

ROLE DESCRIPTION—CENTRE DIRECTOR

A Centre Director is the representative of the Sakyong in a city or region and is selected by the members of their Shambhala centre. Once selected, their appointment is confirmed once they have been formally presented to the Sakyong and the President by Shambhala Europe.

View of the Centre Director Role

Fundamentally, the role of a Director is joining heaven and earth and helping to make a good community flourish. This involves helping to provide and create a space where the basic goodness of all people can be recognised and uncovered. In this sense, heaven does not necessarily mean that the Centre Director represents heaven or holds the lha seat in a centre, but rather it means that they should have a good relation to that which is above, or higher.

The relationship to heaven manifests in a Centre Director in a number of ways:

- Having devotion, loyalty or a good relation of trust with the Sakyong and his appointed representatives, including the Acharyas and the Director of Shambhala Europe.
- Having a good understanding of the Shambhala vision.
- Having a healthy and ongoing relationship with practice and making an active effort to study the teachings.
- Understanding the general guidelines of Shambhala and being open to advice on how to help manifest Shambhala principles.
- Relating to other leadership groups – either a local board of the centre or the Shambhala Europe Council or mentors.

In the same way, the Centre Director will also manifest earth by:

- Being in touch with the community and aware of the issues in the community.
- Ensuring that there is a sound basis for coming together to practice, including good premises and sound finances. Also, ensuring that the necessary details for the space and events are taken care of and accomplished.
- Overall, being very well-connected and willing to relate to the fundamental gritty realities of life and the community.

In bringing these heaven and earth together, the Centre Director fulfils the role of man, which manifests as:

- Holding the seat of leadership to inspire, train and empower others.
- Working closely with other staff and mentoring new people.
- Taking care that the activities of the community are well-coordinated and planned. Also, ensuring people have clearly defined tasks and that their work is coordinated.
- Working to ensure that there is good communication – both within the community with other parts of the mandala.
- Ensuring that there is harmony in the community.

These three aspects come together to summarise the Shambhala view of what the role of a Centre Director is. The Centre Director is not alone in holding such a responsibility of creating a good community – there are of course many senior teachers and MIs who also hold such a responsibility. But at the same time, this is a leadership position and the responsibility that comes with it needs to be clearly acknowledged.

The Roles of a Centre Director

Outer View

On the outer level, the Centre Director is responsible for the external environment and container in which the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings take place, which includes:

Strategic Planning

- Work in close collaboration with the Directors of Shambhala Europe and any local boards to develop and implement strategic goals and priorities for the Centre.

Finances

- Monitor and ensure the financial well-being of the Centre. The Director should work with their local Shambhala Council to develop an annual budget, and then report to the Council and community throughout the year regarding progress against that budget.
- Ensure the dues system is in place and there exists a sound system of financial management.
- Ensure that the revenues and expenses of the group are properly handled and that they balance.

Operational Responsibilities

- Direct and manage the local Shambhala Council of Centre administrators.
- Plan, direct, and coordinate operational activities at the Shambhala Centre.
- Invite people to take responsibility for tasks in the group and potentially train them in their roles.
- Establish and maintain systems for magnetising and encouraging volunteers from the membership to staff practice, study and community events within the Centre.
- Supervise staff responsible for the management and maintenance of the Centre.

Physical Environment

- Ensure that there is an appropriate physical environment for the community to come together and hear the dharma, and that it is clean and accessible.

Communication

- Communicate with all the relevant bodies in the community.
- Build processes and systems that encourage communications between the Centre and its members.
- Facilitate the Centre's communication and cooperation with Shambhala Europe, Shambhala International and other Shambhala groups world-wide.
- Represent the Shambhala Centre to the general public, visiting teachers, prospective members and newer students.

Inner View

The Director is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the container in which the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings occur. A brilliant and gentle container can be enormously helpful for people to understand the teachings that are being presented. In fact, such a container is itself a manifestation of the dharma, and can be seen to be a teaching. A Centre Director can take care of the container in some of the following ways:

- Setting the tone for the environment of the Shambhala Centre: working to ensure that there is a generally warm and welcoming environment, an environment of some kindness, some sharpness and some brilliance – the atmosphere of Great Eastern Sun.

- Encouraging a culture of practice: Shambhala Culture is a culture that is supportive of practice. Encouraging a culture of practice, and ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities for people to practice.
- Attending to ones own state of mind and paying attention to “being” as well as “doing”. Setting an example in the way one works: use every opportunity to raise windhorse and remember to maintain a sense of humour, while at the same time paying close attention to details.
- Attending to form and decorum: the Dorje Dradul introduced many aspects of form and decorum to help wake us up and cut through cocoon. Some examples are: beginning and ending meetings with a bow, mindfulness of speech, cutting through speed and sloppiness by using decorum when entering and leaving rooms, and mode of dress.
- Taking care of the well being of the community: ensuring that there is harmony and cohesion in the community. Making sure that there are no conflicts and that no one feels excluded or left out.

Secret Level

Finally, on an innermost level, the Centre Director must relate to their practice and path in a genuine and sane way. This involves a genuine relationship to practices on their own particular stage of the path and especially practicing regularly with the community. Practicing with the community is one of the most important aspects of the role – it provides an example of a leader practicing and also strengthens the bond between the leadership and the community. In addition, as much as is possible, Directors should engage in stroke practice.

Required Personal Qualities & Experience

A suitable candidate will:

- Be a reasonably accomplished, energetic, and articulate practitioner of Shambhala Buddhism, which includes Buddhism, Shambhala Training and the Contemplative Arts. Having attended, or have the willingness to attend, advanced Shambhala programmes such as Kalapa Assembly and Seminary is an asset.
- Manifest loyalty and devotion to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche as holder of the Shambhala Buddhist lineage.
- Be people-oriented, well-organized, and able to listen, lead, and make decisions.
- Be able to work collaboratively with the any local Board, the local Shambhala Council, and a wide variety of volunteer staff.
- Respect and encourage diversity both within the administration of the Shambhala Centre and throughout the community. Be flexible and responsive to differing points of view.
- Be skilled at delegation. While being familiar with all aspects of the Centre’s activities, the Director will delegate many of the required jobs to others.