



THE SHAMBHALA MEDITATION
CENTER
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VALUING CHEERFULNESS

To find the meaning and proper application of this word that pops up frequently in our Shambhalian discourses, and is much admired in other cultures as well, we might try a Google search for "cheerfulness" in the Shambhala International website which pulls up the following quotes:

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:

From Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala

"There's always the primordial dot: that spark of goodness that exists even before you think. We are worthy of that. Everybody possesses that unconditioned possibility of cheerfulness, which is not connected purely with either pain or pleasure. You have an inclination: in the flash of one second you feel what needs to be done. It is not a product of your education; it is not scientific or logical; you simply pick up on the message. And then you act: you just do it.

...By being here, naturally being here, we have less resentment. Resentment is not being here. We are somewhere else, because we are preoccupied with something else. When we are here, we are simply here -- without resentment and without preoccupation. And by being here, we become cheerful. Let me see you smile. That's it! Good luck."

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche:

"In Tibet they say, 'The joy of a king is no greater than the joy of a beggar.' It isn't what we possess - it's what we enjoy. This means the experience of genuine cheerfulness cannot be bought or sold. What makes it genuinely cheerful is that we are free from fixation and attachment. We are free of having to depend on something else to make us happy. We can bask freely in the natural radiance of our mind. This is the equanimity of true cheerfulness - nothing more, nothing less."

Layth Matthews:

From the unpublished manuscript *Inherent Wealth* "Inherent wealth is a feeling of unconditional abundance or cheerfulness that does not preclude tears. Ironically, perceiving such abundance is based upon accepting the emptiness, longing, and sadness that are inherent to human 'be-ing'."

That same Google search also brings up reference to cheerfulness as a state of mind that is relied on in the Kadampa slogans concerning training of the mind toward enlightenment and is regarded as an indicator that our practice is winning success on the path.

Further, the bottom line of the criteria for Membership at our Center is about allegiance to cheerfulness; about always relying on a cheerful frame of mind. Can this be a reasonable expectation given the nature of our everyday life? Note that the exhortation only indicates that one could be confident that cheerfulness is an indicator of well-being. It may be regarded as a state of mind that indicates attunement to an enlightened view of things. It manifests from a reference that is not mired in the suffering that arises from being addicted to pursuing passions, indulging in aggression or ignoring the true messages that are always being offered by life. That does not mean to say that one should try to force a happy face or put a positive spin on everything. Attempting to manipulate or avoiding what is going on always creates tension and brings twists in our bodies and a frown to the face. On the other hand, our meditation practice and our studies will bring openness to our relations that allows our anger to be clean and compassionate; our tears genuine and tender, not born from selfish longing. Understanding of the lack of solid substance to ourselves and the world around us tends to free from all those petty hopes and fears and the niggling need to control and manipulate our environment.

It also brings ease and the possibility of a frequent, cheerful smile.

In sum, it seems a joyful, friendly, spirited attitude can be taken as a mark of correct understanding and effort in the pursuit of our Shambhala Buddhist path of meditations and studies and in our commitment to manifest enlightened society altogether.

By David Wilde

EDUCATION

The following two classes from the Shambhala curriculum are scheduled this Fall.

Karma: The 5 Skandhas and the 12 Nidanas

Who am I? How did I get here, and where am I going? Looking directly at the experience of mind, we begin to understand our apparent confusion about ourselves and the phenomena of our world. Renouncing the painful cycle of confused action (karma), we use the natural inquisitiveness of mind to see how confusion arises and therefore how it could simply cease, allowing awake wisdom to manifest.

Thursdays at 7:15 PM beginning October 27th, for 5 weeks (11/3, 11/10, 11/17, and 12/1, plus a one day intensive TBA)

This class is open to all who have a regular meditation practice.

Teachers: Michael Taney and Arthur Jennings

Cost: \$ 60, sliding scale for those in need.

Contact Arthur Jennings, 633 2644, if you have questions about the class.

To register in advance, please call Vickie Schafer, 633 3939, or sign up at the Center.

The Union of Shamatha and Vipashyana

This community practice weekend will held December 2-4 and will be led by Acharya Michael Greenleaf. Stay tuned for the schedule and more details!

Vajra Assembly Tapes

Oscar Garcia has offered to coordinate tape playbacks of the recent Vajra Assembly with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

A schedule will be announced when the tapes become available. These talks are for Vajrayana students.

PRACTICE

Shrines

We will continue using votive candles on the shrines. These candles are less expensive and easier to clean!

Shrine Room Positions

If you'd like to receive instruction for the roles of gatekeeper, drummer or umdze, please sign up at the Center. A training session for these positions will be offered soon to people who would like to stretch their practice to include these opportunities to be of service to the community.

Nyinthun Schedule

The nyinthun falls on Sunday, November 6th, with sitting from 9am - noon and 1:00 - 4:00pm. The Maitri Bhavana liturgy is chanted at 11:00am. Nyinthuns are an opportunity to deepen our connection to practice and community and are offered the first Sunday of every month.

Meditation Instruction

All shamatha students are strongly encouraged to meet with a Meditation Instructor on a regular and ongoing basis. This relationship provides an opportunity for dialogue and serves to assist students in their understanding of practice. If you do not currently have a regular Meditation Instructor, please contact Catherine Clark, ceclark@sover.net or 592 3102.

Tantrikas

Acharya John Rockwell recently gave a talk to tantrikas at the Center about various developments in the Shambhala Vajrayana path. If you are a tantrika and would like to borrow the audiotape of this talk, contact Catherine.

COMMUNITY

Community Meeting

Sunday, November 13 there will be a meeting and potluck dinner at 12:15 after the morning sitting. There will be a Membership induction ceremony at that time for those who have filed the application form and received an acceptance letter. Other agenda items will be decided at the November 8th Executive Committee meeting and sent out shortly after.

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