



THE SHAMBHALA MEDITATION  
CENTER  
OF ST. JOHNSBURY

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THE ULTIMATE DECORUM

*By Suellyn Whittington*

The fruition of the warrior's path is the realization of the primordial, unconditional space of basic goodness. This is not a concept that we think is way down the warrior's road and we won't get there this lifetime. This is an experience we can call upon every moment of the day.

And how did we get to this unconditional place? Well by using our vehicle, of course. No not the Subaru 4-wheel drive. The vehicle of meditation. How else can anyone experience space at all let alone unconditional space? This space you feel on the cushion really does extend to your entire life. A true warrior is not afraid of space.

When we begin to see the world as it is, chaos and beauty together, we see that there is a natural hierarchy. When we usually think of hierarchy we think of enormous institutions such as governments, IRS, western medicine, drug companies and academia. Very often these groups seem omnipotent and can completely rule our lives. Computers! We love the convenience but get into their speed and find ourselves cramming more and more activities into our lives in order to be busy. It's the "in" thing to be busy.

But as warriors we can opt for sanity. We can invite space and enjoy it. Coming up against a large institution can be terrifying if you are not in touch with the Shambhala vision. We can appreciate the speed or confusion, just like we can appreciate the thoughts that come up during our sitting practice or during the day, but we don't have to take part in them. We don't have to go with the flow.

The tighter and fuller our lives are, the less opportunity we will have to experience the natural hierarchy that exists in our world, the ultimate decorum.

Basic goodness is the natural, fundamental law of the universe --an experience of vast, perfect harmony. And bravery, in the Shambhala tradition, is the courage to see this reality. Within this hierarchy is an order we warriors call lha, nyen and lu, where everything has its place. Lha is high, the tops of mountains, skyscrapers, clouds, and in relation to your own body, your shoulders and higher.

Nyen is the middle of the mountain, your torso, the furniture, the people on the earth. Lu relates to the water, basically, but also the basement, your legs and lower torso, creatures under the ground and in the oceans.

If you look around, you can see this natural occurrence. And we appreciate it rather than violate it. Your shoes do not go on your head, your food does not go on the floor, (neither do your clothes). It is this law we respect when we do not put our dharma books on the floor. They are really considered lha, the actual words of the Buddha and are placed in respectful conditions. The dharma book on your shrine is the highest point. We don't slouch in the shrine room or lay down on the cushions. An upright posture of good head and shoulders recapitulates this simple, natural order of lha, nyen, and lu.

So look what happens when we connect with our own gentleness, our own tender hearts; our vision improves and the world with all its beauty opens up to us. A world just full of ordinary magic.

I hope these articles have been of benefit to many. The words of my teachers, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche have been my inspiration and will always be my guide to continually discovering basic goodness.

## NEW SHAMBHALA TRAINING DIRECTOR

The Directors and Executive Committee are pleased to announce that Caroline Demaio has accepted our invitation to become the Shambhala Training Director effective Shambhala Day, the year of the Fire Dog, February 28, 2006. Join us in welcoming Caroline to this position. We are pleased that our center will begin to offer Shambhala Training once again.

## PRACTICE NEWS

### *Nyinthun Schedule*

The nyinthun falls on Sunday, February 5th, 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.

### *Mamo Chants*

"Pacifying the Turmoil of the Mamos" is traditionally recited at the end of the Tibetan year, during what is referred to as the "Dön" season, in order to pacify the karmic cause of personal, social, and environmental chaos that accumulates at the year's end. By reciting the chant, we tune into the protector principle of awareness and reconnect with sacred outlook. An interesting article on the Protector Principle by the Dorje Loppön Lodrö Dorje entitled "Averting the Negativity of the Old Year" is posted at the Center.

We will recite the Mamo liturgy during the Dön season, February 17th through February 26th, beginning at 6pm each evening. Everyone is encouraged to participate. The day following the Dön season (Monday, February 27th) is considered neutral and the Sadhana of Mahamudra will be chanted at noon, as it's a new moon.

## *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.

## RULING YOUR WORLD DISCUSSION GROUP

*By Mary Beth Furr*

During the month before Shambhala Day, when we change from the current Wood Rooster year to the year of the Fire Dog, we are warming up with a discussion group led by Caroline Demaio and Greg McNally about the Sakyong's latest book, Ruling Your World. Just as Sakyong Mipham holds the lineage of his father, the Druk Sakyong, Chogyam Trungpa, his text continues the teachings in his father's seminal Shambhala, Sacred Path of the Warrior. They seem a natural matched set. The premise of the book and discussion is best stated by the author himself, in this quote from Chapter One. In response to King (of Shambhala) Dawa Sangpo's request for teachings on attaining enlightenment in a secular position, the Buddha told him...' " don't be biased. Look at the land and look at your people. If you can develop certainty in the indestructible basic goodness that lies at the heart of everything, then you can rule your world. But becoming a sakyong is a challenging path, since life in the world is full of decisions to make, as well as endless distractions." Taking these instructions to heart, King Dawa Sangpo developed certainty in the view of basic goodness. This vision transformed his kingdom, for it brought inspiration and meaning to people's lives.'

How could we ask for more? This tiny text continues on to give full-blown timely nuts-and-bolts instructions on living the life of a Shambhala warrior in our everyday lives for our own benefit and the benefit of all sentient beings, in all things great and small. Although it is intended to be accessible to all, it is written in the Shambhala language of the four dignities, so a discussion led by practiced Shambhalians such as Caroline and Greg is all the more useful.

Please join the group Thursday evenings after sitting and invite your friends to continue discussing this and Sacred Path of the Warrior after Shambhala Day, jump right in any time. No time like now!

For further information, please call Mary Beth, 748-3651.

## SHAMBHALA DAY

*Tuesday, February 28*

Morning events are scheduled at Karmê Chöling in Barnet. They will be sending out a detailed schedule before then, but expect that there will be a Sadhana of Mahamudra followed by a broadcast of the annual talk by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. Beginning at 6p.m., our center will host a Lhasang followed by an I Ching oracle reading and a showing of President's Eye View, a video of the year in review from Richard Reoch, President of Shambhala International. We complete the celebration with a pot-luck reception. More information to follow.

## THE RESTORATION, RENEWAL AND DEEPENING OF KARMÊ CHÖLING

*By Susan Taney*

An expansive plan for Karmê Chöling was recently unfurled.

This plan can be found on the web site at [www.KarmeCholing.org](http://www.KarmeCholing.org). If you have not had the opportunity to read it, I cheerfully urge you to do so.

The erecting of a stupa which will be called The Stupa of Complete Enjoyment, the beginning of a school of deep study called the Mukpo Institute and a myriad of other building plans and facilities upgrades are outlined there. This jewel of a practice center in our midst is about to be revitalized bringing powerful energy not only to Karmê Chöling but to the whole Northeast Kingdom and beyond.

There are many ways to be part of this whole process as this goes forward. Besides donating money, which is always helpful and needed, the ideas, research and engagement of those who have a heart felt connection to Karmê Chöling will be invaluable. Advisory Committees of six to twelve members are needed to form very soon in the areas of:

- The Stupa
- Architectural Design
- Energy & Sustainable Materials
- ADA Accessibility
- Interior Design, Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment
- Landscaping
- Children and Families

A description of the responsibilities, skill set and time requirement for these Advisory Committees can be found on the Karmê Chöling web site. Please look into any area that connects to your passion and donate your intelligence, energy and time.

For my part, I will be working in the area of communication to help facilitate the exchange of information and ideas around these exciting plans. I will be sure you know about other ways you can offer your ideas and inspiration and that the leadership of Karmê Chöling has access to your wisdom.



## CONCERT BY RAVENNA MICHALSEN

*Sunday, February 12 at 3p.m.*

Ravenna Michalsen trained as a classical cellist for fourteen years and performed in a rock band for four years until she developed rheumatoid arthritis and fibromyalgia - at which point her primary instrument became voice. During a retreat in 2002, Mipham Rinpoche heard Ravenna sing and wrote a song for her to put to music. That song became Just A Seed Waiting to Grow. From that experience grew the idea to write songs about something other than heartbreak and disappointment. Bloom, her first album, is devotional, yet contemporary--perfect for those interested in spiritually oriented music. Ravenna has a haunting, evocative voice and each song on the album is made distinctive by the unique arrangements and dharma-based lyrics.

Bloom is available from Samahdi Cushions in Barnet, Ziji in Boulder, Drala in Halifax and from [www.RavennaM.com](http://www.RavennaM.com).

## DHATU, WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

*By Oscar Garcia*

Someone asked me to define the dhatu. This term occurs in the Heart Sutra, "no eye, ... no mind; no appearance, ... no dharmas; no eye dhatu up to no mind dhatu, no dhatu of dharmas, no mind consciousness dhatu ...." So what does dhatu mean?

It is difficult to define the word dhatu by itself because it is not a word whose meaning is easy to grasp. To begin to understand the word dhatu we need to look at the contexts in which it is used.

Why would the Heart Sutra say: "no eye..., no appearance ..., no eye dhatu"? Aren't "eye" and "appearance" included in "eye dhatu,"-- the triplet of organ, sensation, consciousness?

In the glossary of The Rain Of Wisdom, Shambhala Publications, 1980 it's defined as:

"(1) The three realms of samsara: realm of desire (S: kamadhatu ...), the realm of form (S: rupadhatu ...) and formless realm (S: arupyadhatu ...) (2) The eighteen elements classified in the abhidharma: the six sense organs [eye ... mind], sense objects [forms ... dharmas], and their corresponding consciousnesses [eye consciousness ... mind consciousness]." [underline, italics, brackets, mine].

Also in the same glossary, we find dharmadhatu, defined as: "(...space, realm, or sphere of dharma). All-encompassing space, unconditional totality, unoriginating and unchanging in which all phenomena arise, dwell, and cease."

So for definitions, we could have "realm," "element," and "space." Clear as mud, no?

Oscar Garcia likes words. He wants to know which Buddhist and Shambhala terms that are used around the Center-- have intrigued, confused, or tickled your curiosity. So, please send words whose meaning has interested you to: Oscar Garcia at [karma\\_shedrup@yahoo.com](mailto:karma_shedrup@yahoo.com). We will share the words and meanings you propose to him in subsequent Newsletters.

## NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Ric Walter has taken the role of editor of the center's newsletter beginning with this issue. He welcomes contributions, ideas and comments. David Wilde continues as designer and distributor of the newsletter.

The Shambhala Meditation Center is a lineage institution of Shambhala International. Sakyong Mipham Jampal Trinley Rinpoche is the lineage holder of the Shambhala Mandala, and continues the stream of teachings from Vidyadhara, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. The President of Shambhala International is Richard Reoch. Information at [www.shambhala.org](http://www.shambhala.org).

CENTER PERSONNEL

**Executive Committee**

Co-directors: Gerry Haase and Ric Walter

Shambhala Training: Caroline DeMaio  
Education: Marybeth Furr  
Finance: Vickie Schafer  
Secretary: Linda Warner

Practice: Catherine Clark  
Dekyong: Merle Thompson  
Hospitality: Ken Campos  
Rusung: Michael Taney

**Service Personnel**

Communications: David Wilde  
Librarian: Ken Campos

Decor: Suellyn Whittington  
Recycling: Sandy Raynor

Shrinekeepers: Alan Boye and Julie Swan

contact information is available at [www.stjshambhala.org/personnel](http://www.stjshambhala.org/personnel)

