

## Bringing In the Sun

The story of the first Children's Day

By Lila Rich

Once upon a timeless time, in the land of Shambhala, the country and its people were getting ready for wintertime.

The lovely, long days of summer were over, and so were the harvest feasts, with all the joyful gatherings and delicious foods to eat.

It was time for the children of Shambhala to bring out their colorful coats and hats and gloves to keep them warm on their walks to school.

As the days grew colder, the daylight hours of sunshine got shorter and the dark nighttime grew longer and longer, something was changing in the mood of the country. The mothers and fathers of Shambhala were becoming more serious.

It seemed that the grownups were feeling a little scared – scared about the future, and they were worrying greatly about the winter's supplies for the family. They measured and counted their supplies of food to eat and firewood for warmth, and warm clothing to wear, medicines for colds and flu, and ratnas, Shambhala money, to pay their debts. The grownups were working harder and harder, and getting more and more serious each day, until they hardly ever laughed or smiled or had time to play with the children.

After a while, this worried and serious mood started to bother the children, and they felt just a little bit less cheerful and delighted than usual.

Even at the Kalapa Court where the king and the queen, the Sakyong and the Sakyong Wangmo, were living with their two children, everyone on the staff was so busy all the time, making sure everything was working; from cleaning the chimneys to sealing out the cold drafts from the windows. The royal parents themselves had so many meetings and government business to attend to that princess Yeshe and prince Dawa could feel the seriousness, too.

One day during school recess, when the prince and princess were chatting with their schoolmates about how hard all the parents were working, and how tired they were feeling, one of the children said, "Even though winter is here and the sun goes down earlier every day, and the nights are getting longer, in Shambhala we always have the Great Eastern Sun to brighten our minds and warm our hearts." And another classmate said, "Maybe we should have a celebration, or a festival in the winter so that we can remember the cheerful confidence of the Great Eastern Sun."

When the queen and king heard about the children's idea of a winter festival to cheer up the kingdom they said, "The children are right! From now on we will have a festival every winter at the time of the solstice when the sun in the sky starts its journey back, and we will name the festival Children's Day in honor of the children of Shambhala whose good hearts and beautiful faces remind us of the Great Eastern Sun everyday."

And so the people of the land of Shambhala, and the Shambhala warriors around the world rejoiced and celebrated Children's Day on the winter solstice that year, and every winter thereafter.

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First told to the Children's Day gathering at Shantigar, the retreat place of the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin in Ojai, California on Dec. 21, 1994 – Lady Lila Rich presiding  
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