

Healing Hearts

Healing, Consciousness & Wellbeing News

April 2023



Photo: Courtesy Nigel Richardson

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HEALING HEARTS

Edited by Suzanne King, *Reiki Energy for Life*

'The earth is our relative'. This line from a Lakota Sioux sacred song reflects the bond or 'oneness' that indigenous tribes feel for the natural world around them. Five words that honour life-giving forests, grandfather trees and medicinal plants. Nature moves with us, feeds and heals us, supports our wellbeing and teaches us the mystery of life, the now and beyond, in the dance of the wind, in the rocks and trees.

In this edition, Nigel Richardson explains how his love of wild places fills him with purpose to protect the environment while Silvana Smillie explains how living close to nature is so important to her overall wellness. Dr Jennifer Sanger takes us on an adventure to view a 500 year old tree in the Grove of Giants, while Ron C. Moss, Zen meditation practitioner and world-acclaimed haiku poet explains how an expanded awareness shows how "we are nature". Time to have a walk on the wild side and find out how nature is fundamental to our health and wellbeing.

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reikienergyforlife@outlook.com

Editor's Letter

All things are our relatives; what we do to everything, we do to ourselves. All is really One..

Quote by Black Elk, Lakota Holy Man

How lucky are we here in Tasmania to live so close to our natural environment. Vast swathes of rugged wilderness, blue tiers, wild and tranquil waterways all rest literally at our doorstep. I even spoke to someone recently who cycles past a family of platypus in the Rivulet, on her daily commute to the city! So whether you are cycling or hiking along trails, dipping your paddle into the Derwent, or just sitting admiring the waves, simply being in nature works to invigorate us in mind, body and spirit.

Nature fills us with wonder, immerses us in peace and places us into the present, allowing the issues of the day to ebb away. With each breath of fresh air we are connecting our own internal micro eco-systems to the flow of nature, to macro eco-systems of this earth and beyond. Indeed, reiki energy healing promotes ki/qi; the universal energy which flows in and all around all living entities (animals, plants and us humans).

Japanese people use the term 'satoyama' to describe this flow; this harmonious, deep connection and relationship between people and the environment. Apart from the tranquility and aesthetic beauty of Japanese gardens (inspired by Buddhism), an example of a thriving satoyama eco-system is evident in Kyoto. Here, there is a centuries old water garden system which flows into homes, which allows residents to fish from the pond within their house, while the water continues to flow all the way to Lake Biwa-ko (Japan's largest freshwater lake) (refer David Attenborough's documentary 'Japan's Secret Watergarden').

Of course, for First Nations people, the whole essence of 'country', their lives, identity, culture, creation stories and language is woven into the fabric of the land, waterways and sky. For the Yolngu of north-east Arnhem Land, for example, particular coastal waters, the coral and seabed represent song cycles, ceremonies and are the pathways of creation beings. I recently had the privilege of speaking to a Yolngu elder who is responsible for protecting the highest sea totem in their culture; the whale. It is humbling to speak to someone who has been chosen as the caretaker of wisdom, passing on cultural traditions, ensuring that the next generation respect and live in harmony with nature as their ancestors have done.

Across time, across the planet, the adoption of a harmonious relationship with nature is known to support our own wellbeing - on mental, physical and spiritual levels. This edition therefore explores how feeling and being connected to nature is so precious and vital to our health and wellbeing. Perhaps this edition will entice you to go out and explore; fill your senses in an old-growth forest, let your eyes rest upon the luxuriant fronds of ferns or crystal-clear water where seaweed dances in time with the tide. As a result you will feel calmer and more in the rhythm of your life.

Best wishes,

Suzanne King
Reiki VII Practitioner
Reiki Energy for Life



Learnings from Black Elk ('The Sacred Pipe' by Joseph Epes Brown:

"All things that move in the universe, in the rivers, the brooks, the springs, all waters, all trees that stand, all the grasses of our Grandmother, all the sacred people's of the universe. Listen! A sacred relationship with you all will be asked ..."

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Email

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reikienergyforlife@outlook.com
admin@healthyworks.com.au

anita@anitakillick.com.au

Living Life through the Lens of Nature's Beauty



Photo of Nigel alongside Bower spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*). This coastal native features low flammability and its leaves can be included in a salad.

Interview with Nigel Richardson - Photographer and Convenor of Tarooma Environment Network

About Nigel Richardson: Nigel has been part of the Tarooma Environment Network for over 20 years and last year became its Convenor. He also spent close to 40 years as a forester with Forestry Tasmania (now Sustainable Timber Tasmania), where his work encompassed native forest regeneration and fire management. His love of forests, nature and Tasmania's wild treasured spaces is a perfect complement to his other passion - photography. Inspired by family members, and with Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis as role models, it seems Nigel was always destined to become a photographer.

Nigel's vast photographic collection depicts his travels to wild places like the Himalayas and Patagonia as well as across Tasmania. He also works as a photographic editor (curating the images in the series of books *The Abels: A Comprehensive Guide to Tasmania's Mountains Over 1100 metres high*) and was recently a volunteer photographer for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival. He has exhibited his photographs at the Wilderness Gallery, Cradle Mountain and his works can be purchased via his website. He is also passionate about music and likes to combine images with pieces such as *Elegy for the Arctic* by Ludovico Einaudi and *Yanada* by Ross Edwards (refer links next page).

Nigel, can you tell me about the type of work you and your fellow Tarooma Environment Network (TEN) members do? My background in land management was good preparation for my work in TEN. As a volunteer landcare group, a lot of our work relates to eradicating invaders: plants which look like pretty native flowers but are actually weeds. TEN also restores local ecosystems by planting some of the species which once grew on these sites, providing critical habitat for animals and birds. Currently we are engaged in a large project in collaboration with Kingborough Council, Tarooma Community Association and Tarooma Primary School to create a landscaped playground surrounded by local native plants at Louisa Hinsby Park in Tarooma. So our work is beneficial for the community and the environment.

What do you think it is about Tarooma that conveys a sense of living in harmony with nature?

Tarooma has a range of natural environments including forested hills and gullies, coastal areas and public reserves, providing habitat for a diverse range of wildlife, from bandicoots and Bennett's wallabies to swift parrots. There are majestic blue gums, beautiful native pelargoniums, flax lilies (*Dianella sp.*) with their tiny but exquisite blue and yellow flowers followed by lush, shiny purple berries in late summer, and bower spinach, an edible ground cover and climber. Being immersed in this environment allows people to feel a connection with nature. I think Tarooma is also an area where you can feel the presence of the Muwinina people.

One of TEN's projects that I am most proud of, is our installation of a memorial plaque on the Tarooma foreshore to acknowledge one of the largest aboriginal living areas on the Derwent Estuary. The plaque is placed alongside a clump of native grasses, sags and small trees previously planted by TEN in conjunction with Tarooma High School. A John Glover painting alongside the text shows the Muwinina sharing happy times. The plaque aims to revere and celebrate the traditional custodians of the land and I encourage everyone to visit and reflect on their story. Being mindful of the environment and connected to the past inspires us to be respectful and gentle with the earth, for present and future generations to enjoy.

Interview with Nigel Richardson, Tarooma Environment Network continued



Photo: Courtesy Nigel Richardson

Early morning light highlights the strength and vigour of a blue gum, one of several growing behind Tarooma Beach.

Do you think the present generations are generally disconnected from nature and take the environment for granted?

Disconnection to our environment is endemic across the world; we are losing our connections to nature because of a loss of space, biodiversity and ecosystems. People might say 'so what if we lose a species of bird?', but everything on the planet has a role to play. If you lose too much you get to a point where the system breaks down. We need to keep people connected to nature and to this end TEN regularly conducts educational activities.

We hold plant propagation workshops with school and community groups and have held joint working bees at Tarooma Primary and High Schools. We also have a formal partnership agreement with the High School, which enables us to provide the school with labour, advice and expertise, to build an awareness of the environment throughout the whole school. We've also produced publications on coastal plants and habitat gardening which are available online (refer TEN's website address below).

What changes have you seen in the local landscape over the years? In the 1950s – 1960s people would eradicate the native plants and plant exotics (plants from elsewhere) including invasive plants like mirror bush, broom, boneseed and cotoneaster. These were fashionable at the time but have since escaped into surrounding bushland. Now there is a lot more emphasis on planting natives which in turn attract birds and other wildlife. There is a particularly beautiful area of the foreshore track north of the historic Batchelor's gravesite where TEN planted casuarinas many years ago. Judicious pruning has created a tunnel of shade and shelter for track walkers.

Your passions take you from photography to landcare pursuits.

What do you think drives your motivation? Beauty drives my photography. I am addicted to nature's beauty and try to convey that in my images. I find it uplifting and inspiring to look at life through the lens of nature's beauty.



Casuarina tunnel, Tarooma Foreshore Track
Photo courtesy: Nigel Richardson

To purchase one of Nigel's extraordinarily beautiful photographs:

Website: <https://nigelrichardsonphotography.com/>

Email: nigelrichardson@netspace.net.au

To view the 'Elegy for the Arctic' YouTube video (which shows the composer, pianist and grand piano on a raft amidst Arctic ice floes) go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DLnhdnSUVs&ab_channel=LudovicoEinaudi

To view 'Yananda' YouTube video, go to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTIfknKdtGw&ab_channel=GianfrancoBortolato

To find out more about the Tarooma Environment Network, refer to:

Website: <https://tarooma.tas.au/TEN/>

Email: info@ten.org.au



Silvana Smillie

Healing Power of Nature

Interview with Silvana Smillie

Introduction: Silvana means 'woodland, forest' and true to her name, she has always heard the call of nature. As a child she explored the Ku-ring-gai National Park, and as an adventurous backpacker, she set sail across the Indian Ocean in a rustic vessel, aptly called the 'Wilderness'. Soon she will chase auroras in the land of the Intuit in far northern Canada and in between she's walked to Mt Everest base camp in the heart of the Himalayas, climbed Machu Picchu in Peru and camped deep in the Australian desert. Yet her home on a cliff top overlooking a pristine Coningham bay, is where she feels most at peace, and a feeling of being home in mind, body and spirit.

For here she is right next to the Coningham Nature Recreation Area. This is where she can truly enact her life-long philosophy, which is centred around her deep connection to nature. The beauty of the environs that envelope her home, fill her heart with love and joy. There's a truth too; a knowledge that this is a special place, bigger and more profound than we could ever aspire to be. So it is in this special part of the world that we settle down to discuss how nature is so important to our health and wellbeing.

Our interview takes place on Coningham Beach with views across a blue expanse to majestic kunanyi beyond. To get here, we've walked along a track on Sheppards Hill, had an invigorating dip in crystal clear water and now we sip tea from a thermos.

On our way here it's easy to see how she lives and breathes this area. "I've walked along these bush tracks so many times, I could do it blindfolded"! It's here that her feet follow the rhythm of life along bushland tracks, ancient coves and tessellated pavements where perhaps once the Palawa people fished.



Coningham Beach looking towards kunanyi

There is a deep sense of their presence here, and indeed the area is highly valued by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. It seems Mother Earth sighs with relief here, for this is one corner of the planet which feels peaceful and in harmony with the natural flow of life.

Silvana, as we've been walking, you've mentioned a fundamental philosophy that you have lived by. What is that? My philosophy is described beautifully by the words of Mahatma Gandhi '*live simply so that others may simply live*'. For me, this is about treading lightly on the earth, leaving no trace and respecting Gaia - Mother Earth. When I'm immersed in nature, I feel closest to a higher presence, am close to the earth, I feel closest to God or the Universe or a larger presence than us. That makes me think about the time I was at Lake St Clair when we were at the last hut on the Overland Track. I was walking along the trail, I looked up and saw Mt Olympus there in the foreground and the sight was so spectacular, so breathtaking, that I felt a bolt of lightning go through my body - my first spiritual experience. That sort of beauty is just beyond us.

Interview with Silvana Smillie continued

What led you to live in Coningham? We wanted to leave the city and live by the water. Amazingly our friends owned the original house, so our new home was literally right under our noses. Moving to Coningham was like an awakening. We moved here and have never looked back. This is where I belong; there's nowhere else. Together with six other families we bought 10 acres of this beach side property and sub-divided so each lot has direct access to the beach. The thing that I most love about my home is that I have a dozen gum trees in my front yard; what an honour that is. The beach below the house is where I raised my children. When we moved here we threw out the TV, so the children had to occupy themselves by playing outside. They spent their entire upbringing at the beach or playing in the bush.

How would you describe your affinity with this area? The two things I love most in life are right here at my doorstep. On the one side I have the water and on the other side the bush - a perfect balance, a perfect harmony. I just walk out of my door and there I am, immersed in nature. There's also a deep sense of calmness here – you can feel it as soon as you turn off the highway.

How do you think nature and this area impacts your wellbeing? My Sunday walks in the bush are what the Japanese call *shinrinyoku* (forest bathing). It is my therapy and my release. When I'm in the bush or swimming in the sea it releases any stress or tensions that have accumulated over the course of the working week. When I'm walking its meditative - surrounded by beauty I can only think about how beautiful things are and there's a rhythm that helps to cleanse my mind. It is the overall wellness and wellbeing feeling that I am addicted to and cannot live without. When I'm walking in the bush I'm at home. When walking on my own, I love soaking in everything, the trees, the rocks, the birds. I absorb everything on a cellular level; it penetrates deeply and it's when I feel most alive.

What happens when you are taken away from the ocean and the bush? If I'm taken away from the sea and the bush then I start to feel energetically drained. In saying that, I did camp in the desert in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in the far northwest of South Australia. I had a special permit to spend a week with a group of aboriginal women. It was a wonderful experience, just being, learning and becoming immersed in the culture. So that was an entirely different landscape, far away from the ocean and the bush that I love. Yet it was a powerful landscape that seeped into my being and drew me in. Every once in a while, I feel like I need to go into the desert.

What do you think happens to people when they become disconnected from nature? For me, being disconnected from nature is no way to live. Being disconnected is disturbing because everyone and everything on the planet follows a rhythm and everything needs to co-exist. Many native people do not have a concept of private property. You can't own the land, you are a custodian. They also saw animals as equals that could only be hunted for food. The hunter would ask the animal's spirit permission to kill it. When we personify nature, we tend to take care of it. The more removed we are from nature, the more difficult it is to empathise with nature and the less we empathise with nature the less we care about protecting it. We lose the necessary connection and the ability to care. The stronger the connection with nature, the stronger the urge to protect it.



Coningham Beach boathouses

For more information on the Coningham Nature Recreation Area, visit:

<https://parks.tas.gov.au/explore-our-parks/coningham-nature-recreation-area>
<https://www.greaterhobarttrails.com.au/tracks/coningham-cliff-top-track>

Finding Peace in the Grove of Giants

Interview with Dr Jennifer Sanger, Forest Ecologist



Jennifer Sanger & husband Steve Pearce
Co-Founders, The Tree Projects

About Dr Jennifer Sanger: As a passionate forest ecologist, Jennifer is dedicated to putting Tasmania on the eco-tourism world stage. Her vision for the future is that forests like the Huon Valley's Grove of Giants will become THE place to view colossal, 500+ year old trees. With great swathes of the giant endangered sequoias of the Sierra Nevada (California) lost to bushfire, Tasmania has the potential to become world-renowned as the place to see the last remaining, protected giants on the planet. To raise awareness, Jennifer and her husband Steve, have co-founded The Tree Projects; an educational and environmental advocacy platform focused on the conservation of these forest giants.

Between authoring ground-breaking scientific reports, conducting speaking tours and consulting with members of government, Jennifer and Steve also take people on Open Days into the Grove of the Giants to see, in particular, Lathamus Keep (*Eucalyptus globulus*) – a magnificent blue gum close to the same age as the Vatican's Sistine Chapel. Jennifer is a member of the Independent Science Council of Tasmania, a visionary and her enthusiasm for conservation is infectious. Plus, she can climb giant trees at a single bound (well, with the help of a harness)!

Jennifer, how did you embark on your journey to become a forest ecologist? I have always loved the forest and been passionate about the environment. I grew up on a farm just outside Coffs Harbour and living there shaped my views. It was once a beautiful farm with bushland but then it was sold and now it's an industrial estate, complete with a McDonalds and a service station. My childhood memories are of the forest which is no longer there. So my love of forests flowed into my studies. When I came to Tasmania I was studying for my PhD. My thesis was on ferns and orchids which grow on trees, so I did a lot of field work in beautiful rainforests. That was when I learned to climb giant trees with my husband Steve. He is a photographer and film-maker so he has photographed the forests in a way that people are not used to seeing.

How did you find the magnificent blue gum, Lathamus Keep in the Grove of the Giants? We came upon that patch of forest a couple of years ago as it was destined for logging and it was actually our friends Carl and Jan who found the tree. We are all tree climbers, so we thought if we could measure it, it might classify as a 'giant tree'. A giant tree needs to be either 85 metres tall or over 280 metres in volume to be categorised as a giant. So we climbed the tree and found it was 320 cubic metres and could therefore be classified as a volumetric giant.

As it's recognised as a giant, it should now be afforded a 100-metre buffer zone but unfortunately that doesn't mean that it's neighbours will be protected. We have however found four other neighbouring trees which are close to that height. As the trees are situated on Crown Land, we have provided plans to try to make the area into a formal reserve. The plans are currently being reviewed and we should know the outcome by July 2023.



Lathamus Keep

Interview with Dr Jennifer Sanger continued

How would your vision for an eco-tourism venture work?: The Grove of Giants is close to established walking tracks at Lake Skinner which attracts a lot of visitors every year. To properly promote the area we would firstly need to protect the trees from logging, then the government would need to invest in establishing walking tracks. In the meantime, there are ten of us who have explored the area and located many other trees which are over 4 metres in diameter.

How do you advocate for the protection of these giant trees?: I go on speaking tours to raise awareness, and I've just authored a ground-breaking report that underpins my eco-tourism vision. The report relates to my finding that native forest logging in Tasmania is the State's highest emitting sector (it's equivalent to the emissions of 1.2 million cars). In conjunction with my findings, my husband Steve has filmed a documentary called *Tasmania's Forest Carbon* which premieres at the State Cinema on 19 April 2023. Steve has also filmed the documentary *Big Tree Hunters* and is currently filming *Big Tree Hunters II*. We are also selling Steve's beautiful photographs in the form of posters. For example, there's posters of Lathamus Keep as well as the 84.5 metre Gandolf's Staff (*Eucalyptus regnans*) located in the Styx Valley, Tasmania (refer our website). So my aim is to show how important it is to retain the most carbon dense forests in the world for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of the planet.

How do you experience the forest?: When you walk along, you can make out the understory, the sassafras and overhanging plants. It's a calming, happy place to be. Everyone feels that way. When we hold our Open Days in the Grove of Giants, we will have a whole bunch of people walking through the forest and everyone will be smiling. Then when I climb a giant tree, I am able to get a totally different perspective. Normally people experience the forest by viewing the lower half, and that can be a shady, mysterious place but when I climb a tree, I am with the birds, insects and the sunshine is on my face. It takes my breath away every single time. Being in a tree fills me with such peace and joy. I feel a spiritual connection to the land. In the forest I feel at home, at peace and I've been able to tap into a source of inspiration. The forest is where I slow down and I can appreciate the finer details. I am at home and I feel at peace in the forest.

To find out more, subscribe to The Tree Projects newsletter and/or join Jennifer and Steve on their next Open Day to view Lathamus Keep and the Grove of Giants, go to:

Website: <https://thetreeprojects.com>
Email: thetreeprojects@gmail.com

Thanks to Steve's filming expertise, you can even immerse yourself in the wonder of the forests and big tree discoveries from the comfort of your home. Documentaries on the website include *The Tasmanian Big Tree Hunters*, which follows the lives of five Tasmanians, on their big tree discoveries. The film captures the imagination; a future where bush-walkers, mountain-bikers and people of all ages can venture to where the biggest trees in the Southern Hemisphere are thriving. Jack O'Hare (International Track Builder) considers in the film how the Grove of Giants could become recognised as a world-class mountain biking destination.

As stated in the film, "being amongst big trees is utterly humbling."



Steve Pearce, Co-Founder of The Tree Projects standing next to a tree in the Grove of Giants

The Tree Projects website also features information on the Big Tree Register and there's a large gallery of magnificent Big Tree posters available for purchase.

A Growing Awareness - We are Nature

Interview with Ron C. Moss - Mountains & Rivers Zen & Volunteer Fire-Fighter



Ron creating one of his exquisite ink paintings

About Ron and Mountains & Rivers Zen: Ron and his friend Ross Coward have helped steer Mountains and Rivers Zen in Hobart for over 25 years and are practice leaders, along with a vibrant community of Zen practitioners or Sangha that's open to all. Susan Murphy Roshi is their teacher and they are affiliated to her Open Circle Zen Group.

Most days Ron can be found pursuing his passions for practicing Zen meditation, qigong and tai chi, or creating haiku and sumi-e ink paintings but at a moment's notice, he can swap a paint brush for a firehose, leave tranquility behind, and jump into his role as a volunteer fire-fighter. As the current Brigade Chief for Sandfly brigade, Ron has fought fires for his community and interstate, for decades.

The impact of infernos on the environment, and the risks that he and his crew have taken, in saving lives and livelihoods, was the catalyst behind his books, in particular *Bushfire Moon*. He has achieved acclaim for his poetry and art, which also appears in worldwide journals.

Ron, how did you start to develop an interest in ancient eastern philosophy, culture and practices? I started learning and practicing different martial arts in the 1970s which led me to tai chi, qigong and aikido energy based martial art forms. I naturally gravitated to the eastern traditions, the way the energy of nature is integrated into practices. This led to haiku poetry which is very much about our place in nature. So it is a life-long learning experience, a growing awareness, that we are not only interconnected with nature, that 'we are nature'. In Buddhism, everything is one, so we are part of everything else. Over the years I've discovered haiga, which is art with haiku poetry.

Can you explain what Zen meditation is and what haiku poetry is?

Zen is a meditation practice. One of the core teachings is breath counting while remaining in a stable seated position for a period of time, in order to sustain a period of stillness. Zen comes from Chan Chinese that comes out of Buddhism and Daoism (the basis of Rivers and Mountains tradition of Zen). In a simple form, Zen is about our interconnectedness with nature and remembering our true nature.

While you sit in zazen (seated meditation) thoughts will still come in, but as the Zen teacher says, 'you don't make them a cup of tea and entertain them!' You just let your thoughts go, but of course, that takes practice. You are not trying to achieve anything, you are already who you are trying to be. I think we are born as amazing beings but we forget about that. So it's about remembering and realising who and what we are.

Haiku is a traditional Japanese 5-7-5 word verse with a nature element with a deep resonance, but in English our syllables are different so it's more about the rhythm. In English it is more 3-5-3 but not fixed and the two parts of a fragment and phrase determine the structure. Haiku poetry is very much about our place in nature.

*dry billabong
a gathering of songs
from the old people*

*the light steps
of a hooded plover
on sacred ground*

*ocean of stars
the ancient humpback
going home*

Haiku from Ron's book
'Broken Starfish'

Interview with Ron C. Moss continued

Ron your affinity with ancient eastern philosophy has obviously provided much sustenance in your life. Can you explain how Zen meditation, or moving meditations like qigong and tai chi, have been of benefit to you? Firstly, by practicing a mindful life and writing haiku poetry, that prompts an opening of consciousness which then affects how you relate to the world and others. It promotes peace, patience, tolerance and centres you around taking responsibility for what you do and say. Following on from the haiku spirit of a famous Japanese poet, Taneda Santoka, haiku has a grounding in gratitude – being grateful for each day – and provides a way to transmute grief and sorrow.

The haiku contained in my book *Bushfire Moon* was very cathartic to write. It was my way of expressing what I had seen and felt while fighting fires. Also by practicing Zen meditation, it means that I am promoting peacefulness and stillness in my daily life. Regular practice is very beneficial; I think you get to a point of feeling sustained. You might feel anger for example, but you won't hold on to the anger. This in itself is a life-long tool or a way of being that helps to navigate daily life. I continue to write and publish haiku all over the world and collect them into award-winning anthologies.

Can you tell us about your books and your work: I have four published books featuring haiku poetry, being, *The Bone Carver*, *Bushfire Moon*, *Broken Starfish* and *Cloud Hands*. There's also various journals and sites like The Haiku Foundation and Contemporary Haibun Online where you can see my haiga gallery.

For more information on Ron's collection of haiku and art or to purchase one of his books:

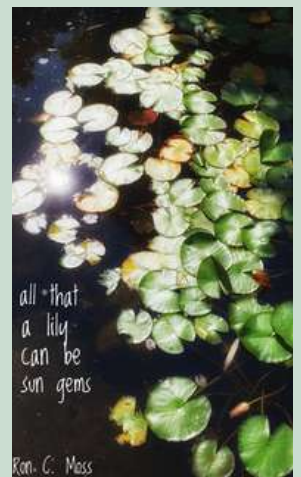
Email: ronmoss8@gmail.com

For more information on Mountains & Rivers Zen:

Website: www.zenhobart.com

Email: info@zenzenhobart.com

Address: City Dojo (above Goulds Natural Medicine), Liverpool St, Hobart



One of Ron's haiga entitled: 'all that a lily can be sun gems'

Mountains & Rivers Zen meets on a Thursday night and Wednesday lunch-time plus the first and third Sunday of every month. Newcomers to Zen or visitors from another Sangha are always welcome.

All That Is (Haibun by Ron C. Moss)(Published Blithe Spirit 2022)

The sunlit rain sparkles with raindrops and indigo diamonds as the mountain path disappears along with me into low clouds. I bow to a twisted pine, and it seems to return my bow, taking endless years to do so. Do I end at the tips of my fingers? Or as the ancients tell us, we are all that is, we are all One ...

*mixing ink
the old master breathes
a river of mountains*

The Rise of Reiki Natural Energy Healing



Reiki in Hospitals around the world

A century after Dr Mikao Usui founded his method of hands-on healing, reiki is now used by millions of people for self-care and as a complementary healing practice in hospitals and private practices around the world.

There has been an increase in academic studies over the past 10-20 years into the efficacy of reiki natural energy healing on reducing pain and anxiety and helping to 'restore the body's homeostasis' [1]. All of these studies are chipping away, edging closer towards proving what reiki practitioners already know; that **this healing modality should be part of standard care practices**. In the meantime though, it is heartening to know that reiki practitioners now work in hospitals across the United Kingdom and in over 800 hospitals across the USA (a rapid increase from approximately 60 hospitals, just a few years ago).

Hospitals using reiki practitioners include the Cleveland Clinic, where reiki is provided to heart and cancer patients as well as to people suffering from Parkinson's Disease, chronic pain, digestive issues and stress-related diseases. For hospitals like Abramson Cancer Centre (Penn Medicine), reiki is available for patients either getting infusions or receiving treatments in the Radiation Oncology department. At Johns Hopkins and other major hospitals, reiki training is built into nursing education. And at the Harvard Cancer Centre, the hospital recommends reiki as best practice for insurance purposes. [2]

Across America, reiki is provided in hospital emergency room settings to palliative care and many other clinical settings in between including: oncology, cardiology, orthopaedic, internal medicine and bone marrow transplant patients as well as patients suffering from trauma, musculoskeletal injury/pain, chronic illnesses and chronic pain. In New York, you can even have a reiki medical practitioner accompany you into surgery. According to the founder of this practice (Medical Reiki Master Raven Keyes), this provides immense comfort and reassurance to the patient and works to speed along the healing process, post-surgery.[3]

After witnessing the benefit to patients first-hand in the Operating Room and in integrative oncology settings, Dr Sheldon Marc Feldman MD FACS (Chief of the Division of Breast Surgery & Breast Surgical Oncology) has stated that medical reiki means that: *"there is less blood loss during surgery, a shorter hospital stay and faster healing without the need for pain medication"*. He now seeks a future where *"energy medicine becomes part of standard care, and Medical Reiki Masters are welcomed into operating rooms and other medical venues in service to doctors' patients across the globe."*[3]



Dr Sheldon Marc Feldman

Indeed, Dr Feldman is the force behind a groundbreaking clinical trial to study reiki's effects as a therapeutic intervention in breast surgery, which is being conducted at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine. Dr Feldman is due to present at the Usui Reiki Ryoho Conference (7-9 April 2023) in Osaka, Japan, on the results of the research and how he uses reiki in his daily surgical practice. [4] In the meantime, to view a video entitled 'Contribute to the Study of Medical Reiki in the Operating Room, go to: <https://www.ravenkeyesmedicalreiki.com>

1. <https://www.myamericannurse.com/reiki-hand-in-hand-with-nursing/>

2. <https://samanthaavery.com/2021/02/reiki-in-hospitals-and-clinics/>

3. Keyes, Raven, *Medical Reiki: A Groundbreaking Approach to Using Energy Medicine for Challenging Treatments*.

4. <https://usuireiki2022.org/en/programme/>



Dr Mikao Usui,
Founder of Reiki
in the early 1900s

Introduction to the Miracle of Reiki

Reiki is a natural healing modality and is used as a complementary therapy, both for self-healing and for practitioners to assist patients to ease their pain and discomfort, within private practices and in clinical settings. Apart from the complementary healing part of the practice, reiki also has a spiritual aspect, so people use the miracle of reiki as a tool or means to open their consciousness to develop spiritual awareness. Reiki can be used therefore as a way to find peace and respite, both mentally and physically. It is like having a 'calming balm' available for every moment of your life. If you are suffering in some way, then reiki is used to reduce that pain, tension or anxiety.

This occurs as reiki activates the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby allowing the body to go into a respite response, which in turn reduces the heart rate and cortisol levels. When the body is placed into this rest position, that's when energy (known as qi/ki) can flow more freely through the organs. Flushed with qi/ki, you feel more radiant, rested, balanced, calmer and in less pain.

So how did the miracle of reiki come to be? The founder of this healing method, Mikao Usui (1865 - 1926) was a Buddhist Tendai priest in Japan. His family history is resplendent with famous samurai stories; from an ancestor warlord who conquered the city of Usui through to his high ranking samurai family. Indeed, Mikao Usui was a member of one of the last high level hatamoto samurai families in Japan. After years of searching for a way to achieve enlightenment, he underwent a spiritual journey (what American Indians would have called a 'Spirit Quest') in 1922. After fasting for 21 days amidst the roots of a tree on sacred Mt Kurama, he experienced enlightenment which also resulted in an ability to heal.

After descending Mt Kurama, he performed countless healings, and is especially famous for treating victims of the great 1923 Tokyo earthquake. He also taught students his Usui hands-on healing method, which later became known as Usui Reiki.

The Japanese kanji symbols for reiki, when translated mean 'rei' or spiritual and 'ki' meaning the energy of the Universe. Combined, 'reiki' therefore translates to 'Universal Energy'. This concept is beautifully explained by Koichi Tohei, in his 'Book of Ki', as follows:

*'Ki is the basic unit of the universe.
It is the infinite gathering of infinitely small particles.
Everything is ultimately composed of Ki.*

*If you pursue this concept to the depth of human
consciousness, you will understand the universal mind which
governs all creation, loving and protecting all life ...*

Everything originates from the Ki of the universe.'

The legacy of Mikao Usui lives on to this day. Millions of people over generations across the planet use his healing technique and seek to live as he lived - exuding peace and harmony to all.

As one of the few Reiki VII professional practitioners in Australia, I always feel honoured to be able to help my clients to feel less pain, more rested, relaxed, refreshed and more positive and buoyant. Learning reiki from Sir Gary Samer (5th in the lineage after founder Sensei Mikao Usui) was life-changing for me. Suddenly (in 1999), self-healing was literally at my finger-tips and I loved the gentleness and peace of Mikao Usui's philosophy. Over the years my reiki practice has evolved significantly and I love welcoming clients into my peaceful space in Battery Point. To make an appointment or find out more visit my website at:

Website: www.reikienergyforlife.com

Reiki Energy for Life



Suzanne King, Reiki VII Practitioner

References and Courses

Songs of Peace

"The Earth is our relative" is an excerpt from a Lakota Sioux sacred song within what is known as the Hunkapi rite. For the full version refer to *The Sacred Pipe, Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux* by Joseph Epes Brown (who spent time with the legendary Sioux Holy Man in 1947). One way to sing and chant to honour the earth or dance for universal peace, is to join in one of the workshops offered by Sangita of Mountain Mindfulness in Tasmania. Here you can join in singing numerous sacred chants including the Native American: All My Relations (as follows):

May I walk in beauty, my I walk in peace
All, all my relations
All life is sacred, the mountains and the seas
All life is sacred, the animals and the trees
All, all my relations
Heya hey hey, hey hey hey
All, all my relations



For information on Mountain Mindfulness courses, refer:

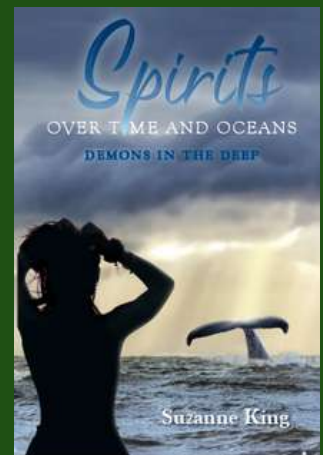
Website: www.mountainmindfulness.com.au
Email: contact@mountainmindfulness.com.au
Phone: 0400 519 323

Honouring the forest and all wild verdant places on earth

Eco-fiction novel '*Spirit Over Time and Oceans*' is an honouring of the forest and all wild verdant places on earth. Set mostly in Battery Point and across the Southern Ocean on Macquarie Island, the story follows extraordinary artist Delia, who possesses the essence of the Goddess of the Wilderness. While readers will recognise familiar Hobart landmarks, they will also find themselves querying 'what is the good life', 'what is art', and 'am I doing enough to protect nature?' The book is full of imagery, hope and above all yearning to protect nature, leaving the planet a better place for our children and grandchildren.

Available at Fullers and Wild Island Gallery and online via Echo Books:

<https://echobooks.com.au/our-books/spirits-over-time-and-oceans/>



Expanded States of Consciousness World Summit - 9 day free online event - 18 - 26 April 2023



Wim Hof
(known as the Ice Man)

The Heart Mind Institute in partnership with Neurodynamic Institute presents 60+ world-class experts speaking on powerful resilience practices. Topics include plant medicine, breathwork and meditation. Featured speakers include:

- Wim Hof - famous for his breathing technique.
- Sandra Ingerman - world renowned teacher of shamanism
- Flordemayo - Founder of the Confederation of Indigenous Elders of America
- Daniel Siegel, MD - Clinical Professor of Psychiatry
- John Vervaeke PhD - Buddhist Psychologist, Tai Chi and Meditation Teacher

<https://www.expandedstatesworldsummit.com/>

July 2023 edition

- Health and wellbeing pillars that support longevity
- How octogenarians and nonagenarians exude life-force energy and avoid diseases of ageing



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