

Springs Mountain Sangha

# Dharma Rag

Volume 7, Issue 7

November, 2004

## *Inside this Issue:*

Letter from Joan

Coming Home—  
December Retreat  
*David Weinstein*

What does means to  
Take Refuge  
*Jinny Lucas*

Sitting with Pain  
*Elizabeth King*

From the Steering  
Committee

The SMS Community  
Concerns Committee

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](mailto:dharmarag@comcast.net).  
Submission deadline is the  
second Friday of each month.



Dear Friends:

Just a note to thank you for all the time and energy you put into my autumn visit to Colorado Springs. I very much enjoyed the chance to spend some extra time with you, to participate at least in the last meeting of the precepts group, and to visit the regular Monday evening meeting. The retreat was great for me in several ways, among which was the joy and depth of the refuge ceremony and the sense of really beginning to integrate taking the vows with inquiry and koan study. All in all, it really was a wonderful way to celebrate my birthday!

My best wishes to you for Thanksgiving and your upcoming Ancestors Retreat with David Weinstein--May those you love and those who love you, seen and unseen, walk with you this autumn wherever yr path may lead.

Warmly,  
Joan Sutherland



## **Coming Home— December retreat with David Weinstein**

Traditionally, the December retreat is called 'Rohatsu', the old Japanese term for the 8th of December, the day of the Buddha's enlightenment. As a way of honoring the spirit of the

occasion and not clinging to a name I'd like to suggest we call it the *Coming Home* Retreat. I had been thinking about calling it the Home Coming Retreat, but a recent conversation with Karin Henriksen has helped me appreciate the reverberations that might be set up with a name like that. Some people might expect the crowning of a King and Queen and the making a float.

The quality of the experience that this retreat commemorates is one of being at home in the universe. Of recognizing something that has always been true. Nothing has to be added, nothing has to be taken away. It's like coming home, kicking off your shoes and putting your feet up. The place where you can scratch where it itches.

During the December retreat, we'll explore what being at home means to us. What does it feel like? Equally important, what does it feel like when we don't feel at home? What gets in the way?

We are fortunate to once again have the opportunity of holding the retreat in a real home. The generosity of Robert and Elizabeth King in opening their home to us for this retreat is a great gift that gives us a running start.

## What does means to take refuge?

Jinny Lucas



Tuesday 8:14 pm  
March, 2, 2004,  
West bound  
Interstate 90 in  
Montana, driving 60

miles for hours, there was a fatal car accident involved in a single vehicle, I was the driver of that vehicle involved in that fatal accident. My vehicle rolled over 4 times and hit the guardrail on both sides several times over on a 70 yard stretch on the Madison River, and I was conscious the entire time and my vehicle finally stopped rolling at the edge of the River, I was pinned up against the guardrail and the vehicle. I was in and out of consciousness for some time, I do not know when rescuers got there. It took nearly four hours get me out of the vehicle. I do not yet know how I survived, it's a mystery. I know one thing for sure, I was meant to be alive and it was not my time to die yet. My question is, WHY? That accident was the turning point of my life, and was the spiritual awakening in my life. Sometime in life, what its means for us to grow in our lives and follow our dreams. Every person has different ideas about inner growth. I have my own perspective about inner growth and true essence of inner beauty and love. We at different times in our lives, need different things to satisfy our needs, wants and goals. After the accident, I think I finally came to the point in my life, where I

may know what it is that I really want and need to do, and have the ability to follow through. I am not entirely sure what is the purpose on this journey that I have undertake in my life, but that is what I feel I must learn right now. I know "Taking Refuge" in itself is a serious commitment, but I feel perfectly right, taking refuge in Bodhisattva way.

The past few months, I had been evaluating my life, my goals and purpose, trying to find who I am and how to attain and to achieve and to be the best person that I can be. I have lived and endured a past, which for the most part I am grateful for. I have walked and lived in pain and sorrow, I have also gained knowledge, wisdom and appreciation of how precious the gift of life truly is. I strongly felt that taking refuge vows is about learning how I can lead a more useful life and how I can help to create a more positive society. The refuge vows help me make a commitment to Buddhism in order to develop my own spiritual path so that I may be better able to help myself and other people. I am entering the path for both my own self development, and at the same time, to learn how to help others. My "commitment" to precepts vows is more like a resolution to study, to learn an understanding of how things are seen through the principle of Buddhism.

I try to live with loving kindness and compassion, but sometime I am finding myself very challenging. In any case I found that the reminder of the

precepts vows is very useful because Buddhism teaches me how to develop loving kindness and compassion.

I know without constant practice I will have a hard time and even I might not be interested and might give it up altogether. So I must try to develop loving kindness and compassion so that no matter what kind of experience I personally am having, I will still be able to learn to give to myself and others. I think taking refuge is having a great benefit, because I cannot be lazy. I cannot change my ideas all the time, for an example, "today I like everything and everybody, and next day I am fed up with everything and everyone and do not want to be bothered!" I think the fact that I have taken Refuge guides and protects me from negative emotions, and feeling negative about experiences. I think being a Buddhist means that I am and will always looking to improve myself so that I will be more useful. I never can say that I have finished self-improvement that I do not need to do any more! I know being a Buddhist is a commitment to a constant improvement and spiritual development. It means that I should be constantly trying to purify my own negative thoughts, my own negative emotion. What can I say! The learning and gaining is never complete.

Mitch, William, Robert, Elizabeth, David, Judith, Andrew, and especially our teachers Sarah and Joan, you are the backbone of my spiritual life. Without strong support from you I wouldn't be here

standing right now writing this. I am still a baby spiritually and I'm hoping to grow strong. To me the precepts vows and take refuge ceremony are more like a baby learning to how to walk and I trust that you won't let me fall.

These people are my refuge and I strongly feel that I finally found my home I can take refuge in.

*Jinny (Beautiful Place In My Heart)*

## **Sitting with Pain** Elizabeth King



Though I've thoroughly loved being a retreat leader in the past, the face in my mirror that

September morning said flat out, "It's high time you gave up leading and learned to *just sit*." I liked the idea and looked forward to "growing my practice" by just being present. That is, until the pain started shooting up and down my left leg. How in the world would I make it through four days of sitting in a murky pool of back and leg pain?

What did I know about enduring pain? I thought of my first teacher, Yozan. After he had hip replacement surgery, he told me he had discovered it's quite possible *to be in pain without suffering*. "You only hurt when you notice; you only suffer when you fight it," he said. Now as I think of those mornings when I've wakened with a bad headache, I remember that, later in the day, Robert has often asked, "How's your head?"

To my great surprise, I discover the ache is gone and I hadn't even noticed! How could that happen? "Awareness. Awareness. Awareness," Yozan would have answered. "Just keep your awareness on your breath. Let the pain in but don't follow it. Go right back to your breath."

Something I learned from sitting in pain in sesshin is that there are many different kinds of pain - aching, cramping, needling, throbbing, stabbing, and an infinite variety of others. I found out that pain can be associated with color.

Sometimes I felt as though I was sitting in a pool of heavy brown muck; at other times, it felt deep red and piercing. As I paid close attention to it, I also discovered that, though it seems that pain is constant, there are actually spaces in it if you pay close attention. Just studying the pain helped me to get outside of it.

Joan suggested that another way to sit with pain is "to let yourself go into it, to *become the pain*." Somehow this caused the pain to fill the room, to belong to everyone, and I no longer felt alone in it.

I'm thankful for the lessons pain taught me at the September sesshin, and for those it continues to teach me.

## **From the Steering Committee. . .**

The Steering Committee meeting October 15, 2004 was chaired by

chairperson Robert King, with Sarah Bender, David Cockrell, Karin Henriksen and Jinny Lucas present. William Jeavons was chosen as chairperson for 2005, and Judith Steed will be taking over the newsletter. Robert King will continue to serve as treasurer.

Joan's September "mini-residency" was discussed with general satisfaction expressed for the retreat, Introductory workshop and Monday night sitting. On October 7, following the fall retreat, our holding teacher Joan Sutherland, turned 50! To celebrate this symbolically significant birthday, the SMS steering committee presented her with a check for \$1,000 at the close of the retreat. In response, Joan said that it was her "half-century wish" to visit Scotland and Ireland, the lands of her ancestors, and that the gift would help her to realize this dream.

Upcoming events include a sangha-wide discussion of the Community Concerns Committee proposal on Monday, November 16 at the community night gathering after the Monday night sitting, which will be held at the Women's Center. There will also be a by-laws workshop for our emerging 501.c3 organization on Sunday, November 14 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm at Sarah Bender's house, to be followed by a light dinner and a Steering Committee meeting from 5:00 - 6:30 pm. Everyone is encouraged to attend both events.

The Rohatsu Sesshin will be held December 1-5 at the King's home in Green Mountain Falls. The cost for the sesshin will be \$200, with the option of commuting or staying four nights at the motel in Green Mountain Falls for \$50. Registration is being handled by Robert King, (719) 684-0130, or [kingrh53@earthlink.net](mailto:kingrh53@earthlink.net).

Finally, a book study of John Tarrant's new book *Bring Me the Rhinoceros* is under consideration for three Sunday nights in January. More to be revealed soon!

## The SMS Community Concerns Committee

Draft 10/19/2004 for review by the sangha Monday, November 8, 2004

### Introduction

Most of the inevitable tangles that occur in community life can be resolved by treating each other with kindness and respect, and by turning to our practice with our difficulties. In a voluntary and volunteer organization, it is particularly important that we encourage rather than dishearten each other. The Community Concerns Committee (Committee) is intended for those situations in which we cannot accomplish this. When such concerns arise, we are committed to their resolution as compassionately and fairly as possible. It is important for Springs Mountain Sangha (SMS) members to know that their legitimate concerns will be addressed. To this end, the SMS Steering Committee (SC) adopts the following procedures for concerns that arise within the community, including member concerns about sangha policy, leadership and practice structure; intra-sangha relationship issues; as well as requests for assistance in enhancing the quality of sangha life and for referrals for assistance with emotional and spiritual needs.

### SMS community concerns process

#### *First steps*

All sangha members are welcome to take concerns to any member of the SC at any time. The SC member may advise the member to take the concern to the Community Concerns Committee if it cannot be addressed in a more informal way. In case of a conflict arising between members of the community, the people involved should first attempt to address it directly among themselves. If this is unsuccessful, we recommend that they seek a trusted third party or parties to facilitate dialogue and informal resolution. If third party help does not lead to resolution, SMS members may request help from the Chairperson of the Committee.

#### *Requesting assistance from the Community Concerns Committee*

The SC shall appoint three SMS members, selected from a solicited applicant pool, to serve on the Community Concerns Committee. Membership will be for one year, subject to renewal, with at least one member carried over each year to maintain continuity. A member of the SC will serve on the Committee on a case by case basis. The committee will be on-call and meet periodically as requests come forward. The responsibility of the Committee shall be to mediate concerns described in the introduction, only after the first steps toward concern resolution have proved unsuccessful. The role of the Committee is to hear such concerns and advise sangha members about courses of action. If the SC, in consultation with the teacher, decides a concern is a practice matter, it will be referred to the Teacher. Difficulties with Teachers will be referred to the Holding Teacher as a practice matter. If it can't be resolved here, it can go to David Weinstein. Members of the community do not need to be formal students of Joan or David to consult the Community Concerns Committee.

#### The process

1. Any SMS member may ask the Committee to address a concern.
2. To present a request for assistance from the Committee, a member should communicate orally or in writing to the Committee Chairperson. The committee will establish its own guidelines for information to be included in a request for assistance.

3. The Committee Chairperson shall acknowledge receipt of the request and provide copies of the SMS community concerns procedures to all relevant parties.

4. Once a request for assistance has been presented, the Committee shall meet in private to discuss the merits of the issue and decide the next steps of the procedure. These might include:

a. Seeking additional input from other parties to the issue;

b. Conducting informal meetings for conflict resolution between the parties;

c. Scheduling a formal hearing in which all parties are given an opportunity to present their understanding of the issue;

d. Rejecting the request on the grounds of insufficient cause

5. When the Committee members are satisfied that they have adequate information, they will review and discuss the issue in a private session. The Committee's decision shall be reached by a form of consensus that allows one committee member to stand aside - i.e. to disagree with the decision but acquiesce to it.

6. Once a decision has been reached, the chair of the committee shall notify the parties either orally or in writing of the decision and make its recommendations.

7. Throughout the process, all content shall be held in strictest confidence.



## November, 2004

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1 6:15 Sutra Service	2	3 6:00-7:00 Zazen	4	5	6 6:30-8:30 Zazen
7	8 6:15 Social Night (Community Concerns Committee discussion)	9	10 6:00-7:00 Zazen	11	12	13 6:30-8:30 Zazen
14 By-Laws Workshop & SC Mtg. (Sarah's house)	15 6:15 Teisho Night	16	17 6:00-7:00 Zazen	18	19	20 6:30-8:30 Zazen
21	22 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	23	24 6:00-7:00 Zazen	25	26	27 6:30-8:30 Zazen
28	29 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	30				

## December, 2004

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>Coming Home</i> Retreat begins, evening	2	3	4 6:30-8:30 Zazen
5 <i>Coming Home</i> Retreat ends	6 6:15 Sutra Service	7	8 6:00-7:00 Zazen	9	10	11 6:30-8:30 Zazen
12	13 6:15 Social Night	14	15 6:00-7:00 Zazen	16	17	18 6:30-8:30 Zazen
19	20 6:15 Teisho Night	21	22 6:00-7:00 Zazen	23	24	25 6:30-8:30 Zazen
26	27 6:15 Two Periods Zazen	28	29 6:00-7:00 Zazen	30		

### 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 Zen traditions. To learn more, visit our website, <http://www.smszen.org> or contact us at [Dharmarag@comcast.net](mailto:Dharmarag@comcast.net).

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

### The Dharma Rag

c/o David Cockrell  
One Goldsmith  
Pueblo, CO 81008

[www.smszen.org](http://www.smszen.org),