

Springs Mountain Sangha

Dharma Rag

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Rohatsu Sesshin: Everyone Welcome for David's Evening Talks!

Rohatsu sesshin will be held on Dec. 3-7 at the home of Robert and Elizabeth King in Green Mountain Falls. The teacher for the sesshin will be **David Weinstein** of the Pacific Zen Institute in California. Registration forms are available from Robert King (kingrh53@earthlink.net). The registration fee for fulltime participants will be \$200 and for part time participants \$50 per day (as compared with \$350 and \$90 at Benet Pines.) In addition, all participants will be expected to contribute food. Since we will be preparing our own meals, we need everyone to bring a casserole, salad, bread, or fruit. When you register, you will be asked to state a preference regarding what you would like to bring and for what day.

Participants who stay overnight will be housed either in the cabin adjacent to the King's house or in the local motel a half mile from the house. (The motel is in easy walking distance, but there is ample parking near the house for those who wish to drive to and from the motel.) There will be no extra charge for those staying in the motel.

Part time participants are welcome, but it is important that we know at the time of registration when you plan to attend and when you will be absent, since space in the zendo is limited. (We can accommodate up to 15 at any one time.) **Advance notice is not required for the evening talks Thursday Friday and Saturday, which are open to anyone. Plan to arrive about 6:45. We will sit 7:00 to 7:30, and the talks begin at 7:30 pm.** There is no charge for attending the evening talks, but donations for the teacher are appreciated. If you have questions, you should direct them to Sarah Bender, William Jeavons, or Robert King.

Directions to the Kings

Coming from Colorado Springs take Hwy. 24 west to the second Green Mt. Falls exit, where you will turn left across the eastbound lane. ¼ mile from the exit, turn right onto Belvidere Ave. Go ½ mile and turn left onto Iona St. (coming for just evening talks, continue with these directions). The King's house is at the corner of Iona and Cottage. Turn right onto Cottage and bear right into the driveway in front of the house (a logsided house with a green roof and trim). If the driveway is full, you can park in front of the garage across from the house.

Our roots, Newcomers, and the SMS-PZI Connection:

An Interview with David
Weinstein Sensei

Conducted November 14, 2003
by David Cockrell

Have you ever heard of a philosopher named David Kalupahana? He's at the University of Hawaii and several times came to Koko An Zendo to give talks at the invitation of Robert Aitken Roshi, as a scholar and practitioner of Theravada in Sri Lanka. He actually saw Zen as a way of Buddhists going back to Theravada—back to original Buddhism!

Cockrell: That makes some sense to me. The emphasis in Zen on contact with the dharma outside the "scriptures"—through direct experience, is a return to the essential teaching of the Buddha.

Weinstein: My first practice was Tibetan practice. There's a really firm grounding in very fundamental Buddhism that I got from Tibetan practice that still serves me well. I think that if I had bumped into Zen practice as my first spiritual tradition, I would have left frustrated and angry. By bumping into Tibetan practice first, it gave me something that my mind could deal with at the time.

Cockrell: Our Sangha has been wrestling lately with accessibility of the practice. I'm questioning whether Zen is a good vehicle for a beginning practitioner. You know, like the old story that if

you want to practice Zen, you sit outside the monastery door for three days, and finally somebody comes to the door and says "Oh, you've been sitting out there for awhile . . ."

Weinstein: I've got to admit, that dimension of Zen kind of attracted me! I kind of like the fact that there isn't a clear path into Zen. A welcoming face is important. But it's interesting how a welcoming face for one person can be interpreted as pushiness and intrusion by another. There's a kind of art to it. To meet newcomers with openness and sensitivity to who they are is about the best we can do, and they will do what they will with that.

In Hawaii, you had to listen to four hours of introductory talks to Zen by Harada Roshi before you could sit there! At first I thought that was kind of cool, but it was a barrier really. For some the sitting is the main course. It can be a Tibetan, Vipassana, or Zen place, but it's the flavor of the environment that is going to be their experience. Sometimes the requirement that you must do this first before you can sit here gets in the way of the experience. The experience should be open to anybody who can behave themselves and not become too much of a distraction to others.

We had a guy in Hawaii who was kind of weird. Like in the middle of walking meditation he would turn around and walk backwards, staring at the person behind him. We had to ask him not to do

those kinds of things. But other than that, why make *any* requirements? Throw the doors wide open, and don't require anything of anybody other than to come into the space and contribute to it in their way.

We just had a Koan seminar here, and several people showed up who had just heard about it on the internet, they had never sat, totally newcomers. People were totally delighted by the infusion of new energy.

Cockrell: Do you feel that in Zen, there are what we might call "advanced practices", to be taught to people who have a relatively mature practice already?

Weinstein: Does somebody think that? Even in the Tibetan tradition, there are different streams of thought about "advanced practices. The two lamas that John and I practiced with believed that there was no practice that should be withheld from anybody. Practices that in the Trungpa tradition would have the entire Gundo practice (100,000 prostrations, 100,000 recitations of the sutras and 100,000 mandala offerings) as a prerequisite before they would be permitted to participate, well these lamas said you know, it can't do any harm—Do it!

Cockrell: So you think it should be accessible to everyone. . . All the teachings. . .

Weinstein: Yeah. And you know, that kind of spirit is not the kind of spirit that some people feel comfortable with, and that's

cool. We can't be everybody to everybody. We have to be who we are. It's kind a recognition of what's true.

Cockrell: This strikes me as another of these fairly radical Americanizations of Zen. In the 12th & 13th centuries, I think there was considered to be a progression of practices, in which new initiates would not enter into the middle of the practice.

Weinstein: Yeah, I think that's true. I think it's true of some 21st century traditions as well. Some people thrive in an atmosphere of more structure. Again it's not a value judgment. Different medicines work for people in different ways. I practiced Tibetan practice for a number of years before coming to Zen, and in no way was that a loss—It was part of the journey.

Cockrell: Are these ideas PZI philosophy?

Weinstein: I think they are, and if they are not, I'd be interested in finding that out! With the understanding that PZI is a group of unique individuals. I just did a sesshin with John here, and it's a great experience, because people get the taste that you don't have to be any particular way. You can be your own way, and that's O.K. We encourage people to discover their own way of doing the practice, rather than imitating somebody else.

One year I went to the Tibetan new Year's celebration in Bodhgaya, where the Buddha sat

under the tree. I thought, wow, this is going to be great because the Dalai Lama is going to be teaching, so I went. He devoted the entire first morning to the westerners who were there, and what he said was practicing Buddhism has nothing to do with being able to speak Tibetan, wearing Tibetan clothes, or eating Tibetan food. We were born in the west and that was our karma and we had to honor that. We become infatuated with the culture, and beyond infatuation we think we have to become something other than what we really are in order to embody the truth of it. You know, the Chinese did that for 500 years before they made it their own. In a way, Zen is the embodiment of what the Chinese did to Buddhism, making Buddhism something Chinese rather than something Indian. And we're doing that now! Isn't that great!

Cockrell: Only 422 more years to go.

Weinstein: Information technology—I think we're going to speed it up a lot—speaker phones, email, maybe it'll only take 200 years.

Cockrell: Hearing your ideas about Zen practice and its structure, and PZI philosophy, it seems kind of like an ecosystem of ideas.

Weinstein: Yeah, it's a mandala.

Cockrell: Do you have a thought about how the SMS fits into the PZI mandala? Our relationship with Joan is clearly growing, but

we wonder what our relationship with PZI is, and what it might become?

Weinstein: Great question. (Silence). I can't answer that. How am I supposed to answer that. I can tell you what *my* relationship to you is. I might be able to tell you a little about what PZI's relationship to you is. But you have to answer what your relationship to PZI is.

When Joan took a year's sabbatical, I was your holding teacher. I was also in Colorado together with Joan for the first SMS sesshin, so I feel like I was there in the delivery room, watching it be born, and watching it grow up. I feel like, you know—I can't say father, but uncle doesn't seem like quite enough—to the group. Maybe in 20 years it'll be more like grandfather. So I have a lot of affection for this wonderful living thing called SMS, that almost seems separate from the individuals, whom I also know and have relationships with and value greatly. I'm just looking forward to the time when you guys get big enough that you can afford to have me *and* Joan come out for the sesshins! That would be the best of all possible worlds.

Cockrell: Well I think that time is coming.

Weinstein: PZI, well, you know I'm on the Board of Directors. I know that the Board doesn't really know what the relationship with the affiliates means, and they are trying to figure it out. If you're a member of SMS, you get a discount if you come out

here for sesshins—there’s something concrete. Other than that, I don’t really know. What is the relationship? For some people, affiliates appear to be a kind of drain, because teacher energies go out that way. But I don’t really feel that way, because I feel energized when I go out there. You guys treat me a lot better than they treat me here! When you go away from your home place—to the provinces, there’s just this great appreciation, because they don’t have a teacher living there all the time. How great it is that a teacher comes out. So I don’t think there is a drain of resources, it’s a fertile kind of mulching, creating something moist and full of nutrition.

What you guys want from PZI is another question, and a really important one. You can spend hours and hours working it out, although you can probably just kind of look at where you’re at now, and rather than figuring out what you want, figure out what you already are, and that will maybe tell you what you want, because maybe you are what you want!

There’s the whole question of what Affiliates mean, and it’s not defined. Our bylaws mention nothing about them, and we need to rewrite our bylaws. The whole thing about the Affiliates has been wonderfully organic and unstructured and unplanned, like a sort of wildflower garden. The need arose, and we responded to the need, and the necessity of responding to the need outweighed the necessity of thinking it out more clearly in

advance before doing it. We just said “Oh”, they want somebody to come out and teach a sesshin. Let’s go. And what does that mean? Well, we’ll work that out later. And now we’re at the point of working it out.



The “Three-month” Steering Committee Retreat!

I. The Vision Piece Report by Judith Steed, Facilitator



On July 12th, the Springs Mountain Sangha Steering Committee met to do some

playful work. The purpose of the day was to explore together the role of the steering committee (SC) in relation to the Sangha as a whole. To do this we had a variety of exercises.

The first exercise called the group to break up into pairs to fill out the boxes on this 2X2:

What is Currently Working Well	What is Currently Not Working Well
--------------------------------	------------------------------------

For the Steering Committee	
For the Whole Sangha	

This was an effort to recognize and celebrate our current successes and also to share our potential concerns as well.

From here, we set the stage for the main activity that ended up taking the remainder of the day. It is an exercise owned by the Center for Creative Leadership called Visual Explorer¹. It is a process and resource packet that helps groups explore and share important and sometimes difficult ideas. It also helps individuals in groups to share more than just a conversation; this process opens up individuals and groups to a deeper understanding of what they might think individually and collectively.

To warm up to this exercise we used affirmative inquiry to begin to percolate a warm, positive and energized mind set. The facilitator asked the group to close their eyes and imagine we had moved forward 3-5 years. From the future state, the group was asked to imagine that the steering committee and Sangha were doing extraordinarily well together and they each were bragging to someone about how well it was going. They were then

¹ The Leader’s Edge by Horth & Palus, 2001

asked to sit with the thoughts and feelings that came up. This sets the stage for the Visual Explorer.

Now, with the warm and fuzzy and very realizable thoughts and feelings evoked, the group is asked to think of the working questions for the visual explorer exercise:

- ◆ What purpose do you wish for the SC?
- ◆ How do you hope the SC and the SMS will work well together?

After a moment of reflection, each person worked through the following process: first, viewing the 200 plus images laid out on the floor while reflecting on the above questions; then, selecting the pictures that jumped out at them; then journaling for a while about the thoughts and ideas concerning the Sangha that came up.

Once each person had returned to the group the holder of the picture presented it to the group, first describing the concrete details and elements. Then he/she shared the ideas and thoughts that this picture evoked in light of the questions. Once that was done other members of the group got a chance to respond to what they saw in the same picture. Everyone having had a chance to contribute, the picture was returned to its owner who had the last word.

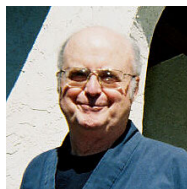
After all of the pictures were shared, the group worked to pull out the themes and trends in the thoughts and ideas shared by the group. This distilled and gave the group direction for moving

forward. It was at this point that the group, exhausted and energized, called it a day.

The SC concluded that their purpose will be "shared responsibility for responding to the needs and possibilities of the SMS. We will know we have done this when we see that we are:

- ◆ Supporting each other in our practice;
- ◆ Exploring community connectedness as it is informed by our practices."

II. Structure & Direction By Robert King, Sarah Bender and David Cockrell



At the follow-up retreat of the Steering Committee on November 6, there was a

strong desire to reach some concrete decisions and action plans. The SC was most interested in giving greater definition to the composition and function of the Steering Committee. A need was also recognized for the SC to be a decision-making body, not necessarily carrying out all the necessary Sangha tasks. A primary goal is to be more effective in letting Sangha members and visitors know about further opportunities for practice and leadership.

Positions within the Steering Committee were better defined at this retreat. The **Chairman** and **secretary** of the SC are functions internal to the operation of the SC itself. These positions are currently

held by William Jeavons and Elizabeth King. **Meditation Instructor**, Sarah Bender, offers occasional talks and classes, is responsible for leader training and leadership for other teaching activities. William and Elizabeth will be giving orientations and talks as well, and others may lead dharma study groups at times. **Treasurer** Robert King collects and keeps track of Sangha finances. The **Teacher liaison**, Elizabeth King, manages Joan Sutherland's interview schedule. **Greeter**, Donella Berry, provides an initial contact for new people (by phone and in person on Monday nights). **Dharma Rag editor** David Cockrell manages our primary form of communication with the Sangha. The **Web Master** will also be a SC position, and Karin Henriksen has been serving this function.

The SC decided that we need a new position, **Communications Coordinator**, to oversee general publicity for special events such as retreats, talks, workshops, and study groups. *This position is currently available, so if you are looking for additional involvement with the Sangha, please consider volunteering!*

Other positions may be added later as needs arise, such as sesshin coordinator. We discussed the value of turning over positions on a regular basis, as is done in monasteries, so that we could bring fresh energy to our various leadership tasks and give more individuals leadership experience.

In her handout following our July retreat, Judith said we should consider the SC to be a decision body and vehicle for management of tasks...not necessarily always a 'doing' or 'making it happen' body. We believe the definition of functions within the SC will help us better fulfill that role. It does not exclude an open invitation to anyone in the Sangha to attend SC meetings. We clearly recognize the need to improve communication within the Sangha, especially in regard to people's needs for more instruction and support, and we are looking for ways to achieve that objective.

We brainstormed other activities we might want to sponsor, such as a dharma study group that would meet on an ongoing basis, more introductory and leadership training classes, and a prison ministry or other community service activity. We talked about the process by which individuals are recruited and trained for various leadership roles and agreed that the subject needs more attention. One concrete step will be a training on leading walking meditation, to be held soon. The SC will also be actively seeking a stable place for the Sangha to call home over the next few months.

The SC will hold another retreat in January to continue this fruitful process and welcomes input from everyone about any of the issues under discussion!

Rocky Mountain Insight's New Home

RMI is pleased to announce as of November 5th sitting groups will be meeting at the new sangha location 2525 W. Pikes Peak Blvd. Suite A.

Also by popular demand and after much anticipation, two additional sittings will be added beginning November 9th: Sundays 9 - 10 am and Mondays 5:30 - 6:20. People are welcome to arrive between 5 - 5:30 for the 5:30 sitting on Mondays. Contact RMI at (719) 634-0566 or at:

<http://www.rockymountaininsight.org>

Current Affairs

◆ The November half-day sitting is scheduled for Sat., Nov. 22, 6:30-12 am. at David Cockrell's ranch. Meet at the All Souls Church Parking Lot, Tejon & Dale, at 6:30 am to carpool. No sitting at Shove.

◆ Justin Michelson from CC is starting a student meditation group on Tuesdays at Shove. Fliers are up on campus already.

◆ On Monday night sittings, volunteers are requested for bringing flowers and readings, and also for making offerings at the altar. A sign-up sheet will be available each Monday, beginning Nov. 16, 2003.

◆ Changes in Sitting Schedules:
11/22: ½ day at Cockrells
12/6: Sat. Sit is at Kings
12/8: Mon. Sit is at Interfaith House



September, 2003 Sesshin fulltime Participants

November, 2003

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
2	3 6:15 Sutra Service	4	5 6:00-7:00 Zazen	6	7	8 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
9	10 6:15 Social Night	11	12 6:00-7:00 Zazen	13	14	15 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
16	17 6:15 Teisho Night	18	19 6:00-7:00 Zazen	20	21	22 6:30-12 Half-day Sit Cockrell Ranch
23	24 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	25	26 6:00-7:00 Zazen	27	28	29 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
30						

December, 2003

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1 6:15 Sutra Service At Interfaith House	2	3 Rohatsu Sesshin begins	4 7:30 Public talk: David Weinstein	5 7:30 Public talk: David Weinstein	6 Sesshin sit at Kings house 7:30 talk David Weinstein
7 1:00 Sesshin ends	8 6:15 Social Night	9	10 6:00-7:00 Zazen	11	12 6:00 Steering Committee Meeting	13 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
14	15 6:15 Dharma Talk Night	16	17 6:00-7:00 Zazen	18	19	20 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
21	22 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	23	24 6:00-7:00 Zazen	25	26	27 6:30-8:30 Zazen 10-12 Precept Study
28	29 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	30	31 6:00-7:00 Zazen			

Dana for Springs Mountain Sangha

Springs Mountain Sangha engages in three weekly sittings, study groups, retreats, residencies for our holding teachers, the Dharma Rag, website, and other communication media. Contributions from members and friends are the Sangha's sole financial resource. Let's share the dharma assets!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (h) _____ (other) _____

Email: _____

Contribution Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Checks should be made out to Robert King, Treasurer.

Springs Mountain Sangha is an affiliate of Pacific Zen Institute, in both the Soto & Rinzai traditions. To learn more, visit our website, <http://www.zencorner.org> or contact us at Dharmarag@comcast.net.

- Please check if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email, saving resources & expenses.

Dharma Rag

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