

**Summary of the reform proposals
discussed by the
Mandala Governing Council
(adopted at the meeting of the Council:
Boston, 4-7 December 2004)**

The Mandala Governing Council discussed a wide-ranging set of reforms and recommendations to create a new atmosphere of openness, clarity and care as the basis for building Shambhala society.

The proposals will go out immediately to all Shambhala Centres so that they can be discussed in community meetings before the Second Shambhala Congress takes place in Halifax from 13 to 17 February.

Openness and trust: a statement of affirmation

The Mandala Governing Council formally affirmed that the continuing emergence of Shambhala Society must be based on the profound realisation of unconditional openness and trust in basic goodness that are the heart of our Kagyu, Nyingma and Shambhala lineages. It said the governance of our mandala needs to embody the principles of openness, transparency and accountability, so that communication, participation, dialogue and debate can be included in the unfolding of natural hierarchy.

It stated: “No one should face derision, exclusion, rejection or retribution for holding or expressing their views or for dissenting from the views held by others, including the policies and practices of the leadership of the mandala.”

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

It encouraged open-hearted discussion throughout the mandala, using appropriate upayas such as talking circles and other forms, to enable these and other concerns to surface freely and fearlessly within our community so that we can bring the power of our collective wisdom and warriorship to bear and use these as the ground for the practice of enlightened society.

Effects of the reform proposals

If the proposed reforms are adopted after discussion at the Shambhala Congress, they will have the following effects:

Diversity and Accessibility: a deeper understanding with detailed recommendations

Everyone will be encouraged to reflect on our community’s need for greater diversity and accessibility. The aim is to broaden our understanding and appreciation of ourselves and people of different cultures, beliefs and views. A set of more than 70 practical recommendations are offered to the community on the need for diversity and accessibility in our leadership, programming, languages and facilities. Specific suggestions are made for diversity training. Programs would be made more affordable and more family

friendly. The goal is to benefit a broader spectrum of people within Shambhala as well as to make our teachings accessible to many more people in our larger societies.

Intellectual and Political Diversity: a clear statement of inclusiveness

The Diversity and Accessibility Working Group also stressed the importance of promoting intellectual and political diversity. “We encourage members at all levels of the Mandala to adhere to the principles of openness and basic goodness in all communication, including discussions that take place in on-line forums and as part of programs as well as more informal settings,” it said. “Our contemplative tradition must remain open to all: soldiers and pacifists, monarchists and anarchists, capitalists and socialists, republicans and democrats. No one should be excluded from the richness of our situation and no one should have grounds to feel they are excluded or ostracized on the basis of their views, opinions or beliefs.”

Outreach: new tool kit and new website design

At the forthcoming Shambhala Congress, all Shambhala Centres will be given a free “outreach tool kit”. It will include a manual and accompanying CD with adaptable templates for advertising, flexible formats for the Turning the Mind into an Ally curriculum, and suggestions for follow-up after introductory “gateway” programs for newcomers. In addition, the Outreach Working Group is producing an *Outreach Bulletin* in time for the Congress. It will feature innovative programs and community events already happening at local centres. In the coming months, the Shambhala website will be redesigned to make the homepage more inviting, dynamic and user-friendly so that it welcomes newcomers into our global mandala.

Community Care: new resources and practical steps for local centres

Caring for people in our community would become a high priority, reflecting the aspiration expressed in the Sakyong’s *Treatise on Society and Organization*. All Shambhala Centres will be provided with free resource material put together over the past year by the community care working group. These resources will be ready in time for the forthcoming Shambhala Congress. A key recommendation is that at each centre there would be a local community care leader who could help members discuss the ways in which caring for each other is part of our collective practice, work out their highest local priority and decide what practical action they could take as a first step.

Leadership Development and Succession Planning: sharing best practice and community-wide resources

All Shambhala Centres will be provided with a collection of examples and best practice in developing good leadership, as well as resources and suggestions for leadership training and development. These resources will include models for mentorship programs, volunteer coordination, organizational structures and sample job descriptions.

A New Economic Model: aiming for long-term stable funding

Under the proposals discussed over the past year, Shambhala would establish a new economic model whose goal is to provide long-term stable funding for the lineage of Sakyongs and the core services of the mandala. This will rely on individual donations as

well as systematic contributions from all parts of the mandala, including all Shambhala Centres, to a central budget. All contributions, including those from Shambhala Centres, would be voluntary, with the aim of phasing in broad participation over the coming years. This system already functions in Europe, and Shambhala Europe (the central administration) has offered to contribute 10 per cent of its annual net income to support our international mandala. Almost half the Shambhala Centres in North America have agreed to participate in the new model in the coming year, in most cases contributing between four and six percent of their net income. Major practice centres will also be contributing to the system.

Financial planning and reporting: new systems and strengthened management

All Shambhala Centres will be provided with a new format for annual financial reporting. The core services of the mandala, funded through our international budget, will also be expected to give our whole community an accurate and comprehensive financial report each year. Openness, transparency and accountability are the guiding principles: the 2005 budget, just adopted by the Board of Directors, will be posted on the Shambhala website. The goal is to enable our members to build trust as a result of greater disclosure as well as better planning based on accurate financial information. The President is being asked to appoint a Chief Financial Officer to Shambhala's leadership team as soon as resources become available. This will strengthen financial oversight and policy development for the whole mandala.

Membership: a unified approach for the whole mandala?

A mandala-wide definition of membership is proposed, as well as a common approach to determining who is a member. Local membership would automatically confer membership in the global mandala. There would be central support to help local membership coordinators. In addition, there would be a new category of membership introduced so that people who are not affiliated to a local Shambhala Centre could become international members of the mandala. This is an area where there are widely ranging points of view and differing experiences – it is likely that this will be the subject of lively discussion at centres and at the Congress.

Shambhala Governance: an evolving set of tenets

Shambhala Centres and the Congress are being invited to discuss an evolving document setting out key tenets for Shambhala governance.

Core Services: meeting the needs of Shambhala Centres and members

Additional core services would be provided to Shambhala Centres and practice centres, initially mostly through the contribution of volunteers throughout the mandala. The priority for providing core services would be based on input from the centres themselves.

The Shambhala Congress: a continuing space for community exchange

The Shambhala Congress would further develop as a venue for open exchange, listening, community building, and the development of training and other resources to support our evolving mandala.

The Shambhala Charter: a new framework of self-regulation

A new Shambhala Charter would support the autonomy of local centres within the framework of a unified, cohesive mandala. Local centres would become Charter members of Shambhala with rights and responsibilities.

A new governing structure: opening up participation throughout the mandala

The Sakyong has proposed a new set of governing structures. This would include a new body on which every Shambhala Centre would have a seat. His proposals have been discussed over the past few months by the Mandala Governing Council and he will consider its recommendations this month. The new governing model will come into effect on Shambhala Day so that a system will be in place to implement the outcome of the Shambhala Congress in February.

The ground of openness and trust: Statement of the Mandala Governing Council

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

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

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

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

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

In this spirit, we urge our community at all levels to reflect on the ways in which we can create containers for sane society within our mandala. Thus we can work compassionately with our differences and conflicts, so that there is respect for each other's commitment to different streams of teachings and practice. No one should face

derision, exclusion, rejection, or retribution for holding or expressing their views or for dissenting from the views held by others, including the policies and practices of the leadership of the mandala.

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

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

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

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

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

- The need to respect the diversity of transmissions and different allegiances that people hold within Shambhala;
- The fault lines resulting from differences of individual loyalties and devotion to different lineages and teachers;
- The importance of working with different points of view resulting from the new Shambhala ngondro, the emergence of the Rigden as a central image for our shrine rooms and the introduction of a new shrine in Shambhala Centres;
- The need to address fears that Shambhala could be seen to be cutting itself off from the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages, and that practitioners of those lineages could feel themselves excluded from the Shambhala community;
- The changing reality that we are now a mandala with one Sakyong and many teachers/root gurus;

- The need to address concerns that the new path associated with the Shambhala ngöndro could exclude people who are not Buddhists from the highest teachings of the Shambhala tradition and entry into the Kalapa Shambhala Society;
- The concern about confusion over the use of the term “Shambhala Buddhism”;
- The need to understand and come to terms with the differing views regarding the Vajra Regent;
- The importance of communicating properly and giving genuine feedback to the Kalapa Court;
- The difficulties many people experience as we go through transitions in leadership (such as the changes in Dorje Kasung and board leadership), generations, forms and practices;
- The importance of dealing with divisions in ways that avoid polarization, do not force people to choose between “one side” or “the other” or lead people to fear exclusion;
- The feelings people have that they are not represented in the consultative and decision-making processes of the mandala;
- The need for clarity about the role of Nova Scotia as the centre of the mandala;
- The concern that discussions around diversity must be based on real commitment and not be a matter of lip service.

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

Adopted by the Mandala Governing Council of Shambhala
 Boston
 7 December 2004

*Members of the Mandala Governing Council attending the meeting
 (in alphabetical order)*

*Victoria Bell
 Bill Brauer (for Jeff Waltcher)
 Connie Brock
 Brian Callahan
 Amy Conway
 Susan Dreier
 Deborah Garrett
 Holly Gayley
 Michael Greenleaf
 Alex Halpern
 Bonnie Hankin (for Jesse Grimes)*

*Alice Haspray
Arawana Hayashi
Sharon Hoagland
Joseph Inskip
Marty Janowitz
Ed Keizer (for Chris Tamdjidi)
Sophie Maclaren
Debbie McCubbin
Melvin McLeod
Larry Mermelstein
Dan Montgomery
David Quinn
Cortez Rainey
Richard Reoch
Jim Rosen
John Sennhauser
Susan Skjei
Arbie Thalacker
Robert Vogler
Mary Whetsell
Karen Wilding*