

Contemplation Points from the Gathering of the Shambhala Leadership with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche

*December 8, 9 and 10, 2006
Boulder Shambhala Center*

The Sakyong invited members of the Shambhala leadership to gather with him over three days in Boulder at the Shambhala Center. He was joined by Lady Diana Mukpo, Khandro Tseyang and President Reoch, as well as some 120 leaders and other representatives from all over the mandala. Recordings of the talks are being sent to all centres so that the leadership of each Shambhala Centre and of other entities within the mandala can listen and reflect on the teachings that were given.

Among the central points that arose from the weekend were:

1. One Mandala

The Sakyong said it is time for a stronger sense of collaboration and strategic planning across all parts of the mandala. We need to go beyond thinking only about our own part of the mandala, and see the mandala as a whole. Decisions about finances, building projects and scheduling need to be made with the good of the entire mandala as the primary consideration. He had previously spoken to the Sakyong's Council about the need now to develop a greater sense of central governance for the benefit of the mandala as a whole.

2. Shambhala Governance as Practice and Path

The Sakyong spoke about the distinctive teachings we have received on governance and the importance of understanding Shambhala governance as practice and path. He asked President Reoch to present a contemplation on the Six Ways of Ruling that could be used by Shambhala leaders. This incorporated material from both the Druk Sakyong and himself. It is being circulated along with this message. The Sakyong also indicated that he would like to have further periodic meetings with the Shambhala leadership and give teachings on Shambhala governance to us. The next such gathering would be at the time of the Shambhala Congress in Cologne, Germany, which he urged us to attend.

3. The Importance of Shambhala leaders being connected to the lineage of the Sakyongs

Rinpoche said that the lineage of the Sakyongs is "the branch that's holding up the tent of Shambhala". In her address to the leadership, Lady Diana Mukpo said that it was crucial for leaders within our mandala "have their finger in the socket of the Shambhala lineage". While it is always fine for members of Shambhala Centers to study with other teachers, it is important for those in leadership positions to be clearly aligned with the lineage of rulership. In this way, our leaders can find their primary source of inspiration in the lineage of Sakyongs, and best help create the Kingdom of Shambhala.

4. New Protocol for Inviting Other Dharma Teachers to our Centres

The Sakyong reminded us that invitations from Shambhala Centres are actually invitations issued on his behalf to teach in the Shambhala mandala, of which he is the throne-holder (*tridzin*). It is important for him to maintain a sense of who is teaching within our mandala and strengthen his own relationship to those

teachers. A letter will be coming soon from the Office of the Kalapa Court, seeking information from all Shambhala Centres about their forthcoming plans for issuing invitations to other dharma teachers. On the basis of the replies, a composite presentation will be made to the Sakyong so that he can make recommendations on updated procedures for inviting dharma teachers into our Centers. Centers that currently have a visit from such a teacher on their calendars do not need to change plans that have already been made.

5. Working with money in Shambhala

The Sakyong invited Alan Schwartz and Joanne Martin Braun to lead a workshop on “Working with money in Shambhala” as part of a mandala-wide effort to reflect on the importance of generosity, the personal and societal issues we have around money, and to encourage us to reflect on how we can best place the whole of Shambhala on a much firmer financial footing for the future.

6. Decision Making in Mandala Governance

The Sakyong was asked about decision-making methods in Shambhala. He spoke of the importance of leadership functioning not only through the natural hierarchy of lha, nyen and lu, but also of the importance of collective wisdom that emerges through group work. However, he pointed out that strict allegiance to using consensus in decision making can be a problem: consensus requires agreement of all involved and can therefore allow a small number of people (even one or two) to keep governance from moving forward. The Sakyong’s Council has evolved a set of general principles of decision making, which it has used to move forward on a number of issues. The decision-making procedure it uses is described in the document that accompanies this message.