



“How do you give your best when you feel your worst? . . . [Y]ou go deeper into the feeling of ‘worst.’ . . . [T]hat’s what tonglen is really about—being willing to move closer to our pain.”

—PEMA CHÖDRON  
*Tonglen: The Path of Transformation*

## About Us

Established in 1976, the Kootenay Shambhala Meditation Centre is part of an international community of some 170 meditation centres and groups founded by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and now led by his son and spiritual heir, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. At the heart of the community are the Shambhala Buddhist teachings, a unique expression of the wisdom of the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibetan Buddhism and the Shambhala tradition of living an uplifted life, fully engaged with the world.

Our core offerings include free mindfulness-awareness meditation instruction and a curriculum of Shambhala, Buddhist and contemplative arts training. The thread that runs through all we do is the aspiration to relieve suffering by awakening the world to its own potential.

We invite everyone to participate in this journey of discovery.

## Regular Public Events

These events are open to anyone, free of charge or by donation. For the latest information see our events calendar at [www.nelsonbuddha.com](http://www.nelsonbuddha.com) or email us at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

### Meditation Practice

**Sundays, 9am-noon; Mondays, 7-8pm; Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30am; Thursdays, 5:15-6:15pm; and Fridays, 6:30-7:30am**

These sessions emphasize the Shambhala community’s central practice—mindfulness-awareness meditation—

in both sitting and walking forms. Sessions start and end with chants. Participants are welcome to come and go as they choose.

### Open House

**Mondays, 7-9:30pm**

Our Open House program introduces participants to Shambhala Buddhist practice, teachings and culture.

• **7pm:** Meditation practice (introductory meditation instruction is available at 7pm, further instruction at 7:30pm) • **8pm:** Talk and discussion • **9pm:** Tea

### Sadhana of Mahamudra

**New and full moon days, 7-8pm**

*The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, a text written by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, embodies a way of cutting through all forms of dogmatism. The practice involves chanting the text and relaxing into the atmosphere that doing so creates.

### Meditation Tune-Up

**First Sunday of each month, 9am-noon**

Meditation instruction at 9am, a couple of short talks and a light mid-morning community breakfast combine to create a relaxed way for newcomers, friends and members alike to perk up their practice.

### Children in Shambhala

**First Sunday of each month, 10:15am-noon**

Aimed at children ages 5 to 11, this program offers a fun introduction to Shambhala, with yoga, meditation-related activities, storytelling and refreshments.

## Heads-Up

Acharya (senior teacher) and former Kootenay resident Dale Asrael is leading this summer’s KSMC weekthün (week-long group meditation retreat), on our forest retreat land at Nelway, from Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup>. Save the dates and stay tuned for more info.

## Upcoming Core Curriculum Programs

The Shambhala community's core education curriculum consists of three elements:

- **Shambhala Training**, a secular meditative path of realizing the world's natural goodness
- **Buddhist studies**, a progressive exploration of Tibetan Buddhist teachings and meditation
- **Training in contemplative arts**, bringing a meditative perspective to various art forms

We invite people to engage the curriculum to the degree they want. Curriculum programs altogether offer students the preparation they require to receive subtler training.

### SHAMBHALA SCHOOL OF BUDDHIST STUDIES Lojong: Training the Mind (for Everyday Life)

With Dr. Duncan Grady

Thursdays, February 22 - March 29, 6:30-8pm

Open to anyone • Online participation possible •

Suggested donation: \$60 (materials not included)

Since September, we've been trying a new way of running Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies (SSBS) weeknight courses. We're holding a class every Thursday evening, offering courses back to back. And we're structuring the classes in a way we hope makes them both beneficial and enjoyable.

The classes, though open to anyone, ask more of participants than our Open House program does: teachings are more in-depth, and students are expected to complete each course they start, do the readings and contemplate the homework questions.

We hope this approach will enable interested students to complete the nine courses in the SSBS curriculum in a timely and agreeable way.

Another thing we've been doing for several months is using the Internet to reach people who can't attend classes at the Centre. Course audio files and handouts are made available to registrants on a limited-access page on the Centre's website. Whether one participates at the Centre, online, or in some combination of these two options, the suggested donation is the same.

*Lojong* (literally, "mind training") cultivates realization in emptiness and compassion, the essential qualities of the bodhisattva warrior. This practice-oriented course

explores the mahayana slogans of Atisha, a 10th century Indian Buddhist master, whose teachings left a deep imprint on all Tibetan lineages. The contemplative practice of exchanging self for other—*tonglen*—is emphasized in conjunction with the day-to-day application of the slogans.

The course readings are from the books *The Great Path of Awakening*, by Jamgon Kongtrul, *Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving Kindness*, by Chögyam Trungpa and *Tonglen: The Path of Transformation*, by Pema Chödrön. Copies of the books will be available to course participants at discounted prices in the "Shambhala Shop" at the Centre. You may buy a book at its discounted price if you write your name and the course name on the book's price slip.

*DR. DUNCAN GRADY was raised in the Siksika/Sauk Blackfeet tradition. He uses various ceremonies/rituals taught by his people to bring spiritual concepts into direct experience. Also a Shambhala Buddhist practitioner, Duncan incorporates elements of the Tibetan and Shambhala Buddhist tradition into his life and teachings. He has taught in North America, South America, Indonesia and Europe.*

Early pre-registration by participants will help us ensure that we have enough books for all participants. To pre-register or for more information, contact Jim Northcote at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

### SHAMBHALA ART • Awakening The Sacred

Shambhala Art is a process, a product, and an arts education program. As a process, it brings wakefulness and awareness to the creative and viewing processes through the integration of contemplation and meditation. As a product, it is art that wakes people up. Shambhala Art is also an international non-profit arts education program based on the Dharma Art teachings of the late Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the founder of Shambhala Buddhism.

The purpose of Shambhala Art is to explore the creative process and the product we call art from the viewpoint of meditative discipline. This is a viewpoint that encourages us to see things as they are, rather than just how we think or imagine they are. Shambhala Art does not teach a particular skill or technique such as painting, sculpture, or dance. It is about the source of inspiration, its manifestation, and how it speaks to us. Once a view and a path are established, they can be put into practice within any artistic discipline.

Art has been used for millennia to evoke, or reveal truth, genuineness, and a sense of the sacred. That's what "awakening the sacred" means. Although the

Shambhala Art teachings are inspired by Shambhala Buddhism, they are not in any way religious. They are about discovery and play, and the universal nature of the creative and viewing process and what the result communicates.

**PART ONE: Coming To Your Senses**

**With Lynn Frederick and Petra Youngberg**

**Friday, February 23, 7-9pm; and Saturday, February 24, 9am-5:30pm**

Open to anyone • Suggested donation: \$60 • Materials fee: TBA

Art has more to do with perception than talent. Without clarity, all we express is our inability to perceive accurately. We have to perceive our world as it is before we can represent it in an art form. Part One is the exploration of the nature of our perceptions and how our thoughts influence what we perceive.

To pre-register or for more information contact Lynn Frederick at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

**PART TWO: Signs and Symbols**

**With Lynn Frederick and Petra Youngberg**

**Friday, March 9, 7-9pm; and Saturday, March 10, 9am-5:30pm**

Prerequisite: Part One • Suggested donation: \$60 • Materials fee: TBA

Part Two deepens our understanding and experience of things as they are as opposed to how we think they are. Many of us have little clarity about this distinction. Perceiving this difference is fundamental to understanding signs and symbols. Signs have more to do with our thoughts and symbols more to do with our experience. It is said that one of the things that makes art, art, is that it communicates through signs and symbols: information and direct experience. If we want to communicate a felt experience as well as information, then we need to clarify what makes a sign a sign and a symbol a symbol.

To pre-register or for more information contact Lynn Frederick at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

**BUDDHIST STUDIES**

**Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness**

**With Russell Rodgers**

**Thursdays, April 12 - May 17, 6:30-8pm**

Open to anyone • Online participation possible •

Suggested donation: \$60 (materials not included)

*For a general description of the course format see the "Lojong" course description above.*

Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness is a very challenging course based on the book of the same name by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche. The book follows the development of understanding of egolessness/emptiness through different Buddhist schools, finally arriving at the Shentong school, which is the closely associated with Shambhala Buddhism. These schools roughly correspond to the developmental stages of a practitioner's understanding.

Copies of the book will be available to course participants at a discount in the "Shambhala Shop" at the Centre. You may buy a book at its discounted price if you write your name and the course name on the book's price slip. Early pre-registration by participants will help us ensure that we have enough books for all participants. To pre-register or for more information, contact Jim Northcote at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

**SHAMBHALA TRAINING LEVEL IV: Awakened Heart**

**With Frank Johns**

**Friday, April 13, 7-9:30pm; and Saturday & Sunday, April 14 & 15, 8:30am-6pm**

Prerequisite: Level III • Suggested donation: \$120

The focus of this program is on opening to increased awareness and inquisitiveness about the world, as it is. To pre-register or for more information contact Sally Albert or Gala Sly at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

**Other Upcoming Programs & Events**

**Winter Practice Intensive**

**Wednesday, February 7 - Friday, February 16**

Open to anyone, free of charge or by donation

The Kootenay Shambhala Centre is pleased to offer once again our annual winter practice intensive. This program coincides with the end of the Tibetan lunar

calendar year. According to Tibetan tradition, the year's end tends to be cluttered with accumulated personal, social and environmental chaos. So it's the perfect time to slow down, intensify awareness and reconnect with basic goodness in the company of other practitioners.

### The schedule

- Wednesday, February 7, 6:30-8:30pm
- Thursday, February 8, 5:15-7:15pm (Journey Without Goal class follows)
- Friday, February 9, 6:30-7:30am & 6:30-8:30pm
- Saturday, February 10: 9am-noon & 1:30-4:30pm
- Sunday, February 11, 9am-noon & 1:30-4:30pm
- Monday, February 12, 7-9:30pm (Open House, as usual)
- Tuesday, February 13, 6:30am-7:30am & 6:30-8:30pm
- Wednesday, February 14, 6:30-8:30pm
- Thursday, February 15, 5:15-7:15pm
- Friday, February 16, 6:30-7:30am & 6:30-8:30pm

Each practice day (except Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup>) will end with a half-hour devoted to chanting our usual closing chants plus repetitions of *Pacifying the Turmoil of the Mamos*, a chant recited to purify and transform accumulated negativity. The Open House talk on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> will present the purpose and meaning of this practice. All are welcome, and members are particularly encouraged to participate. For more information contact Margaret McKeown or Jim Northcote at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

### Neutral Day Cleanup

**Saturday, February 17, 1-5pm**

The winter practice intensive leads up to the last day of the year—this year, Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup>. This is a “neutral day,” a gap in the energies of ending and beginning, and the best time to clean house, get rid of old clothes, prepare special food for the coming celebrations, and generally keep busy. Naturally, we have something in mind for the day. Please join the Drala Committee in giving the Shambhala Centre a special sweep and polish. For more information contact Jim Northcote at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

### Shambhala Day

**Sunday, February 18, starting at 8am**

Ring in the Year of the Fire Pig with the day's festivities at the Centre: international role call, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's address to the mandala, gala community brunch and more. We invite all members and friends to celebrate together! For the latest information see our February events calendar at

[www.nelsonbuddha.com](http://www.nelsonbuddha.com) or contact Cameron Wenaus at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

### Milarepa Day

**Saturday, March 3, 1-4pm**

Open to anyone, free of charge or by donation

This event celebrates the enlightenment and life example of Milarepa, one of Tibet's most ardent practitioners/revered saints/premier poets. We will begin with a telling of Milarepa's life story followed by a group reading of selections from his thousands of dohas (songs of enlightenment). Then we'll sing some of his songs, set to music by students of Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso. People who have attended our summer weekthün may be familiar with some of these joyous and spiritually instructive songs, each of them a distillation of the essence of the wisdom of our lineage. The tunes are easy to learn and a delightful addition to the subterranean AM radio of one's mind. In keeping with Mila's tradition, we'll serve nettle tea. For more information contact Margaret McKeown at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

### Elsewhere in Shambhala

#### Fresh from Dathün

By Lynn Frederick

*LYNN FREDERICK is a dance instructor and choreographer living in Nelson.*

I just returned from a dathün (month-long group meditation retreat) on Vancouver Island. I heartily recommend this kind of retreat to others. It's very powerful.

You might think that you'd have to be an accomplished meditator to attend a month-long retreat, but it isn't so. Most of the participants at this retreat came with very little meditation experience, and I was struck by how well they did.

In a month of just being with your mind, you can count on going through a lot of ups and downs. But it's a great opportunity to relate to everything with mindfulness-awareness. By engaging in this way, you might start to discover what Buddhist author Pema Chödrön calls “the wisdom of no escape.”

For me, one of the greatest benefits of a long retreat is realizing, by just staying present, hour after hour, day after day, sitting, walking, eating, sleeping, and reading dharma teachings, the seamlessness of dharma and daily life. The boundary between formal practice and

everyday activities blurs, and dharma becomes more and more deeply embedded in everything you do. This can have a big effect on the way you relate to your life when you return home.

The dathün program presents a progression of meditation techniques and includes regularly scheduled private meditation interviews with trained instructors. Another aspect of the program is the Shambhala idea of enlightened society. Through a variety of forms, including oryoki (a practice of bringing mindfulness-awareness to serving and eating meals), shrine room protocols, chanting, ikebana (contemplative flower arranging) and work assignments, participants can get a sense of the way culture affects wakefulness and wakefulness affects culture.

Participating in a dathün is essentially about connecting to ourselves and our world. I think that's a good way to spend a month.

*Dathüins are held regularly at these four Shambhala residential practice centres:*

DECHEN CHÖLING  
Mas Marvent, France  
[www.dechencholing.org](http://www.dechencholing.org)

DORJE DENMA LING  
Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia  
[www.dorjedenmaling.com](http://www.dorjedenmaling.com)

KARMÊ CHÖLING  
Barnet, Vermont  
[www.karmecholing.org](http://www.karmecholing.org)

SHAMBHALA MOUNTAIN CENTER  
Red Feather Lakes, Colorado  
[www.shambhalamountain.org](http://www.shambhalamountain.org)

## Programs & Events

The Kootenay Shambhala Centre continually receives information about programs and events taking place in the wider Shambhala world (as well as other helpful resource materials). To check out this info, see the "Further Resources" binder in the community room at the Centre.

## Column

### Is Vetali Real?

By Russell Rodgers

*RUSSELL RODGERS is a senior member of the KSMC. He has been practicing and studying Shambhala Buddhism for about 30 years.*

"Is Vetali real?" seems like a simple enough question, deserving a "yes" or "no" answer. In fact, this question has many levels. In one of my previous articles about the protectors, I talked about the protector ritual as a doorway to deeper understanding and awareness of impermanence, karma, and auspicious coincidence. In a second article I talked about the protectors as an atmosphere, or "vibe." This kind of atmosphere can be invoked through a particular chant or ritual and it may seem to exist in the environment outside of us. However, in neither of these two interpretations is there any definite way of separating our personal psychology from the protector being invoked. In this article I'll look at the *Vetali* chant from the point of view of whether she actually exists or not on two levels: the relative and the absolute. First we'll look at these two levels of truth, and then we'll look at the chant itself.

If you ask Tibetans about the protectors, most will tell you that they are bodhisattvas who have promised to protect the dharma. This sounds pretty real. Trungpa Rinpoche, as a young man in Tibet, is reported to have had terma (hidden) teachings delivered to him personally by Ekajati (a protectress of the Ati teachings). Chagdud Rinpoche recounts that he was given a page with a practice liturgy written on it by a man only children could see. Later in his life, a protector manifests as a mysterious one-legged herdsman and tells him how he can escape the Chinese. This sort of story is not unusual in Tibet. Except for the fact that we might be ethnocentrically suspicious of how imagination works in a foreign culture, it sounds like a "real" occurrence.

On the other hand, Trungpa Rinpoche encouraged his students to take a non-theistic view. In other words, deities are not to be understood as independently existing entities, but as expressions of one's mind. I think that this is actually a very subtle statement. Those who take it superficially, without understanding what is meant, risk over-simplifying or dismissing the protectors as a sort of useful superstition.

I was present when a student asked Trungpa Rinpoche whether protectors were real or not. His answer was: "They're as real as you are." Let's look at this statement more closely, from absolute (ultimate truth) and relative (everyday understanding of reality) points of view. "Relative" refers to the fact that we live in a world where concepts are embedded in our sense of reality.

The nature of concepts is that they're always relative to other concepts—tall has meaning relative to short, human is relative to non-human, bad is relative to good, and so on—like a house of cards leaning on each other. When we experience the world, it's very hard to experience it without concepts of what it is. When we look at the wood floor, we project a concept of solidity that is not present in the mere visual impression. But if we question the embedded concept of solidity, other cards start to wobble: if it's not solid, what's the nature of wood? This is a beginning experience of emptiness.

As good Buddhists we're supposed to know that we don't exist, ultimately, in absolute truth. When we study the skandhas, we find that we have conceptually isolated some groupings of phenomena (sensory snapshots of body over time, feelings, impulses, conceptual pigeonholing, and a vague sense of consciousness) from all the other phenomena in the world, given this arbitrary grouping a name—"me"—and taken it to be a real entity simply because it has been named. This is the working of relative truth. The understanding that "me," "I," or "John" is only a name is absolute truth. If we truly understand that, we've discovered emptiness.

Another way of looking at the absolute point of view is expressed in the *Sadhana of Mahamudra*:

*All apparent phenomena are the play of the mind.  
All qualities are complete within the mind.*

In other words, mountains, oceans, people, tornados, and galaxies do not physically exist in our craniums, but their appearances do, along with their qualities: vastness, force, solidity, fluidity, wonder, the magic of existence, and so on. These are not expressions of the small mind that struggles on the cushion with self-centred discursiveness, but big mind, Buddha mind. So this big mind has an empty, space-like quality that can accommodate everything, and also an expressive quality that plays in the form of the appearances that we experience.

Turning now to the *Vetali* chant, the first line goes:

*Vetali, Vetali, life, life!*

Vetali is dark blue with red hair and wears a crown ornamented with skulls. She has bone ornaments and is seated on a saddle of human bone with a saddlecloth of human skin. She has chains around her ankles. She rides over a blood lake. She is the consort of Four-Armed Mahakala.

*The Devi with one face and four arms, riding on a donkey with a white blaze, approaches and accepts the offering.*

Vetali has one face because she has arisen from primordial emptiness and her single nature is emptiness. This means that she doesn't exist ultimately as an entity. Perhaps she is a grouping of auspicious coincidences that has simply been named. Perhaps she is a way of symbolizing an underlying reality. Perhaps a Tibetan lama "saw" her as the play of his mind, which was culturally Tibetan. Going back to our original question, her one face of emptiness seems to carry a simple message: she doesn't exist. She's just a figment of our (or Tibet's) imagination.

But wait! If Vetali is as real as I am, there might be other levels happening here. Firstly, absolute truth means truth unobscured by conceptual overlays. If we say that Vetali doesn't exist, that's a conceptual overlay. So absolute truth is empty of both existence and non-existence. Absolute truth is empty but full of unconfirmed possibilities. This leaves us with relative truth: the conventional, apparent truth of seeming common sense.

On the common sense level, as I go about my life, I act as though I'm real and as though there's a real world out there. When I see a door, I open it to walk through. I don't say it's all in my mind: just thoughts of past memories and concepts about doors. I don't try to walk through the closed door. I'd get a bloody nose and bruises. I think like this 99.9 per cent of the time, except when I remember my Buddhist logic. So is it appropriate for a person who is in dualistic reality to adopt superficial, convenient parts of absolute reality when he's not actually functioning on that level? Is it possible for Vetali to exist on a relative, perhaps invisible, level, just as we seem to exist ourselves? I suspect that Tibetan culture would say "yes." Should we ask for Vetali's help in the same dualistic way that we might ask for help from one another? This, in fact, is what we do in the chant. Let's see how the rest of it goes:

*BHYO  
Protector and friend of the yogin,  
Guardian of the Practice Lineage,  
You enjoy drinking the blood of ego.*

BHYO is a seed syllable that embodies her energy. The Practice Lineage puts special emphasis on meditation experience, as opposed to intellectual study alone.

*Your sword cleaves the heads from the destroyers of  
the teachings.  
Holding the mirror which reflects the three worlds,  
Brandishing the phurba, you fulfill all actions.*

The destroyers of the teachings might be us. The three worlds are different ways of being with the mind. Our confused world is one of them. The other two are dead-end meditational states: the form and formless god realms. The mirror reflects them as they are, without partiality. A phurba is a three-bladed knife, triangular in cross-section, which slices through passion, aggression and ignorance.

*You ride on a donkey with a white blaze.  
As day dawns, you guard the meditator.*

In mythological history, Vetali was a trickster who lived in the realm of the gods. The gods are beings that have discovered ways, some of them "spiritual" to blank out suffering and dwell in pleasure. Vetali sowed discord, plague, famine and war, interrupting their blissful ignorance. Trying to banish her, the gods shot arrows, one of which hit her donkey. The wound turned into an eye, symbolizing that whatever you try to do to her, it just turns into more awareness.

*As night falls, you cut the aortas of the perverters of  
the teachings.*

Nightfall is regarded as a time of shifting energy, good for contacting the energy of the protectors. The perverters of the teachings are those, including ourselves, who try to make a nest out of the teachings to support our own egos. As a female protectress, Vetali is especially concerned with protecting *prajna*, the insight that discovers emptiness. When we try to solidify the dharma, there will be consequences.

*You send out a million emanations.  
As our mother, sister, and maid,  
Please look after us of the lineage of Marpa the  
Translator.*

At first, like a small child with her/his mother, we don't understand what Vetali is up to and the karmic feedback that she represents seems capricious. Later, we appreciate her as a sister. At this stage we are tuned into the kind of action and consequences that she symbolizes and represents. Psychologically we aren't quite one with it but are on a par with it. Finally, she acts as a maid. There's no separation from the flux of the universe. Karma works for us. We can use it for enlightened action.

*Accept this amrita, blood, and torma as token of  
samaya.*

Amrita is an alcoholic drink with blessed substances in it. It intoxicates concepts and emotions and liberates them back into awareness. Blood represents life force. These are symbolized by the tea offering at the back of

the shrine room. Torma is a kind of barley cake offering which is omitted in our normal protector ritual.

*Fulfill the actions of the four karmas.*

The four karmas are enlightened actions that are used to transform the world: pacifying (providing perspective, cooling out), enriching (bringing out the natural richness of situations), magnetizing (the warmth of connection), and destroying (bringing unworkable situations to an end).

So should you regard Vetali as a "real" entity? That completely depends on the reference points imbedded in your question. This is called "relative-reference-point" thinking and is characteristic of the way Buddhists approach the truth. It enables us to shift into another's point of view, and empathize with that person. It is anti-dogmatic. It's also groundless. You might as well get used to it.

## Reviews

*If you've recently come across any mind-stopping, heart-opening or otherwise noteworthy art, music, books, blogs or suchlike, you can tell others about your discoveries here. Email your short (under 150 words), snappy reviews to the KSMC Newsletter at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).*

### ***The Tibetan Book of the Dead*** **From the National Film Board of Canada**

Reviewed by Russell Rodgers

Several years ago the National Film Board of Canada released two videos on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Members can borrow them from the Shambhala Centre library, and non-members can get them from the Nelson Municipal Library.

The two videos take the form of a docudrama. One uses skillful animation to trace a journey through the bardo, and the other follows a lama and a boy monk as they assist in a real life ritual to help an old man's passage in Ladakh. In neither of these videos are there any talking heads. These are great videos, a rare combination of being accurate in their presentation of the topic and also riveting and visually stunning. They are narrated by Leonard Cohen.

## Community

The Shambhala Centre is home to a community of people who share a connection to mindfulness-awareness practice and the aspiration to realize a more wakeful, saner society. There are many ways to get involved—attending programs and celebrations, working with a meditation instructor, joining in recreational activities and helping out at the Centre, to name a few. Everyone's participation is invited and appreciated.

### Volunteering at the Centre

We currently have openings for volunteers in our library, flower arranging, housekeeping, graphic design/publicity, website maintenance, database management and shrine room staffing groups. We're also open to exploring other ways people can contribute according to their interests. Let us know what interests you!

You can stay in the loop about what's on at the Centre by visiting our events calendar at [www.nelsonbuddha.com](http://www.nelsonbuddha.com) and/or by subscribing to one or both of our email lists. If you subscribe to the *Newsletter* list, we'll send you our monthly newsletter and little else. If you subscribe to our *Active Friends* list, you'll get the newsletter plus reminders about upcoming programs and events and a small assortment of community-related messages. To join either list—or for more information about any aspect of Shambhala—email us at [info@nelsonbuddha.com](mailto:info@nelsonbuddha.com).

## Last Word

### Fragment 1: Contentment

By Sohan Ko

Fragment is like a snapshot of a stream of time. A particle being looked at, a moment being felt . . .

An old woman was sitting down on a chair.  
It's just a simple chair, made of tree.

Her movement was slow and definite.  
The wrinkles on her face were smiling  
in accord with the sun.

She didn't say anything, nor  
think of anything.  
She was just holding her hands together,  
like a prayer,  
a prayer  
with no sound,  
no words,  
no thoughts.

She just sat,  
and the soft wind blew . . .

"Grandma, the tea is ready . . ."  
A voice from a distance said.