

First Annual
REPORT ON DIVERSITY IN SHAMBHALA

Prepared by the
Diversity Working Group



“You are welcome in the Kingdom of Shambhala.”
Shambhala President Richard Reoch

Mandala Governing Council Meeting

April 1-3, 2006

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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Cover Photograph by Marshall Clarke

"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."

---James George, *Searching for Shambhala*

Letter from the Chair of the Diversity Working Group

April 2006

Dear Noble Sangha,

Thank you for all the many things you have done to foster a situation of openness and inclusion in Shambhala, a situation where everyone's life can become a genuine expression of warriorship.

From all of human history and from current events on every continent, as well as from our own personal experience, we know that communities of industrious, intelligent, articulate and well-intentioned people blossom when their people are authentically open, inclusive and welcoming of others and genuinely give priority to fostering an atmosphere that is truly open, inclusive and welcoming. This is how human beings give rise to societies that are enlightened.

According to James George, the most singular thing that Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche saw about Shambhala was that its inhabitants "were of all faiths, races, and nations, and appeared to come from the four corners of the earth." Such a society can only come into existence when everyone is working diligently with enlightened means to bring the ideal of being open, inclusive and welcoming of all people into reality.

The Shambhala and Buddhist teachings and sitting meditation practice are the basis of our path to creating that reality.

This report is offered with many thanks for your practice.

Cortez Rainey
Chair of the Diversity Working Group
Member of the Sakyong's Council

First Annual

REPORT ON DIVERSITY IN SHAMBHALA

Diversity Working Group

April 2006

Dear Friends,

The Diversity Working Group is happy to report that Shambhala is becoming more open, inclusive and welcoming of diversity. We believe this situation is unfolding because our sangha's practice is blossoming further outward.

A lot has happened. During the First Shambhala Congress and the one-year consultation that followed that assembly, and at the Second Shambhala Congress, sangha members said clearly that diversity is one of the most pressing issues facing the mandala.

In response to this feedback, the Diversity Working Group was established. As the working group looked at diversity issues in Shambhala, we identified areas where action was needed. Our findings are in *Recommendations for Improving Diversity in Shambhala*. It is intended as a source for further community discussion and action.

We also found something else: Throughout our mandala there are people who are, and have been for years, performing positive actions arising out of local needs that help to foster an atmosphere that is open, inclusive and welcoming of diversity. However, their efforts are not widely known.

This report is intended to:

- Inform our sangha what we as a community are doing regarding diversity issues.
- Clarify perceptions about Shambhala's relationship to diversity issues.
- Encourage diversity activities that are being planned or are already under way.
- Further our efforts to create enlightened society.

Sharing this information allows us to see what Shambhala's relationship actually is to diversity issues. The creation of a Shambhala diversity website, submission of articles to *The Dot* about center and group diversity activities, and casual conversation about the diversity activities and issues of our centers and groups will also help.

Shambhala is a rejuvenated society whose members are working selflessly and tirelessly to turn the flower outward. While there are no hard and fast rules for doing this, especially when we are busy or overwhelmed, our shamatha practice is still the ground for creating situations of openness and inclusion. We hope from this ground, that we can create space in our centers to make the *Shambhala Aspirations* visible and include some form of diversity contemplation in our community practice.

After all, diversity aspirations and contemplations are simply tools to cultivate directly and explicitly our intention to be open, inclusive and welcoming of diversity. Cultivating such intention is not something "separate" or "in addition" to the dharma. Rather it simply is what we do as Shambhala and Buddhist practitioners to create enlightened society.

In the Vision of the Great Eastern Sun,

The Diversity Working Group

Diversity Initiatives of Shambhala Leadership

- In February 2005, the Sakyong's Council met and issued a statement of commitment entitled *Statement on Diversity and Inclusiveness*, and created a separate working group to focus specifically on issues regarding accessibility. The President selected Hamish Maclaren to chair that working group and to serve as a Member of the Sakyong's Council.
- In April 2005, the Sakyong's Council reviewed the Diversity recommendations, agreed on the need for diversity training at all levels of the Mandala, decided to develop a diversity statement, and established an Accessibility Board to ensure that all new construction funded by Shambhala is fully accessible—in particular, the Rigden Lodge at SMC.
- In May 2005, the President traveled to Baltimore for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Congress, where he hosted an elegant dinner to acknowledge and celebrate the racial and ethnic diversity in the Mid-Atlantic region specifically, and the racial and ethnic diversity that exists in the Mandala in general. The dinner was organized with the help of Center directors from New York, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and Baltimore.
- In August 2005 at Shambhala Mountain Center, the Sakyong's Council and Mandala Council (Center Directors) participated in a half-day diversity training course called "Going Beyond Bias."
- In October 2005, during a speaking engagement in London, England, Gesar Mukpo stated that acceptance of diversity is vital for the health of Shambhala and that we need to hire a full-time diversity coordinator who can co-ordinate all the diversity initiatives of our international Mandala.
- In December 2005, the President, having consulted with the Diversity Working Group, the Accessibility Working Group, the Mandala Governing Council, and the Sakyong's Council, formally issued a statement, *Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility and Compassionate Care*, and requested that centers and groups display the document.
- In February 2006, Center directors from around the mandala generously participated in a Diversity Working Group survey to ascertain our community's involvement in diversity activities.
- In March 2006, the Sakyong's Council selected a representative to serve on a steering committee, with representatives of other Buddhist traditions, to plan a national conference on race and ethnicity in American Buddhism.

Diversity Initiatives of Centers/Groups

Following are initiatives that have been undertaken by Shambhala Centers and Groups, as reported in February 2006.

Acadiana, Louisiana

- Offers reduced/free tuition for students and folks who can't pay full price

Albany, New York

- Included the Warrior's Heart diversity contemplation in Buddhist Basics course
- Distributed the Warrior's Heart contemplation on Shambhala Day
- Read the Shambhala Aspirations during community meeting on Shambhala Day
- Posted diversity images on Center website
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Annapolis, Nova Scotia

- Offers mainly programs that are open to all
- Offers two sessions of class for those who can't come on Sundays due to family commitments
- Posted the Shambhala Aspirations at the Center
- *Selected a diversity contact person.

Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Displays the Shambhala Aspirations at group meetings and gatherings
- Explores ways to invite more people from all neighborhoods
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Atlanta, Georgia

- Started a Shambhala prison dharma program
- Co-sponsored a presentation by Bo Lozoff
- Has correspondence and visitation program with prisoners
- Started holding weekly meetings for young adults
- Hosts a weekly AA meeting
- Has only one room the new facility that is not accessible
- Is exploring how to make the grounds accessible to wheelchairs

Austin, Texas

- Continues to support a Gay Men's Group
- Has a Children's program
- Continues to support prison outreach
- Is exploring formation of a women's group

Baltimore, Maryland

- Has moved to a wheelchair- and public transportation-accessible space
- Uses diversity images in advertising
- Continues to use generosity policy
- Was honored to offer its space for the diversity dinner hosted by President Reoch
- In summer 2005, held a 4-week course that explored our relationship to difference and prejudice

- Has continued to build leadership that is diverse
- Displays the Shambhala Aspirations on the bulletin board
- Selected a member to work on issues related to families and children
- Displays pictures of Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the room we use for initial meditation instruction (as examples of modern-day bodhisattva warriors)
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Berkeley, California

- Will be holding a People of Color retreat in May 2006
- Has members who volunteer at a halfway house for single mothers with substance abuse issues
- Has members involved with prison community project

Birmingham, Alabama

- Held performance by a student of Indian dance
- Has an African-American woman volunteering for kasung duty at Open House programs
- Holds informal discussions on how to be inviting to all
- Has stayed in communication with churches that provide social outreach in area
- Had African-American teacher give public talk
- Placed advertising for public talk in many places around town

Boston, Massachusetts

- Identified Spanish-speaking MIs for newcomers who are not fluent in English
- Has diversified images on publicity postcards
- Diversified the public face of the Center by hiring an African-American part-time coordinator
- Has made introductory programs "pay what you can"
- Developed scholarship funds for people to attend programs elsewhere in the mandala
- Center director makes it a point to reach out to persons of color during open house programs
- Has begun to contact YMCA's, boys and girls clubs to teach meditation
- Encouraged and support the Queer Buddhist Fellowship and Under Thirty groups
- Developed children's program
- Hired childcare person for nynthuns so parents can practice on Sundays
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Boulder, Colorado

- Decided to form a Diversity Committee
- Built ramp to increase accessibility to handicapped persons
- Provides meditation in prison
- Held a weekend diversity training put on by the youth
- Participates in on going diversity talks, presentations, classes at Naropa University
- Works with local Buddhist groups, churches and welfare agencies to low-income families, single parents and individuals.
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Brunswick, Maine

- Uses an international diversity photo for most of Level I advertisements
- Has urged sangha to contemplate diversity initiatives
- Has asked a member to serve as diversity contact person

Buffalo, New York

*Selected diversity contact person

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

- Has flexible pricing policy for all programs
- *Selected diversity contact person

Chicago, Illinois

- Has offered workshops related to women and gender issues
- Offered a public talk directed and advertised to the LGBTQ community
- Offered a monthly meeting for a Queer Dharma group
- Hosted a workshop on People of Color in Dharma
- Is working to establish a People of Color Scholarship Fund
- Displays the Shambhala Aspirations on the bulletin board
- Displays photographs of Pema Chödrön and Khandro Rinpoche
- Has discussed diversity issues during meditation instructor's meetings
- Has discussed diversity issues during community meetings
- Is helping to co-sponsoring a Conference on Women in Buddhism
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Cleveland, Ohio

- Is presently searching for ideas on how to reach out to African-American, Asian, Lesbian/Gay community
- *Selected diversity contact person

Davis, California

- Has a thriving Children's program
- Has a new 12-Step program that meets weekly
- Has an active Men's group that sponsors a monthly "movie night"
- Has a prison dharma program

Durham, North Carolina

- Sent a representative to the diversity dinner hosted by President Reoch in Baltimore

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

- Has been involved with various Buddhist groups, Vietnamese, Burmese, etc
- Has individual members involved in women/gender issues, native youth and palliative-care patients
- Is considering working on accessibility issues and programs for those house-bound

Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada

- Has posted the "Going Beyond Bias" diversity training info on the bulletin board
- Has a diversity contact person who remains open to issues that might arise within the centre and keeps the council/centre informed of the Diversity Working Group's ongoing initiatives.
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Gainesville, Florida

- Has doors open to anyone!
- Has shared sitting practice with a mix of colors, faiths, economic levels, sexes and ages
- Has openness to all faiths mentioned in promotional flyer
- *Selected diversity contact person

Karmê Chöling, Barnet, Vermont

- Spent \$8,000.00 to upgrade accessibility, including new wheelchair ramps
- Is consulting with architects to have all buildings ADA compliant

- Is constructing new housing that will have fully accessible rooms, bathrooms and showers
- Has budgeted \$100,000.00 for scholarships for those who cannot afford listed program rates
- Discussed prejudice in community meeting attended by students, staff and managers
- Invited Queer Dharma to hold annual group retreats at KCL
- Has nurtured a community that covers 7 decades of the human lifespan, teens through 70's
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Kailua, Hawaii

- Brings in teachers of color whenever there is an opportunity to do so
- Networks with other Buddhist groups/individuals
- Collects toiletries for distribution to the homeless during Thanksgiving & Christmas holidays
- Works with an interfaith group to help homeless families
- Has open door policy for classes and programs: "No one is turned away."
- Whenever possible, includes Hawaiian culture into activities at the center

Kansas City, Missouri

- *Selected diversity contact person

Kootenay, British Columbia, Canada

- Has doubled the floor space so a greater range of programs can be offered to a range of people
- Established a children's program
- Introduced a by-pricing policy
- Opened up Council and committee meetings to all members

Lexington, Kentucky

- Hosted Mid-Eastern Party to honor Mid-Eastern sangha members
- Is preparing to offer a Sarpashana Alcoholics Anonymous Group
- Has a Men's Group that has been meeting for about 4 years
- Has a Women's Group that has been meeting for about 1 year
- Has readers for a man who is legally blind
- Offered special help to women with multiple sclerosis
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Los Angeles, California

- Offered a series of free public programs on Thursday evenings
- Offered programs with tiered payments/reduced prices for seniors and students
- Has a work-study program
- Has membership fees with suggested amounts with arrangements for people to pay less
- Carries Spanish translations of dharma books

Madison, Wisconsin

- Is discussing whether to take a stand on a civil rights/discrimination issue in the state

Media, Pennsylvania

- Has coordinator who warmly greets anyone who comes through the door!
- *Selected diversity contact person

Montpelier, Vermont

- Finds diversity to be very important!

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

- Provides bilingual translations (French/English) for all Shambhala levels
- Offers monthly introduction to meditation for each of the 2 linguistic groups
- Offers monthly public talks alternately for each of the 2 linguistic groups
- Offers Buddhist courses for each of the 2 linguistic groups
- Offers palliative-care for pediatric patients
- Offers meditation instruction and follow-up for female prisoners
- Working on the accessibility of advanced programs for francophones outside Montreal
- Provides different kinds of help to increase the financial accessibility for Shambhala levels and Buddhist courses

Minneapolis, Minnesota

- Has a scholarship fund to help sangha members go to dathun, seminary and Warrior Assembly
- Has a variety of program pricing, including a free book group on Wednesday nights
- Has Center directors who attended diversity training
- Has a monthly Children's program

New York, New York

- Helped organize the diversity dinner hosted by President Reoch in Baltimore
- Had community meeting to discuss the topic of diversity
- Is actively exploring the idea of a People of Color weekend program.
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Otsa-Shingsa, Italy Cross, Nova Scotia, Canada

- Offers half-price specials for low-income folks

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

- Held a community meeting to discuss the Diversity Working Group recommendations
- Set up a Queer Dharma Group that meets monthly
- Set up a Bodhi School that meets monthly
- Implemented a Generosity Policy that removes financial barriers to program participation.
- Started a Scholarship Fund to help members attend major residential dharma programs
- Provided consecutive translation at a Golden Key program to enable francophones to participate.
- Held a celebratory evening event for sangha women
- *Selected diversity contact person

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Posted the Shambhala Aspirations on the bulletin board
- Helped organize the diversity dinner that President Reoch hosted in Baltimore
- Is planning a community meeting to discuss/contemplate diversity
- *Selected a diversity contact person.

Phoenix, Arizona

- Has established a scholarship program
- Offers hospitality to all members and guests
- Offers practice and study that focuses on areas we share in common
- Is a sangha that acknowledges individual differences

Prince Edward Island, Canada

- Welcomes people of all faiths
- Includes a visible minority in the group, an indication that we encourage diversity

- Has enabled people of limited economic means to participate in programs

San Antonio, Texas

- Offered a *Turning the Mind Into an Ally* weekend class in Spanish
- Advertised in Spanish in local publications
- Has Spanish-translation dharma books
- Has a listing in a Gay and Lesbian newsletters
- Have a clear program pricing policy that excludes no one on the basis of financial need
- Established a Family Program
- Is working on forming a Teen Program

San Francisco, California

- Is moving into a more central San Francisco neighborhood
- Has a commitment to accessibility of the new building
- Handed out the Shambhala Aspirations to the Upaya Council
- Posted the Shambhala Aspirations in the Center
- Shared "The Warrior's Heart" contemplation with education and practice leaders
- Is planning to include the Shambhala Aspirations in next newsletter
- Has a working group exploring diversity issues/holding diversity workshop
- *Selected a diversity contact person

Santa Cruz, California

- Has had homeless people and ex-offenders who come to sit
- Includes Queer Shambhalians
- *Selected diversity contact person

Santiago, Chile

- Diversity is manifesting!!
- Hosted a "wonderful Seminary with a Latin flavor," including participants from 10 different countries with simultaneous translation from English to Spanish and Portuguese, and the chants in those three languages and Polish (as there were 3 participants from Poland); there was lots of singing and dancing, hugging and kissing, and much joyful discipline in practice and study.

St Johnsbury, Vermont

- Has members of the center who visit prisoners at their work camp
- Has prisoners who come to practice and study at Center
- Has a scholarship fund for those who cannot afford programs or classes
- Has started a fund/solicited donations to find an accessible space for the center

St John's, New Brunswick, Canada

- Welcomes foreign students to sit with us
- Reaches out to the poor as its biggest outreach to "minorities"

St Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada

- Has taken measures to allow persons with environmental sensitivities to participate in programs
- Has a Generosity Policy
- *Selected diversity contact person

St. Petersburg, Florida

- Never turns away anyone because of cost

Tallahassee, Florida

- Holds two regular open houses in addition to twice-weekly meditation sessions
- Recently installed a ramp to make the facility more accessible
- Has posted flyers in a variety of locations

Tamalpais, California

- Makes everyone feel welcome and encourages that attitude among the small membership
- Exposes participants to interracial/intergenerational relationships

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

- Has an on-going Family Program
- Hosted grade school, high school and university students interested in meditation/Buddhism

Washington, DC

- Offered a Learn to Meditate workshop at Gallaudet University for the deaf community
- Offers a Learn to Meditate in Spanish program
- *Selected diversity contact person

Suggested Readings

Notes on Diversity and Accessibility, by Dan Hessey

Going Beyond Bias, by Sangyam Agness Au

Recommendations for Improving Diversity and Accessibility in Shambhala

Resources for Improving Diversity and Accessibility in Shambhala

Quotes

"In the modern world, diversity awareness has become a fundamental and basic skill that is necessary for all leaders, in particular leaders who have been entrusted with the vision of enlightened society, within a growing multicultural community that has become more and more diverse. It's an ongoing discipline. Each layer of bias we uncover will point to another layer and another layer."

---Sangyum Agness Au, "Going Beyond Bias"

Warriors of Shambhala are not trying to create a dharmic nest for themselves and people just like them, which would result in the corruption of the tradition. Rather we must invite as much diversity, confusion and wisdom as we can handle into the Shambhala Buddhist world. By doing so we not only make it accessible to others but also ensure it will be a genuine world for us as well.

---Dan Hessey, *Notes on Diversity and Accessibility*

Diversity Contact Persons*

Acadiana Shambhala Meditation Group

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Albany Shambhala Center

Karen Starr
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Annapolis Shambhala Meditation Group

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Ann Arbor Shambhala Meditation Group

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Tamalpais Shambhala Meditation Group

Marc Matheson
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Washington, DC Shambhala Meditation Center

Chris Montone
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*The diversity contact person helps center/group members with diversity issues, participates in a telephone conference twice a year with other diversity contact persons to share information and experiences, is available to provide consultation to the Diversity Working Group and practices being open without bias.

Challenges to Diversity

Following are reports received from Center directors indicating some of the obstacles they experienced to implementing diversity initiatives.

1. We have had a lot of other areas and staff changes to address this year and have not focused on identifying a single person to champion diversity.
2. We currently have no director.
3. More than for any other reason or obstacle, there have not been enough of us for the various responsibilities and roles we would like to designate.
4. I would like to have someone devoted to just this [diversity] soon, but I haven't found the right person to take this on.
5. I hope a self-selected person will arise.
6. Thanks for your patience and persistence in shepherding these important [diversity] issues through the fog of our distraction and complacency. We will be having membership meetings this spring to divvy up the many tasks [the soon to be retired director] has been carrying for 5 years. I too will welcome more help from our far flung sangha.
7. I'm sorry we dropped the ball on this [diversity initiatives]. It happens sometimes with 3 co-directors all thinking someone else was carrying the ball.
8. People are just so busy.
9. We are hoping this person will be our diversity contact person, however her school schedule currently prohibits active involvement.
10. A relatively small center with limited people resources, we do not have a specific contact person for the Diversity Working Group.... And by small I do mean one or two people carrying the load of keeping the center open.
11. We are struggling to just get the word out about our existence period, and struggling to put on basic programs to benefit beginning meditators.
12. We do not have a specific diversity person as our numbers are small.
13. The main reason we haven't been proactive in this area is lack of time and human resources (and administrative skills, maybe).
14. We have not appointed a diversity coordinator. Our quarterly community meeting had to be postponed due to a North Eastern storm. We will attempt to do this at our next meeting.
15. We have not yet identified a Diversity Contact Person for our center. The only obstacle has been our focus on moving to a new location. The move is happening this weekend! Once we are in the new place, the focus is shifting to strategic planning and diversity will be part of that planning.

16. We haven't implemented any real measure since the congress. I think the crucial factor was not having that point person, the personally invested community person. Now that has changed.
17. Our group is less than 1 year old, and is still in the organizing stages. We do not yet have a designated individual for many important roles.
18. Our group is very small and many of the initiatives would not be currently applicable.
19. Our group is small and basically still learning how to properly behave. We haven't really done any work on diversity, but there is not much here to work with. Our province does not attract or retain many people from many minorities.
20. We are very small (about five people at any given time). I cannot say that we have done anything specifically aimed at promoting or nourishing diversity although just giving thought to it will give us some momentum in the right direction.
21. I would like to encourage the varied audience to at least visit our center. I would appreciate any ideas from others in the Shambhala community, especially those from smaller centers.
22. I am single handedly trying to keep the local Shambhala group together while trying to keep my personal life together and just one step ahead of the creditors every moment. I hardly have time to read your [diversity] document, let alone set up a task force. [But] I appreciate your motives. I am glad to be reminded to keep all sentient being in mind, and to pay special attention to the one who might slip through the cracks. This is what I am doing. I do not have the resources to do it and report on it as well.
23. I like the idea of advertising material that shows diversity. We could use help from Shambhala International in putting promotional material together (as well as a million other forms of support).
24. It's amazing to me that I live in this huge ethnic melting pot and that there are so few people of color in our sangha. It's not that ethnic people don't come to our sangha, but my feeling is they don't stay because it is mostly white. My way of addressing this in the short term is to bring in teachers of color whenever I have the opportunity. But it seems they are few and far between. I was told we could probably count them on one or two hands. Can this be true?
25. The most obvious obstacle, it seems to me, is that we are a very small group. At this point in time there is only myself and one other person who are actively involved in providing programs. Subsequently the interest that, I think, feels most pressing to us is providing introductory classes and generating new membership. Obviously that concern and diversity initiatives are not mutually exclusive.
26. We're relatively new, and so the only "official" positions we have is me, and a financial person. So I'm doing all the stuff that isn't money. We've only recently hooked into anything official, so don't have a diversity contact here, yet. I will continue working on this. Perhaps for the time being you could keep me in the loop, I'll pass anything on to whoever steps up.
27. We are a small group meeting once a week in a rented space with attendance ranging from 2 to 8 people. Diversity is not currently an issue for us, just getting anyone to attend is our concern.

P R E S I D E N T O F S H A M B H A L A

Dear members of the Mandala Council,

Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility and Compassionate Conduct

Following the first Shambhala Congress, we have worked to strengthen our commitment to diversity, accessibility and compassionate conduct. The Sakyong's Council has now agreed to a common statement of aspiration that it would like to see posted at all Shambhala Centres. I am enclosing a copy that you can display in any appropriate location for the benefit of visitors and members.

This notice refers, in the final sentence to the *Shambhala Care and Conduct* document. This was sent to centres earlier in electronic form. A printed copy is also enclosed for you to keep easily accessible in your centre.

Please take the time to read *Shambhala Care and Conduct*, if you have not already done so. It sets out core principles for conducting ourselves in accordance with the key teachings of the Shambhala Buddhist path. These are not commandments, but guides for training on the path. These principles also illuminate our way of dealing with conflicts and complaints within the community.

You will note that the document says that the Desung Corps ("Bliss Protectors") may be contacted at any time through the Rusung, Director of the Shambhala Centre or leader of the group. Please ensure that you and your Rusung know how to do this. It is hoped that most complaints and conflicts within the community can be resolved by the skilful means of our local leadership, with assistance from the Desung Corps if needed.

There is a specific Misconduct Procedure. It is important that you be aware of this. The procedure states that any individual may seek to have the procedure invoked by contacting any office holder of Shambhala. It is the responsibility of that office holder to work with others in an effort to deal with the matter locally. If that is not possible, the matter must then be referred either to the President or Desung General. Kindly discuss with the leadership of your centre or group how you will apply this in practice.

I hope you are able to work with this information and that it provides you with a sufficient basis to manifest the duty of care we wish to provide for all those who enter our mandala.

While these are the procedures we have evolved at this time, based on recent experience of working with specific cases, we nonetheless regard our efforts in this area as a work-in-progress. Any suggestions, questions or proposals for improvements are welcome.

Yours in the Vision of The Great Eastern Sun,

Richard Reoch

President

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. As part of our intention to create enlightened society, these 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.

Diversity and the Warrior's Heart

A Contemplation for Cultivating Gentleness, Fearlessness, and Intelligence

1. Gentleness:

Contemplating basic goodness, your own and others', bring to mind someone who is not from your "group"; this can be defined in many ways---racial, sexual, economic, political, religious, linguistic, cultural, personal---someone whom you are vaguely or strongly uncomfortable around, who brings up negative feelings in you, or with whom you disagree. Letting go of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of them or your feelings about them or their opinions, recognize your own basic goodness, and theirs, and sit with this recognition for a few moments.

2. Fearlessness:

Practicing fearlessness is being willing to be with what comes up in our experience, no matter what that is. Be awake to what is happening as you hold this person in your mind. Notice the thoughts and feelings that arise, and your feelings about the thoughts and feelings. If you find that you want to escape or shut down, notice that too. Observe these patterns with gentle curiosity. Contemplate whether some of these patterns can be seen as an expression of cocoon.

3. Intelligence:

Still holding the person in your mind, contemplate whether there is a possibility of encountering him or her freshly, without worry or struggle. Notice whether there is a difference between viewing the person from the cocoon and viewing the person from the perspective of basic goodness. If fear or revulsion arises, remember that we do not step out of the cocoon once and for all, that we are on a path of continued opening.

4. Postmeditation:

In any encounter with people, whether face to face, in the media, or any other context, we can flash on the basic goodness of ourselves and others. We can be willing to be fully present to ourselves and them. Just as we practice on the cushion noticing thoughts and gently returning to the breath, we can observe our experience in the moment with curiosity, not judgment, and we can learn to relate to the world and everyone we meet with more openness, clarity, and genuineness.

---By Linda G. Francis (Baltimore); adapt as appropriate

A Shambhala Diversity Webpage

The Diversity Working Group invites you and your center or group to contribute material for a Shambhala Diversity Webpage, which will offer resources for developing awareness and understanding of the many different forms of diversity in our community:

- Physical, perceptual and mental ability
- Nationality, culture and language
- Race and ethnicity
- Religion, spirituality and path
- Sexual orientation
- Gender issues
- Sexual orientation
- Youth and the elderly
- Class and income
- Any other aspect of our diversity

Anything that you can suggest or contribute—whether it originates from within Shambhala or not—will be considered for inclusion in the webpage. For example:

- Descriptions of diversity best practices
- Diversity awareness training modules
- Descriptions of upcoming diversity programs
- Names of bilingual teachers authorized to teach Buddhism, Shambhala Training, or meditation
- Names of teachers who might be willing to speak on an aspect of our diversity
- Transcripts of dharma talks on diversity
- Books, articles, reports, essays, poems
- Movies, documentaries
- Diversity photographs or artwork
- Links to other websites
- Testimonials

In other words, anything that you feel would contribute to understanding and appreciation of any aspect of our diversity would be appreciated.

Whether you are a senior teacher or a new practitioner, we'd like to hear from you. You will have to hurry though. We will need the material **not later than June 1, 2006**. You may email it to: crainey52@aol.com. Please use "Diversity Webpage" as your email subject.

Many thanks,

The Diversity Working Group