

The Legend of The Shambhala Warriors

By Edwina Shaw on Wednesday January 18th, 2017

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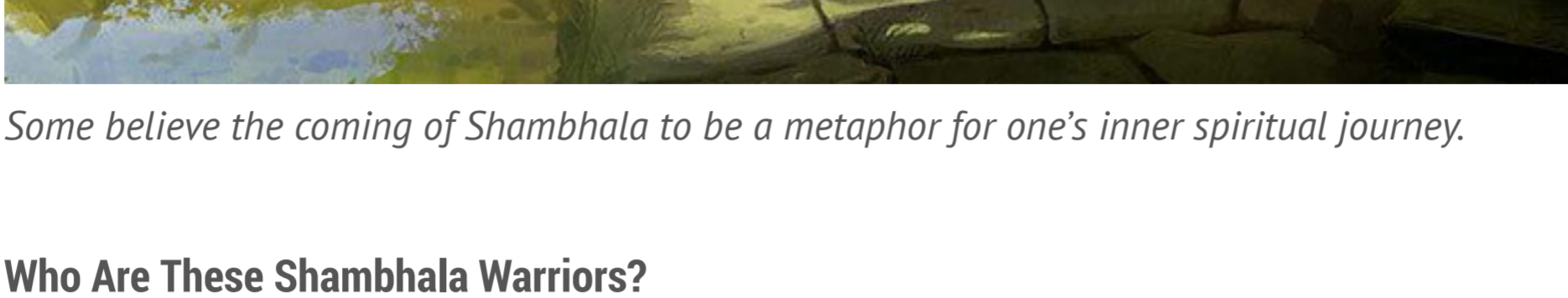


Embracing Our Inner Warrior to Create World Peace

“ Tibetan legend has it that the Kingdom of Shambhala rises when the world is in danger of annihilating itself through greed and corruption.

It says that this is a time when two great powers, one in the West and one in the East, are set on destruction and, though they have much in common, are focused only on the accumulation of weapons of unimaginable horror, intent on crushing each other. It seems the survival of every sentient being is at threat. It is a time of apocalypse. A time, it seems to many, that may be upon us now. It is then that the Warriors of Shambhala arise and bring about great healing.

There are varying interpretations of this prophecy, some portraying the coming of the Kingdom of Shambhala as a metaphor for one's inner spiritual journey, while others present it as an entirely external event that will unfold in our world independent of what we do. The following version of the legend of the rise of the Shambhala Warriors comes from Choegyal Rinpoche of the Tashi Jong community in northern India, through his friend, Joanna Macy.



Some believe the coming of Shambhala to be a metaphor for one's inner spiritual journey.

Who Are These Shambhala Warriors?

It is at this time of great turmoil and fear that the kingdom of Shambhala arises. And from this kingdom comes warriors to overthrow the purveyors of hate and weapons. These warriors have no land of their own, they live within the lands of the warring parties, walk among those intent on destruction. But it is through the individual courage and compassionate wisdom of the Shambhala warriors that the world is brought to peace and healing.

Shambhala warriors have no uniform, no insignia, they may not even recognise each other on the street. It is an individual path. But these people of spirit are called upon to go into the corridors of power and to dismantle the weapons of mass destruction. From within, the Shambhala warriors bring about great change and healing. They can do this without fear, says Choegyal, because they know that these weapons are made of the mind and, therefore, can also be dismantled by the mind. The Shambhala warriors know that the forces of destruction do not come from outside ourselves but from within; that it is our own greed and fear and hate that creates the weapons that now threaten the world.



Shambhala warriors are simply people who wish to bring about great change and healing.

Weapons of Compassion and Insight

In order to bring about change within the corridors of power and dismantle the weapons that threaten to destroy us all, these spiritual warriors must train in weapons of their own. These two essential weapons are **compassion** and **insight**. Compassion is essential because it moves us – when we are open to feeling the pain of others, we are driven to act to ease that suffering (Read: [How to Listen Compassionately](#)). However, compassion alone is not enough. We can become burnt out and filled with despair, overwhelmed by the pain we feel around us. Insight is needed alongside compassion to give structure to our warmth. Our passionate hearts need to be combined with a rational understanding of the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of all things so that we realise, it is not a battle between external forces, but a coming to terms with the good and the bad within every human heart.

Insight brings with it the knowledge that every action, undertaken with pure intent, creates a ripple of healing in the world that has repercussions far greater than we can imagine. Alone insight can be too cool and detached, so it needs the heat and power of compassion to move it into action. The two combined create wise actions that can transform and heal the whole planet, especially if large numbers of warriors – an army in fact – are working on it together.



Compassion and insight make the perfect combination for healing and change.

The Origins of Shambhala

The concept of Shambhala has its roots in an ancient indigenous sun-worshipping religion of Tibet. After the adoption of Mahayana Buddhism, it was incorporated and became synonymous with a mythological kingdom of peace and beauty where people lived in harmony and were wise, courageous and compassionate. These ideas were first brought back to the West by a Portuguese Catholic missionary Estêvão Cacella, who had heard about Shambhala and in 1627 set off to discover it. For centuries afterwards, even into the 1930s and 40s, Westerners made expeditions to Tibet and the regions north of India to try and find this mythical kingdom to learn its secrets. In the late 19th century, founder of Theosophy, Helena Blavatsky, made such a journey to Tibet and introduced Tibetan wisdom, and the idea of Shambhala, to spiritual seekers in the West.

Chogyam Trungpa, a Buddhist monk who fled Tibet during the Chinese invasion, received the forgotten teachings of Shambhala as a "Terma" (hidden sacred treasure), as he meditated in a cave attempting to wait out the invasion. He quickly transcribed the insights and teachings he received, but unfortunately, as he crossed a river being shot at during an attack by the Chinese army, these original teachings were lost. However, some years later, the Terma was again recovered and he went on to bring the teachings of Shambhala wisdom to the West. He established the USA's first Buddhist-inspired university, many meditation centres around the world, and specialist centres in Shambhala warrior training. He is the author of a number of books on Shambhala including *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* and *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* and is the father of Shambhala teachings in the West today.



There have been many expeditions to find the mysterious kingdom of Shambhala.

Shambhala Practices for the Home

Chogyam Trungpa established special training centres for spiritual warriors but the practices are simple enough to engage in at home. The central belief of Shambhala is in the inherent goodness of human beings. Forget about "original sin", we are all good and wise just as we are. The basic practice is mindfulness meditation, focusing on the breath whilst keeping an awareness of thought patterns, especially those which create our "cocoon" – or the rigid beliefs that keep us trapped in being and acting in a certain way, that may not be to our benefit or the benefit of others. Through meditation, we eventually come to our own personal realisation of the oneness of all beings, and through this arises both compassion and insight – our tools to heal the world.

What is most appealing about Shambhala practices is that they do not require any adherence to a particular religion or seclusion from the world. It is a practice we as ordinary householders can achieve and use to help heal our planet. If like me, you have trouble with the term "Warrior" and the concept of fighting for peace and healing, we can find new ways to express these concepts. *Make Love, Not War* rings true for me. "Warrior" and "Weapons" are terms from a more violent age, a different era. War implies violence, conflict and aggression. It is the base word of Warrior. Yes, we need the fearlessness of warriors, but perhaps, instead we can call upon the courage of birthing women, not of those wearing headlong towards killing rather than weapons, I propose we use the term tools, as these are not tools of destruction, but rather, of healing and soothing.



We can all instigate change and healing, whether we identify with being a warrior or not.

Before we can start healing our hearts and the world, we need to reframe the language we use to describe these actions. Harnessing our rightful anger against injustice is important, but that anger needs to be channelled into positive action through, using wisdom alongside the compassion that gave rise to our anger at injustice. We need to use our insight and knowledge of all beings being interconnected to understand that if we harm others, even in pursuit of a higher goal, we are also harming ourselves, and our cause. If we hate, rather than love, we are only injuring ourselves. We need to become spiritual WORKERS, not warriors, and use compassion and wisdom as our TOOLS not weapons.

Because we are both compassionate and insightful, we can approach change with courage. As everything is interconnected, if our intentions are pure and focused on the good of all, we know only good will follow. Through **small acts of kindness** by brave and gentle hearts, the world will come to healing. It may not come all at once. No great warrior king may come to lead us in a spiritual battle, but perhaps instead, the gentle wisdom and love of a great many hearts will do the same work and achieve the same result – **peace**.

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Words By Edwina Shaw

Writer and teacher of workshops, combining writing and yoga.

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comments

4 Responses to The Legend of The Shambhala Warriors

Susmita Barua says: April 23, 2019 at 9:31 am. The confidence of Shambhala warriors come from their inner Sun of Basic Goodness. They recognize it in themselves, which help them move forward in the age of darkness, chaos, doom and gloom. They can also help activate it in others and can even self-awaken by waking up the inner guru, healer and teacher. Also they can see through the mind-made illusion, fabrications, systems and structures and this allows them to serve others selflessly, inspite of the fear and hindrances, internal and external.

Donna Magee says: January 18, 2017 at 10:15 pm. I'm usually the first person in my circle to improve on or soften language that is being used but in this case, I disagree. Changing the language in this way seems to soften and weaken the task ahead for these warriors.

They will indeed need to be warriors to fulfill the tasks needed to achieve their goal of peace; struggling to maintain their own internal peace, compassion and love in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties would indeed be a true test of their courage, internal strength and faith. All warriors need these traits in any kind of battle.

You would reduce their heroism to "work" and "tools"?

Edwina Shaw says: January 20, 2017 at 10:44 am. Hi Donna, Thanks very much for your comment. I agree with you, great courage, strength and faith is needed to face the times we live in and to overcome the powers that be. I see this courage in birthing women who face their own deaths as they bring life into the world. And it is this courage we need as we encounter the challenge ahead to bring healing and peace to our planet. Perhaps my words aren't quite right – but for me, and I know not for everyone – words used to describe war and the harming of others aren't quite right either.

IC says: February 23, 2020 at 6:41 am. What about Master Healers using healing powers 😊

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