

**The Second
Shambhala Congress**
13-17 February 2005
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Provisional Report

The Second Shambhala Congress continued the mandala building begun at the first congress and turned to the need for developing a spirit of inclusiveness capable of holding our diverse traditions, teachers, generations and cultures. It also devoted time to the challenges we face in accommodating changes, growth and differences.

“A key point is to share and communicate with a pure heart,” said Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. “We are here because we care. We need to be able to look at each other and feel we are all doing something worthwhile.”

“At the heart of this tradition is the Druk Sakyong and his vision of goodness and joy,” he said. “This vision is a contributing factor to a better world, a viable means of social transformation.”

The Congress was attended by more than 150 participants from all parts of our global mandala, with more people attending from Europe and Latin America this year than before.

Continuing to experiment with openness and listening, the congress set its own agenda, determining the themes it wished to discuss and holding several plenary sessions on the question of “factionalism and inclusiveness”. It also reviewed the recommendations of the eight working groups established after the first Congress as the basis for structural, financial and organizational reforms in the mandala.

The newly established Mandala Council (which includes representatives of all Shambhala Centres) and Sakyong’s Council will meet immediately after the congress to determine the next steps for working on the issues that surfaced.

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This provisional report includes the short reports produced by the dozen topic groups that unfolded at the congress. In order to ensure that all participants had a working summary of the congress proceedings to take back to their centres and groups, this document was compiled before the topic group reports were presented to the plenary and before discussion took place of the recommendations of the eight working groups.

The INSPIRATIONS

of members of the 2005 Shambhala Congress to attend and participate:

- Inspired to come to the Congress by the lineage. By devotion to and love for the Vidyadhara, to reconnect with the heart wish of the Dorje Dradül and to the Sakyong's big vision and fresh energy.
- Inspiration to connect with the centre of the mandala, to link up to that energy, to deepen our relationship to the greater mandala; some spoke of rejoining the mahasangha after many years, to tap into the larger picture and larger community and to really feel the sense of being a participant in a larger community
- Not only a process of linking to the centre, but also linking to each other. Partly of bringing the vitality and reality of our local centres and groups here to the centre of the mandala and then taking the energy and wisdom of the Congress back home with us to our centres- and also just being together here, re-uniting, getting to know each other and learning from each other.
- Inspired to be here by a profound need to be here; it's choiceless; a sense of responsibility; that being here is fulfilling our vows. Seeing how we can hold together in an unconditional world. "The sangha is my family." "When we gather as a group, it raises enlightened energy."
- This is an opportunity for raw, honest dialogue. Speaking from the heart start to create enlightened society- here we do that with others, with a sense of clan in a safe container for free expression. "I came here to support the process of opening up, holding our diversity and broader sense of loyalty that began at the first Congress." "The openness is an inspiration in itself."
- Within that openness "we can complete different, yet one", "be inclusive and overcome division" and "learn what binds us that is bigger and beyond our differences."
- Inspiration by specific objectives:
 - ⇒ To bring closure to the process started at the last Congress, followed through by the Working Groups
 - ⇒ To have answers to questions about the Primordial Rigden practice, the new shrine
 - ⇒ How to explain Shambhala Buddhism
- Most of all:
 - ⇒ Speaking from the heart and deep listening
 - ⇒ The world needs us and we need to get organized
 - ⇒ How big can it be, how far can it go?

The ASPIRATIONS of members of the 2005 Shambhala Congress of what was/is to be accomplished:

What is important to accomplish?

- To express, deepen, fulfill the inspiration that brought us here. Not necessarily to accomplish anything- rather just to be present with what's happening. To make a home for everyone, to come together, to know each other better, to increase TRUST, to share space in which we can feel good about what is happening, take pride in that, create an atmosphere of intimacy, fearlessness and love- none other than to create and be in the Kingdom of Shambhala.
- Within that atmosphere we can accomplish helping each other, share ideas of how to work with differences, touch back into our vows, and "go beyond the elephants and come to a common ground of devotion and surrender as our unifying common ground." "We can let go of our individual minds, see that we are at a confluence of many streams, create synergy or move forward." "The group can handle poison because of its strength and view."
- People also have specific concerns they want to address:
 - ⇒ Finish the work of last Congress and come up with a plan
 - ⇒ Inclusiveness:
 - Is the Kingdom of Shambhala open to the non-Buddhists? Was it ever?
 - How do other traditions, like Christianity fit in?
 - People who are students of teachers other than the current Sakyong?
 - ⇒ How do we develop mandala-wide coordination?
 - ⇒ How do we take back proposals, policies and implement them at our centres?
 - ⇒ Period of social service
 - ⇒ Women's issues
 - ⇒ Families and children
 - ⇒ Sense of neighborhood and deleks
- Sense of learning- about each other, our lineage, our inheritance, our Shambhala world
- Sense of healing- how to harness the energy of Shambhala and direct it for the benefit of all
- Sense not only of enlightened society, but of enlightened governance. To bring Shambhala centres authentically into the process of governance, speak up about what they need, but also what they have to offer, to see that this "process of Congress" embodies enlightened society. To bring us all together within the vision of an enlightened mandala.

Factionalism and Inclusiveness

A major theme of the Congress was the issue of “factionalism and inclusiveness”. This was overwhelmingly selected as the principal topic that people wished to discuss in plenary session. A total of five hours was devoted to open discussion of this theme involving all participants. There was also time spent in a smaller group discussion to go into this subject in more depth.

At the outset, the president outlined six strands that arose from the many cards on which people had expressed themselves at the outset of the Congress:

1. *One Sakyong, many teachers.*
How do we accommodate many teachers within the framework of the Shambhala mandala?
2. *Not watering down.*
How do we accommodate many traditions and levels of teaching and practice without watering down what we value?
3. *Preserving the Vidyadhara’s legacy.*
How do we ensure that the priceless legacy of the Vidyadhara’s transmission is not lost, while remaining open to change?
4. *Shambhala, the container.*
How can the Shambhala mandala, as a whole, be a container for diversity of lineages, teachers, and practices?
5. *The binding factor.*
What binds us as a community?
6. *Growing diversity.*
How do we work with the ever-growing diversity of ages, social, groupings, classes, languages and cultures?

There were a number of practical points raised:

- If members of Shambhala become tantrikas of other teachers, what is their status in relation to Vajrayana seminaries, teachings and texts within the Shambhala mandala?
- A “curriculum of support” is needed at all levels to support practitioners, meditation instructors and teachers so that they can understand and answer all the many questions that arise as a result of the constant process of change in our mandala. How could this be developed and delivered?
- Often people end up in leadership positions in our mandala without previous experience in such situations and particularly without the skills needed to work with conflict. Would it be possible to develop appropriate leadership training and coaching?
- How do people find out the truth about rumours they have heard? Is there a way to do a “fact check”?
- The process of change is one of the marks of existence. How can we use our teachings and practices to help us understand how best work with the consequences of change?
- How can we communicate more effectively in our mandala so that people understand changes and their consequences more thoroughly? People need to be able to place new information and new practices in an understandable context.

A letter from the New York vajra sangha was read out by the president in order to highlight concerns expressed by senior practitioners at the city's dynamic, developing centre. They stressed the importance of scheduling feast and other advanced practices so that the vajra sangha could participate in them and reserving the tantra shrine room so that it would always be useable by tantrikas; the importance of maintaining active links with teachers from principal Buddhist traditions (Kagyü and Nyingma); the preservation of an appropriate physical environment at centres so that the dharma is environmentally communicated; and so on.

There was also extensive discussion on what binds us, bearing in mind that what binds us most deeply is often non-conceptual and cannot be expressed in words. Several participants spoke of the underlying love that we all experience and extend to each other in our community – and how that same love and longing often underlies the deep concerns of people who want to ensure the continuity of all the streams of our inheritance.

Topic Group Summaries:

(In alphabetical order)

- 1. Communications**
- 2. Community Deleks**
- 3. Families and Children**
- 4. Feminine Principle**
- 5. Growth**
- 6. Kingdom of Shambhala, Court, Role of Warrior of the Center, and Forms**
- 7. Leadership Development**
- 8. Money**
- 9. Practice**
- 10. Regionalization**
- 11. Social Action**

Communications Topic Group

(with notes from the Factionalism & Inclusiveness group, with whom the Communications group merged on Wednesday afternoon)

1 & 2. What is at the heart of this issue for me / for my community?

- Communication is a spiritual practice, a „meditation in the world“ practice
- Communication is not the same as information dissemination, which is a necessary but not sufficient ingredient for good communication.
- Communication is not easy in a frenetic, speedy world. Genuine communication involves slowing down.
- Good communication requires understanding that we make assumptions, and bringing awareness to why we make them.

Re: Community -

- There is considerable unacknowledged pain in our sangha - we are not communicating well with one another in regard to our pain, fear and grief.
- We often do a poor job communicating with new students. This includes both verbal and nonverbal communications about who we are as Shambhalians.
- How do we communicate to each other and to new people that we care, that we want them to come back?

3. What is our vision of communications working well?

- In every committee, every group, every Council, someone is designated as the “communicator”, and is responsible for sharing what happens at that event.
- Training of mind and heart before engaging the mouth.
- Suspending judgment being willing to give space so that all positions and opinions may emerge in a safe, respectful atmosphere.
- Reaching out to those who feel disenfranchised.
- Being willing to acknowledge problems when they arise and address them openly, without gossip or blame.
- Genuine appreciation of each other.
- Lightness and a sense of humor.
- Good communication, based on mindfulness and precision, flows at all levels and between all levels.
- Practice “fearless kindness”
- Establishing a culture of listening well and responding well. Developing skills to help us do this, on both the interpersonal level and the macro-level.
- Being willing to trust each other with making decisions. Trusting each other, period.
- Establishing a container that can “hold” diverging viewpoints

4. What is currently working well?

- We care for each other and genuinely want to communicate.
- The Congress process is an excellent model for good communication.
- Talking Circles and other methods for deep listening.
- The system of working groups ^ putting effort into involving everyone provides a good model on large projects. Everyone feels invited. Creating transparent and accessible communication.
- SNS. Not perfect, but a big improvement. (Don,t overuse it, or it will become one more thing that people ignore)
- Q&A with the Sakyong is soooo helpful!
- Our print media is improving vastly most folks like The Dot.
- LOVE the marketing toolkit. Not only well done for outreach purposes, but the toolkit itself says “we hear you”, and provides core services useful to local centers.
- The Mandala Council, as a delegate system, goes a long way toward improving communications between the center and fringe of the mandala.

Communications Topic Group (cont.)

5. What is not working well?

- We are not good at handling conflict. No skills, no systems in place (those that are in place are either ineffective or insufficient.)
- We may not be taking full advantage of systems previously in place such as the delek system, etc.
- Email is both overused and misused as a form of communication. We are not discerning about how to use email. We cannot assume communication has taken place just because an email has been sent. We often don't disseminate information very well.
- There is no technology to substitute for really listening. Communication involves more than relaying "facts" (although getting the "facts" straight is a good place to start!)
- Language is often a barrier. We need more emphasis on translation, more awareness of the needs of non-English speakers.
- Inadequate communication between military and civilian, between civilian and religious (Council of Acharyas, Office of Practice & Education, Kasung, etc).
- Poorly monitored E-lists become frustrating to receive.
- When problems arise, rumors and gossip often displace an open, pro-active, factually oriented sharing of information and expression.
- Impatience, lack of lungta, feeling stressed, overworked, unappreciated these "emotions" greatly constrict how effectively we can receive what is being "communicated"

6. What next steps do we recommend?

- Developing upayas for living in community and for communication within our community. First and foremost, this involves relating to community as a spiritual practice, and relating to communication itself as spiritual practice.
- Remember: patience is the great austerity! Despite people's best efforts, communications "breakdown" and things don't go as planned. (look at the lateness of this report, which had very good hearted and dedicated people working on it but didn't happen in a timely fashion because of a technical glitch!)
- Training in conflict resolution, mediation, group process and facilitation for all leaders and anyone else who is interested.
- Revisiting currently existing systems which could be helpful in addressing concerns, such as the delek system.
- Developing guidelines for communicating via email: what to communicate in this manner, when and to whom. Monitoring e-lists so they do not become obnoxious, offensive and discursive. Giving someone the authority to make these decisions and clean up the garbage.
- As part of core services, developing materials to help Centers communicate better about who we are as Shambhalians, what we do, and what Shambhala means.
- Developing processes for communication between the military, civilian and religious Pillars, Limbs, whatever. Allowing someone, or a group of someones, to be in charge of developing and maintaining such processes. Similarly, systems should be in place for communications from the center to the fringe of the mandala, and everyone should know who's responsible for this.
- Active rumor control, based on proactive communication.
- Shambhalians must be provided with a contact list for core services so they know where and to whom they should address concerns and questions. The people whom they contact must be responsive.

Community Deleks Working Group

What is the heart of the issue for me?

Talking circle not recorded

What is the heart of the issue for us as a community?

Making people feel welcome (a word containing the words we and come)
Why does it seem to work in some places and not in others?

There seems to be a need for flexibility to accommodate the needs of the grass roots. Connection and communication horizontally and center to fringe is needed.

How does center to fringe communication relate to community care?

Trust, providing a safe place to speak from the heart.

Dekyong friend family how do you create the situation without imposing some structure?
Genuineness vs. contrived. Be perky daring don't wait for perfection. The ground is there the time has come the world needs this (that we become a community of communities)

Ongoing care-everyone involved, not a hi-how are you approach. Everyone feels a part of a caring community.

The division of becoming a vajrayana student apart from the rest of the community. Bodhicitta knows no boundary this is our central teaching it is also a litmus test of meditation in action.
Practice of the paramitas.

Deleks can fracture as well as bond. Bring teachings from head down to heart. Opportunity to go into heart. People are drawn to dharma initially to end their own suffering so we work with our own and others suffering in an ongoing way. Help and be willing to be helped. Initial gentle sense of curiosity is needed to arrive at a caring community. We have to learn to ask for help, trust. Practicing together regardless of level of practice.

What is our vision of this topic in our Shambhala Society?

What are the elements needed. Communication is a key, horizontal and vertical, to support each other's needs. Community care person (dekyong, desung, health and well being person) who is passionate about one are. Deleks came up.

Communicate out of basic goodness, with meditative view.

Education-introduce program about deleks and dekyongship. Invite teachers

Develop skillful means. Study, contemplate the meaning of community

What is currently working well in this area?

Social Gatherings- In Madrid Spain, after practice at the center, practitioners gather together at a local tapas to have a meal or drinks. This is a great way for communication, and care to grow horizontally, but the connection to the center administration is difficult. This is partially cultural where in Spain government and central administrations are often authoritarian.

In Austin Texas deleks divided by geographic experience uneven success. There are 3 deleks. The membership is approximately 125 people. Where there is common interest it has worked. Age or demographic groups have met with success where there is an open forum, raw dialogue, and food, especially chocolate!

Practicing together, especially with practitioners of different levels doing different practices has been successful in Lexington Kentucky

Community Deleks Working Group (cont.)

Regarding community and all its associated responsibilities and benefits as a practice was agreed to be essential. Community as Practice

Study groups develop a heart connection

Including children's programs at a centre. "If you build it they will come"

In Madrid, task delegation gets people involved

Taking a "cultivate the garden" approach to community and deleks rather than attempting to force a foreign structure works. Gardens need space, patience, manure, nurturing, cultivation, dormant seasons and growth seasons

What is currently not working so well?

A way to talk about community seems to be missing.

Gathering by age groups seems to work initially, but there is difficulty with attracting, engaging, and sustaining other segments of the community.

Movie nights have not met with success in a couple of centers

Getting everyone in the group "on-board" is often difficult.

Phone trees are hard to delegate.

There is a momentum behind "getting lost in the solitude of practice" overcoming this momentum is often difficult.

Children often complicate getting together. Different ages and numbers of children.

Time (priorities) are often an obstacle to extending out into the community. Personal momentum is often difficult to overcome.

Awkwardness and fear of being in a group.

Jargon is intimidating and doesn't help communication especially when newer and older students are talking.

Being too sweet and avoiding conflict doesn't work.

What next steps do we recommend in order to achieve our vision?

What is the food for our community fish?

There is a need to develop our understanding of and propagate the following:

- Spontaneous insight
- Talking circle, deep listening, connecting to space and basic goodness
- Education finds teachers to teach and inspire delek dharma. Show don't tell using exercises, practice!!
- Deleks, establish a buddy system of sister deleks for support of new deleks
- Community meetings
- Evoking feminine principle practice and action
- Use nametags
- Create contact lists
- Be mindful of appreciative speech
- Cultivate role-playing games to aid dekyongship practice.
- Spontaneous haiku in groups
- Co-operative social interaction

Community Deleks Working Group (cont.)

Who are the volunteers that will help implement this action plan?

- Create a List serve of centers and deleks and dekyongs (Richard Moreau)
- Compile a resource material list for community and delek building (Jeremy F)
- Organize questions to facilitate community delek discourse and hold community meetings on the subject. (Monica Brown)
- Develop delek role-playing exercises. (Ella Reznikova)
- Develop delek teaching curriculum and program (Carol Johnstone)
- Create a dekyongship regional conference at a regional land center and encourage centers to sponsor local participants to attend Ella Reznikova (Merle T)
- Raise awareness in the community of community and delek issues (David Q)
- Provide translation into other languages (?)

Additional comments

The relationship of community to delek.

Many relationships were suggested such as community proceeds delek formation, deleks enhance community, it is a feedback-loop relationship, and deleks arise spontaneously out of a community. Community is ones family, and deleks are a way to enhance that community. The dekyong looks inward to the need of the delek while the warrior of the centre looks outward to the larger community.

The Community Fish

The group was helped along tremendously by the use of an organizational fish! Helped along with a visual aid, the group imagined the community was a fish with two main characteristics. It produced beautiful scales (signs of a healthy community), and it needed food. Among the scales were emotional supports, deleks, town hall meetings, nyida days, dance parties!, Shambhala cafes, group practice, feasts, etc. The groups task was to identify what food the fish required.

Families and Children Topic Group

Group Members: Susan Smith-Sargent (Lexington, KY), Catherin Hayward-Zeigler (Halifax, NS), Francesca Nilo (Santiago, Chile), Alex Halpern (Boulder, CO), Pat Hayward (Dechen Choling), Esther Siebold (New Haven, CT), Sophie Maclaren (Boston, MA), Deborah Raoult (Los Angeles, CA), Sonya Salanti (Portland, OR)

View

Families and children are inseparable from the continuity of the Shambhala family lineage. It is the responsibility of our clan to nurture the basic goodness of all children, teens and young adults and support the development of their confidence and dignity. Parenting is a practice of compassion and it is the clan that provides support and encouragement to families in fulfilling that role.

Primary Recommendations

- 1) Form a Shambhala Commission on Children and Families
A separate and distinct group is recommended with the sole focus being the inclusion and support of children and families. (The Community Care group in Shambhala is not able to fully address topics of interest and concern for families).
- 2) Provide a Seat on the Sakyong's Council for a Children & Families representative
- 3) Develop an inclusion policy and curriculum for families and children that can be instituted mandala-wide

Contemplations

- Every Shambhala center can manifest a seat and environment that is welcoming and encouraging to all children and parents. These centers can provide the space for ongoing, continued involvement of these members of our clan.
- Families need a venue/system to find and give support, share resources and mutual inspiration.
- Diversity of individuals (i.e. not just parents) involved in the planning, implementation and ongoing activities of including families and children will ensure that the work continues for generations to come.
- Shambhala Vision benefits parenting—sharing the broad vision through magazines/websites/books/programs within and outside of the mandala
- Educating the sangha-at-large about the importance of relating to children and families; educating families about children and the Shambhala environment
- Engaging teens in Shambhala; mentoring younger children; rites of passage for 13 year olds
- Making residential and local programs/classes both accessible and feasible for families (including single parents)
- Childcare and babysitting so parents can practice and engage in center programs
 - Implemented and run by parents *and* the community (parents are not expected to set it all up on their own)
- Local centers vary in their resources and programs for children and families due to size of center and number of families involved in the Center
- Dharma Transmission (Children's curriculum)
 - How do we teach younger children to meditate?
 - View: introducing children to their own basic goodness

Families and Children Topic Group (cont.)

Actions/Goals (1st Year)

- Establish subgroups that address tasks, needs and fundraising (group should be multigenerational (for continuity), have equal gender representation and include newer and older students)
- Identify advisors, mentors and active participants
- Gather existing wisdom—identify what is/has been done; what has and hasn't been working
- Develop and administer a survey that will provide information on issues, needs and future vision for families and children

Ideas for the future

Website on Shambhala webpage for parents and families

Chatrooms/Listservs

Shambhala Sun column on families, children and practice

Feminine Principle Topic Group

The article published in the most recent *Dot* on the Shambhala Commission on the Status of Women and Feminine Principle provides the ground for this report. Very simply, feminine principle represents space and wisdom. Masculine principle represents energy and skillful activity. These principles are inherent to both men and women, and are in fact inseparable. Unfortunately, in a world that prizes speed and efficiency; feminine principle qualities are often overlooked or ignored.

Main recommendation: to invite awareness and contemplation of masculine and feminine principles as a dynamic dance of wisdom and skillful means. This dance is accessible to each of us in every moment. We encourage pointing out of feminine and masculine principles in our everyday lives, in our practice, in our government, and in our celebrations.

Some things that are working in terms of a balance of masculine and feminine principles:

- Listening and speaking from the heart and use of talking circles
- Governing structures opening and becoming more inclusive
- Desung system improving
- Some forms and decorum are working well (Some are not)
- Code of conduct becoming clearer
- Flexibility in use of teaching tools; mixing arts and culture
- More attention to physical space—feng shui
- Wonderful children’s programs emerging in some centers
- Meetings becoming more informed by the wisdom of all participants

What is not working?

- Form without the wisdom of the space—this affects everything!
- Celebrations without fun and spontaneity
- Meetings driven by the tyranny of task orientation

Now—for the fun. Here are some slogans and contemplations.

“You Don’t Have to Do Anything.”

This was Sakyong Mipham’s advice to a new Shambhala Center Director.

Appreciate the ground and process.

Let go of the tyranny of fruition.

Contemplate the transmission of feminine principle in everyday life.

Listen—and hold the space that arises out of basic goodness.

Manifest Sakyong and Sakyong Wangmo principles in your everyday life. What does that feel like?

Imagine a Ministry of Culture given a seat at the highest level of Shambhala government. What would our world look like?

Don’t forget laughter and play!

When masculine and feminine principles are in balance—life is at its best.

Feminine Principle Topic Group (cont.)

Finally, an offering from Dapon M:

Holding with the space—innate wisdom arises as engaged skillful means.
Together, contemplating this union—in the moment—sane society unfolds.

We discussed many more aspects of all of this—but this a brief taste of an amazing exploration.
May this journey continue. Ki Ki So So!

Growth Topic Group

Facilitator: Margaret Callahan

Core Issues:

- 1) Resource sharing, regionally and internationally
- 2) Starting new centers
 - a. Accessing existing knowledge resources and supports from other centers
- 3) Fundraising: community resistance to contributing money due to the lack of trust for Shambhala International
- 4) Regionalization issues
 - a. Calendar sharing
 - b. Data base
 - c. Virtual community
 - d. I-T planning
 - e. Simultaneous translations
- 5) Growth that connects outward to the world vs. growth that isolates our community
- 6) Sakyong's tour

Vision:

- 1) Binding factors of community:
 - a. Holding and guiding new people
 - b. Relationship as ground or binding
 - c. Environment and qualities of spaciousness, upliftedness and invitation
 - d. Naming what and who we are clearly

Path:

- 1) Entrances or gateway programs
 - a. Open houses
 - b. Cross over programs: something that combines meditation and another discipline, e.g. arts discipline + meditation
 - c. Turning the Mind Into An Ally as a regular, one day gateway program
- 2) Community – Communication:
 - a. Using community meeting in the forms of dialogues and talking circles
 - b. Personal responses to phone calls and emails, e.g. an actual person answering the phone
 - c. Professional level advertising including the use of a mailing house
- 3) Programming:
 - a. Identify core programming that your community is willing to commit to holding – sponsoring, e.g. Shambhala Training, Ani Pema tapes, etc. Programming needs focus and clarity. Members have a buy-in
 - b. Share your mail list with other Buddhist groups
 - c. Attempt to identify what the local community would respond to or be interested in.
- 4) Leadership:

Necessity to mentor all levels of leadership and to support or teach team building skills and authentic, deep communication skills

Recommendations:

See outreach recommendations, re: core services and communication strategies

Growth Topic Group (Cont.)

More (another summary)....

A. List of Recommended Core Services:

1. More templates (like the one developed for TMA program)
 - For SSBS programs
 - For Shambhala Training

Templates could be provided to centers by a template section on the Shambhala .org website

Centers could be made aware of new templates by an e-mail over center talk (or a new outreach list serve - see below) with a link to the template

Also, a CD could be mailed to centers, but web is preferable to make updates possible

2. Create brochures - "What is Shambhala" or similar
 - a. Something colorful and attractive that could be made available on campus, at Yoga studios, counseling centers, etc.; not too "Tibetan" or jargon oriented
 - b. More detailed brochures and information for center would also be useful
3. IT (Computer) Support for Local Centers:
 - a. Provide How To Information: How to create a list serve, how to start a webpage
 - b. Provide a FAQ page
 - c. Provide a contact hotline for questions from local centers
 - d. Make it easy for a local center to create a link from Shambhala.org to a local webpage: create a template in which you could plug in local information, which would automatically create a basic web page
4. Provide chat-rooms or other capability to conduct on-line meetings and discussions

B. Strategies for Lateral Communication'

1. Create regional listserves
2. Create regional mailing lists
3. Create a "WIKI page" - through WIKIPEDIA.COM, a great way to exchange information
4. Create a new Shambhala.org list serve specifically for center representatives interested in outreach; this list serve could be used to exchange information regarding templates for posters, program description, publicity, upcoming programs which could be coordinated among various centers

C. Recommendations to Local Centers

1. Appoint an Outreach/publicity coordinator (this person could be part of the outreach list-serve, see B.4.
2. Find hi-tech volunteers at your center to help with flyers and distribution of publicity, could be on work study basis

D. Ideas for next Congress: Provide IT/Computer training

Kingdom of Shambhala, Court, Role of Warrior of the Center, and Forms Topic Group

Facilitator: Bonnie Rabin

VISION

Court as space to invite the local and Imperial dralas, allow Shambhala Culture to manifest
Activate, enhance the understanding and presentation of forms (decorum) and court principle.
Inseparability of form and view is critical
Communicate and experience luminosity through the forms
Center as container in which content can manifest
Heighten role of forms and view of court as a teaching method
Decorum as way to bring practice into our lives, to uplift us, synchronize us
Celebration, appreciation of well-being and basic goodness, cheering up
Wake-up energy
Membership-wide involvement

WHAT IS WORKING WELL AND NOT

Working well—

Existing decorum classes

Not working well—

Not having forums for using and teaching the forms

Not having enough mentorship programs

New Center Directors not knowing all the forms and not having the resources to learn about them

Role of WOC position not clear

Not enough opportunities for all members to participate in court forms

RECOMMENDED STEPS – REQUESTS TO GOVERNORS' COUNCIL

Provide training and mentoring in service and decorum at our Centers

Request clarification on the role of the Warrior of the Center

WOC to join with Center Director by holding the culture and environment, and representing the King's view in regards to protocol and decorum

Request from Warrior General and Sakyong clarification of the role of the WOC and the position of the WOC in the hierarchy of a Center and in the larger mandala

Membership-wide involvement

Create on-going forum(s) for discussion of these points

Each WOC to implement the vision as they currently understand it, immediately and on the ground

Transmit this work to all WOC's

Governors' Council to solicit input on development of the view from local Centers

Any manual or instruction must be joined with personal transmission

Instruction to be at level appropriate for receiver

Maintain gentleness and heart always

Develop new regional Shambhala Culture courses

VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

Email list

Leadership Development Topic Group

Session 1

What is at the heart of this issue for us as a community?

- We need to change the leadership paradigm from heroic to facilitator/servant
- How to transmit our knowledge from leader to leader - value our wisdom - oral transmission
- How to mentor new leaders
- Need to train our leaders - then protect and support them
- What are our expectations of leaders? We need clarification (job descriptions, contracts, etc. for administrative leaders and Acharyas)
- Create a culture where everyone can be a leader - share authority and power - not asking leaders to do jobs by themselves.

Session 2

What is our vision of this topic working well in our Shambhala Society?

We have a view shift/ culture change where:

1. Leadership is a valid and appreciated path.
 - We are professional about leadership positions- contracts, assessments, terms of service
 - Leadership is viewed as practice. Continuity- tantra of path
 - People are brought along via mentorship, internship, elders, coaching, support/network of regional leaders
2. Leaders feel empowered to do their jobs and can empower others.
3. Leaders practice (i.e. take time for vacation and retreats every year)
4. Leaders have the protection of good boundaries.
5. We train leaders with curriculum, congress participation.
6. We invite people into leadership - including more people from minority groups.

Session 4

What next steps do we recommend in order to achieve our vision?

1. Using the Authentic Leadership Program at Naropa University as a starting point, we recommend creating a leadership development program for Shambhala. Some of the elements of this program could be:
 - The essence of the program is the Shambhala teachings, and the basic curriculum is the same as the Naropa program (a contemplative environment; includes meditation and work with the harmonization of body, speech, and mind; facilitation of collective wisdom; leading people through change...)
 - Several weeks of on-line learning, sandwiched by (or followed by) an in-person program.
 - In addition to the Naropa curriculum, other topics could be taught which are specifically relevant to Shambhala centers (for example- working with volunteerism; service as path; coaching new leaders; issues of diversity in Shambhala; Kasung leadership; financial management, etc.)

Leadership Development Topic Group (cont.)

- The programs could be organized regionally, so that travel costs are kept to a minimum.
 - Those in our community who are already capable of teaching such a program could be brought to the regions to teach, and they could train others in each region to take over future programs.
 - The program could be open to anybody who wishes to attend, and could potentially be marketed to those outside of the community.
 - Current and emerging leaders from Shambhala centers could be sponsored to attend by their centers or regions or Shambhala.
 - We recommend that fund-raising be done to acquire seed money for the development of the program (including a proposal to the Shambhala Trust)
 - Low cost; low time-commitment; minimum travel
 - As part of, or in addition to, this program we could offer an on-line (and on-going) learning tool available to Shambhala center leaders.
2. We recommend the further development of the resource collection already started by the working group. In particular, we would like to collect more examples of things working well in Shambhala centers, in order to share our collected wisdom and experience.
 3. In order to provide clarity and support for those in leadership positions and for centers seeking out new leaders, we recommend the development of policy and guidelines around leadership succession in Shambhala centers.

Who are the volunteers that will help implement this action plan?

Victoria Bell will facilitate the follow-through of these recommendations. The following people have agreed to help in some way, and will be contacted by Victoria to determine their individual interests and availability:

Jan Russell; Elisabeth Hazell; Julie Heegaard; Henry Chapin; Beth Hook; Candlin Dobbs; Lodro Rinzler; Makenti Dennis; Christina Junghans; Jane Bishop; Susan Oudshoorn; Margaret Drescher; Lely Abud; Susan Skjei

Money Topic Group

Facilitator: Lance Brunner

Heart of the matter:

A sane view of working with money in order to develop skillful practices. Including how we talk about money.

Making programs accessible

Pricing policies that include membership, that welcome rather than just accommodate, keeping dignity in the process at all times

Generosity (cultural shift, i.e., a view of generosity and wealth)

Tension between volunteer and paid positions

Lack of communication of best financial practices between centers

The need to learn from other financial practices used in other organizations (Ex. Vipassana (Gwenkar?), and Dzongsar Khentsye Rinpoche

Fundraising for capital and/or operating expenses (clarifying where money will be going)

Lack of communication between center of mandala and other centers as to budget and details about how money is spent and priorities (e.g., Sakyong's salary and support)

How we earn and spend money is a reflection of who we are (e.g., what we spend on the Court may seem excessive but it is a form of practice) The view of how we spend our money.

The culture of money differs from one place to another, so there is no general rule, but rather principles that can guide sane approaches and decision-making.

The image of our sangha as for only middle class or people who are financially well off, because of the pricing of our programs.

Money Topic Group (cont.)

***What are the next steps do we recommend in order to achieve our vision?**

1. Pricing policy and strategy for both programs and memberships. Asking core group to provide material similar to the Outreach Toolkit to people who make these decisions. As a tool, make up a suggested list of points to consider.
2. Fact Sheets to accompany the budget, especially the core Shambhala budget. For example a fact sheet to explain the Sakyong's line in the budget, why programs are so expensive, why we need to do fundraising. The fact sheets should be dynamic and modifiable from year to year.
3. Developing a financial manual for North America (following the example of Europe's financial manual)
4. Seminars on money and work, both for the general public and for the leadership team.
5. Sharing success stories and examples, which help create an institutional memory
6. Cultivating a view of fundraising for both individual members and leadership, including clear and responsible goals and reasons for fund raising, with good communication about this
7. Coordination of mandala-wide financial goals (before land centers start fundraising, they should coordinate with centers and the center of the mandala)
8. Meetings or conference calls of financial managers to discuss financial matters in the centers.
9. CFO should be an informed before being hired, that part of their responsibility beforehand to be available to disseminate information about financial situation to members of center and between centers.
10. Guidelines or recommendations for teacher honoraria

Note: the majority of our group joined another group to deal with mandala-wide coordination of financial practices, which is in fact part of this group's charge, so other information will no doubt be coming from this new group.

Practice Topic Group

Facilitator: Pamela Gaines

This topic actually has permeated the entire Congress, becoming the main focus of the plenary sessions. Its integration is a good thing! These areas addressed by the group here that will continue in various forms and various groups throughout the year since they are integral to our mandala, along with the plenary questions that arose.

What is at the heart of this issue for me?

No Notes from Talking Circle.

What is at the heart of this issue for us as a community?

- 1) Risk of Losing VCTR teachings
- 2) Rigidity in what forms, rules, traditions are supposed to be
- 3) Everyone's heart-wish is to move forward with VCTR's vision regardless of exactly how that happens.
- 4) Importance of Retreat Practice - both solitary and group
- 5) Fear of Shambhala Buddhism being diluted. Fear holds us back.
- 6) Working with Mind - meeting minds - what if Guru is not living? The Sakyong is only one person. - One suggestion has been working with Acharyas, how are their roles defined as representatives of SMR and his vision?
- 7) How will Shambhala Training change in light of the new developments?
- 8) Teacher/MI Training - for new teachers, to encourage and engage more young people, ongoing for current teachers - need more training opportunities locally/regionally.
- 9) Mid-range students - Post SSBS Continuing Education, Mahayana students, and/or those who are not able to attend residential or month-long programs for family/livelihood reasons.

What is our vision of this topic working well in our Shambhala Society?

People are inspired and challenged in their practice, encouraged by elders and supported by the community. Feel welcomed and included in their local mandala, a part of the wider mandala. Practice includes teaching and service at all levels. Elders mentor new students, constant flow of inspiration and heart connections keeping the teachings alive and growing.

What is currently working well in this area? What is currently not working so well?

Confusion in inclusions and exclusions. This area was taken into a separate discussion. Mentoring and partnering in teaching when it happens is quite magical. Evaluations from students very helpful. Evaluations of teachers very helpful but doesn't happen enough. Feeling that older students want to hold onto forms that may not reflect current realities in fear of diluting or losing the traditions and teachings of the Vidyadhara. People working at the centres not knowing the past work, not knowing how to do their jobs, not feeling supported.

What next steps do we recommend in order to achieve our vision?

- 1) Senior students spearhead teaching VCTR work - transcripts, audio, and video.
- 2) Students express curiosity about forms, Elders be generous and gentle in sharing the forms and flexibility in what is going on now
- 3) Acknowledge inherent basic goodness and heart in everyone's path.
- 4) Nurture both group and solitary retreat practice, long term and short term, regional land centers, weekend city retreats
- 5) Leap into fearlessness.

Practice Topic Group (cont.)

6) We don't expect the Acharyas to all be the same, but can we ask them to indicate their major teaching interests in more detail, (i.e., who is really excited about the new developments, including Shambhala ngondro?)

7) It's not the content of Shambhala Training that will change, but our clarity in communicating to participants about the path - i.e., clarify what part is secular - Level 1-5 are like Shambhala Humanism - SMR They go back to their lives illuminated. Reflect this in advertising and marketing. GES clarifies the sacredness of the Sacred Path and the progression to Rigden Abhisheka and Werma practice.

8) Explore various levels of teacher training that progress deeper and encourage mentoring and sharing experiences and expertise:

A) Local teacher training - everyone at center teaches: View - all are teachers. Gather / create materials to support training program staff, administrators at all levels to work with managing volunteers, conflict resolution, dharma forms, all of it.

B) Regional:

1) Formal teacher training/certification/mentoring for the "In The Chair" teaching

2) Practice authorizations - Shambhala Guide and Meditation Instruction levels

C) Deepening in Preparation for Mipham Institute

D) Mipham Institute

9) Offer, encourage and empower people to be teachers in training who can facilitate study groups, tape/book classes, etc. Bring the in to link to local teacher training (8A) - everyone teaches.

Who are the volunteers that will help implement this action plan?

Group ended up with only a few people as most went to the newly formed Group to pursue inclusion issues.

Regionalization Topic Group

VISION

Motivation

- To benefit others
- Support progress on the path

Networking

- Communciation
- Calendars/scheduling
- Intra- and inter-rtional activities
- Fostering connections

Sharing resources

- Cost sharing
- Teachers
- Programs

Empowering

- Mentoring
- Training
- Leadership – mutual support, prevent burnout
- Encouraging initiative

Extending Shambhala vision, visibility

REGIONS THAT ARE WORKING

Rocky Mountain Region –

Identify Coordinator

Directory of names of everybody in the region – 3 parts

White pages of every name and email in the region

Resource guide – description of groups (Shambhala centers as well as other groups and teachers) in the region, Halifax contacts and interregional contacts

Yellow pages – ads (pay for the directory) of Shambhala businesses, Shambhala associated businesses, or other connections. Businesses that support the community.

Maritimes – yearly conference (training sessions: mediation, how to make a gomden, guide training, MI training), currently setting up a website, sending out annual report,

Texas/Louisiana

Europe

South America

Bay Area

Resource sharing – already established, ex Maritimes

Overlapping regions, ex Chicago, Lexington, Birmingham

Regionalization Topic Group (cont.)

EMERGING REGIONS

Northeast
Southeast
Midwest
Border region – Kentucky
MidAtlantic
Northwest

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Identify regionalization as a policy and priority in the mandala
 - Support from the governing councils
 - Regional representation on the Mandala Governing Council, and at the next Congress
2. Process be individualized based on strengths, resources and needs of each region
3. Find a way to pay coordinators
 - Identify current models – regional support (e.g. Calif), other models?
4. Centers mobilize to define their regions

ACTIONS

1. Communication about regionalization
2. Identify coordinators
3. Identify groups and contacts – are they up to date
4. Begin the process of emerging regions identifying themselves
5. Gather information from existing regions about their processes and activities
6. (web sites, list serves, calendars, communications, meeting schedules, etc.)
7. Advertising in each other newsletters – cross publicizing
8. Establish lines of communication within regions, across regions, regions and center
9. Clarify role of acharyas involvement in various regions.
10. Clarify regional kasung structure/involvement, establish communication and collaboration

Social Action Topic Group

Facilitator: Susan Skjei, Scribe: Debbie McCubbin

1. What is the heart of the matter for us?
 - Do we have permission to do a project that is inspired by the teachings but that might get political? (Maybe we don't need to name it as Shambhala)
 - How can we do something meaningful without taking a political stand?
 - How can we cultivate an appreciation of community in Shambhala Centers?
 - Maybe we could gather in "compassion groups" at centers to focus on social action projects
 - People yearn to have an impact—how to take this beyond the individual to something we can do together?
 - What are the principles of social action from a contemplative point of view? How to get beyond the prejudice that it is "misguided" to try to be "helpful"
 - The "period of service" creates momentum, but how to view it as an ongoing process and include people in the community who can be resources or mentors
 - Social action has been renamed "social engagement" to indicate that it isn't just about projects, it is about our ongoing connection with others
 - What might "service" mean within our Shambhala community itself?
2. What is our vision of this happening within our Shambhala society (3 year vision)?
 - One idea from advisory group was to utilize three pillars to create
 - Teachings
 - Communication
 - Projects
 - Social action would be seen as a key part of the practice
 - Every major center has at least one project
 - Website—provides communication about the projects
 - Wide variety of resources to help people implement ideas
 - People responding to needs that touch them/inspire them
 - Some unifying position/coordination of this aspect at centers (a web)
 - People will have don't a period of service as part of their ngondro
 - Ongoing support and training at centers for social action. Teachings and practices to engage in social action in a healthy and skillful way.
 - We've tapped into teachings on this from other traditions
 - We bring our perspective "emptiness"
 - Discussion and projects mandala—wide on alleviating the root causes of some problems.
 - Teaching s focused on developing ability to be present with suffering and extending this to non-sangha
 - Adding skill training to ST that is useful to social action (e.g. deep listening)
 - Training and doing at the same time.
 - Partnering with resources that already exist in the sangha
 - See how your practice spreads into the world in everything we do
 - Taking meditation programs out to prisons, hospitals, schools, etc.
 - Social action includes community care including marginal people
 - The wakefulness created by people "going out" creates curiosity and draws people in.
 - An awareness that all our actions have social action impact.
 - Helping others "learn how to fish" by teaching them to se the root causes
 - Seeing it as a personal path, not just helping others.
 - Masters program at Naropa in "Social action"
 - Opening to others natural practices of wakefulness.

Social Action Topic Group (cont.)

Mission:

View: To awaken and deepen the practice of bodhicitta and basic goodness

Practice: By keeping the conversation of service alive

Action: Encouragement and support for the members of our community who are engaged in service.

Recommendation:

To create a working group tasked with developing mechanisms of communication such as a website and list serve to share stories, resources and support for local service groups. This would be the ground for conversations that could take place in centers that would help create more support and interest. The "period of service" would create momentum at first, but then it would blossom into other projects and opportunities for the community at large.