



Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior

Chögyam Trungpa, Carolyn Rose Gimian (Editor)

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In this practical guide to enlightened living, Chögyam Trungpa offers an inspiring vision for our time, based on the figure of the sacred warrior. In ancient times, the warrior learned to master the challenges of life, both on and off the battlefield. He acquired a sense of personal freedom and power—not through violence or aggression, but through gentleness, courage, and self-knowledge. The Japanese samurai, the warrior-kings of Tibet, the knights of medieval Europe, and the warriors of the Native American tribes are a few examples of this universal tradition of wisdom. With this book the warrior's path is opened to contemporary men and women in search of self-mastery and greater fulfillment. Interpreting the warrior's journey in modern terms, Trungpa discusses such skills as synchronizing mind and body, overcoming habitual behaviors, relaxing within discipline, facing the world with openness and fearlessness, and finding the sacred dimension of everyday life. Above all, Trungpa shows that in discovering the basic goodness or human life, the warrior learns to radiate that goodness out into the world for the peace and sanity of others. The Shambhala teachings—named for a legendary Himalayan kingdom where prosperity and happiness reign—thus point to the potential for enlightened conduct that exists within every human being. "The basic wisdom of Shambhala," Trungpa writes, "is that in this world, as it is, we can find a good and meaningful human life that will also serve others. That is our true richness."

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior Details

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From Reader Review Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior for online ebook

David James says

Shambhala is a bit special. It feels like a gentle walk with someone who cares about you who is gently encouraging you to open up to the world around you deeper than you have before, despite fear or other reactions that suggest opening is unsafe. It reminded me of experiences I have had with both an animal and human teacher, neither of whom are here now which made this a slightly bitter, much more sweet read.

When I was only a young fella, probably 5 or 6 (if that) I went with my dad to collect Boo from a remote Australian dog pound. Probably a mercy mission of my mum's, Boo was a dog who would go on to live to be a canine senior citizen of big dog 15 years. Boo was a scruffy bitch of unknown parentage who just had a way of quietly being present. Boo lived every minute, running across fields, even being hit by a farm vehicle when she was 8 or so she would continue to run her modified, sideways run joyful pink tongue akimbo out the side of her mouth. Sticking her head out the window she would bite the air coming her way and she loved each day and person as hard as she could. It may be a stereotype yet reading Shambhala reminded me of riding or running under the trees on a long hot day with Boosie soaking up every experience until we buried her under the sniffing tree on her favourite run.

Another mate of mine was a bloke who also "lived life alive," appreciated the small stuff and more often than not was the mate who would greet shenanigans or planned adventure as if it would be crazy NOT to do it. He had (and showed) an open, brave heart which as Shambhala says is the core of meditation. Presence rather than transcendence. Living loud rather than hunching small or living a life according to others expectations. Shambhala adds the concept of wind horse, lungta, which is the capacity of mastering internal and external energy sources (drala) to powerful, humanist and personal outcomes. Which warrior could disagree with that?

Sherry says

I love this book, especially after being introduced to Chogyam Trungpa's Shambhala way by some of his disciples at the ALIA Leadership Institute I just went to in Halifax and the track on "Leader as Spiritual Warrior" that I took with Meg and Jerry as the guides.

Finishing the book on my little porch on my cabana at the Finca Mistica on the Olmetepe Isle on Lake Nicaragua this morning, I delighted in the second to last chapter on authentic presence where I discovered the four dignities and finally understood more the teaching that has been grating on me since Meg and Jerry put it forth: we need to give up fear and hope to become fearless warriors. I'm still having some trouble giving up hope but am getting closer to understanding why it is necessary to do so to become the warrior they invite.

Okay, the four dignities are meek, perky, outrageous and inscrutable!

Quote:

Meekness is basically experiencing a humble and gentle state of being, while perkiness is connected with uplifted and youthful energy. Outrageousness is being daring and entering into situations without hope and

fear, and inscrutability is the experience of fulfillment and uncontrived, spontaneous achievement.

The analogy for meekness is the tiger in its prime, who moves slowly but heedfully through the jungle....The tiger walks through the jungle with mindfulness. But because the tiger likes his body and his bounciness and sense of rhythm, he is relaxed. From the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail, there are no problems. His movements are like waves, he swims through the jungle. So his watchfulness is accompanied by relaxation and confidence. For the warrior of meek, confidence is a natural state of awareness and mindfulness in the way he conducts his own affairs.

The principle of perky is symbolized by a snow lion who enjoys the freshness of the highland mountains. The snow lion is vibrant, energetic, and also youthful....The warrior of perky is both humble and uplifted, as well as fundamentally youthful.

Outrageousness is symbolized by the garuda, a legendary Tibetan bird who is traditionally referred to as the king of birds. The garuda hatches full-grown from its egg and soars into outer space, expanding and stretching its wings, beyond any limits. Likewise, having overcome hope and fear, the warrior of outrageous develops a sense of great freedom....The warrior of outrageous also possesses great mercy for others. Because you have no obstacles to expanding your vision, you have immense capabilities of working for others.

Inscrutability is represented by the dragon. The dragon is energetic, powerful, and unwavering. But these qualities of the dragon do not stand alone without the meekness of the tiger, the perkiness of the lion, and the outrageousness of the garuda....Inscrutability is a state of wholesomeness within which there is not gap or hesitation. It is therefore a sense of truly living, of actually leading your life; it is a feeling of hardcore solidity, but at the same time you are continuously sharpening your intelligence. Question and answer occur simultaneously and therefor inscrutability is continuous.

Chogyam Trungpa died at 47 in Halifax. Imagine his teachings if he'd lived longer....perhaps he does....

Chilly SavageMelon says

I can't say it's bad without really trying to implement the lifestyle described, but I've read other similar works that were more inspiring. For example, there's a volume I can't find on here, a series of letters complied into a volume called Advanced Meditation by Yogi Ramachakra that came out early in the 20th century. While reading the explanation of the ego, will etc. I was suddenly inspired to quit smoking.

While there's nothing wrong with what's being said here, it seems aimed at the complete Western novice.

And though it shouldn't directly reflect on the work, I can't completely forget the tales about the author, an alcoholic who died at 47, and some scandals at the Boulder center. Plus it was given to me by a drunken girlfriend, I drink myself but wasn't at the time, and we both exhibited some very non-Shambhala behavior and words during the break-up, which happened before I could finish this book. She was high on her windhorse, and I have the emails to prove it...

Nicholas says

A guide on how to live you life properly. Could lead to a lot of narration. Same as the Alchemist.

Quotes:

"That is the definition of bravery: not being afraid of yourself."

"In spite of all our problems and confusion, all our emotional and psychological ups and downs, there is something basically good about our existence as human beings. Unless we can discover that ground of goodness in our own lives, we cannot hope to improve the lives of others."

"The problem is that, when we begin to realize the potential goodness in ourselves, we often take our discovery much too seriously...A genuine sense of humor is having a light touch: not beating reality into the ground but appreciating reality with a light touch."

"True fearlessness is not the reduction of fear, but going beyond fear."

"In working with ourselves, cleaning up begins by telling the truth. We have to shed any hesitation about being honest with ourselves because it might be unpleasant."

"The way of cowardice is to embed ourselves in a cocoon, in which we perpetuate our habitual patterns...We cannot just reject the world of the cocoon, even though it is quite horrific and unnecessary. We have to develop genuine sympathy for our own experiences of darkness as well as those of others. Otherwise, our journey out of the cocoon simply becomes a setting-sun holiday."

"But then, once you have made a leap of daring, you might become arrogant. You might say to yourself: "Look I have jumped! I am so great, so fantastic!" But arrogant warriorship does not work. It does nothing to benefit others."

"Warriorship is a path or a thread that runs through your entire life. It is not just a technique that you apply when an obstacle arises or when you are unhappy or depressed. Warriorship is a continual journey. To be a warrior is to learn to be genuine in every moment of your life."

"When you live your life in accordance with basic goodness, then you can be spacious and relaxed, without having to be sloppy. You can actually let go of your depression and embarrassment about being a human being, and you can cheer up."

"Bravery is the courage to be - to live in the world without any deception and with tremendous kindness and caring for others."

"Good behavior is not meant to build us up so that we can think of ourselves as little princes or princesses. The point of good behavior is to communicate our respect for others."

"If we try to solve society's problems without overcoming the confusion and aggression in our own state of mind, then our efforts will only contribute to the basic problems, instead of solving them...If you want to solve the world's problems, you have to put your own household, your own individual life, in order first...So

the first step in learning how to rule is learning to rule your own household, your immediate world."

"The way of the warrior, how to be a warrior, is not a matter of making amateurish attempts, hoping that one day you will be a professional. There is a difference between imitating and emulating. In emulating warriorship, the student of warriorship goes through stages of disciplined training and constantly looks back and re-examines his own footprints or handiwork. Sometimes you find signs of development, and sometimes you find signs that you missed the point. Nevertheless, this is the only way to actualize the path of the warrior."

Luke says

Not knowing exactly what to write, I wanted to write a review to remind myself of the key points in this book and share something that is likely not on most people's radars. Much of this book can't be summarized or fully captured in a blog post, but I think the quote below gives you an idea of what you'll find in here. The basic premise is that we need to fully accept what it means to be human, taking our "bad" with the good, and facing this fact—embracing our humanness—is an act of being a warrior. And actually it teaches to not think of things as "good" or "bad" in our nature, but merely as a state of being what we are. Once we can accept this, then we can begin to move forward in "uplifting our lives."

A great deal of chaos in the world occurs because people don't appreciate themselves. Having never developed sympathy or gentleness towards themselves, they cannot experience harmony or peace within themselves, and therefore, what they project to others is also inharmonious and confused. Instead of appreciating our lives, we often take our existence for granted or we find it depressing and burdensome. People threaten to commit suicide because they aren't getting what they think they deserve out of life. They blackmail others with the threat of suicide, saying that they will kill themselves if certain things don't change. Certainly we should take our lives seriously, but that doesn't mean driving ourselves to the brink of disaster by complaining about our problems or holding a grudge against the world. We have to accept personal responsibility for uplifting our lives.

In order to get the most out of this book, I had to be open. There are many phrases and whole chapters in here that are written in such a way that they almost seem like something from a cheesy, B-rated kung-fu film. Being open though, I was able to get past some of these awkward styles and really see the lesson being offered. There is also a whole chapter on meditation and the author admits outright that it's really just a beginning guide and that you can't fully grasp the concept without studying with a practiced mentor. Still, I found it quite useful and have used it from time to time to gain some peace in my day-to-day.

Much of the underlying message is guiding the reader through releasing fear:

Acknowledging fear is not a cause for depression or discouragement. Because we possess such fear, we also are potentially entitled to experience fearlessness. True fearlessness is not the reduction of fear; but going beyond fear.

Another key point in this book is not just moving beyond fear but also hope. It sounds strange at first, but I think the point was that in hope, we often have expectation. And expectations often lead us to disappointment and resentment of others. I have found that practicing being in the present moment, the

"now", has allowed me to move beyond fear and expectation, and therefore has allowed me to find moments of peace in the midst of my chaotic life. Most of my anger, depression, restlessness is due to regretting something that has already happened, or worrying about what *will happen*. This book has been an invaluable guide for figuring out how to approach and overcome fear in my life.

This book can be a lofty and awkward read at times, but if you're open, I think it's an excellent place to begin figuring out how to overcome many things rooted in fear (anger, stress, depression, resentment, etc.) It will at least provide a different way of looking at yourself and the world around you, and I think that's always something worth checking out.

Ashley says

The Sacred Path of the Warrior is an amazing and rather interesting read. I didn't actually expect to relate to the lessons and methods explained within the book, but I was sorely mistaken. This book takes you through each step of becoming a warrior in life. In other words, this book helps you to become aware of yourself and the world around you. It really puts the reader in the hot seat because its so easy to find things in life that you need to work on. This book is more of a philosophical and psychological read, so its perfect for open minded people, especially those that are interested in human adaptation and interaction in the world. Trungpa elaborates on how to conquer fears, self-doubt, negativity, and aggression by getting to the root cause of these problems that most of us face from time to time. He also explains how meditation benefits the body and mind by creating synchronization. Even if you aren't interested in that sort of thing, the book is still very intuitive and relevant to a great majority of people. I would highly recommend that people should at least read a chapter or two because its such a cool and different take on self awareness.

Mara says

Inspiration from the ancient Tibetan Kingdom of Shambhala as a means to strive for an enlightened society in modern times carries powerful messages. The Buddhist foundation is grounding while expanding to encompass all beings in a non-religious way of life mentality focused on fearlessness, egolessness, and soft-heartedness. These and related characteristics are the "true face" of the warrior.

Recognizing and appreciating the basic goodness of life as it is, being compassionate to yourself and others, and living each moment with genuineness sounds simple but as we all know is anything but simple. Hence the need for teachers and guides (or whatever term you want to use) where Chogyam Trungpa is one that we all could learn from with this book serving as a foundational guide for a path well-worth traveling.

Gerardo says

Beyond mindfulness, before mindfulness. This is what I got from reading on the XXI Century Shambhala, Chogyam Trungpa's classic. Throughout its pages, the renowned meditation teacher and artist develops a secular approach to living a fulfilling and meaningful life according to the Shambhala teachings. Although these are rooted on Buddhism, its application can be implemented by anyone interested in making the best out of his or her life, and benefitting as many people around as possible.

So, expect to find meditation instructions, ethics and lots of inspiring tips to develop the most admirable

attitudes in human existence - fearlessness, dignity, strength and so forth. Also, I really appreciated Trungpa's work on redefining much of these concepts, giving them a brand new meaning devoid of any selfish or negative connotation.

However, on the didn't-like-it-so-much side, which is why I gave it 3 stars (although that's still a "I liked it"), is what I find is a lack of specific instructions on how to develop these attitudes. Although the meditation and developing drala instructions are very clear, there are almost none on the deeper topics (such as developing the tiger, lion, dragon and garuda attitudes). This is understandable from knowing that there are specific training programs in Shambhala centers around the world, but I still miss some more details.

Other than that, very interesting book in which a Buddhist approach to living life is adapted for the Western mind.

Linda Martin says

I will be honest - I found this difficult to read but by sheer power of stubbornness I slogged through it and tried to learn the philosophy. There's a lot of wisdom shared on right living and the path of a spiritual warrior. It was not at all what I expected! The path is very subdued and subtle. I took notes on every chapter... I'll share a few with you.

Chapter One: Creating an Enlightened Society

Basic secular human wisdom can solve the problems of this world. There's a discussion of where Shambhala is - in or near Tibet, north of the river Sita. Some believe it is still here and others believe all the residents became enlightened and so the city disappeared into a higher dimension where the Rigden rulers still help to educate and enlighten humankind. They are expected to return here to help save humankind from destruction, one of these days. Soon, perhaps? Some believe Shambhala was a real or mythical place, but this book approaches the belief that Shambhala is not external, but is "the ground or root of wakefulness that exists as a potential within every human being." Our duty is to appreciate the ideal of the perfect human society and seek to emulate it as enlightened citizens.

Chapter Thirteen: How to Invoke Magic

External drala: clean the house! Internal drala: dress with dignity and eat right. Secret drala: a result of the two other dralas and gives you a sense of 'ownness'. It brings a sense of the Windhorse, riding on basic goodness, a wind of delight and stability of a horse: movement, speed, practicality, discrimination, skill. Drala means energy beyond aggression and helps you see the world as it really is. "You actually experience being able to connect yourself to the inconceivable vision and wisdom of the cosmic mirror on the spot."

That should be enough to give you a sense of what this book contains. I learned a lot about Buddhist thought and why Buddhist monks act the way they do.

Max says

For those interested in methods for the edification of the heart and spirit without relying on ghosts or Flying Spaghetti Monsters, this book is a must read. Yet interestingly enough, most of what Trungpa is saying is mirrored in the more profound aspects of Christianity, especially in the exegesis of scholars like Bultmann or

Tillich, provided the reader doesn't get hung up on cosmetic differences but thinks about the *meaning* of the words. I can recommend this book with an open heart equally to atheists and skeptics and to the religious, which is special enough; the excitement that comes off the page and into the reader's heart is of a different order entirely.

Robin says

As part of my 2015 reading challenge I was to read the book at the bottom of my to-read list. I'm not sure why I wanted to read this, but it was my very first Goodreads "to-read" book. The title seems intimidating, as I'm suspicious if not cynical about the words sacred and warrior, and have no desire to be either. But since I inherited the book from a friend who passed away, with whom I'd shared many books, I thought it was worth a try. I needed to cross it off my challenge list anyway, plus it's only 150 pages. I can't claim to have understood the whole book, but the early and middle chapters contain some surprisingly good suggestions for improving one's attitude and life experience.

First of all, the word warrior is used in the Eastern sense. It's not about aggression, preparing for war, or doing battle with others. It's about subduing personal habits that rob oneself of inner peace. And sacred has nothing to do with religion or being holier than thou. It seems to be more about practicing meditation and believing in the goodness of the world and the goodness of oneself in preparation for sharing one's talents with the world.

Trungpa suggests adopting a different world-view from that which is commonly held. In what he calls the setting sun world (mindset), most people see resources dwindling, expect the worst, and are fearful of the future. In the alternative view, the great eastern sun world, all is illuminated and the world is basically good. There is no need for fear if a person truly believes in the goodness of their environment and their own person—despite anything "bad" that might happen along the way. This simple concept isn't that easy to put into practice, but the way in which Trungpa writes about it is calming and cheering, emphasizing self-forgiveness in simple and lovely language. He also gives some specific meditation instructions that are fairly easy (except for the crossed-leg sitting on the floor part, which I skipped).

The book goes on to some more esoteric Tibetan symbology as well as quoting from children's literature amongst its practical advice. It's really a unique book. Even though I didn't understand all of it, nor take the time to ponder the symbolic parts, my four-star rating reflects the feel-good aspects and simple advice in the straightforward chapters that I did understand without any effort. My advice to readers is to take what resonates with you and leave the rest.

Chris says

Finally finished. Meh. Some good stuff but really preachy as well. Just not my style.

Izak Last says

I try and live my life by the wisdom contained in this book. It focuses on the rising sun and not the setting

sun, a great way to adjust one's outlook on life. I try to read a few lines from it every week even though I have read it many times.

Laura says

Confession: I didn't finish this book. Realization: It doesn't matter.

Last year I read *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, also by Trungpa. Both it and this book are the kind you can read, chew on, chew on, then come back to. Its a part of a journey. That being said, they could also be used as part of a very intentional practice, which I hope to get back to.

If you've ever wondered how to delve into the layers of your psyche without the use of drugs, pick up this book. The use of imagery is particularly helpful as a part of practice, aiding the reader with memorable visions of what it looks like to act honestly and from your own heart, versus acting from a cluttered mind. In the din of daily life, these metaphors will guide you.

Trungpa is perhaps the most clear and real of the masters in syntax and structure. His words cut like a knife to the heart of the matter: recognizing ego's machinations. It is easy to read, though every mouthful is so rich and true as to be savored and held forever.

Charlie says

Hmmm, once upon a time Trungpa comes out to a large audience waiting to hear his lecture. He was late. When he finally appears, dead drunk, he stumbles to the mic and states simply, "You read the book" and walks away. For this the people in attendance had paid five bucks.

I'm glad that so many Americans have found Buddhism to soothe their agnostic needs to have a God who does not exist but as the author of this book states about his final (and arguably best) text, "it's secular". Trungpa was a freak and he died an alcoholic death, swollen liver. The straight forward philosophy of basic goodness, you get what you give, and pain in Shambhala is sort of trumped up with needless magical prose and Chogyam's air of self importance no doubt fueled by his naive but well meaning devotees. Here's lookin at you Boulder.

Jordan says

The first part was really interesting, the second part definitely lost me, and the third part was a mix of the previous two. Mostly what lost me in the second part was Trungpa's constant redefining of words to mean something only vaguely similar to their normal usages. It was frustrating to have to constantly remember that fearlessness didn't really mean fearlessness and magic didn't really mean magic. I know sometimes concepts don't translate well into English, but I really wish he could have come up with a better substitute or just used a closer Tibetan term. At least with a foreign term all I have to do is remember a definition, not remember and additionally try and block out an already existing definition. It really made it hard to see some of his concepts clearly. After finishing the book and taking a step back, some of his overarching concepts were

interesting, but mostly I think this book just wasn't for me.

Bryan says

People occasionally ask me if I attended Naropa University. My response is that if I was an adult when I chose were to attend university I would have attended Naropa University.

This popular text by Naropa's founder is required reading there. Though nominally secular, Buddhism is at the core of this spiritual primer. Not that different from other introductory Buddhist texts, this book is nice breath of fresh air, or a foot in the door for those wanting to learn more about Buddhism (or just the whacked out life of Chogyam Trungpa). I think though the current Dalai Lama's often humorous public persona makes Trungpa's approach very familiar.

Now that I am nominally an adult, would I still choose to attend Naropa University?

David Guy says

I've probably read this book five or six times; I just seem to know when I need to. Supposedly it is talking about a secular practice that is not specifically Buddhist, but it's quite apparent that Buddhist thought and practice are behind it; only the terminology has been changed. Somehow or other I find this to be Trungpa's most inspiring and accessible book, and am always very much inspired by it. It's about basing your life in meditation practice, and learning to live out of that.

Trungpa's life is a puzzle to me, but his teaching always seems clear and beautifully phrased. He was a brilliant man, and a great teacher.

Christopher Cordry says

This book is awesome. Trungpa's writing style is a little bit quirky, but if you can appreciate the subtle humor, you will enjoy it.

I wish someone had given me this book when I was a teenager. It's like a manual for being an adult--a mature human being living in the world. It cuts straight through our habitual patterns of thought and action, our addiction to comfort, our laziness and our delusions.

Trungpa occasionally delves into esoteric territory (e.g. the chapters on invoking drala, or magic), but for the most part, his message is simple: wake up, be present, have the courage to embrace reality as it is.

Unfortunately, this book might be a little confusing for someone with no prior knowledge of Buddhism, so I can't really recommend it as a beginner book--except to those few with the intelligence and natural curiosity to bear with Trungpa despite his idiosyncratic writing style and tendency to go off on weird little tangents.

In the end, though, this is one of the most direct and challenging books about the spiritual path that I have ever encountered. It is one of those rare books that seems to have a life of its own, its own intelligence and intentionality. Trungpa's motivation--the awakening and liberation of all beings--shines through it like the pole star. For sincere seekers, I can't recommend this book highly enough. It will cut through your bullshit and bring you back to reality--like being punched in the face by a bodhisattva.

Ariel Desouza says

This book changed my life tremendously.
