

The ground of openness and trust

“We had as our guest the well-known Tibetan Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche . . . and we asked him what he thought of the tradition of Shambhala. To our astonishment, he replied very quietly, that although he had never been there, he believed in its existence and could see it in his mirror when he went into a certain state . . .

“That evening in our study he produced a small metal mirror of the Chinese type. After looking into it intently for some time, he began to describe what he saw . . . The most singular thing about the inhabitants of the city was that they were of all faiths, races, and nations, and appeared to come from the four corners of the earth.”

----Account of James George, *Searching for Shambhala*

The Mandala Governing Council, meeting in Boston from 4 to 7 December 2004, wishes formally to affirm that the continuing emergence of Shambhala Society must be based on the profound realisation of unconditional openness and trust in basic goodness that are the heart of our Kagyü, Nyingma, and Shambhala lineages.

We affirm deep respect for our spiritual and cultural heritage, the primacy in our mandala of the lineage of Sakyongs, and our appreciation for the forms they have developed. At the same time, we wish to acknowledge that we are a living tradition that allows for new forms and new teachings that enable people to have access to the wisdom, compassion and power of our Shambhala world.

In this spirit, we urge our community at all levels to reflect on the ways in which we can create containers for sane society within our mandala. Thus we can work compassionately with our differences and conflicts, so that there is respect for each other's commitment to different streams of teachings and practice. No one should face derision, exclusion, rejection, or retribution for holding or expressing their views or for dissenting from the views held by others, including the policies and practices of the leadership of the mandala.

We need to explore further the ways in which we can all work with the balance of feminine and masculine energies in ourselves and throughout our mandala, developing heartfelt and powerful communication with each other.

The governance of our mandala needs to embody the principles of openness, transparency and accountability, so that communication, participation, dialogue and debate can be included in the unfolding of natural hierarchy.

The process of community reflection and renewal in which we are now engaged must be conducted in such a way that it includes all generations, embracing elders, emerging leaders, the second and third generations, as well as those who feel they have been marginalized in our community over the years.

The Mandala Governing Council attempted to manifest this approach to governance in its meeting by devoting time to a talking circle on one of the issues of deepest concern to many members of our community: “As Shambhalians, our trust for the Sakyong varies widely from individual to individual. At one end of the continuum, a number of devoted students are deeply concerned that the Sakyong is systematically dismantling the Vidyadhara’s vision. At the other end of the continuum, equally devoted students feel the Sakyong is completely and brilliantly manifesting the Vidydhara’s vision.” The talking circle gave everyone the opportunity to speak about this from their heart. This was a deeply moving experience of opening to each other, of deep listening and unconditional appreciation.

We invite others throughout our mandala to engage fearlessly and compassionately in similar explorations, not only of this issue, but of the many others that abound throughout our mandala and are often associated with intense emotions, These include, but are not limited to:

- The need to respect the diversity of our transmissions and different allegiances that people hold within Shambhala;
- The fault lines resulting from differences of individual loyalties and devotion to different lineages and teachers;
- The fear that Shambhala is cutting itself off from the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages, and that practitioners of those lineages will feel excluded from the Shambhala community;
- The changing reality that we are now a mandala with one Sakyong and many teachers/root gurus;
- Disagreements resulting from the new Shambhala ngondro, the emergence of the Rigden as a central image for our shrine rooms and the introduction of a new shrine in Shambhala Centres;
- The concern that the new path associated with the Shambhala ngöndro will exclude people who are not Buddhists from the highest teachings of the Shambhala tradition, that Shambhalians not following the Buddhist path will be excluded from entry into the Kalapa Shambhala Society;
- The need to understand and come to terms with the differing views regarding Vajra Regent;
- Disagreements and confusion over the use of the term Shambhala Buddhism;
- Concern that it is not possible to communicate properly and give genuine feedback to the Kalapa Court;
- The difficulties many people experience as we go through transitions in leadership (as in the changes in Dorje Kasung and board leadership), generations, forms and practices;
- The deep concern that we are dealing with the loyalties and genuine concerns that divide us in ways that create polarization, that force people to choose between “one side” or the other, and that lead to the fear of exclusion.
- The feelings people have that they are not represented in the consultative and decision-making processes of the mandala;
- The need for clarity for the role of Nova Scotia as the centre of the mandala;

- The fear that the discussions around diversity are a matter of lip service rather than real commitment;
- The fear that the President is a non-human entity bent on world domination!

Our aspiration as the body entrusted with the governance of the mandala up to Shambhala Day 2005 is that our community will use the wisdom and practices of our lineage, as well as helpful upayas from other traditions, such as talking circles and other forms, to enable these and other concerns to surface freely and fearlessly within our community. We intend to bring the power of our collective wisdom and warriorship to bear and use these as the ground for the practice of enlightened society.

Adopted by the Mandala Governing Council* of Shambhala
**The transitional governing body of the mandala Feb 2004 – March 2005*
Boston
7 December 2004

Appendix B

Statement on diversity, inclusiveness and community in Shambhala Governance

We, the members of the Sakyong's Council, commit ourselves to a spirit of diversity, inclusiveness, and community in the governance of Shambhala.

At the heart of our tradition is the vast vision of the Druk Sakyong, the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, with its confluence of lineages, its rich fabric of teachings, forms and practices, and its aspiration to create enlightened society for the benefit of all beings.

Today, the Shambhala world continues to unfold. We are still mining the immense resource of the Druk Sakyong's teachings and example. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche is offering fresh perspectives, teachings and paths of practice. We also host many teachers. Our community itself is expanding to embrace new generations, social groups, languages and cultures.

While these developments bring increasing richness to our community and to what we offer to the world at large, they also highlight the need for open-hearted and penetrating discourse about the nature of our mandala, the range of teachings we present, and our different view points.

At the second Shambhala Congress the challenge of diversity and inclusiveness emerged as a central theme. This included the following questions:

- * How do we preserve the Vidyadhara's priceless legacy within the growing range of teachings we offer?
- * How do we accommodate multiple teachers within the framework of the Shambhala mandala and our emerging Shambhala society?
- * How do we provide for many traditions and levels of teaching and practice without watering down what we value?
- * How can the Shambhala mandala serve as a container for our varied lineages, teachers and practices?
- * What binds us as a community?
- * How do we work with the ever-growing diversity of ages, social groups, classes, languages and cultures?

As members of the Sakyong's Council, we are committed to clarity in answering these and other related questions. We will encourage wide-ranging and fearless dialogue throughout the mandala, and we ourselves will engage with these subjects over the course of the year.

In particular, it will be important to clarify the paths open to different practitioners, bearing in mind our graduated programs of study as well as the various teachings and practices that involve specific vows and authorizations. It will also be important to develop greater clarity about the offerings we provide to all those interested in meditation.

While the composition of the Sakyong's Council is not, by itself, a guarantee of this open spirit, we do comprise practitioners brought to the path by the Vidyadhara, the Vajra Regent and Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche -- and we study with a range of teachers. We span different points of view, generations, ethnic origins, race, social classes, and cultures. Our aspiration is that the challenge of working with our own diversity will help ground us as we work to promote openness, inquiry and deep appreciation of the basic goodness of everyone throughout our mandala.”

Adopted by the Sakyong’s Council
February 2005

Appendix C

Shambhala aspirations on diversity, accessibility and compassionate conduct

The teachings held by the Shambhala mandala challenge us as individuals to recognize and dissolve barriers that separate us from others. As a community of practitioners, we strongly encourage understanding of and respect for the basic goodness inherent in all individuals, social groups and cultures.

At this centre, we are committed to the teachings of our lineages, to the practice of meditation and meditation-in-action, and to genuine communication. These teachings and practices also help us gain insight into others' realities, appreciate diversity and work with conflict.

We strive to foster a welcoming atmosphere free of prejudice and to develop an inclusive and enlightened society with facilities fully accessible to all persons. Although some of our programs and events are open only to those who have fulfilled certain prerequisites, everyone is welcome at our centre regardless of religion, spiritual tradition or teachers, path of practice, opinions, class, nationality, culture, ethnicity, race, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical, perceptual or mental abilities.

Our centre is committed to creating a practice, study, and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. In addition to being bound individually and as a community to basic Shambhala and Buddhist standards of conduct, we are also citizens of the larger societies in which our centres are located worldwide and, therefore, must abide by public laws. These include, but are not limited to, laws pertaining to alcohol, drugs and sexual conduct. Each individual has the right to practice, study and work in an atmosphere that is free from discrimination.

As with all intentions, personal or collective, these aspirations chart our way forward, and it is our mutual responsibility to work together with each other to respect them. If any individual wishes to make recommendations to Shambhala, or is concerned that the actions of a member of Shambhala, including any of its office-holders, may not have been in accordance with these aspirations, please contact the Director of this Centre, the Rusung of the Dorje Kasung, or any appropriate person in the local leadership. Concerns about the behaviour of office-holders will be handled in accordance with the procedures set down in *Shambhala Care and Conduct*, a copy of which is available at this centre.

Adopted by the Sakyong's Council
December 2005

