

SHAMBHALA IRAN FUND



Tehran Shambhala Meditation Center

Creating a Global Shambhala Community

Localisation of the teachings, something that Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche has been emphasising for a number of years, depends upon the ability of practitioners to listen, contemplate and meditate in their mother tongues.

The Shambhala Mandala and the Sakyong's Council have recently affirmed their intention to help support groups throughout the world that face barriers to hearing and receiving the teachings.

Recently, the Chair of the Diversity working group, Cortez Rainey, surveyed groups from around the world as to their needs, including Central Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia, and Australia and New Zealand, and who struggle with a number of similar issues.

They suffer from geographic isolation and language barriers, and thus have difficulty in receiving teachings from qualified instructors in their native languages. In addition, these groups have less administrative advice and input. They cannot pay the relatively high travel costs (high relative to local income levels.) As a result, the teaching visits that do occur are often sporadic, and do not result in the development of the community in the manner that regular visits by a mentor/teacher could achieve.

In the report from the Diversity working group, the following recommendations were made to help emerging regions and to create a more diverse global mandala:

- Provide teachers, trainers and mentors to emerging regions
- Increase the participation of emerging regions
- Develop diverse leaders globally
- Provide translation assistance
- Funding for teachers, translation and distance education
- Make all programs affordable

Shambhala Iran Fund

In 2005 Raana Bastani returned to Iran after living in California for 20 years. She herself arranged and paid for the printing of 2000 copies of *Turning the Mind into an Ally*, which included securing the approval of official government censors. She also refurbished an apartment and set up a Shambhala centre where she now regularly hosts shamatha practice with up to 20 people.

The group would like to receive further teachings. However, finances are a limiting factor – it is not possible to pay for the visits of teachers from participants' fees. A weekend program in Iran would cost no more than 20\$US, or 15 Euro, given Iranian income levels.

Shambhala Europe, which already supports many groups in 15 countries, has a number of years' experience with mentors and funds. Shambhala Europe has funds for assisting central European groups with teachers' travel, scholarships and centre developments.

Recently, the Sakyong asked Shambhala Europe to take responsibility for assisting in Iran. We would like to create a fund to help Iran in the following ways:

- Identify 1-3 mentors for Iran
- Pay for mentor to travel to Iran 2 times per year.
- Pay for travel and training of Raana Bastani and other emerging Iranian leaders – including MI training, teacher training, and Shambhala leadership training.
- Support Iran with the translation tools that have been developed for all non-English languages.

The Projected total annual cost of this effort is approximately 2,000 Euro, or 2,635\$US per year.

How you can help

We are looking for a three-year commitment from interested individuals, centers or groups to finance this groundbreaking Shambhala Iran Fund. Ideally, donors would pledge to 25\$US, or 19 Euro, or more per month. Groups or centers of individuals would be invited to pledge a minimum of 50\$US, or 38 Euro, per month.

If you are interested in assisting to develop a Shambhala Center in Iran, or in supporting the larger vision of creating a global Shambhala community by strengthening Shambhala Groups in Iran and the Middle East, please contact Marc Matheson at tigermind@earthlink.net.

Thank you.