



Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship

Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre
16-18 Fitzroy Street, Kirribilli
(near Milsons Point Station)

Tel: **0466 940 461**

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Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

5 June, Martin Horlacher: "Spinoza: Was He the Prince of Philosophers?"

Baruch Spinoza is widely considered one of the greatest rationalist philosophers not only of 17th-century Europe, but perhaps of all time, laying the groundwork for the 18th-century Enlightenment and modern biblical criticism, as well as modern conceptions of the self and the universe. His moral character and philosophical accomplishments throughout his 44 years of life have led one 20th-century philosopher to name him "the 'prince' of philosophers", and this talk will examine why.

(This is the talk that was cancelled last month).

12 June, No service (Market day. Kirribilli).

19 June, Jan Tendys: "And so she returned to her old friend."

Sometimes we need to rediscover what we knew early in our lives.

26 June, Rev. Geoff Usher: "Flowers and Rainbows."

The rainbow is an excellent example of unity in diversity. All those lovely colours come together to make the rainbow. We need all seven colours there, or the rainbow just wouldn't be right. It can remind us that we are often blind to hidden beauty around us all the time.

WHAT I WONDER ABOUT A LOT...

What I wonder about a lot is,
what we would do with our questions
if we weren't here.

Where else would so many names
for God, luck, seasons, love, fun
and the agony, absence of bliss,
be found ... if we were not here?

PTO

From previous page:

With whom would we share hope, help,
aptitude, ineptitude,
if we were not here...

What I wonder about a lot is,
do we even know what we do here?
Do we know that what we do here is to create
with our lives:
to sing, to weave, to embroider, to solder,
to use hammers and nails and saws
and what we create, what we build
exists nowhere else but here.

Contributed by the Rev. Geoff Usher

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Ball games, Roman artwork, 2nd century AD. Wikipedia

**Children Learn What They Live**

**Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.**

If children live with criticism, they learn to  
condemn.  
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.  
If children live with fear, they learn to be  
apprehensive.  
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry  
for themselves.  
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel  
shy.  
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel  
envy.  
If children live with shame, they learn to feel  
guilty.  
If children live with encouragement, they learn  
confidence.  
If children live with tolerance, they learn  
patience.  
If children live with praise, they learn  
appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to  
love.  
If children live with approval, they learn to  
like themselves.  
If children live with recognition, they learn it is  
good to have a goal.  
If children live with sharing, they learn  
generosity.  
If children live with honesty, they learn  
truthfulness.  
If children live with fairness, they learn  
justice.  
If children live with kindness and  
consideration, they learn respect.  
If children live with security, they learn to  
have faith in themselves and in those about  
them.  
If children live with friendliness, they learn the  
world is a nice place in which to live.

**Contributed by Caz Donnelly**

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Reflection on the Seventh Principle

"Our seventh Principle, respect for the inter-
dependent web of all existence, is a glorious
statement. Yet we make a profound mistake
when we limit it to merely an environmental
idea. It is so much more. It is our response to
the great dangers of both individualism and
oppression. It is our solution to the seeming
conflict between the individual and the group.

"Our seventh Principle may be our Unitarian
Universalist way of coming to fully embrace
something greater than ourselves. **The inter-
dependent web—expressed as the spirit
of life, the ground of all being, the one-
ness of all existence, the community-
forming power, the process of life, the
creative force, even God**—can help us de-
velop that social understanding of ourselves
that we and our culture so desperately need.
It is a source of meaning to which we can
dedicate our lives."

—Rev. Forrest Gilmore,
**Executive Director of Shalom Community
Center, Bloomington, IN (read more from
Forrest in The Seven Principles in Word
and Worship, ed. Ellen Brandenburg)**

Moonlight in the Frost

Danny Swicegood

Frozen leaves crunched beneath my boots and plumes of condensed breath fogged my glasses as I crept along a deer path under the full moon of a pre-dawn November morning. Warm summer breezes filled with singing cardinals and buzzing hummingbirds seemed an eternity away. To hear or see owls was the reason I was in the woods before daylight on a morning of heavy frost and subfreezing temperatures.

While I was fortunate enough to see a Great Horned Owl that morning not twenty feet away, it wasn't the large, yellow-eyed predator that profoundly stirred my soul but an inconspicuous sight on the forest floor. Looking down to pick my way through the woods, I noticed faint lights among the leaves. Since the nearest artificial light was some distance away, I stopped and knelt to examine this strange luminescence. When I reached down to touch one of the points of light, it disappeared. Withdrawing my hand made the light reappear. Slowly, I realized that each individual crystal of frost on the leaves reflected a tiny, perfect full moon. I'll never know whether it was the position of the moon in the sky or the angle of moonlight shining through the bare trees—but the narrow deer path I followed into the woods was illuminated faintly by moonlight reflected on frost crystals. A Milky Way galaxy in miniature stretched before me here in the woods of Iredell County, North Carolina, on an icy November morning, pointing the way to ... just pointing the way.

It seemed almost sacrilegious to step on such a perfect example of duality: heaven and earth, black and white, yin and yang, light and darkness. Both ancient and modern Tao teachers, attempting to explain to students their place in the cosmos, silently point one hand at the sky and the other at the ground. This simple, profound act signifies that humanity's place is between the heavens and the earth. The traditional Taoist maxim "Heaven, Earth, Humanity" places the importance of heaven and earth before that of humanity, reminding us that we are only a part

of everything under the skies and on the earth.

I followed that path into the woods that morning. May we all be fortunate enough to have a path shown us by the universe, and may we all have the courage to follow it. Enlightenment need not arrive all at once, straddling a bolt of lightning, or even after a lifetime of meditation and study. It might come in small packages, as moonlight reflected in the frost of a cold November morning.

Contributed by Rev. Geoff Usher.



The Chinese Peaks

For Donald Hall

***I love the mountain peak
but I know also its rolling
foothills
half-invisible
in mist and fog.***

***The Seafarer gets up
long before dawn to read.
His soul
is a whale feeding
on the Holy Word.***

***The soul who loves the peak
also inhales the deep
breath rising
from the mountain
buried in mist.***

~ Robert Bly ~

(Meditations on the Insatiable Soul)

Photo Wikipedia— Zhangjiajie

From Tai Chi Academy, an Interview

A Glimpse of Taoism with Dr. Ken Gardiner – interviewed by Instructor Lis

From the East End of London to the ANU in Canberra

In 1992, Dr. Ken Gardiner retired from the position of Senior Lecturer in Chinese History at the Australian National University [ANU] where he had begun as Junior Lecturer in 1966. He has had a fascinating life, starting out in the East End of London in a house "with a wonderful view of the gasworks".

How does someone travel from those very working class beginnings to become a Doctor of Oriental History?

"Luck" is Ken's answer; being at the right place at the right time. The Labour Government, when he left school in 1950, made scholarships available to working class students and Ken was awarded one. He went to the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University. Here he met a number of renowned scholars who were to become his teachers, including D.C. Lau and A. C. Graham

But why, I asked, was he interested in going there? Where had that come from?

Ken's grandfather ran away to be a soldier and ended up fighting in Afghanistan and Burma during the time of the British Raj. Tales of that fascinating relative, coupled with a book of Indian stories he had been given as a child, fuelled Ken's enthusiasm to learn about India. He completed his first degree in Indian History and then, after doing two years National Service, went back to follow what had now become his real and enduring love, Chinese history.

Ken told me that what had put him off Indian history was having to study Sanskrit which, for complexity, is in a class of its own, way beyond Latin. Chinese characters, however, were another matter altogether, and he discovered he had a very good visual memory and could learn very quickly. He did his doctoral thesis in Korean history, no-one else in

the West at the time having done any research on the topic. All early East Asian writing was done in Classical Chinese, that being the language of the educated classes, just as Latin was in early European history.

Ken gained a scholarship to study in Japan for two years. He returned to England to find there was not much future for him there in his field, so he went back to Japan to teach English literature. He received word from one of his former lecturers, then at the ANU, that a position was available to lecture in Chinese history. Ken jumped at it and has been in Canberra ever since.

And Now, to Dr. Gardiner's interest in Taoism

When I asked Ken if he could sum up the philosophy of Taoism for me in a sentence, he thought for a few minutes and then said, "It's tuning into the essence of things; not getting hung up on the irrelevant." He quickly added, "The best way of understanding it is through stories."

There are plenty of stories. The earliest known writings on Taoism are basically just that, stories to illustrate the philosophy. The "Chuang Tzu" translated by one of Ken's first teachers, A.C Graham, dates from about the fourth century BC. Many people are familiar with the following story from Chuang Tzu. It relates to Chuang Tzu's comment when he awoke from a dream of being a butterfly: "He didn't know whether he was Chuang Tzu who dreamt he was a butterfly or a butterfly who dreamt he was Chuang Tzu."

The other two main texts of early Taoism are "Lao Tzu", also known as the 'Tao Te Ching' (the Classic of the Way and its Virtue or Power) translated by another of Ken's first teachers, D.C Lau and "Lieh Tzu" (trans. A.C. Graham).

Perhaps the best known of the Taoist texts is the "Tao Te Ching". It is the most translated book in Chinese and with the possible exception of the Bible, the most translated book in the world. Ken thinks it is probably the most difficult to grasp. "Tao Te Ching" is a collection of aphorisms extolling the virtues of simplicity, but each one is bafflingly obscure,

lending itself to numerous interpretations and misinterpretations. Thus, the "Tao Te Ching" has been used to support many different ruling factions throughout Chinese history.

"He who pursues learning will increase every day;
He who pursues Tao will decrease every day.
He will decrease and continue to decrease,
Till he comes to non-action;
By non-action everything can be done."
This is also explained, "To pursue knowledge is to gain knowledge; to pursue Tao is to get rid of ignorance. The more one knows the more one has to get rid of. Therefore, to increase is but to decrease."

Further along the path ...

In 1989, Ken was asked to supervise a Tibetan student. He agreed and thus met Lama Choedak, familiar to many of our students through his series of workshops and courses in calm abiding meditation. Ken and his wife Merrill, through their contact with Lama Choedak, became interested in Buddhism as a commitment rather than in a purely academic way. They, like many other Westerners, are attracted by the openness of the philosophy and feel it offers something that other mainstream religions are missing.

Ken told me that there is an interconnectedness between Buddhism and Taoism as the early Buddhists, circa 1st century AD, took over many of the Taoist terms as they translated the Buddhist texts into Chinese. The philosophy of Taoism also became the basis for a Taoist religion as a number of animistic beliefs and deities became incorporated over time.

Several years ago, Ken gave a series of fascinating talks for the Tai Chi Academy on Chinese philosophers and the main strands of Classical Chinese thinking. As he explained then, and again to me recently, the best way of understanding Taoism is through the stories. He likes people to think. "The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao. **The name that can be defined is not the unchanging name.**"

Below is Another Story Ken would like to Share with Us

The Story of the Horse

The King called for his horse master and said, "I want you to find me the best horse in the world. Money is no object and I don't mind how long it takes you or how far you travel. I want the best horse in the world."

The horse master replied, "Your majesty, I am an old man now and I don't have the energy to travel far and wide as you ask, but I have a student who is a very good judge of horses. If you agree, I will send him."

The king agreed and gave the younger man his instructions, impressing upon him that he didn't care how long it took or how much it cost, he wanted the best horse in the world. The man set off and returned after three years saying, "I think I have found what you wanted. This horse is the best I have seen. It has a good nature, is intelligent, perfectly formed, strong; I am sure you will be satisfied. It is in a village quite far from here."

The king was delighted and immediately asked, "What colour is the horse, is it a mare or a stallion? What does it look like?"

"I don't know," said the man doubtfully. "Oh, it's a black mare."

The king immediately sent word to the villagers, asking them to sell him their black mare at a price they could name. Not long after, the king was informed his horse had arrived and he rushed out to find a white stallion. "What is this? Where is the black mare?" he cried in anger.

"We don't have a black mare, but we thought this must be the horse you wanted as it is the best we have," the villagers replied.

The king summoned the old horse master and shouted, "You told me your student was an excellent judge of horses, but he can't tell a mare from a stallion or black from white. He told me the best horse was a black mare and look at this."

The horse master replied in astonishment, "Is he as good as that now?"

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**Emphases by present editor. JT**

## Note from the Tai Chi Academy

The Tai Chi Academy has no religious connections. We don't practise Taoism as a religion and we don't consider or call ourselves Taoists. We are human beings with the skill and knowledge to teach people stress relief and to improve their health and well being. We learn and benefit from Taoist principles and wisdom to enhance the quality of life.

Explore the website

<https://www.taichiacademy.com.au/new.php>

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### Abraham Maslow (1908 - 1970)

"I was awfully curious to find out why I didn't go insane," remarked Abraham Maslow, one of the founders of humanistic psychology.



He was born and raised in Brooklyn, the eldest of seven children. He was smart but shy, and remembered his childhood as lonely and rather unhappy. Maslow attended City College in New York. His father hoped he would pursue law, but he went to graduate school at

the University of Wisconsin to study psychology. While there, he married his cousin Bertha, and found as his chief mentor Professor Harry Harlow. At Wisconsin he pursued an original line of research, investigating primate dominance behavior and sexuality. He went on to further research at Columbia University, continuing similar studies. He found another mentor in Alfred Adler, one of Freud's early followers.

From 1937 to 1951, Maslow was on the faculty of Brooklyn College. In New York he found two more mentors, anthropologist Ruth Benedict and Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer, whom he admired both professionally and personally. These two were so accomplished in both realms, and such "wonderful human beings" as well, that Maslow began taking notes about them and their behavior. This would be the basis of his lifelong research and thinking

about mental health and human potential. He wrote extensively on the subject, borrowing ideas from other psychologists but adding significantly to them, especially the concepts of a hierarchy of needs, metaneeds, self-actualizing persons, and peak experiences. Maslow became the leader of the humanistic school of psychology that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, which he referred to as the "third force" -- beyond Freudian theory and behaviorism.

Maslow saw human beings' needs arranged like a ladder. The most basic needs, at the bottom, were physical -- air, water, food, sex. Then came safety needs -- security, stability -- followed by psychological, or social needs -- for belonging, love, acceptance. At the top of it all were the self-actualizing needs -- the need to fulfil oneself, to become all that one is capable of becoming. Maslow felt that unfulfilled needs lower on the ladder would inhibit the person from climbing to the next step. Someone dying of thirst quickly forgets their thirst when they have no oxygen, as he pointed out. People who dealt in managing the higher needs were what he called self-actualizing people. Benedict and Wertheimer were Maslow's models of self-actualization, from which he generalized that, among other characteristics, self-actualizing people tend to focus on problems outside of themselves, have a clear sense of what is true and what is phony, are spontaneous and creative, and are not bound too strictly by social conventions.

Peak experiences are profound moments of love, understanding, happiness, or rapture, when a person feels more whole, alive, self-sufficient and yet a part of the world, more aware of truth, justice, harmony, goodness, and so on. Self-actualizing people have many such peak experiences.

Maslow's thinking was surprisingly original -- most psychology before him had been concerned with the abnormal and the ill. He wanted to know what constituted positive mental health. Humanistic psychology gave rise to several different therapies, all guided by the idea that people possess the inner resources for growth and healing and that the point of therapy is to help remove obstacles

to individuals' achieving this. The most famous of these was client-centered therapy developed by Carl Rogers.

Maslow was a professor at Brandeis University from 1951 to 1969, and then became a resident fellow of the Laughlin Institute in California. He died of a heart attack in 1970.

"Human nature is not nearly as bad as it has been thought to be."

From pbs.org  
Public Broadcasting Service (US)

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More on Peak Experiences

"...a highly valued experience which is characterized by such intensity of perception, depth of feeling, or sense of profound significance as to cause it to stand out, in the subject's mind, in more or less permanent contrast to the experiences that surround it in time and space."

(D. Leach, "Meaning and Correlates of Peak Experience," 1962)

The Characteristics of Peak Experiences
Privette (2001) developed an Experience Questionnaire designed to look at both the shared and unique characteristics of peak experiences. After looking at a wide variety of people, peak experiences have been identified as sharing three key characteristics:

- Significance:** Peak experiences lead to an increase in personal awareness and understanding and can serve as a turning point in a person's life.
- Fulfillment:** Peak experiences generate positive emotions and are intrinsically rewarding.
- Spiritual:** During a peak experience, people feel at one with the world and often experience a sense of losing track of time.

When Do Peak Experiences Occur?
Maslow suggested that one of the best ways to think of peak experiences are to think of the most wonderful experiences of your life. Those moments of ecstasy and complete and utter happiness. Being in love is one ex-

ample of a peak experience. Such moments may also occur when you are in a creative moment or when reading a book or listening to a movie. You might feel a sense of "being hit" by a particular creative work in a way that strikes an emotional chord inside of yourself.

In one survey, people reported that peak experiences tended to occur during artistic, athletic or religious experiences. Moments in nature or during intimate moments with family or friends were also common. Achieving an important goal, either a personal or collective one, could also lead to a peak experience.

Other moments when such experiences might occur include when an individual helps another person in need or after overcoming some type of adversity.

What Does a Peak Experience Feel Like?
So what exactly does it feel like to have a peak experience? Some describe these moments as a sense of awe, wonder and amazement. Think of the sense of awe you may feel while watching a sunset or the excitement you might experience during the final moments of close basketball game.

Peak Experiences and Flow
Peak experiences bear numerous similarities to the concept known as flow described by positive psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Flow is a state of mind during which people become so involved in an activity that the world seems to fade away and nothing else seems to matter. When in a state of flow, time seems to fly by, focus becomes sharp and people experience a loss of self-consciousness.

Flow can happen when a person is having a peak experiences, but obviously not all instances of flow qualify as peak experiences. Everyday moments such as becoming engrossed in a thrilling book, working on a satisfying project, or enjoying an afternoon game of basketball can all lead to a flow state, but these moments are not necessarily peak experiences.

Read More: <https://www.verywell.com/what-are-peak-experiences-2795268>

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## Do we have a “killing culture”?

Most Australian ecologists are sure we need to kill as many feral cats as possible.

<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive-species/publications/factsheet-feral-cat-felis-catus>

But is there no other way? **Animal Justice Party** candidate for Eden-Monaro, Frankie Seymour, has called on the Australian government, whatever parties comprise it after the July election, to take the lead in working to obliterate what she calls ‘Australia’s killing culture’.

Read more:

<http://animaljusticeparty.org/news/>

**Meanwhile keep your dog or other companion animals safely away from possible baits.**

### 10.80 poison symptoms

frenzied behaviour such as running and howling • hypersensitivity to sound and light • failure to respond to owner • vomiting • urinating and defecating uncontrollably

### First aid for 1080 poisoning in dogs

If you see your dog eating a bait, a poisoned animal or toxic vomit, or you suspect it may have done so, immediate action is needed and it is essential not to wait until obvious signs of poisoning appear.

### **Take the dog to the nearest vet without delay!**

If you know there will be a reasonable delay in getting your dog to the vet, or that a vet visit is not possible, you might try to induce vomiting by administering an emetic. Be aware that it is not easy for an untrained person to make a dog vomit. If you decide to induce vomiting it needs to be done as early as possible after ingestion of the poison. **Considerable care must be taken when inducing vomiting as:**

- Your dog may be hypersensitive and may react violently,
- You may administer the emetic into the dog’s lungs causing it to asphyxiate, Excess administration of some emetics may make the dog critically ill, and
- If you successfully induce vomiting, the toxic vomit can poison other dogs or pets if not cleaned up as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Even if you succeed in inducing vomiting, still seek immediate veterinary attention if possible as some poison could have been absorbed and the dog may well not be out of danger.



## Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?

**Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter.** Full membership \$50 concession \$20 . If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring **0466 940 461** or consult our website [www.sydneyunitarians.org](http://www.sydneyunitarians.org) . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher or Ginna Hastings for an application form at the Sunday service.

***If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.***

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: [jtendys@bigpond.com](mailto:jtendys@bigpond.com) or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

***Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation?*** As Unitarians, we support an “Open Pulpit” and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

**Fellowship contact 0466 940 461**