



## TAKING REFUGE

by John Travis

There's a storm outside, pushing the corners of our drought.

Always wondering if nature is stronger than us?

The chaos ultimately rules, shaking up that little place deep in the recesses of our brains.

A little contraction, a flutter in the belly that confirms that we do not control our ultimate destiny or nature, politics, or for that matter, these aging bodies.

You and I sit in the center of a revolving world; there is only a temporary reprieve... our vanishing is certain.

Maybe not today but someday—our accomplishments and failures only a small blip in the history of time.

So where to find some refuge from this First Noble Truth?

First, the simplest; here in Bangkok going to the temple with the many Thais—giving offerings: a lighted candle, a flower, incense, money, resting on knees, bringing forehead to the ground.

Praying or requesting blessings and protection.

Verbally reciting our supplication to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha.

Allowing one to sense our own smallness in the scheme of things.

The second type of refuge comes directly from these insight practices —by remembering the power of mindfulness as it releases the past and the future.

Allowing one a sense of safety in the here and now, giving us a sense that we are enough.

This simple breath, the gift of these sense doors as they inform us about what is going on, inside and outside.

The gift of this body, as a simple refuge.

The mind with its awareness without the need of the storytelling or the storyteller.

The mind disciplined to stay.

A practice that brings the heart in alignment with the wisdom factor.

Now we come to the third type of refuge.

It simply has the power to release everything—particularly, that sense of dualism.

Always entranced in ourselves and other.

Always caught in this world of comparison.

Always caught in a myopic sense of self.

Trying to manipulate our thoughts, always to be the winner.

MAR 2017 – AUG 2017

*This edition of Dharma Stream is devoted to the theme of "Taking Refuge."*

*Access the complete newsletter online at [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org).*

Yet! We were born with this incredible power to release everything and sit in the center of the knowing itself.

Having no history or future, it simply rests in the center of things undisturbed by the comings and goings.

It's no longer a mind-heart separated.

But simply sits in the unity of all things.

Mind-heart completely at rest in its original nature.

It was never something to be gained, but simply to be realized.

The great storms come, obscuring the vast open sky.

But the sky remains undisturbed, just as our awareness rests undisturbed.

Taking refuge in this awareness itself.

Peace and freedom are yours.



# DAYLONGS AND RESIDENTIAL RETREATS

March 2017 through August 2017

For the most up-to-date information, visit [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)

## MARCH 5, SUNDAY

Anne Cushman  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [ann@mtstream.org](mailto:ann@mtstream.org)

## APRIL 2 – APRIL 5 SUNDAY – WEDNESDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Lake Tahoe, CA  
INFO: [eltigrenevada@gmail.com](mailto:eltigrenevada@gmail.com)

## APRIL 9, SUNDAY

John Travis  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [meburgess.lotus@gmail.com](mailto:meburgess.lotus@gmail.com)

## APRIL 29, SATURDAY

John Travis  
Dharma Zephyr, Reno, NV  
INFO: [www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

## APRIL 30, SUNDAY

John Travis  
Dharma Zephyr, Carson City, NV  
INFO: [www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

## MAY 4 – MAY 7

### THURSDAY – SUNDAY

John Travis  
Bodega Bay, CA  
INFO: [bodega.bay.retreat@gmail.com](mailto:bodega.bay.retreat@gmail.com)

## MAY 6, SATURDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Chico, CA  
INFO: [bhakti.metta@gmail.com](mailto:bhakti.metta@gmail.com)

## MAY 7, SUNDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Placerville, CA  
INFO: [candaceFlint@yahoo.com](mailto:candaceFlint@yahoo.com)

## MAY 9 – MAY 12

### TUESDAY – FRIDAY

John Travis  
*Householder retreat (4 evenings)*  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org)

## MAY 13, SATURDAY

John Travis  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [sundrops@earthlink.net](mailto:sundrops@earthlink.net)

## MAY 15 – MAY 21

### MONDAY – SUNDAY

John Travis, Heather Sundberg, Mary  
Grace Orr  
Angela Center, Santa Rosa, CA  
INFO: [www.spiritrock.org](http://www.spiritrock.org)

## JUNE 2 – JUNE 11

### FRIDAY – SUNDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Nevada City, CA  
INFO: [jenna@mtstream.org](mailto:jenna@mtstream.org)

## JUNE 17, SATURDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [t.lawrencepitts@gmail.com](mailto:t.lawrencepitts@gmail.com)

## JUNE 24, SATURDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Sacramento Insight Meditation  
Sacramento, CA  
INFO: [www.sactoinsight.org](http://www.sactoinsight.org)

## JULY 8, SATURDAY

Kevin Griffin  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [Randy@mtstream.org](mailto:Randy@mtstream.org)

## JULY 28 – AUGUST 2

### FRIDAY – WEDNESDAY

Heather Sundberg  
Cloud Mountain, Washington  
INFO: [www.cloudmountain.org](http://www.cloudmountain.org)

## AUGUST 13, SUNDAY

Aloka Vihara (Monastic) Nun  
Nevada City Insight Center  
INFO: [vitskaia@hotmail.com](mailto:vitskaia@hotmail.com)

## AUGUST 22 – AUGUST 26

### TUESDAY – SATURDAY

John Travis and Gil Fronsdal  
Insight Retreat Center, Santa Cruz  
INFO: [www.irc.org](http://www.irc.org)



*Dharma talks by John Travis and  
Heather Sundberg can be found at  
[www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org) and  
[www.dharmaseed.org](http://www.dharmaseed.org)*

## FACTS & FIGURES FROM MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION

*In 2016, the Insight Center welcomed nearly 4,000 participants. The amounts below reflect how the Center's programs and operations are funded.*

### ANNUAL FINANCIAL SUMMARY

*For Fiscal Year: October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016*

**Income** from donations and registration fees (daylongs, classes,  
and Committed Students Program) \$80,464

#### Expenses

1. Salaries & professional costs	\$47,536
2. Facility (utilities, maintenance, repair)	\$11,456
3. Computer/website/Internet	\$5,315
4. Supplies/printing/postage	\$10,586
5. Advertising & other expenses	\$5,126
Total expenses	\$80,019

#### Totals for Annual Fiscal Year

Total income	\$80,464
Total expenses	- \$80,019
Balance	\$445

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE CENTER

*Ongoing sessions at 710 Zion Street, Nevada City*

### MONDAY NIGHT SITTING GROUP

7:00pm to 8:30pm

Silent meditation and Dharma talk

### 1ST WEDNESDAY VIDEO NIGHT

6:30pm to 8:30pm

Watch and discuss a movie together

### OTHER WEDNESDAYS

*Kalyana Mitta Group*

(Spiritual Friends)

6:30pm to 7:45pm

A peer-led, interactive Dharma community gathering

### OPEN TEMPLE FRIDAYS

10:00am to 2:00pm

Enjoy: walking the labyrinth, spiritual library, 20-minute group sit from 11:30am to 11:50am

### INSIGHT MEDITATION CLASSES

Thursdays, March 9 – April 13

7:00pm to 8:30pm

Led by Bruce Pardoe

Sliding scale: \$40 to \$60

Info: [randy@mtstream.org](mailto:randy@mtstream.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

5:00pm to 7:00pm

Mar 12, May 7, June 11, and July 16 (board retreat)

## ADD YOUR VOICE

The online *Dharma Stream* newsletter is published twice a year by a volunteer staff. Your contributions are warmly welcomed. For consideration, please submit articles, poems, photos, and artwork by:

- July 31, 2017 for Fall edition
- Jan 30, 2018 for Spring edition

Articles should be no more than 400 words, and may be edited by the newsletter team.



## SIT WITH OUR EXTENDED SANGHA

*Connect with community in your local area*

### AUBURN

*Canyon Spirit Yoga Center*  
Mary Helen 530-887-9400  
[maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:maryhelen@mtstream.org)

### CARSON CITY, NV

*Dharma Zephyr Sangha*  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

### CHICO

*Heart of the Lotus Sangha*  
[www.skycreekdharmacenter.org](http://www.skycreekdharmacenter.org)

*Chico Insight Sangha*

[Chico.insight@gmail.com](mailto:Chico.insight@gmail.com)

### DAVIS

*Davis Insight Group*  
[www.davisinsightgroup.org](http://www.davisinsightgroup.org)

### DIAMOND SPRINGS

*Metta Meditation Group*  
Will Lister 530-306-7264  
[mettaphoto@mac.com](mailto:mettaphoto@mac.com)

### MINDEN/GARDNERVILLE, NV

*O2 Yoga and Wellness*  
Karen 775-267-2424

### NORTH SAN JUAN RIDGE

*Your Place Too*  
Bruce 530-277-3470  
[bruce\\_pardoe@yahoo.com](mailto:bruce_pardoe@yahoo.com)

### PLACERVILLE

*Sierra Insight Sangha*  
[www.sierrainsightsangha.com](http://www.sierrainsightsangha.com)

### RENO, NV

*Dharma Zephyr Sangha*  
[www.dharmazephyr.org](http://www.dharmazephyr.org)

*One River Sangha*

(LGBT and Allies)  
[www.oneriversangha.org](http://www.oneriversangha.org)

### ROCKLIN/ROSEVILLE

Donna 916-532-6955  
Elke 916-632-8766  
[donna@mtstream.org](mailto:donna@mtstream.org)  
[elke@mtstream.org](mailto:elke@mtstream.org)

### SACRAMENTO

*Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Group*  
[www.sbm.org](http://www.sbm.org)

*Sacramento Insight Meditation*  
[www.sactoinsight.org](http://www.sactoinsight.org)

### INSIGHT MEDITATION CLASSES

*Roseville Maidu Library*  
Roseville, CA  
Wednesdays, March 22 – April 26  
(no class April 19)  
6:00pm to 7:30pm  
Mary Helen Fein and Maeve Hassett  
Sliding scale: \$40 to \$60  
Info: [Maryhelen@mtstream.org](mailto:Maryhelen@mtstream.org)

#### Executive Director

Marcia Craighead

#### Managing Editor

Laura Holland Belk

#### Newsletter Scout

Susan Solinsky

#### Layout & Production

Joe Fajen

#### Contributors

Marcia Craighead, Mary Helen Fein, Randy Musgrave, Bruce Pardoe, Kathy Schwerin, Jennifer India Scott, Steve Solinsky, Susan Solinsky, John Travis, Cassandra Wahlstrom

#### Proofreaders

Joyce Miller, Susan Solinsky

# THE REFUGE OF THE WEAVER

(ON THE WARP AND WEFT OF AWAKENING)

by Steve Solinsky

I am a weaver.  
I work my lonely loom - this body/  
mind loaned for life,  
Burdened with common views,  
spun and strung by men -  
In mental warps of mind,  
These fiber thoughts in thread -  
Conditioned, tense, and taut,  
Stretched with certainty and  
direction,  
Await the harmonizing weft,  
Drawn from the dusk of my own  
imagination.

Are we just of dust, or do we come  
from something greater?  
And can this Divine Sophia be the  
woman of our Nature?  
Is our most precious piece  
Left unseen by the eyes of our  
knowing?

I choose to bind this bundle now,  
Stringing fabric lines of heart with  
mind  
In just the right proportion,  
In wide spiral arcs  
Of weaving in, and weaving out,  
Touching limits of both Earth and  
heaven.

With my every thought and act  
The weft is woven wider.  
‘Till emptiness and form are  
webbed,  
I choose my palette wisely –  
Threads of beauty, compassion and  
light,  
(But careful not to pull too tight.)



*Deer Creek, by Marcia Craighead*

If this weaving's woven loose and  
lean,  
So Source has space to intervene  
Through cracks where light slips in,  
Then pain and strife may see  
release,  
And soul at last can find her peace.

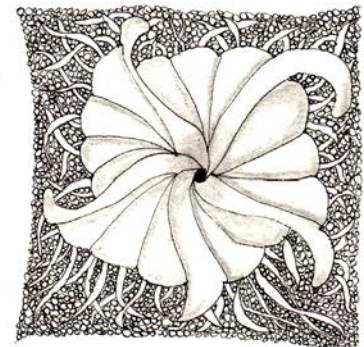
From this warp-ed world my body  
bides,  
“If we're both tapestry and weaver,  
Are we the maker, or the be-er?”  
“Can't we loosen the threads,  
Open our hearts, and clear our  
heads,”  
As Buddha said ...  
And we'll all be freer.

In this blessed life,  
Well beyond all fear. ❁

# ZENTANGLES

by Mary Helen Fein

These are Zentangles, original  
pen and ink drawings on small  
tiles of good watercolor paper. They  
use structured patterns. The practice  
of creating them is a ceremony of  
mindfulness, step by step, staying in  
the present moment, one stroke at a  
time. They are non-representational,  
without any up or down, and  
without preplanning or expectations.



# ASKLOVE.ORG AND THE AGE OF WISDOM

by Bruce Pardoe

We live in such a head-driven global culture. No surprise given that we've been in the Age of Reason for the last few hundred years fueled by industry, science, and technology. Of course, this was a big step up from the Might Makes Right ethos that dominated earlier times.

However, as incredible as the gifts of the reasoning intellect have been, we find ourselves in a world riven with divisiveness, injustice, and environmental degradation. We sense in our bones that another way is possible. That we are pregnant with the possibility of a global shift. A shift to the Age of Wisdom.

Dharma and practice illuminate the truth that ignorance, at its base, is a false sense of separateness. The opposite of ignorance is wisdom. Where do we experience non-separateness? In the one place where we are naturally and effortlessly selfless - our hearts.

Our culture predominantly associates wisdom with the reasoning mind. But the intellect, as powerful and useful as it is, sees things in pieces and parts, whereas the heart, as our seat of caring and connectivity, sees an interconnected, unified whole. And that's how reality actually is. So when we lead from our hearts, we tap wisdom itself and get our most realistic, effective responses.

The problem is, in the face of conflict or challenge, we often contract and spin in our heads. Or worse, we react and regret it. We lose access to our hearts' wisdom. And we suffer.

## TAKE IT TO ASKLOVE.ORG

AskLove.org is a free, nonprofit online community where members share their toughest issues and receive heart-based wisdom from the moderated community. Heard of crowdsourcing? This is heart-sourcing and hopefully a valuable resource for our sangha.

When we ask our hearts for guidance with sincerity and innocence,

what emerges may be an intuition or an emotion, an image, a memory, maybe even words. Whatever arises, the intellect explores it to see if it makes sense, and, if so, supports and articulates the message. Head and heart are aligned and we access our full potential. When we lead with the head, however, the heart is left out.

The Age of Wisdom is both an individual and cultural possibility. Online communities are global by nature and grow in value as their membership increases. It will be exciting to see what role AskLove.org will play, and you are warmly invited to participate. ❁



*Feline Refuge, by Randy Musgrave*

## REFUGE *by Anonymous*

Sometimes when I talk to my inner child I hear, "I want to go home." At first I was confused. We are home; we like it here. So what does this mean? Where we grew up? Some new place that might feel more like home than here? Then I realized: that child wants to come home to me. But more than that, to the place within me that is beyond me, where there is no Me. That is home. ❁

# WITH THE BRAVE YOUNG TREES

by Jennifer India Scott

I was lucky enough to be a teaching arborist on staff at TreePeople. Looking back at those 10 years, I discover, and can tell you now, that my first sangha was the Urban Forest of Los Angeles.

This sangha I speak of included hundreds of hard-luck, young city trees (planted by TreePeople volunteers and officially under my program's care), shared tools, tired soil, surprised worms, lots of concrete, and hundreds of open-hearted humans.

These elements came together on volunteer-powered Saturday morning Tree Care sessions—starting with Welcome Circles first.

“Trees need people and people need trees,” was our simple, inclusive chant from those days. Occasionally, I literally had to point out the trees! They were sometimes mere “whips,” say 7 feet tall, slimmer than upturned brooms and often planted 30-feet apart — hardly a noticeable grove — especially from a fast-moving car.

Of course, these skinny, often stressed trees would have chosen to be planted anywhere else on Earth, but hey, here they were: making the best of causes and conditions by surviving (mostly) and thriving when possible. Shimmering green leaves of beautiful shapes and sizes touched our cheeks and kept us deep watering. Feathery



*Gros Ventre Wilderness, by Marcia Craighead*

African Acacia, fragrant, round-leaf Carob, and Dr. Seuss-esque, tall, and gangly Cassias – we humans were committed to our standing brothers and sisters. (That’s a soul family-invoking phrase from Native American traditions I have always loved.)

The way I saw it, part of my job was to support these trees and part of my job was to support the volunteers who would support these trees. I explained “forest systems” (largely missing for street trees in L.A. or any city.) Plus I shared these words, too, “This is a Buddhist practice because we can’t be attached to outcome.”

These dear trees could be hit by garbage trucks’ mechanical arms, or uprooted with startling efficiency by the City for “sidewalk

improvements,” or many other incidental, incremental, accidental, and sudden not-tree-friendly crazinesses.

Yet the sacred interconnectedness between all things alive, our faith in these brave, patient trees, our sanctuary with each other, and our dedicated service with wobbly wheelbarrows full of mulch was nourishing both externally and internally.

My first sangha. My first refuge. John O’Donohue writes and wonders about “the one gift my life requires...”

The one gift MY life requires is mindful community.

Taking and co-creating refuge together.

Surprised worms included. ❁

## FINDING REFUGE

by Kathy Schwerin

Tonight I watched a dozen talented artists paint, play music, dance, and do amazing circus routines as they told the story of their country's descent into genocide and its ongoing recovery from those horrors. These young performers are the grandchildren of the Khmer Rouge (the perpetrators of the killing fields) and its victims. They attend a performing arts school that gives them skills and a way to work through their grief and anger, developing a bond with each other and confidence in their own abilities.

I arrived in Cambodia a week ago, as a tourist. I had been feeling both relieved and sad to be away from the US during such a transformative time. Although wi-fi is ubiquitous, it's easy to avoid staying current with the news. Visiting the temples of Angkor Wat, eating delicious Khmer curries, riding tuk-tuks, getting a massage—I could feel I was taking refuge in an exotic country where I had no responsibilities.

But that fantasy bubble is easily burst if you are observant. Outside some temples are small orchestras of amputees who lost their limbs to land mines from the war. There's a war museum where people are encouraged to hold weapons and feel what it's like. People here are well aware of the change in US leadership. Some say that our pres-

ident-elect is an angry man; some fear an outbreak of World War III. Others express confidence in Americans who have so many years of experience with democracy.

So where is there refuge, a place of peace and safety, when we cannot escape the consequences of past injustices nor the worries of a future to come? Taking refuge often means to go into a protected space, to turn our backs on the world. Although I can do that when on retreat, that's not how I want to live in the world. For me, refuge means stopping to listen to the

beauty of the music, not turning away from the amputated limbs. It means attending a performance where pain is expressed and then transformed through art, connection, and courage. There's refuge in noticing people's good hearts, exchanging everyday kindnesses. Refuge is created when we work together with open-heartedness for the benefit of all. Refuge is no longer a way to hide from the difficulties of the world but to join together in solidarity and love, through art, engagement, and action. ❁



Siem Reap, Cambodia, January 19, 2017

# TAKING REFUGE IN A WORLD SEEKING REFUGE

by *Eric Moses*

One definition of “Refuge” is: “Anything to which one has recourse for aid, relief, or escape.”

We live in a world that is seeking refuge in so many things and ways that provide no lasting relief from the relentless onslaught of dukkha, things like drugs and alcohol,

material gain, work, sex, and food.

In the Buddhist practice of “Taking Refuge,” we do not seek refuge in those things. Instead, we choose the true refuge of the Three Jewels:

- 1) Buddha/Awakeness
- 2) Dhamma/Truth

3) Sangha/Spiritual Community

Here’s the thing. To “take” something is much different than to “seek” something. To take something, you must first be certain that what you intend to take is indeed there. Its existence and presence have been verified. For one who is seeking some thing, none of this is yet even known.

In Taking Refuge, we are finding through our own practice and direct experience that the aid, relief, or escape from dukkha is already present and available to us at any time. We can “take” refuge in these things because the genuine and skillful nature of these aspects has been verified through our own experience as the direct result of our own practice.

For me, the most precious of these Three Jewels is the Dhamma, or, the Truth of things as they really are; to see the impermanent and unsatisfactory nature of all conditioned things, as well as seeing through the solid, separate sense of self to the interdependent and interconnected nature of all conditioned things – and to know that our refuge is simply in the allowing of these truths – this is such a precious jewel.

What a gift. To have a skillful way in which to find the space to breathe and be, in a world so caught up in seeking and doing. ✿

## POEM

by *Cassandra Wahlstrom*



Taking Refuge In What- ever is  
 Acceptance Of Flow whatever direction  
 Nourished By Unity of all manifest/unmanifested



## SEARCHING

*by Susan Solinsky*

I search and find refuge in many forms:  
find it inside the pause and yearning  
for something fleeting;  
in the sun appearing after a night of freezing snow falling and crashing on the roof;  
in the warmth of the woodstove crackling  
and drying laundry near it;  
in welcoming an embrace and burst of belly laughter;  
in knowing nothing can harm me or silence  
my spirit or the quiet that comes from being clear and rooted.  
I find it's the web of life stretching wide and deep  
to include everyone – a web infinitely flexible,  
enduring, tough,  
with love at each point –  
even on the bad days or sleepless nights.  
That it's knowing how things change, move and shift so quickly  
there's no holding on to anything,  
no clutching but  
giving it the space to be there;  
how nothing is fixed in any of this,  
how it's all just movement anyway  
and  
again, remembering it resides in the moment;  
in the dance, and the breath. ❁



*Scottsdale, Arizona by Marcia Craighead*



*Grand Tetons, Wyoming by Marcia Craighead*



## **MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION**

P O Box 2510

Nevada City, CA 95959

**Return Service Requested**

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 68  
Nevada City, CA  
95959

**MOUNTAIN STREAM MEDITATION** offers the heart and depth of the Buddha's teaching for all beings, to ease suffering and to awaken to compassion and joy. As an Insight Meditation community, Mountain Stream serves as a resource for Buddhism in the Sierra Foothills of Northern California.

**NEVADA CITY INSIGHT CENTER**, located at 710 Zion St., is part of the Insight Meditation community from coast to coast. We welcome you to explore spiritual practice in a peaceful environment that supports various kinds of mindful practice. This is a place to connect, reflect, and study.

**FOUNDER AND GUIDING TEACHER** John Travis is dedicated to teaching the Dharma so it remains accessible to all. He began teaching in 1986 after studying in Asia with teachers in both the Theravada and Tibetan traditions. John is a senior teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, has a private practice as a meditation counselor, and was trained in Hakomi body-centered psychotherapy.

**RETREAT TEACHER** Heather Sundberg began teaching in 1999 after completing a four-year teacher training at Spirit Rock Meditation Center under the guidance of Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein. Heather teaches at the Nevada City Insight Center and nationally in association with several other meditation centers.

**GENEROSITY** is foundational to meditation practice and sustaining the Buddhadharma. Together we invest in future generations by sharing the gift of a generous heart. Buddhist teachings are offered freely and are available to all levels of practitioners. Opportunities to contribute include financial gifts, service, time, and energy.

### **FOR INFORMATION**

about Mountain Stream as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, residential retreats, classes, daylong retreats, and ways to contribute, please visit [www.mtstream.org](http://www.mtstream.org).

