

Springs Mountain Sangha

A Zen Buddhist Community

Springs Mountain Sangha

Colorado Springs

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The dharma rag

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Springs Mountain Sangha's Monthly Newsletter: *The dharma rag*

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DHARMA TALK

A Season of Hope

By Joan Sutherland

It's the harvest season again, and the holidays that mark the turn from autumn into winter have begun. Our tribe gathered to do the things tribes do together: make a new teacher, have a ceremony reaffirming things we hold dear, like the bodhisattva vows. Talk to each other, eat food together, sit in silence, raise our voices in song. Then we joined the rest of the nation in holding an election that opened up some of the first hope many have felt in awhile. A fine harvest.

I encourage you to take the risk of enjoying the hope for a bit, however tentative it feels. It's good to give those muscles an occasional workout, in case we ever need them in a sustained way again. When I hear a Yeah, but! rising in me, I think of something I recently read in a Japanese novel: "Your problem is you think too much. Life isn't that simple." Fortunately.

For the holidays at least, let's let the world be as complicated as it really is. Dreamlike. Unexpected. Sweet and disastrous. A late autumn world at war whose morning star can still kindle the light of your own eye.

Thanks to all of you who helped make my autumn residency possible, and I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season. If you travel, go safely. I hope your plans include at least one person under six and word from an old friend you'd lost touch with. Take good care of yourselves, and take good care of each other. Happy Enlightenment Morning.

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Dear Springs Mountain Sangha,

The low slant of this late autumn light gives a pensive tinge to the afternoon. I've been thinking about us, about Springs Mountain Sangha, with gratitude and curiosity. I've been thinking about what it is that we, in particular, have to offer here in Colorado Springs. These days there are a number of new and interesting avenues for people to explore Buddhist teachings and meditation practice here. This is very exciting! And it offers us a chance to look at our own place in the field of practice here.

Here's what I think. We offer, first of all, a strong and steady community of practice. Zen tradition recognizes that meditation itself is at the core of our practice, but that it is not the only skillful means available. Study, service, and devotional practice, for example, and the Zen methodology of inquiry based in koan study--- practiced with teachers and in groups---all are aspects of a rich practice life that is supported by the community in many ways.

Second, we offer a particular embodiment of the Dharma: our holding teacher, Joan Sutherland, brings us her particular realization and presentation of Essential Nature. David Weinstein brings his; I offer mine, and each Sangha member contributes the particular insight given to him or her, so that something becomes visible---becomes visible freshly and differently at each moment.

Third, and perhaps most important, we offer the confidence that each person already has what he or she needs. Awakening is available to each of us all the time. Zen is not a self-improvement project, and by insisting on this point, Zen creates a bare field on which each of us can come forth in a unique way, as a unique expression, giving full energy and dreaming on the Dharma as no other person could do it. May all beings benefit from our yearning to more fully express our realization!

Sarah Bender

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REVIEWS: RESIDENCY AND ASSOCIATED EVENTS

JOAN SUTHERLAND'S RESIDENCY WITH SPRINGS MOUNTAIN SANGHA

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The Precepts

By Lucinda Lawrence



The Three Refuges

1. I vow to surrender to the unknown in each moment as it arises.
2. I vow to stop trying to control life with internal dialogues about what I think the past should have been or what the future should be.
3. I vow to accept help from my companions in my times of need without excessive fanfare and to give help to my companions in their times of need without desire for self-gratification.

The Three Vows

1. I vow to bow in respect to the inner wisdom in all beings by refraining from over-solicitude and judgment of what I think they should or should not do.
2. I vow to treat all beings with loving kindness and compassion, including myself.
3. I vow to never judge what is best for another until I have stood for a time in his or her shoes.

The Ten Precepts

1. I vow not to kill this moment by thinking about the next moment.
2. I vow not to steal by wishing life to be other than it is at this moment.
3. I vow to use my sexual energy as a creative fire to burn away my delusion of separateness.
4. I vow not to hide behind a false smile and sugar words when I am really feeling hurt and angry.
5. I vow not to use distractions such as excessive chatter or chocolate bonbon binges to avoid looking at what it is I am trying to avoid looking at.
6. I vow to sit with the three poisons...greed, hatred, and ignorance...instead of projecting them onto others.
7. I vow not to view myself as superior or inferior to others through judgment.
8. I vow to give more of my time and energy toward finding effective ways for all of us...both here in America and throughout the world...to focus our attention on our commonalities, not our differences.
9. I vow not to manipulate others into being targets for projections of my unprocessed maps and stories.
10. I vow to carry out His Holiness the Dalai Lama's recommendation that we teach compassion to our children at home, at school, and even in the marketplaces of the world.

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So, no, I didn't make it to the room but I was THERE! Amazing! Linda



I woke at 2:30 this morning having dreams filled with much busy-ness....they felt like karmic dreams, and involved my job, my students. There were good things happening in them, but I felt a sense of urgency and frustration because somehow I knew I needed to get to Sarah's house! One detail I remember from the dream...and I have no idea where it fits (this has nothing to do with my Koan, but??? :-) ...is the year 1991.

After being awake for a little bit, I fell back to sleep....and the phone rang at 5:45!!! (it was a hang-up call--aargh!!) However, I had fleeting glimpses of what I was dreaming at the time, and I was just going into a room....details not clear enough to be sure it was Sarah's....but I remember saying, or having the thought, "Oh, here you are...I've been looking for you." I can't say I was there...but there was definitely the feeling I'd found someone/some place I'd been looking for.

I fell back to sleep and woke around 8:30, any traces of dreams I was having evaporating despite my staying very still. Marsha



My piece of the collective dream-intention to meet at Sarah's meeting space and to remember.

Notes: I went to sleep on my L. side. Focused on my breathing and visualized white bead on my forehead and felt myself descend-as it were-very quickly. I awoke at 3:00 am and waited slowly and quietly to walk back into the dream to retain as much as I could and then I turned on the light and wrote the below account. Then before I went back to sleep I again set the intention to meet at the same place and to again remember and when I awoke, sometime after 8:00 am, I felt heavy and drugged and drew a "blank" on remembering anything at all of a dream. I felt as if I had slept very deeply AND I still remember hearing the Sunday paper being delivered with a huge PLONK on the driveway outside my bedroom window about 6 am. In fact I thought I remember being aware of 2 newspapers being delivered at two different times but when I awoke and finally got out of bed and looked out of the window, I only saw one paper. Ha.

I write in my journal---

My first awareness: an endlessly large amorphous space filled with light-no walls or ceiling or floor-no sense of anyone else there. I remember saying, "this must be the place." And it felt like it took along time to get there. I remember waiting there.

Then I found myself in a clinic-a patient's room-cleaning instruments and counters-speculums in scummy water-(Note.-I worked in a Planned Parenthood clinic twice here in Colo. Spgs.-my first and my last jobs as a nurse). I was going on vacation and I wanted to leave an especially clean place. Didn't want to leave any evidence that could get us in trouble should the clinic be checked on by anyone?---the government, or people looking for an excuse to shut us down or find evidence of "illegal" behavior.

The clinic room then became more like a kitchen. Someone was not doing their clean up job and I was pitching in to take over someone else's job. I was finding food to clean up on a wooden counter and a place where "she" should have cleaned off her own space---on this space were several what looked like predigested pieces of what looked like meat, waiting to be chewed again and swallowed. The pieces were spaced out on the counter and looked like little balls of food like small grapes stuck together, pale in color and neglected. Flies were beginning to find them so I sweep them all off the counter into a waste can. I know "she" will be upset that they are gone. Doing her job makes me feel---why doesn't she take care of her own stuff and a bit sanctimonious that I am doing her job.

Then I return to the space of great light. I still see no one else but I feel a collective presence and an awareness of someone there who is extremely sensitive to even the opening and closing of a door-crying out with each air of movement reaching her. And the collective presence is being there, being aware of her presence, and tiptoeing-as it were- or moving in that space as if in awareness of this sensitivity and honoring it.

Now, being awake with my journal, I continue to write:

Awake, as I think about this sensitive person, I find tears in my eyes. I remember just being there, listening for, almost witnessing and not stepping in to “help” or to “enable” her. It felt like a collective witness to her journey, to be present, to holding the space. No rescue. Donella



I had a long and complicated dream after 6:30am today but location did not resemble Sarah's living room and the many people involved were only vaguely familiar. It was an organized activity related to teaching/learning and included a variety of feelings; overall feeling was confusion.

I awoke thinking I had no dream whatever and it was several minutes before I remembered I did dream and then went to write it down. Many components in this dream and so far they have not produced a coherent, consciously meaningful story.

It was a disordered dream, which my notes from Joan's talk reminds me, is a good sign; a sign of purification and readiness to move on to something different. Because of the many people throughout the entire sequence, it could be interpreted as a Group Dream perhaps. Perhaps an unknown Group for me (or SMS/WMS) to discover. I wonder if Dream Intention can be guided to a location other than a specified place. Jan



HIKING RETREAT JOY

By Clay Taylor

Three eager hikers set out to explore body, mind and the Pipeline Trail behind Cheyenne Mountain. Climbing over logs, tickled by spruce branches, we meander a circuitous route along an ancient mining era aqueduct. A clear autumn day, golden aspen leaves floating down around us, the perfect opportunity for a hike.

Lunching atop a large boulder facing the sun and deep blue sky, we enquire about what sort of self we really have? Can we truly only consist of an insubstantial collection of related stuff and experience? The Indians of Asia thought so. But then why would we really invest our hearts in anything at all? Resting on that rock under the huge sky with the noisy grasshoppers flying overhead making us laugh, suddenly the stubborn notion of a separate self vanishes and we merge with the energy of red granite, warm sunshine, and big ponderosa pines. Wow!

Returning along the same trail, thoughts move on to planning the evening's events. Although the deep focus disperses, gratitude remains for an awesome day. How about a ski retreat this winter?



VOICES & REVIEWS

Stone Drop. Plop. Ripple.

By Andrew Palmer

(a caseworker's meditation [lament], in two voices: “It's my job” ~ “I'm a human being”)

Wednesday morning, I get a referral indicating that a newborn (2 days old now) has been born under conditions that make it unsafe for her to go home with her parents. She is due to be discharged this afternoon so the pressure of time is added to the pressure inherent in the situation. The information is such that I am able to go directly to the county attorney and get the O.K. for a verbal order to take custody of the child.

I go to the hospital to interview the mother and see the child. The main purpose of my interview is to find out if there are any relatives in the area that I can place this child with, knowing that there is nothing this mother could say or explain to me that would make it possible for me not to do what I have to do. But still, I wish there was some magic wand move that could be made. At the least, I wish that I could tell her that I, Andrew, don't want to do this, don't want to keep her from taking her baby girl home, but I, Caseworker, have no choice. But I can't say that. I hope that through the anger, the tears, the insults, the energy of who I am somehow makes it through.

There are no family members in the city or even in the state. I make the call to request a foster family be identified. It takes less than two hours. I let the hospital know I am on my way, and am relieved to hear that the mother has gone home. I can't imagine how I could look her in the eyes, how I would be able to endure her emotions or mine. Things go rather smoothly, and the most I have to endure is the self-protective cynicism of some of the hospital workers.

As I head toward the elevators with the little girl, it begins to sink in that her first experience of the outside world is with me. It shouldn't be this way. Babies should leave the hospital with their parents. But it is me, and it is this way, and I feel honored to be with this precious little life at this time. But it shouldn't be me. We exit the hospital and it begins to sprinkle. I cover her up and realize I am the first person to shelter this little girl from the rain. It shouldn't be me, but it is, and I am honored.

We make our way to the foster home. No radio, only the sound of the rain, the car engine, a few words, breathing. The home looks good, and the family seems warm and loving. A brief exchange of details and information, then I head home myself.

I greet Wendy and Ian, then light incense and chant the Heart Sutra. My transition from work to home, a way of setting things from my day down so I can be present with my family. It works pretty well, but worry, doubts, thoughts of things I have to do tomorrow still pop up here and there.

Thursday afternoon we have the meeting that we have with all families whenever a child is removed from their custody. A chance for in-depth explanations, collaboration, making decisions about how we will proceed from here. In light of some information, we tell the family about a program that would make it possible for their child to be returned home sooner. Then additional information from the family makes that possibility begin to fade.

Ultimately, they are told there are certain conditions they have to meet, and if they can get things in place by the time we appear in court tomorrow, their little girl can come home.

Following the meeting they get to visit with their little one. Only one hour, supervised by another worker. Then the day is done. Making my way home, I hope that this family can meet those conditions. But things don't look good. I look forward to checking my messages in the morning to see what they've come up with.

Friday morning. After hearing the message and talking with a supervisor, I call the family to tell them that what they came up with isn't adequate and the reasons why, the risks. I tell them what specifically would need to be done and hope they can do it, even though yesterday they said they couldn't. But today they can, and they will.

A few hours later, after going to court, having all the legal parties involved agree to the plan and getting it approved by the magistrate, I arrive at the foster home. This bodhisattva, who not even two days ago took this fragile and precious little girl into her home returns her to me with as much warmth and love as she received her with, selflessly. There is not a trace of sorrow about the fact that this little one is leaving, but only joy at the fact that she is going home to be with her parents. I am in awe, and envy her boundless heart.

The CD I've been listening to has a recording of the Dalai Lama, so I play this chant as we drive away, heading for home. Once it ends I turn the radio off. I talk to this dear little girl, just four days old.

I thank her and let her know how honored I feel at having been able to share life with her, regardless of the circumstances that brought us together. I wonder aloud about how the events of these past days will play out over the rest of her life, how the ripples will dance and what they will create. I tell her the truth of what has happened, because I'm not sure that she will ever hear it otherwise. I am angry at her parents for the choices they made, what they put this little girl through and what they put me through as a result. But I am also grateful for how things have turned out and hopeful for the way things are heading. I chant the Sho Sai Myo Kichijo Dharani, The Ten Line Guan-Yin Sutra of Endless life (Japanese and English), offer her a dedication, and sing the Four Boundless Vows.

We wait about 10 minutes in the parking lot because her mom, dad and grandma are making their way home from the store. Inside the apartment I help set up their playpen/bassinet. It's an updated version of the one we had for Ian, so I know what goes where, which makes putting it together easier and quicker. For a few minutes I am not a caseworker in a client's apartment, but instead we are all people sharing in the joy of welcoming a newborn home. There is no animosity, no awkwardness. It is all simple, alive, real. Eventually, though, self-consciousness creeps back in and soon I'm on my way.

Driving home, I begin to feel the effects of this heaviness I have carried. I make a detour to the liquor store to pick up some sake, knowing that it will help me relax and loosen the knots that have built up in my back and shoulders. I'm glad that it is Friday. For two days I get to set "caseworker" down and just be Andrew, Daddy, at home with Wendy and Ian. The life of these two days is full and rich. I'm amazed at how now (it wasn't always the case) I am able to leave work at work, step out of those shoes completely and be where I am, with no residue haunting me. Monday I'll slip those shoes on again and head back to the office—five more days, at least three more referrals landing on my desk. It is difficult work, it is essential work, and fortunately I am here to do it.

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Walking the Labyrinth

By Lee Overmann

Two winters ago, I had the opportunity to walk a labyrinth. It was December; the afternoon was cold and overcast and misty, the sun an odd blue glow that peeked through somber gray. The labyrinth was surrounded by pines, and a light wind stirred the uppermost branches. Snow filled the deeper shadows under the trees; the rest had melted, leaving the ground damp. Infrequently a car drove by on the nearby highway, but aside from this, the solitude was complete, unbroken. The woods were hushed and reverential, the quiet

enhanced by the occasional birdcall.

The labyrinth was marked by mossy, fist-sized stones in rough lines. Some were half-set into the earth; others rested on the surface. They were chill and wet from the weather and sprinkled with fallen pine needles and scrub oak leaves. I walked into the clearing and approached the labyrinth with trepidation. I had never walked one before. I had heard other people discuss their labyrinth experiences, meaningful, mystical experiences full of wonderful insights and wisdom, but I was not sure what I would find. I hesitated. If I did not find anything, what would it mean—that I was diminished somehow, that my soul was smaller than other souls? But if truly *there is nothing to attain*, would it matter what I found?

I gathered my resolve, found the entrance, and walked into the labyrinth. Moisture dripped from the trees, wind swirled in the clearing, and I was cold. To my right, the center beckoned. *Here is your goal*, it said. But was it? I looked at it across the corridors and pathways. These were just so many stones upon the ground, hardly real obstacles; I could

ignore them and walk straight to the center. Was there a “right” way to walk a labyrinth? I decided the quick path had different things to teach, that what I desired would be found on the slow path. And thus the labyrinth taught me its first lesson: that shortcuts would not always take me where I wanted to go; that the slow path, like the human lifetime, was an opportunity I should seize.

The leaves under my feet were brown and fragrant with decay, and they were so wet they made little sound as I stepped on them. My breath steamed in the frosty air. I noticed that whenever I looked up to see where I was going, to see the pattern of the labyrinth, I saw a confusing field of rocks instead. I decided to keep my head down, my gaze focused on the ground before me, the corridor of twists and turns. *Where you put your attention is important*, the path advised. *Focus on the moment*. And so my second lesson: the entirety of the pattern held less meaning than the immediacy of walking with mindfulness. The past and the future of *what I had just walked* and *where I still needed to go* might have been jumbled, but the mindful *now*, the *where my feet were*, was very clear.

The path went left, then right, then straight and right and left; it looped back upon itself again and again, and I was amazed when it never quite repeated itself. Each pass brought me closer to the center, but there was no way for me to tell how much farther I had to go. The path looped and turned and looped again. Sometimes I was so close to the center I was only separated from it by a single line of rocks, then another loop would turn me away and I would find myself back on the outer rim, as distant as it was possible to be. At those times I wondered if I would ever reach the center. *Courage*, the wind whispered in the trees. *Trust the path*. And then I reasoned that as long as I walked forward, I must reach the center eventually. It did not matter how close or far away I was; proximity was not the same as progress. And it did not matter how many times I cycled back and forth between the two extremes; they were merely different parts of the same path.

A small brown bird sang on a nearby branch; then it flew up between the trees and sought the gray sky. Two more quarreled noisily, deep in the shadows of the woods where I could not see them. I walked another long, straight passage and a turn. I kept my head down, my focus on where my feet were. Loops and turns and twists offered themselves to me. I walked slowly, cautious of the wet leaves and patches of slick, half-frozen mud. The labyrinth appeared endless, the center a long way off. Would I ever reach it? Time seemed suspended; I might walk forever. But one step more, and unexpectedly, the center! The suddenness of my arrival was a shock. The labyrinth revealed another secret then: when I was full of doubt and my goal seemed unattainable, I might be closer than I knew. At any moment, the very next step might get me there. I would not be able to predict it; I need only keep walking and trust the path.

In the center was a log to sit on, and I rested there. A hollow in the earth held the remains of bonfires: unused kindling, charred wood, cold ashes. Nearby were withered flowers, piles of stones and branches, a candle stump, the remnants of celebrations and ceremonies. I envisioned solemn, moonlit processions with torches, barefoot celebrants, singing. I wondered how many religions and spiritual paths had traveled labyrinths in search of meaning, what each might have found. I wanted to savor the experience, to remember it always. A stone caught my eye, a piece of quartz, crystalline and symmetrical, and I considered taking it as a souvenir. *The only things worth carrying*, the woods breathed, *are the lessons of the soul*. I decided to leave the stone where it was in memory of whoever had placed it there, in honor of what I had learned.

I sat for a long time on the damp log in the rocky clearing, ignoring the cold. It was getting darker, and the clouds were promising snow. My seat became uncomfortable, my fingers half-frozen—mundane conditions of existence reminding me that it was time to leave. I did not want to go. There was clarity in the stillness of the center: I wanted to take it with me; I feared that I could not. I took comfort in the thought that I was not the same person who

had walked in—the lessons of the labyrinth had changed me. I stood up and took a final look around. Slowly, deliberately, I retraced the pattern; somehow, in returning, the same path was shorter, my steps more sure-footed. The difference was in the *practice*.

Words are so inadequate in matters of the spirit; written down, committed to paper, the wisdom of the labyrinth is simplistic, commonplace. But I will not fret about this. It is enough that I carry it with me, like a stone I cannot misplace or lose; it is enough it is meaningful to me.

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Prof. David Gardiner speaks Monday, December 11

Dr. Gardiner, professor of Religion at Colorado College, has accepted our invitation to speak to the Sangha on our community night, 6:15PM Monday, December 11, at Shove Chapel. He will talk about the Tibetan Lam Rim, or "stages of the path," and offers this introduction to the topic:

The Heart Sutra says *form is emptiness*, yet that very emptiness is form. The four immeasurable vows also say that we aim to free all beings even though they are numberless. We might add: even though they do not truly exist in a substantial or permanent way! Such paradoxes are at the heart of Mahayana Buddhist practice. One way, among many ways, of understanding this paradox is by looking at the idea of the "two truths" as expressed by the Indian maser Nagarjuna: there is the conventional truth of language, concepts and people, and then there is the ultimate truth of emptiness. In the Mahayana tradition it is said to be very important to maintain deep attention to both truths, to never drop one of them from one's vision of the practice. But this is no easy task. As one avenue for exploring this religious or spiritual approach, I will talk briefly about the Tibetan view of the Buddhist path as articulated in a comprehensive understanding of practice known as *Lam Rim*, or "stages of the path." The Lam Rim teachings, which are central to all Tibetan traditions, attempt to skillfully integrate the dimensions of form and of emptiness, of energy/intention and of release, of compassion and of wisdom, into a clear outline or template for envisioning what the overall aim of Mahayana practice ought to be. It is often said in the Japanese Soto Zen tradition that our task in Zazen is to "just sit." But Dogen and other Zen masters who promoted such wonderful advice did so after having mastered years of Buddhist religious study. This study incorporated vast and powerful theories, or "visions" if you will, of the wider contexts in which a bodhisattva does this simple sitting. It's not actually all that simple in the end. And yet it is, as well. Let's see how the Tibetans talk about it.

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MORE VOICES & REVIEWS

My personal spiritual journey...lately

By Elliott Wright

A development in awareness of what we are...

Introductory Quote: "First it is important to recognize the human form as rare and precious. It is not enough just to obtain this precious human form which has great potential; rather, you should use that potential to its fullest extent by taking its essence. For example, if a person's ascent to high office's not followed by good work for the community and people, it is not very beneficial and worthwhile. If, on the basis of full use of the potential, one is able to accomplish great feats, that would truly be a great success. Therefore, it is important initially to recognize all the significance and great potential of this human existence."

~His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Ø There are three kinds of people in this world: those who seek, those who do not seek, and those who have found what they believe to be the fulfillment of their search.

Ø There are three clear realities about our searching: we all have something to search for, we are here in order to search (that is our purpose), and those who believe they have found it still have to bring others to their fulfillment (and therefore, their work is not finished).

Ø There are three truths about the nature of our lives: we will die at some point, we do not know when we will die, and we cannot take anything with us.

Ø In all, there is one awareness we need to carry. It is infinitely complex or infinitely simple:

THERE IS

(and that is all there is)

ॐ

Temples of Goodness Inside

The purpose of all the major religious traditions is not to construct big temples on the outside, but to create temples of goodness and compassion inside, in our hearts.

-His Holiness the Dalai Lama, "The Good Heart"

Be a Master

Master your senses,
 What you taste and smell,
 What you see, what you hear.
 In all things be a master
 Of what you do and say and think.
 Be free.
 Are you quiet?
 Quieten your body.
 Quieten your mind.
 By your own efforts
 Waken yourself, watch yourself,
 And live joyfully.
 Follow the truth of the way.
 Reflect upon it.
 Make it your own.
 Live it.
 It will always sustain you.

-from the Dhammapada

ॐ

What I'm Reading – Lee Overmann

I'm most of the way through a wonderful book (borrowed from Marsha (thanks!!)), which is titled The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom (The Spiritual Experiments of My Generation) by Wes "Scoop" Nisker. It's a hilarious and poignant book of exploration that takes the reader from the author's childhood (the only Jewish child in a small town in 1950s Nebraska), through his career as a counter-culture journalist and radio announcer (during the birth and heyday of the Hippies), to his search for spiritual meaning (which he ultimately finds in Buddhism). So many of his experiences are contemporary (or nearly contemporary) with my own, there is a lot of insight that really rings true for me.

Other books that I'm reading or have just finished include:

- ★ Strangers to Ourselves (Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious) – Timothy D. Wilson
- ★ The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep – Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
- ★ The Alchemist – Paul Coelho
- ★ Blink (The Power of Thinking Without Thinking) – Malcolm Gladwell

My Hip

Rounded place
 Below my waist
 In the back
 Gluteus Maximus
 Womanly curve
 Doer of the twist in high school
 Resting place for heftily-carried textbooks
 Marcher in school band
 Hiker in mountains
 Spread for lovers
 Straddled by toddlers

I wanted it to be bigger when I was
 young and skinny
 (Just goes to show you have to be careful
 what you hope for)
 Point of interest for the opposite sex
 (Maybe)
 And once upon a time
 A resting place for his hand after
 lovemaking

How many places has it sat? Lain?
 Leaned?
 Wearer of jeans
 Circle skirts
 Short shorts
 Mini skirts
 Bathing suits
 Diapers
 Nothing at all.

My hip was created deformed
 I marvel at my mom's stories of my dad
 walking and walking
 Around their kitchen table with little 18-
 month-old me holding tight to his fingers
 I tried and tried, but fell and fell
 No one knew the secret of my deformed
 hip
 It finally supported me, and I began
 walking

Then I ran
 And played
 And danced
 I knelt
 Crouched
 Kicked
 Turned
 Jumped

That secret deformed hip
 My constant companion down all the
 paths of my life
 Doing its best to be strong
 In spite of itself

But the years have brought it to its knees
 (can a hip do that??)
 The spring in my step has given way to
 hobble and limp
 A little like the path around that long-ago
 kitchen table
 I take stair steps like a child—one at a
 time

My hip
 It whispers vulnerability
 Inevitability
 Mortality

Oh

Wisdom gates

marsha garrett
 11-23-06



OTHER EVENTS / ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER

Details for SMS Events

December 2006

- **Celebrations:** New Year's Eve Gathering: Zazen, potluck lunch, etc. 9:00am-? May include Big Mind presentation from David Levy, but will confirm. For more information, contact William at wmjeavons@earthlink.net.
- **Retreats:** Rohatsu Retreat: For more information, contact Andrew at apalmer1@myway.com.
8th Zazen and Talk. Free Event.
9th Sutra Service, Zazen, Precepts Recitation, Talk, and WITR.
Suggested donation: \$20.
- **Speakers:** Dr. Gardiner, 11th, Shove Chapel.
- **Zazen Changes:** 25th cancelled for Christmas (FYI).

January 2007

- **Classes:** Painting Workshop: Details TBA. For more information, contact Nard at 719-520-5409.
- **Retreats:** All Day Retreat: Zazen, Talk, and WITR. Suggested donation: \$20. For more information, contact Andrew at apalmer1@myway.com.
- **Service Projects:** Outdoor Work Day at Benet Pines. For more information, contact Clay at 719-213-6553.
- **Study Groups:** Studying Nelson Foster's The Roaring Stream. For more information, contact Sarah at sbender@corb.com.

February 2007

- **Classes:** Introduction to Zen Class: Fee \$20. For more information, contact Andrew at apalmer1@myway.com.
- **Retreats:** Retreat with David Weinstein: Details TBA. For more information, contact Robert & Elizabeth at kingrh@adelphia.net, kingem@adelphia.net, 719-684-0130.
- **Study Groups:** Studying Nelson Foster's The Roaring Stream. For more information, contact Sarah at sbender@corb.com.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- ❖ **Monday evenings** from 6:10 PM to 7:30 PM at Shove Chapel, 1010 North Nevada on the campus of Colorado College
- ✓ *First Monday* of the month: 30-minute sutra service, walking meditation, one 25-minute periods of meditation
- ✓ *Second Monday.* One 25-minute meditation period, walking meditation, and social gathering
- ✓ *Third Monday.* One 25-minute meditation period, walking meditation, followed by a dharma talk or reading
- ✓ *Fourth Monday.* Two 25-minute meditation periods with a walking meditation in between
- ✓ *Fifth Monday.* Two 25-minute meditation periods with walking meditation between, or the second meditation period will be replaced by a community member sharing a personal Zen practice experience: "Way-Seeking Mind." If you'd like to take a turn, please contact Sarah Bender to schedule.
- ❖ **Wednesday mornings** from 6:00AM to 7:00AM at Shove Chapel
- ❖ **Saturday mornings** from 6:30AM to 8:30 PM at Shove Chapel. Afterwards, many of us walk to a nearby coffee shop for breakfast.
- ❖ **Sunday** we often have steering committee meetings or discussion groups or workshops

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

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Dr. David Gardiner
Speaks on Tibetan Lam Rim, or "stages of the path"
 December 11th
 6:15PM
 Shove Chapel

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Other Local Groups

Wet Mountain Sangha (Pueblo)

- Meets Wednesdays 6:00pm-7:30pm
<http://wetmountainsangha.home.comcast.net>

Rocky Mountain Insight

- www.rockymountaininsight.org

Fireweed Sangha

- Robert Harkins, 719-540-8617

TSL Group

- tslcolorado@yahoo.com

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SNOWY MOON
ZEN MEDITATION RETREAT
WITH JOAN SUTHERLAND

JOAN SUTHERLAND'S TENTATIVE 2007 SANTA FE SCHEDULE
Meditation Retreats
January 24 - 28
July 25 - 29
Koan Retreats
March 23 - 25
October 26 - 28

for more information or to register:
retreats@joansutherland.net

Wednesday, January 24 to Sunday, January 28, 2007
Mountain Cloud Zen Center
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Out-of-State Events

December 9

- **Life of Buddha Retreat with John Tarrant**, PZI Santa Rosa Center, California
www.pacificzen.org

December 17

- Joan Sutherland: **Open Source Winter Solstice Celebration**, Guerneville, California
www.joansutherland.net

December 10

- **A One Day Retreat with David Weinstein**, Menlo Park, California
www.pacificzen.org

January 13 – 20

- Pacific Zen Institute: **PZI Sesshin**, Sonoma County, California
www.pacificzen.org

January 24 – 28

- Joan Sutherland: **Snowy Moon Zen Meditation Retreat**, Mountain Cloud Zen Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico
www.joansutherland.net

February 17

- Pacific Zen Institute: **Koan Seminar with John Tarrant**
www.pacificzen.org

SMS December 2006

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1	2 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's
3	4 SMS Zazen & Sutra Service Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm	5	6 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	7	8	9 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am
					Rohatsu Retreat with WITR Woman's Club Fri 6:30pm-8:30pm/Sat 9am-5pm	
10 Steering Meeting Woman's Club 4:00-6:00pm	11 SMS Zazen & Community Night Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm <div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Tibetan Lam Rim With Dr. Gardiner</div>	12	13 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	14	15	16 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's
17	18 SMS Zazen & Talk Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm	19	20 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	21	22	23 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's
24	25	26	27 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	28	29	30 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's
31 <div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">New Year's Eve Gathering Woman's Club 9:00am ... (potluck lunch)</div>						

SMS January

2007

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	<p>1</p> <p>SMS Zazen & Sutra Service Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Breakfast-Wooglin's</p> <p>Outdoor Work Day Benet Pines 10:30am-1:30pm</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>SMS Zazen & Community Night Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am</p> <p>All Day Retreat with WITR Woman's Club 6:00am-4:30pm</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Steering Meeting Woman's Club 4:00-6:00pm</p>	<p>15</p> <p>SMS Zazen & Talk Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Study Group Sarah's House 3:00-5:00pm</p>	<p>22</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Breakfast-Wooglin's</p> <p>Painting Workshop Details TBA</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Study Group Sarah's House 3:00-5:00pm</p>	<p>29</p> <p>SMS Zazen & "Way Speaking Mind" Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am</p>			

SMS February

2007

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1	2	3 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Breakfast-Wooglin's <div style="border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> Intro to Zen Class Woman's Club 9:30am-12:30pm </div>
4 Study Group Sarah's House 3:00-5:00pm	5 SMS Zazen & Sutra Service Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm	6	7 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	8	9	10 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's
11 Study Group Sarah's House 3:00-5:00pm Steering Meeting Sarah's House 5:30-7:30pm	12 SMS Zazen & Community Night Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm	13	14 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	Retreat with David Weinstein Robert & Elizabeth's House		17 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Breakfast-Wooglin's
18 <div style="border: 1px solid purple; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> Retreat (cont'd) </div>	19 SMS Zazen & Talk Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm	20	21 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am	22	23	24 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:30-8:30am Followed by breakfast @ Wooglin's
25 Study Group Sarah's House 3:00-5:00pm	26 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:15-7:30pm	27	28 SMS Zazen Shove Chapel 6:00-7:00am			

Dana for Springs Mountain Sangha

Springs Mountain Sangha (now with tax exempt status) 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: _____ (required for e-distribution)

Contribution Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Checks should be made out to Springs Mountain Sangha c/o 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

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