



Kootenay
Shambhala
Meditation
Centre

NEWSLETTER • April 2009

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“Friendship with others is intimately related to friendship with ourselves. Meditation practice offers us a way to become friendly with our own experience, cultivating gentleness, peace, and a sense of humor.”

—SAKYONG MIPHAM RINPOCHE

WELCOME

The Kootenay Shambhala Meditation Centre is part of an international community of meditation centres founded by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a Tibetan Buddhist meditation master, and now led by his son and lineage holder, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

Our Centre offers free meditation instruction, a clearly defined path of practice and study, a range of community activities and more. All our offerings are meant to help people of all kinds awaken their innate wisdom, compassion and sense of irony.

We invite you to join us in celebrating this journey of discovery.

For the most up-to-date and complete information about the Kootenay Shambhala Centre please visit our website at www.nelsonbuddha.com or contact us at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

REGULAR PUBLIC EVENTS

Everyone is welcome to attend these events. Participation is free of charge. (We gratefully accept donations.) For the latest schedule information please go to the Clickable Calendar on our website.

Meditation Practice

Sundays, 9 am - 12 pm

Mondays, 7 - 8 pm

Wednesdays, 12 - 1 pm

Thursdays, 5:15 - 6:15 pm

These sessions highlight the Shambhala community's core practice—mindfulness-awareness meditation—in both sitting and walking forms. Most sessions start and end with chants. Sunday sessions include mid-morning refreshments and, occasionally, short teachings and/or maitri bhavana healing practice. Participants may come and go as they wish.

Children in Shambhala

Sundays, 9 am - 12 pm

Intended mainly for children of parents participating in our Sunday morning meditation practice, this weekly program offers a playful introduction to Shambhala, with developmentally appropriate activities to nurture body, mind and heart.

Open House

Mondays, 7 - 9:30 pm

Our Open House program offers a friendly introduction to meditation practice, Shambhala Buddhist teachings and our community. • **7 pm:** Meditation instruction and practice (introductory instruction is available at 7 pm; follow-up instruction, at 7:30 pm) • **8 pm:** Talk and discussion • **9 pm:** Tea

Sadhana of Mahamudra

On (or near) new and full moon days (this month, April 8 & 24), 7 - 8 pm

The Sadhana of Mahamudra is a text written by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. It embodies a way of invoking the energy and wisdom of the Kagyü and Nyingma schools of Tibetan Buddhism and cutting through all forms of dogmatism. The practice involves chanting the text and relaxing into the atmosphere that doing so creates.

TIDBITS

Who is Gesar and why should we care?

By Cameron Wenaus

On April 17th to 19th, the Kootenay Shambhala Centre is offering a program led by Acharya Jenny Warwick and Cameron Wenaus and titled, "Gesar: Egoless Warriorship for Wrathful Times" (for more information see the program listing on page 4 or go to the Programs area on our website). You might understandably ask, "Who is Gesar and why should I care?" Here is a response to that question.

The Epic of Gesar is an ancient Central Asian tale—and one of the East's longest and wildest stories! In Tibet, there are singing bards who, although they can neither read nor write, can somehow recall the story of Gesar in precise detail; their accounts can last for days. In the West, we have only recently had the good fortune to come across this magical story and its inner meaning.

Gesar was born in Ling, an area of Tibet, in 1038, at a time when the dharma was in great peril and was on the brink of being wiped out by materialistic forces. He was an emanation of Padmasambhava, who out of great compassion for humankind, took a rebirth in Tibet in order to subjugate four demonic kings who were intent on destroying the dharma altogether. He is associated with many miracles and is revered for overcoming all obstacles he faced, no matter what the odds.

Gesar is known for having incredible *lungta* (life-force energy), *ziji* (blazing confidence), and an unwavering view in basic goodness, the basic ground of reality, free from concept. It was through his *lungta* and confidence in basic goodness that he was able to liberate Tibet from these four lords of materialism and enable the dharma to thrive in until 1959.

The story of Gesar could be viewed as instructions on how to guide our own life through the many obstacles we face each day. When we encounter our fear, perhaps the panic of doing our taxes, do we retreat into old patterns of procrastination? When we encounter our desire, the springtime sensual sight of a passerby, do we react in familiar mindless indulgence? We have been down these roads before. Instead, we could have the bravery to look our old habitual patterns right in the eye, and with curiosity deepen our understanding of what makes us tick, and what is really going on. It's our choice.

Living with a view of basic goodness, we can magically transform our obstacles into opportunities. Just as light effortlessly dispels the darkness in a room no matter how long it has been dark, when we connect to our basic goodness, automatically our fear, hesitation and doubt are all workable. Each obstacle is now a chance to grow and deepen our understanding of ourselves and our reality.

A central aspiration of Shambhala is to manifest enlightened society. Understanding the rich story of Gesar of Ling gives context and guidance to our situation as practitioners today. Some of the ancient forms and practices we relate with in Shambhala, such as arranging our environment, wearing pins, offering lhasangs (smoke offerings), and proclaiming KI KI SO SO (a victory cry), are directly related to raising our *lungta*, our life-force energy.

When our *lungta* is high, we can accomplish our goals, whether worldly or spiritual, with few obstacles. When our *lungta* is low, we encounter obstacles at each turn, no matter how hard we try. In Shambhala, Gesar is an incredible example of one who has mastered these practices, and with blazing *lungta* and magnetizing confidence, he fearlessly proclaims the ground of basic goodness for all beings.

New on our website

Check out the new posts to our blog. One includes a link to a Kootenay Co-op Radio interview featuring Kootenay Shambhala Centre Director Lynn Dragone and member Sohan Ko talking about the weekly Parents/Infants Meditation Group they lead at the Shambhala Centre on Thursdays, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM.

Summer meditation retreat details online

The Kootenay Shambhala Centre heartily invites new and experienced meditators alike to participate in this year's annual public one-week meditation retreat at Senge Ling, our retreat land near Nelson, from Saturday, June 27th to Sunday, July 5th. In this retreat, titled "Touching the Earth" and led by senior Kootenay Shambhala Centre member Russell Rodgers, we will explore our experience of the natural world in the context of *shunyata*, or empty-fullness. For a full program description go to the Programs area on our website.

GENEROSITY POLICY

Our Generosity Policy allows anyone to participate fully in the life of our Centre regardless of his or her ability to contribute financially. It states:

The Kootenay Shambhala Meditation Centre thrives due to the generosity of its program participants, friends and members. Recognizing that generosity, trust and openness are interconnected, we offer all of our programs on a suggested-donation basis and welcome participants to donate less or more than the suggested amounts as they choose.

To learn how you can make a donation please go to the Donations page on our website.

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

Mindfulness-awareness meditation is the basis of all Shambhala activity. Originating from Shakyamuni Buddha over 2,500 years ago, this practice is the art of resting the mind, opening the heart and appreciating what it is to be fully human.

Free instruction in this practice is perhaps our Centre's most valuable offering. We offer introductory instruction to newcomers and follow-up instruction to other practitioners on Monday evenings, as part of our Open House program, and at other times by appointment. We encourage anyone curious about the path of meditation to work regularly with a meditation instructor.

Shambhala meditation instructors are senior Shambhala Buddhist practitioners specially trained and authorized to help people deepen and expand their conceptual and experiential understanding of meditation.

For more information go to the Meditation area on our website or contact Tim Albert, our Meditation Instruction Coordinator, at 250-357-2497 or eldoradocreek@netidea.com.

CORE PATH PROGRAMS

As currently presented at the Kootenay Shambhala Centre, the core Shambhala Buddhist path consists of three interconnected elements, each grounded in mindfulness-awareness meditation.

- **Buddhist Study** is offered primarily through the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies, a curriculum of weeknight courses and weekend programs that presents a thorough introduction to Buddhism in general and Tibetan Buddhism in particular.
- **Shambhala Training** is a sequence of weekend workshops that emphasizes embodying bravery, gentleness and wakeful intelligence in every sphere of human activity.
- **Contemplative Arts** are a vehicle for integrating mindfulness and awareness into everyday life.

We welcome everyone to explore these offerings to the degree s/he wants. Altogether, this training is a big part of the preparation students require to attend Shambhala seminars and other advanced programs and engage in subtler practice and study. Upcoming core path programs are listed below.

For more information about the Shambhala Buddhist path visit our website or contact Jim Northcote at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

SHAMBHALA TRAINING

Outrageous & Inscrutable

With Geoff Bannoff

Friday, April 3, 7 - 9 pm; and Saturday & Sunday, April 4 & 5, 8:30 am - 6 pm

Prerequisite: Shambhala Training Perky

Suggested donation: \$120; \$40 for repeat participants

This program presents the two "heaven" dignities of the Sacred Path. These fruitional dignities refer to the extraordinary skill of a practiced warrior. No longer afraid of making mistakes, the unconventional and visionary perspective of the outrageous warrior combines with the skill of spontaneous inscrutability to create benefit for others on a large scale.

For more information go to the Programs area on our website or contact Sally Albert at 250-357-2497 or eldoradocreek@netidea.com.

Gesar: Egoless Warriorship for Wrathful Times

With Acharya Jenny Warwick & Cameron Wenaus
Friday, April 17, 7 - 9 pm; Saturday, April 18, 8:30 am - 5 pm; and Sunday, April 19, 8:30 am - 12 pm
All welcome
Suggested donation: \$100

The rampant materialism, aggression and suffering of this age call for a response that is extraordinarily wise, compassionate—and powerful. The ancient Tibetan warrior-king Gesar embodies such a response. This program will use meditation practice, storytelling, dharma talks and warrior exercises to invoke the qualities of Gesar in our own place and time.

For more information go to the Programs area on our website or contact Peter Maloff at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

OTHER PROGRAMS/EVENTS

April Open House Talks

Mondays, 8 - 9 pm

All welcome • Free of charge (donations gratefully accepted)

Our Open House program offers a friendly introduction to meditation practice, Shambhala Buddhist teachings and our community. Typically, senior or intermediate Shambhala Centre members present the teachings in talk-and-discussion format. Upcoming talks are listed below. For the latest schedule information go to the Clickable Calendar on our website.

Monday, April 6

"The Warrior of Shambhala," with Cameron Wenaus

Monday, April 13

Statutory holiday—no talk scheduled

Monday, April 20

"Meditation—As It Is," with Tim Albert

Monday, April 27

"Not Causing Harm," presenter TBA

Refuge Vow Ceremony **With Acharya Jenny Warwick** **Sunday, April 19, 4 pm**

The Kootenay Shambhala Centre is pleased to provide suitably prepared individuals with an opportunity to take the refuge vow, with Acharya Jenny Warwick, on Sunday, April 19th, at 4:00 PM.

Who may take the refuge vow (the following criteria are guidelines, not strict rules): 1) one should have been sitting regularly for at least six months; 2) one should have an ongoing relationship with a meditation instructor; and 3) one should have taken some classes on the Buddhist path and should understand the meaning of taking refuge.

All family, friends and others are welcome to attend the ceremony and reception afterwards.

If you intend to take the refuge vow, please notify Lynn Dragone at nalandalynn@yahoo.com so that you and she can prepare appropriately.

Bodhisattva Vow Ceremony **With Acharya Jenny Warwick** **Sunday, April 19, 5 pm**

The Kootenay Shambhala Centre is pleased to provide suitably prepared individuals with an opportunity to take the bodhisattva vow, with Acharya Jenny Warwick, on Sunday, April 19th, at 5:00 PM.

Who may take the bodhisattva vow: one must have taken the refuge vow before this weekend. For further criteria and other information contact Lynn Dragone at nalandalynn@yahoo.com.

Attendance at the ceremony is limited to those who have taken the bodhisattva vow. All family, friends and others are welcome to attend the reception afterwards.

This newsletter describes only some of what's happening at our Centre. For the most up-to-date and complete listing of our programs and events please visit the Programs area on our website.

ELSEWHERE IN SHAMBHALA

Sangha Retreat
With Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche & Acharyas
Pema Chödrön & Adam Lobel
Shambhala Mountain Center, Red Feather Lakes,
Colorado
July 17 - 24, 2009

This retreat provides an opportunity for the Shambhala community to gather, practice and connect with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, and Acharyas Pema Chödrön and Adam Lobel. The retreat will focus on the sitting practice of meditation and include talks, guided meditation, contemplation practice, and shamatha yoga. Open to members of Shambhala, this week will count as one week of a dathün. For more information visit Shambhala Mountain Center's website at www.shambhalamountain.org.

For information about programs and events taking place in the wider Shambhala world—or about any other aspect of the community—please visit Shambhala's main website at www.shambhala.org.

COMMUNITY

The Kootenay Shambhala Centre is home to a wonderfully diverse and vibrant community of about 35 members. We share a connection to mindfulness-awareness meditation and the aspiration to create a wakeful, joyful society. There are many ways to get involved—attending meditation practice sessions and celebrations, joining in recreational activities, taking courses, working with a meditation instructor and volunteering, to name a few. We invite and appreciate everyone's participation!

To learn how you can join in, visit the Programs area on our website, subscribe to the Kootenay Shambhala Blog or one or both of our email lists, or contact Lynn Dragone, Cameron Wenaus or Jim Northcote (or any other Centre member) at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

MEMBERSHIP

Everyone is invited to become a member of the Kootenay Shambhala Centre. Membership is a way to express appreciation for what Shambhala provides and help make it available to others.

Membership involves supporting the community in three main ways:

- Practicing mindfulness-awareness meditation
- Volunteering
- Providing financial support

Membership also brings several privileges. For more information please go to the Membership page on our website or contact Cameron Wenaus, our Membership Coordinator, at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

The Kootenay Shambhala Meditation Centre Newsletter is published monthly. You can contact the editor, Jim Northcote, at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

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