

NYIDA DAYS

Over the years our community has adopted a tradition of celebrating the changes of the seasons. These are called “nyida” days from the Tibetan words *nyima* (sun) and *dawa* (moon), and they occur on, or near, the days of the equinoxes and solstices. Nyida days are family-oriented celebrations and occasions for local Shambhala communities to gather socially



Shambhala Day- Lunar New Year/ Losar
Shambhala Arts Day- Spring Equinox
Midsummer’s Day- Summer Solstice
Harvest of Peace- Autumnal Equinox
Children’s Day- Winter Solstice

Most centers regularly celebrate these holidays. To encourage the inclusion of families and children you can always offer children’s programming for each of these days. You can use the framework for a [Family Meditation Day](#), and include the theme of discussing the holiday. Often the Shambhala Sadhana is offered on Shambhala Day and the Harvest of Peace. Children can be welcomed in to sit with their parents, practice the sadhana, or a quiet activity like coloring can be set up in the shrine room so they can be part of it. Also children love to participate in the Lhasang ceremony and it’s good to explain this to them and/or let them have a miniature one of their own. Often these celebrations include potlucks as well. Midsummer’s Day is often celebrated outdoors at a park and is a great way to plan a picnic and games with children and adults.

Children’s Day is unique, as it celebrates children in particular. This holiday provides a special opportunity to express appreciation for, and with, our children. At a time when the weather begins to bear down upon us, we turn to family for celebration, creativity, and generosity. Because the solstice marks the time of year when the daylight has waned and the night is longest, light is a special characteristic of this holiday.

A Children’s Day Celebration can look many ways. Common elements included in the celebration are:

- Children’s Day Shrine: A King and Queen Doll are added, the water bowls are replaced with the 5 sense offerings, the Shrine is decorated with strung





lights, toys, animals, garlands, and offering bowls filled with candies. See the photographs on this and the previous pages.



- Shambhala Day King and Queen: two adults dress up as a King and Queen (or Queen and Queen or King and King or Monarch and Monarch). They “hold court” in the Shrine Room. The parents bring gifts for their children which are passed out by the King and Queen. The Monarchs might also read the story of Iliana to the children.
- Iliana Story: This is a Shambhala story of the Solstice traditionally read to children on this day. It has also been turned into a play. You could do the play as well. You can find the story [here](#).
- Songs: Often children learn a song and sing it as an offering to the Monarchs. Or the whole group could learn the song together. There are many songs [here](#) in the Children's Day Songs and Stories Manual. [Here](#) is an article about the We are the Warriors song including lyrics and audio.
- Offerings: Children can perform the Children's Day Four Dignity Offering Ceremony outlined [here](#).

Read about Children's Day Celebrations across the mandala [here](#).