



## Fire and Living Dharma

*Jan 5, 2020 Orgyen Hermitage*

*This post is dedicated to the Australian fire fighters, medical responders, comforters, supporters and helpers – bodhisattvas of all kinds – who are courageously rising to the occasion, regardless of risk, to help and succour beings in need. I realise that many of you are far too engaged with immediate necessities to find these mere words of any value but a bit further from the flames, some might find them relevant. Wherever you are, may you be safe. May injury be healed. May a rain of blessing come soon.*

I watch the news from Australia,  
from America,  
from the Middle East,  
it seems like everywhere . . .

The fire season is upon us;  
a span of months,  
but with implications for many years to come.

The world is on fire;  
Burning forests, grasslands, croplands, and infrastructure.  
Burning creatures, big and small.  
Burning political expediencies, social intolerance,  
racism, sexism and domestic violence;  
pathologies of frustration-driven destructiveness.

The core fuel is fear, with its entourage of entailments;  
fanned by turbulent winds of grasping,  
narrow focussing,  
hormonal and muscular dancings,  
acquisitiveness and control,  
and relational violence.

Winds of this fire-storm are drying the world;  
Evaporating fluids,  
the moistures of love and reverence and intelligent humility.  
Its a catastrophic crisis of desiccation,  
shrivelling people to infantile helplessness.  
Too big, too much, too overwhelming to deal with.  
In this gestating womb of a tinder dry mother,  
we flare with the tiniest spark.

Look!  
Look deeply into what we are doing.  
Look what we are doing to our mother earth,  
this mother nature,  
this communal body and knowing that we are.

We are playing with fire!  
Risking everything!  
for a fantasy of immortality – as if this economy could go forever,  
striving for never – quite – arriving peace and goodness,  
investing in futures for an imagined comfortable retirement;  
all flammable processes that will surely burn our grandchildren.

We must end this hypnotic lure!

Fire is dangerous!  
We can't control it.  
We can't reason with it  
We can't work with it.  
Fire kills!

Living in dharma,  
or, as Vaclav Havel said, "living in truth",  
this is the extinguisher of such fires;  
an actual rain of blessing.

Living in truth takes place as an ever present now,  
right here, in the life you are living,  
– in the life *we are together living*.  
This is where the fire can be quenched.

And so, immersed in this unfathomable dancing of inter-being;  
each of us may be moved to ask,  
What can we do?

And in this moment of genuine asking;  
we stop,  
we pause,  
– a hiatus of poignant stillness –

Listening, midst the rhythms of heart beat and breath,  
we begin to hear a response,  
or perhaps we sense it,  
so deeply,  
that it feels more like a moment of intuition, whispering  
in the juices of our body.

*"Whatever helps to expand your appreciation and respect  
for the mystery of living that we are."*

Breathing further,  
contemplating the breadth of such guidance.

Then . . .

Expand this appreciative respect, in the domain of space;  
one's body, one's home, one's country, one's world;  
one's family, one's culture,  
humanity, plants and animals,  
the entire living world.

Cultivate the joys of connecting,  
through seeing and listening and smelling and tasting touching and empathizing.  
This we can do.

Expand it, in the domain of time;  
feeling myriad cultures of ancestors  
reverberating in this present experience;  
Recognising that our actions today will echo

in the lives of generations  
yet to come.

In short, we expand "appreciation and respect  
for the mystery of living that we are" through  
actively cultivating generosity,  
and wholesome relating,  
and patience,  
and skilled use of directed energy,  
and ever continuous caring and enquiry;  
And all of this tempered with profoundly integrative understanding.

This way of living is the quenching of destructive fire.  
The ultimate extinguisher.  
The fundamental fire retardant.  
It is the only sustainable way, for biological beings,  
creatures who have no existence  
apart from the activity of living  
that they and we are.

This is truth.  
This is living dharma.

I watch the videos from Australia and feel my heart quaking.  
I think of friends in the fire zones.  
I think of brothers and sisters in countries around the world.  
I think of myriad living beings of forests, grasslands, tundra and oceans;  
creatures of every dimension of life.  
We are indigenous to this world.  
It is what we are.  
It is all we have.  
It is our family, and home.  
And in moments like this we realise  
it is precious!

I pray these fires help to wake us up!  
May they become the dropping penny,  
the point of realising,  
if we have not yet done so already,  
That we can no longer play dangerous games  
of political and personal celebrity;  
games of power and heartless economic accounting.

The Bible relates how Christ threw the money changers  
out of the temple.

Now look what's happened!

Whether by stealth or connivance,  
they have managed to slink back in.

May we discover, find, recognise, or realise,  
the rarely appreciated blessing of  
living in truth.

May we wake up to the real priorities of sustainable living.  
This communion of sentience that we are.

In finishing this post, please join me  
in the following aspiration.

*We take refuge in love and clear seeing.*

*We live courageously in this world of birthing and dying.*

*Our hearts embrace all companions on this path of lucidity and freedom.*

SARVA MANGALAM