



# Center Community News

*The Newsletter of the Center for Sacred Sciences*

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## Listening to the Stones (again)

### Cloud Mountain 9-day retreat, Fall 2011

When one retreatant, performing a lunchtime task in the meditation hall, encountered a repairman at work, she whispered that she hoped she wouldn't be disturbing him. "Not at all," he whispered back. "But why are we whispering?" "Because," she told him, "we're on a 9-day silent retreat." "No way," he answered, wide-eyed. "Nobody could do that!" Later, when she recounted the incident to the group, another retreatant piped up with "It's a good thing you didn't mention we've taken on stones as gurus."

But that's exactly what we did on this retreat, and the teachings of our stones were empirical, direct and personal, and corroborated the testimony of many mystics. Starting with a pointer from Meister Eckhart, *All created things are God's speech. The being of a stone speaks and manifests the same as my mouth about God*, we practiced many ways of learning to look past our conditioned ideas to the Source reflected in the various phenomena we call "stone." *There is nothing that does not glorify Allah in praise but you do not understand their glorification*, says the Koran. The Native American Pawnee have a saying, *All things speak of Tirawa* [Ultimate Reality].

Our task was to see how this is actually so.

To do this, we needed to hold in abeyance our conditioned interpretation of what we seem to see, hear, smell, taste, feel and think. Instead we were to adopt a new paradigm in which the cosmos is seen as a teaching mandala, where every phenomenon is a teacher, here, now and specifically directed to us. On the second day Joel led us in a guided meditation to enter into this mandala. From this "embarrassment of riches," as Joel put it, we would select just one stone to teach us.

Each of us located a guru-stone on the Cloud Mountain grounds. And then, of course, immediately recognized our guru-stones as direct and undeniable reflections of God, as the mystics proclaim? Well, perhaps not immediately. Fortunately Joel provided us with the antidote teaching early on: we

*have to learn to be at home in the darkness, where we don't get the message.* Always a helpful reminder for me.

This was a very rich retreat for me. Who knew that a stone could teach, on a par with Joel himself, on impermanence, the emptiness of subject and object, devotion and gratitude, the inseparability of Consciousness and phenomena? Equanimity, compassion, humility, surrender—our stone gurus offered teachings on all of it.

The deep intention of the group as a whole was evident throughout, even when interspersed with stone-related quips relating to Mick Jagger, death by stoning, and mind-altering substances. As many of us noted at the final sharing, it was a profound opportunity for practice and remembering that teachings are continually available, if we only take notice.

—MORA FIELDS



Photo: Jack Yousey

### Retreatants with stone gurus

*Front row: Bill Hamann, Judith Hasbrouck, Tom Rundle, Jack Yousey;*

*2<sup>nd</sup> row: Ellie Parsons, Annie O'Shea, Megan Greiner, Mora Fields, Hiromi Sieradski;*

*3<sup>rd</sup> row: Shan Ambika, Clivonne Corbett, Joel, Sally Snyder, Kathleen Daniel, Nancy Miller, Joel DeVore;*

*4<sup>th</sup> row: Gene Gibbs, Fred Chambers, Mike Strasburger, David Cunningham, Mel Bankoff, Laurina Peters;*

*Way back: Jim Patterson, Tom McFarlane*

*Not pictured: Deanna Cordes, Meg Jefferson, Vip Short, Matt Sieradski,*

# How to Examine Mental States

By Matthew Sieradski

*This article is an introduction to a perspective on mystical spiritual practice, based on my own path, which entails first training the belly/body/emotions to stillness, then opening to spaciousness through precise mental discrimination—which opens the energy centers of the head—and finally enlightenment as complete transcendence of the heart's restriction—the source of delusion—through unconditional compassionate release of self-grasping, at the source of consciousness as it emanates from the chest.*

The key to spiritual liberation is to learn how to examine our own states of consciousness. In Buddhist parlance, these states are called “mental,” but in actual experience they comprise the total field of consciousness-awareness, or the whole body-mind-heart of a being. Only through becoming intimately familiar with the texture of experience may we hope to develop the subtlety of attention required to root out the ego sense.

As the ego sense is the source of delusion—the reification of the division between subject and object—rooting it out is the fundamental goal of the spiritual life. This sense of ego is experienced as identification with the body-mind and a simultaneous restriction of the field of the heart. Rooting it out requires examination using three principle qualities: dispassion, precision, and compassion.

Dispassion is a quality that corresponds with the bodily field. The field of the body is composed of our perceptual world, the most important to us being our emotional experience. Being mostly unconscious of this field, we identify with our emotions and suffer. Freedom from emotions means freedom from motion. Dispassion is thus the practice of detachment from movement. “Just sit,” the Zen Master tells us. When we release attachment to activity based on grasping and aversion, we begin to embody the stillness behind and before all activity. This gives us a taste of peace and freedom and forms the foundation for further examination. However, to truly “just sit,” we must examine all inclination that moves us to act, the resistance to “doing nothing.” By attentively acknowledging our feelings we begin to get a real perception of how deep our dis-ease is—how rich in content our emotional suffering has become under the delusion of self. This real experience of deep malcontent is one of the first major stumbling blocks on the spiritual path. However, if we persevere in our stillness practice we find that all emotional content is impermanent. “This too shall pass” is the hallmark axiom at this stage. In this relative calm we find the first major seductive trap of spiritual practice: *attachment to calm states*. For if we mistake relative stillness for the egoless ground of reality we can wallow in relative quiescence for a long time without making progress in rooting out the delusion of separate existence. The Xin Xin Ming says: *If you stop movement to return to stillness, stillness even more fills with movement. You will merely stagnate in dualism, rather than realize oneness.* Oneness, our true nature, is beyond all duality, including the distinction between movement and stillness.

This brings us to the second principle of our examination of mental states: precision. Precision is a quality that

corresponds to the mind. It is through careful analysis of our mental experience—often called discrimination—that we begin to recognize the arbitrariness of our distinction between self and world. All thoughts that arise immediately pass away again. Thus what we call “mind” is nothing more than a sequence of mental events. It is completely insubstantial. However, time and again we are deceived by our thoughts. While our experience is always whole and complete we take “this is” and “this is not” to be true statements. We continuously fall prey to the worldly custom of valuing one experience over another. We judge between right and wrong, favorable and unfavorable. And although human life is just as natural as the plants and the animals, the stars and the planets, we set ourselves apart through belief in the discriminatory biases of our complicated thinking.

Here we must, as the Zen tradition says: “turn the light back towards its source.” In this way, we root out the habit of believing in our own discriminations. We uproot mental bias and we discover a vast spaciousness, which includes all distinction. This process will unleash tremendous energy in the body-mind, often arousing buried emotional content. It is for this reason that the cultivation of stillness through the principle of bodily dispassion is a requirement for mental precision. For without a foundation of relative calm, neither can we wield the instrument of mental analysis nor can we absorb its conclusion: namely that all distinction is mentally constructed and thus purely imaginary. Stillness is our foundation for spaciousness.

The final principle of compassion, which corresponds to the heart, brings us to the very core of our being and to the source of consciousness itself. First, within the bodily field, through dispassion towards and integration of emotional content we came to experience the relative stillness behind all activity. Then, through precise discrimination within the mental field we found the spaciousness that allows us to recognize that all duality is falsely imagined. Finally, it is through compassion arising in and as the heart that we may cut the root of both attachment to stillness and aversion to distinction. For while we learn in our practice that the mechanism of our suffering arises in our own body-mind, no matter how valiant our attempts nor consistent our attention, we will never be able to prevent the arising of new states and experiences. Movement arises and distinctions are formed. Life goes on. It is only through the love that we come to recognize as the core of our being—and the core of the creative movement of the cosmos—that we can find the peace in our heart that transcends all movement and stillness and that

**Finally, it is through compassion arising in and as the heart that we may cut the root of both attachment to stillness and aversion to distinction.**



suffuses and surrounds all mental modifications of this vast space of being.

For love is the purpose of all creation. The cosmos is the divine in love with itself. You and I arise out of the pure joy of experience itself. There is no purpose beyond that, and there is no salvation for the suffering soul other than dissolving in this all-pervading power.

So, in practice, have compassion for each suffering mind-state you may encounter, in yourself and in others. See clearly that the suffering does not pertain to the phenomenon itself, but to its mistaken sense of separation from the ground of being. Hold dear to your heart all experience, all beings, as they are the pure manifestation of the compassionate heart of creation—which is your heart, and none other.

Through careful examination of your mental states using these three principles of dispassion, precision, and compassion—in the fields of body, mind, and heart, I have no doubt that you will find that the egoic sense has no root and that there simply is no separation between you and the world. *Consciousness, the ground of all, arises in the heart, is reflected by the mind, manifests through the senses, and appears as the body and world. Don't allow the reflections to distract you from recognizing that source, reflection, manifestation, and appearance are of one nature.* Then you will find final rest in the midst of the creative movement of life and will understand the essence of all mental states to be manifestations of the One Consciousness which is none other than your True Self.

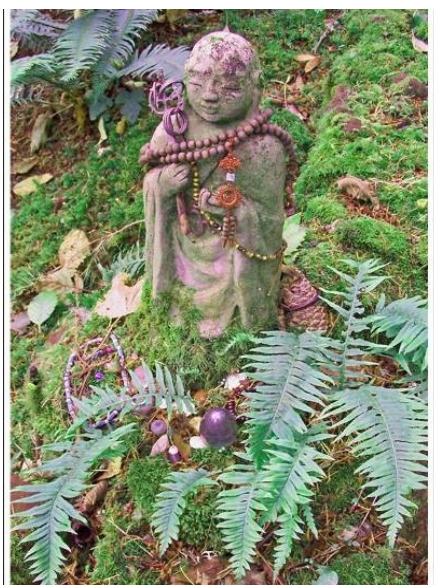
May all beings attain to this bliss beyond all comparison.



Matthew Sieradski is immersed in his second year of teaching at CSS, and is Director of Green Phoenix Institute in Eugene, where he practices acupuncture and craniosacral therapy and teaches internal martial arts.

Stone Buddha on grounds of Cloud Mountain Retreat Center where CSS retreats are held.

Photo: Joel DeVore



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## Tom McFarlane Speaks about Time at SAND Conference

Tom's talk, titled *Experiential Integration of Scientific and Nondual Perspectives of Time*, was delivered at the third annual Science and Nonduality Conference on October 23 in San Rafael, CA.

Whereas the mystics view time as emerging from a more fundamental timeless reality, the scientific tradition presupposes time as part of the framework in which theories are formulated and experiments are performed. Tom used experiential exercises to encourage his audience to question and investigate the basic structures of time that are implicitly assumed at the basis of both science and personal experience.

Other presenters included Fred Alan Wolf, Jeff Foster, Gangaji, David Loy, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, Francis Lucille, and Rupert Spira.



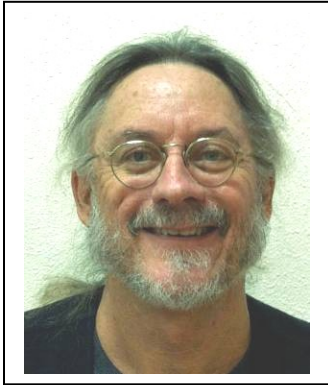
### **NEW CENTER OFFERING: SATURDAY SITS**

Day-long Sitting Meditations at GPI, facilitated by CSS teachers Todd, Fred, or Matt. Basic instruction, practice and dialogue. 10 am-12 pm & 1-4 pm, attend either or both sessions. By donation. Dec 17, Jan 14, Feb 18, Mar 17, Apr 28, May 19, June 9

# Sangha – One of the Three Jewels

## What is your experience with subtle energy and how does it fit into your spiritual path?

**MEGAN GREINER**, our roving reporter, attends a Practitioner's Group taught by Matt Sieradski which is investigating the subject of mysticism and subtle energy. At the first-ever meeting of Matt's subtle energy practitioner's group, several people mentioned having previous experience with subtle energy. She asked them to expound.



*Vip Short, DC has been in practice in Eugene since 1982, and has been a student at CSS since 1999. Here he addresses awareness and healing.*

Every form of so-called alternative healing contains the notion of a life force, the energy which, when present, renders any organism alive as opposed to inert and unmoving. In my field of chiropractic, it is termed

“innate intelligence.” In the other main discipline I practice, classical homeopathy, it is termed “vital force.”

It makes intuitive sense that if we can learn means to promote and strengthen this inborn force of life, then health can be re-established and death averted. The art of healing involves, first, optimizing conditions for it; and second, learning to get out of the way so the process can work.

I have found that as I work to cultivate mindfulness, the typical obstructions to life-force become more apparent and less powerful. I find a heightened sense of simple, pure energy in my experience.

I am working at my best as a health practitioner when our third principle of detachment is in play. My job, as a sort of midwife of energy, is to set up conditions that allow its free and unhindered expression. The rest is up to Universal Intelligence or Consciousness Itself.

Subtle energy may be experienced directly, displaying in infinite forms. There is no inherent purpose for this display, other than the reminder that life itself is energy and motion. I try not to get hung up on any particular form or display, but rather to make room for the surrender, which we call “healing.”



*Carol Ann has been attending the Center since 1989. She is currently taking a Qigong class and a sound yoga class. She describes a kundalini experience.*

In 1994 I had a spontaneous kundalini awakening, which started me on a journey of experiencing intense energy in my body. I had experiences of light and different realms as well as of consciousness opening,

expanding, and merging with everything. At times it felt like a

volcano was erupting inside of me. At the same time my whole body tried to resist it, making it very painful.

The energy was exciting—it felt like something new emerging, something transformational. My path caught fire and I began to practice and push myself to awaken. However, I also found the energy disruptive, disturbing, and at times frightening. It felt like too much was opening up and I wasn't ready for it. I generally viewed the energy as a problem and fought and resisted it.

This continued on and off for 10 years, and then in 2004, after a 9-day retreat with the Center, the top of my head opened and mind opened to “no mind”. It was blissful at first, but then all of the unresolved, repressed fears and desires began arising, some of the lower chakras blasted open, and I ended up going over the edge in a big way. I had to spend most of my time lying down for over a year.

My memory was also gone. I lost my connection to life and self and could no longer see beauty. I felt like my life was over. This went on for 6 years, and I got really good at watching TV. But about a year ago, a teacher said something which directed attention back into my heart. A shift happened and I felt reconnected to life again.

Kundalini works on a different level, one that I cannot describe. It took me on a wild ride over the edge and back again. It has been my greatest teacher, bringing my life to surrender many times and in many ways. I no longer push myself like I used to. I feel a lot more openness, appreciation, and in the flow of life.



*Hiromi Sieradski moved to Eugene from Seattle with her husband Matt, who had “found Joel” in 2005. She became a regular at the Center when she took the Foundation Studies class in 2008. She tells of taking up Qigong after a car wreck.*

I used to wonder why Matt sought out spiritual teachers. Right after we got married, he found a Korean Zen master

who also taught Daoist Yoga. We practiced that for a while, then moved on. Matt started to study Taiji and Qigong after this.

I was given an opportunity to study Qigong after I got into a car accident. I had to take a leave of absence from work for almost a year and was seeing numerous health practitioners: massage, acupuncture, osteopathy, etc. About a year into this ordeal, I asked my doctor about my chances of getting off of Vicodin and muscle relaxants. “I don't know. You might be



## Sangha – One of the Three Jewels

the one who gets lucky and gets off medication someday, or you might take it for the rest of your life.” I never went back to see him after this comment.

I realized doctors and Western medicine were not going to heal me. Then Matt suggested I take a weekend Qigong workshop that focused on medical healing. I decided to take a chance and try it.

I practiced the Qigong that I learned diligently and was able to ease my pain. I was able to reduce, then discontinue, medication completely. After this I started to study the Hunyuan Taiji and Qigong system.

The Hunyuan system helped me learn to cultivate stillness in my mind through relaxing my body. I could really settle my mind that way, and I now can use this system in sitting meditation. I can circulate my qi (energy) from my middle dantian (abdominal center) to my head and back down. When I do this I can focus my attention and reach a calm-abiding state. Thought comes back but I can let go much easier. The fall retreat at Cloud Mountain was the first time I really practiced this method of meditating and I was able to see my stone, and my self, disappear.

It also helps to practice Qigong between sitting sessions to prevent physical stiffness and a sore body. I feel truly blessed to have Qigong in my life and I appreciate how it has benefited my spiritual practice. Meditation and Qigong are not two separate practices as people tend to think, but really benefit one another. I am happy that CSS is introducing this missing piece into our curriculum.



*Sharry Lachman has worked as an energy psychotherapist in Eugene for the past 13 years. She and her husband Wesley joined the Center in 1997, introduced to CSS by their daughter when they first moved to Eugene.*

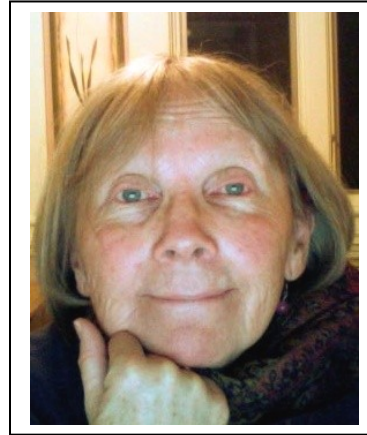
I work mostly with women who have been through medical treatment for cancer. We use the energy meridians and the chakras to clear away emotional, psychological

and spiritual traumas of cancer, the treatment, and life in general. I've practiced qigong for 10 years.

I went with a friend to a 5-day retreat with an Indonesian Qigong Master in Halifax. I've been doing a home practice since then and some teaching of Qigong with my friend.

In my work with Guided Self-Healing, I learned to rely on “muscle-testing” or kinesiology to help clients access their “deepest soul wisdom,” the gut-level knowing that's stored in the cells of our bodies. I think of that as subtle energy, and it guides me in my work and in my life. Once I learned to rely on it, I had a hard time trusting what I think of as “my little pea brain” or conscious mind.

I hope in this class with Matt to learn to tune in more and more deeply to this energy, to surrender to it, to let it have me. Already I've learned I need to change my posture so that energy can flow more easily, and I know that body awareness is a key for me in meditation.



*Meg Jefferson has lived in Eugene since May of 2010. She completed the Foundations Studies Course with Matt Sieradski. Along with Meditation, she has been studying Taiji, Qigong and Chansi Gong at the Green Phoenix Institute. Here, she relates stories of healing.*

Over the years I have worked with Subtle Energy while doing

massage, breath work, Healing Touch and Hospice Work. To do these practices I centered myself and open to guiding sensations, feelings, sounds, images, words, and stories—whatever happened to arise.

Once, I was called in to see a comatose Hospice patient at a nursing home. His close-knit family had crowded into the small room to be with him during his final hours. When I placed my hand on his chest, I had a very happy image of him gaily dancing a jig. Taken by surprise, I laughed out loud.

When I explained to the family why I was laughing, they completely cracked up, exclaiming, “That's Dad!” Their father had been an entertainer and a practical joker who would do anything to make people laugh. The tension in the room eased as the family was warmed by the thought that their dad's mischievous spirit was still pulling tricks.

On another occasion, I was giving an older friend a massage. I was doing a comforting sweep up the right side of her body, when suddenly I felt an electric shock that made me jump back from the massage table. When I went back to examine the spot I had last touched, I felt a lump on the side of her right breast.

My friend was diagnosed with breast cancer and had a life-saving operation. Seven years later, she is still going strong. Today, she remains convinced that subtle energy saved her life, or, in this case, not-so-subtle energy.

Our CCN reporter, Megan, summarizes: *Many of the stories echo my own experience. It seems that subtle energy represents a link that was heretofore unaddressed at CSS. The more body-awareness we have, the better. Dantian meditation makes possible deeper stability. Qigong practices can yield healing, which, even if only of self, can make sitting meditation less painful. As long as the four principles are remembered, anything that arises can be seen through, and ultimate reality recognized more clearly.*

## Linda Hunt, New Distance Studies Grad

Since 1998 I had been very involved in Unity of the Valley here in Eugene, employed as the administrator and also serving in ministerial capacities as a Chaplain, director of the prayer ministry, leading services, and teaching classes. I worked closely with Wayne Leeds, our sound tech. When Wayne decided to move to Minnesota in 2008, although we had only a brother-sister type relationship, suddenly I felt that I *had* to go with him! It was preposterous, really, since I had grown up in South Dakota and hated cold weather. And I had no hope of finding similar work there, no connections. It made no sense at all in the worldly way of seeing, but I really felt like I had no choice.



During the first weekend after I moved, I went for a long walk on a lovely frozen lake with Wayne's girlfriend. I asked her about her spiritual beliefs, and she said she wished that she had found a spiritual teacher like Wayne had—Joel. Because Wayne was so active in Unity of the Valley, I had naturally assumed that

Unity was his spiritual practice. So I asked him about it, and he told me about Joel. Despite living in Eugene for almost 30 years, I had never even heard Joel's name.

That evening I listened to Joel's talk "Consciousness Alone is Absolutely Real." I had heard many spiritual teachers over the years, as I have been on a devoted spiritual quest since 1980, and Joel's talk didn't seem new or especially different. Then, in response to a question at the end of the talk, he said something so astonishing that I practically fell out of my chair. It was something I had long held to be my deepest truth, but every time I'd said it aloud other people seemed completely turned off by it, so I had stopped saying it. What Joel said was that "it's about being a slave to God."

Everything about why I had moved to MN instantly became clear, and I realized that, as entrenched as I was at Unity, I probably would never have left there any other way. Three weeks after arriving in Minnesota, I returned to Eugene to meet Joel in person and see if he was really my teacher. At that talk he quoted Meister Eckhart, one of my mainstays whom I had heard very few people ever reference, and I knew he was for me. Back in Minnesota, I ordered Joel's autobiography, **Naked Through the Gate**, and applied to the Distance Studies Program as soon as I finished reading it. Joel's teachings and practices helped me through some very "dark nights of the soul" before I realized that I had gotten

what I came to Minnesota for. I moved back to Eugene in June.

Although I considered switching to the Foundations Studies Course in the fall after moving back to Eugene, I ended up going back to Distance Studies after attending three classroom sessions, mainly because the room was so warm that I spent the whole time each week just struggling to stay awake! And I really liked moving at my own pace, choosing which books to read, and listening to Joel's talks on CD.

As for my mentor, Todd Corbett, I can only say that his guidance has been profound. His availability, careful consideration of all questions, and detailed answers were invaluable to me through my studies. He is truly an enlightened teacher, and I am blessed that Joel chose him as my mentor

## CSS Unveils Bequest Program

*A Talmudic story tells of a traveler who once saw an old man planting a carob tree.*

*The traveler asked him when he thought the tree would bear fruit.*

*"After seventy years," was the reply.*

*"Do you expect to live seventy years and eat the fruit of thy labor?"*

*"I did not find the world desolate when I entered it," said the old man, "and as my ancestors planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who will come after me."*

Do the teachings offered by the Center provide value and enrich your life? Do you appreciate the depth and breadth of the materials available in the library? Would you like to see the Center secure a permanent home for classes, meetings and the library? Then please consider making a *bequest* to the Center.

What is a bequest? A bequest is perhaps the easiest and most tangible way to have a lasting impact on the people and organizations that mean the most to you. It is a written statement in your will directing that a gift be made to a certain beneficiary (the Center) upon your death. The gift can be a sum of money, a specific amount of stock, a parcel of real estate, property of any description, savings bonds, or even a home. Using this method allows you to retain control and use of your money and assets during your lifetime, and you may change or cancel the bequest at any time.

No matter what your financial position or amount of the bequest, you can make a difference and support the Center's mission; some members of the Center have already made bequests or have committed to making bequests, including several CSS board members. Bequests are for everyone and anyone—they are both sensible and simple gifts.

More information, including resources for creating and updating a will, as well as sample language needed to add a bequest to a will, is available on the Center's web site: [www.centerforsacredsciences.org/about/supporting-the-center.htm](http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org/about/supporting-the-center.htm).

If you have questions, call 541-345-0102 or e-mail [events@centerforsacredsciences.org](mailto:events@centerforsacredsciences.org).



## Two Poems by Mora Fields

### Heaven-n-Hell

To see distrust arise,  
engage  
its conversation:  
hell.

To see distrust arise,  
forego  
its conversation:  
heaven.

Heaven arrives in a blink  
as hell  
departs in one.

Desiring to hold heaven fast,  
Conversation,  
again,  
is born.

Seeing hell is heaven;  
not seeing heaven, hell.  
Beyond them both  
can only lie

not knowing  
which is which,  
or  
needing to.

### Yielding

Forced to submit  
to suffering's undeflectable embrace;  
the obstinate grip,  
unwilling bodily knot  
of cellular disturbance—

Forced to accept—  
and what is found  
is simply the simmer of rest itself,  
joyful cellular incipency;  
exquisite am.

#### Send Us Your News...

News items, Submissions, Comments,  
Suggestions, Creativity, Opinions,  
Questions for The Good Doctor, Gripes

Email [newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org](mailto:newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org) or  
snailmail to postal address on back page of this issue

## Ask Doc Gnosital

Dear Dr. Gnosital:

My spiritual practice seems to be going nicely overall, but I do have one complaint. Sometimes my equanimity gets lost when things go wrong—developments occur that I really don't like. What's your advice?



—Shaken Or Stirred

Dear SOS:

There is a very common medicine that's used for your problem, and I am sure you have heard of it: **Damitol™**. Applications include everything from crashing your car to a pimple on prom night. It is one of the most popular medicines ever, and is also approved for use on hemorrhoids as well as mother-in-law visits. Currently it is being studied for treating job loss, hair loss, and yes, equanimity loss. Unfortunately, no studies to date have shown any effectiveness whatsoever, for any of the conditions listed.

However, with a simple perceptual shift you may find that your problem never existed in the first place. The great sage Ramana Maharshi observed, "You thank God for your blessings, but fail to thank Him for your troubles. That's where you go wrong." And Christian mystic Brother Lawrence found lasting peace, once he learned to be grateful for every appearance from God, both "good" and "bad."

The best remedy, as Meister Eckhart proclaimed, is to see "everything as divine."

*We will be happy to forward questions to Dr. Gnosital. Just email them to: [newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org](mailto:newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org)*



*Diamond Hall, the meditation hall at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center in Castle Rock, WA, location for CSS retreats*

*Photo: Joel DeVore*

# Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

The Center relies entirely on donations to support its services. On behalf of all those who benefit from these services, we would like to thank all local, Bishop, Distance Studies, and supporting sangha members who have made ongoing contributions to the Center. Without the support of these individuals, the Center could not exist as we know it. We wish to acknowledge everyone who has expressed their generosity through Sunday offerings, newsletter donations, volunteer labor, and other gifts.

We thank everyone who donated books to our annual Book-drive. We also thank Carol Bates, Beau Binder, Barbara Hasbrouck, Jennifer Knight, Carol Mizera, Joel Morwood, Miriam Reinhart, and Holly Saunders for their recent donation of cash, books and DVDs for the library collection.

For contributions to the Scholarship Fund, we thank: Robin Bundy, those who donated cash, Clivonne Corbett, Todd Corbett, David Cunningham, Joel DeVore, Mora Fields, Amy

Greenwold, Sharry & Wesley Lachman, Pat Munden, Annie O'Shea, Laurina Peters, Tom Rundle, Vip Short, and Michael Strasburger.

For other special monetary gifts we thank: Tamara Cohn, Lori Cunningham, Jay & Les McCandles, Mo Moscovitz, Andrea Pucci, Sacha Stuart and other members of the Bishop Sangha.

Thanks to Lori Bailey Cunningham for assistance with the correction of errata in Joel's book, **The Way of Selflessness**.

Thanks to Per Kielland-Lund for technical assistance with the CSS website.

Special thanks go to Vinnie and Lou Principe for the gift of their music at our annual parties.

Special thanks also go to Mora Fields, Oriana Hurwit, Ani (Marleen) Marshall and Jim Zajac for assisting George Mottur. We would also like to thank Jack Yousey and others for many tasks great and small, too numerous to mention, especially the tea and chair yogis at Sunday meetings.

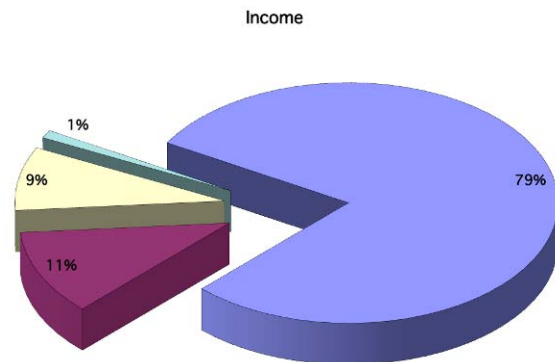
## SUMMARY OF OPERATING PROGRAMS

Fiscal Year September 1, 2010 to August 31, 2011

From its inception, the Center has been run almost entirely as a labor of love by volunteers. None of the CSS teachers or board members receives compensation and, aside from small stipends for our treasurer, audio engineer, and newsletter editor, the Center has no paid staff. We rely entirely on the continuing financial support of our members to defray expenses as we continue providing services to increasing numbers of seekers. Any donation to help support Center programs and services is greatly appreciated. The Center for Sacred Sciences is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, and any contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

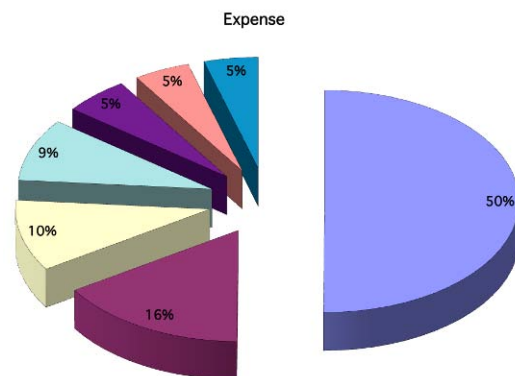
### Income

Membership Dues	24,778	79%
Special Gifts / Memorials	3,570	11%
Sunday Offerings	2,679	9%
Other: Library, Interest, Newsletter	330	1%
* Total Income	\$31,357	100%



### Expense

Facilities: Rent, Utilities, Insurance, Phone	15,976	50%
Organizational/Admin.	5,042	16%
Library Exp. & Acquisitions	3,305	10%
CSS Audio/Video Production	2,905	9%
Retreat Scholarship covered by CSS	1,737	5%
Center Community News	1,480	5%
Programs, Meetings, Holos, Website	1,435	5%
* Total Expenses	\$31,880	100%





# My Lone Pine Retreat 2011 — Liberating Afflicted Emotions

by Clivonne Corbett

The summer retreat at Franklin Merrell Wolff's *Great Space Center* in Lone Pine was wonderful for tapping into a sense of space, with the contrast of the vast blue sky, jagged granite mountains and wide Owens Valley. Recognition of the reality of fortunate incarnation arises when conditioned stories of "I" appear in this space.

This retreat began at the perfect time for me. In the hour before the Dharma Party Van from Eugene rolled into the Black Hole of the VA hospital grounds, my workplace, my new supervisor reviewed with me the things I've been doing wrong and produced a "proposed reprimand" that may go into my file. It was a big fat emotional deal for me.

The big black bomb that had landed on my head gave me the opportunity to observe the reactions of my conditioned mind. It felt like the "rug had been pulled out from under me," to quote one of my favorite teachers, Pema Chodron.

When the retreat began I experienced difficulty contacting emotions, as just sitting gave space to all kinds of stories in defense of self at the hands of unjust and unkind beings. Fortunately the teachers and sangha surrounding me were able to assist me in directing mind energy to the suffering of others. I was reminded of what a great opportunity for practice I have been given.

Our teacher, Joel, skillfully guided us through the steps outlined in his book, **The Way of Selflessness**, on transforming emotions. This was a fast track refresher for me on the five afflicted emotions and the techniques available to transform them into the corresponding wisdom energies.

*Desire* transforms into the discriminating wisdom of *love and compassion*.

*Aversion* transforms into the mirror-like wisdom of *perfect clarity*.

*Pride* becomes the wisdom of *equanimity or sameness*.

*Envy* is liberated into *all-accomplishing wisdom*.

*Ignorance or bewilderment* transforms into the *wisdom of all encompassing space* (gnosis or enlightenment).

In Tibetan Tantra, these are called the Five Buddha Families.

We then had a chance to use the techniques on our own. We picked a precept corresponding with each emotion in order to undertake our practice of being mindful of moral boundaries. For example, for anger there is the precept of harmlessness.

A couple of things I experienced were anger and a sense of betrayal. Eventually I became aware that people attack others because of their own issues. I would experience anger at the person who betrayed me, and by dropping the story I was able feel compassion instead.

The energy of the sangha and the sharing of losses and deep-felt emotions created a safe environment for the emotional energies to arise and pass through me. For me this means crying. Crying for me is a lovely expression of energy and it feels as though the wordless storms of emotion are cleansed by the release that tears

afford. Sitting with the emotions and dropping the stories is always useful. For me this creates distance from the drama, which opens up the possibility of responding in a positive way and using the energy less harmfully.

At one point, sitting in the swing overlooking the spacious valley, it became clear to me how thoughts color our perception, and how seeing the beauty around us is impossible if the mind is obscured by stories of "I". As the story dissolves into space, all is well.

I camped in the orchard, and after moving my tent three times to find "the perfect spot" I felt secure in my chosen place. However, the last evening the wind picked up, and trees that protected me from the sun were now creaking and groaning above me, allowing me to experience the fear of imminent death. This was just another opportunity to examine thoughts and sensations of fear. I realized that if my life ended in the orchard that night, things would be just fine. In death, worries about job and everything else, really, would simply disappear into space in the same way these thoughts are dying just now.

Winding down at Andrea's the night after retreat was a magnificent display of energy, dance and happiness.

Then a quick trip home to reach my little car parked in the old VA parking place. Hello to my beloved and my lovely kitties.

Since returning to work, I have been practicing a bit of humility.

My heart is grateful for having had the experience of this beautiful space, sangha, teachings, teacher, and boundless energy of Miss Andrea to bring us all together for practice and celebration.

*Clivonne Corbett is a CSS teacher who has been attending the Center for over 20 years. She lives in Roseburg with her husband Charlie Boberg and 3 cats.*



*Clivonne with the Five Buddha Families*



Center for Sacred Sciences  
1430 Willamette St., #164  
Eugene, OR 97401-4049

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## CONTACT THE CENTER



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Library address: 1571 Buck St., Eugene, Oregon  
Web address: [www.centerforsacredsciences.org](http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org)  
Phone: (541) 345-0102  
Postal address: 1430 Willamette St. #164  
Eugene, OR 97401-4049

## MISSION AND PROGRAMS

The Center for Sacred Sciences is dedicated to the study, practice, and dissemination of the spiritual teachings of the mystics, saints, and sages of the major religious traditions. The Center endeavors to present these teachings in forms appropriate to our contemporary scientific culture. The Center also works to create and disseminate a sacred worldview that expresses the compatibility between universal mystical truths and the evidence of modern science.

Among the Center's ongoing events are Sunday public services with meditations and talks by the Center's spiritual teachers, monthly Sunday video presentations, and—for

committed spiritual seekers—a weekly practitioners group and regular meditation retreats. The Center also maintains an extensive lending library of books, audios, videos, and periodicals covering spiritual, psychological, and scientific subjects. In addition, the Center provides a website containing teachings, information, and other resources related to the teachings of the world's mystics, the universality of mystical truth, and the relationship between science and mysticism. The Center publishes a newsletter containing community news, upcoming programs, book reviews, and other information and resources related to the Center's mission.

The Center for Sacred Sciences is a non-profit, tax-exempt church based in Eugene, Oregon, USA. We rely chiefly on volunteer labor to support our programs, and on public donations and membership pledges to meet our operating expenses. Our spiritual teachers give their teachings freely as a labor of love and receive no financial compensation from the Center.

*Center Community News* is published three times a year by the Center for Sacred Sciences. Submissions, comments, and inquiries should be sent to:

Publications Director, Center for Sacred Sciences  
1430 Willamette St., #164, Eugene, OR 97401-4049  
[newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org](mailto:newsletter@centerforsacredsciences.org)

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# CSS CALENDAR

JANUARY 2012 – MAY 2012

## JANUARY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1 CLOSED	2 Practitioners 7:00	3 CLOSED	4 Practitioners 7:00
8 Video* 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	9 Practitioners 7:00	10 Library 6:00–8:30	11 Practitioners 7:00
15 Talk 11 am	16 Practitioners 7:00	17 Library 6:00–8:30	18 Practitioners 7:00
22 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	23 CLOSED	24 Library 6:00–8:30	25 Practitioners ALL 7:00
29 Talk 11 am	30 Practitioners 7:00	31 Library 6:00–8:30	

### \* The Transparency of Things

In this video-interview, nondual artist and teacher, Rupert Spira, discusses how formless consciousness manifests itself in every form of experience.

## FEBRUARY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
			1 Practitioners 7:00
5 Video* 11 am	6 Practitioners 7:00	7 Library 6:00–8:30	8 Practitioners 7:00
12 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	13 Practitioners 7:00	14 Library 6:00–8:30	15 Practitioners 7:00
19 Talk 11 am	20 Practitioners 7:00	21 Library 6:00–8:30	22 Practitioners 7:00
26 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	27 Practitioners 7:00	28 Library 6:00–8:30	29 Practitioners 7:00

### \* Rev. Dr. James Forbes: One in the Spirit

Drawing on his rich experiences as an African-American growing up in the South, Rev. Forbes preaches an interfaith message of “radical inclusion,” which seeks grounds for cooperation among people of all religious traditions.

## MARCH 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
4 Video*	5 Practitioners 7:00	6 Library 6:00–8:30	7 Practitioners 7:00
11 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	12 Practitioners 7:00	13 Library 6:00–8:30	14 Practitioners 7:00
18 Talk 11 am	19 CLOSED	20 Library 6:00–8:30	21 Practitioners ALL 7:00
25 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	26 Practitioners 7:00	27 CLOSED	28 CLOSED

### \* Lunch with Bokara: The Heart of Islam

Bokar Legendre hosts Moroccan Sufi Shaykh, Ahmed Sidi Kostas, for a lively discussion of a variety of topics, including love, justice, the meaning of the “heart,” and “Divine intoxication.”

## APRIL 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1 CLOSED	2 Practitioners 7:00	3 CLOSED	4 Practitioners 7:00
8 Video* Library 2-4:30 pm	9 Practitioners 7:00	10 Library 6:00–8:30	11 Practitioners 7:00
15 Talk 11 am	16 Practitioners 7:00	17 Library 6:00–8:30	18 Practitioners 7:00
22 CLOSED	23 CLOSED	24 CLOSED	25 CLOSED
29 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30 pm	30 Practitioners 7:00		

### \* Eckhart Tolle: Finding Your Life’s Purpose

In this video, contemporary spiritual teacher, Eckhart Tolle, shows us that the way to find our life’s purpose is not by looking to an imaginary future, but by opening ourselves to the living present, which is beyond all forms of thought.

## MAY 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
		1 Library 6:00–8:30	2 Practitioners 7:00
6 Video*	7 Practitioners 7:00	8 Library 6:00–8:30	9 Practitioners 7:00
13 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30pm	14 Practitioners 7:00	15 Library 6:00–8:30	16 Practitioners 7:00
20 Talk 11 am	21 Practitioners 7:00	22 Library 6:00–8:30	23 Practitioners 7:00
27 Talk 11 am Library 2-4:30pm	28 CLOSED	29 Library 6:00–8:30	30 Practitioners ALL 7:00

### \* Brilliant Moon: Glimpses of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

This video chronicles the life of writer, poet, meditation master, and teacher to the Dalai Lama, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, one of Tibet’s most revered 20th-century Buddhist leaders.

View the calendar on the web!

<http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org/fullcalendar.html>

### LIBRARY ADDRESS:

**1571 BUCK ST., EUGENE, OREGON**



**PHONE: (541) 345-010**

Saturday Sits at Green Phoenix, Oct 22, Nov 19, Dec 17, Jan 14, Feb 18, Mar 17, Apr 28, May 19, June 9 (see p.3 for more info)



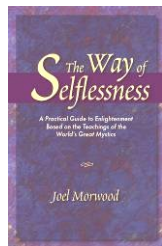
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## Center Publications

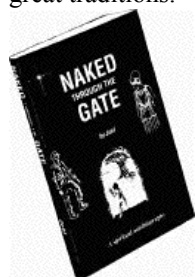
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### **The Way of Selflessness: A Practical Guide to Enlightenment Based on the Teachings of the World's Great Mystics**

By Joel Morwood, *Center for Sacred Sciences*, 2009, Paperback, 364 pages, \$27.95 (or from [www.Lulu.com](http://www.Lulu.com) for just \$18.00)



A distillation of Joel's teachings on the path of selflessness drawn from his extensive study of the world's mystical classics. Will help seekers in any (or no) tradition understand and take to heart the teachings of the mystics of the great traditions.



### **Naked Through the Gate: A Spiritual Autobiography**

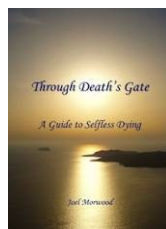
by Joel, *Center for Sacred Sciences*, 1985. Paperback, 262 pages, \$11.95

Joel's personal account of his remarkable spiritual path, ending with a Gnostic Awakening.

### **Through Death's Gate: A Guide to Selfless Dying**

by Joel Morwood, *Center for Sacred Sciences*, 1996. Paperback, 83 pages, \$10.00

A guide to death and dying from a spiritual perspective, including teachings and practices from the world's great mystics.



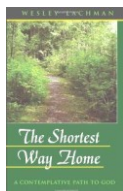
The above three books may be ordered at <http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org/>

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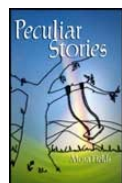
## Book Publications by Members

### **The Shortest Way Home: A Contemplative Path to God**

by Wesley R. Lachman, *O Street Publishing*, 2008. Paperback, 136 pages, \$10.95 [www.ostreetpublishing.com](http://www.ostreetpublishing.com)



An introduction to the contemplative mystical path for those seeking a radically new and deeper way to God. A step-by-step presentation of the path of spiritual realization. Each chapter ends with a *You find out* exercise so the reader can test what has been read against his or her own experience.



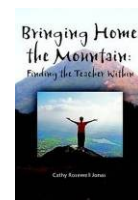
### **Peculiar Stories**

By Mora Fields, *O Street Publishing*, 2010. Paperback, 94 pages, \$6.95  
Youth fiction, ages 6-10 and up [www.ostreetpublishing.com](http://www.ostreetpublishing.com)

A book of teaching tales that are plain spoken, absorbing, and layered with depth. These stories delve into such topics as where do thoughts come from, how do we deal with things like emotions, fear and peer pressure, how to experience spaciousness, and the meaning of life.

### **Bringing Home the Mountain: Finding the Teacher Within**

By Cathy Rosewell Jonas, *Free Heart Press*, 2010. Paperback, 224 pages, \$16.95 [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) and [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



"Cathy Jonas's exciting account of her spiritual journey, *Bringing Home the Mountain*, overflows with an abundance of experiences and insights. Any genuine seeker should find plenty here to both inspire and instruct on his or her own path to Awakening." —Joel

### **Einstein and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings**

by Thomas J. McFarlane, *Ulysses Press*, 2002. Paperback, 176 pages, \$14.00 [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

This remarkable book contains sayings from the founders of modern physics paired with parallel sayings from the works of Buddhist, Hindu, and Taoist contemplatives. *Einstein and Buddha* challenges us to think deeper about the relationship between modern physics and mystical insight.

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## New Recordings

<http://www.centerforsacredsciences.org/catalog.html>

### **New CDs**

#### ***Resting in Impermanence***

Todd Corbett, 10/25/2009, 50 minutes

#### ***Spiritual Psychology 101: Buddhist Perspective***

Fred Chambers, 1/31/2010, 65 minutes

#### ***Spiritual Psychology 101: Jewish Perspective***

Fred Chambers, 3/21/2010, 48 minutes

#### ***Matt's Awakening***

Matthew Sieradski, 4/28/2010, 56 minutes

#### ***From Bardo to Awakening***

Todd Corbett, 6/30/2010, 55 minutes

#### ***Spiritual Psychology 101—Sufi Perspective***

Fred Chambers, 5/16/2010, 46 minutes

#### ***Spiritual Psychology 101—Hindu Perspective***

Fred Chambers, 6/27/2010, 53 minutes

#### ***Discovering Enlightenment Within Discouragement***

Todd Corbett, 2/8/2010, 54 minutes

### **Transforming Emotions Series (Set of Seven)**

#### **Seven Talks from the Fall 2009 Retreat**

*Spacious Awareness*, Joel, 10/16/2009, 69 minutes

*Understanding Emotions*, Joel, 10/17/2009, 61 minutes

*Desire and Aversions*, Joel, 10/18/2009, 62 minutes

*Pride and Envy*, Joel, 10/19/2009, 60 minutes

*Ignorance*, Joel, 10/20/2009, 61 minutes

*True Nature, Part 1*, Joel, 10/21/2009, 62 minutes

*True Nature, Part 2*, Joel, 10/22/2009, 59 minutes

**Transforming Emotions Series (above) is also available as an MP3 AUDIO SET**