

Springs Mountain Sangha

Dharma Rag

Volume 7, Issue 6

September, 2004

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**Details of the
Autumn Retreats
And Programs!**

SMS September Events with Joan Sutherland

Clear Mind, Open Heart: The Way of Zen Meditation

A One-day Retreat

Saturday, September 25,

9:00 am - 3:00 pm, \$30

Location TBA

Meditation is an enlivening way of curiosity, insight, and kindness. This one-day retreat is for those interested in learning about Zen and those who wish to deepen an existing meditation practice. Led by senior teacher Joan Sutherland and meditation instructor Sarah Bender, the day will include an introduction to meditation, a taste of koan work and inquiry, interviews with the teacher, and time to move, ask questions, and enjoy the stillness. All are welcome; no experience necessary.

Passionate Zen

Dharma Talk at the SMS

Monday Night Sitting,

September 27, Shove

Chapel on the CC Campus

In meditation our individual hearts touch the great heart of the world, which is both full of beauty and broken by sorrows. Zen is about really being *in* the

world, through discovering a deep equanimity that embraces a fierce caring for life. On this early autumn evening we'll meet for a talk and conversation about cultivating this way of being in our own lives, and in the troubled times we share.

Work in the Room

Tuesday, September 28,

7:00 - 10:00 pm

Joan has set aside an evening for her students who won't be coming to sesshin, as well as other regular Sangha attenders, to meet with her privately. If you'd like to have this opportunity, please contact Elizabeth King in advance at 719 684-0130 or elizking@earthlink.net.

At Home in the World: A Harvest Moon Retreat

Wed., September 29, 5:00

pm - Sun., October 3, noon

Benet Pines Retreat Center

Our autumn meditation retreat will include a Ceremony of Taking Refuge in the Bodhisattva Way, and so we'll focus on what it means to aspire to live a life of greater kindness and honesty—to find refuge, to be at home, in

Springs Mountain Sangha's
Monthly Newsletter

The Dharma Rag

Editor: David Cockrell

Book Review Editor: Judith Steed

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**1 Goldsmith Ct.,
Pueblo, CO 81008**

or at dharmarag@comcast.net.

Submission deadline is the
second Friday of each month.

the world just as it is.

Dharma Talks will be held each night at 7:00 pm, and all are invited to attend the talks.

Please contact Robert King at (719) 684-0130 to let him know of your interest. Plan to arrive about 6:45 to get settled.

Autumn Retreats & Programs

Joan Sutherland



I'll soon be spending ten days, from September 24 to October 3, with Springs Mountain

Sangha. In addition to a four-day meditation retreat (September 29-October 3), we'll have time for a one-day introductory retreat (Saturday, September 25) and a chance to share a Monday evening program (September 27) and some work in the room together.

Our four-day retreat is called *At Home in the World: A Harvest Moon Retreat*. On the last night—Saturday, October 2—we'll hold a *Ceremony of Taking Refuge in the Bodhisattva Way*, which is itself an expression of finding a home in the world. I'm always touched when people decide to take refuge; you don't have to do it, and it's a big investment of time, thought, and fine motor skills. So when someone chooses it, what a gift that is, to that someone and to the community as a whole. It reminds us that all that time, thought, and both gross and fine motor skills we put into our

community means something, can feel like a haven and a support to our companions. Everyone in the SMS community is welcome to join us in the celebration.

Deciding to participate in a refuge ceremony is a deeply personal matter: It's a kind of request that rises from the heart, usually to acknowledge the sense of coming home one has found in this way, and the desire to live a life that is more beneficial to oneself and others, a life of greater kindness.

In taking refuge, we admit our vulnerability and longing for safe harbor. The realm of the vows is not the world of our ordinary culture, with its emphasis on good boundaries and cost/benefit ratios. It's a beautifully reckless act, in which we make impossible promises and express our willingness to have life act upon us in ways we won't be able to control.

We offer ourselves to the world, asking nothing in return, but trusting that if we make this gesture of intention towards life, life will respond by lifting and carrying us along. To make this gesture is to declare our love of life, or maybe just whisper the possibility of it. Which is to move from the prison of our own small story into the fullness of things. Just this small gesture can make all the difference.

There's a particular poignancy to offering ourselves to the world like this at a time when that world seems so troubled. It involves a kind of fierce caring, and that will be the focus of our

Monday night talk and conversation, *Passionate Zen*. Recently an interviewer mentioned to the writer Diane Ackerman that her work seemed quite Buddhist at times. She replied, "I'm a Buddhist right up to the point where you can't be enthusiastic." A common view, to be sure, but one that makes me a bit sad. Enthusiasm can literally mean being inspired by the gods or possessed by them, a pretty crucial difference. Let's talk about the distinctions between feeling deeply and being blinded by passions, between detachment and equanimity. Let's talk about the possibility of zen enthusiasm.

All of us are walking a lifelong path towards being at home in the world. It's a complicated and challenging journey, so it's good from time to time to recall the simple things, to rest awhile on the bedrock of our practice. We'll have that chance during the one-day *Clear Mind, Open Heart* retreat, which will be an introduction to zen meditation. You're welcome whether you've just thought about beginning to meditate or would like to refresh a longtime practice.

Happy Autumn Equinox, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Joan Sutherland is a senior teacher of Zen Buddhism and the holding teacher for Springs Mountain Sangha in Colorado Springs. She is deeply interested in what becomes possible when ways of meditation and inquiry developed over thousands of years are brought into contemporary American lives. She lives in Sonoma County, Northern California and teaches through The Open Source Project, a network of Zen practitioners in the western U.S.

September, 2003

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 6:30-8:30 Zazen
5 6-8:30 PM Precept Study Group Woman's Club	6 6:15 Sutra Service	7	8 6:00-7:00 Zazen	9	10	11 6:30-8:30 Zazen
12 6-8:30 PM Precept Study Group Woman's Club	13 6:15 Social Night	14	15 6:00-7:00 Zazen	16	17	18 6:30-8:30 Zazen
19 6-8:30 PM Precept Study Group Woman's Club	20 6:15 Teisho Night	21	22 6:00-7:00 Zazen	23	24	25 6:30-8:30 Zazen 9-3 Intro Workshop
26	25 6:15 Dharma Talk with Joan	28 6:45 pm Work in the Room (King's)	29 Fall Sesshin begins 5:00 pm	30		

October, 2003

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Dec. 1-5 Rohatsu Sesshin with David Weinstein	Mt. Cloud Zen Center Retreat Oct. 28-31				1	2
3 Sesshin ends with noon meal	4 6:15 Sutra Service	5	6 6:00-7:00 Zazen	7	8	9 6:30-8:30 Zazen
10	11 6:15 Social Night (Community Concerns Committee discussion)	12	13 6:00-7:00 Zazen	14	15	16 6:30-8:30 Zazen
17	18 6:15 Teisho Night	19	20 6:00-7:00 Zazen	21	22	23 6:30-8:30 Zazen
24	25 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	26	27	28	29	30 6:30-8:30 Zazen
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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 member of the Open Source Project, in both the Soto & Rinzai traditions. To learn more, visit our website, <http://www.smszen.org> or contact us at Dharmarag@comcast.net.

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

The Dharma Rag

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