



COMMUNICATIONS

Questioning

Richard Reoch's response to our report from last month's community meeting discussion "Who Are We Anyway?"

Dear Newcomb --

I am so touched that you were able to have this discussion at your centre and that you were able to pull together this short note about it! That is so helpful. (You may get the prize for the first centre to respond in this way!) I totally agree that the range of answers points to the need to allow this discussion and probing to continue and deepen. I feel confident that if we can do this, and extend the exchange of insights across the mandala, we will come out of the present situation greatly enriched as a community.

With every best wish,
Richard

The points we were asked to contemplate regarding "Who Are We Anyway?" (see Newsletter of July 2003) continued at the Community Meeting of July 24. There is an interesting confluence with the interest expressed by the Vajra Dawn group (see report below) that is directed toward more contact with our general community. Several promising ideas will be explored further by the Executive Committee.

Vajra Dawn Presentation

The Thursday Night Talk on July 3 was a presentation by five young men and women who had attended the recent Vajra Dawn program at Karmê Chöling, where the Sakyong and Richard Reoch met with participants who were all between age 18 and 30. The staff at Karmê Chöling, anticipating 120 participants, soon found out that Rinpoche had invited everyone he saw! The final tally was around 230.

Major themes of the program were matters such as leadership, politics and maturity.

The Sakyong's talks were oriented toward practice and being grounded. Participants were asked to describe their practice and state of mind. Richard Reoch spoke about life styles for practice like the householder yogi life of many older practitioners, and asked Vajra Dawn participants how they would come into a lifestyle that was founded on practice.

Formal and informal discussions often revolved around why people were there: What was their inspiration? How were they connected to their local center? How could other young people be magnetized to the dharma without proselytizing? In workshops these discussions became more concrete. How could the young Karmê Chöling staff encourage the surrounding community to come and visit? In Burlington sangha members could go to local colleges.

Diversity was a major concern. The average person on this path is over 30, white, and middle class. We need to diversify and make Shambhala available to more of the general community. This is done not through proselytizing but through general community interaction and accessibility. Making the dharma affordable became a theme, and ways that the internet could be used were explored.

Participants were interested in taking what they learned from the Shambhalian view to a political (in the broad sense) venue. Angry war demonstrations were not seen as the way. There were no particular "causes" promoted. Decency is what we need to outwardly and inwardly manifest. But there is no need to wait until you're perfect. It's possible to work on oneself and work in the world at the same time.

The St. Johnsbury sangha talked about how we could draw from and actualize what we had heard. Next year the Vajra Dawn programs will be at Karmê Chöling, then other locations.

CENTER ACTIVITIES

Practice Department

On those occasions when we do not have a speaker for a **Thursday Night Talk** we will substitute video or audio tapes. We can count on the continuation of Thursday evening dharma events.

As for **feasts**, they can happen at the center when the schedule is able to accommodate them, taking priority when possible, but not unseating shamatha or Dean. We will work together with Karmê Chöling and also try to adjust the sitting and class schedule when possible.

Free **meditation instruction** is always available. Just ask. A meditation instructor can answer questions, help with stuck spots, introduce new opportunities and generally spark one's practice, so please take advantage of this opportunity to juice up your practice and study. Those of us who have an MI and haven't met with him/her recently might find this a good reminder. MI's, when was the last time you met with your students? Any one wishing to have a meditation instructor, or any MI's who feel that they have more time to offer, please contact Mary Beth Furr at 748-3651.

Karen Bufka has agreed to become the **Shambhala Training** co-coordinator with Greg McNally. They will begin with a Level III September 26-28.

Our Facility

Trombly Heating and Northern Petroleum visited the Center to assess our heat and ventilation options. They feel our ventilation is as good as it gets. The possibility for heat control includes putting zone valves on radiators, although that appears to be impractically expensive. We have the option of just shutting down the radiator in the director's office then supplement with an electric space heater when needed.

All of our windows will be replaced in July or August.

There's now a lock on the store room.

The Rusung suggests that we keep better track of who has keys to the center.

Library News

Thank you to David Wilde for donating a very special book: Ikebana by Stella Coe. The author pioneered the Sogetsu School of Ikebana in Europe and was Trungpa Rinpoche's Ikebana teacher during his years in Britain. This month's other new additions of Buddhist and Shambhala teachings include:

- H.H. the Dalai Lama--Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment
- H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche--Counsels from My Heart
- Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche (Jules Levinson translator.)--Essential Practice
- Cynthia Kneen--Awake Mind, Open Heart, the Power of Courage and Dignity in Everyday Life
- Peter Senge--The Fifth Discipline, The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization
- Margaret Wheatley & Myron Kellner-Rogers--A Simpler Way

Bhodi, a quarterly magazine of in-depth teachings by contemporary masters of the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages such as Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, will be arriving soon.

To make space on the shelves, all the Tricycle magazines are being given away. Please help yourself to them.

We welcome brief reviews of any books from the library that you have found particularly enriching.

To sangha parents: What do you think about having a section of books for children? We currently have Jataka Tales and Tibetan Folk Tales.

Please contact Susan Shaw at sosusan@kingcon.com with your ideas.

Study Programs

The next Kado class with Marcia Shibata will take place on Thursday Aug. 28th at 11 am just following Yoga.

CENTER ACTIVITIES*Finances*

Annual Yard Sale -

Our annual yard and bake sale will be Saturday September 20 to coincide with the Fairbanks Museum's Craft Festival Weekend. It will again be located at the very visible driveway of Gerry Haase on the corner of Spring & Pleasant Streets.

This has been our only regular fund raising event and we have tons of fun doing it. It is also a wonderful way to introduce ourselves to the general community. We clearly display that this sale is to benefit the St. Johnsbury Shambhala Center.

Our successful 3 years have been due to having a lot of things to sell. Last year we raised around \$600 due, to a considerable extent, to the generous donations of Reeve Lindberg on behalf of her mother. We need the generous contributions of your sum and substance. You can't do business from an empty wagon! It is ourselves that we are supporting.

So please look beyond your own closets and see if any of your friends or neighbors might have things, nice items, to donate.

The collection area will again be the barn at Rick & Suellyn. If you need directions or have any inclination to participate please contact Suellyn (751-8318 rsjww@sover.net) or Greg & Tune (626-9612 gregtune@kingcon.com). We can arrange to have your items picked up.

Archiving

There is an updated **Events Archive** at the STJSC website. You might find it interesting as well as useful

<http://stjshambhala.org/ac.schedule.html>

This link is referenced at the bottom of the regular schedule page:

<http://stjshambhala.org/schedule.html>

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*Current Staffing*

Coordinators: Tune Faulkner & Newcomb Greenleaf

Practice: Mary Beth Furr

Finance: Vicky Schafer & Emily McAdoo

Facilities: Michael Leszczynski

Publicity: Sal DeMaio

Study: Anne Stevens

Secretary Karen Bufka

Rusung: Michael Taney

Membership: Barry Rossinoff

QUOTES OF THE MONTH*A Point To Ponder*

A very new meditation student who is reading *Turning Your Mind Into an Ally* pointed to a meaningful, for her, paragraph from page 112 ...

"....When a musician asked the Buddha how he should meditate, the Buddha asked him, "How do you tune your guitar?" The musician answered, "Not too tight and not too loose, so it makes the right sound." The Buddha said, "Similarly, you should hold your mind in meditation." Just as in playing a musical instrument, holding the mind "not too tight and not too loose" takes practice."

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