

Mind Moon Circle

Journal of the Sydney Zen Centre



Trees

WINTER 2017

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Trees

Every time you breathe in, thank a tree	Gillian Coote	3
Frankland River forest - 41A & B	Diana Levy	7
Tree Dreaming	Maggie Gluek	8
Photo – Tree in Jubilee Park, Glebe	Glenys Jackson	11
Zen and the Adventuring Mind	Will Moon	12
Book review “ The Hidden Life of Trees” by Peter Wohlleben	Jill Steverson	18
Ancient Italian Olive Trees Inspire Artwork... in Puglia, Italy	Caroline Josephs	20
Branchfall	Ruby Stephens	24
Four Trees	Brendon Stewart	25
My Life as a Tree	Brian Gutkin	27
Go Sweep Leaves!	Sean Loughman	28
haiku	Juliet Hollingsworth	32
Musings + poem	Sally Hopkins	33
The angophora lady	Diana Levy	34
haiku here and there	Diana levy	35

Editor: Diana Levy

Front cover photo: Diana Levy, tree in Breakfast Creek, Blue Mountains

The next issue of Mind Moon Circle will be edited by Jason Koh and Helen Sanderson. They ask,
“Home is where the heart is, isn't it?”
We are eagerly anticipating your home based entries for the spring MMC. Send your submissions to:

helen.sanderson@me.com
zazender@fastmail.fm

Mind Moon Circle is published quarterly by the
Sydney Zen Centre, 251 Young Street Annandale, NSW 2038, Australia.
On the web at www.szc.org.au

EVERY TIME YOU BREATHE IN, THANK A TREE (1) Gillian Coote

At our recent samu at Gorricks Run, I asked Heath and Fleur (Nick and Jo's children), whether trees breathed. They weren't too sure, so we embarked on an experiment. We picked some leaves and put them in a glass of water, weighing them down with a little rock. We had to wait a few hours for a result, but there always lots of things to do up there, like throwing the dog a ball. (2)



Heath, Fleur, Snoopdog and the Stone Buddha

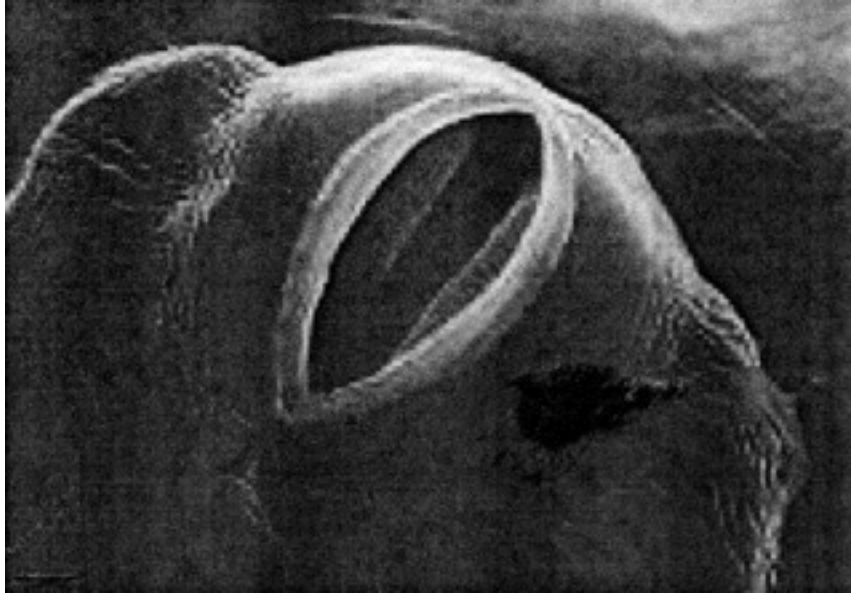
photo: Jo Denington

After lunch, we took a close look at the leaves in the glass of water— sure enough, some tiny bubbles had formed, oxygen released by the leaves, the evidence we needed to show that plants do ‘breathe’ through their leaves! But without a microscope, we couldn't see the tiny openings in the leaves called stomata – Greek for ‘mouth’ - that allow plants to exchange gases necessary for cellular processes, such as photosynthesis.

Stomata open and close to allow the intake of carbon dioxide and the release of oxygen that we ourselves need to breathe in, to survive. Not only does breathing provide our bodies with necessary oxygen, but it also rids them of waste like carbon dioxide, which our blood delivers to the capillaries surrounding our alveoli, tiny sacs within our lungs. It then moves into our lungs, where it leaves the body when we breathe out. Breathing in oxygen, breathing out carbon dioxide – that's what we do all our lives. Breathing in carbon dioxide, breathing out oxygen – that's what trees and all plants do all their lives. What a wonderful and mysterious exchange. And there's more.

‘The capacity of trees to synthesise and sequester carbon through photosynthesis as they grow has made afforestation an important practice in the age of warming. A recent paper from Oxford University has conservatively estimated that afforestation could draw down one to three gigatons of carbon dioxide per year in 2030 and 18 gigatons by 2050.’ (3)

This information comes from an encouraging book, Drawdown, edited by Paul Hawken, (4) which documents existing programs which ‘draw down’ carbon, a book written to see global warming not as an inevitability, but as an invitation to ‘*build, innovate and effect change, a*



A stomata – just one of many tree mouths

pathway that awakens creativity, compassion and genius’, in the face of what is at stake for our planet.

There are two means to achieve the reduction of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere – a radical decrease in human-caused emissions *and* widespread adoption of proven land and ocean practices that sequester carbon from the air and store it for decades –

when Heath and Fleur will be adults - and even centuries.

So, one hundred meticulously peer-reviewed solutions to reverse global warming are presented, detailing gigatons of carbon dioxide reduced, as well as net costs and savings in such diverse areas such as energy, transport and land use, including forest protection and afforestation. (5)

Just days after buying Drawdown, I heard an ABC interview with Patricia Scotland, Secretary-General for the Commonwealth, who said that the ideas in Drawdown have now been taken up by the Commonwealth Secretariat to support small endangered states in the Pacific and Caribbean. She called it ‘regenerative development’. (6)

Who knew that the planet loses more than 15 billion trees every year, much of them cleared for farmland to feed the world's booming population? That deforestation and forest degradation make up 17% of the world's carbon emissions, more than the entire world's transportation sector, according to the UN?

Now for some *good* news - an Australian engineer, Dr Susan Graham, has been helping develop a drone system that can scan the land, identify ideal places to grow trees, and then shoot germinated seeds into the soil. Drones can plant in areas previously impossible to reach, like steep hills. *“Although we (hand) plant about 9 billion trees every year, that leaves a net loss of six billion trees. With a pair of drone operators, we will be able to plant nearly 100,000 trees each day and sixty teams will get us to a billion trees a year - ten times the rate of hand planting and 20% of the cost”*. (7)

While these seed-planting drones are a timely invention, trees do take a while to grow. In the meantime, with whatever gifts and energy are at our disposal, let's do what we can, including planting and protecting native vegetation.



*Bush regenerating at Kodoji
photo: Jo Denington*

In the face of global warming, let's deepen our practice of the Prajna Paramitas. especially kshanti – gentle forbearance, endurance of hardship and acceptance of truth (often translated as patience) and respond to these challenges with creativity and compassion - for the sake of Heath, Fleur and all the many beings.

And let's notice when we close down in despair, because resistance to suffering is dukkha, the anguish we feel when we don't want to suffer. It's *because* we love the natural world and experience anticipatory grief for what we know is being lost and for what *will* be lost, that we do what we can. Even though you may ask yourself in times of despair and grief, '*what can one person do in the face of such enormity?*', remember that we are *not* one person, we are

interconnected and interdependent and each tiny compassionate action is powerful.

The Breathing

An absolute
patience.
Trees stand
up to their knees in
fog. The fog
slowly flows
uphill.
White
cobwebs, the grass
leaning where deer
have looked for apples.
The woods
from brook to where
the top of the hill looks
over the fog, send up
not one bird.
So absolute, it is
no other than
happiness itself, a breathing
too quiet to hear.

Denise Levertov



Photo: Jo Denington

And remember, every time you breathe in, thank a tree.

Notes:

1. Line from a poem by John Wright
2. Susan Elvidge, Science Project Ideas
3. Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming, ed. Paul Hawken, (pub. Penguin 2017)
4. *ibid*
5. *ibid*
6. Gregg Borschmann, ABC RN Breakfast (19/5/17)
7. Jake Sturmer, ABC News, 25/6/17



Two Crows, Janet Selby, 2009

At Easter, I took part in a camp for artists called the “Tarkine in Motion”, organised by the Bob Brown Foundation. The idea was to respond in our chosen medium to the cool temperate rainforests (the largest remaining in the southern hemisphere) of the Tarkine, in northwest Tasmania. We were camped beside a logging road near the Frankland River, and I sank into the forests, the trees, the company I was in, and the river. It was wonderful to be enabled, by the volunteers, to sink so thoroughly into my writing. And I began to see what could be lost. This experience inspired me to offer the theme of ‘trees’.

FRANKLAND RIVER FOREST - 41A & B*

Diana Levy

It was war
and the giants fell
despatched by a scadgett,
take this coupe and make of it
a timber soup says the Forestry,
so a yellow machine
with a saw and a claw
tracks its way to 41A,
and the man inside
with a job and a plan
cuts the elders and shoves them,
they’re pushovers,
claws them into a pile,
the ‘log landing’.

Then the leaves leave
the birds go
the arboreal mammals scatter
and what was it I heard last night
from the snugness of my tent?
voice high in a tree,
a faint reply further out,
all these creatures go
but where is their refuge?

Horizontal now, the Tarkine giants
are a bleaching cracking abandoned
tumble jumble,
with a rubbish pile of bones high at the back,
in the middle of a forest where few set foot,
not since it was called “takayna”.

Are we the last to have Tarkined here
shouting as we swam in the freezing Frankland River,
skipping stones or glimpsing

a brook trout flee across
the shallow pebble bed?
the last to watch the wedge-tailed eagles
soar above a pebble picnic
where we drank cocoa
and fed out souls
through our very pores?

*FR 41A & B are the names of the coupes that were due to be logged



The little boys explore “The House Tree”, a very old myrtle.

TREE DREAMING

Maggie Gluek

Is there anything lovelier than the dharma of trees? I was lucky enough to grow up in a woods in semi-rural Minnesota in the 1950s. Ash, elm, maple, oak, birch. All around us, they marked the beauty of time, the cycles of birth, death, and resurrection, as we moved through the year. From the first buds and pale green leaves of spring, not yet obscuring the branches, carrying that freshness which lifts you up off the ground. To the exuberant rich dark green canopies of summer which I associate with a kind of extroversion. Then the colors of autumn, oh the colors, leaves drying in the bracing air: shades of fire and earth—orange, red, yellow, russet, brown. And the sweetness in those trees finally dropping their finished assets, going to ground. Going to the long bare stasis of winter, beauty now stark and unadorned except—and then wonderfully—by snow. Then is a good time for reflection, interiority. Melancholy does not feel inappropriate when it matches the landscape.

Our house was isolated. My sister and I played with each other. Then wandered, often separately, in the woods. My first record, a 45 LP, was “Teddy Bears’ Picnic.” *If you go down in the woods today, you’re sure of a big surprise. If you go down in the woods today, you’d better go in disguise.* Though thousands of black bears inhabit the forests of northern Minnesota, there were in fact none that far south. But our woods *was* home to deer and to many small mammals—among them foxes, raccoons, groundhogs, squirrels. And birds. Some—chickadees, jays, cardinals—were year-round residents; others, like the rose-breasted grosbeaks and goldfinches, made an eagerly anticipated spring return.

It was our refuge too. When I was in fourth grade, I wrote a clichéd and derivatively Romantic poem entitled “My Woodland Glen.” (How could it have been anything else?) It began like this:

*On days when I am worried
And have so many cares
I go to find my woodland glen
And smell spring’s sweet fresh airs.*

*It is a very special place
With flowers, birds and bees
And over it to shelter them
Are old but sturdy trees.*

Oh, the cares of a ten-year old! But children do worry. Safe in the embrace of that place a child could be utterly herself, at once alone and part of the wider natural community.

Trees bridge earth to sky. They invite different perspectives. Look up and your spirits will rise! Climb to the top and you'll have a wide vision. And in their longevity these life-forms themselves have some kind of big picture, like wise elders. What have they borne silent witness to? A lot happens in tree time.

Linji took this into account as he planted pine trees in the mountains. When asked by his teacher what was the point of this activity, he responded “First to create an ornament for the main gate.” The function of beauty. “Second to make known a standard for future generations.” Marking the Way for folks to come. Trees might be taken as role models, reminding you to stand—to live—upright, steady and strong. How about a tree on your zafu?

Now on the other side of life, on the other side of the world, I find myself in a district on the northern edge of Sydney with a yard that adjoins a Hawkesbury sandstone gully. The trees are the “why” of our living here. *Eucalyptus piperita* and its cousin *Angophora costata*—a.k.a. peppermint and Sydney red gums—are the dominant species in the open-canopy dry-sclerophyll forest. They offer sensuous gifts—the soothing depth of their ever green, the spicy-scented oil of their leaves, the honeyed blossoms that fuel nectar-loving communities of birds and insects, who in turn pollinate and thus propagate the trees.

The *Angophora costata* are goddesses! Not rectilinear but curvy and sinuous in form, sometimes twisting like dancers; smooth-barked, with round protuberances on the trunk. And effecting a spectacular red shedding when new bark comes through.



Magic Angophora, 2011 Painting by Janet Selby

I bow in gratitude to all these great protectors of the land, everywhere. Whose branches, hollows, leaves, bark, roots support myriad lives and particular communities. Who provide lungs for the planet, taking carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and breathing out oxygen, that allows us in turn to breathe. May we in turn protect them.



ZEN AND THE ADVENTURING MIND

Will Moon

Talk given 21 May, 2017 at Sydney Zen Centre, Annandale

We are all in a place now where our outlook on life is probably a bit different to what it was 5, 10, or 20 years ago. It also feels as though some of these things have not changed, familiar patterns and ways of thinking continue along throughout our life. Working on ourselves in particular ways, such as through meditation practice can change and shift things around over time. It is this aspect that I wanted to talk about and how it relates to my own experience over time. I want to talk about the mindset that is associated with adventure and risk-taking, and how this mindset is re-moulded over time as a result of ongoing zazen practice.

Right from an early age of probably about 12 or 13 years the idea of adventure was very appealing. I remember looking through my older brothers' climbing magazines at the photos of the climbers in the mountains and dreaming of being a climber. The desire became strong and I decided to go and climb a cliff with some mates with a clothes-line rope, nail hammer, and some lawn mower blades to use as pitons. I almost killed myself when I slipped climbing around some rocks to get to the cliff, and fell down the rocks for about 15 metres. I spent two weeks in bed recovering and can vividly remember dreaming of getting back out on the rocks and climbing. The pull for adventure became even stronger. I got my first chance to do a proper climb when I was 14, my brother realised that if he didn't take me climbing and teach me how to do it properly, I would probably kill myself before long. From the time of that first climb, climbing remained a significant part of my life for about the next 20 years. Lots of other adventures also became part of the mix of activities, including canyoning, sea kayaking, cross country skiing, ice climbing, and solo hiking in very wild and remote places.

At some stage, perhaps in the late teens or early twenties there was a sense that the greater the degree of risk that was taken, the more rewarding the experience felt. I began to try new climbs that were sparsely protected, so a fall would eventuate in serious consequences, perhaps a huge fall before the rope would arrest you, or perhaps you would smash into the ground if one little mistake was made. It also involved descending canyons solo in winter, and at night without wetsuits. There was no option of a mistake such as getting a rope tangled. Death from hypothermia would be swift. The appeal was to try to do these activities in some sort of controlled fashion so that you walked a fine line on the edge of potential disaster. The experience was intense, one slip, one broken hold, and you were away. You had to be totally in the moment totally focussed and not be overcome by the background fears or doubts. Walking the path of risk started to become part of the norm.

I remember some of the experiences of the big walls in Yosemite, a national park in California's Sierra Nevada. On the big walls I often found myself 1000 feet up on a sheer wall, my last point of protection was perhaps 50 feet below me, so one slip and I would fall for at least 100 feet before the rope would stop the fall. There was virtually nothing visible on the face to hold onto. I was just standing on tiny rounded ripples on the rock's surface, there was no retreat from this place but to inch higher, with a racing heart, the fear beyond intense, but in a controlled way I had to lift my foot and place it on the next piece of blank face,

where the rock surface was often only just like rough sandpaper, and it was just a case of hoping the rubber soles would stick. At any second a foot could cut loose. As a climber you become incredibly perceptive to that minute zone where the friction of the rubber on the rock is only just able to stick. With each step up, with each move, it was performed so delicately that you barely took a breath, cheeks pressed against the wall. Finally I would step onto the belay ledge, often only inches wide and belay my climbing partner. You would often be met with a comment like “good lead mate, I’m glad you had that one” and then we would swap leads as they led the next pitch. I would also be glad they led the pitches that they did. And so it went like this all day. On El Capitan we did this for 5 days climbing a sheer 3,000 foot wall, equivalent to almost four Sydney towers stacked on top of each other. We had to sleep in harnesses tied to the wall. In the morning you would wake up and look down at the tiny cars on the black line which was the road snaking through the valley. Then look up as the wall rose up into the sky.

On one occasion I did a trip on my own, bushwalking in the rainforests of the Iron Range on Cape York. My plan was to fly to Weipa, ride my mountain bike across to the east coast, stash the bike and hike for a week through the mountains, then return, get the bike and ride back across the cape to Weipa. When I got to Weipa the police informed me that the rivers were still swollen from the wet season, so I wouldn’t be able to cross the rivers to get there. So I chartered a small plane to fly me over to the Lockhart River community. It was a small ride from there to the Iron Range National Park. The place had always fascinated me as it was a place where there was a crossover with the plant and animal species of New Guinea.

Pushing my bike down the final grassy track to where I would stash it and head bush, a taipan slithered between me the bike I was pushing. It was a scary start. I hiked for days following a river, which became a creek, and then climbed waterfalls and through jungle into the mountains. All along the river I encountered wild pigs and felt a bit unnerved by them. Once I got above the waterfalls I felt that I was out of the crocodile zone and could plunge into the streams in the tropical humidity of the rainforest. I camped a night in a place where I had never felt so remotely removed from people and civilisation in my whole life.



Left: My campsite in the Iron Range, FNQ

The next few days I descended the mountains, sometimes crawling on hands and knees through the jungle following the tunnels that the pigs had made. I reached the next river that I would follow to

eventually join another river, which would take me back to my bike. The jungle was so dense that the only way to make progress was to walk along in the waist deep water. I knew that I was back into crocodile territory and so my walking involved progressing along the river in a state of heightened awareness, conscious of every little movement and sound, for hours, and then for several days. Eventually on the last day of the walk I joined another river where the top of the bank was flat and more opened. More and more I encountered wild pigs. At one stage I saw two large ones cross over the track ahead of me and then come past hidden in the rainforest to my right. I had an uneasy feeling and sure enough a large black boar came at me from the rear. As it charged towards me there was no time to do anything. My instinct was to speak to it in a firm and non-threatening voice, which worked. Somehow the pig sensed my message and rather than gore my legs it brushed past and returned into the forest. My nerves felt a bit shattered after this and I was relieved to exit the rainforest that afternoon.

The next morning I had to ride down into a gorge and cross the Pascoe River which was still swollen. I tried to descend to the river as quietly as I could so as not to attract the attention of any crocodiles. When I got to the river I was alarmed to see that at the crossing the water was deep and moving swiftly. The trees that lined the river bank hung well out over the water so I could not see up or down the river until I was well out into it. I would have to cross three times, once to carry the bike over and then return to carry my backpack over my head. It was a terrifying prospect not knowing if there were crocodiles watching my every move. The water was up to my neck. I had to watch my footing and move slowly to avoid being swept downstream. Eventually I got everything across and was in one piece. The result of these adventures was to be living in an intensity that was unmatched by anything else in life, at least that's how it seemed.



*Left: Day 1 –
launch from
Wonga beach,
FNQ*

Sea kayaking had become another way of satisfying this need for adventure. On one occasion a friend and I went to attempt to paddle up Cape York. We were getting pounded by the southeast trade

winds which blew day after day at 30 to 45 knots. I remember laying in my tent one morning before daylight and listening to the wind and ocean. It literally sounded like we had setup our tents beside a jumbo jet with its engines set for take-off. Leaving the shore the next morning

was almost impossible. To leave the shore we had to paddle into the wind until we got out through the waves and then turn north. I remember paddling as hard as I could possibly paddle into the wind with wave after wave breaking over the boat. In absolute desperation we finally got through and turned north.

As the day progressed the wind grew stronger and the waves got bigger. In the roar we could barely hear each other. I shouted to my mate Benj to stay away from me as I realised if the kayaks collided, we would punch a hole through them. At one point I saw him out of the corner of my eye carving down the face of a big wave like a surfer in the 5.8 metre kayak. We realised the seriousness of our predicament and taking the safest angle for the shore it took us another 10 kilometres of paddling before we could land. Benj's gps registered a top speed of 43 kilometres per hour that day, not bad for a couple of sea kayaks.

Day after day we headed out into the extreme conditions, not wanting to give up on our ultimate adventure. One day when we were about 20 kilometres out to sea, it seemed like I was paddling in this boiling white mass. The ocean was so wild I spent more time sitting in frothing water up to my armpits, my boat submerged in the breaking seas. I turned and looked behind to see deep green waves with breaking white caps stacked one after another, like rows of soldiers going back as far as I could see.

The same day a trawler travelling the opposite direction passed us. The waves broke over the bow entirely enveloping the boat with the white windswept ocean waves. We must have looked somewhat surreal to the fishermen out in that sea. One day my pump failed to remove the water from my boat, making it incredibly unstable. During our beach landing I was overturned in the waves going over the small fringing reef. I had to get out of my boat and walk it to shore in the chest deep water. The reef sharks were zipping around me in excitement.

Each night on our shortwave, we had weather forecasts of 35 to 45 knots every day for the coming week. We decided to give up our dream adventure in the interest of staying alive. I realised then that something must have started to change in me. I took the decision with a heavy heart, we had failed to achieve our dream. In one sense there was this idea that to achieve the great things in adventure, you need to push on through the danger zone. However it also began to dawn on me at some level that the decision to stop was a success. Succeeding and achieving our goal was not the most important thing.

Prior to this I had had a number of close calls. I've almost killed myself on a number of occasions. I've been winched out of the bush and helicoptered to hospital. On one occasion I climbed out over a roof upside down about 70 feet up. Then there was a short vertical wall leading to the top that was relatively easy. My last protection was more than half way down, so a fall meant going all the way to the rocks below. But the last stage was easy so I wasn't too concerned. As I reached over the top to pull myself up over the edge the handhold broke and I slipped back over the edge. Miraculously both my feet slid down and stopped on some tiny ironstone edges, saving me from a certain death fall.

By the time of our retreat from our kayaking trip, I had been practicing Zen for more than 10 years and the effects were starting to creep into my life. At each camp we had a morning

ritual of porridge and coffee. We would sit around and quietly chat in the early hours before the sun rose, and then go through the ritual of packing up the tent and packing the boats. I noticed that there was a real beauty in this process. I would become absorbed in the simple process of folding the tent poles, and the tent fly. There was nothing else in the world but that folding, the feel of the light aluminium tubes in the hand, the dull clanking of the tubes packed together, the sounds of sliding the tent pegs into the sheath. The moment seemed to be without need of anything else. But I still needed many more years to get enough understanding that each moment contains everything, that nothing extra is needed.

I think that some of the koans I was working with in the early days were starting to slowly dismantle some of the old structures in my thinking. One of these was case 21, Tou-shuai Ts'ung-yueh's Three Barriers from the Diamond Sangha's collection of Miscellaneous Koans. The first line goes, *"The reason people go to abandoned grassy places and do zazen, is to search for their self nature. At such a point, where is your self nature?"* It was somewhat startling to find what I thought of as myself was nothing but a shadow.

A year after our Cape York trip my brother was proposing that we go and paddle across Bass Strait. This seemed like it would be an amazing trip. I remember talking with a friend contemplating it and saying, "What would it be to do Bass Straight?" In other words, how amazing would that be? My friend replied, "What would it be to not do it?" I was left a bit dumbfounded by this question at first and then realised the wisdom it contained. I realised that it was a greater challenge to accept the idea of what it would be not to do it, than it would be to do it. What? How can that be more of a challenge? It involved letting go of all the precious ideas I had held for so long, of the need to achieve, the need to do something extraordinary, not just ordinary. It was also contrary to the ideas that all my adventuring friends held. We were always checking in with each other to see who was going to do the next amazing adventure.

Not long after this a friend of ours was going to attempt to paddle solo across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand. This was the most extraordinary feat that anyone could attempt. A bit like travelling to Jupiter and back on your own. If anyone could do it, it was our friend. He was an almost superhuman character in the world of sea kayaking. For example, He had paddled non-stop across Bass Strait, paddling all day, all through the night and the next day to land on the north coast of Tassie.



Left: My sea kayak – north of Cooktown

One morning we were putting our kayaks in at Iron Cove for a training paddle before work and we ran into our friend not long before he left for his attempt at the crossing. After having a chat with him and wishing him the

best, as we said our farewells, I looked back and had an incredibly strong sense that this would be the last time I ever saw him. It was a profound feeling and I told Sue as we left. We followed his trip each day on the internet. Little flags would appear on the map showing each day's progress. It was amazing to watch and after a while I thought, he is going to make it. When he was almost there, less than one day's paddle from New Zealand, after more than 30 days, he disappeared at sea. His boat was found upturned but there was no trace of him. It left me in a state of disbelief, how could someone so meticulous and so capable fail at the last minute? I sat on the swings in a playground that night with Sue, repeating over and over my disbelief that he was gone. Sue said that they might find him, however I knew that there was no chance of it. Someone so exhausted separated from their boat in these cold waters would perish in a very short time. What came with this was a profound realisation that all of it was completely meaningless. A realisation that the whole adventure thing didn't really mean anything. What I had spent most of my life doing up to this point, in a sense, was really meaningless. Sure it has meaning for those who are doing it however on a deep level, none of it matters. You think that you are doing the ultimate, but it's only in your head. It doesn't matter if you conquer the oceans, become the CEO, or whatever else it is that you create in your mind. These things are all relating the idea of the self to scales and measures, setting and reaching benchmarks, raising the bar, always striving. I think that if we don't see through it we can live our lives trying to measure up to the standards that we or others set, and we may never be content. The moments that don't seem special, really don't ever get a chance to be experienced as special, complete in themselves.

There can be elation at the end of an adventure after having such an amazing experience, from overcoming our challenge. There can also be a sense of relief once the risks and the fear are no longer there. However there is also the mixed feelings of disappointment that the journey is over, as we know that we will be heading back into the mundane world of work and bills and responsibility. It is because of this that adventurers often need to keep having the next big adventure. If there is also mixed with this a need to prove something to either ourselves or the world, each next adventure can become more risky than the previous. There is a need to surpass our last achievement.



Left: View from my kayak towards Pentacost Island in the Whitsundays

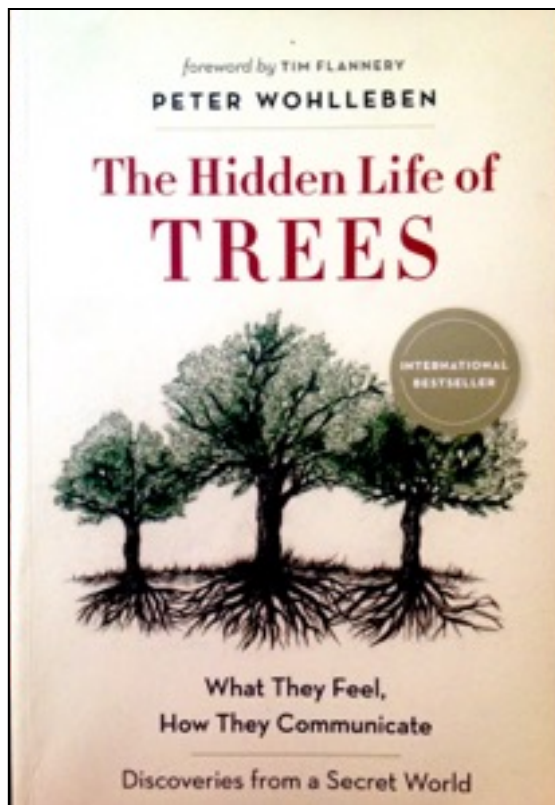
Zen practice on the other hand requires us to engage with the mundane, to keep returning to it, rather than scheming our next trip to avoid it. In Zen practice, we can feel exhausted by this returning again and again to the moment, but if we keep doing it anyway, rather than switching on the remote or going to the fridge, the resistance dissolves and then an amazing thing happens where each

moment is full and complete. Then we will probably call this heaven rather than mundane.

This is where the adventuring mind is at odds with the Zen mind in a sense. In Zen practice, gradually the simple, not the special or exciting becomes very interesting, it is enough. We don't need to leave home and hang from a 3000 ft wall. Weeding the agapanthus out of the garden is enough, enjoying a cup of tea in the autumn sun can have everything. To an adventurer, this would probably seem completely crazy. In many respects, what the adventurer is seeking by being on the edge of the extreme is not so different to what brings us to Zen. There may be some emptiness, or something that feels unfulfilled in our lives. The next adventure is like a search for ourselves, and we go to wild places in this search. The adventure brings us face to face with ourselves in the extremes, but it doesn't open us to our original face before our parents were born. The adventures don't transform in the way that zazen transforms. In a sense the universe is transformed in zazen.

BOOK REVIEW

Jill Steverson



This book is a beautiful *tree*!

Peter Wohlleben is a forester from the beech and oak forests of Hummel in Germany and his research and reflections have sparked international interest and are absolutely relevant to our beautiful trees and forests in Australia. One of the reasons I loved it was that he invites the reader to start to understand trees as great mysteries and sentient beings that are not yet understood. Arising from his research he uses the term the *wood-wide web* to explain how families of trees communicate with and support each other in a community through a fungal and root web that is critical for their health and protection.

His use of human comparisons to describe tree behaviour have annoyed some in the scientific community but I found he uses a fascinating new lens to view our precious tree world. He

invites the reader into the different time scale of the life of a tree, often growing to maturity over hundreds of years. One of the oldest trees is a spruce in Sweden being more than 9,500 years old. He argues that if our species understands the leisurely pace of these creatures we can start to see the management of forest communities differently. Scientists have determined that slow growth when a tree is young is a prerequisite if a tree is to live to a ripe old age, and ancient trees are massively more productive in terms of growth and biomass over time.

Peter explains how trees support and assist each other in a variety of ways. When in a community, they synchronise their photosynthesis, and their individual performance is better

than for lone trees with lots of space. He describes how young trees are protected by parents who shade their offspring, leading to slow growth and ensuring proper development. Life support is provided for sick or dying trees, sugar solutions are transferred to ancient stumps of felled trees which keep them alive (perhaps honouring them) and how warnings are given out between trees when they are attacked by pests and diseases.

The book leads the reader through the recent discoveries by science in a fascinating and accessible manner. It evoked for me the magic of a forest that is felt but rarely explained. He also reviews the evidence on questions that are still unknown, for example how water is moved up to the crown of a 100- metre tree, why trees send electrical signals and make noises to each other.

Since this book was published Peter has gone on to highlight the evidence that artificial light affects plant health. He suggests to Councils that streetlights should be turned off at night, this will improve the health of urban trees that need to sleep at night. Peter provides a fascinating new voice to engage us in a deeper understanding of our beautiful tree neighbours.

Lonely and deep in the cloudy valley

Still the sacred pine tree

Lives through the cold of many years

Denkoroku



In the oldest yew forest in Europe, a 2,000-year old yew tree, Kingley Vale Nature Reserve near Chichester, Sussex, England

ANCIENT ITALIAN OLIVE TREES INSPIRE ARTWORK...IN PUGLIA, ITALY

Caroline Josephs

Standing in the garden – looking down on a work table – unfurling paper for a new artwork. Applying paint quickly to a fridge door – improvised, as a base for the printing process... pressing a long panel of paper over the paint. Paper absorbing the paint traces, a sweep of line, olive tree-as-body -- stretching through time, space...

*Grasping two corners of the paper now imprinted with painted image, I peel it back... mingling chance with control. Expectant pause...as the first olive tree image reveals itself... Imagined into being - olive tree -- ancient, dignified, **alive!***

The olive grove stretches out behind me, beyond the Millhouse. I am staying here, painting in the garden, on a *masseria*, in Italy.

A *masseria* is a fortified farmhouse or country house on a country estate -- found in the region of Puglia. Puglia is a province of Italy situated in the south-east, near the 'heel' of Italy. 'Masseria' lodgings range from rustic to luxurious, Most are set in working farms producing olive oil, wine, or other produce. The one I stayed on, featured walled-in residence areas, and a huge olive grove.

Olive trees here are not *owned*. The inhabitants are *custodians* of the ancient trees (called *secolare* or 'centuries old'). Some are a thousand years old. Trees twist and gnarl, curl and furrow, creating empty space in entirely hollow trunks. In the interior space of the trunk, I run my hands over the wood surfaces, sensing shapes, the people who have been here before -- the ghosts of ancestors, the humans who lived with the trees, and my own body-as-tree -- all coalescing in imagination, in the artwork that transforms into image on the page.

This news of 'custodianship' of trees resonates with my own experiences with Indigenous Australians. For Aboriginal Australians, traditionally, 'Country' is, similarly, not owned. Clans are responsible for caring for country in their own clan territory, including trees, and also streams, rocks, sea, sky, all creatures. Country has to be visited, enlivened by mark-making and art, as well as story, song, dance...For Indigenous Australian people this is not about representing country. It is *re-creating* country. I wonder at the connections between two ancient cultures in Italy and Australia as I wander the olive grove of Impisi, and translate from imagination to paint the great grey trunks of the trees.

The *masseria*, not far from the town of Ostuni in Puglia -- was originally a fortified family farm. Protection was a necessary precaution during the period of Saracen invasions. Behind me where I work in the garden, is the entrance to a cave-like studio, once an ancient olive mill. The 15th century Millhouse above the studio now houses our hosts. A short was from where I work, across a tiny bridge in the garden, the sign '*acqua*' on a large door invites us into a dark water repository, deep, green, enclosed. The medieval water cistern was probably

adapted from an even older Messapian tomb when the water course and river were harnessed for the *masseria*'s use. I can see the sea -- on the horizon.



Caroline Josephs, Secolare – Ancient olive tree, photograph, 2011

Fruit trees abound in the garden -- lemon, orange, fig, almond, apricot, quince, loquat, pear. Up the slope, off an arched colonnade, stands our accommodation, looking over a swimming pool cut into the limestone. Each day I plunge in, refreshing myself in the cold, after the concentration of art-making.

This is a property where artists can visit and work, explore the *masseria* and the surrounding ancient hilltop fortified towns like Ostuni (*la città bianca* - the white city) just 15 minutes' drive away, made up of a myriad of pale angular terraces of buildings, winding cobbled streets, full of small and inviting places to meander in, explore.

The country estate is *Masseria Impisi*, where artists David and Leonie are hosts, artists, teachers, cooks, guides, storytellers, welcoming groups of artists or those wanting to explore the area or just work at their art, writing, photography.

With their own hands, David and Leonie worked for over a year to build these rustic yet elegant buildings out of rubble-like dereliction. David completed new plumbing, all the electrical networks, and learned new skills -- such as constructing new archways, and working with the extensive stonework. Now, his sculptures surprise and delight at various corners, and atop the roof. Leonie's hand has created mosaics in the garden, and simple furnishing touches. Further improvements have been completed -- the shady garden pergola, the swimming pool. Fresh herbs and a vegetable garden are supplemented by local produce from the markets nearby.

A long wooden table on the terrace overlooking the olive grove creates a companionable space for guests to assemble, sometimes for lunch, and always for dinner, together with antipasto, good local wines, cheeses, olives -- and Leonie's authentic Puglia dishes: *Cozze e Patate al Forno* (mussels, potatoes, rice, baked in oven), *Calamari Ripieni* (stuffed squid), cold almond soup, *Fava e Cicoria* (a purée of broad beans with wild greens) and much more... served and eaten with laughter, stories and good conversation, led by David's sparkling wit, and sustained by the enduring warmth of both hosts.

I found this place by 'accident.' Some years previously, at home in Sydney, I had been watching *Grand Designs*, a BBC program which follows people initiating and completing unorthodox, amazing housing and building designs, often from very challenging beginnings. The *Impisi* project was one. I watched the building work from start to finish and found myself deeply moved, not only by the way the *masseria* took shape, but by the people involved, the way they found their way through Italian bureaucracy, through the challenges of unknowns, the inevitable rough patches, the arduous business of learning entirely new skills, and doing most of the hands-on work through a blistering summer. I admired the way they involved family and friends in the work, sharing meals around a table stacked with goodwill and laughter, good wine and food. I wanted to be a small part of this place. (It reminded me of many *samu* weekends and *sesshins* with Zen buddies at Kodoji)...I wrote to Leonie and David. I received the details promptly, and booked in.

Synchronistically, the dates exactly coincided with my planned visit to New York for the opening of my exhibition (By another synchronicity, the gallery director in New York also came, I learned -- from Puglia!) I could fly on straight to Rome after the opening in New York, and to Brindisi -- to be transported to Impisi. It was all easily arranged.

The prints of olive trees are drying on the stone wall of the garden. Arching over the wall -- an orange tree, laden with fruit.

Back home in my Sydney studio I found myself painting back into the prints of trees -- remembering in my body -- the fall of yellow pollen, the drift of olive blossom, the grey-green flurry of the olive leaves, the burnt rust earth, the sweep of graceful, grey trunks, the cerulean blue of the sky...Recalling conversations, laughter, the generosity of artists, our hosts, tables laden with delicious food and good wine, the poetic musicality of the Italian language, the theatricality and drama of Italians, the warmth of Italy! The magic of *secolare* -- where no tree is owned....but has only, custodians.

The wonder of making Art. The wonder of our relatives -- *secolare*, the ancient olive trees!



Caroline Josepha "Tree-as-Body", acrylic on paper, 1m x 50 cm, 2011

Branchfall

Ruby Stephens

Late afternoon -

 gunshot
 across the paddocks
then a second crack,
 tearing
of reluctant flesh from flesh.
I walk over to inspect the carnage,
green ants like emergency crews
already marking out the scene.
Fresh buds flail
in a tangle of broken limbs:
no birds' nests, bee hides - I check,
just wounds clammy with sap
a whiff of eucalyptus
sticking to my fingers.
Crimson rosellas
chatter unconcerned
through the grass seeds,
and the wind carries on in the branches
more hollows to carve before dusk.

FOUR TREES

Brendon Stewart

There are two big trees in our home garden. One, an Angophora towers over the front verandah. In the crook of the trunk where three massive limbs divide and carry on towards the heavens there is a possums' nest. I know this because I have poked the end of my straw broom into the leaf and twig debris causing an irate response from one of the inhabitants. Sometimes I become concerned that if the possum family piss and shit away in their warm cocoon will there be a gradual rotting of the Angophora's sturdy timbers. I don't want this giant to fall.

In our back garden even bigger is the *Eucalyptus punctata*, a Grey Gum. This great guardian of our backyard towers down on all the other underling plantings, shading the vegetable patch throughout the winter months and scattering leaves and twigs all over the lawn.

The fall of leaves and twigs from gum trees is a constant reminder to practice careful ladder management because I have to regularly climb up to the roof gutters and dig out the black sludge that accumulates. The ladder management references the fact that the biggest incident of emergency hospital visits is by men, over the age of 65 who have fallen off ladders and who, only some hours beforehand were climbing up to the roof guttering in an attempt to clean out gum tree leaf and twig litter.

Big branches have fallen from the *E. punctata* into the middle of our neighbour's lawn. Indeed this great tree of ours is, to all intents and purposes our neighbour's tree because so much of its canopy glory shades their vegetable patch too. The falling branch episodes have generated over the paling fence politics: *do you think this is the right sort of tree for a back garden? We love it but ... And what if that big one in your front garden were to fall; it would take out our bedroom.*

There you are, big trees and paling fences.

To this end we engaged the tree lopping industry. As well as the lopping of trees, people in this line of work seem to be very active in self-promotion through letterbox drops. At a rough guess I reckon we get tree management business cards in amongst the letters on three or four days each week. Sometimes now that Australia Post is trying to extricate itself from that quaint social media platform called *postal delivery*, the tree loppers are our only potential correspondents.

Tree lopping involves young men, ropes, chain saws and noise. In our neck of the ever-expanding city forest, or woods to stay with the colloquialism, households need council approval to sever even a twig from any significant tree. When these two gums were planted 60-odd years ago someone might have said *they are not appropriate for gardens like yours*. Now, such beings that were once thought inappropriate have become significant; trees of local cultural importance and a Council DA must be acquired to prune them even within 10% of their canopy.

In the gardens of what remains of Hiroshima castle there is a delicate wooden and stone bridge crossing over a classic moat. On diagonally opposite corners two trees flourish. One is a willow and its companion is a eucalypt. In the parkland only the castle's tower remains intact, a large wooden structure. Scattered on the ground are pieces of masonry from which this castle was once made. Until August 6, 1945 this was the headquarters of the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces High Command.

Both trees survived the explosion of the first ever atomic bomb attack on an enemy. Both trees are more than 100 years old. Today the willow curtsies its long tassles down to the water and the eucalypt stands erect and bold. How did this gum tree come to be planted in a Japanese castle garden? Photos taken only days after the first Allied forces arrived in Hiroshima, show the trees badly broken. Follow up photos from 1947 show the trees, especially the gum full of new growth.

What survived the bomb?
The land, the river
And
A eucalyptus and willow tree
We bow with deep humility

It snows heavily in much of Japan, and old and often very precious plantings have to be protected from damage during the severe winters. Gardeners sometimes fashion wonderful architectural structures made from bamboo that support the long and heavy limbs, and some even make elaborate rope nettings that hang elegantly from the tops of some great trees, a type of snow coat. Japanese gardens are wondrously artificial.

The perfect garden landscape evokes spaciousness, tranquility, artifice, antiquity, watercourses and the near and far. Among other things a garden is a passage to somewhere else.

These four trees, the great anchoring pillars between which is suspended my imagination.

I wake up in cold:
what is the world doing now?
a shower of leaves.

DL

My Life As A Tree

Brian Gutkin

In more illumined moments I have often thought of myself as a tree.

Not a particularly rare or fancy one, rather a plain ordinary common or garden variety, knurled and twisted, broken in places, brushed up upon, wounded, bruised but still standing, albeit leaning distinctly to one side; the legacy of strong prevailing winds that buffet regularly from certain quarters, to which I remain vulnerable.

Such imagining helps hold compassion for myself and also, as I look about, for others also, trees themselves of various shapes, sizes, hues and imperfections. It engenders patience and tolerance in the face of all of our blustering and irascible blunderings.

Trees talk don't they, but they are of few words. What they say is reverent, deep, earthy, considered. Perched in some deep wood never leaving their allotted space they humbly stand minding their ground, roots firmly gripping earth, be it sweet and moist with rain or dew, or hard and dry in less abundant times, until they loosen, let go, fall and die.

Oft times, when the moon is full and high, they can be seen lighted in glory presiding over all they survey, or in gloom of winter and frosted snow, laid bare, suffering, to survive and again be nurtured by the coming spring. There are times too when under lightning's storm dutifully standing bearing their fate, they painfully wait for to see whether it is their destiny to be spared, bent, broken, or struck down.

We are all trees you and I, like it or not. Never imagine otherwise. Never stray from your place and always hold your ground quiet and respectfully. Take in the stale and tainted. Breathe out the fresh and cool. Give of your body, your breath, your fruit, your shelter. Be used for good, to nourish, create, heal and protect and yes, to teach. Accept your station with fortitude and patience. Just be, and in your gentle being hold the world.



*photo:
Glenys Jackson,
Fig tree in Sydney
Botanic Gardens*

GO SWEEP LEAVES!

Sean Loughman

For practitioners of Zen, the initial problem is one of attaining realisation, seeing in to the true nature of things. And yet realisation (more obvious if we call it rebirth) marks the beginning of a journey, in fact the beginning of the Zen journey proper. This is what I have learnt so far about that journey.

You may wonder as I do, whether the audience for such instruction is so small as to make this exercise meaningless. Or whether someone who has achieved realisation would need further instruction. However, after realisation, there are different challenges. Much like mountain climbing, it is easier to climb up the mountain, than climb down it, counter-intuitive though that may seem. Muso Kokushi (Muso Soseki), an early Japanese Zen master and master gardener, stated:

Since ancient times it has been said that ascertainment of truth is relatively easy compared with the difficulty of preserving truth. Preservation of truth is the work of maturation.¹

Shido Munan makes similar observations.

... it is considered comparatively easy to awaken to the Way, while practicing it in action is most difficult. Therefore, Bodhidharma, the great teacher, said, "Those who know the Way are many; those who practice the Way are few." ²

Before I discuss what Bodhidharma meant by the practice of the Way, let's pause, take a step back and take refuge in trees.

To grow a magnificent pine, plant it early.

So a saying goes. Wise advice for those of us cultivating our buddha-nature or bodhi tree, it would seem. Sometimes, waking to our bodhi tree happens quickly, sometimes it happens slowly. Either way, it is just the beginning of a path without end...

But our bodhi tree is ever present within each and every one of us, so what is there to plant? Huineng goes even further in response to Shenxiu's poem and swings his axe, clearing his garden of weeds, trees and all:

Bodhi originally has no tree³

But if we use the tree as a metaphor for bodhi or buddha-nature, how is your tree faring now? Is it a dormant seed, awaiting the right conditions or has its first bud bloomed or perhaps the roots are planted firmly in the earth, its boughs offering welcome shade to others? Regardless of where you are at, it lives or dies in this moment and this moment alone. Not early and never late, where is your bodhi tree right now?! If you are not sure, this is the perfect season

for sweeping leaves. Sweeping leaves is a great meditative practice. Put down *Mind Moon Circle*, go outside and sweep up some big piles of leaves. Your bodhi tree is waiting outside, I promise!



Shōrin-zu 松林図 (Pine Trees - left screen 156.8 × 356 cm) (1593-95) by Hasegawa Tōhaku⁷, who captures the true nature of magnificent pines and bodhi trees in the delicate dance between form and emptiness, perfection and imperfection, dreams and wakefulness.

Now that you have swept your garden clean, you can put away your broom (and perhaps your axe!), and let's return to Bodhidharma. What did he mean by "practice the Way"? It means embodying the Great Vows moment by moment. When you begin to understand the implications of this statement, it seems like a formidable task. At the least, it is an ideal to aim for. And why is it so hard to practise the Way even after you have seen through your self and into the Void? Baizhang Huaihai (Hyakujo) offers a clue and remedy in his discussion on discipline (vinaya), concentration (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna):

Discipline involves stainless purity. Concentration involves the stilling of your minds so that you remain wholly unmoved by surrounding phenomena. Wisdom means that your stillness of mind is not disturbed by your giving any thought to that stillness, that your purity is unmarred by your entertaining any thought of purity and that, in the midst of all such pairs of opposites as good and evil, you are able to distinguish between them without being stained by them and, in this way, to reach the state of being perfectly at ease and free of all dependence. Furthermore, if you realize that discipline, concentration and wisdom are all alike in that their substance is intangible and that, hence, they are undivided and therefore one – that is what is meant by three methods of training performed at the same level.⁴

Now that we know what kind of garden we want and where the weeds are, I will share some other gardening tools which I have gathered along the Way. They are a work-in-progress, fashioned from my own insights, so feel their heft in your hand before you use them in your own garden. I have seen mention of "downward training"⁵, "the work of maturation"¹ or "bo in" (a Korean term referring to the practice of letting rice stand at the last stage of cooking)⁶, but have not yet found much practical advice in the literature.

Muso Kokushi again:

After realising the intent of Zen, people in ancient times used to spend decades polishing themselves thoroughly in order to free themselves of compulsions of conditioning and habit. This is called the work of maturation; the completion of maturation is called the attainment of unification.¹

This does not sound terribly different from regular practice! How does the path from realisation differ from the path to it? When we talk of the practice of Zen, sometimes "practice" refers to the technique and training, sometimes it refers to the expression. Often, we make no distinction. The path to mastery often follows the pattern of expression, to technique and back to expression. To make the return to effortless expression, technique is helpful. Furthermore, in my experience, some activities are more suited to training, others to expression. Some are eminently suited to both and it often depends on the individual. Take for example kyudo, or Japanese archery. Drawn by the mystique and cool-factor of Zen and inspired by *Zen in the Art of Archery* by Eugen Herrigel, I practised kyudo for a number of years while in Japan. My efforts resulted in zero progress in understanding Zen or myself. However, in retrospect, I can now see that it is a brilliant means of expressing Zen for many reasons, the most obvious being that the target does not lie. Not coincidentally, the (martial) arts also follow the same pattern of technique giving way to expression. It is also worth remembering that everything is an expression of Zen.

Here are some suggestions for bridging the gap between training (actions for yourself) and expression (selfless actions) until the two become one. Regular practice continues, but these practices take you further. In a nutshell, their purpose is to help you move from sitting zen to everything zen. If you can keep buddha-mind while focusing on your breath, then focus on sounds. If you can keep Buddha-mind with sounds, keep it with household tasks and so on.

Developing a clear mind

Developing and strengthening your mind increases your resilience to habit and delusion. It is relatively easy to maintain a clear mind on the cushion, not so easy off it. This is why zazen is still important. Zazen improves resilience by lessening the influence of habit and improves depth of understanding through contemplation. Koans help by exercising and confirming the depth of your understanding. However, at this stage they should be seen as an aid to a larger practice, not just to save yourself.

The story of Zuigan (Ruiyan Shiyao) is instructive. He was known for talking to himself, "Master!", "Yes, what?", "Stay awake!", "Yes, yes!". Perhaps he struggled with enlightenment and this was his way of staying present? I was reminded of Zuigan by my two-

year-old Zen mistress and daughter, who inspired me to write this essay. For a time, she would announce (in gender and subject-agnostic Japanese) everyday:

Mr. Leaves, I am eating my breakfast!

Mr. Clouds, I am eating my breakfast!

Mr. Moon, I am eating my breakfast!

Theory

Burn the sutras, but then read them if you haven't before. Not only does it deepen your knowledge, it reminds you of the Way and shows how Sangha members past approached the same challenges. Zen is just one of many paths to the top of the mountain. Join different congregations and listen to their Dharma talks. You will be able to better help those still climbing along the various paths by learning of different religions. Again Muso Kokushi says something similar:

For Zen teachers, knowledge of verbal expression should not be limited to the methods of Zen schools only, but should extend to the devices of other Buddhist teachings and even to other philosophies and secular sciences.¹

Approaching it from the other direction and writing about my experiences has also helped me untangle my thoughts, forced me to do research and synthesise and express my new understanding. Many of the things I have written here, I did not know until I put pen to paper.

Forgetting clear mind

In letting go of everything, clear mind must go too. I went through a phase where I would suddenly realise that I was in a state of perfect no-mind and then being annoyed at myself for realising this and therefore losing it at the same time. Perhaps the next step for me is letting go of the attachment to clear mind.

Living the prajna paramita

Part of the answer lies in the Great Vows. Attaining nirvana is not enough. Now you must do something with the wisdom that you have discovered. This means putting it in to practice. There are many tales of monks living among the poor after enlightenment. I suspect this works both for training and the actualisation of enlightenment.

One particularly effective way of strengthening your buddha-mind is to work on something that you have identified as a weakness in your former self. This is not for the faint of heart!

The practice of Zen

There is only this moment, in which thought is no-thought and there is no mind or technique to develop or forget. Living the prajna paramita is effortless, so what need is there for effort. Once you reach the top of the mountain, you can be in all places at the same time. Stay at the top, but come down at the same time. This is the realm of skillful means (upaya). Selfless action is Bodhisattva action. There is only living the prajna paramita.

Go sweep leaves!

Many thanks to Allan Marett for his input.

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*Black tree shapes, dark skies -
theatre empties in silence
as we wipe our eyes*

*In this summer sun
eucalyptus leaves glinting
silvery, each one*

Juliet Hollingsworth

from Sally Hopkins

Everything flowing in and out of everything,
earth, and sky and growing tree,
 everything on the move
like ocean, like air, like the sound of the wind,
the cells of the body, the blood,
the life in the soil,
the sap, the atoms of leaf and bark,
 the stars-
how could anything be separate?



I can no longer find the name of the Aboriginal artist who created this painting, but since I first saw it in the mid 80's when we were on our isolated farm, and it was on many postcards, it has seemed as if it speaks the truth of How it IS. Our ideas so often divide, within ourselves and between ourselves, but there is a reality greater than our ideas, which we ignore at our peril.

This painting sings of that Reality.
Sitting sometimes feels like being this tree.

THE ANGOPHORA LADY

Diana Levy

The angophora lady
has her head in the soil
while her two pink legs
with the delicate wrinkle between
point straight up into the air –
leafy feet waving

Is she equally long
beneath the ground,
a thin brown torso and
a head of wild root-hair

swapping dharma and jokes
with worms, ants and
burrowing earth creatures

taking the temperature
of earth's mantle?

Angophora costata
common name:
Smooth-barked apple



Painting by Janet Selby, 2009



Burnt out Scribbly Gum, Janet Selby 2009

*I'm not giving up
burnt and broken tree
still standing*

Mt. York

**in old age
an act most powerful -
tree across the path.**

**let that sunshine
of the wattle
bloom in me**



DL
 old camping ground
 sitting with a tribe
 of blue gum trees

Mind Moon Circle, Journal
 of the Sydney Zen Centre
 251 Young Street
 Annandale NSW 2038
 Australia

PRINT POST
 225 293 00002

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