

Dharma Rag

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Some Reflections on the Residency Joan Sutherland

So I'm back in Sonoma County, where the spring winds blow off the ocean, and my desk (and, if the truth be told, large areas of the floor as well) is buried in the mountains of stuff that piled up like sand dunes while I was gone. You've returned to the more usual rhythms of your lives, and the intensity of our time together is likely beginning to fade. A lot happened while I was there, and sometimes it can feel as though we had just enough time to stir things up, and then it was over. For all of us, this is a time of integration, of absorbing and sorting and considering, even as we move on to the next things in our busy lives.

Before I came, we talked about how, when we're doing all the daylight work of preparing for something, there's also something stirring underground, preparing in the dark. After it's over, even as we turn our attention to other things, an integration is going on in the same dark. How is that for you? What do you notice about what's changed, and what persists? What's surprised you?

I thought I might take a moment to mention some of the things

that have stayed with me. Strongest is gratitude for how we came together for so many different events, and how much people put of themselves into those meetings. We made a kind of practice period, which built as the weeks went on. Thank you for all the work you did, and for the wholehearted way so many of you threw yourself into that practice period.

Because, of course, a belief in the power of collaborative work is one of the defining features of our way. When this is combined with the intense introspection of meditation and the intimacy of work in the room, we have spiritual realization as a conspiracy of friends, as well as an individual quest. The field we make together is richer and more extensive than any individual heart-mind could make, and that, it seems to me, is the essence of the Mahayana. That's never been clearer to me than after the integrative retreat in which we worked with the story of Psyche. I've been studying and teaching this myth for years, and yet I learned so much that had never occurred to me from listening to what the other participants had to say.

The part of my residency that most of you didn't have the chance to see was the classes I taught at Colorado College and

UCCS and my baccalaureate address. I come away encouraged by the heartfelt curiosity of the young people I talked to, and by the interest their parents and grandparents showed in a little bit of what Zen can offer.

There's something quite hopeful here, I think, if we can make the translation in a way that is meaningful to contemporary Americans. Once again, as it was when many of us were young, people are looking for alternatives to a dominant worldview that is badly failing us. Perhaps the time Zen people have stood on the riverbank, debating issues of form and dharmic correctness, is passing. Perhaps it's time to jump into the river—to look to what we have to offer, and to what we might learn from others.

I remain very touched—and happy—about the moment when people said, Wait a minute, we're not *affiliated* with The Open Source Project, we *are* the Open Source Project! I'm so glad you feel that way, and I look forward to all the holy mischief this conspiracy of friends might get itself into in times to come.

A very happy turn into summer to all of you. May you have green leaves and soft evenings and no wildfires, and time to stretch into the good warmth of summer life on this Earth.

At least for awhile, read the text of Joan's Colorado College baccalaureate address at: http://www.coloradocollege.edu/news_events/transcripts/JoanSutherland2004.cfm

From the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee (SC) met June 19, 2004 to take stock of the Residency and make plans for the summer. There was much excitement about the Sangha's ratification of our membership in the Open Source Project!

A financial report was given by Robert King. The Residency ended several hundred dollars in deficit, but the expenses included two sets of our new sutra books! The success of the budget was largely based on the abundance of in-kind contributions at all the events.

Upcoming events will include a Leaders' Training, probably July 24th, and a Beginner's Workshop, possibly July 29th at Shove. (These events will be finalized soon, with more information forthcoming). A full-day sitting is scheduled for August 29, and the September Sesshin will be September 29 - October 3.

At the meeting a decision was made to initiate a **Community Concerns Committee (CCC)**. The Committee would address member concerns about sangha policy, leadership, and practice structure; inter-sangha relationship issues; requests for assistance in enhancing the quality of sangha life, as well as help with referrals for assistance with emotional and spiritual needs.

The SC will appoint three members selected from a volunteer applicant pool. The

committee will be on-call and meet periodically when requests come forward. Membership terms would be one year, staggered to maintain continuity.

The role of the committee is to hear such concerns and advise sangha members about courses of action they might follow. In instances when a sangha decision is requested (either by the applicant or the CCC), a recommendation will be made by the CCC to the SC, who will then take formal action. Confidentiality will be expected on the part of the committee. The first step in addressing any interpersonal conflict must be to take it directly to the involved persons, and this will be customarily recommended by the CCC.

The next meeting of the SC will be July 23, 4-7 pm at the Woman's Club. Discussion of draft by-laws for the sangha will be the featured topic. Everyone is welcome!

We Are Part of the Open Source!

(with Apologies to Judith Steed, who wrote much of this summary)

At the Community Forum on June 14, the Steering Committee's decision to be a part of Joan Sutherland's Open Source Project was presented for ratification of the larger sangha. Sarah Bender shared an overview of the Steering Committee's understanding of the Open Source Project and the question of how we might affirm our

membership in the Open Source while still evolving our relationship with PZI. She presented how our affiliation with PZI originally grew out of our connections with Joan Sutherland and David Weinstein. She spoke of Joan's creation of the Open Source Project with a fundamental commitment to collaboration and transparency. She also compared and contrasted the organization of PZI and The Open Source. We then adjourned to the downstairs for tea, cookies and conversation.

There was discussion about the virtual community Open Source, about the Zen Practice in our lay, western, now-vs.-traditional, non-Japanese context. There was discussion about PZI's slightly more "hierarchical" structure vs. the Open Source's emergent structure. There were words about moving toward a new state of being rather than chasing some kind of already constructed state of being. And there was a sentiment to continue to value our relationship with PZI, but to just turn more toward the Open Source. In the end a consensus was reached to describe ourselves as part of the Open Source Project, and to continue to explore our relationship with PZI in conversation with the PZI Board.



COMMUNITY FORUM

This month's Forum focuses on reflections of sangha members during their experiences of the 2004 Residency.

Journal Notes, May 4, 2004 Lucinda Lawrence



Michael's birthdate is tomorrow; notice that I say birthdate and not birthday, for the latter denotes a

tangible presence. About four years ago, I learned about the second or reptilian brain from a tape by Robert Bly and Marion Woodman. Bly described it as the murderous survival at all costs part of our nature. When I first met my therapist, Arlen, I told her that I had jitterbugged for years with my shadow and that I wanted to come to terms with the reptilian part of my nature and overcome the fear I held in my stomach. It is over a year later that these things are coming to pass. (I just learned there is yet another second brain, located in our gut!)

This morning I did yoga, sat, and then walked around the park. Zoo brain, yet I knew somehow it was okay. As I walked I said to myself, I am being peeled like an onion and broken open like a walnut; I thought about the second brain...more thoughts of the monster within me...visions of sharp animal teeth bursting out of my mouth...snarling...ugliness popping out like sweat from pores...everywhere. And then I thought of the beauty of the reptilian brain...the fight for survival. Canibalism...in a boat

with friends and the hot sun burning away shreds of so-called morality. What would any of us do? If a young mother, live for the baby; if an old woman, stick to the self-righteous convictions? How well I remember as if yesterday, yet it was some 30 or 35 years ago when I read in the newspaper about a man who used eight and nine year old boys to push drugs by getting them hooked. I rose with indignation and the familiar tune of: "How could anyone do such a thing? I would never do such..." And in that instant I knew that I could and I would had I been born in that environment and known no other life but one of drugs and the life that goes with such. And canibalism...is there not a beauty in the desire to reach out for life? Is there not a terrible ugliness in such a desire to reach out for life and to fear death to such a degree? My roaring indignation shrivels belly down in the dirt; I am perfectly capable of beating a baby or a puppy to death and exulting in the kill-thirst; what I need to learn now is that I am perfectly capable of the greatest kindest acts on earth. But what are they? Goodie two shoes syndrome leading to ego masturbation? When I sat down to write this I was overwhelmed with tears of gratitude. And while the increased sitting has not brought more focus to my zoo mind, I trust the universe and I trust me...somehow it is all unfolding as it should...it...it is an unknown...Zen...comfortably balancing on a paradox like a slippery seal on a beach ball from Wahlmart. Schwoosch!

Just As They Are

by Connie O'Murray

June 2004

Today

I praise the sky

The clear blue evening sky

That embraces the tangerine
clouds

Not thanking God

Just praising the sky

As it is.

And I praise the mountains

The regal, majestic mountains

In their green and hazy purple
splendor

Not thanking Gaia

Just praising the mountains

As they are.

And I praise the sun

The brilliant consistent light

That brightens and warms the
day

Not thanking Spirit

Just praising the sun

As it is.

And I praise the wind and the
rain

and the moon and the stars

and the birds and the trees

and the lovely scent of flowers
on a summer's evening.

Just as they are.



TO RISE

The light is what stirs you from your death
practicing sleep.

The warm cocoon of sheets and blankets
entices you to stay, like the arms of a lover, as
you watch the transforming light, from this in
between place of waking and dreaming, waiting
for the signal to rise.

Then it happens, almost unexpectedly, a soft energy,
pulling you upright.

There is a pause, a question, is now the time?

A deep breath emerges from your body in a sigh
of gratitude,

Your naked feet touch the bare floor, and you stand
for the first time of the day.

Wondering, what now?

Kathryn McWilliams

Acquainted With The Night by Robert Frost

From Lucinda Lawrence

I have been one
acquainted with the night.

I have walked out in
rain -- and back in rain.

I have outwalked the
furthest city light.

I have looked down the
saddest city lane.

I have passed by the
watchman on his beat

And dropped my eyes,
unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and
stopped the sound of feet

When far away an
interrupted cry

Came over the houses
from another street,

But not to call me back
or say good-by;

And further still at an
unearthly height

One luminary clock
against the sky

Proclaimed the time
was neither wrong nor right,

I have been one
acquainted with the night.

Springs Mountain Sangha's Monthly Newsletter
The Dharma Rag

Editor: David Cockrell

Book Review Editor: Judith Steed

Published the third week of each month, mostly.

Submissions of articles related to Buddhism are encouraged from all readers and may be sent to the editor at:

1 Goldsmith Ct., Pueblo, CO 81008

or at dharmarag@comcast.net. Submission deadline is the second Friday of each month.

Stuffed Peppers

Submit by Jinny Lucas

- * 1 16-ounce block firm tofu
- * 1/2 cup shredded cheese (any kind)
- * garlic, salt and pepper to taste
- * 1/4 cup each chopped cilantro and parsley
- * 1 small yellow pepper, chopped
- * 2 green onion chopped
- * 4 large green peppers, cleaned, with tops removed
- * 1 1/2 cups salsa (or to taste)
- * 1 1/2 cups tomato sauce (or to taste)

Mash tofu together with cheese. Mix in garlic, salt and pepper to taste. Add chopped cilantro and parsley. Mix in yellow pepper and scallions. Stuff mixture into the 4 large green peppers that have had tops removed and been cleaned. Place in pan large enough for all four, open side up. Cover with a combination of medium hot salsa and tomato sauce. I use about 1 1/2 cups of each. Bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes. The baking time can vary depending on size of peppers. It shouldn't take more than an hour. Hope you like this.

Parent Practice

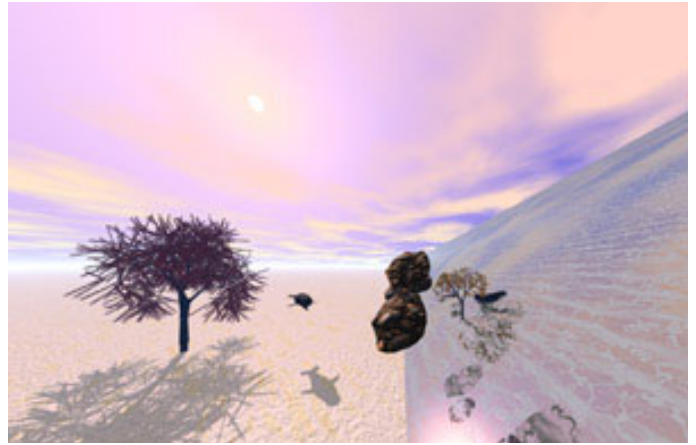
Andrew Palmer

I got up at 3:30 this morning to feed Ian. Not because he was fussing and "demanding" to be fed, but just because he was awake and I was awake (well, woken up by him pleasantly playing in his crib). He'd been up for a little while just talking to himself or his mobiles or the

universe or all of the above. I figured I would let him be for a while then feed him so he could go back to sleep for a few more hours, then later perhaps he would still be asleep while I sat zazen. His room and our zendo share the same space, and the last couple of times I've attempted to sit, just after preparing tea and bringing it in, lighting the candle, donning one of the three rakus, Ian wakes up. I try to sit anyway and let him do his crib-play thing, but he knows I am there and peers over the crib bumper at me and smiles. It cannot be resisted, that early morning fresh cuddly cuteness! So I bring him to the cushion and we have our Daddy-Son Zen Morning Time. He likes to stare and smile at the banner I made a few years ago. I like to think that he is drawn into it because he has an affinity for the practice already (he is already an accomplished master, of course), but know it probably has more to do with the fact that his little bright eyes enjoy the contrast of black and white.

Still, the story of his beginning is a romantic one: conceived at the Rocky Mountain Shambhala Center during the midway break of a month-long retreat; his first

*The Sangha Art Series:
The Works of Monica May, Sangha member and Digital Artist (Reprinted with permission.) See more of her work at <http://www.digitalmay.com> YES NO*



ultrasound indicates that he is sitting upright with his legs somewhat crossed (we think he stayed that way for a while, which would explain being born with club feet); and he has been so bright, attentive and alert from the beginning. We just dwell in his Ian-ness, though, regardless of all that. Just that he is here is what matters, really.

Oh yeah, during that morning time he also has taken to the mokugyo and has even been able to strike it a few times. I think that's pretty cool. Anyway, after he fell back asleep this morning, I was still pretty awake, so I decided to sit. I had been sleeping restlessly the past few nights anyway (this night was no exception) - might as well stay up and grab the opportunity to sit for a longer period of time.

Toward the end of my time thoughts about contributing to the Dharma Rag arose, about how I wanted to write something about this fatherhood stuff and

tried to compose something orderly with a specific point to reach but never could quite manage it. Then it struck me that I could instead just put down whatever came up and out of me, which is how I ended up leaving the cushion and coming to this computer. (Ian had woken up but didn't look over the crib bumper, although he knew I was there because I coughed. I crawled out of the room so he wouldn't see me. By the way, he is working on crawling himself and has developed an inchworm style - knees, belly, hands, knees, belly, hands - which is working well for him. He's also gotten his first tooth!).

Two weeks have passed since writing the above, and now Ian has two teeth. He is still using the same crawling technique and has gotten much faster. Picking up the thread concerning this fatherhood stuff, here is some more rambling, but with a little more focus. The Death Thing: You are probably familiar with the encouragement in Zen to make death a constant companion in order to truly embrace life (or something to that effect). Having a little one around makes that an inescapable reality. At first it was a constant threatening enemy. Spending the first eight days of Ian's life in the hospital in order to get him stabilized, introducing him to the world during flu season, returning to the hospital a for a three-day stint a few months later due to a respiratory virus. Plus knowing that he would need surgery to help in correcting his feet during which he would have to be put under completely and

wondering if he would make it through. Wendy and I talked about how we longed for certainty, either to be guaranteed that Ian would have a long life or to know that he would die young - just give us a solid answer. I think that the surgery was the biggest fear for me, and after he made it through with no difficulties at all I began to relax into the relationship of death as companion. Knowing that anything could happen at any time and that I can't control everything that happens to Ian, I lose myself in playing with him and being with him, forgetting all else in the moment. By embracing death's constant presence I have experienced the deepest joys of my life.

Another gift Ian has given me, in light of Zen practice, is showing me just how intact my ego is. As it was with death, the first few months were the most trying. "I've got to check email; I just fed you yet your hungry again?!; You were supposed to sleep for more than 15 minutes so I could get stuff done; I just laid down to take a nap with you and you woke up, after only 15 minutes; I, I, I, me, me, me." Over time, thankfully, I have learned how to dance better with all of this, how to let go of expectations (well, perhaps 80% of the time) and just be and work with what it is, in the moment. The basic formula is to stop thinking about what I think has to be done and "knowing" and just listening to Ian. Actually, that is even taking it a step too far. I think it is better to say stop thinking and knowing and just. .

It is quite amazing how this all works out. There is definitely a flow to all of this and as a family it seems that we are in this flow often. It helps to ignore others' advice and recommendations and instead of imposing a form onto our lives and trying to fit into it, we are looking for the form that is constantly emerging and showing itself.

I could go on and on, but I won't. Things are really great and I am loving it all. Deep gratitude and appreciation abound! To wrap up, here is a poem I found a couple of weeks ago while walking:

To what shall I compare this life?

*Water splashed onto a rock
under the bright sun,
Evaporating.*



Rocky Mountain Insight Vipassana Sangha

Weekly Schedule

♣Wed night at 7:00 pm

♣Metta Meditation Friday, 12:00
to 12:50

♣Sunday meditation at 9:00 to
10:00 followed by Noble
Conversation 10:15 to 11:30

2525 W. Pikes Peak Blvd., Suite A

July, 2004

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 No Sitting!
4 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Woman's Club	5 6:15 pm Gathering at Wooglin's	6	7 6-7 am Zazen	8	9	10 6:30-8:30 Zazen
11 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Location TBA	12 6:15 pm Social Night	13	14 6-7 am Zazen	15	16	17 6:30-8:30 Zazen
18 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Location TBA	19 6:15 pm Teisho Night	20	21 6-7 am Zazen	22	23 4-7 pm Steering Committee Woman's Club	24 6:30-8:30 Zazen
25 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Location TBA	26 6:15 pm Two Periods Zazen	27	28 6-7 am Zazen	29	30	31 6:30-8:30 Zazen

August, 2004

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Location TBA	2 6:15 pm Sutra Service	3	4 6:00-7:00 Zazen	5	6	7 6:30-8:30 Zazen
8 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Woman's Club	9 6:15 pm Social Night	10	11 6:00-7:00 Zazen	12	13	14 6:30-8:30 Zazen
15 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Woman's Club	16 6:15 pm Teisho Night	17	18 6:00-7:00 Zazen	19	20	21 6:30-8:30 Zazen
22 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Woman's Club	23 6:15 pm Two Periods Zazen	24	25 6:00-7:00 Zazen	26	27	28 6:30-8:30 Zazen.
29 All-day sitting. 6-8 pm Precept Study Group Woman's Club	30 6:15 pm Two Periods Zazen. Full Moon: Recite Precepts!	31	SMS Fall Sesshin Sept. 29 - Oct. 3	Mt. Cloud Zen Center Retreat Oct. 28-31		

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 a part of the Open Source Project, 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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