

The broken bowl of Shambhala and Kintsugi, art of precious scars

When a bowl or a precious vase breaks into pieces, we think that it is finished, - and we throw it.

There is a Japanese practice that highlights and enhances the breaks thus adding value to the broken object. It's called kintsugi (金継ぎ), that means golden ("kin") and repair ("tsugi").

This traditional Japanese art uses a precious metal – liquid gold, liquid silver or lacquer dusted with powdered gold – to bring together the pieces of a broken pottery item and at the same time enhance the breaks.



"When something's suffered and has an history, it becomes more beautiful."

(B.Bloom, about Kintsugi Art)

The scars become what to exhibit

With this technique it's possible to create a new piece of art, with its own story and beauty, due to the unique cracks formed when the object breaks, as if they were wounds that leave different marks on each of us.

How many beautiful messages the kintsugi technique conveys

When something breaks, it doesn't mean that it is no more useful. Its breakages can become valuable.

"To repair things in a way we obtain more valuable objects. This is the essence of resilience. Looking for a way to cope with traumatic events in a positive way, learn from negative experiences, take the best from them and convince ourselves that exactly these experiences make each person unique, precious."

(from Stefano Carnazzi)

Kintsugi is built on the idea of strength and beauty in imperfection.

This art form is seen to many as a metaphor for brokenness and healing—that embracing one's brokenness and imperfections can create something unique, beautiful and strong.

In kintsugi, the cracks on a vase aren't hidden and are instead used as part of the design, a reminder that the 'bad' will always exist; it's a normal part of life. But we have the power to still create something beautiful.

Kintsugi makes broken objects stronger than before. It refocuses our attention from what the object "should have been" (i.e. unbroken) to creating something beautiful and strong with what we do have.

And well, it's a reminder that if you break something, it's not the end of the world. It's a slow and careful ceremonial of patience and concentration, step by step, day after day, month after month, the broken object is cleaned, cared for, healed, sublimated.

As a philosophy, kintsugi treats breakage and repair as part of the important history of an object rather than something to disguise. It focuses not on replacement, but on awe, reverence and restoration.

Shambhala

Kintsugi sounds like a good practice to see Shambhala's future.

Shambhala's structure is the bowl itself, the container. The container is breakable and could be treated as said above.

Shambhala's teachings are the *content* of the bowl. Shambhala's teachings are unbreakable. They are the transmission of a lineage starting at the Buddha itself, through the lineage. The future of the teachings has to be treated by the lineage. This is beyond our competencies.

To be a teacher and to be a leader are two different functions.

To understand the situation, we have to re-read the Letter of Black Ashe. The Vidyadhara was speaking of the dark age which are arising in our world, probably aware that these difficult times will also be so dark times for Shambhala Sangha itself...

Then we can read the Letter of Black Ashe with this new point of view of the Dark Age of Shambhala, and a lot of things suddenly become obvious. So far, we have some clues on the next question: "So what are we going to do now?" "At those times of great confusion" in Shambhala, "when fear and doubt occurred", some people forget their inner confidence, forget their Basic goodness, in themselves, in others, in the society.

Shambhala is in trouble, in confusion. A lot of suffering arose, a lot of quarrel occurred among the sangha. We have to solve these problems, these huge difficulties. To support and heal the victims, to prevent such discordances. But it's not the end of the world. It's the end of a world, a fairy tale world we imagined in our heads, a world where everyone is beautiful, everyone is gentle. The end of a dream. We are back to reality. Here and now.

Most of us are committed to an Enlightened Society. Good. But did we really think that would be easy, comfortable and without pain?

We call ourselves Warriors. It's a war! With suffering, with tears and blood, with torn apart, with friends falling on the fields, with heroes and "countless multitudes of cowards". Of course this is an allegory and we won't cut any throat. But if the battle is on another level, the obstacles are similar. It's not a game. In fact, again, we are in the real world.

Therefore, I repeat the question:

"So what are we going to do, here and now?"

Do we want to be part of the problem, or part of the solution?

We are warrior, not judges. As warriors, we know that who was a coward yesterday can be a hero tomorrow. We can't judge anyone who felt, as we probably felt ourselves sometimes in the past, in other circumstances, in another way, experimenting we are not perfect too. Human beings are human beings, teachers or not.

And as warrior we are not alone. We are connected. And we have to be more connected to each others, more committed to the Enlightened Society, committed to creating a world, a Shambhala world for beginning, where such trouble wouldn't happen. Staying in the vision of the Four dignities, able to fly as a Garuda, not depending of what happen on the Earth, but not disconnected of it, able to see thing things from high.

At the same time, we also have to heal all the victims, the victims, the victims of those who felt, and those who felt as victims of themselves. Everybody can be repaired. With gold. The same and another nevertheless,

As Buddhists, the first question we have to ask ourself is:

"What could I change, starting from myself, that could make for this not to happen, that could make a difference?"

Shambhala will never be the same. So let us make it better, not worse.

What we have to do is to consider the Shambhala structure, container, the shanga, committees, ministries, centers, and all the official organization not strictly part of the essence of the teachings.

We have to do a profound reflection about who we are, and how we want to re-create a new Shambhala, using some ancient parts, creating new ones with love and gold. We have to start from the field, from the people, and create a global network. Open space, transparent like the crystal.



As the Kintsugi-resilience Japanese culture do: if the Shambhala container is cracked, let us stick it with gold, erected more beautiful on the top of the highland mountain, visible from everywhere, transparent as a "castle of crystal".

Let us be "*always without quarrel, ever loving and very generous*" (Chögyam Trungpa).

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