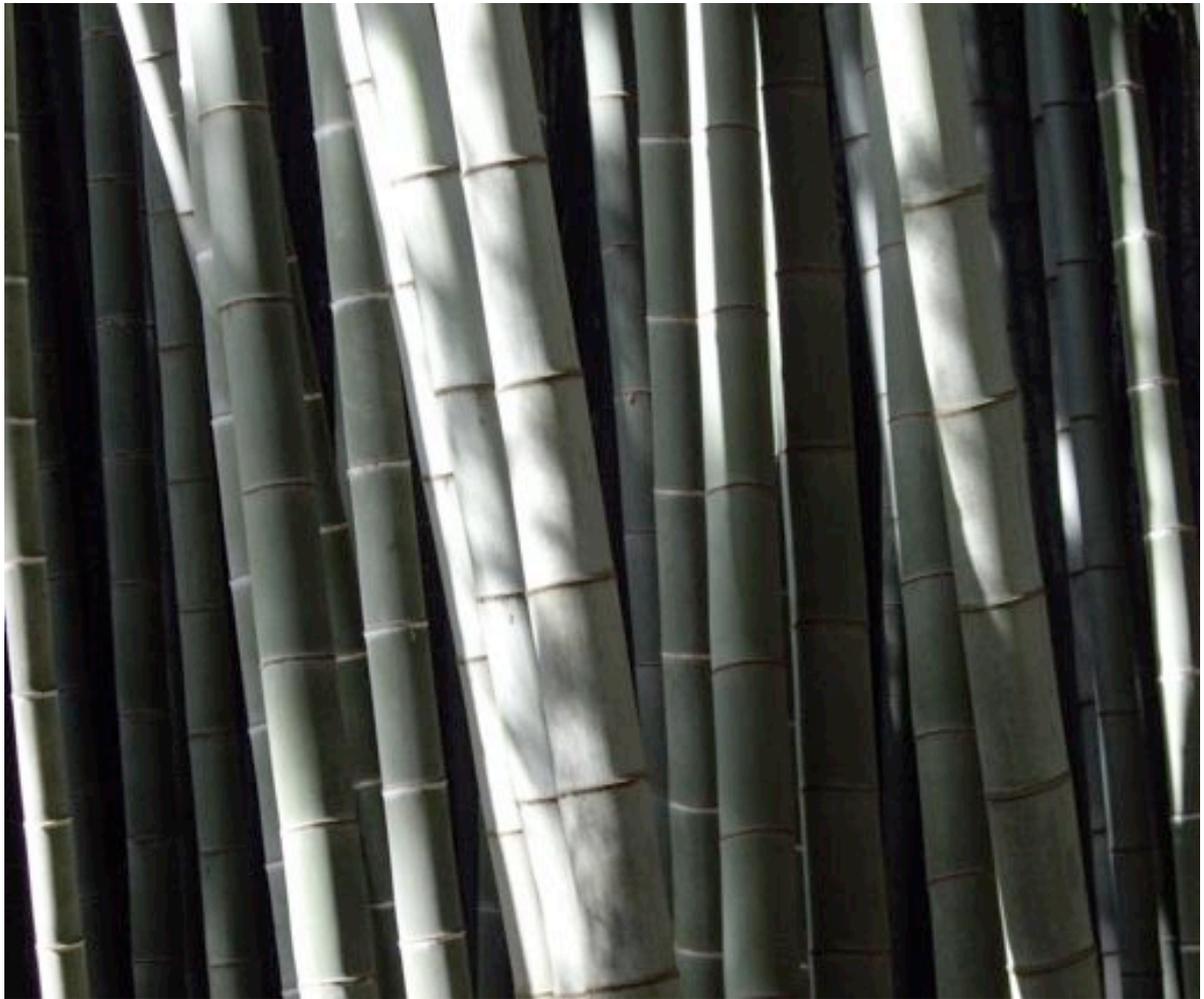


**mind
moon
circle**



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Autumn 2009

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This issue explores the many dimensions of 'connection and bonding with other beings and nature'.

Contents

Maggie Glueck	Never lost	p. 3
Sarah Walls	Ode à puss	p. 7
Will Moon	Tangle orchid	p. 8
Sally Hopkins	This quiet days	p. 11
Larry Agriesti	Temple of Heaven (or: 'Bonding with Emptiness')	p. 12
Janet Selby	What trees mean to me	p. 14
Caroline Josephs	Selected "Rainer Maria Rilke" poem	p. 15
Carl Hooper	Fox spirit	p. 16
Janet Selby	Harmonising matter and spirit	p. 17
Sally Hopkins	First breeze endlessly arising	p. 19
Larry Agriesti	Bonding with Simon	p. 20
Diana Levy	Haiku in summer, autumn, winter sequence	p. 23
Gillian Coote	Only connect	p. 24
Jeff Ward	Starlit darkness	p. 25
Brendon Stewart	Belonging/ Bonding/ Connection	p. 26
Jean Brick	Dharma study and facilitators training program	p. 29
Diana Levy	Stone women dharma with green mountain me	p. 30

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*The winter issue will focus on: 'How we got here'.
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As part of the Diamond Sangha's 50th birthday celebrations, the next Mind Moon Circle will record the experience of past and present members of the SZC. So regardless of whether you have been a member for 30 years or 30 days, regardless of your current membership status, write up to an A4 page on your experiences, how you came to the practice etc. More information on the Yahoo list.

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Never lost Maggie Gluek

Tao Wu and Chien Yuan went to a house to express condolences. Yuan rapped on the coffin, and asked, "Living or dead?"

Wu said, "I won't say either living or dead."

Yuan asked, "Why won't you say?"

Wu said, "I won't say! I won't say!"

On the way home, Yuan said, "Your Reverence, please tell me right away. If you don't, I shall hit you."

Wu said, "If you like, I'll allow you to hit me, but I'll never say." Yuan hit him.

Later, after Tao Wu had passed away, Yuan went to Shin Shuang, and told him this story. Shuang said, "Alive, I won't say! Dead, I won't say!"

Yuan asked, "Why won't you say?"

Shuang said, "I won't say! I won't say!"

With these words, Yuan was enlightened.

One day Yuan appeared in the lecture hall, with a hoe, and walked from East to West, and from West to East.

Shuang asked, "What are you doing?"

Yuan said, "I am seeking the sacred bones of our late master."

Shuang said, "On the billows of the Great Ocean, white caps swell to the sky. What do you search for as our teachers' sacred bones other than that?"

(Hsueh Tou said, "Alas, alas!")

Yuan said, "That is good for my training."

Fu of T'ai Yuan said, "The sacred bones of our late master still exist."

Blue Cliff Record, Case 55: Tao Wu's Condolences

This talk is dedicated to my mother, Kathleen Kelly Gluek, who died on January 14, 2009 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

All things pass quickly away, all the time. Wanting to understand, in the way of being completely at ease with this, is a fundamental human concern and foundation for taking up Zen practice. Inside the main gate of Eihei ji, temple established by Dogen in 1244, is a wooden plaque inscribed with Chinese characters announcing that "Only those concerned with the question of life and death need enter here."¹ This matter of life and death, what is it? What animates us? Does it go somewhere when we die? Is there something that is not born and does not die? What is it? Ch'ien Yuan in his inquiry is standing in for each of us.

He and his teacher Tao Wu have come to the house of someone who has died to pay their condolences. Yuan raps on the coffin and asks urgently "Living or dead?" He gets a response "I won't say either living or dead." And feels deprived. "You know" thinks Yuan. "Why won't you say?" "What is the meaning of your not saying?" The desire to know is so strong, the search for a substantive foothold, a yes or no, to settle anxiety that way. Is such a solution comprehensive or does it eventually engender its opposite number? The horns of good old duality. Is the real issue wanting

¹ John Daido Looi, *Mountain Record of Zen Talks* (Boston, 1988). p.15

to cling to an idea? *This* is it, *now* I know. Careful! Buddhadasa Bhikku, eminent Thai teacher and social activist, said “Nothing whatsoever should be clung to. Only when there is clinging is there *dukkha*” (unsatisfactoriness, the anguish of the restless mind). He himself rejected religious identification, with Buddhism itself and with the conceptual implications of that term. Can I simply embody things as they are instead of trying to figure them out, instead of creating a grand narrative? Buddhadasa again: “Non-grasping is taking refuge if only for a moment.” What about *this* moment? Others are imaginary. When I arrived in Minnesota on January 11 my mother greeted me, her warm and energetic “old” self. Though I knew she had not been well, I was reassured and imagined three weeks with her, settling in for the visit, with its usual time-frame. Heading west. 36 hours later she began to die at home. Oh! No, heading east. I imagined her dying peacefully at home, as she had wished and intended to keep her there. 14 hours later we were in the hospital where all her vital signs were good. Oh! Heading west. I imagined her emerging within the week, maybe severely compromised in body and mind. 4 hours after I had gone back to her house for a sleep, the nurses rang to say that she was dying. Oh! Heading east². “It’s not what you *think*” was writ large! And not what you expect.

Robert Aitken writes in *Miniatures of a Zen Master*: “You have plenty of time--that is to say, you face the timeless. It is there that the moment of realization occurs. However, any concept of the timeless or of realization is the realm of here-and-there. You are just sitting with your thoughts. Dismiss all concepts. Dismiss all thoughts. *Neti neti neti*. Not this, not this, not this.”³

Just so the wholesale song of the Heart Sutra...no eye no ear no tongue no body no mind no path no anguish no old age and death no ending of old age and death...no grasping no not grasping. Dogen said “Think not-thinking” and called it, in his creative way, Non-thinking.

Living or dead? I won’t say I won’t say. Does a dog have Buddha Nature or not? I won’t say, I won’t say.
Can the ineffable be *explained*?

Clearly the death of the physical body is not static, not a single event but a process, not one *thing* becoming *something* else but a series of manifestations. Nothing stops changing. God is a verb, it has been said.

In our cells now, in the DNA, there’s a preview for the coffin or the urn. How can we talk about ending and beginning? Beginning and ending, you might say.

Words and names, or rather the meanings assigned to them--words themselves, like thoughts, are innocent-- can mislead, limit, deceive. You often find this demonstrated in koans. The signifier may be stale, dead. Where is the matter alive? Kuei shan was the cook at Pai Chang’s monastery. When Pai Chang wanted to choose a founding teacher for Mt Ta-Kuei, he put a water bottle on the floor and said “Don’t call this a water bottle? What will you call it?” The head monk said, “It can’t be called a

² "Now heading west, now heading east" comes from Marian Morgan, friend and Diamond Sangha Teacher, her metaphor for my experience of disorientation.

³ Robert, Aitken, *Miniatures of a Zen Master* (Berkeley, 2008), p. 16

wooden clog.” Pai Chang asked Kuei shan his opinion. Kuei shan kicked over the water bottle and walked out. Just like that.

People, let alone water jugs, are so much more than your or my “version” of them, in this world, in all directions. (Kindly include yourself there!) After my mother died, she came to life fully in ways I had never known her or in ways I had known but not really appreciated because “me” got in the way. In relationship it’s easy to identify with a role, like a name, daughter or mother, father or son, the goodie or the baddie, an notion of what that means and its implications, attached to preconceived ideas and expectations, missing the multidimensionality. In my mother’s house, in her landscape, with her family, with her friends, local and far away, the richness and scope of her life, its breadth and depth, appeared as a kind of revelation. A fluid and vital portrait. Twelve years ago I taped an interview with her, asking questions about her family history and her years growing up in the 1920s. The tape lay in a drawer until a few weeks ago, unheard. Then, there she was! And there was the town of Owatonna, a microcosm, full of characters--her father riding his horse into town, Rosie and Josie Symonds going to church every day, the boy who called himself Irene. If you can--this can be the intention anyway, the aspiration--*see* the other with the eyes of the Bodhisattva, now, beyond your limited historical relationship with that person. Invite the big, not to say vast, picture, which is clearly apprehended only when self-preoccupations are put aside. Then immediate, vivid, specific, unique details come forward, things just as they are. The mirror is clear.

How are the dead honored? Paying condolences is one way. This is the context of today’s story, the fact of loss and mourning. *The world of dew is the world of dew, and yet...and yet.*⁴You can realise essential insubstantiality, *and* laugh and weep. Not two realms. The word condolence means literally from the Latin, “to grieve with, to feel pain with.” Gathering around the death of a loved one or friend, people join in the commonality of this human experience. Participating together in the mystery, sharing sorrow, celebrating a particular life now passed and thereby remembering the vivid *preciousness* of each and every thing. It seems to me that at such times people are taken out of themselves; a window is opened, and there is an unusual quality of intimacy to interactions.

***I went to a funeral
Lord it made me happy
Seeing all those people
I ain’t seen
Since the last time somebody died***

***Everybody talking
They were telling funny stories
Saying all those things
They ain’t said
Since the last time somebody died***⁵

⁴ Issa, *The Year of my Life*, transl. Nobuyuki Nuasa (Berkeley, 1972), p.104

⁵ Lyle Lovett, “Since the Last Time” from *Joshua Judges Ruth* (CD), Curb Records, 1992

In this koan, Ch'ien Yuan is desperate to find the *most* intimate understanding that will put his mind to rest. There's real integrity in his anger. He won't let up, even resorting to hitting his teacher. Tao Wu in turn presents his own integrity, even to letting himself be hit. He's the barrier.

Later when Tao Wu has died, Yuan meets his old teacher--a live action replay ensues with Shin Shuang--and realises his meaning. He has stayed with his question and it has ripened him. It's tempting if you seem to be getting nowhere with a koan, to try another one, to jump around. The fact is that wherever you are there will be times of frustration, discouragement, anger, despair. Whatever your practice is, the best thing you can do is to be faithful to it as your very self.

One day Yuan comes into the hall at Shin Shuang's place stating that he is looking for the sacred bones of his late master. He carries a hoe for digging around. Finding and keeping relics of the deceased, especially relics of individuals thought to have spiritual power, is an age old religious tradition. To have something they possessed or more intimately some part of what who they were--bones, teeth, hair. These things may confer some of that individual's energy. Some are venerated, as in the Temple of the (Buddha's) Tooth in Kandy. I brought home some relics from my mother's house. Her tattered, grease-stained Betty Crocker cookbook published in 1950, its pages stuffed with recipes handwritten or torn from the newspaper. Her lived and died in bathrobe. A ring. Half of her ashes in a brown plastic container--my sister having the other half--to be taken back to the US in August. I "found" her figuratively in birds. She had said she wanted to "come back" as a chickadee--small familiar much loved North American bird, often described as "cheerful"--and I made meaning of chickadee visitations which were delivered at exactly the right time. *Chickadee-dee-dee. Feebee.* Made meaning too of the bird who showed her the exit door. A woodpecker's *knock knock* and she sat up in bed "Who's there? Who's there?" All day long wild birds were congregating at the feeder outside her bedroom, supporting her, it seemed.

But what remains is unconditional and closer still.

Yuan walks from East to West and West to East; up and down back and forth, the coming and going itself a sacred rite. The action for itself. The work for itself. He is honoring his late teacher in his dedication to stay awake, to keep his eyes open. See into self-nature and life-and-death is not a problem to be solved, but training is on-going. Yuan demonstrates being true to the very matter of his teacher again and again. Not stopping. He knows what he is doing. Is Shuang's comment superfluous?

"On the billows of the Great Ocean, white caps swell to the sky. What do you search for as our teacher's sacred bones other than that?" There *is* no other. It has to be here or not at all. Our teacher can never be lost to us.

"That is good for my training", says Yuan. He'll accept all the kindnesses of the universe and reciprocate.

So, how about those sacred bones?

Please accept all the kindnesses of the universe.

Ode à Puss

(Poem written by Dominique Toulet, a dear friend who stayed with Puss and Sarah for in August 2008. Translation from English into French by Sarah Walls)

On m'observe
Sensation de regard intense posé sur ma nuque
Derrière moi un chat blanc et noir me transfixe du regard
Plongée vertigineuse dans de grands yeux verts
Où je crois lire
Sagesse silence sérénité
Et ce vide qui obstinément m'échappe
Troublée je me détourne
Serait-ce là l'Enseignement tant attendu?
Quand je le regarde de nouveau
Le Maître dort
Ronflements paisibles
Grand koan

Ode to Puss

I am being observed
I feel an intense gaze settle on the back of my neck
Behind me a black and white cat transfixes me with its gaze
A dizzying dive deep into its great green eyes
In which I seem to read
Wisdom silence serenity
And this emptiness that obstinately escapes me
Troubled I turn away
Could this be the Teaching so long awaited?
When I look again
The Master sleeps
Peacefully snoring
Great koan



Photo taken by Sarah Walls

Tangle Orchid ⁶

Will Moon



When I first contemplated the theme of this month's Mind, Moon, Circle there seemed so much that could be said about connecting with nature. Since my first overnight walks into the wilderness back at the age of about 12 the experience of the wilds has had a lasting impact and ever since I have returned over and over to experience the wonder of it all. The following paragraphs briefing touch upon only one aspect of the experience.

When contemplating what it means to be connected to nature I have a few ideas about this. Essentially we are always connected. We can become more aware of the connection through our Zen practice and also through observing and studying nature. This has the potential to change our understanding and our impact upon nature. There is also an immersion into nature through activities that create a strong sense of connection physically and psychologically, which also changes our understanding and impacts upon nature.

Spending time in the forests not too far from Sydney, just observing, contemplating and experiencing can open up our appreciation and connection with nature.

Forests are a rich example of life and interdependence. When wandering around in the forests of the east coast it is not uncommon to come across the Tangle Orchid (*Plectorrhiza tridentata*). It can often be seen hanging in the air by a single dead root from a branch, usually as a small cluster of roots and leaves. They swing in the soft breeze under the forest canopy and often quite low down, sometimes a meter or less from the ground. Their lifeline, the dead root contains a small elastic hair that is incredibly strong. Often we have found them lying on the ground attached to a small twig that has broken off above and fallen.

They like the shade, humidity and air movement and it must be just right to survive, you won't find them much beyond the margins of the closed vine forest. The humid air rising off the leaf littered moist forest floor provides an atmosphere that sustains its fragile life in between the rains. The roots have a special spongy covering that allows them to absorb moisture from the mists and fog that rises out of the mountain gullies. This allows them to take advantage of any moisture that may be available in the air.

When it rains the drops of water build up on the leaves of the forest canopy, sliding over the leaves they pick up minute minerals and nutrients before they slip off and fall to the next forest layer or to the forest floor. This small orchid, which sits in the lower layers of the forest, is showered with the drops on their way down. The small nutrient charged drops sustain the orchid's needs for minerals.

⁶ Image taken from www.gloriousnebo.org.au

Its pollinator is not known however it is likely to be a native bee or small flying insect. Most orchid flowers are specially adapted and evolved to suit a specific pollinator. They are dimensioned exactly so that only the specific insect will be able to enter the flower and detach the pollen sack before flying off to enter another flower and fertilize it. Your average garden bee won't do the job.

The seeds are the size of fine dust and for orchids these can range from over a thousand per capsule to several million. When the capsule ripens it ruptures and the breeze carries the fine dust off to the next tree or further along the forest. The dust sized seeds need to land in just the right spot to have a chance of germinating. Being so fine they don't carry the energy reserves that seeds from other plants have to sustain them. To germinate and grow they are required to enter into a symbiotic relationship with a fungus. The fungus infects the seed and then provides it with essential nutrients to grow.

By observing this little orchid and then studying its relationships and environmental requirements we can get an understanding that it is somehow connected and dependant upon the things around it, and things that are not so close such as the sun.

Observing the relationships essential for the orchids survival it is interesting to ponder what exactly is the Tangle Orchid? Without the right filtered light there is no orchid, so it must be the light. Without the humidity there is not orchid, so it must be the humidity. Without the fungus the seeds will not grow so it must be the fungus and the decaying material that the fungus feeds off must also be the orchid, they can't be separated. Without the dust that falls on the forest canopy there are no nutrients so it must be the dust and the rain, and without the host tree and forest there are not the conditions necessary for its support and growth. The trees and the forest rely upon the bacteria in the soil to fix the Nitrogen to be able to live and grow and it has been recognised that without these few types of bacteria performing this role there would be no trees and virtually no life on the planet. So we too are as connected to the bacteria in the soil as much as the trees and the tangle orchid. All connected. Are we also the tangle orchid? We are the bacteria, the air, the forest and the tangle orchid.

Entering the forest and we enter the enchanted world where everything seems tied to the next, teeming with life and interdependence.

How can we help but somehow feel that same connectedness?

Steam rising off a sweaty shirt dissolves in the forest air.

Nostrils draw in fragrant aromatic breath, filled with pollens, the smell of flowers and rotting leaves.

My skin covered with fragments of moss and lichen, dark forest soil built up under my fingernails.

Peeing into the leaf litter, a beetle scurries to safety.

Pee merges into the moist forest floor.

Nearby rushing stream, deep clear pools, frog eggs precariously holding the edge of polished stone.

Wrestling through the vines a caterpillar inches across my shoulder.

A python lay still on a fallen trunk, diamond eyes reflecting every move.

Indigenous forest dwelling peoples knew all too well that they were the forest and lived in a harmonious way with it, honouring the forest and its creatures, the rains and the seasons.

Digging up the earth, polluting the rivers the sea and the air and felling the forests at an ever increasing rate we seem to have lost touch with our place in the scheme of life.

Taking time to connect with nature reminds us and helps us to learn about our interconnectedness with all things. Each time we lose a species similar to the Tangle Orchid we are losing parts of ourselves, not just in our loss of biodiversity but also our loss of what provides the wonder of life, the wonder that inspires our art, our paintings and poetry and indeed our spirit, seeing the orchid blossom we see our true nature.



This quiet day

Sally Hopkins

This quiet day, this Autumn morning,
I gather leaves still damp with dew
to mulch our garden.
People passing, smile, "Good morning",
children running up the hillside,
laugh, the currawongs are calling,
this quiet day.

Spring this morning in his homeland,
Afghan New Year, celebration,
so he tells me, this quiet day;
but he's here now
this his birthday,
mother ill and far away
in the violence. Tears
on this, this Autumn day

Down the road the drugs are selling,
this quiet day.
Bored young men splash paint about,
swear and fight
and hate each other, shoot and flee
this lovely day as yellow leaves
fall in bright light.

This quiet day I get his letter
from the jail -he writes of anger,
clang and bang of slamming doors
guns and death, but also kindness,
Spring, and love, and great birds flying,
deep despair and concrete walls.

This quiet day, this Autumn morning,
Magpie warbling sky calm blue
This shared world. This boundless body.
Gathering leaves still damp with dew.



Temple of Heaven (or: 'Bonding with Emptiness')

Larry Agriesti

In the middle of Beijing is the Temple of Heaven, a collection of exquisite buildings and altars set within a vast parkland of forest groves, covered walkways, and picnic grounds. Here people come to worship heaven, give thanks, and pray to influence the course of heaven. They also come to play, relax, sing songs, do acrobatics, give lectures, and even practice musical instruments for the Beijing Opera!

On one of the paths that meandered through the cypress groves, I watched as a woman painted calligraphy using water on the large, flat, grey pavement stones. Her brush was as large as a broom. She would dip her brush into a pail of water and quickly paint the large characters, passages from the scriptures I assumed, stepping backwards as she worked. The result was amazing: jet black characters that slowly faded to grey then disappeared from the heat of the afternoon autumn sun. She would pause occasionally, admire her work, and then continue completely ignoring the fading scriptures she had written so beautifully. Her face was serene; happy and content to be doing what she was doing.

Let me see...do I have the right wording here...hmmm...this is fun...ahhh, this character again...difficult...hmmm...never mind...stroke...dinner tonight; noodles?

I watched her for a long while, not understanding a word she was writing, but totally thrilled. She looked at me once and smiled.

This encounter both touched and puzzled me. I thought: the images fade and disappear and yet, paradoxically, continue to remain, vividly, in my memory. Are my efforts though life just as impermanent? Does anything I do or feel remain beyond memory and consequence?

I wake in the morning and shower. Just this water, nice soap, feels good. Eat breakfast, this bread, hot tea. Plan day, think, many thoughts, water on stone they quickly fade. Make choices, drive car, arrive at work. Talk with someone about a problem. Listen, use memory, craft a story; water on stone. Pause now and then to have a look, make corrections with new thoughts; keep moving. Each moment asks for the same effort as the last; no more, no less. Keep going. Each stroke; sometimes quickly sometimes more carefully, sometimes my strokes are exquisite and sometime rushed and sloppy. But when I pause sometimes and have a look, things overall appear, well, beautiful. If not, I can become more careful if I want. Just keep going. But will my efforts matter? Will what I love endure?

Most of us search for some evidence that, in spite of the evident impermanence of things, some things are, like love, everlasting. The good news is there never will be any proof. In fact, proof of permanence would destroy the very premise of love: free choice. I will do this, I will love, and I will act, because I choose to do so and for no other reason. If it endures great; if not that's fine too. But I will still do this!

Someone dies; the water script fades and disappears...the story and it's meaning is read by others and threaded into other stories...other script in water...we read and listen to those stories now...countless stories from past and present that guide and

sustain...we dip our brush and continue the story with our own, one stroke at a time, one breath at a time...pausing now and then to look at how beautiful it is...how it fades and how we renew it over and over and over. Look! The fading words on stone tell us: I am here now...creating this out of emptiness...this meaning...this love...this story...of no importance and yet...this is what sustains the world and all of heaven.

A few days later my partner Simon and I travelled to the beautiful city of Suzhou. Wide tree lined streets and canals that cross between stone white houses with slate tile roofs. We hired a small wooden boat and floated through this wonderful place, looking at the daily lives of people living next to the water. The boatman began to sing a local folk song, and people would stop for a moment, look, and smile.

I listened to his sweet song for a long while, not understanding a word he was singing, but just as with the water words at the Temple of Heaven, it all made sense.

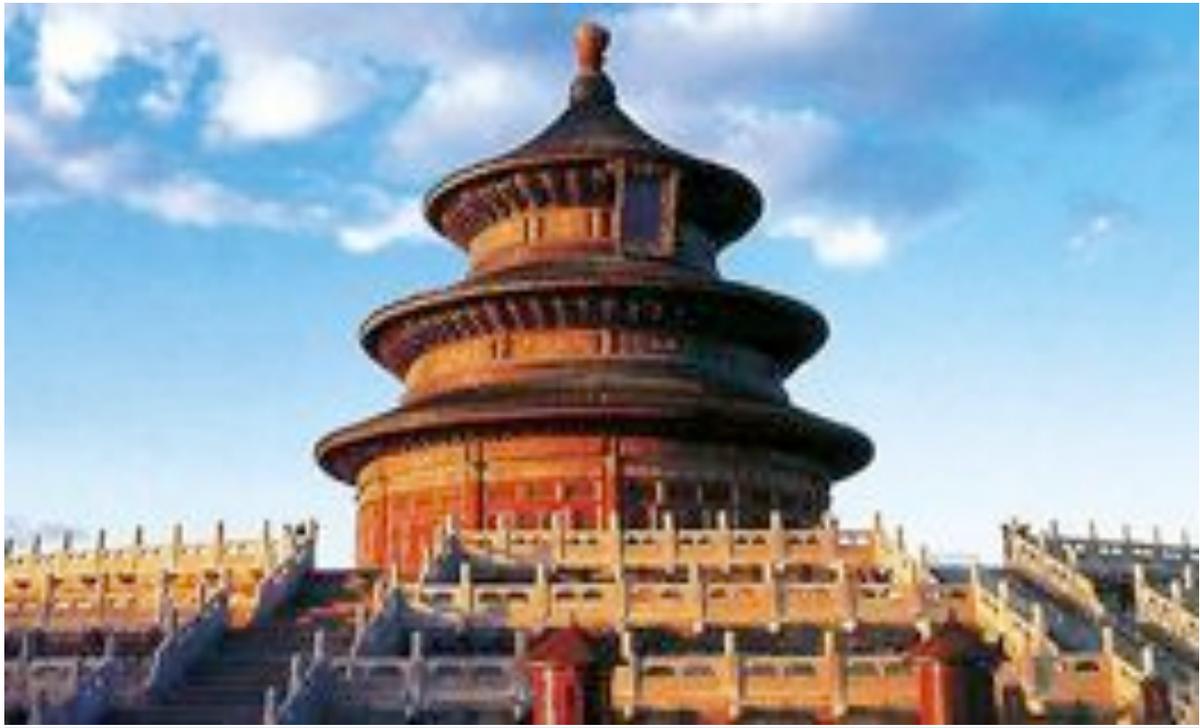


Image taken from
www.globalthinkinginc.com/china/

What trees mean to me

Janet Selby (2008)

Why do I appreciate trees so much? What can they teach us? These are the questions I ask myself as I make and display my sculptures based on my experience with the Australian Bush.

Trees represent many human qualities we can relate to. In the bush suburb where I spent my childhood, I became barefoot and intimate with the spirit of the place. Now as an artist I practice expressing this intimate spirit connected to values and qualities I admire.

My first main encounter with a tree spirit was with a giant Iron Bark, on a group bushwalk to visit an aboriginal site at Gorrick's Run. We approached side of the valley from the top of a ridge, to the where we were to rest and prepare for the site visit. Before this though, on our first approach down the hill, a large black mass stood out from the scrub. Bashing through the undergrowth and heaps of leaf litter, its trunk became apparent – it was apparent that it was a huge trunk. A feeling of awe and respect overwhelmed me. Standing at its base, in deep unsteady footings, I let my eyes follow the line of the trunk upwards. My head tilted back, and back. There in the distance perhaps exaggerated by perspective, were the first branches, high and far away. Awe-full. Breathing was difficult. I had to sit down, lean up against it, finger its textured bark, hug it, and experience the powerfully overwhelming spirit of this living guardian. After the ritual of preparation with ochre as was customary, we proceeded to the site to spend quality time there – the reason we came. The overhanging rock provided a wonderful array of faded paintings, handprints, perhaps 1000's of years old. Now abandoned and deteriorating, a feeling of sadness prevailed. But for me, the spirit was already alive and pulsing there in that tree, guarding the whole hillside.

Trees are a metaphor for human existence. They show qualities of perseverance, tolerance, tenacity, stability, beauty, grace, solidity, solidarity, nobility strength and adaptability. We co-habit, are shaped by the elements. We make choices and live with the outcomes. We follow the easiest line of growth and crave nutrients and nourishment. Even the shape of a tree reflects our own bodies. Roots strike into the earth creating stability, allowing nutrients and moisture to be circulate, up through the trunk. The trunk is our torso, our backbone. Flexible, strong, structurally adapting to conditions. Then the limbs reach out for the source of light, ingesting the essential, expiring the unnecessary. No more than any other life form, trees deserve a better go in this modern imposing world. They do their best to live. The consequences of environmental meddling is not their doing, they just are experiencing it like us all. But the source of this meddling – humankind, can be observant and reflect on the consequences through studying trees, frogs, birds, and icebergs – every thing effected. We can learn what is happening and perhaps do something to attend to the mistakes we have made. Like trees, we can learn to live our lives, notice the conditions and respond.



Sketch by Janet Selby

Rainer Maria Rilke:

*Ah, not to be cut off,
Not through the slightest partition
Shut out from the law of the stars.
The inner--what is it?
If not intensified sky,
Hurled through with birds and deep
With the winds of homecoming.*

Selected by Caroline Josephs

fox spirit
Carl Hooper

boldly you come into the open
in broad and plain daylight
padding softly the empty field
shape changing as you go
from fox to dingo dog

you fade from sight among the hills
you re-appear within our ranks
shape changing brunette blond
and though I see at once
your one true face I safely feel
a wrinkled mountain hermit not
a young and eager pilgrim monk

so why this sudden turmoil in my thoughts
these wild fantastic dreams
these adolescent scripts
this ceaseless chatter with a phantom girl
and why from far away
this sound of sobbing in the night

shape changing fox to girl to cat
you set among my pigeon thoughts
the mischief done you snatch away
that beauteous maiden form
with n'er a backward glance at this
my ancient desert thirst
you fade again into the wooded hills

(Autumn Sesshin, Kodoji, 2009)



Harmonising Matter and Spirit

Janet Selby

“As humans we identify with matter. Matter includes every subtle and gross manifestation. Matter is anything that can be touched, felt, perceived, or thought. A feeling is matter and emotion is matter, as is a body, a car, or a floor.

But the essence of matter is spirit. Matter is animated by spirit, by the life force, and they cannot be separated. If we take away the life force there is no matter. Awakening to harmonising of spirit and matter, inherent Oneness is realised. Spirit and matter are not two different things – they are two aspects of One.

It is said if you want to wake up you need to hang around awakened beings. It can be awakened human beings, awakened trees, awakened mountains, awakened rivers – it can be any environment. If we are sensitive, we can feel when environments are awakened. Human beings can be more or less awakened. So can trees or a mountain, canyon, hilltop, or a particular street corner in our neighbourhood. When we are sensitive, we can feel these things. When we expose ourselves to that awakens, to that environment where spirit and matter are harmonised, it helps us awaken. Those are good environments to hang out in, and they quite naturally harmonise us.

When we relax and allow this natural harmonisation, there is a deep awakening to the beauty of our environment, just as it is, and to the beauty of our own selves.”⁷



Bush Connections

When we see a huge pink angophora tree, it is easy to relate it to ourselves. We can identify the limbs spreading out like arms welcoming us home. There is so much to learn about the values of each characteristic species of the bush. I find it exciting to explore their relationship with each other, the ecosystem. Also interesting is the human connection in the bush, not just our impact upon it. We can all connect by observing, by being aware of the deep subtleties of energy. There are certain places in the Royal National Park, for example, that have a great impact on those sensitive to the peculiar energy radiating there.

My sketches record observations of that energy in certain special places alive with spirit. I handle the clay in such a way as to impart my energy through my hands and heart into the memory of the clay that potters from long ago know is inherent in the medium. Mother Earth remembers all, and she

⁷ by Adyashanti, Emptiness Dancing, Sounds True Inc, 2006

allows me to use her to rework and reform her so as to leave a lasting reminder that the Earth and our selves are co-existing, interconnected by spirit.

I make sketches and sculptures of places I find harmonised. I want to show that they are alive with spirit. The challenge arises in finding the methods of transforming the ethereal energy of nature into the hard mass of ceramic matter.

Janet Selby grew up in the Sutherland Shire, becoming familiar with local bushland and using it as inspiration for her sketching and ceramic sculptures. She will be exhibiting her work at Gallery Red, Shop 11, 131-145 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, from 10-24 July 2009. This sketch depicts landscape from the Royal National Park. www.janetselby.com



Landscape of Royal National Park by Janet Selby

Fresh Breeze Endlessly Arising

Sally Hopkins

We walk with friends down the sandstone track
as bird song flit and flirt and flap,
angophora bloodwood apple gum
as dew on bud and leaf and tree
as stone whale lying in the sun
as fragrant air and droning bee
the red white blue pink yellow flowers.

All, all is here
right here- right now
shared ancient breath
the brightly shining waters.

We stand on rocks by tree ferns dancing
where dragonflies flash clear bright wings.
We stop. We listen.

From a distant bough
a crow is calling:
“AARGH! AARGH! AARGH!”
“OH! OH! OH! OH!”
stone whale responds.

The frogs are dying.
There’s been no rain.
The eggs are smashed
The butterfly’s pinned
by a beak.
We think we’re alone
I’m afraid he’s angry,
They’re fighting
She’s crying...
“AARGH! AARGH! OH! OH!”

but wren ‘s bright blue hops on a twig
golden whistler’s whistle rings the air

and everything is just as it is
this empty breath

RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW

We walk with friends down the sandstone track.

Bonding with Simon

Larry Agriesti



Picture of Simon and Larry
China, October (2008)

The Buddha acknowledged suffering, or *dukkha*, as a self-evident reality of human existence, and identified being separated from those we love as a major cause. When we can no longer be close to those we are bonded to, for whatever reason, we experience pain, sometimes great pain. Why is this so?

For all of us, the life sustaining process of bonding begins at birth when the first separation occurs. Since the moment of conception, we were one with mother, at home with her and all the universe. At birth we establish new ways of continuing that connection with her and others; being held and looking into each other's eyes allows the bonding to begin, and with attention and attending, to flourish. The neural pathways this establishes in our brains are set, and forms a grounded memory. Without this, we would wither and die. We repeat this process with others many, many times throughout our lives, and it should come as no surprise that falling in love often begins with looking into our lover's eyes and being held. Falling in love and bonding follow the same pathways to remaining or becoming whole.

The usual distance between an infant and mother as they gaze into each other's eyes, or that of lovers, is very small. But then, the distance can be great as well. In my work as a psychologist, I often deal with prisoners who are separated from their loved ones by the tyranny of distance. They are only able to see, but often not touch, those they love when they are lucky enough to have visits. Sadly, in many cases the distances are too great to allow for visits, but recently, prisons have introduced teleconferencing on the internet that allows this contact. This internet connection nurtures the relationship, and provides love sustaining contact: being able to see, to talk, comfort and plan for the future.

That people now meet, and frequently fall in love on the internet is a commonplace occurrence throughout the world. Social networks, chat rooms, MSN and Skype allow intimate contact and bonding, although the opportunity for touch is limited to imagination. But the remembered touch of our parents and others allows the magic of imagination to activate and create endless ways of overcoming this limitation.

As an aside, you might notice that those who were never touched as children are often incapable of bonding later in life, and those who lack imagination appear to be severely limited in being able to sustain a dynamic, evolving relationship over time. Love requires constant renewal and repair, nurturing and attending like any other living thing. It is creative hard work at times, and imagination fuels possibilities.

There is a song that reminds us, that “some enchanted evening, you will meet a stranger across a crowded room”. Notice ‘across a crowded room’. How far? Distance is not an issue when it comes to love and bonding. Just a glance, a meeting of eyes is all it takes and the adventure can begin from there. Somehow the eyes tell us and memory reminds us that home and wholeness is possibly near. We have learned that yes, the heart is a lonely hunter and love is wherever we find it; distance means nothing and we move with the natural grace of gravity towards the other as particles throughout the universe sense and bind to create all manner of wonderful things.

I met my partner Simon on the internet. In truth, it was not much different in circumstance than meeting someone at a party with friends. A simple message that said hello, a photo of a smiling face by the sea, a few words on his profile that said: looking for friendship and maybe a soulmate. After the first few exchanged messages and teleconferencing on Skype, I was hooked. How could this possibly happen with someone who lives so far away in China? Easy. It just happened because memory and imagination allowed it to happen, because we wanted it to happen, and the process of bonding began: the connecting of our minds and hearts.

Falling in love on the internet, although no more or less than in any other situation, is fraught with danger as well as opportunities. But the internet does allow a unique opportunity to engage in dialogue that seems safe (you can stop at the push of a button), exchanging information about each other’s interests, values, ambitions, and beliefs. Studies have shown that individuals are more inclined to reveal intimate details about themselves online than when face to face, details that are critical in relationship building. Yet this same safety also enhances the pitfalls of fantasy; romanticising the information as evidence for a romantic relationship. It could all be just a hopeful dream! Meeting face to face, it seems, is the only real test that can confirm those feelings in a meaningful way.

When I finally did meet Simon in Shanghai last October, the dye was cast when I saw him waiting for me on the steps of the Hotel Metropole. The process of bonding accelerated to the speed of light that moment, and continued to build over the following days. We agreed then to become partners and share a life together.

My bonding with Simon is, to me, the bright and beautiful side of bonding; what bonding can provide for all of us; a true sense of belonging, of feeling loved and being home. It is the greatest gift in all the universe.

And yet, there is a potential dark side of bonding; when bonding becomes bondage, when the nature of the relationship becomes toxic and we cling to another even when that person causes us pain and damage. This is a real and ever present danger, and the stories of love and anguish throughout time are forever exploring the bright and dark sides of bonding.

Interdependency and bonding are distinct, although they share certain features. We are all interdependent whether we like it or not. Bonding is with the particular, and is as physically as it is mental. The whole of the person is involved in bonding; we feel physically connected, and we feel wounded when separated.

In clinical terms, this bonding is usually referred to as ‘attachment’ when, in fact, the more honest word is ‘love’. In the mid 20th century, the psychologist Harlow conducted a series of experiments with infant monkeys to explore the nature of attachment to the mother. He removed these infants from their natural mother and put them in cages with surrogates; wire figures, covered in soft cloth. He then introduced a loud, frightening noise and the infants would cling to the surrogate. In one interesting variation, he hid sharp spikes under the soft cloth, but the infants would still cling even though they were wounded and visibly distressed. So much for the urgent need to cling to what we feel bonded to, even when it hurts.

There are many novels written about this dark side of bonding. ‘Of Human Bondage’ by William Somerset Maugham provides an excellent example of someone who continues his love for a woman who abuses him on several levels, and leaves us wondering: why does anyone put up with abuse? Maugham does not answer the question for us. Ask Harlow’s monkeys and they might say ‘because there is nothing else; nowhere else to go’. True enough for infants, but not so true for adults who find themselves in bondage. They have a choice; children do not.

I suspect there is a lot of denial as adults when it comes to pain, particularly the pain of loneliness and toxic bonds. When we feel there is nothing else, nowhere else to go, like the infant monkeys, we often cling to just about anything that gives us comfort; even when it damages us. The heart is not only a lonely hunter; it is a desperate hunter at times. Drugs, alcohol, sex, money, power; all these can feed the void, including the madness of ‘falling in love’. Indeed, many have likened romanticism to an illness, as did Gabriel Garcia Marquez in ‘Love in the Time of Cholera’. Although we have no control over when and with whom we fall in love, we often find ourselves bonded to the wrong person and it is a very hard struggle to free ourselves. Marquez reminds us to be cautious of romantic love, to look behind and beyond the thin veneer of attachment, and ask deeply: why am I allowing myself to become bonded to this person? Is it sexual infatuation; an amusement to keep me from facing who and what I really am? A diversion from the horror of loneliness? Like Maugham, Marquez does not answer this question for us, but he did force me to face some very painful questions about myself.

Zen Buddhism and our practice of meditation provides us with the tools not only to recognize when we are on a dark path of bondage or romantic illness, it gives us the tools to work our way free, to recognize illusions for what they are, and the courage to return to wholeness. It does not suggest, however, that we should, or even could free ourselves from the pain of separation from those we truly love and have become bonded to. The pain associated with being separated is not to be avoided or judged; it simply hurts when part of us is torn away, or is far away.

There is a Chinese symbol for dukkha or suffering: the cart with one wheel that is slightly broken, so that the rider is jolted each time the wheel rolls over the broken spot.

In bonding with Simon, we both knew that until he is able to come to Australia on an Interdependency Visa, and we could live together as a couple, we would feel that jolt every time the wheel turns while we wait. Yet there is no sadness here. Riding the cart with a broken wheel is still a joy; we are traveling together! This is bright and beautiful bonding, as we are grateful for the gift.

Haiku
in summer, autumn, winter sequence
Diana Levy

You make such a splash
snakes
flee the waterhole

Rain-rotted blossoms
blackened and dead –
tiny nipple limes

So secret
the orchid's throats
for exotic dancing

'ONLY CONNECT!'⁸

Gillian Coote

The drone and whine of incoming jets heading for Mascot begins around 6 am and doesn't let up all those cramped cicadas up there longing to be released, coming and going, never astray, up in the sky, down in the bed. A coach yells encouragement to rowing fours and eights in semi-darkness. Yes! 1, 2, 3, 4 - move! Kookaburras cackle up the light, willy wagtails chitter, nametag tinkles as Grace scratches, the fleas awake and biting.

Time to get up and time to stay awake, for this next moment and then the one after that, just like practising walking a tightrope wire, just like an earthbound Phillipe Petit, especially when everyday offers repeatable events like every other day, with the cup of coffee, the rituals of zazen, the conversation at breakfast, the journey to work, and on and on till the eyes close for sleep, all at the same time. Aha! 'the same' is a dharma gate. And there is no same.

Our path is the path of connection; it's personal and intimate and can't be examined from a distance, as if it were someone else's, one step removed. Kensho and satori *are* intimacy. Connection, you could say, is our religion. Though these days many bridle at the word 'religion', perhaps because for many years, 'religion' meant 'the human recognition of superhuman controlling power and especially of a personal God entitled to obedience'⁹ which counts out Buddhism, though examining the etymology is instructive. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary traces the word back to L. *religio* meaning "taboo, restraint." Religio comes from *re and ligare*. *re* a prefix meaning "return," and *ligare*, "to bind" - in other words, 'return to bondage', not too far from 'yoga' (Skt.) a word which means 'union, being yoked, bound, connected, the Hindu system, designed to effect the reunion of the devotee's soul with the universal spirit.'¹⁰ Regardless of whether we identify our Zen practice as religious or not*, the open-ended invitation, both on and off the cushion, is to experience the disconnect and come back to the matter at hand. So, Three cheers for the disconnect! It's our whetstone. Jump in!

*In the ongoing and complex examination of religion, Professor Emeritus of Comparative History of Religion at Harvard, William Cantwell Smith, suggested abandoning the term 'religion' entirely, instead introducing notions of faith and the cumulative religions, with the following six dimensions: a practical and ritual dimension, eg yoga, meditation, prayer and ritual; an experiential and emotional dimension or faith, which would include the experiences of the founders of the traditions, and the mystical experience and sense of the numinous for those within the tradition; a narrative or mythic dimension - the story tradition, biographies of

⁸ Howard's End, E. M. Forster

⁹ Concise Oxford Dictionary

¹⁰ *ibid*

the founders, heroes or saints; an ethical and legal dimension - how one should act, eg the Torah, Shar'ia, the Precepts; the social and institutional dimension – the people who make up the tradition;
a material dimension, ie buildings, works of art, even natural features, like rivers and mountains¹¹

Starlit darkness *Jeff Ward*

Starlit darkness in the forgotten valley,
the night creatures chant
the secret everlasting sutra;
no names will ever hinder
the unfolding of this perfect song

(Autumn Sesshin, 2009)



¹¹ 'The Meaning and End of Religion', William Cantwell Smith, NY 1964

Belonging/Bonding/Connection

Brendon Stewart

Belonging, bonding and connection have a lot to do with desire. Desire we are told has a lot to do with discontent. Desire also has something to do with excitement and pleasure. Belonging, bonding and connection are lived experiences and they are central to how we are humans; they are deep psycho-biological processes. There is a romantic and nostalgic seduction here too because the memory and the activity of being bound in our belonging and connected to place or loved ones is satisfying.

There is some tension in all of this with Buddhist philosophy and practice. In particular the idea of a non-abiding presence; impermanence is central to the Buddhist perspective. Certainly the historical Buddha (and presumably the mythical Buddha) chose homelessness and set out to abandon the pull of attachment to place.

Did he make the right choice?

To dwell and belong to a place involves our deepest biology and an intense subjectivity that is engaged as imaginative knowledge. Belonging to a place involves more than knowing the postcode. There is an interaction with the people and their physical environment and too, the emergence of a conversation about meaning that is bound up with the inexplicable sense of ourselves in the world, our being-in-the-world as Martin Heidegger says.

We abide in a place.

Landscapes are built around a core of myth born of memory, reflection and familiarity, cultural learning and storytelling. On the top of the tower of one of the oldest churches here in Sydney, St Annes at Ryde (1824) there is a blue neon light cross: a *sacro monte* in this far flung reach of Christendom; an electric Calvary whose origins date back to the Franciscans and still earlier to the hallowed tree of life which encased the slaughtered remains of a nature god.

High on the ridge reaching up behind Kodoji temple there is a cave: a large sandstone shelter containing hundreds of Aboriginal drawings, paintings and stencils. An eel-like creature swims across the roof, probably the Rainbow/Water Serpent, and there are large anthropomorphs, possibly superhuman ancestral beings. There are also drawings of kangaroos and wallabies, lyrebirds, tortoises, fish, eagles, lizards and stencilled hands in black, white and red. It is like a Chagall painting.

The land that my family and I have lived on for nearly a century has known wild forest for thousands of years, farming for some years and, most recently, suburban housing and towns. It has good soil, backyards can be bountiful and there are tall gums in the remnant patches of bush where Black Wattle still flowers. It is the place on earth where I live and love, it is where I work and raise my children, it is where I live through winters and summers. Little by little I know its beauty.

My grandparents moved from Balmain in the early part of this last century to the newer estates opening on the western banks of the Parramatta River, where there was plenty of space and the chance to build a modern home. A home with plenty of glass, my grandmother often told me, as she looked on her house with pride. My grandparents bought a block of land on the crest of a hill and in 1918 finished off the building and moved into their new home: *Carisbrooke*.

Carisbrooke is a brick house built in the hybrid style of Federation fetish and the Californian bungalow. Hundreds of acres of Sydney bush and grassland were divided up into quarter-acre blocks along grid road systems and houses similar to ours were built. These were the suburbs of my boyhood, streets often planted with camphor laurels in front of gardens of azaleas and hydrangeas. Years later my three youngest children were all born on various floors of this old home. Hours of labour spent together with Kerry, pushing, puffing, being frightened, being exhausted, being transported by the exquisite drama of birth, and then to be bundled up with a baby during his first few hours in our home.

And just last week we have another very little person join us here at home: Maximilian. He is Kerry and my first grandchild. He was born Good Friday night about 8.15. For a time just after he was born he had to spend a few hours in the intensive care unit with his temperature being monitored. Basia was taken to the maternity ward and cleaned up. Kerry stayed with her but after a short time she began to fret, she wanted her baby, talking by mobile with Aidan down in intensive care only heightened her anxiety. When baby and mum were reunited the bonding overwhelmed them both. Little Max seemed to dig into her and Basia came back from her anxiety.

It was beautiful and spellbinding. A baby had been born and parents created all at the same time; my son became a dad his wife a mum and a family emerged.

Kerry wondered aloud this morning whether Aidan's great grand parents would ever had have contemplated that their great-great-grand child would be living here too. In less that a century four birth generations have lived and belonged in this place.

From the top of the Gladesville Bridge you can look east along the river to the Balmain peninsula and Cockatoo Island. The old shipyards and stevedoring businesses where my grandfather plied his trade as a plumber are now fashionable apartments and the river has become a playground. Sometimes as a boy I would see the black, brown and cream ferries coming down from Abbotsford and Meadowbank taking men to their work on these wharves. But for me the river was always a playground. I spent hours in the mangrove forests that grow along the shore of the Gladesville mental asylum. Knee deep in the dark mangrove mud, and trying to keep my serge woollen school shorts relatively clean, I would drag frail tin canoes out to the open water. I would paddle around Bedlam Point and down to the huge bamboo patch that hangs out over the river. Climbing in there between the great green masts of this fantastic plant, listening to its sighing and creaking was always magical.

Within ten days of Governor Phillip's fleet arriving in Sydney Cove a landing party under the command of Captain Hunter and Lieutenant Bradley had completed a survey of Port Jackson as far west as Homebush Bay. By May of 1788 longboats had

explored the upper reaches of the river discovering river flats on which the first farms were established. On 2 June 1791 the name of the settlement at the head of the Harbour was officially changed from Rose Hill to Parramatta, an Aboriginal word meaning 'head of the river'. The first translation of this word into the English of the colony is attributed to Mrs Macarthur, wife of John Macarthur, the regimental paymaster and inspector of public works. By the end of 1792 all the economic hopes of the colony on were centred on Parramatta. Vice regal longboats rarely ply these waters now. For a long time the Parramatta River has been the forgotten end of the Harbour. It was a humble working river, along whose shores were farms, then factories and boat builders, oil refineries, gas works, mental asylums, military depots and the occasional grand estate.

Today on the skyline near Homebush Bay there is a great and magnificent monument of the Islamic faith. In 1986 the Turkish community decided to build a large mosque, modelled on that of Sultan Ahmed in Istanbul, which would accommodate 5000 worshippers. The Gallipoli Mosque serves the needs of thousands of Muslims of various ethnic backgrounds, mostly Turks, who live in the nearby suburbs. The local Muslim communities pooled their skills and labour to construct this beautiful building which rises above the small cottages of Auburn, houses built for returned Gallipoli soldiers. Now, Turkish men with big black moustaches and women with colourful head scarfs stroll peacefully down the nearby streets on their way to prayer. They walk through a landscape of memories and bright red bottlebrush.

And what of the sacred? I could indulge myself here, yes, our house has held birth and death, it has celebrated weddings, the garden is being worked back to grow Banksia, Kangaroo Paw and tall gums. There is a Bodhi tree and a Bodhi leaf on the altar and we often sit to watch the broad evening sky. There is no rush at calling things sacred, we should be patient and give the land time to tell of its destiny and memory.

'Because mountains and waters and valleys have been active since before the eon of emptiness, they are alive at this moment' (from the opening paragraph of Dogen Kigen's essay Sansuikyo, Mountains and Waters Sutra, 1240).



Sculpture by Janet Selby – Landscapes of Royal National Park

Dharma Study and Facilitators Training Program

Jean Brick

The first Dharma Study and Facilitators Training Program took place at Gorrick's for 5 days immediately after the Easter Autumn Moon sesshin. I say 'first' because it was a profound experience for everyone who took part and finished with a unanimous wish to do it again. The program was the brainchild of Subhana, who then invited Patrick Kearney, an Insight teacher in the Mahasi tradition, to co-teach with her. This set the stage for an inspiring encounter between two different approaches to practice, allowing us to explore the commonalities between Zen's metaphoric and poetic understanding and the precise analysis of all formations, mental and physical, that characterises Patrick's understanding of the dharma.

One thing we had to sort out early on was terminology, as most participants were used to using 'Insight' to refer to a specific approach to practice, one which contrasts with Zen. As both Subhana and Patrick pointed out, Zen is an insight practice: that is, it is a practice aimed at understanding the true nature of things, as is the approach commonly referred to as Vipassana or Insight. Rather than contrasting Zen and Vipassana, we examined the relationship between serenity and insight. Patrick led three discussions on this relationship, identifying the types of question, which guide the development of insight compared with the questions which seek to develop serenity. An important shared concern, which emerged from this was the emphasis on questioning which is common to both Zen and Vipassana.

While we approached Vipassana Insight through discussion, our exploration of Zen was more experiential, and involved examination of the ways in which the words of the Heart Sutra relate to our daily lives. Subhana also invited us to work with selected lines from Dogen: *A stone woman gives birth to a child by night; ... the green mountains are forever walking* ...responding to them in poem, story and embodied action. This type of activity was a revelation to many of the non-zennies! Paul Maloney developed the serenity strand of the program with a dharma talk on shikantaza.

But this was only half the program! Another section was devoted to developing our skills as facilitators via a series of small group activities which allowed us to explore specific questions such as our understanding of 'insight' while at the same time honing our dharma facilitation skills. These small group activities also encouraged us to explore the ways in which we realise our practice amid the challenges of daily life.

We also had the daily opportunity to witness and participate in dharma inquiry, during which people raised issues or questions of concern and discussed them in public dialogue with Subhana. This was an extraordinarily useful aspect of the program, as we get so few opportunities to discuss our practice and our difficulties with others.

Speaking personally, the program has opened up a whole new perspective on practice for me. While Zen and Vipassana are separate traditions, they each offer something to the other. As someone, maybe Patrick, commented, the shadow side of Zen is its lack of focus on the 'how to' of meditation, its lack of attention to the mind and its relation

to the body. The shadow side of Vipassana, on the other hand, is its tendency to get totally caught up in a repetitive analysis of the minutiae of physical experience and to lose sight of the big picture. In this respect, each tradition offers a counter to the excesses of the other. In saying this, I am not advocating a blancmange practice, an amalgamation of the two. I believe very strongly in the integrity of each practice, but the experience of five days practicing and studying together is that we have a great deal to offer each other. So here's to the second Dharma Study and Facilitators Training Program! Watch this space!

Special thanks to Pip Atkins and Betsy Faen for their enormous efforts in getting the whole show on the road, and to the teachers, Subhana, Patrick, Ellen Davison and Paul Maloney.

Stone Women Talk Dharma with green mountain men

Diana Levy

After the Easter sesshin a unique dialogue took place at Gorricks Run. A group of practitioners from diverse Dharma backgrounds, mostly zen and Vipassana, met for five days of discussion, creativity, dharma study, meditation, and improvement of facilitation skills. The formal programme was taught with great aplomb by Patrick Kearney and Subhana Barzhaghi, with input from Paul Maloney and Ellen Davison. Apart from the formal programme, it was a great opportunity to forge or renew *kalyannamitra*, spiritual friendships. There were some wonderful conversations and discussions, it was truly a chance to broaden one's view.

The rain was a constant - a novelty for those from South Australia and Victoria - and it gave the event a feeling of gathering in together, the need to keep warm and dry. One night we huddled around the potbelly stove, sharing poems. Here is one we could all relate to:

It's there!

No it's not.

It's there.

Oh, it's gone now.

There it is.....was.

That's it!....oh.....almost.

Thaaat's it.....usually.....just not at the moment.

That's it!

Sometimes.

And sometimes it's something else.

But most of the time it's it.

Well.....some of the time.

Lenore L.

Towards the end Subhana threw out a challenge: “Respond creatively to these expressions of the inexpressible”.

Here is my response to Dogen’s “A stone woman gives birth to a child by night”:

*Tumbling into the void
from between my stone legs
a shiny screaming world of words
caught;
held to my mossy breast.*

And here are two short poems in response to Dogen’s “The green mountains are forever walking”:

*Walking slowly
I shed cliffs
preserving my green mantle*

Paul Maloney

*Illumination
lost in shade -
sun warms my back*

from James, of Canberra

And what about Brendan’s presentation, marching like a mountain around the verandah then appearing in the door of the dojo to say, “I”.. thump thump thump, around again.. ”climbed the green mountain”...thump, thump.. No. You had to be there.

Diana Levy



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