



SHAMBHALA MEDITATION CENTER

St. Johnsbury Vermont
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Editor: Ric Walter

KADO AND MEDITATION: THE WAY OF FLOWERS

Marcia Wang Shibata

Saturdays, Nov. 4, 11 & 18 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Kado, literally “the way or path of flowers”, is the ancient Chinese word used before the adoption of the Japanese term Ikebana for this practice. Whereas Ikebana, as currently practiced, usually concentrates on form, Kado is mediation practice that can open the student’s mind to see the natural world as it is and the student’s mind as it is.

The laws of the natural world apply to the human realm as well. We are not separate or independent as we believe; thus, through studying nature as it is and ourselves as we are, and by using classical Ikebana forms, it is possible to see clearly and sever our allegiance to illusions about self and other, accepting what is. If we see clearly and accept experience, it is possible to be friendly with others and ourselves. The ultimate purpose of Kado is not to make a nice flower arrangement but to work and be in life without conflict.

Open to beginning or experienced students, this class includes meditation practice, classical flower forms

and visual teachings.

The class is limited to 8 students. Cost is \$75.00 and includes materials. Your check is your registration and should be made out and sent to Ms. Marcia Shibata, 2289 Orton Road, East Hardwick, VT 05836-9843. Call or email questions to Marcia at 802-533-9269 or mtflower@wirelessvt.net.

MEDITATION IN ACTION – REFLECTIONS ON THE DORJE KASUNG PATH OF PRACTICE

By Rusung Sara Demetry

“Dorje Kasung? What’s that?” I’m not sure when this thought first entered my mind, but I likely first perceived the Dorje Kasung early on as oddly dressed folks at public talks or at the open house night, who seemed somewhat aloof and separate from everyone else. It wasn’t until two years later that I entertained the possibility that I might choose this as a path of practice. At the 2000 Seminary, which was the last full three month seminary, there was a vast menu of all the things one could participate in – service, delegs, rota, practice, study, bonfires, socializing.... and being a Dorje Kasung. It felt so, “not me”, and my meditation instructors had always encouraged us to “lean into things” that were uncomfortable. So, leaning in, I borrowed some ill-fitting uniform items, and joined a squad, with the intention of exploring whether this was really a practice or just people who liked being in an exclusive little club.

Right off, there were many things to do; drill practice, event guard shifts (which meant you couldn’t take notes at talks), camp guard at the Sakyong’s residence, driving or being personal guard for the Sakyong, sleeping in the shrineroom to discourage any illicit after hours activity, and Tori shifts (guarding the gate to the land at all times of the day and night.) For some-

one who is drawn to be busy, this was great news! And then the actual shifts. There were the briefings where you found out what was expected of you, the moments of activity, the many moments of irritation or uncertainty and then the stillness and space of nothing happening for long periods of time. There were times when I expected a military “harshness” from other Dorje Kasung, and what happened instead was kindness and gentleness and open heart. And there were moments of connection with the Sakyong, my root teacher, and the opportunity to be of service to him and feel more like a part of his world. Most of all, there was the opportunity to be on the spot, fully in the moment, continually confronted with the choice and necessity to drop one’s story line and just do what needed to be done.

Now, years later, on taking the Rusung Oath, not much has changed. I am still exploring how Dorje Kasungship is a path of practice, with an underlying sense of trust, tested by my own experience, that it is a profound path. I still have the same tendencies toward busy-ness and irritation. But there is a trust that to put on a uniform and pin and show up with the intention to be of service, and to hold oneself in a dignified way is of great benefit. There is a need in my life for a reminder of how to bring meditation practice into action, how to manifest mindfulness and awareness in daily life.

There are said to be three pillars of Shambhala Society; the military, the government, and religion. All of them are necessary and interdependent. Instead of a conventional military that uses weapons and force to keep out what is not wanted, what is feared or demonized, the Dorje Kasung use weapons of gentleness, and fearlessness to accomplish their objective of “Victory over War”, conquering aggression both within ourselves and within society. With weapons like these, wars need never be fought.

On a relative level, as Rusung, I am now the one responsible for the security of the Shambhala Center, and the safety of the community. If the doors aren’t locked at night, I’m the one the police will call. On a relative level, the Dorje Kasung relate to things like medical emergencies, fire evacuation, and security. On another level, it is just like any other form given to us by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche – it is given to us to wake ourselves up, and to help each other wake up. Without the intention to open our soft and tender heart, it is only a uniform. That opening may take years, or happen on the spot, but day after day, that is what our path is about.

If you are interested in exploring the practice of Dorje Kasungship firsthand, please contact Rusung Sara Demetry. Upcoming events that will require Dorje Kasung presence are President Reoch’s visit to the Center October 21, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche’s visit to Karmê Chöling in late October, and Lama Sonam’s visit in November.

SECURITY NOTES FROM RUSUNG DEMETRY

Please Note: Any request for a key to the Shambhala Center should be directed to Rusung Sara Demetry. Also, please note that there is now an upstairs doorbell to the Shambhala Center which is audible in the shrineroom – this makes it possible for the upstairs door to be locked during talks or programs, and for any latecomers to make their presence easily known.

RICHARD REOCH, PRESIDENT OF SHAMBHALA,
TO VISIT US SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

As we go to press with the newsletter, final details of President Reoch's visit are not yet available, so actual times may change. From what we know as late September, something like the following will happen. Final details will be sent by email and posted on the bulletin board.

6:00 pm Mess with the Dorje Kasung.

6:30 pm Potluck dinner with the President in the Center shrine room.

7:30 pm Welcome and introduction by the Center Co-Directors, followed by a short address given by the President and a period of collective practice, and discussion.

CENTER STAFF:

<i>Shambhala Council</i>	
Co-directors: Gerry Haase and Ric Walter	Shambhala Training: Caroline DeMaio
Education: Marybeth Furr	Finance: Vickie Schafer
Health and Well-being: Merle Thompson	Rusung: Sara Demetry
<i>Service Personnel</i>	
Shrinekeepers: Alan Boye & Julie Swan	M.I. Coordinator: Julie Swan
Practice Coordinator: Oscar Garcia	Décor: Suellyn Whittington
Recycling: Sandy Raynor	Librarian, Hospitality: Ken Campos
Communications: David Wilde	Rota: Jane Alper

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