

Dances of Universal Peace Australia

March 2025 Bellingen Shire – Sue Lennox (Susan Miriam)

The mid-north coast group has been meeting quarterly on the Equinox and Solstice. We held 4 gatherings during 2024, hosted by Cedar Amina at the beautiful Bundagen Community Meditation Hall. The group is co-led by Annie Stella Noora and me. Annie requested that I share some of our practices and influences of this past year.

1. Deepening Connection to Country and Traditional Owners

I have been learning Gumbaynggirr language in Bellingen for a few years, with Uncle Micklo Jarrett. Language classes are held on Monday afternoons year-round. As I practice Gumbaynggirr Language, I find I need to go through the same process as learning a new song or dance – frequent repetition until I know it by “Heart”- until the language or song starts to “sing” me. With Uncle Micklo’s permission and encouragement, I have started to bring these songs to our DUP group. The first song has become a dance we use to open each dance circle and honour Ancestors and the 7 directions - Ngiyaala Garla Ngarraangala.

2. “Desert Flowers” – sharing Neil Douglas-Klotz (Saadi) meditations

I really appreciate joining in the “Desert Flowers” global online group run by Saadi 3 times a year. These beautiful Aramaic practices foster a deepening of connection with these living words and ways of being. I share the practices with our dance circle as part of our meditation time. We have also begun bringing writing and drawing materials to the circle, to foster a deepening of connection with the practice and what it communicates to us. The writings and drawings are stunning.

3. Mother Ganga – Tulsi Ghat, Varanasi, India

Another major influence on my spiritual practice comes from over 30 years of voluntary work I have been doing for the Swatcha Ganga (Clean Ganges) Campaign led by the Sankat Mochan Foundation. This connection to people and place has fostered a deepening of my connection with Hindu Deities and a deep love of the lived example of the radical peace maker Goswami Tulsi Das (1511-1623), author of the Ramcharitmanas. Tulsi Das

Ji was a Vaishnava (Ramanadi) saint and poet who brought Hindu teachings to the masses by performing “street” theatre on the banks of Mother Ganga every day. This joyful tradition continues 500 years later, with the annual month-long performances of the “Ram Lila” and “Krishan Lila” taking place in the evenings during September-November.

Interestingly the first time I went to DIPA at the Friends Hall in Sydney in 1996, Robin led Ganga Ki Jai Jai. I was enthralled and felt at home.

In February-March this year, I was blessed to have Uncle Micklo accompany me on the journey to India. He was keen to investigate the ancient links between India and Australia. There were many magic moments but one highlight stands out – connecting Uncle Micklo with the Nag Sadhus who were camped on the ghats of Mother Ganga in Varanasi after the Maha Kumbh Mela.

4. A Course in Miracles (ACIM)

ACIM has formed the basis of my daily meditation practice for forty years and continues to bless me each day. The interconnectedness of Aramaic practices and ACIM practices is a wonderful synergy. For example in the recent Desert Flowers practice I felt the connection between embracing the unknown Heshukha and calling to Ruha D’Svara, Hakima and Alaha as fundamental to the practice of Forgiveness that is at the core of ACIM.