



“It is necessary for us to sharpen our cynicism, to sharpen our whole critical attitude towards what we are doing. That cynicism provides a basis for our study and work.”

—CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA
Journey Without Goal

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 or email us at 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 (resumes in February)

With storytelling, games and refreshments, this program offers a fun introduction to the Shambhala world. It is meant for children whose parents are developing their own meditation practice.

Tidbits

Early Morning Sessions Continue

Due to the interest of a few dauntless dawn practitioners, the Shambhala Centre will continue to offer weekly meditation practice sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 6:30 to 7:30 AM (see above for more information).

Perk Up Your Practice

Join us on the first Sunday of each month, from 9 AM to noon, for a community "Meditation Tune-Up." We're offering guided sitting and walking meditation, a couple of short talks on chants or shrine room-related topics, and a chance to meet people over a light mid-morning breakfast.

Note from Sopa Pamo

SOPA PAMO (a.k.a. Emily Keast) is a KSMC friend now living at Gampo Abbey, the Shambhala Buddhist monastery in Nova Scotia.

Dear Sangha,

I'd like to thank the many members of the KSMC who contributed to my fundraising. Through your generous donations I was able to participate in my first semester of Shedra [monastic college], under the Vidyadhara Institute. Being able to access Dharma independently has been a tremendous boost to studying! It's been a year, now, that I've been a resident of Gampo Abbey. I feel a definite commitment to monasticism and Shedra. Again, many heartfelt thanks for making this accessibility a reality.

Warmly,
Sopa

Upcoming Core Curriculum Programs

The Shambhala community's core education curriculum comprises three aspects:

- **Shambhala Training**, a secular meditative path of fully expressing 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 Journey Without Goal

**A Six-Class Introduction to Tantra
With Russell Rodgers and Sally Albert**

Thursdays, January 4 - February 8, 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 a few 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 password-secured 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.

The "Journey Without Goal" course introduces the principles of tantra, or fruition practice. The readings are drawn mainly from the book *Journey Without Goal*, compiled from a series of lectures Chögyam Trungpa gave at the Naropa Institute in 1974. These teachings provide a direct and experiential picture of the teacher-student relationship, devotion and empowerment, mandala principle, visualization and formless meditation, and the fruition qualities of the five wisdom energies.

Pre-registration is requested. To pre-register and order a copy of the book (available for about \$27; allowing three weeks for delivery is recommended), or for more information, contact Jim Northcote at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

SHAMBHALA TRAINING LEVEL III: Warrior in the World

With Eric Watson and Sally Albert

Friday, January 19, 7-9:30pm; and Saturday & Sunday, January 20 & 21, 8:30am-6pm

Prerequisite: Level II • Suggested donation: \$120

In this program we focus on developing the bravery to step outside our cocoons. To pre-register or for more information contact Sally Albert or Gala Sly at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

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)

For a general description of the course format see "Journey Without Goal" above.

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.

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.

Pre-registration is required. To pre-register and order the books (allowing four weeks for delivery is recommended), or for more information, contact Jim Northcote at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

SHAMBHALA ART • Awakening The Sacred *Cultivating cool minds, clear perception, pure expression in everyday life*

The creative process often seems mysterious and magical. How do we give a physical reality to some ephemeral inspiration and in turn communicate its essential nature beyond the limits of its container? The Shambhala Art program's purpose is to explore the creative process and the product we call art from the viewpoint of meditative discipline. This program does not teach a particular skill or technique such as painting, sculpture or dance. It is about the source of inspiration and how what is created speaks to us. Once a view and a path are awakened they can be put into practice within any artistic discipline.

Shambhala Art is based on the Dharma Art teachings of the late Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. The international Shambhala Art program is a division of Shambhala International and taught by trained and authorized Shambhala Art teachers.

Art has been used for millennia to evoke, or reveal truth, genuineness, and a sense of the sacred. That is what "awakening the sacred" means. Although the Shambhala Art teachings are inspired by Shambhala Buddhism, they are not in any way religious or about adopting a religion. They are about discovery and play, and the universal nature of the creative process and what the result communicates.

PART ONE: Coming To Your Senses

With Lynn Frederick and Petra Youngberg

Friday, February 23 and Saturday, February 24 (times to be announced)

Open to anyone • Suggested donation: to be announced

Art has more to do with perception than talent. The creative process requires that we first perceive our world as it is before we can represent it in art form or use it as a launching pad for expression. Part One is the exploration of the nature of our perceptions and what influences them.

To pre-register or for more information contact Lynn Frederick at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

PART TWO: Signs and Symbols

With Lynn Frederick and Petra Youngberg

Friday, March 9 and Saturday, March 10 (times to be announced)

Prerequisite: Part One • Suggested donation: to be announced

What do we perceive? Is it our thoughts about things or the things themselves? In Part Two we discover that our

perception of art, if not also everyday life, is inextricably linked to our realization of signs and symbols. Exploration of thought sense and felt sense of things, including us.

To pre-register or for more information contact Lynn Frederick at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

SHAMBHALA TRAINING LEVEL IV: Awakened Heart

(Director to be announced)

Friday, April 13, 7-9:30pm; and Saturday & Sunday, April 14 & 15, 8:30am-6pm (to be confirmed)

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.

Other Upcoming Programs & Events

OPEN HOUSE SERIES: Fearless Buddha, Peaceful Warrior

A Four-Part Introduction to Shambhala Buddhism With Margaret McKeown and Jim Northcote Mondays, January 8 - 29, 8pm

Open to anyone, free of charge or by donation

MONDAY, JANUARY 8: PART 1: Overview of Shambhala and Buddhism • Margaret McKeown • *Joining a spiritual path with everyday life*

MONDAY, JANUARY 15: PART 2: The Three Vehicles • Jim Northcote • *Three progressively more subtle approaches*

MONDAY, JANUARY 22: PART 3: Basic Goodness as Ruling Principle • Margaret McKeown • *The basis of creating a sane society*

MONDAY, JANUARY 29: PART 4: Shambhala Vision and Community • Jim Northcote • *Manifesting an awake society*

For more information contact Rose Sauvé at info@nelsonbuddha.com.

Essential Heart of Kasungship • Part 1

A Dorje Kasung Basic Training Program

With Cameron Wenaus

Wednesdays, January 17 - February 21, 6:30-8pm (to be confirmed)

Cost: \$65

“Essential Heart of Kasungship” is a new training program for all current and aspiring *kasung* (protectors of the teachings). The intention is to bring all regional *kasung* together in the context of *kasung* dharma, to deepen and sharpen our individual understanding of *kasungship* and our shared sense of camaraderie on the path. Veteran *kasung* are strongly encouraged to attend, both to share their wealth of experience and to contribute to the evolution of the course itself. Part 1 is a close study of the Dorje Kasung handbook. (A syllabus for self-study of Part 1 is available on request.)

For more information contact Rusung Cameron Wenaus at (250) 352-1101 or cameron@bluemandala.com.

Elsewhere in Shambhala

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 keep abreast of this info, see the “Further Resources” binder in the community room at the Centre.

Residential Practice Centres

Shambhala International has six major residential practice centres. These centres provide opportunities for intensive practice and study in contemplative settings. The programs offered vary from centre to centre but in most cases include month-long meditation programs, public weekend programs, solitary retreats, and intensive study programs for all levels of students. It is also possible to live at a contemplative centre for an extended period of time, participating in the regular practice and study schedule of the staff. For more information visit the centres’ websites.

DECHEN CHÖLING
Mas Marvent, France
www.dechencholing.org

DORJE DENMA LING
Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia
www.dorjedenmaling.com

GAMPO ABBEY
Pleasant Bay, Nova Scotia
www.gampoabbey.org

KARMÊ CHÖLING
Barnet, Vermont
www.karmecholing.org

SHAMBHALA MOUNTAIN CENTER
Red Feather Lakes, Colorado
www.shambhalamountain.org

SKY LAKE LODGE
Rosendale, New York
www.sky-lake.org

Column

Meet the Four-Armed Mahakala By Russell Rodgers

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

What's a *mahakala*? Do mahakalas really exist? These are questions provoked by doing the protector chants. In this article, the second of a series, I'll explore the questions a little more and talk about the Four-Armed Mahakala in particular.

In last month's article, "The Protector Ritual," I discussed the protector chants as a way of focusing our awareness so that we become super-aware of the active aspect of reality, of impermanence, of constant change, and of the creation and unfolding of karma. From that point of view, it could be said that protectors represent a deeper level of reality, deeper than the level that we habitually inhabit.

In this column, we'll look at the protectors in terms of psychological atmosphere. The hippy generation had a great word for this: "vibe." One of the characteristics of atmosphere or vibe is that you can't tell whether it's in your own mind, or outside in the environment; you could take either position. However, all of us intuit, perhaps unconsciously, the "vibe" of situations and respond accordingly. For instance, we might avoid an ominous-feeling dark alley at night, or be drawn to a part of town that feels exciting to us. Perhaps the shrine room at the Centre has a palpable atmosphere for you. Different towns have different vibes. Some people notice a different feeling tone when they cross the border into Canada.

A Tibetan might say that what we're intuiting in these situations are local deities, yidams, protectors, guru's

mind, ghosts, demons, harmful or helpful spirits. Perhaps what we feel in the shrine room is the Rigden, or maybe a space where awareness of basic goodness is being protected by mahakalas. The sense of deity or spirit in these situations can actually be felt. These feelings aren't as abstract as the belief systems that one commonly encounters in ordinary western religion. The presence of a certain atmosphere or vibe has a lot to do with the kinds of things that tend to happen in that particular space, and we feel that. It's very practical, in some sense.

In tantric Buddhism, protectors are more than just a metaphor for heightened intuition about situations. The liturgies and drum accompaniment evoke the feeling of presence of the protectors. It could be that we feel their presence because we've invited them and they've come, or it could be that we're just evoking something that was always there as a possibility in our minds. In either case, because the feeling tone affects our expectation of what might happen, different things do tend to happen. Sometimes we act differently, and sometimes things happen coincidentally.

Mahakalas, or wisdom protectors, are a particular class of deities. If one thinks of them in terms of atmosphere, they would be the sense that reality is pregnant with potential change, activity and impermanence. They are *wisdom* protectors because they represent enlightened action, and they've made a promise (*samaya*) to protect the inherent sacredness of existence, and the dharma teachings that lead one to the truth of that. By "sacredness" we mean the condition of things as they are, in primordial basic goodness, before we superimpose our projections and conceptual interpretations.

In our culture, shamanism and paganism have been seen in opposition to a single jealous god who doesn't like having other deities around. In Tibet, the historical situation was different. When Buddhism came in, it incorporated the indigenous shamanistic way of working with energies into a deeper understanding. Since there's no equivalent of protector practice in our culture, and since protector practice dovetails nicely with the Buddhist teachings on mind and reality, it makes sense to borrow the Tibetan imagery. Understanding the meanings of the words and images is very important to understanding the qualities of a particular protector and enables us to work with the associated energies in a creative way.

One can invoke the atmosphere of a protector through appropriate rituals. In order to invoke the energy of a certain deity, we have to follow steps that our minds can grasp and that will evoke the appropriate atmosphere. Traditionally, protector chants contain the following

elements: they start with a seed syllable; then there may be a description of the environment that the protector comes from, a request for the deity to approach, a description of the deity and what s/he is holding, an offering, a request for the deity to fulfill their vow or perform actions, and finally, the mantra of the deity. Probably something like this kind of structure is inherent in shamanistic rituals all over the world. We'll see how this format applies in the chant *Four-Armed Mahakala*.

The chant begins:

HUM
From Glorious Mount Malaya,
From the red field in the blood lake Koka,
From the charnel ground of Matram Rudra,
I invite the great protector.

HUM is the seed syllable of ultimate mind, empty but radiant. The Mahakala arises from that. What is he like? He comes from a red field in the lake of blood that arose from the slaying of Matram Rudra. Mythologically, Matram Rudra is the ultimate ego, the kind of person who gathers all the confused and neurotic energy and power of the samsaric world into himself. A modern example might be someone like Hitler.

Like a rain cloud adorned with lightening,
Please enter this place of practice.
SAMAYA JAH

His presence and atmosphere is awesome, and we invite him in and confirm his presence with the mantra SAMAYA JAH.

The vajra Mahakala
Is savage and terrifying.

In the iconography, he is surrounded by flames representing wrathful compassion that burns away delusion, the source of suffering. He is savage in the sense that his action is without hesitation, abrupt. He wears garlands of human heads that represent emotional negativities that are not rejected but transformed and worn as ornaments.

The next section of the chant tells us something about the qualities and dynamic energy of this particular protector.

Holding a hooked knife with your first right hand,

A hooked knife represents the energy of enriching. "Enriching" is the energy of appreciation of the richness inherent in all phenomena. It's also connected with equanimity, since everything has the same basic richness

or basic goodness in its essence. It could be that the protector acts by bringing more elements that express richness and basic goodness into a situation.

Holding a skull cup of blood with your first left hand,

The skull cup holds a kind of nectar that pacifies situations. Intellect can be pacifying because it puts things into a sense of perspective. Pacifying has a quality of cooling out.

Brandishing a sword with your second right hand,

When the sword is waved about, it magnetizes all the energies of the situation. The energy of magnetizing is warm and attractive.

Thrusting a khatvanga with your second left hand,

A khatvanga is a kind of trident, which destroys confusion and annihilates obstacles. So here we have a description of the four karmas, or the four different modes of enlightened action: pacifying, enriching, magnetizing and destroying. Although we think of mahakalas primarily as fierce destroyers of ego, it's clear from this description that his energy has other qualities besides destruction.

You, the warrior with a tiger skin round your waist,
Are surrounded by your retinue, with the Raven-Headed One among them.

The Raven-Headed One represents the masculine aspect of destruction. He is a servant of the Mahakala, and he preys upon and consumes whatever endangers the teachings. He holds a hooked knife and a skull cup.

In accordance with your vajra oath
Proclaimed before the great Trungpa, Kunga Namgyal,
At the hermitage of Dorje Khyung Dzong,
Protect the heart teachings of the Kagyü.

Kunga Namgyal was the fourth Trungpa (our founder was the eleventh), who spent six years in retreat. Kunga Namgyal established the Four-Armed Mahakala as protector of his monastery and also of the Chakrasamvara teachings and practice. Seasoned practitioners in our Centre do Chakrasamvara practices. Chakrasamvara practices uncover the primordial sacredness of the world, so they need protection from degrading and corrupting influences. As well, there needs to be situations created that are conducive to practice. The protectors are responsible for the auspicious coincidences that make supportive circumstances possible.

*The evil beings with two tongues who pervert the
dharma
And delight in disrupting the teachings—
Eat them as your food, O black protector.*

Sometimes we pervert the teachings and use them to become bloated or arrogant. It's good to get feedback.

*By the fierceness of your compassionate wrath,
Instantly accomplish the karmas
Of pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying.
Lead the faithful holders of the Practice Lineage
To the state of Vajradhara.*

The practice lineage refers to the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. These lineages form much of the basis of Shambhala Buddhism and are famous for their emphasis on meditation practice as opposed to purely intellectual learning.

OM MAHAKALAYA DEVA-RAKSHA SAMAYA
HO BALIM TE KHAHI

This mantra invokes the energy of Mahakala. It translates roughly as "Homage to Mahakala, O protector of devas (gods), keep the samaya vow. Eat this food." Food here is represented by the tea offering (on the black shrine in the back corner of our main shrine room), which is carried out at the end of the protector chants. The tea could represent just tea, or it could represent blood, or life force.

The atmosphere created by the drum and the imagery can sometimes be quite electric. At this point we've not only tuned our awareness to the action aspect of reality, but we've also invoked an atmosphere or vibe. Within this pregnant atmosphere, it might not be too surprising to experience auspicious coincidences associated with the action of the protectors.

When doing a chant, it's good to pay special attention to the atmosphere it invokes. You can then ask yourself whether it is just purely psychological or whether it's a presence that you've actually invited in from the outside through the ritual. Perhaps you have met the Mahakala and didn't realize it, or maybe it was your projection. If you have a definitive answer, I'd like to know.

In next month's column, I will look at the protectress Vetali from the point of view of the Cittamatra understanding of reality and examine the question of whether protectors are real, though invisible, entities in a theistic sense.

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.

Portrait of Leonard Cohen

I'm Your Man

A film by Lian Lunson

Reviewed by Candace Batycki

CANDACE BATYCKI has been connected to Shambhala for 15 years. She lives in Nelson and works as an environmental activist.

Leonard Cohen, the "bad monk" from Montreal, poet, songwriter, singer, icon, is paid musical and filmic tribute in *I'm Your Man*, available in Nelson at Movie Gallery and Reo's Videos. Footage from a 2004 tribute concert in Sydney, Australia is interspersed with interviews with Cohen discussing his career, art, music, politics and love. Cohen's 30 years of practice (including many years at Mount Baldy Zen Center in Los Angeles as an ordained Zen monk) shine in his face and words, bringing wisdom and grace. While the concert is a bit uneven, there are many moments of heartbreaking beauty; perhaps most touching is the version of "Tower of Song," which Cohen himself sings backed by U2, that closes the film. I loved it.

Buddhist Movies

Reviewed by Russell Rodgers

People occasionally ask if there are any good movies about Buddhism or Tibet. Here are a few, available at Reo's Videos:

Little Buddha

This is the story of the historical Buddha as told to a child from Seattle who has been discovered as the reincarnation of a dead Tibetan lama. It's Hollywood, but worthwhile seeing once. Keanu Reeves stars as Buddha.

Himalaya

This is a beautiful Nepalese movie about the transition of power between the old and young amongst Tibetan yak herders. The family goes on a long journey accompanied by a monk. It's steeped in Buddhist culture and it's a privilege to have a glimpse into this world.

The Salt Men of Tibet

Four men from a nomadic Tibetan tribe undertake their annual, ritualistic pilgrimage to a sacred salt lake. The

journey incorporates a number of rituals necessary for their culture to survive. This is a very slow paced but beautiful film, using indigenous actors. Again, one feels privileged to be invited into their world.

The Cup

Directed by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, this film tells the story of a group of Tibetan monks who want to watch World Cup soccer on TV at their monastery and run into resistance from their more conservative abbot. Light and enjoyable.

Travelers and Magicians

This film, also directed by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, tells the story a very modern-minded Bhutanese young man who runs into a beautiful girl who is a very devoted traditional Buddhist. Haunting.

Words of my Perfect Teacher

This is a great film *about* Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche by one of his students. It is about earnest students trying to follow a teacher who is an irreverent, illusive trickster.

Kundun

The story of the Dalai Lama's discovery, youth and training. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Well worth seeing.

Seven Years in Tibet

Brad Pitt stars as an Austrian mountain climber on the run in Tibet during the Second World War, who meets and becomes friends with the young Dalai Lama. Hollywood, but OK.

Samsara

A story about a monk from Ladakh who falls in love with a village girl. A nice love story, nice scenery, but the depictions of three-year retreat and the process of becoming a khenpo seem to be made-up plot devices to support the love story. A nice Buddhist movie, but marred by inaccuracies.

Close to Eden

This is the only movie in this group where Buddhism doesn't have a starring role but is just part of the background. However, it's a sweet little movie, from Russia, about the cultural encounter between a nomadic Mongolian family discovering modernism, and an alcoholic Russian trucker who gets stuck nearby.

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.

You can stay in the loop about what's on at the Centre by visiting our events calendar at 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.

Last Word

Just This

By Robin Higgins

Sometimes I get it that this is all.
A mind with its shimmer of cloud and sky.
Senses opening to what's true.
A body dancing deeply then dying.

Nothing more than
Chopping this purple onion
While Eva Cassidy croons.
This sip of wine.
This flash of kindness.
This instant of cats and kids and chaos.

Winter air on skin.
Voices touching.
Traffic in the night.

Just This.