

Shambhala Mirror

Volume X, Number 3, Fall/Winter 2006/07

Creating Enlightened Community



Sakyong to run Chicago Marathon Sunday, Oct 22 **Midwest welcomes Royal couple at Gala Reception**

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche will run the Chicago Marathon on October 22, 2006 as a benefit for the shedra (school) at Surmang, Tibet. Additional detail is available on our website (www.chicagoshambhala.org/SMR2006.html); events that weekend include:

Thursday, Oct 19: Sakyong and party arrive in Chicago. Khandro Tseyang is planning to accompany the Sakyong.

Friday, Oct. 20: Reception and Dance Party to welcome the Sakyong and Khandro Tseyang to the Midwest and to benefit the Kalapa Court. This will be held at the Chicago Athletic Club downtown from 8-12 pm; there will be a wide range of ticket prices and no sangha member will be turned away—it should be a delightful evening.

Saturday, Oct 21: Networking events and a party at the Chicago Shambhala Center, and an afternoon in Chicago with sangha members from out of town.

Sunday, Oct 22: Race Day: Cheer on & support the Sakyong's team and other sangha runners.

Lots of opportunities for participation in these events! We need your help; please contact Anne Fraser (tsondru108@aol.com or 847-853-7218) to volunteer.

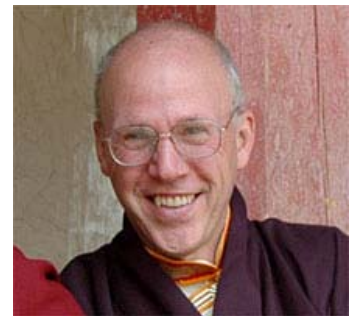
President Reoch to visit Chicago

Sunday, October 8th

Shambhala International President Richard Reoch will conduct a 64-day tour of all 50 North American Shambhala Centers this fall. He wants us to gather our entire community of members, friends and family so that we may practice, enjoy a potluck dinner together, and share information and opinions. Specifically, President Reoch would like to bring everyone up-to-date on what's happening in our worldwide mandala, and to listen to whatever people feel he needs to know as their president.

If you are interested in helping in any way, please let us know! (Contact Janet Hasz: 773-588-0827 or admin@chicagoshambhala.org) The event schedule is:

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|---------|---|
| 5 pm | Meeting with local Shambhala leadership (Officers, coordinators, Council members) |
| 6 pm | Mess hosted by the Dorje Kasung, open to the community |
| 6:30 pm | Potluck dinner with the President |
| 7:30 pm | Short address by the President, followed by practice, questions, answers and discussion |
| 9:30 pm | Evening will conclude with opportunity for people to speak personally to the President |



Director's Letter ...

Governance as Path

Many of you know that I recently returned from a two-week solitary retreat in a cabin at Karmê Chöling. This amazingly rich experience has sensitized me both to the demands of my role as Director, and to opportunities to strengthen my confidence, cultivate bodhichitta, and be free from fixed mind. Our Shambhala path has this potential: to teach us what qualities will actually help us to navigate our world, and how we can nurture those qualities. And what a wealth of teachings are available here this fall! Our offerings of Shambhala Training levels, and the Buddhist teachings of Pema Chodron, Ari Goldfield (and John Roadhouse) on Madhyamaka, and Acharya Eric Spiegel are only the beginning. My own inspiring role model, who teaches "governance as path," President Richard Reoch, will join us for the afternoon and evening of Sunday October 8th. President Reoch wants this to be a Shambhala family occasion, sharing a meal, practicing together, and sharing our concerns. Less than two weeks later, our Sakyong and his new wife will arrive in Chicago for his Marathon race. Even though this is not a formal teaching visit, Chicago will become the Kalapa Court from October 19-23. We will be at the center of our Shambhala Mandala, and it will be a learning experience, believe me! Or don't believe me, but come and see for yourself. The Sakyong inspires us with his discipline, whether running marathons or maintaining a busy teaching schedule. We too can become stronger, more flexible, more balanced in our lives.

Speaking of sharing our concerns, on a local level we have organized a group called "The Listening Committee," to help us reach a community consensus about our future. I hope everyone will participate in this process of individual and small group interviews to reveal who we are, what is most important to us, what can be improved, and how you want to be involved. I so appreciate the feedback given to me by older students, by people who have just walked in the door, and by all of our perceptive, intelligent, compassionate members and friends. Think of it as generosity for you to share your view of our situation, in all of its dimensions. If you see something that ought to change, something that could be better, please bring it to our attention and please be willing to be part of the improvement. I believe we are on the edge of becoming what we want to be as an enlightened community—in Chicago and in the global community.

Alice Dan, Center Director

September, 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Ice Cream Social, Yard Sale, Medicine Buddha, Padmasambhava	4 Labor Day	5	6 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) I	7	8	9 Shambhala Training Level I
10 Seminary Prep, Sadhana Mahamudra ST Level I, Werma	11	12	13 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) I	14 Pema - Aggression	15 Shambhla Training: Meek	16 Meek
17 Vajrayogini Feast Meek	18	19	20 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) I	21 Pema - Aggression	22	23 Cafe Shambhala
24 Harvest of Peace, Sadhana Mahamudra	25	26	27 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) I	28 Pema - Aggression	29	30

October, 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Medicine Buddha, Werma, Sem Prep	2 Padmasambhava Feast	3	4 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) II	5 Pema - Aggression	6	7
8 Sem. Prep, Reoch Visit,, Sadhana Mahamudra	9	10	11 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) II	12 Pema - Aggression	13 Shambhala Training: Level II	14 ST Level II
15 ST Level II, Seminary Prep	16 Vajrayogini Feast	17	18 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) II	19 SMR Visit	20 Benefit Reception w/ SMR & Khandro Tseyang at Chicago Athletic Club	21 SMR Visit
22 Chicago Marathon, Sadhana Mahamudra	23	24	25 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) II	26 Pema - Aggression	27	28 Learn to Meditate
29 Social Action, Seminary Prep	30	31 Padmasambhava Feast				

November, 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) III	2 Pema - Aggression	3 Shambhala Training: Perky Level I (U of C)	4 ST Level I (U of C) ST: Perky
5 Medicine Buddha, Ashe, ST Perky, Sadhana Mahamudra	6	7	8 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) III	9	10 Ari Goldfield: Talk on Emptiness	11 Ari Goldfield: Moon of Wisdom
12 Ari Goldfield	13	14	15 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) III Vajrayogini Feast	16	17 Shambhala Training: Level III	18 ST Level III
19 ST Level III, Werma, Sem Prep, Sadhana Mahamudra	20	21	22	23 Center Closed for Thanksgiving	24	25
26 Social Action	27	28	29 Shambhala Training (Weekday AM) III	30 Padmasambhava		

Coming Attractions:

Ngöndro/Werma practice weekend (Acharya Eric Spiegel)	December 8 th – 10 th
Ikebana (Brooke Pohl)	Saturday, January 20 th
Shambhala Training – Level IV	January 26 th – 28 th
Talk: Mahayana view of social engagement (Bill Karelis)	Friday, January 26 th
Buddhist Work in Prison (Bill Karelis)	January 27 th & 28 th
The Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Bill Karelis)	February 2 nd – 4 th
Shambhala Training – Outrageous & Inscrutable	February 9 th – 11 th
Shambhala Day	February 18 th
Midwest Buddhist Council – Buddhist Women's Conf.	February 24 th
The Five Wisdom Energies (Acharya Richard John)	March 2 nd – 4 th
Shambhala Training – Level I	March 10 th & 11 th

Building Update

On July 9th, we held a community meeting to report our latest efforts addressing space issues and the needs of our growing sangha.

Our History and Space

We purchased the building in 1995 for approximately \$365,000. The owner is Vajradhatu, now Shambhala International; money for the downpayment was raised through a building fund and a bequest. The initial 7 year balloon mortgage has been refinanced twice for better rates. The current balance on our 5 year loan is about \$209,000; we currently pay \$2095/month (\$1118 in principal, \$977 in interest). Another \$100,000 (est.) was invested in rehab of this former mansion/daycare center/medical clinic, adapting it to our purposes. Our property is zoned as residential RT-4, which allows detached homes, two-flats, townhouses, low-density apartments, and compatible nonresidential use such as medical offices or churches (but not retail). We are also in the Lakefront Protection District.



Although the Center is underutilized much of the week, when we are open we often (especially with visiting teachers) have inadequate space. Ideally we could accommodate 100+ meditators, which would require a meditation hall of about 1500 sq. feet. In addition we desire a smaller meditation 50 person hall for Shambhala Training, a permanent Vajrayana practice space for 30, and physical accessibility to the building. During community meetings from 2002-2004, other needs were also identified.

Initial Plan - Renovate

During her 2004 visit, Shambhala Fung Shui expert Eva Wong gave this property her blessing, noting the dzong (tibetan castle) shape of the building and the potential to increase our usable space. A three phase plan was developed. Phase I - essentially completed - has uplifted our space in numerous ways. Preliminary architectural plans and a detailed cost estimate for the major renovations for Phases II and III were obtained. The roughly \$1.5 million for this plan correspond to approximately \$10,000 per member.

Alternatives

Questions began to arise about the adequacy of these plans, and it became clear that we needed to formally explore all of our alternatives. Zoning regulations require one parking space for each 8 people that the building accommodates, limiting our use of the land. Tom Golz led a Building Alternatives Task Force, obtaining input from a number of people with expertise in Building and Real-Estate related professions.

The task force appraised our holdings. Similar properties are on the market for \$1.2 to 3.5 million. One developer has indicated that \$1.4 might be a good price to expect. A developer would likely take down the building to build new construction; any one wishing to return the current structure to residential use would face a substantial investment to make it livable.

An examination of properties in the \$1.2-1.5 million range (our approximate equity) revealed that they all would need considerable rehab before we could use them. We looked east of Western Ave and north of the loop. We did see a large church building in good condition with several city blocks of parking, in the southside Woodlawn neighborhood for \$1.5 million, but felt it was a poor location for most of our community. There are rumors the city will sell fire houses in the Rogers Park area, but none are currently available. So it appears that no "magic bullet" property exists, but we will keep our antennae peeled.

Besides remodelling and moving, a third intriguing possibility is a mixed-use redevelopment on our current site, leveraging our equity to finance expansion. This might allow the inclusion of space for members who are healers to practice, for other activities such as yoga classes when the center is not otherwise utilized, etc.

Zoning requires at least 1,000 sq. feet of land for residential use, but we might be able to combine a green building project with some condos and an expanded center. The parking lot immediately south of the center has a non-trivial asking price of \$3.4 million, so not clear that it could be incorporated into such a plan.



How to Decide?

The center's Listening Committee, including Alice Dan, Beth Lynch, Gretchen Neve and John Roadhouse, has been formed to develop community consensus in a deep way that includes more than simple space issues alone. We realize that to make the best decisions about our building plans, we must know what our community wants to be and to do, and what other considerations they consider important. The Listening Committee began by reviewing the reports of community meetings from 2002-2004. Beth Lynch has summarized the group's assessment of those meetings: First and foremost, people seemed happy with what the Center offers and requested more: more open time for practice, more visiting teachers, more programs. Wishes for diversity in our community and for outreach were mentioned. Finally, while the wish list was quite extensive, there was little indication of how the plans might move forward.

The three top priorities identified - and later corroborated by the Shambhala Council - are in accord. More programs require more space, and the need for one large space is the single greatest requirement. For increasing diversity and cultivating outreach, we know that outward signs are important. When people see a building that is accessible to physically challenged people, that's an indication that this community is open to all. And we are a vajrayana sangha; it is not healthy for us to lack a permanent vajrayana practice space.

The Listening Committee will talk with community participants - both members and nonmembers - in small groups and individually. We intend to explore who we are, what brings people here, why people stay (or don't), how the center supports people's practice, what people want to see us become and what part they are willing to play. The Committee is finalizing interview questions and procedures, and will then begin contacting people.

It was noted during the discussion on July 9th that one goal of moving to this building 11 years ago was to break the "50-member barrier." And that has happened! Now we must break the "150 member barrier." What would we look like if we tripled again to 450 members? Another suggestion was that by asking members to vouch for collateral, our loan could be on better terms. Frustration was expressed with people missing shifts to help keep us open and running. We need to let people know they're needed and express appreciation.

Shambhala Children and Families on the Path Conference

By Donna Mandel

I had the great fortune of attending the first Conference of Shambhala Children and Families on the Path at SMC this June. The idea for the conference came from the Families and Children Working Group, and focused on "how to create enlightened society for our families, our children and our world." Presentations and discussions were geared toward the support of parents, to those providing educational programs for children in Shambhala, and to "creating a culture that includes children and families in our community activities."



One of the most delightful surprises of the weekend was running into Sue Shapiro-Holleman who just happened to be coordinating the event! She is happy and thriving in that Colorado environment and sends her love to the Chicago Sangha.

I arrived just in time for Friday night's excellent and very practical presentation on developmental stages from a dharmic perspective by Kerry Maclean (author of Peaceful Piggy Meditation and The Family Meditation Book). On Saturday morning, we divided into 2 groups for the brainstorming of pre- and post- Rites of Passage Ceremony (8 years old) curricula for children based on the needs of these developmental stages. We worked hard to find a framework for the curricular areas we were generating and were delighted to find that both groups independently decided to use the Six Paramitas (generosity, patience, discipline, exertion, meditation and wisdom) for our frameworks. Kerry urged us to make sure that our activities had 3 ingredients: 1) that they are rooted in love (both content and form), 2) that they are structured to include optimal challenge for the children, and 3) that they are ultimately empowering to children.

On Saturday afternoon, Kerry Maclean, Charley Rosicky and Norah Murray (who taught at Alaya Preschool for 16 years, served as former director of Shambhala Mountain's Shotoku Children's Center, is currently director of Bodhi School, and guest teaches in Naropa University's Contemplative Education department) led discussion on the teaching of dharma to children, focused on creating an environment of loving acceptance and sacredness, the importance of being child-centered and flexible, and assessing our curriculum plans.

Another discussion on Saturday included “Parenting as Path” groups. In Boulder, the Parenting as Path group meets monthly to discuss such topics as “discipline without aggression”.

Presenters and participants gave sample Bodhi School and class formats, and discussed the idea of inviting our older children to be mentors and models for younger children, which I am excited to try here in Chicago. I am also inspired to try some of Kerry’s ideas on Meditative Arts instruction for families, including ikebana, calligraphy and haiku for our Children’s Day program this year.

On Saturday night we had an opportunity to interview Kerry Maclean’s daughter, Kelly who has served as a mentor and taught at family camp and led the Rites of Passage Ceremony at SMC this summer. This led into a wonderful discussion of meditation instruction for children, both at home and at the centers.

Sunday morning brought an inspiring and encouraging talk by Naropa University professor Richard Brown. Richard gave a profound and practical teaching for parents and teachers on how we can use mindfulness and awareness to work with strong emotions in relationship to children, in an effort to be truly present for them. He urged us to balance our beliefs and expectations with an appreciation for what the child’s experience is in that moment – to balance discipline and delight.

All weekend I felt grateful to be in the midst of such a devoted group of practitioners. Participants came from all over the United States and Canada and held a wealth of wisdom from their years as teachers and/or parents, making for deep and truly helpful discussions.

I was inspired by so many of these discussions and would like to implement some of the ideas generated in the conference, such as: finding ways to make our center more inclusive of families and children; keeping parents informed about topics we’re exploring in the Children’s Program, and inviting parents to assist at least one Sunday morning per year so they have more information about what we’re doing and can help to create a bridge for activities and discussions between the center and home. And as I mentioned earlier, I am also inspired by the idea of inviting older children to assist in the Children’s Program as mentors, and presenting a meditative arts day for families on Children’s Day.

Our New Thanka

When Nancy Floy was at Namdroling monastery in India studying under His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, she renewed her friendship with Khenpo Gawang – a study partner of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. As a result, the center was privileged to receive teachings from him this summer, but that’s not all! His brother-in-law Guru, a thanka artisan, donated the Padmasambhava thanka - pictured at right - to the center. It hangs across from the entrance to the main shrine room. Members who wish to purchase copies of this or other thankas from Guru should contact Nancy Floy. Proceeds will support Khenpo Gawang’s school in Eastern Tibet, which serves over 200 children.

Sangha Update

Welcome to new members Paula Butler, Dave Carno, Fran Hammon and Paul Romejko!

Currently planning to run the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon, besides the Sakyong’s Team, are Gina Caruso, Michael Duerr, Zane Edwards, John Jacobsen, Randy Smith and Alan Walker ❀ Kate Curliss has moved to Boulder and is living in Marpa House ❀ Tom Golz has started a new job in the University of Illinois development office ❀ Lloyd Schad and his wife have moved to Boca Raton FL to be near their daughter and grandchildren ❀ Nancy Rubin will undergo Chemotherapy very soon; keep her in your thoughts and tonglen ❀ Joe Sunn now calls Baltimore home ❀ Gretchen Neve has made her first foray into real estate, purchasing a condo on Estes ❀ David Roadhouse, World Mens 60-64 Triathlon champion, successfully defended his title at the world championship competition September 2nd in Switzerland ❀ Special thanks to Gina Caruso for all of her efforts on the building and grounds – especially redecorating the front porch, and planting & tending the flowers outside (along with Beth Lynch) ❀



Why Madhyamaka - And Who Cares?

by John Roadhouse

For those of us who never made it past high school algebra (or maybe we got to solid geometry and trig), Madhyamaka seems a bit like advanced calculus. Perhaps we thought: “I don’t really need calculus, let alone advanced calculus, to get into college; and I just know I can live my life without it. Besides, it’s for those intellectual-type math people, while I’m an intuitive artistic-type and glad of it!” So for those of us like this, calculus is just a word whose meaning is hidden from us, which triggers uncomfortable feelings, and which (we are convinced) is irrelevant for our lives.

If the word “Madhyamaka” seems like advanced calculus to you – better left for others, thank you very much – please know that you are not alone. For many dharma practitioners, old and new students alike, Madhyamaka is just a word. With a little bobbing and weaving, and occasionally outright avoidance, we have managed to leave Madhyamaka to those advanced calculus types. “I’m devoted to practice, which is all that really matters, and besides, I had plenty of study in school, and it hasn’t seemed to help me much. I don’t care about Madhyamaka!”

So – why Madhyamaka?

In his book “Ruling Your World”, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche describes the “me plan” and the obstacles that are its inevitable result. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is that we just can’t make “me” happy. Rinpoche says: “The reason we can’t make ‘me’ happy is that there is really no one behind that door. ‘Me’ is just an idea, a concept, a myth. We’re clinging to a fabrication and generating negative emotions in our attempt to protect it ... ‘me’ is just thoughts, feelings, and emotions made solid.” To get off the “me plan,” Rinpoche suggests that we begin with meditation practice, where we can start to see how our thoughts and feelings create the apparently solid “me.” As we practice meditation, we begin to see those thoughts and feelings as simply the display of the mind – so we are not “quite so fooled by appearances.” Then, the Sakyong says, “we hear, contemplate, and meditate on how the mind works and how the world works.”

We hear the teachings about this apparently solid “me” and we practice meditation. But we also must “contemplate;” that is, reflect on what we have heard before we meditate. The Sakyong does not say just listen and then meditate. Yet for many of us, it is precisely the instruction to contemplate or reflect that is missing from our dharma practice. We may think that contemplating or reflecting means that we should just sort of muse a bit on the teachings. And that is all many of us ever do. Then we wonder why we continue to get angry with our partner, or jealous of our friends, or gossip about others, especially when we diligently practice meditation – why, in other words, does negativity keep arising in our experience, and the shining, vibrant world of the Great Eastern Sun seem so far away from our experience.

Madhyamaka comes in here – at the stage of contemplating or reflecting. It is a way to focus our contemplation with increasing subtlety and insight. It is a tool based on logical reasoning for developing clarity and, with continued application, certainty. Certainty about what? Certainty about the heart of what we hear: “that there is really no one behind that door.” Certainty that this “me” which we take for granted, which feels tangible and self-existing, is as the Sakyong describes it – a “mirage” and a “fabrication.” Madhyamaka is a powerful tool that leads us, inevitably, to the Middle Way (which is Madhyamaka loosely translated) between nihilism and eternalism – between nothing matters and a “me” that is solid, self-existing, and permanent. This middle, we discover, is empty of whatever we thought was there. Empty like a mirage, which appears yet is nowhere to be found.

So why Madhyamaka? To help us get off the “me plan.” To help us develop certainty that “me” – that solid entity of unrequited happiness - is indeed a fabrication. Who cares? The dharma student and practitioner who is tired of the habitual, repetitive cycle of pain and disappointment, who has an auspicious connection with the precious Teacher and precious Teachings, and who begins to see that Madhyamaka need not remain just a word, but can become an essential and ultimately transforming ingredient in our practice. But then what is genuine happiness if there is no “me” to experience it? Get on the Madhyamaka train and find out!

Ari Goldfield on "The Moon of Wisdom"

Introductory Talk – Friday, November 10th, 7pm

Class – Saturday, November 11th & Sunday, November 12th

Chandrakirti's classic Madhyamaka text "Moon of Wisdom" describes the true nature of reality as the union of perfect purity and dependent arising. Since all things are by nature perfectly pure, disturbing emotions, contradiction, difficulty and suffering do not truly "exist." Since they are mere appearances arisen in dependence upon causes and conditions, those causes and conditions can be transformed so their inherent purity can actually manifest. This inherent perfect purity and the accompanying possibility for transformation of negativity into purity are why the Lord of Yogis Milarepa sang: "E ma, the phenomena of the three realms of samsara/While not existing, they appear, how incredibly amazing!"

Ari will give an overview on Friday and then go into more detail over the weekend. Friday's introduction is intended to show how beneficial it is to integrate knowledge of genuine reality into one's life; how it helps one to be happier, more generous, patient, diligent, compassionate, and relaxed. In short, who cares about emptiness and why ...

The class will start from the beginning and will definitely cover the first 7 verses plus the quotation from the Buddha about the 10 types of equality in detail. There will also be an overview of the main logical reasoning in the first part of the text, proof that things do not truly arise because they do not arise from any of the four extremes. Depending on how well-prepared the class is and how many questions arise, the class may go further. This class will be beneficial for both newer and older students alike.

About Mr. Goldfield:

Ari Goldfield was born in San Francisco in 1969. In 1993, his final year at Harvard Law School, he encountered Buddhism, which he says "gave his life great meaning and joy." He worked as an attorney for six months in 1994, but then left his job to study Dharma and Tibetan language in India.

Upon the advice of lamas and friends, in 1995 Ari attended Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche's Dharma course in Nepal. Under Rinpoche's direction, from 1995-1998 Ari studied Tibetan and Sanskrit and taught English at His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche's and Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche's monasteries in Nepal and India, and at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath. In 1996 Ari began to serve Khenpo Rinpoche as a translator. Since 1998 he has traveled with Rinpoche full-time, serving as secretary and translator. He has translated several of Rinpoche's teachings for publication in magazines and books. He also has translated numerous stories and songs of Milarepa and other realized masters.



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