

SHAMBHALA CONGRESS

*Identifying The Issues :*

The Shambhala Congress to be held in Halifax, N.S. November 4 to 9 will be attended by Newcomb and Madge representing the Center at an approximate cost of \$500 each. Gerry Haase is also donating his personal resources and energy to attend.

The following is a report from the Community Meeting of Sunday, October 19. Gerry Haase acted as our scribe as we first listed talking points, issues that we hoped would be taken to the Shambhala Congress, by our representatives.

1. Enriching what we have rather than trying to grow.
2. Diversity in meditation instruction, particularly for beginners.
3. Who is a Shambhala Buddhist?
4. Openness to other Buddhists and non-Buddhists.
5. What is our relationship to lineage?
6. We need a clear short mission statement.
7. How can we go beyond egalitarianism?
8. Money as an obstacle to following the path.
9. Openness, being willing to listen without preconceptions, with the "ear of the tiger."
10. How do local centers decide on their curriculum?
11. Should our title include "Buddhist"?
12. The role of a deleg system in caring for others.
13. What social action is appropriate and effective for the Shambhala sangha?
14. The mistrust of leadership.

The 15 or so folks in attendance then picked the topics which were most pressing for them, and on that basis, we split into three groups to discuss topics 1, 4, 8, and 12, above. After about half an hour we reconvened and heard reports from each of the groups. Here are the main points from each group.

*Diversity and Openness*

- We should be concerned about the accessibility of the teachings to newcomers but also at all levels.
- We have a responsibility in preserving Tibetan Buddhist and Shambhala traditions and incorporating them into our culture.
- We need to balance the benefits of decentralization with the risk of diluting the teachings.
- Buddhism has always adapted to the local culture and it will evolve in ours.
- We need diversity at all levels of governance.

*Money as an Obstacle to Following the Path*

- We need to recognize the barrier that inability to afford programs creates for some.
- Outsiders sometimes perceive the sangha as a club of the wealthy.
- We might re-examine the priorities of the Center, particularly décor vs. scholarships.
- The "suggested donations" approach has advantages but people need to appreciate that the centers and teachers need to be supported.
- All centers should offer free introductory talks by outstanding teachers.  
People should realize the possibilities of working for program credit at Karmê Chöling.

*Delegs and Caring for Others*

- We need to be aware of those who may be sick, lonely, or isolated.
- Delegs haven't generally worked in small sanghas.
- There is a choice between "interest" deleks and geographical delegs.
- We should be aware of wheelchair accessibility for meetings such as this one.

There was considerable interest in having another meeting before November 4, when Madge, Newcomb, and Gerry leave for the Congress. Stay tuned.

## STUDY PROGRAMS

### *Cutting Through*

The Shambhala Center will be offering a 5 week discussion of "Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism" by Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche.

"To understand the essential qualities of the spiritual path, especially what obstacles or conundrums might lie ahead, we need a clear sense of direction. This is what is offered ...in Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism."

"...in order to understand a spiritual path, we must acknowledge and understand our own mind, now, as it pertains to the journey. What misunderstandings and concepts we may have about a spiritual practice, we must overcome so that we're not merely practicing according to our own conceptualized idea."

- Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche

The program will be lead by Sarah Littlefeather, a long time student of Rinpoche, at the Northern Lights Bookstore & Café, a wheel-chair accessible facility.

The class will begin October 28 and go through November 25. We will offer a brief period of sitting meditation prior to each class. Books are available at Northern Lights Bookstore.

Time 6:30 pm

Please call 748-4240 or 563-2866 to register

Suggested donation \$25

### *The Heart Sutra*

Heart Sutra discussion, with Roger Guest, will be on the week-end of November 7 & 8.

What we know as the Heart Sutra is a pith instruction of the Buddha which condenses several seasons of his most profound teaching on a very deep topic (Sunnyata or Emptiness) into a couple of short pages. Thus, it is no wonder that it sometimes comes across as a kind of intuitive riddle.

A close examination of this sutra, however, challenges us just as it did those fortunate practitioners 2600 years ago, to go beyond our conventional way of seeing, beyond our web of conceptual reference points. To do so we must open our eyes to the perfection of knowledge that provides the view or basis of all the other paramitas.

Roger Guest is a mere bug, a self-confessed charlatan who has no experience of the things he speaks about.

Nonetheless, it may be of some merit to practice together and to contemplate this profound sutra in the company of others. Everyone is welcome.

Friday 7:00 PM

Saturday 9:00-5:00; talks at 11:30 and 4:00

Sunday 9:00-4:30; talks at 10:30 and 3:00

The cost is a sliding scale fee \$35-\$65.

### *Shambhala Buddhist Lineage*

"Peaceful Buddha, Fearless Warrior" - an introduction to Shambhala Buddhism with Ken Ketchum. December 6 & 7.

The weekend will be grounded in meditation practice. We will discuss the lineages of Buddhism and Shambhala warriorship, brought together originally by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and now flourishing under the leadership of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. There will be four talks:

- Overview
- Three yantras of Buddhism
- Great Eastern Sun
- Community resources, local and world-wide

Ken Ketchum has been trying to practice since 1977 or so. He lived at Karne Choling from 1978 through 1983. Ken been working, raising a family, and involved with the Hanover/WR Jct. group as he does so.

Saturday and Sunday 8:30 to 5:00. Light breakfast and lunch are included.

### *Wake Up To Your Life*

The Ken McLeod group studying from Wake Up To Your Life will begin again and work our way through the chapters more slowly. A probable beginning date will be Sunday November 16 at 1:30. We will discuss the Introduction and the short Chapter 1: The Mystery of Being. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone interested to join the existing group.

It now appears that Ken McLeod is very committed to come to teach in this area due to Newcomb's invitation. We're probably looking at a time around next April. It is not yet determined if this event will be hosted by Karne Choling or by our Center. In either case his visit is certain to be a draw for many people in the Northeast though he usually limits attendance to 30-40 participants.

## PRACTICE EVENTS

### *Meditation Instructors*

An MI meeting is planned for Nov. 16, Sunday, at Northern Lights Bookshop from 9 to 11. It will then join Sunday morning sitting at the Center. We will meet with Gaylon Ferguson to continue discussing changes in meditation instruction.

We should allow time to update our focus as a group of local mi's providing a service to the community and each other as well, so please think about that. It would be very good if we could touch in with our students before the meeting as well, to refresh ideas of interest and need. If anyone is new to the center and hasn't joined the list of available MI's please let Mary Beth know you are here and what practice you instruct.

If you or your students have any special requests for a Beginners list of reading materials to help understand Shambhala Buddhism, please send them in. We're thinking of Meditation in Action, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind and Shambhala, Sacred Path of the Warrior, but what do people like to turn to who want to learn about the chants or the forms, for example? Donations of these to the Library, via Susan Shaw, would be meritorious, as would a small information booklet one might offer to write.

### *Shambhala Training*

The Level III in September went very well, despite an extended power outage and sitting by candle light. We are now planning to have a Level IV sometime in January, then another Level I.

### *Learn To Meditate*

Our Learn To Meditate program has resumed and will be offered the Second Sunday of each month from 10-11. Participants can continue with our regular sitting until noon.

## NALANDA GATE

The art exhibit Open to the Senses was organized by the Nalanda Gate, under the leadership of Barbara Moraff. It turned the entrance and community room of the Center into an elegant gallery for the month of October. Included were paintings, drawings, pottery, stained glass, stone sculpture, and jewelry.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### *Zen Studies*

David Loy is an American Zen Buddhist who teaches at a Japanese University. Among his very interesting books are:

A Buddhist History of the West, and  
The Great Awakening: a Buddhist Social Theory

With Jeanette Tweedy, the minister St Andrew's Episcopal Church in St Johnsbury, we have come up with the idea of a joint study group devoted to Loy's work.

A one hour videotape was shown at the Thursday Night Talk October 30th. He tells his spiritual autobiography and the ideas on history and social action which he was led to. If you missed this showing of the tape, it can be borrowed from Newcomb.

### *Vows*

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche spent most of October at Karmê Chöling, teaching introductory and advanced programs, performing the Vajrayogini Abhisheka, and giving Refuge and Bodhisattva Vows.

The following members of our Center took vows or received the abhisheka. Ken Campos, Valerie Fischler, Michael Heffernan, Jesse Lukas, Robert Norton, and Merle Thompson took Refuge. Michael Beauregard, Mark Fischler, Angella Gibbons, Michael Leszczynski, Dennis Ross, Nancy Wallace, and Linda Warnaar took the Bodhisattva Vow. Karen Bufka and Patton Hyman received the Vajrayogini Abhisheka. Congratulations to all!

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Please note that this is the last issue of this Newsletter that will be broadly disseminated by regular mail. Unless you inform us to the contrary Newsletters will be sent via e-mail to all of those for whom we have an e-mail address. So please let us know if you want to continue to receive the Newsletter by regular mail or if you will pick up copies at the Center.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Brian Blundell for his recent \$500 donation to be applied to our new entry-way carpet.

Thanks to **Troll Press** for donating the printing of this Newsletter.



# Shambhala Center of St. Johnsbury

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
						<b>1</b> 1:00-4:30 Kado
<b>2</b> 9:00-12:00 and 1:30-4:30 Nyinthon	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 4:00-6:30 Tai Chi 6:30 Executive meeting 6:30 <b>Cutting Through</b> at Northern Lights	<b>5</b> 6:00 Silent Sitting	<b>6</b> 6:00 Sitting 7:10 <b>Thursday Night Talk</b> 4:00-5:30 Tai Chi	<b>7</b> 7:00 <b>Heart Sutra weekend</b>	<b>8</b> 9:00-5:00 <b>Heart Sutra weekend</b>
<b>9</b> 9:00-4:30 <b>Heart Sutra weekend</b> 10:00 <b>Learn to Meditate</b> 11:00 Sadhana of Mahamudra	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 4:00-6:30 Tai Chi 6:30 <b>Cutting Through</b> at Northern Lights	<b>12</b> 6:00 Silent Sitting	<b>13</b> 6:00 Sitting 7:10 <b>Thursday Night Talk</b> 4:00-5:30 Tai Chi	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:00-11:00 <b>MI Meeting</b> at Northern Lights 11:00 Sitting 1:30 <b>Wake Up to Your Life</b> book group	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 4:00-6:30 Tai Chi 6:30 <b>Cutting Through</b> at Northern Lights	<b>19</b> 6:00 Silent Sitting	<b>20</b> 6:00 Sitting 7:10 <b>Thursday Night Talk</b> 4:00-5:30 Tai Chi	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 1:00-4:30 Kado
<b>23</b> 11:00 Sadhana of Mahamudra	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 4:00-6:30 Tai Chi 6:30 <b>Cutting Through</b> at Northern Lights	<b>26</b> 6:00 Silent Sitting	<b>27</b> 6:00 Sitting 7:10 <b>Thursday Night Talk</b> 4:00-5:30 Tai Chi	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 1:00-4:30 Kado
<b>30</b> 11:00 Sitting						

## November 2003