

OzZen Journal Summer 2022



Writing • Poetry • Art • Events • Dharma

The OzZen Journal is published quarterly (spring, summer, autumn and winter editions) by the members and friends of OzZen. The OzZen Sangha is based on the mid-north coast of NSW, Australia. For more information about OzZen please visit the website: ordinarymind.com.au

We acknowledge the Gumbaynggirr owners of the land where we meet, and pay our respect to elders of the past, present and future.

Cover photograph: Phil Pisanu

Contents

Contents.....	Page 3
Editors Note	Page 4
Letter from the Teacher	Page 5
Dharma Talk: Taking Refuge.....	Page 7
Thich Nhat Hahn—Buddhist Revolutionary.....	Page 12
Poetry.....	Page 15
OzZen Book Club 2022.....	Page 17

Editors Note

Welcome to the Summer edition of the OzZen Journal for 2022.

For those of you on the east coast of Australia I hope you are enjoying the La Niña double whammy. Rain, very warm water, and a highly active Pacific Ocean (thanks to cyclonic activity and extra-topical lows) are certainly keeping it interesting.

Perfect weather for mozzies and bluebottles. Summer....perfect as it is!

This edition has plenty of interesting material with a full transcript of Andrew's dharma talk on 'taking refuge' in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Contributions from Andrew and Kate Koch pay tribute to the passing of one of the great modern Zen masters - Thich Nhat Hahn (1926-2022). His lifelong commitment to peace and the alleviation of suffering is an inspiration to all of us.

Thanks to Louise Cranny and Larry Hancock for their contributions of poetry. Larry has provided several unique translations of Zen inspired poems into the Gumbaynggirr language, a fitting recognition of the traditional lands where the OzZen Journal is produced.

The final contribution from Tom Jacks and Larry announces the upcoming OzZen Book Club. It promises to be an interesting 2022 for OzZen with a comprehensive Zen program planned for the year.

Happy reading.

Phil Pisanu, 28 January 2022

philnsandy@internode.on.net

Letter from the Teacher

By Andrew Tootell

Dear Friend,

In the tradition of what's best about Australian culture – inclusiveness and participation - I am very excited about the latest developments within our Sangha. We are fortunate to have so many people with years of lived experience in the arts, education and the helping professions, who are willing to donate their time and creativity to create such a rich and vibrant community.

A number of friends: Phil, Tom, Rhys, Louise, Jack, David, Elisabeth, Kate, Pingala, Jed, and Larry have volunteered to contribute to our OzZen community as *Dharma Facilitators*, either leading us in silent Zazen sessions, Guided Meditations or facilitating the Wednesday Evening Book Club. Please consult our website Calendar for all the dates when our friends will be presenting. The Guided Meditation project began last year with myself, Rhys and Jed experimenting with this form of practice (see the Research Report in the OzZen Spring Journal, 2021) and I am very happy to see it develop and grow in this way.

Our friend and local language teacher, Larry Hancock, will also be offering lessons in Gumbaynggirr language every second Sunday after our Sunday Zen meetings. Larry is passionate about Gumbaynggirr and taught Japanese and Wiradjuri. Larry also has been translating some Zen poetry into Gumbaynggirr (see this edition). These lessons will be starting sometime later this year (date yet to be confirmed).

The OzZen Book Club is taking up the reins from where the Precepts Group ended last year. Tom and Larry, both experienced group facilitators, will be hosting the OzZen Book Club meeting every second Wednesday evening, commencing on the 2nd of February. The book is called *Mountains and Rivers Sutra: A Weekly Practice Guide* based on a series of teachings by Norman Fischer, poet, priest and Zen Master in the Shunryu Suzuki Soto lineage, on the essay of the same name by the founder of Soto Zen, Eihei Dogen. I hope you are able to join us in what promises to be an excellent way to build sangha relationships while reflecting on our practice, inspired by this wonderful and mysterious poetical writing which touches on Ecodharma themes and lots more. Each chapter contains practice suggestions by Norman Fischer which are to be discussed every fortnight.

I would also like to acknowledge the excellent ongoing work and contribution of all the OzZen Committee Members: Jill K-W, Jill C, Tom, Phil, Michael, Larry, and Rebecca. Our committee plays a vital role in guiding OzZen as an organisation and making the best decisions they can to make OzZen a safe and supportive culture for everyone to feel at home within. I thank them all for all their efforts. Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution to OzZen by our website designer and manager, Steve Coates. The website has played a significant role in the development of our community and Steve has given us the best of his creative talents. He has currently redesigned the website to make it more user friendly and to enable people to join OzZen or renew their membership directly on our website.

The annual membership fee is \$25.00 (there is flexibility to donate more for those who can) and is based on the Calendar year. Membership becomes due in January each year and gives everyone the opportunity to participate in annual elections (usually held in April) and get involved in creating our OzZen culture.

The membership fee goes directly into the on-going costs of maintaining OzZen as a viable and inclusive dharma community. There is also a separate link to make donations for the dharma teachings, which are given freely. *I am happy to say, by the time you receive this Journal, you will be able to go straight to the new website and either join or renew your membership for this year!*

Please enjoy this edition of the Journal and many thanks to our Editor and Publisher, Phil, for putting it together in such an attractive format.



Dharma Talk: Taking Refuge

<https://soundcloud.com/ordinary-mind-zen/taking-refuge>

So, the topic I chose to speak on this Sunday, the 6th of June 2021 is known in Buddhism as final shelter, or taking Refuge in the Three Treasures, the Triple Gem: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. During a dharma talk, I would encourage you to maintain your zazen practice, your zazen mode of listening. In other words, I'll try and not make this a university lecture. I don't want you tuning in just with your intellect but with a deep listening. So just maintaining your zazen practice let my words fall as I speak and then we'll have time at the end for discussion.

For me, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the Three Treasures, is probably the easiest and simplest way of understanding or expressing Mahayana Buddhism or Buddhism, or Zen Buddhism. All Buddhism's and all Buddhists take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. For those of you who are present, who are taking part in the Jukai ceremony, during our Yarrowarra retreat, after making repentance or atonement, which comes first, the first three (of the sixteen) precepts are taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. So it's interesting they come, in this sense after the atonement, when we atone for any harm we may have caused, towards ourselves or others, in this lifetime or previous lifetimes. In other words, there's a sense of completeness as we take refuge.

For those of you who are not taking the Jukai ceremony, in other words, the Jukai ceremony being the ceremony which initiates one into being Buddhist, then just look upon this notion of taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in a way that makes meaning and sense for you. In fact, for all of us, we have to arrive at our own understanding, and make it our own, what it means to us as we experience Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. We have to personalize it. Each one of us will have a slightly different understanding of it, and that's fine. Because whenever we come to speak about Zen Buddhism, it's always an approximation, words are always an approximation. Sometimes the teaching is clearer when you just listen to the birds or listen to the cars going past.

So, this form of Jukai was established by Dogen Zenji in the Soto Zen lineage, taking the 16 precepts, the first three being taking Refuge. Just a little quote on the meaning of the Pali words. The expression "take refuge" is translated from the original Pali, and in our Sutra book, we have the three refuges in Pali on page one, called "T-Sarana". Where we say, I take refuge in the Buddha by saying: Buddhā, Saranam, Gacchāmi. So "sarana" refers to a shelter, protection or sanctuary. Some place of peace and safety. So sarana, shelter, protection, sanctuary, some place of peace and safety. Gacchāmi or "gamama" refers to the act of returning. The act of returning. So:

"The English word refuge, seems quite appropriate, because it carries the sense of both place and going back or returning, it is synonymous with shelter and protection. It is anything to which you may turn for help or relief. The Latin root "refugere" means "to flee" or "to fly back". When we take refuge in the triple treasure, we are flying back to our true home".

That is a quote from a book by Reb Anderson, a teacher in the Shunryu Susuki lineage, from his book called *Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts*.

So, refuge, refugees. I want to just to preface something here. I think that, taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is really premised upon the assumption that we already have some relative sense of safety. So, if one was fleeing from a country were, literally one was fleeing for one's life. And if one became homeless and one's children were, of course, in that process, and we did not experience any safety. Then the first thing we need to focus on is providing ourselves and hopefully other people helping to provide us with some sense of refuge as a refugee status. Some place that we can call home, where we and our families can feel safe.

When Buddhism was first developing 2,500 years ago, the Sangha I guess was the place where one could literally turn to for refuge, in those days there was a lot of poverty as there is now, but now we also have poverty in the midst of affluence, but the traditional Buddhism, where you have Shakymuni Buddha teaching and the community, which formed around him, the Sangha, and teaching the Dharma, teachings, we have the Buddha Dharma Sangha, right from the beginning. And in those days, I think the sangha did provide a kind of refuge for people who didn't literally have a home and one took up homelessness as a kind of refuge, where one would reside, within a supportive community that survived on begging for food, literally and did not have any permanent shelters necessarily and who may have wandered around as a community, teaching the Dharma. But one did have the support of this community.

I think in modern times or post-modern times here in the West, many of us live in relative affluence, so we don't necessarily go to refuge to escape from some sense of poverty. Although, of course, people in different countries experience, extremes of violence and poverty. But for us, often, the refuge we are seeking, is from something more like some kind of existential insecurity. And so, as you would have all noticed in the west, sangha's are primarily middle class, usually people educated and have developed an interest at some point in their lives. in Buddhism. Most of us in the Sangha are not experiencing extremes of poverty or violence. hopefully. So that's one big difference between modern Buddhism and traditional Buddhism. That many sangha's in the west, you know, people find very high middle class people living affluent lives. However, having said that, there is obviously a need in the West....the need for refuge is different. More a kind of existential sense of seeking refuge. And we know that there is a lot of isolation and loneliness that we experienced in the west, in the midst of our affluence.

When I hold the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, in mind, I sort of like, have a kind of triangle in my mind. You can envision that, with Buddha Dharma and Sangha at the top maybe, and little arrows pointing both ways on each line, connecting them all together. So, as I see it, the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha are really all about the interconnection between the three of them. They are interdependent, like all of reality, they are empty like all of reality and the best way to understand them is to see them as being interconnected all the time, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha all working together. And we can see this Triple Gem, this taking refuge, as either a boat, which carries us towards a safe place, a boat, which transports us, or we can also see it as taking refuge right now, here in this moment. And I think, you know, in our Zen, Mahayana practice, there's always these two aspects to our practice. There's the direct, no path, which is right here right now, and there is this notion of gradualness. So right now, we can take refuge right now, in this moment. And we have Buddha Dharma, Sangha present right now. Or we can see it as a boat, which we continue to cultivate, and which takes us to a place of Refuge.

Normally speaking, we don't kind of prioritize the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in any particular order because they all work together. That's the primary understanding about them. But if I was to prioritize them, I would put Sangha first and then Dharma then Buddha. I think from a human point of view, the first place we turn to for refuge is either our family or our intimate relationships or our friends. When family, intimate relationship or a friend is not available, that's when the Dharma and the Buddha become really important.

So we start with Sangha. The first experience of sangha we get is our family, our friends and our intimate relationships. So, a Sangha, a Buddhist Sangha can be seen as an extension of that, building on that human need. So in a sense, a Sangha is a kind of association of friends, that come together, sharing core common values i.e., the teachings of the dharma. To support each other in the practice of the dharma. So even back in the days of the historical Buddha, there were associations of crafts people, kind of like we have like we have unions now, people formed associations. And as we've developed over the West, we've developed the notion of a democratic association of friends forming the Sangha.

I mean, so that's a literal interpretation of the sangha. How we formed OzZen as a Sangha with a constitution.

And when you think about it really, there's no, really, there's no dharma and no Buddha without a sangha. And vice versa. The Sangha creates the teacher as much as the teacher creates the Sangha.

When we take refuge in the three Treasures, we are also asked during the Jukai ceremony, to maintain them. So this also points to another important aspect about the Sangha, that is tradition. Our tradition dates back some 2500 years. Each generation makes the tradition anew, according to conditions and circumstances, times change, the way we teach changes, the way we do Sangha changes, we are doing it doing on Zoom this morning. But we recognize and acknowledge that we do belong to a tradition. So part of the importance of Sangha is maintaining that tradition. So that's one of the reasons why it's important that the Sangha is autonomous from the teacher. Because it's the Sangha that maintains the tradition. Teachers come and go, teachers can retire, eventually teachers will die. Hopefully the sangha continues, sangha members will die but hopefully other sangha members will replace them. Sangha continues. Maybe eventually we will all die out. We don't know. This experiment, with lay teaching, with being Buddhists in our everyday lives, is a relatively new thing. In the past, it was maintained by monasteries. We are yet to see it to see whether or not Buddhism can survive without monasteries. But even in those days the monasteries were there to, in a sense people could take refuge in a monastery and receive some hospitality. Or one could live in a monastery, and it was not an easy life. One would have to work very hard. So as Buddhism migrated into China, monasteries developed, whereby the monks began to grow their own food and they no longer needed necessarily to beg. Begging became more of a ritual, whereas a lot of the monasteries were self-sufficient in terms of their food production.

Right from the start, the notion of coming together as a sangha was to support practice, to enable people to be free from labouring all day in order to sit in meditation or to have the freedom like we did today, to sit and meditate and discuss the dharma. This is a privilege. Many countries today, many thousands and millions of people today, wouldn't have time to be able to sit around meditating and discussing the dharma. Which goes back to my original point, that there's a certain degree of, of comfort that is required in order to practice Buddhism in the first place. So, Buddhism is not about asceticism, as we know, the historical Buddha went through that stage and left that and returned to the middle way: being kind to oneself, giving one's self enough food and catering for one's needs.

The other thing I think that's important about sangha is, it's the place in which hopefully we can learn to overcome our fear of strangers. Even middle class educated people like ourselves, experience fear of strangers and we experience social anxiety. And many of us have been hurt in a social content, whether in an intimate relationship or whether in a group situation, perhaps starting in school or in our families and so on. So, coming together, to have conversations with each other, is an important practicing in itself, where we're learning to create a safe context for this kind of sharing to take place. And inevitably, as in psychotherapy, it can also happen in our Sangha, that there will be some times ruptures or disruptions in relationships that need to be mended as best we can. Sometimes they can be mended and sometimes they can't be. But we're all human and we're all imperfect in that way.

We aspire to practice creating safety and respect in our conversations. That's another important part of the Sangha. Finally, of course, as we've all experienced, sometimes marriages or intimate relationships don't last. Sometimes we just get disconnected from family and sometimes we get disconnected from friends. Hopefully in creating or co-creating Sangha, because Sangha is a co-creation, we co-create the possibility of connection that can last a lifetime. So that's another important part of taking refuge in the Sangha.

Taking refuge in the Dharma. The dharma has a lot of interpretations as to the meaning of Dharma. I'm just going to keep it simple. So dharma refers to both the literal teachings of the original Buddha and all the various history of teaching since that time. But it also refers to reality.

You know, most of you now are quite familiar with, the four practice principles. So when we talk about taking refuge in reality, you all know we're talking about taking refuge in being just this moment. Simply being and being present to whatever is arising in This Moment. This moment is it. Now, you're all familiar with the practice of no gain, no lack, nothing missing. This moment is complete. Reality is always complete. It's impersonal. In a sense, reality really doesn't care about our feelings, really doesn't care about whether we are suffering or not. Reality is just reality. But, if we can enter the gateless gate, then we just relax into this moment and be this moment.

One of Joko Beck's chapters from her first book, which I've always really liked, which really stood out for me when I was first studying her, the chapter is called "What practice is" and this particular quote really stood out for me many, many, years ago, and it still does now:

"We begin to learn that there is only one thing in life we can rely on. What is the one thing in life we can rely on? We might say, 'I rely on my mate.' We may love our husbands and wives; but we can't ever completely rely on them, because another person (like ourselves) is always to some extent unreliable. There is no person on earth whom we can completely rely on, though, we can certainly love others and enjoy them. What then can we rely on? If it's not a person, what is it? What can we rely on in life? I asked somebody once and she said, 'myself.' Can you rely on yourself? Self-reliance is nice, but is inevitably limited ... There is one thing in life that you can always rely on: life being as it is."

Life is always going to be the way it is. Trust in things being as they are, is the secret of life. If we can be with reality as it is, in other words, when there is an absence of resistance and we take refuge in just this, we are free of suffering. Even if we're in the midst of a heartbroken ending of our relationship, or we've just lost someone we love. We just feel the feeling. Suffering stems from desire, resistance to life being the way it is. In other words, we want the good stuff to continue or we want the bad stuff to go away. That's suffering! When we take refuge in the Dharma, we take refuge in life as it is. And also, as we say in our practice principles, life is the great teacher or the only teacher. Life is teaching us all the time about impermanence and interdependence. And if we listen deeply, life will teach us how to be in this moment. We enter into the not-knowing mind. The unconditioned mind.

It may even be possible to be free from our biologically based survival instincts of fear. When we enter into this place. Not always, but possible. We can actually even be free of flight, fight and freeze and so on. This is the conditioned reality that we all live in, our biologically conditioned reality, our culturally conditioned reality, our personal history of our own history of relationships. This is all our conditioned reality. Which is always part of and inseparable from, the boundlessness of reality or the unconditioned reality, or what is sometimes referred to in Buddhism as The Unborn Mind. Which takes me into taking refuge in Buddha.

So refuge is not self-reliance as such, and it's not even other-reliance and it's not a higher-power reliance neither. So Buddha is, you know, short for the awakening one, the awakened mind the awakening mind the one who is awake. The reason why I said Sangha first and then Dharma second and Buddha third, is that really Sangha is creating and preparing the ground for us to experience the Buddha Mind. And the Buddha mind is so simple, that we miss it often, we don't recognize it. And also, it's sometimes hard to see it because we get caught in our fixations and our reactions when we are caught in suffering, when we are caught in the self-centred dream, in other words, when we are caught in not accepting the reality of things as they are, for whatever reason, we lose it, we don't recognize it. Buddha-Nature, reality itself is perfect just as it is, we can't improve upon it. But the Buddha is pointing to our experiential realization of that and our practice is the experiential realization that everything is complete, everything is okay, just as it is, right now. When we respond from that place, we're much less likely to do any harm, much more likely to respond compassionately in an appropriate way, as opposed to when we get caught up and taken away by some requirement or some reaction of things to be different than they, then we

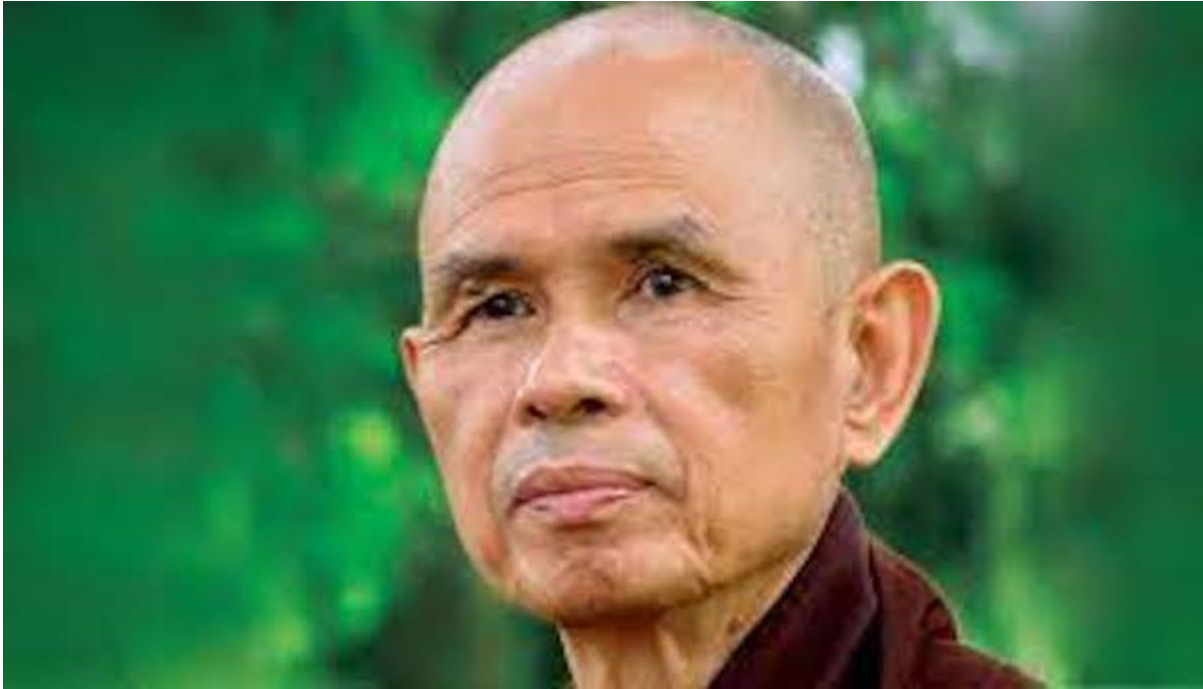
are much more likely to come from a dualistic place and separate ourselves from others.

So, Buddha is pointing to the non-dualistic experience of reality, of being non-separate from reality, whatever this moment is. And again it's really hard to put this into words, and it's very important not to turn it into a thing that we can hold onto. So, Buddha Mind is not a thing. It's not something that we can see or feel or touch. It's the kind of the source or the context for all of this. And it's the experiential realization of that in the moment. So because it's a moment-by-moment thing, then we can actually sometimes get disconnected from it and we lose it. So, that's what brings us back to the importance of Sangha and practice, being with reality, creating the conditions for us to be free of all conditions and to experience Buddha Mind here and now and the freedom that comes with that. The freedom which comes from having no need right now, in this moment, to be anything other than just this moment, to be totally complete, right now. That's the Nirvana Mind. It's no different from Samsara. Samsara is just the resistance to what is.

Okay, so that's just a few words on Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It's a beautiful way to hold Buddhism in your mind, in a very easy way. It's something we could talk about for a lifetime as well, yet it's utterly simple and it's something that we'll continue to learn about for the rest of our lives. So, I'll now open up for discussion.....

Andrew Tootell.

Thich Nhat Hanh (1926-2022) — Buddhist Revolutionary



January 22, 2022 — Yesterday Thich Nhat Hanh died, after a long illness. Two years ago I was asked to write this piece for “Lion’s Roar,” as part of a celebration of Thich Nhat Hanh’s teachings and life. It seems relevant today.

Thich Nhat Hanh always wore the simple brown robes of a monk. He walked and spoke mindfully as a Zen teacher, poet, and bridge between the world’s faiths. But the strength of steel lay just below his placid surface. It made him a kind of Buddhist revolutionary.

I recall Zen teacher Richard Baker’s description of Thich Nhat Hanh as “a cross between a cloud, a snail, and piece of heavy machinery—a true religious presence.” Now at the age of ninety-five, he has left this earthly plane and his frail body. But his wisdom and influence are strong, completely alive and essential.

When I started working at the Buddhist Peace Fellowship in the early 1990s, there was a broadside hanging over my desk with an excerpt from Thich Nhat Hanh’s book *Peace Is Every Step*. In part it read:

Mindfulness must be engaged. Once there is seeing, there must be acting. Otherwise, what is the use of seeing? We must be aware of the real problems of the world. Then, with mindfulness, we will know what to do and what not to do to be of help. ... Are you planting seeds of joy and peace? I try to do that with every step. Peace is every step. Shall we continue the journey?

The disarmingly straightforward wisdom of Thich Nhat Hanh—more familiarly known to his students as Thay, meaning master or teacher—was tempered in Vietnam’s anti-colonial struggle against the French and the devastation of the U.S. war that followed. In the face of these conflicts, Thich Nhat Hanh brought a nonviolent movement to the Buddhist monasteries and created the School of Youth for Social Service, a cohort of Buddhist peace

workers working in rural villages of Vietnam. “So many of our villages were being bombed,” Thich Nhat Hanh said:

Along with my monastic brothers and sisters, I had to decide what to do. Should we continue to practice in our monasteries, or should we leave the meditation halls in order to help the people who were suffering under the bombs? After careful reflection, we decided to do both—to go out and help people and to do so in mindfulness. We called it ‘Engaged Buddhism.’

In the late 1960s Thich Nhat Hanh was exiled from Vietnam—an exile that continued until 2005. Mistrusted by both the communists and nationalists in his own country, he steered a middle way of Buddhist-based nonviolence. In the U.S. he found like-minded comrades in Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Merton, the radical Catholic Bergin brothers, western Buddhist teachers and students, and activists within the nonviolent circle of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

I began reading Thay’s books in the 1980s, starting with *The Miracle of Mindfulness* and then *Being Peace*, the first Parallax Press book. After *Being Peace*, the stream of published words by Thay became a wide river, with brilliant commentaries on classic Theravada and Mahayana sutras, radical re-interpretations of the bodhisattva precepts, and Buddhist social commentary on our troubled modern world. As they rolled off the presses, his books were eagerly read by so many of us in the Buddhist community.

At the heart of his teachings Thich Nhat Hanh has driven home the centrality of mindfulness as the core of Buddhist practice. It’s fair to say that the flowering of our pervasive contemporary mindfulness “movement” has grown from the words of Thich Nhat Hanh.

As director of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship through the 1990s, I was asked by Thay and his growing community to organize biennial talks at the Berkeley Community Theater, which accommodated four thousand people. The first talk I organized was in April of 1991 in the immediate aftermath of Desert Storm, the first U.S. war against Saddam Hussein’s Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait, and the police beating of African-American Rodney King in Los Angeles. I was struck by Thay’s comments that night. He spoke of his deep anger over the war in Kuwait and the beating of King, both of which seemed to trigger for him painful memories of the war in Vietnam and the brutal ignorance of U.S. oppression. He said he had considered cancelling his tour, with all its retreats and dharma events. His words revealed to me that he wasn’t an unreachable saint, but a man with raw feelings. Then he shared that he’d meditated on his own reactivity and realized that he had to continue his tour as planned, because these oppressors and victims—the police, Rodney King, U.S. soldiers, Iraqis, and all their government leaders—were neither different from nor distant from himself.

That same week, in a *Los Angeles Times* op-ed, Thich Nhat Hanh wrote:

Looking more deeply, I was able to see that the policemen who were beating Rodney King were also myself. Why were they doing that? Because our society is full of hatred and violence. Everything is like a bomb ready to explode, and we are part of that bomb. We are co-responsible for that bomb. That is why I saw myself as the policemen beating the driver. We all are these policemen.

This insight about interdependence is what I have learned from Thich Nhat Hanh. It has infused how he has taught and walked in the world, but it is not a special vision of his own. Such insight appears to Buddhist and spiritual teachers of all lands and ages. It comes from poets and seers. Walt Whitman wrote: "I am large, I contain multitudes."

Let us strive to be like Thay, that is, let us strive to be truly human, our true selves.

Author: **Hozan Alan Senauke**

(Contribution from Andrew Tootell)

I asked the leaf whether it was frightened because it was autumn and the other leaves were falling. The leaf told me, "No. During the whole spring and summer I was completely alive. I worked hard to help nourish the tree, and now much of me is in the tree. I am not limited by this form. I am also the whole tree, and when I go back to the soil, I will continue to nourish the tree. So I don't worry at all. As I leave this branch and float to the ground, I will wave to the tree and tell her, 'I will see you again very soon'."

That day there was a wind blowing and, after a while, I saw the leaf leave the branch and float down to the soil, dancing joyfully, because as it floated it saw itself already there in the tree. It was so happy. I bowed my head, knowing that I have a lot to learn from the leaf.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

(Contribution and photo from Kate Radha Koch)



Poetry

In my pit
of loneliness I sit
and stare into the puddle
that accompanies
me there
is this reflection really me ?
or just life's
parody

[poem written when i was 17]

and now

sitting
breathing in with the night crickets
breathing out
becoming one with the gentle rain falling

Louise Cranny.

• • • •

Juway yaam warluuny yaanyji?
Ngaya yaarri warluunyambi.
Warluuny yagarra! Yagarra!
Warluuny yarralambigurrang!
Warluuny nyaagiling!
Biiwayay Ganyjagigam.

Where does this path lead?
I am on the path.
Follow the path! Follow it!
The path is lost!
The path is found!
An end to suffering.

For thich nhat hanh

*Giidany gurraadaygam nyayagi
Bangarr-bangarr yuwarrgin dawaandiyay
garaala balgarraabaygam-bugany
Nyirrnaaygam ganiliyay,
Ngaaja ngaanya yarralambigurray
muuda ngilidu bindaymay.*

Contemplating the clear moon
Reflecting a mind empty
as an open sky
Drawn by beauty,
I lose myself
In the shadows it casts.

-Dogen (1200 – 1252)

*Yarrang garrgin
Juluum guru-gu
Yarrangadi giidany nyirrnaa nyayinggili...
Biyagayandi nyaawang,yaam garrgin
Nganyundigujaa-gu biyaaming.*

Passage into dark
Mountains over which the moon
Presides so brilliantly...
Not seeing it, I'd have missed
This passage into my own past.

-Saigyō (1118 - 1190)

*Babaarrabaygam buunminda
Waguuny gurraygundi bunyjing ya-
Nyagunyjirram muurr ngiibarr.*

As the sound of the clap sticks falls
The scent of the flowers rise-
Evening shade.
Kane kiete/hana no ka wa tsuku/yuube kana

Adapted from Bashō (1644 – 1694)

Poetry with Gumbaynggirr translations by Larry Hancock

OzZen Book Club 2022

OzZen will be running a fortnightly book club on Zoom this year, starting on Wednesday 2nd February from 7:00 pm-8:30 pm, to be hosted by Larry and Tom.

This year's book will be 'Mountains and Rivers Sutra – A Weekly Practice Guide' by Norman Fischer, based on the Mountains and River Sutra by Dogen (click [HERE](#) for a translation of the sutra).

Each chapter of the book contains a page of reading and then a simple practice for the week. We will be working through two chapters each fortnight, and there will also be time allocated for general discussion about the dharma and reflections on personal practice. While we encourage everyone who wants to get involved to purchase a physical copy of the book, it is by no means a requirement. Larry will email photocopies of each chapter to everyone on the emailing list as we work through them.

The basic structure of sessions will look like this:

6:45 pm – Open for check in

7:00 pm – 10 min zazen

7:10 pm – 30 min discussion of the book (2 chapters/practices)

7:40 pm – 10 min break

7:50 pm – 30 min for general discussion and reflections on personal practice

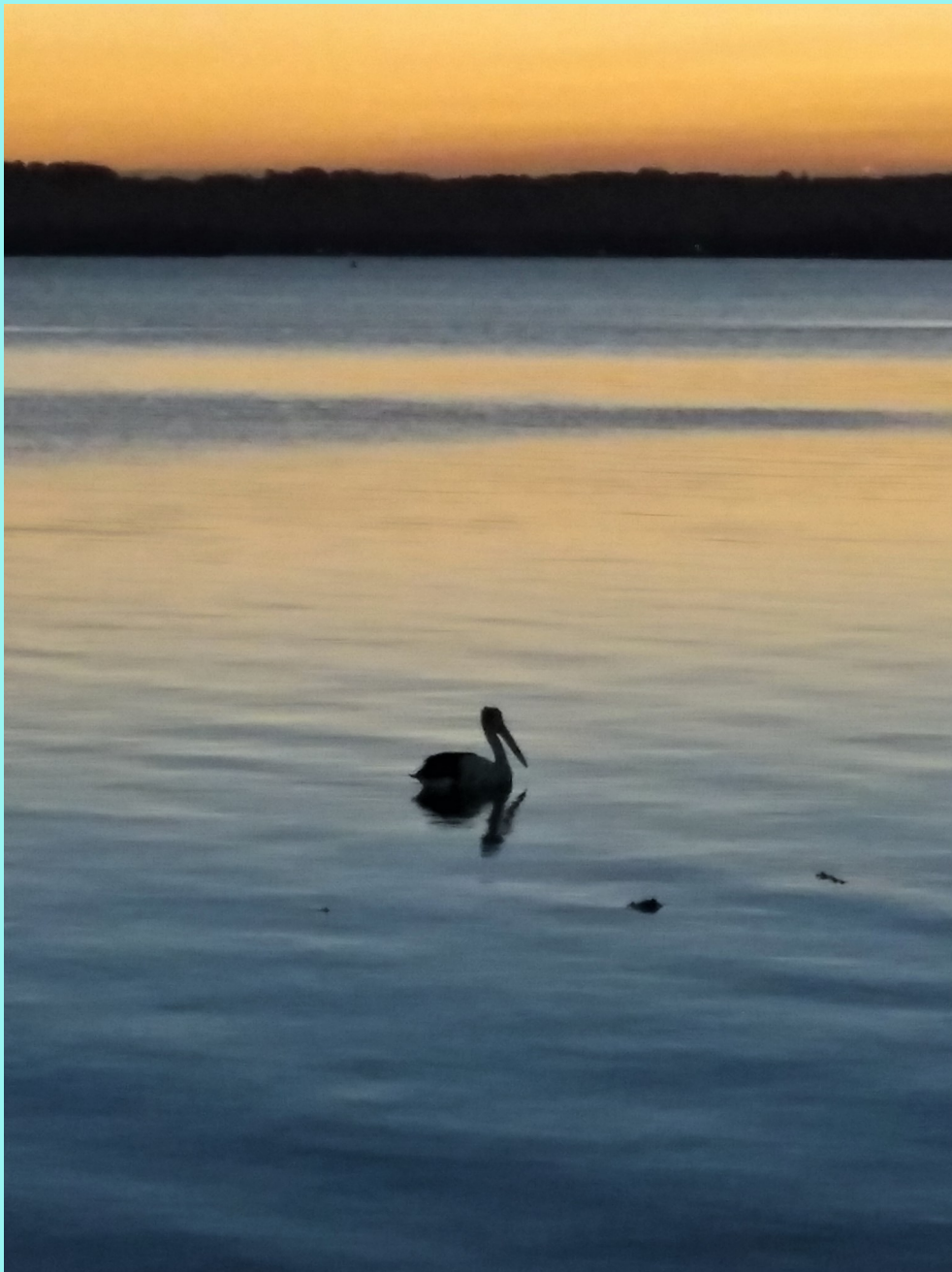
8:20 pm – 10 min zazen

8:30 pm – End of session

While we have a text in order to give each session some sort of focal point, the idea is not to create a strict study regime, but to provide a space for sangha members to meet, discuss aspects of their own practice and generally get to know one another better.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please email Tom at thomasjacks001@gmail.com





Please email contributions for future issues of the OzZen Journal to:

philnsandy@internode.on.net