

# OzZen Quarterly

Summer 2021

OzZen Quarterly is a publication for and by members of the OzZen community based on the Mid North Coast NSW, Australia as a means of keeping in touch and sharing information. For more information about OzZen please see our website: <a href="mailto:ordinarymind.com.au.">ordinarymind.com.au.</a>

#### From the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of OzZen Quarterly. The subject of this edition is time. Andrew writes about endings and beginnings and Phil reflects on 'space - time/being - time'. Others have contributed poems and quotes on the topic and I've included a few cartoons.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to contribute to this publication. Your efforts make for a much more interesting read for us all.

If you are not already a member of OzZen, please complete the membership form on the last page and return to me at rubyandjill@gmail.com Membership is free.

Thanks, Jill K-W

#### **Letter from the Teacher**

Endings and Beginnings ...

The way is inherent in each of us; still our gaining the way depends upon the help of copractitioners. Though each person is brilliant, our practicing in the Way still needs the power of other people ... Therefore, while unifying your mind and concentrating your aspiration, practice and seek the Way together - Dogen

As I sit here writing this letter on a rainy day in December, I am thinking of endings and beginnings – transitions. How the time of our lives is shaped, sometimes gently, sometimes dramatically, by endings and beginnings and transitions. Endings can be traumatic, or they can be something looked forward to. And of course, in every ending is a new beginning. I think most of us would have looked forward to the ending of school and the beginning of the

summer holidays! I guess the sentiment many of us feel now, as we look forward to the end this year, a year most of us will never forget, is one of relief, with a sense of hope and excitement for the new year. The ending of COVID and the ending of Trump, and hopefully plenty of summer rain to nurture the dry earth!

I am certainly full of excitement for what 2021 will bring for OzZen, as we continue to grow and evolve as a distinctly Australian sangha, with our own Australian flavour for how we do things. Many traditional Zen centres would probably find us a little too informal, but I think this informality has always been present in Australian culture. At the same time, we want to preserve and honour the tradition we belong to, dating back hundreds of years in Japan and China. In retrospect, although 2020 was a difficult and challenging year for all of us, we have grown as a Sangha and I feel our connection to each other has deepened throughout the year. I know that the Zoom zendo was not a forum that everyone resonated with, but it did enable us to support each other and stay connected. Also, I deepened my appreciation of how we are all sharing in this *now moment*, wherever we may be located.

It was also wonderful to establish relationships with new (and old) members to the sangha from interstate and overseas. OzZen now feels more like a national organisation, while at the same time, deepening our roots in the local community. It was heart-warming to have such a good turn up for our end of year meeting and celebration, including performances by our musicians and poets. The gathering reminded me once again of the unique talents and abilities all our Sangha members bring to OzZen, ranging from music and singing, craft and visual arts, to dance and poetry, Tai Chi and Gurdjieff!

I am happy to announce we are offering an exciting new program for 2021. In this edition you will find details of our 2021 program, which includes regular meetings at the Sawtell Zendo, as well as continuing with regular meetings via Zoom zendo. We will also continue with regular *morning meditations*, every Tuesday. I will facilitate these morning meetings every *second* week, and Dr Jed Blore and Dr Rhys Price-Robertson, both experienced therapists and meditators, have kindly volunteered their services to stand in for me on the alternate Tuesdays. I would encourage everyone to attend each week if possible.

The reason why I had to change the mornings from Wednesday to Tuesday is that we will also be hosting a *Precepts Study Group* every second Wednesday evening from 7-8.30 pm throughout the year. This group will be co-facilitated my me and Malcolm Martin, Ordinary

Mind Teacher, located in the UK. We will be focusing on the application of the precepts in our everyday lives. The study group will culminate in a Jukai ceremony at our end of year Yarrawarra Retreat, where members of the group who wish to participate in this traditional ceremony, will receive the precepts and a black rakusu, publicly communicating their commitment to wholeheartedly embracing the Way of Zen Buddhism.

We will also be introducing chanting periods next year, during our Sunday meetings at Sawtell and on retreats. Chanting is another form of meditation which connects us with out tradition, including doing some chants in Japanese. I am also interested in exploring how we might set some of the Zen liturgy to music, with the help of our talented sangha members. To this end, the leadership role of Jikido, will be broken up into two roles: Timekeeper (Keeper of the time) and Chant Leader. I will be calling for four volunteers (two for each role) to take on these important leadership roles next year.

Welcome to new beginnings!

Andrew Tootell December 2020



Our Sawtell Zendo

# Programmes for 2021

## OzZen Calendar 2021

#### SAWTELL ZENDO AND ZOOM ZENDO

SUNDAY	JAN	31	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
			COMMITTEE MEETING	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	FEB	14	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
SUNDAY	FEB	28	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
			INFORMAL DISCUSSION	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	MARCH	14	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
GUEST SPE	AKER:		BARRY MAGID	
SATURDAY	MARCH	27	SAWTELL RETREAT	8.45AM – 4PM
SUNDAY	MARCH	28	SAWTELL RETREAT	8.45AM – 4PM
SUNDAY	APRIL	11	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
SUNDAY	APRIL	25	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
			OzZen AGM	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	MAY	09	ON-LINE RETREAT	8.45AM – 4PM
SUNDAY	MAY	23	SAWTELL ZENDO	09.45AM –12PM
			INFORMAL DISCUSSION	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	JUNE	06	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
SUNDAY	JUNE	20	ECO-DHARMA OUTDOORS	9.45AM – 12PM
			LUNCH	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	JULY	04	ZENDO CLOSED	
SUNDAY	JULY	18	SAWTELL DAY RETREAT	8.45AM – 4PM
SUNDAY	AUGUST	01	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM

SUNDAY	AUGUST	15	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM –12PM
			COMMITTEE MEETING	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	AUGUST	29	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 4PM
SUNDAY	SEPT	12	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
			INFORMAL DISCUSSION	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	SEPT	26	ON-LINE RETREAT	8.45AM – 4PM
SUNDAY	OCT	10	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
			INFORMAL DISCUSSION	12PM – 1PM
SUNDAY	OCT	24	ZOOM ZENDO	
SUNDAY	NOV	07	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM -12PM
			COMMITTEE MEETING	12PM- 1PM
SUNDAY	NOV	21	ZOOM ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
WEDS	NOV	24	YARRAWARRA RETREAT	<b>7PM</b>
THURS	NOV	25	YARRAWARRA	
FRIDAY	NOV	26	YARRAWARRA	
SAT	NOV	27	YARRAWARA	
SUNDAY	NOV	28	YARRAWARRA	12PM
SUNDAY	DEC	05	SAWTELL ZENDO	9.45AM – 12PM
			END OF YEAR PARTY	12PM – 2PM

## ZEN PRECEPTS STUDY GROUP DATES

#### **CO-FACILITATORS: ANDREW TOOTELL & MALCOLM MARTIN**

EVERY SECOND WEDNESDAY EVENING FROM 7PM -8.30PM COMMENCING WITH 25 MIN ZAZEN, FOLLOWED BY DISCUSSION.

#### FIRST SEMESTER

1.	17/03/21	PRECEPTS PRACTICE (ANDREW)
2.	31/03/21	PRECEPTS PRACTICE (MALCOLM)
3.	14/04/21	FIRST APPLIED PRECEPT
4.	28/04/21	SECOND APPLIED PRECEPT
5.	12/05/21	THIRD APPLIED PRECEPT
6.	26/05/21	FOURTH APPLIED PRECEPT
7.	09/06/21	FIFTH APPLIED PRECEPT
8.	23/06/21	SIXTH APPLIED PRECEPT

#### SECOND SEMESTER

9.	21/07/21	SEVENTH APPLIED PRECEPT
10.	04/08/21	EIGHTH APPLIED PRECEPT
11.	18/08/21	NINETH APPLIED PRECEPT
12.	01/09/21	TENTH APPLIED PRECEPT
13.	15/09/21	OPEN DISCUSSION
14.	29/09/21	OPEN DISCUSSION
15.	13/10/21	OPEN DISCUSSION
16.	27/10/21	THE JUKAI CEREMONY, RAKUSU AND JUKAI TALK

#### **TUESDAY MORNING GUIDED MEDITATION 2021**

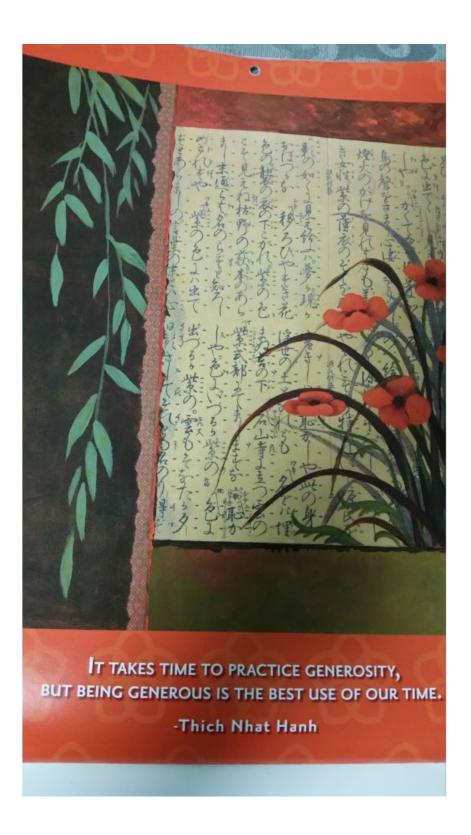
The popular Morning Guided Meditations will re-commence again next year on Tuesday mornings on the *2 February* (the day had to be changed because of other commitments).

The time will remain the same as last year: check-in from 7:45am for a 8am start, finishing no later than 8:45am. Andrew will be co-facilitating the morning meditations with OzZen members Dr Jed Blore and Dr Rhys Price-Robertson, who have kindly volunteered their services to co-facilitate under my supervision. Many of you would have met Jed and Rhys on the Zoom sessions this year. Both Jed and Rhys live in Victoria and are experienced therapists and meditators.

I encourage everyone to attend our Tuesday Morning Meditation sessions for a great start to the week.

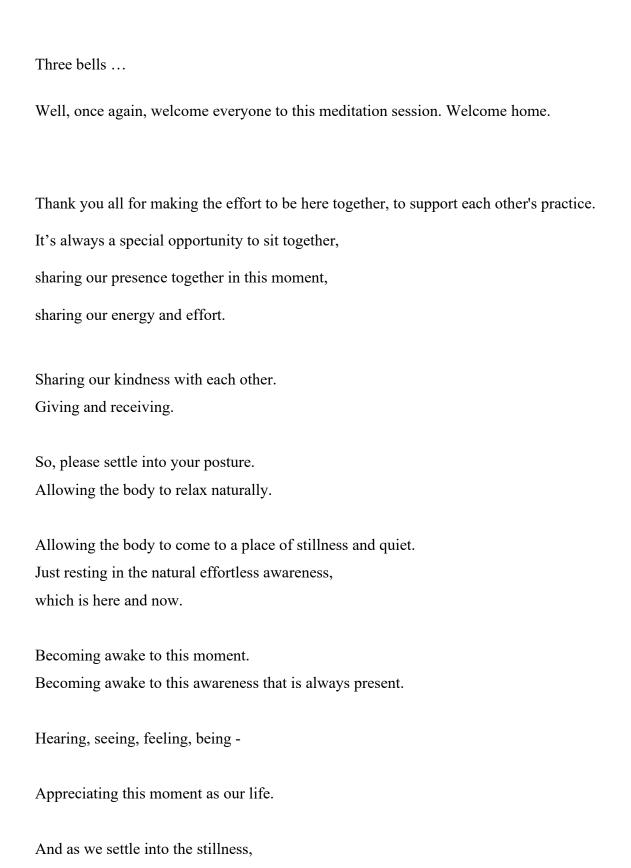
Rhys Price-Robertson lives in Central Victoria with his partner, two young sons, and a growing flock of chickens. He recently started a private practice as a Gestalt therapist, and is also the Editor of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Journal of Australia. The first book on meditation that Rhys ever read was Charlotte Joko Beck's Everyday Zen. Before learning from Andrew, he practised in the Theravāda tradition and with the US teacher Jason Siff.

Jed is a social worker, research scientist, and mental health practitioner in Melbourne, Australia. Jed has also been a meditator in the Theravāda tradition since 2015, attending retreats, sittings, and lectures with a variety of teachers, including Sharon Salzberg, Mark Epstein, John Welwood, Phillip Moffitt, and Tara Brach. In 2020 Jed came across Barry Magid in Tricycle magazine, which transformed his meditation practice. Jed sat with Barry and the Ordinary Mind Zen School in NYC via Zoom, and then heard of Barry's Australian dharma successor, Andrew Tootell, on the OMZ NYC podcast. Jed began sitting with Andrew's OMZ group based in NSW, and began a teacher-student relationship with Andrew. Since 2016, Jed has facilitated mindfulness groups in prisons, rehabs, counselling centers, and hospitals.



Thanks to Angie for this Thich Nhat Hanh quote

### Guided Meditation: Kindness



we become naturally aware of various areas in the body which may be holding or contracting.

We just allow that to be and allow our awareness to enter into those sensations.

Becoming aware of our intention to practice kindness, to ourselves and others.

To befriend ourselves and others.

To be generous to our friends and others.

To be considerate to ourselves and others.

To give ourselves this opportunity to enter deeply into appreciating our bodies, befriending our bodies.

Like we're bathing our bodies in a warm bath of awareness.

These bodies of ours which may often be agitated or restless.

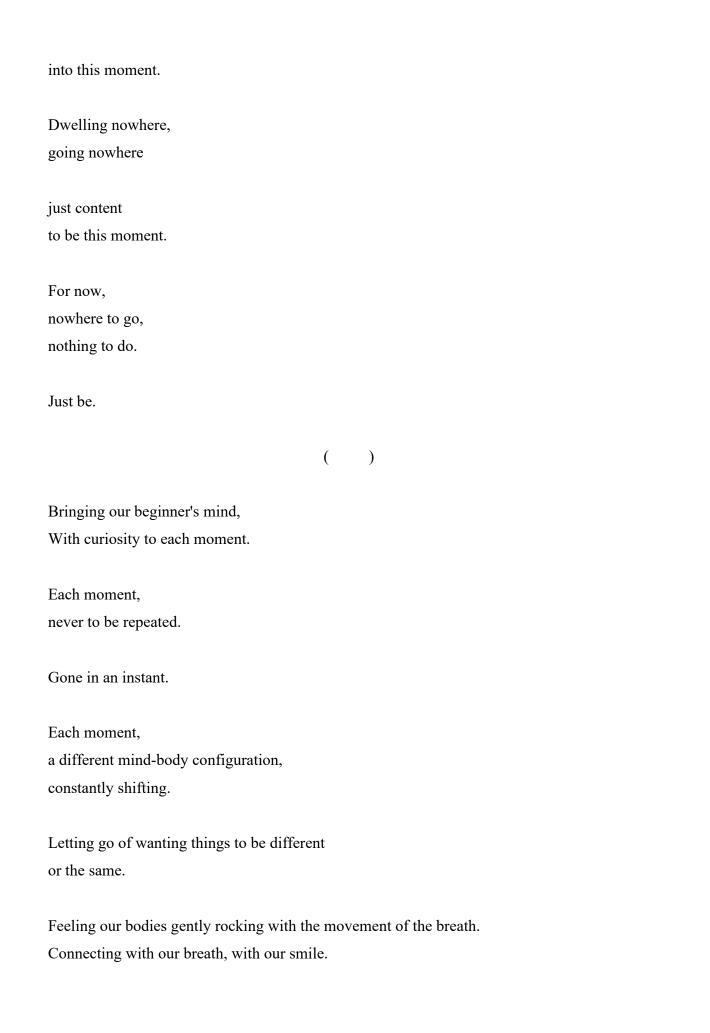
Allowing them to open up, relax and let go of any protective armoring which may be present.

Just letting go.

Embracing each moment
here together
in this safe space.
In our own rooms, alone, but together
Sharing our now moment with each other.

Manifesting our intention to be kind, to be gentle,

to hold each other in this space. To feel kindness in our own faces, in our smile, in our eyes. ) Sensations and sounds arising and ceasing, dying. Endlessly flowing, nothing to grasp or hold onto. Just opening into this flow, this flux of life. Surrendering our normal tendency to control. To want to control, to push away, to grasp onto. Surrendering, letting all that go. ( ) Allowing that clenched fist to gently open. Feeling the belly relaxing, the shoulders relaxing. Feeling, feeling our way into this,



Relating to our own body as you would do to a baby, holding the baby in our arms tenderly.

Surrendering to the rhythm of our breathing.

In, out

Rising, falling

Expanding, contracting.

As the body relaxes our hearts naturally open.

Feel the expansiveness of our hearts opening

touching each other.

Knowing that we all share the one intention to practice kindness.

( )

As the heart opens
we become free from our reactions, our reactivity,
and we are able to respond to the world,
to relationships
from this place of loving kindness, compassion.

We can choose to cultivate kindness.

We can choose to live our lives being friendly, generous and considerate. Realizing our deep, intimate interconnectedness and interdependence with each other and with all beings,

with all life.

My teacher's teacher, Joko Beck, was once asked, if she could summarize all her years of practice in one word, what would it be?

And she said, "kindness".

( )

Each day

thousands and thousands and thousands of acts of small kindness hold our communities together.

Although we know 'good news never makes a paper sell', we all know, from our own lives and relationships, we all know numbers of people, who every day are going out there acting kindness in all kinds of different small ways.

Numerous carers, caring for people:

People helping to clothe and feed the homeless.

The hungry.

Tending to the sick and the dying.

( )

In sitting here in stillness, simply relaxing our bodies, we're cultivating kindness to ourselves and others.

What does kindness feel like?

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( )
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Feel your own way into kindness towards self. Feel the acceptance that's always present.

The deep acceptance of loving kindness.

The deep acceptance of just this moment,
just as I am,
right now.

In all my flaws and imperfections
I deeply accept myself.

This is the practice of kindness.

This natural, effortless awareness that is presencing right now, is totally complete, just as it is.

Lacking nothing, it desires nothing.

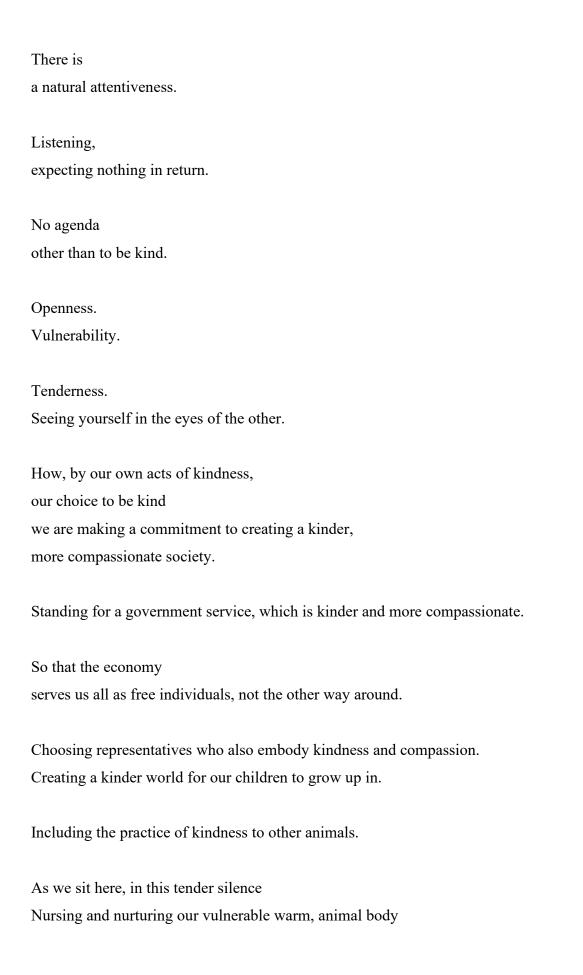
And from this place of completeness kindness as a response to the world can arise.

( )

What are the qualities of this kindness you are feeling right now?

Friendliness.

Generosity.



In this deep well of kindness. ( ) Allowing it to seep deeper down, even into the muscular structure of the body. Allowing it to rest, to be safe, to open and relax. No longer needing to be on guard. As the body relaxes, deeper and deeper, a sense of lightness naturally arises, another quality of the opening heart. ( ) So may your body be at ease. May your heart remain open. May your smile light up the day. May you meet this day full of kindness and love.

Thank you all for being here to share in this practice of kindness.

Andrew Tootell

#### Space-Time/Being-Time (Phil Pisanu, January 2021)

Conventional time has past, present and future in sequence. It is a reliable and practical measure of a series of connected events that we tend to take for granted. Human beings have the perhaps unique capacity to remember the past, experience the present and imagine the future. We don't know if other animals can do this, although there is evidence that elephants, whales and migratory birds carry knowledge of the past and pass it onto their offspring. In the modern world where many things are quantified we divide time into slices and use this measure to organise our lives.

But is time as straightforward as it seems?

Modern physics explains time with a mathematical model termed 'space-time'. This combines the three dimensions of space (up, down and sideways or x, y, z) with a fourth dimension – time. Early (Newtonian) explanations of physical phenomena treated space as flat and time as a completely separate entity. This tends to work for everyday things happening around us. Quantum mechanics uses the theory of space-time to explain the unusual relativistic effects that arise from traveling near the speed of light as well as the motion of massive objects in the universe. Both velocity and mass cause time to slow. An observer on a fast moving spaceship or in a strong gravitational field will experience time passing normally. An external observer will see time passing more slowly on the fast moving ship or in the gravitational field. This is why astronauts in orbit age (marginally) slower than the rest of us on earth.

Dōgen Zenji was also very interested in the phenomena of time. Dōgen proposed a concept referred to as 'being-time'. This moment holds all the other moments and times of our experience, including past, present and future. Dōgen used this explanation of time to point to the idea that life is not just a series of discrete sequential moments passing by but an expression of interconnectedness and impermanence, common themes in Zen. Each present moment holds all being-time.

Dōgen also wrote that the hundred grasses (all phenomena) exist over the entire earth and exist as the entire earth. A present moment is all there is, and each particular time is entire time. Past, present and future are just mental activity. Unfortunately the present moment (all there is) cannot be experienced directly because our time-being is always morphing into the next moment.

Confused? You are not alone!

For more on Dōgen's explanation of time and how it relates to Zen practice I recommend *Being Time. A Practitioners Guide to Dōgen's Shobogenzo Uji* by Shinshu Roberts.

Barry Magid writes on the subject of time and relates this to the verse we (and he) chants at the close of every sitting,

Caught in a self-centred dream, - only suffering

Holding to self-centred thoughts - exactly the dream

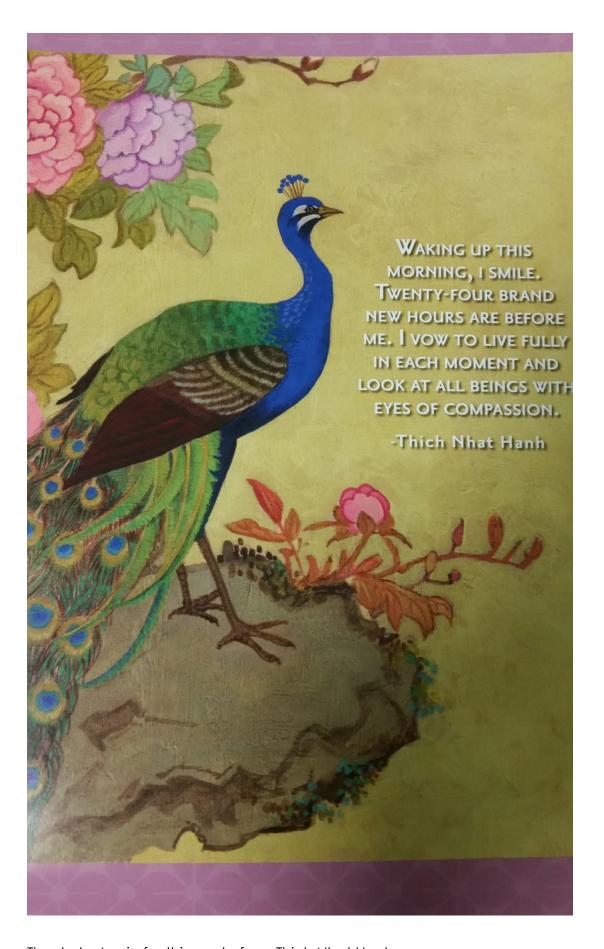
Each moment, life as it is - the only teacher.

Being just this moment - compassions way.

"The verse says a teacher is always at hand – that sounds like good news. The bad news is the teacher is life-as- it- is and that is the only teacher... It is always there to remind us that time's arrow flies in one direction only. Our self-centredness is, at bottom, our desire to stop time in its tracks ... We are forever torn between trying to hold on and trying to reverse direction. But life is right there as our teacher, showing us over and over that reversal can't be done. The alternative? Not looking ahead, not looking back, but being just this moment. Compassion's way is the way of letting go, of loosening our grip. We've had our teacher by the throat and have been squeezing the life out of her. We can only become compassionate toward our life and toward those around us when we are no longer preoccupied with trying to control the uncontrollable.

Acknowledging the inevitability of change does not mean mere passivity or resignation however ... We are honest about what we can control and what we can't, and our efforts are directed toward what's possible, not what's impossible."

Ending the Pursuit of Happiness, Barry Magid (2008) Wisdom Publications. pages 154,155.



Thanks to Angie for this quote from Thich Nhat Hanh

This is an excerpt from Everyday Zen by Charlotte Joko Beck, on the subject of time, submitted by Elizabeth B.

"What is time? What can we say about our daily life in connection with time, and with no-time, no-self? What can we learn about relationships in connection with this no-time, no-self?

"Ordinarily we think of a dharma talk or a concert, or any event in life as having a beginning, a middle and an end. But at any point in this talk, for instance, if I stop right now, where are the words I've already said? They just don't exist. If I stop at any later point in the talk, where are the words that have been said up to that point? They don't exist. And when the talk is over, where is the talk? There is no talk. All that's left are memory traces in our brains. And this memory, whatever it is, is fragmentary and incomplete; we remember only parts of any actual experience. The same thing about our whole day; and our whole life. At this very point in time, where is our past life? It doesn't exist.

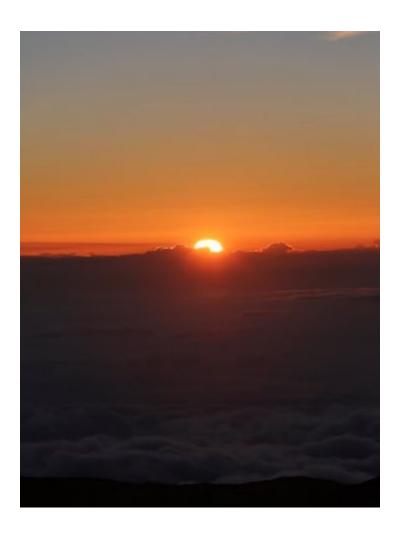
"Now how does this pertain to relationships, to our relationships with anything and anyone – to our relationship to our sitting cushion, to our breakfast, to a person, to the office, to our children?"

<u>Everyday Zen</u>, Charlotte Joko Beck (1997) Thorsons London. page 82

All OzZen offerings are freely given to allow access to all people regardless of income. If you are able to give financial support, please access the donation button on the OzZen website under the Events section.

Trusting fate, I just spend my time. Morning after morning, the sun rises in the east. Evening after evening, the moon sets in the west. The clouds disperse and mountain valleys are still. After the rain, the mountains in the four directions are close. Every four years is a leap year. A rooster crows toward sunrise.

Eihei Dogen in *Dogen's Extensive Record*, Reprinted in <u>Nightly Wisdom</u>, Josh Barok (Ed) (2008) Wisdom Publications page 80.



#### AND NOW FOR A LAUGH... two cartoons lifted from the internet



Maybe with time, they'll improve?



Kitty litter and the impermanence of life.

Please enjoy this beautiful poem submitted by Angie, about the timeless compassion of mother Earth.

#### **HOMECOMING** BY Linda Ruether

And the Great Mother said

Come my child and give me all that you are.

I am not afraid of your strength and your darkness, of your fear and pain.

Give me your tears. They will be my rushing rivers and roaring oceans.

Give me your rage.

It will erupt into my molten volcanoes and rolling thunder.

Give me your tired spirit. I will lay it to rest in my soft meadows.

Give me your hopes and dreams. I will plant a field of sunflowers and arch rainbows in the sky.

You are not too much for me.

My arms and heart welcome your true fullness.

There is room in my world for all of you, all that you are.

I will cradle you in the boughs of my ancient rainforest trees and the valleys of my gentle rolling hills.

My soft winds will sing you lullabies and soothe your burdened heart.

Release your deep pain. You are not alone and you have never been alone.

This is a piece presented by Vreni at our end of year gathering in 2020. It is reproduced here for the benefit of all those unable to attend.

#### SYMPTOMS OF INNER PEACE

Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fear.

An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.

Loss of interest in judging other people.

Loss of interest in judging self.

Loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.

Loss of interest in conflict.

Loss of ability to worry – a very serious symptom.

Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.

Contented feelings of connectedness with others and with nature.

Frequent attacks of smiling through the eyes and from the heart.

Increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.

Increased susceptibility to love extended by others, as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

If you have all or even most of the above symptoms, please be advised that your condition may be too far advanced to turn back. If you are exposed to anyone exhibiting several of these symptoms, remain exposed at your own risk. The condition of Inner Peace is likely well into its infectious stage. BE FORWARNED!

Unknown author

## **OzZen**

# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS:
I, Contact number
(name of applicant )
of,
Email:
hander and to be a constant of O-7 or In the areast of our above and a constant of our
hereby apply to become a member of OzZen. In the event of my admission as a member, I agree to be bound by the rules of the Association for the duration of my membership.
Date:
( signature of applicant )
MEMBERSHIP DETAILS:
MEMBERSHII DETAILS.
☐ I CONSENT TO MY MEMBERSHIP DETAILS BEING SHARED WITH SANGHA
MEMBERS
Name
Signature: Date: