



# SAN FRANCISCO SHAMBHALA

MEDITATION CENTER

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER, 2006

## Meet the President!

Dear SFSC Community,

I wanted to take this opportunity to invite you to meet President Richard Reoch on his upcoming visit to San Francisco.



The visit to our center will be the last of a 60+ nationwide tour of Shambhala Centers across the country.

The purpose of President Reoch's visit is to share an open dialogue about the direction of our global community and how our individual centers can benefit from and contribute to the overall health of the mandala. We'll celebrate the richness of Shambhala with practice, an elegant dinner and discussion about how Shambhala International can best support the local centers and provide services to its international membership. I've had the good fortune to work with President Reoch over the last few years and have found him to be both an excellent leader and a fearless statesman. He has been able to bring together the views of the Sakyong, Mipham Rinpoche and the community of practitioners with skillfulness, patience and insight. His commitment to Shambhala and the success of our organization is exemplified by his tireless efforts to propel our organization into the future in a solvent and integrated way. He greases the sometimes squeaky wheel of that process with razor sharp wit and infectious humor.

*His work with the Sakyong and Mandala Councils, the governing boards of Shambhala, have inspired its members to become more involved in the practice of leadership by demonstrating that our primary intention is to be of service to others. His commitment to that undertaking is exemplified by this trip and his aspiration to engage others in that process in a meaningful, mutual and skillful way. Our SF Shambhala Center can play a significant role in how Shambhala manifests, both locally and abroad.*

*Following the dinner, we'll celebrate President Reoch's last stop with a reception and party, San Francisco style. Whether you've been involved in Shambhala for years, are inactive or brand new to the situation, I hope you can share in this unique celebration of our Shambhala heritage as we discover how to create and sustain enlightened society together.*

*Yours in Great Eastern Sun,  
Seth Bregman, Executive Director*

## Intersections Buddhism and Science...

### Dancing With Desire The Art of Mindful Eating By Jennifer Daubenmier, Ph.D.

I am walking down a quiet, tree-lined residential street in a quaint San Francisco neighborhood listening to the first autumn rain fall through the trees as I make my way to Fulton and 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. It is early evening and I should consider eating something before I arrive at my class so I don't get hungry and distracted midway through. Suddenly, the image of eating pizza from Fat Slice pops into my head. My mind, a second before spacious and open, now feels narrowed and fixated on the thought of pizza. Yum! My body feels a little tense. Yes, I should get the pizza. It's on the way. It's fast and cheap! Decision made! Faster than a flash of lightning, a harsh nay-sayer intervenes: Absolutely not! It's fattening! Greasy

cheese, refined flour. Hardly nutritious. You've been doing a good job of staying away from those foods, and you don't want to ruin the roll you're on of losing a few more pounds. But, still I can't get the image of pizza out of my mind. I am in complete conflict as my feet continue on a robotic walk towards the pizza shop.

My thoughts are a clash between a Hungry Ghost's craving for tasty food and the pursuit of an ideal, in this case, the perfect body. Fundamentally, both desires are driven by the misconception that the object they seek will quench a sense of dissatisfaction. Whichever choice I make, I add fuel to the fire of passion leading me further away from the true peace and happiness already present within.

Our national economy thrives on this tug of war. We are bombarded by conflicting

*Continued on page 2 —*

## Dharma Quote

*Share your thoughts and feelings about a short passage from an inspiring book. We will put a quote in each newsletter and reprint the quote in the subsequent issue with your responses.*

The technique of sitting meditation is very simple: it is the process of becoming one with the breath. It is very important to understand the difference between following the breath and becoming one with the breath. Following the breath involves some kind of witness or watcher, and can actually reinforce the sense of self or ego. Strictly speaking, becoming one with the breath does not involve any kind of witness. Breathing does not need a watcher; it is not self-conscious. The breath goes in and out very naturally. We do not consciously have to try to breathe. So working with the breath is not adding anything particularly new to our experience.

*From Buddha In The Palm Of Your Hand, by Ösel Tendzin*

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Visit from Shambhala President Richard Reoch
- Tantrika Vajrayana Transcripts Study
- Beginners Mind, Class
- History: Karma Pakshi and the Khans

advertisements – Go ahead, indulge your passion for chocolate, you deserve it! Lose 20 lbs. in 3 weeks! We throw away billions of dollars annually to the diet and fast food industries as we fruitlessly attempt to appease both the Hungry Ghost and human passion for bodily perfection. Meanwhile, our bodies are poisoned with refined sugar, fat, and artificial chemicals. Two out of every three Americans are currently overweight or obese. It looks like the Hungry Ghost is winning. Why?

One reason may be that cravings for high fat and sugary foods are wired into our brains. We all know the solution to weight loss: eat less and exercise more. Yet, for some reason, we can't seem to follow these simple guidelines. Recent

#### A NEW WAY TO DONATE TO THE SAN FRANCISCO CENTER

Beginning on January 1, the SF Shambhala Center will be a partner of the Community Thrift Store on Valencia Street. What this means is that when you make a donation to Community Thrift Store, you can allocate that all proceeds from that item go directly to our center. Here is a list of items that are acceptable for donation:

- Clean clothing
- Jewelry & Accessories
- Costumes and Leather
- Shoes, boots
- Books & Stationery
- Art, Mirrors & Seasonal decorations
- Toys & Bicycles
- Collectibles
- House wares
- Furniture
- CDs, records, cassettes, videos, dvds
- Lamps & Electronics
- Bric a brac
- Luggage and baskets
- Crutches, wheelchairs, walkers

A complete list of acceptable and unacceptable items will be posted at the Center. You can also find out more information at

<http://www.communitythrift.brave-host.com/>

Community Thrift Store is located at 623 Valencia Street, near the intersection of Sycamore St and Valencia St (415) 861-4910

neurobiological research suggests that human beings have two eating motives with distinct underlying physiological systems – one drive for caloric need and another drive for pleasure. It turns out that food temporarily enhances our mood by stimulating the release of feel-good brain chemicals such as serotonin (triggered by carbohydrates) and opioids (triggered by fat and sugar). The brain may have evolved to reward eating in times of plenty, when we're not hungry, to create an energy reserve for lean times. Thus, we are up against a biological drive for pizza and chocolate cake. Researchers are now wondering whether people can become addicted to junk food (fatty and sugary goods) the way people become addicted to alcohol or heroine. That is, the brain may adapt to a diet of junk food and become dependent on it. To make matters worse, stress can strengthen the craving for fatty and sugary foods. In our fast-paced society surrounded by tempting, calorically-dense food, our Hungry Ghosts are ravenous. Biological researchers are looking for drugs to dampen our food cravings and improve our physical health. Are drugs the only answer?

As a research psychologist, I am interested in the effects of yoga and meditation practices on mental and physical health. I had the good fortune of studying with Eleanor Rosh, student of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, as a graduate student in psychology at UC Berkeley. Under her guidance, I became interested in how yoga and meditation practices may affect eating and related attitudes. Since yoga and meditation synchronize mind and body, these practices

may be beneficial for those who struggle with food. I conducted a couple studies suggesting that yoga fosters greater awareness of bodily sensations which in turn is associated with healthier food intake. These studies provide encouraging evidence, but further rigorous research is needed to increase confidence in the results.

As a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, San Francisco, my colleagues and I are now conducting a

**DHARMA**  
*Each issue one poem,  
 photo or image will  
 be included*  
**ART**

#### The Jeweled Net of Indra

By Dane Cervine

Offered by sangha member David Asbury

Driving down the freeway, remembering Hindu mythology – Indra's net, each intersecting weave holding a jewel reflecting every other facet of every other jewel, infinitely. Suddenly, I see the hands that paint the white lines, that lay the black asphalt, hands of a man joyous or lost soap-scrubbing his body clean for dinner and beer, for the wife who loves him, hands that hold their tickets for London to see the grandmother, the hard-drinking pub matron whose body bore children in building rubble when the Nazi bombing relented – and if not for that war, would I be driving now, hands on the wheel, listening to the radio recount the birth of the child named Tsunami after the storm that drove her mother into the hills, would the meager dollars I send to rebuild a village – minted with the Rosicrucian-eye above the pyramid dreamed by this country's founders as the all-seeing vision of a world where not a sparrow falls that we don't know about – would I have known to send it, if not for the hands that flew the kite that drew electricity from the skies that made its way into the flat-screened box that unveils this jewel-linked world twenty-four hours of every gleaming day, weaving news with advertisements for clothes made by hands in China nimbly sewing a dream of Hollywood and Ipod and offering their bodies one by one for a better future – while the coal that fumes the electricity that plunges the needle drifts in air that circles a globe that warms the icecaps that melt into sea that shifts the current that loves the wind that swirls from heaven to earth stirring one storm after another, blowing its diaphanous passion over New Orleans like a trumpet sinking the heart so low with blue notes that flood is a dark cure for what burns – this illusion that anyone stands alone – stranded on the roofs of our swollen houses mouthing save me to a world whose millions of hands can turn up the volume loud enough to finally hear, or flick with a single click the entire interconnected vision of it all off.

randomized clinical trial to examine how mindfulness meditation practice may affect food intake and metabolic health among overweight women. We will recruit 50 women to participate in the study and they will be randomly assigned to the meditation program or put on a waitlist. This way, we can compare changes in the women who go through the meditation program to those on the waitlist to know whether the meditation practice was effective. In a series of 12 weekly classes, a group of women will learn sitting mindfulness meditation practice and gentle yoga stretches and be asked to establish a daily practice. They will train in bringing moment-to-moment compassionate awareness to thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations that arise during the eating process. We will practice mindfulness at the grocery store, at restaurants, while cooking at home, and while eating at work, a party, or alone. We will use the cycle of dependent origination as a framework to guide the intervention: sensing leads to feeling, feeling leads to craving, and craving leads to grasping. Our hope is that the participants will experience a greater inner freedom of choice when it comes to what to eat and how much to eat. When not driven by the hungry ghost or a sense of deprivation we hope they can cut the link between craving and automatic grasping. The women will undergo psychological and physical assessments before the meditation program and afterwards. We will see whether meditation affects their diet, weight, stress hormones, opioid tone, and insulin and glucose levels (which indicate diabetes risk). We will also look for changes in mindfulness, body awareness, positive and negative moods, and self-acceptance.

My colleagues and I don't view this program as a weight loss program, although weight loss may result. We will not tell the participants what types of foods they should or should not eat. We assume that most people know what is not good for them. That's not the problem. The problem seems to be finding a way to balance pleasure with health.

The urge I had for the pizza was strong. I decided to let go of the guilt knowing that restricting myself would backfire at a later time. I had read several research studies demonstrating individuals who try to stick to a diet end up eating more

when they're multi-tasking or under stress compared to those who don't restrict themselves. I ordered one slice of vegetarian and sat down to a mindful dinner to savor all the flavors. I didn't need to eat two pieces quickly, one eaten mindfully would suffice. The sundried tomatoes, the artichoke hearts, and of course the greasy cheese exploded with sensations in my mouth bite after bite. I also briefly contemplated the origins of the pizza and how the ingredients conspired together to land in my stomach at the same time. Eating mindfully, I felt a sense of emotional fullness as well as physical fullness set in. The pizza was good and I'm glad I got it because it made me happy. The Hungry Ghost wasn't around begging for more. The perfection seeker was content because I needed to eat something but wasn't overeating. I could still comfortably walk to my class without feeling bloated. And I walked with dignity, musing on how to dance with desire without clinging to it\*



## A Love Song...

I thought I'd share one of my favorite songs by the great Brazilian singer and songwriter Caetano Veloso. The words remain beautiful even when translated from their original Portuguese into English.

### Terra

by Caetano Veloso

When I found myself imprisoned  
Imprisoned  
In a cell inside a jail  
I saw for the first time  
Those photographs  
When we see her entirely  
But where she isn't naked  
Because she's wearing her clouds  
Terra, terra

No matter how distant  
The traveler may wander  
Who could possibly forget you?  
No one could imagine this brunette  
Inside the blue light of a star  
Above the abyss of cinema  
I send my warm embrace to you  
Little one, as if I was  
The honorable poet  
And you the state of Paraiba  
Terra, terra

I'm madly in love  
With this girl Terra  
She's symbolic and elemental  
At sea one says land ahoy  
Land means solid ground for feet  
Land to my hand means tenderness

Other stars will serve to guide you  
Terra, terra

I am a fiery lion  
Without you I would consume  
Myself into eternity  
And it would be worth nothing  
That I happened to be a person  
And people are a happiness  
Different than the stars  
Terra, terra

From beyond time and space  
Pray that the strength should dispatch  
courage  
So that we can treat you gently  
Throughout this long journey  
That you make across the void  
Over which you always carry  
The names of all your flesh  
Terra, terra

I consider Caetano Veloso to be not only a gifted musician but an extraordinary human being- a true embodiment of the enlightened warrior. He wrote Terra for the album Muito, which came out in 1978, ten years after he was released from prison. The song refers to the experience of having his wife visit him in prison and share with him a book with the first photographs of the Earth seen in its entirety from space.

You can listen to an excerpt of the song and read more about Caetano at:  
<http://www.caetanoveloso.com>

— sangha member Kimberly Roe

## BRING DECORATIONS FOR BUDDHIST CHRISTMAS TREE (DECEMBER 9)

This year a small potted Christmas tree will be donated to the center, in order to celebrate the ancient solstice; all religions, as well as the brotherhood and sisterhood of the sangha.

Please feel free to bring any decorations you feel inspired to put on the tree that have meaning for you over the next few weeks after the tree arrives. (December 9)



Sangha member Nancy Grant carved these and put them out on the steps to celebrate Halloween. The upper one is modeled on the Svayambhunath Stupa Eyes in Kathmandu. The second one is T'bröma. Or Dorje Drollö. Or Mahakala...



## PRESIDENT OF SHAMBHALA IN SAN FRANCISCO

The President of Shambhala, Richard Reoch, is visiting every Shambhala Centre in North America. He set off from the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya in September and by mid-November will have met, listened to and talked with as many people and their families as he possibly can.

President Reoch writes "I'd like to bring everyone up-to-date on what's happening in our worldwide mandala and spend time listening to whatever people feel I need to know as their president."

**Date: Saturday, November 18 / Time: 6pm**

**Location: San Francisco Shambhala Center**



## BEGINNER'S MIND with Bruce Dal Santo

At the San Francisco Shambhala Center, we practice and teach mindfulness-awareness meditation, as it has been passed from teacher to student for 2500 years. This course introduces basic sitting meditation.

**Dates:** Thursdays, December 7-21

**Time:** 7:30pm-9pm

**Tuition:** \$60 plus \$26 for manual  
— No one turned away

**Registration:** No pre-registration

**Location:** San Francisco Shambhala Center

**Contact:** Bruce Dal Santo



## TANTRIKA VAJRAYANA TRANSCRIPTS STUDY

with Arlene Mathieu and Melissa Moore

Please join fellow Bay Area tantrikas and sadhakas in a unique opportunity for deepening one's understanding of vajrayana material as presented by both the Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

The material for this course was developed at the 2003 Seminary in Dechen Choling, France, at the request of the Sakyong, who wanted to invite students to familiarize themselves with the precious resource we have in the collection of seminary transcripts.

**Dates: Monthly, January 22–June 25, 2007**

**Location: San Francisco Shambhala Center**

# November 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29   <b>Oct</b>	30	31	1   <b>Nov</b>	2	3	4
8:15a -8:45a White Tara Practice (Restricted)  Open House: Dharma Talk 9:00a -12:00p  1:00p -5:00p Practice Day		Halloween  7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation		8:00p Space, Time, & Energy with Patrick Sweeney	9:00a -5:00p Space, Time and Energy with Patrick Sweeney
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00a -10:00p Meditation only. No Dharma Talk because of Patrick Sweeney Event	7:00p -9:00p Men's Group Contact: Rich Cacciotti	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation		7:00 Tulku Orgyen Zangpo Rinpoche	
10:00a -3:00p Space, Time and Energy with Patrick Sweeney						
1 2	1 3	1 4	1 5	1 6	1 7	1 8
9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk	7:00p -9:00p Upaya Council Contacts: Noah Butter and Susan Arnesen	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation			7:00p An Evening with the President of Shambhala International, Richard Reoch  Talk, Discussion and Banquet
1 9	2 0	2 1	2 2	2 3	2 4	2 5
9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk	7:00p -9:00p Men's Group Contact: Rich Cacciotti	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation			
2 6	2 7	2 8	2 9	3 0	1   <b>Dec</b>	2
8:15a -8:45a White Tara Practice  (This practice is restricted to those who have received the initiation)	7:00p <b>Chess Night</b> Contact: Noah Butter	7:30p -9:00p <b>Evening Meditation</b>	7:30p -9:00p <b>Evening Meditation</b>	7:30p -9:00p <b>Ashe Society</b> Contact: Kara Dansky	<b>7:30p Shambhala Training LevelIII</b>	<b>8:30a -5:30p Shambhala Training LevelIII</b>
9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk						
1:45p -5:15p Monthly extended open house practice session						

# December 2006



Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	Nov	27	28	29	30	1 Dec	2
						7:30p Shambhala Training Level III	8:30a -5:30p Shambhala Training Level III
3		4	5	6	7	8	9
8:30a -5:30p Shambhala Training Level III  9:00a -10:00p One Hour Meditation - No Dharma Talk because of the Shambhala Training	7:00p -9:00p Men's Group Contact: Rich Cacciotti	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Beginners Meditation Class Contact: Bruce Del Santo	7:00 Possible: Tulku Orgyen Zangpo Rinpoche		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk	7:00p -9:00p Upaya Council Contacts: Noah Butter and Susan Arnesen	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Beginners Meditation Class Contact: Bruce Del Santo		12:00a Vajrayogini Feast Contact: Jamie Erfurdt 510-269-1326	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk  Afternoon: Holiday party	7:00p -9:00p Men's Group Contact: Rich Cacciotti	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Beginners Meditation Class Contact: Bruce Del Santo			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
Christmas Eve 9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk	Christmas 7:00p Chess Night Contact: Noah Butter	CBoxing Day 7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Ashe Society Contact: Kara Dansky			
31	1 Jan	2	3	4	5	6	
New Year's Eve 8:15a -8:45a White Tara Practice (This practice is restricted to those who have received the initiation.)  9:00a -12:00p Open House: Meditation and Dharma Talk	New Year's Day 7:00p -9:00p Men's Group Contact: Rich Cacciotti	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation	7:30p -9:00p Evening Meditation				

## Shambhala Training

A five weekend introduction to the view of Shambhala warriorship and cultivating mindfulness awareness in everyday life through the practice of meditation. All weekends start on Friday night at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted.

### Level I - The Art of Being Human -2006-

December 1-3 | Davis

-2007-

January 12-14 | Berkeley

May 12-13 | Silicon Valley

### Level II - Birth of the Warrior -2006-

December 1-3 | Santa Rosa

-2007-

January 13-14 | Davis

January 20-21 | Silicon Valley

February 23-25 | San Francisco

### Level III - Warrior in the World -2006-

December 1-3 | San Francisco

-2007-

February 2-4 and 10-11 | Sonoma

February 23-25 | Davis

March 3, 10-11 | Silicon Valley

March 23-24 and

March 31-April 1 | Berkeley

Please note: Level III has two formats: one weekend and two weekends; the second weekend is Saturday and Sunday only.

### Level IV - Awakened Heart -2007-

April 13-15 | Davis

April 20-23 | Santa Rosa

May 11-13 | San Francisco

### Level V - Open Sky -2007-

June 8-10 | Berkeley

### Sacred Path

For students who have completed the Heart of Warriorship program. All weekends start on Friday night at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted.

### Great Eastern Sun:

#### Introduction to the Sacred Path

October 27-28 | Sonoma Mountain Zen Center

#### Perky

-2007-

February 9-11 | Berkeley

#### Outrageous and Inscrutable -2007-

April 13-15 | San Francisco

#### Golden Key

-2007-

May 18-20 | Sonoma

For more information, contact Noah Butter at [noahbutter@gmail.com](mailto:noahbutter@gmail.com)



## Passed Down Lessons from History...

### Karma Pakshi and the Khans By Valentin Ghiur

The second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi, was born in 1206 into a family descended from the eight-century dharma-king, Trisong Detsun.

This is the story of a very interesting part of his life, his interaction with the most powerful rulers of his time. This reproduces a part of the book "The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet", by Karma Thinley (the reason why it's only about sixteen of them is because the book was published in 1980).

In 1251 Karma Pakshi received an invitation from Prince Kublai who at that time ruled the Sino-Tibetan border regions. In response, Karma Pakshi traveled to the Wu-tok palace, reaching there in the year 1254.

Karma Pakshi was aware of the importance of his visit for the future of Kagyupa teachings and had many visionary experiences indicating this after his arrival at the court. He was honored by Kublai Khan, who requested him to display his spiritual power to the other religious teachers. Karma Pakshi complied with this request and also conducted himself with such courtesy that all acknowledged his greatness. The khan asked him to remain at his court permanently, but Karma Pakshi declined, foreseeing the potential for trouble in the factional interests at the court.

At this time, the rest of China was under the control of Mongka Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan. Mongka Khan exercised a rather tenuous control of his younger brother, Kublai.

Inspired by Avalokitesvara and Mahakala, Karma Pakshi decided to travel to northern Tibet. Despite Kublai Khan's anger at his refusal to stay, he journeyed to the Sino-Tibetan border region of Minyak. When he arrived the country was rocked by a tornado, which Karma Pakshi envisaged as the manifestation of the Vajra Black-Cloaked Mahakala. He also had a vision of Vaisravana, protector of wealth, who requested him to remain in Minyak in order to construct a new temple here.

By 1256 Karma Pakshi had reached Amdo in northeastern Tibet, where he learned that Mongka Khan had suppressed the power of his younger brother, Kublai, and was now the supreme ruler of Mongolia and a large part of China. At this point, Mongka Khan invited him to return to China to teach dharma. The invitation was accepted and Karma Pakshi traveled slowly back to China, passing through the Minyak region once again. In a visionary experience, he was inspired by the red Tara to go to Mongka Khan's palace in Liang Chou. By this time the far ranging importance of Karma Pakshi's dharma activity has become very clear. On the journey to Mongka Khan's court he removed both environmental and social imbalances by his compassionate activity.

Karma Pakshi arrived at the court at the beginning of winter. The khan marked his arrival by freeing prisoners in his honor and Karma Pakshi manifested the enlightened compassion of Avalokitesvara by giving many empowerments, textual transmissions and instructions. The khan became his devoted student and Karma Pakshi revealed that he had in fact studied with the first Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa, in his previous life, and indeed had achieved the same mahamudra realization as Karma Pakshi himself.

In order to display the super skillful means of the dharma, Karma Pakshi invited many jealous Taoist masters from Shen Shing, Tao Shi and Er Kao to join him in debate. However, none were equal to it and they all accepted his teaching.

At the Alaka palace, Karma Pakshi empowered the khan and his other students in the spiritual practice of Chakrasamvara. Mongka Khan practiced his instruction

so precisely that he was able to visualize the yidam in perfect detail. Later, through the power of Karma Pakshi's meditation, a vision of Saraha and the other eighty-four tantric saints appeared in the sky, where they remained for three days. The power of his teaching cut through the khan's involvement with politics, enabling him to develop an intuitive realization of mahamudra.

Subsequently the khan invited his guru to accompany him on a tour of his empire. The party traveled to the Sino-Mongolian border regions and then journeyed to Minyak. Here, inspired by the memory of Dusum Khyenpa (the first Karmapa), Karma Pakshi decided to return to Tibet. Mongka Khan had wanted his guru to accompany him to Manchuria, but Karma Pakshi declined, pointing to the impermanent nature of all situations. The khan did not attempt to detain him but granted him a safe conduct pass through all Mongol territories.

However, in the year of the Iron Tiger, as Karma Pakshi returned to Tibet, trouble broke out in China upon the death of Mongka Khan. At first Alapaga, the late khan's son, established his rule in spite of the fact that some Mongol chiefs supported the rival claim of his uncle, Kublai Khan. Soon, however, Kublai Khan was able to seize control and Alapaga was killed, reputedly by the magical power of a student of Lama Zhang of the Tsalpa Kagyu lineage.

At this time Karma Pakshi, whose journey had been delayed by local warfare, was inspired by a vision to construct a large statue of Buddha, on his return to Tibet. However, he was acutely aware of the difficulties in the way of such a project. The way through these obstructions was revealed to him in a dream of a white horse which rescued him from danger. He composed a song to celebrate this in which he declared, "This supreme horse is like a golden bird. I, myself, am the supreme man, as was Siddhartha Gautama. Therefore we will cross over these dangerous times."

Word had reached Karma Pakshi the Kublai Khan, encouraged by court intrigue, had developed a grudge against him. The khan felt that he had been



slighted by Karma Pakshi and that the latter had encouraged his rival and brother, Mongka Khan, so he decided to order his assassination.

The new khan's soldiers detained Karma Pakshi and subjected him to various indignities and tortures such as burning, poisoning and being thrown off a cliff, but in the face of this brutal treatment he manifested the compassion of Avalokitesvara and the natural freedom of a mahasiddha. Karma Pakshi's realization of the unborn and undying nature of mind meant that his captors were unable to harm him. Eventually he expressed great pity for their confusion.

These events forced Kublai Khan to reconsider his attitude to Karma Pakshi. Instead of assassination, exile seemed appropriate. The khan attempted to damage Karma Pakshi's health by sending him to a deserted area near the ocean where there were few people to receive the dharma. However, within the next few years Karma Pakshi spent his time composing texts and slowly recovered. Eventually, Kublai Khan relented and apologized, asking Karma Pakshi to stay with him. When Karma Pakshi replied that he had to return to Tibet, the khan allowed him to depart saying, "Please remember me and pray for me and bless me. You are free to go and teach dharma wherever you wish".

Karma Pakshi arrived back at Tsurphu after a long journey and set to work constructing the status of Buddha. The cast brass statue, named "Great Sage, Ornament of the World", stood fifty-five feet tall and contained relics of the Buddha and his disciples. On completion the statue appeared to tilt to one side. Seeing this, Karma Pakshi entered into meditation, tilting his body in the same way. As he straightened up, the statue righted itself.

Before his death in 1283, Karma Pakshi transmitted his lineage to his great student, Ugyenpa. He informed Ugyenpa that his next reincarnation would come from western Tibet.

Karma Pakshi was both a profound tantric saint and scholar. The energy of his teachings inspired many people to travel the spiritual path. In addition to Ugyenpa, his other famous students included Maja Changchub, Nyendre Gedun Bum and Mngka Khan✽



## Practice Space

*Members share their personal practice experiences*

### The Body and Meditation Workshop

**T**oday was an amazing day. I was transported into my own body and celebrated my awakened heart. I was late getting to the class, but found one seat for me to be in. I was ready to receive the teachings. It was a profound experience being in that circle of people. I was in a safe space to feel what I always felt; that openness and expansion. During the course, we each said our names and went around the circle telling each other who and why we were here. Our teachers were Alice Tarkeshi and Charity Martin. It was wonderful to be in the presence of such wonderful teachers.

We first did our yoga exercise lead by Alice. We did a gentle stretching in the beginning which made my tender heart really open up. My body was so needing this to happen that tears filled my eyes at the end of the session. My heart was warm and tender after the yoga exercises.

Then Charity lead us through certain exercise that really made us feel grounded. It was the most amazing restful, heartfelt exercise that I could not have done had I not given myself the chance to feel it in that space. It was like my body really connected to earth and how earth cradled my body to bring my heart closer to feeling joy and warmth. I was feeling so relaxed and yet so mindful at the same time. Then we took a break and came back with sitting exercises that literally blew my socks off. Here we were bringing joy of heart and feeling of pain and integrating the two so they co-exist with one another. Like a blanket covering a sore on the body. A piece of my heart (joy) bringing it's warmth to the tension in my shoulders (pain). After a while sitting with it, the

pain started going away little by little. It was still present, but it was much easier to deal with, as if it was being touched in a loving way. My body was healing another part of my body by conducting it's own dialogue, with it's own sensory language. It was really amazing. I had goose bumps just feeling the transformation going on.

I wish that these teachings and workshop could be integrated into our beginning levels as a part of the Shambhala levels. It's so important not only for the mind to be present, but also for the body to be fully present, as well, and how to work with certain aspects of the body such as joy and pain when one sits for a long period of time on the cushion.

Thank you Alice & Charity for reclaiming back my body, mind and heart.

Another workshop will be at BSC Saturday February 17th and at SFSC Saturday April 28th from 10am-4pm.

Warm regards, Noel P. Rivero

## Testimony of an Assistant Director

Offered by Sangha Member Noah Butter

Serving as co-assistant director of the San Francisco Shambhala Center has been a rewarding and challenging experience. I have been working on unifying and streamlining our various forms of communication with the goal of keeping you informed of current events. This first edition of our new newsletter is the result of my desire to tap into your creative energy. I hope you will read it, contemplate it, meditate on it, and contribute to it!

Working as a director is not just about getting things done though, it is more importantly about creating enlightened society in San Francisco by relating with others with dignity, kindness, and bravery. Working with Susan and Seth has given me the opportunity to continually practice meditation in action. I sincerely hope that the consequences of this activity lead to the spreading and manifesting of Great Eastern Sun vision in the Bay Area and beyond.





# SAN FRANCISCO SHAMBHALA MEDITATION CENTER

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