

Springs Mountain Sangha

# The dharma rag

Volume 8, Issue 6

Nov/Dec, 2005

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## **ANCESTORS' RETREAT WITH DAVID WEINSTEIN**

The December retreat in Zen practice centers is traditionally a seven-day affair done in remembrance of the enlightenment of Gautama Siddhartha. It ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, the day designated as the day of his enlightenment, often with people sitting in meditation through the night without sleep.

As we make this practice and this tradition our own, it's good to ask ourselves, what this occasion means to us and how we want to celebrate it? We have many stories passed down to us about the efforts and achievements of people on the path. The koans are one source of these stories that can be inspiring, giving us energy to push on in our own journey along the way. But, the koan way requires more than an admiration from a distance. We are invited to enter the stories fully, finding them to be none other than our own stories and we ourselves to be none other than those whose efforts we admire and are inspired by.

During our upcoming retreat in December (Dec 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>), we will be following the 'Bare Bones' format, no chanting of sutras and a minimum of ritual, but as we have done in the past, on the final night we will gather around the fire to share our stories with each other. We will have from Wednesday night until Saturday night to sit in the richness of the silence to appreciate how our eyebrows are entangled with those of our ancestors, those of the distant past, not so distant past and right here, now.

Sitting around the fire there is no host and no guest, no person of rank.

Looking forward to sitting together with you all soon.

**David**

Springs Mountain Sangha's  
Monthly Newsletter

*The dharma rag*

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:

P.O. Box 60904

Colorado Springs, CO 80960  
Or send an email to  
[SMSdharma@ispwest.com](mailto:SMSdharma@ispwest.com).

Submission deadline is the  
second Friday of each month.

Come visit our website @  
[www.smszen.org](http://www.smszen.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS!

### Half-Day Sit @ the Women's Club

**Saturday, November 12 9:30-12:30**

(Silent Breakfast 8:30-9:30)

Following the regular Saturday sit at Shove Chapel, we will have breakfast and extend our sitting into the early afternoon. This sitting will coincide with our first practice forum meeting, which will include a brief talk about and discussion of Seng T'san's poem "Trust In Mind." Please join us for any or all of the morning's events. For more information, contact Andrew at [apalmer@naropa.net](mailto:apalmer@naropa.net), or call 287-6141.

### Potluck dinner for Karin and Erik Henriksen

To thank Karin for her many, many hours and skills offered to the sangha as webmaster. **November 13, @ 5 PM**, Sarah Bender's house (contact Sarah for directions). Bring musical instruments if you like! ([sbender@corb.com](mailto:sbender@corb.com)) @ 594-0724

### Letter from the Boulder Zen Center

Dear Friends,

The Boulder Zen Center is proud to support the film *Amongst White Clouds* at the Denver Film Festival. The documentary film will be showing Sunday, Nov 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:45pm and Wed, Nov 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:45pm. We have a limited number of discounted tickets for \$9.

*Amongst White Clouds* is a rare glimpse at practice of Chinese hermit monks. This tradition dating back thousands of years is still alive today. The documentary is by an American, fluent in Chinese, who spent five years living and practicing with these monks. His raw footage of these reclusive monks in the Zhongnan Mountains (one of whom must have been Hanshan or Shih-te in a prior life) gives a rare glimpse into the timeless practice of Buddha's Way in China.

Please respond to let us know which day you would like to attend, and we will arrange for the

discounted tickets to be held for you at the Briar Rose.

Gasho, Brian

Clambering up the Cold Mountain path,  
The Cold Mountain trail goes on and on:  
The long gorge choked with scree and boulders,  
The wide creek, the mist-blurred grass.  
The moss is slippery, though there's been no rain  
The pine sings, but there's no wind.  
Who can leap the world's ties  
And sit with me among the white clouds?  
Hanshan (a.k.a. Cold Mountain)  
Translated by Gary Snyder

### Walking with the Ancestors: Practice Forum

"The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences. When love and hate are both absent everything becomes clear and undisguised. Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart."-opening lines of the Hsin Hsin Ming

### Walking With The Ancestors: Practice Forum

This November we will spend some time with Seng T'san, the third Zen Patriarch, taking up his poem "Trust In Mind" (Hsin-Hsin Ming) as a way of enhancing and illuminating our everyday practice.

We will work primarily from the translation by Richard B. Clarke and use "Trust In Mind: The Rebellion of Chinese Zen" by Mu Soeng as our central text, but feel free to bring any or no version of the poem you'd like.

Meetings will take place Saturday Mornings from 10-12, November 12-December 3 at the Women's Club in downtown Colorado Springs Please contact Andrew Palmer at (719) 287-6141 or [apalmer@naropa.net](mailto:apalmer@naropa.net) for more information."

## SMS Ancestors' Retreat

David Weinstein will be leading a meditation retreat beginning on Wednesday evening, **December 7, and concluding by noon on Sunday, December 11**, at the home of Robert and Elizabeth King in Green Mountain Falls. A colleague of Joan Sutherland and John Tarrant, David has been leading retreats for Springs Mountain Sangha for a number of years, including the past five years at this special time of the year traditionally associated with the enlightenment of Buddha.

It will be a residential retreat, though commuters are welcome. For those staying overnight, sleeping accommodations will be provided at a local motel. Meals will be prepared by the retreatants, with each participant responsible for one or two dishes. The registration fee for those staying overnight is \$250, for commuters \$150. For part-timers, there will be a per diem charge of \$75 with overnight accommodations, or \$50 without. A deposit of \$100 is required in order to secure a place.

Registrations and deposits should go to Robert King, who will be serving as registrar and coordinator for the retreat.

For a registration form or further information about the retreat, including directions to the King home, you may contact Robert by phone 719-684-0130 or by email [kingrh53@earthlink.net](mailto:kingrh53@earthlink.net).

**Evening Talk by David Weinstein after the Monday Night Sit at Shove on December 12<sup>th</sup>**

## VOICES

### PAIN AND SUFFERING

Pain is an awareness.

Suffering is a reaction to that awareness.

The awareness reacted to is always a past awareness, the memory of an awareness.

The alarm reaction is a response to what was, rather than to what is, the ever-changing reality of the moment.

Suffering is the result of not being able to flow with the present awareness, of being unable to let go of the previous awareness.

Zen is the art of letting go, of flowing with present awareness.

Katagiri-roshi said "The reason why you need to practice zazen is that otherwise things stick to you, you cannot let go of them."

Learn to do this. Just sit. Just do it. Practice, practice, practice.

Live your life as it is. Life is o.k. You are o.k. The reality of the moment is as it is and cannot be otherwise, and this is also o.k.

Pain is like the rain, not good, not bad, but just there, the way things are at this moment. It is the reality of your life right now, and it is o.k., too.

Flow with the pain. *Become the pain*, the flowing and impermanent awareness of the present moment.

When you become the pain, when you *are* the pain, who is it that the pain can hurt?

You are not hurting. All there is, is the pain, the hurting, but there is no one there to be hurt, to suffer.

Suffering is unnecessary. Suffering is optional. Let go and give up suffering forever.

By Yozan Dirk Mosig (Elizabeth's Nebraska Teacher)  
Kearney Zendo  
Kearney, Nebraska

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**All Sangha Meeting Notes**

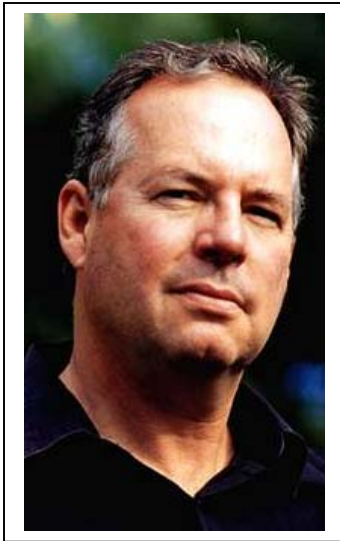
We had a terrific turn out for this meeting some usual suspects and some new faces. Nard reported out on the Non-Profit 501(3)(c) status, the bylaws and all the effort that went into this effort. We talked this over and celebrated.

- ❖ Great thanks was formally extended to all the players and especially David C. <smile>
- ❖ A motion was made and accepted to have a process to collect and review suggestions made in light of the bylaws.
- ❖ The slate of the steering committee was presented and accepted.
- ❖ This committee has been strongly encouraged and agrees to offer items on a wish list containing both things and activities that they recognize the Sangha needs

Thanks to all for your practice and your kindness

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**Mustards Seeds**



Please join us in offering our care and sympathy to Sarah Bender and her family over the recent passing of her brother, Tom Masland. He died on October 27<sup>th</sup>, following a traffic accident. He was well loved and respected by all

who had the privilege of knowing him and his work. He shared generously his heart and his talents; may he pass through the bardos with as much ease and grace as he did in life

**Here are a few words following the Bright Harvest Autumn Meditation Retreat.**



**Reflections on the Autumn Retreat**

Another great retreat at Benet Pines! No snow this time. The blizzard that ended our Spring Retreat more than made up for any moisture deficiency. We actually had lovely fall weather most of the week with just one day, as I recall, that was overcast.

Joan's talks centered around the theme of practicing Zen in troubled times. The highpoint, for me, was her talk about the beginnings of the koan tradition in 8th century China. It was, she said, a time of extraordinary upheaval, including civil war and rampant disease, in which only one person in three survived. She focused on two teachers from that period who took very different approaches to the horrendous conditions of their time, yet who were equally influential in shaping the subsequent development of Zen. The koan seminar which she led on Friday night was, as usual, stimulating and insightful with everyone pitching in.

We had a somewhat smaller group of retreatants than usual with fewer fulltimers and more parttimers, but Sarah managed to keep

things moving in a smooth and orderly way with a minimum of distraction. The energy was strong from the beginning and the tone of the retreat deeply contemplative throughout.

**Becca wrote this poem during the retreat.**

The Pine Trees

I walk through the trees at night.  
I walk through the trees at light.  
Thoughts, feelings, memories, self...  
...going...  
The wind blows softly through the pine trees.

**And this offering from Seth**

As these trees loose their leaves, I want to shed my skin.  
Slip into ambiguity buried in a pile of their dead fall.  
Severing ties with all that has come to define me,  
I'll sink back into the earth and lay dormant.  
Surrounded by nutrients and dark soil  
I'll remain quiet, content and secure.  
Come the frost, come the snow and ice,  
even the freeze thaw cycle.  
I won't be baited out before my time...my time.

**Here is a response to our last newsletter:**

Judith -

Thank you for sending me the dharma rag --- I can't describe how it warms my heart and floods my mind with rich memories of time spent with y'all, and esp. of the first sesshin I attended, where I met Joan -- wow!

I think it was 1996, or maybe '97 - I know it was the early spring because I remember snow flurries

as we sat and the muddy rutted path up to the main house for meals.

Best wishes to you,  
Marilyn

## WISH LIST AND OTHER SMS ITEMS

**This is were occasionally we will list some needs the shanga has**

### A STUDENT BELL

Pease would someone buy good sounding student bell for SMS (for use with work in the room) DharmaCrafts has them for about \$150. Joan has ordered one for use in CA.

### AUDIO LIBRARY

To order copies of Joan's talks or a recording of our sutra service, please contact Andrew (ask Andrew how he wants to be contacted). These will be available as CD or tape. Cost is \$10, paid to SMS.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- ❖ **Monday** evenings starting at 6:10 p.m. at Shove Chapel: 1010 North Nevada on the campus of Colorado College.
  - ✓ *First Monday* of the month: 30-minute sutra Service, brief walking meditation, two 25-minute periods of sitting
  - ✓ *Second Monday*: two 25-minute sitting periods, including walking meditation, followed by a social gathering
  - ✓ *Third Monday*: two 25-minute sitting periods, including walking meditation, followed by a talk or reading
  - ✓ *Fourth Monday*: One 25-minute sitting period and community member shares personal Zen Practice experience: "Way Speaking Mind." If you'd like/willing to take a turn, please call Sarah Bender
- ❖ **Wednesday** Mornings from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. at Shove Chapel.
- ❖ **Saturday** Mornings from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m (note change). also at Shove Chapel. After the sitting many of us usually walk to a nearby coffee shop for breakfast.
- ❖ **Sunday** we often have steering committee meetings or discussion groups or workshops

PLEASE REMEMBER TO CHECK THE WEBSITE  
IN CASE OF CHANGES AND ADDITIONS!!

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (required for e-distribution)

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 [SMSdharma@ispwest.com](mailto:SMSdharma@ispwest.com) or [Judith@ispwest.com](mailto:Judith@ispwest.com) (editor).  Please check if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email, saving resources & expenses.

### *The dharma rag*

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