

Fundamental changes at Shambhala International The Plain-Vanilla Corporate Option

Assumption: Natural hierarchy means a balance of power.

Major Goals:

- 1. Integration:** Integrate our global Shambhala community into a single mandala. We do not have this now.

We should consider that the model of the kingdom of shambhala is our goal – a large umbrella of individuals and organizations committed to individual and social santiy, based upon contemplative non theistic practice and study based upon ordinary mind, within which many guru-disciple relationships can flourish but that the king, the sakyong, provides the main spiritual leadership, focus and energy. The sakyong resides in his palace in Kalapa, the capital of Shambhala, and then there are 24 other root gurus in the various sacred places, bodhisattvas and dakinis in the cardinal and intermediary directions, and so forth...

Shambhala is an association including all of these organizations of these other teachers – anyone we rent to, etc. Ultimately Shambhala is the main and largest network or association of Buddhist organizations in the world, and thus become a major force in the UN and the world scene. Shambhala is a Buddhist country without borders.

- 2. Governance:** Develop a new system of governance based on mandala principle. We need to establish a framework for a genuine partnership that meets the needs of all our regional and local structures and also supports the centre of our mandala.

The governance should be consist of three separate structures:

- a. The executive board of directors - individuals strong in certain key functional areas – legal, hr, finance, operations, development, security, academia, churching, etc - who are independent from the centers represented;
- b. A board of governors - representatives of: Shambhala US, Canada and Europe; the major practice centers (smc, kcl, ddl, dc, sll); and kdz in each country (Boulder, Halifax and Marburg is it?). Two each, one from their board and then (one of) their director(s); and the major “associations” – maitri, shambhala art, kasung, etc.
- c. The “judicial” board - the board of acharyas All “spiritual” issues should be relegated to this board. The acharyas need to have representation for all of our disciplines – nalanda, kasung, maitri, etc, in addition to the usual Buddhist and st.

These could be just three different classes of directors, or could be three separate bodies like in the current U.S. democratic structure with a further system of checks and balances. An executive committee would include representatives of each of these three, say four each.

The proposal of having SMR doing everything is extremely labor intensive for him and not realistic and also not necessarily efficient and most effective. Natural hierarchy is the appropriate balance of responsibility with a harmonious system of relationships.

- 3. Membership:** Agree on a mandala-wide membership policy. This needs to meet the needs of Shambhala Centres and Groups as well as individuals worldwide who want to be part of Shambhala Society.

All membership should be in shambhala international, not local. Due should be handled by outsourcing to a major data mgmt provider. Revenues from such dues go directly to one's local center, but a portion is then split with international based upon reasonable and well defined franchise relationships. Donations should be handled by this outside third party provider as well, allowing donors to specify where funds should go. It should be made clear that some % of all donations will go to overhead (international or local as necessary) – this is normal and to be expected.

Levels of individual membership should be tiered allowing for all ranges of relationships with the organization from 1x/yr friends to the large \$/month crowd. Membership should have tangible but modest rewards – newsletter, program discounts at all centers based upon level of dues primarily. Dues will need to be adjusted regionally based upon cost of living; also there need to be discounts for juniors, seniors and students.

Also associate membership also for organizations such as shambhala art, sarpashana, etc. Forge partnerships with other Buddhist organizations who become associate members and have certain benefits in rentals, programs, etc and we work with to maintain integrity and coordination of common goals and activities – major Kagyu and Nyingma teachers, etc.

- 4. Role of the Centers:** Clearly define the role and responsibilities of all Shambhala Meditation Centres. This needs to reflect a coherent view of the Shambhala Buddhist teachings, the Dorje Kasung, and the importance of arts and culture in the development of Shambhala Society.

This should express the model sketched above in #1. Need a franchise agreement and charter that lays out the vision for our path and world that all franchisees need to agree to stating they will pursue and uphold the furtherance of shambhala dharma, etc. The Centers need a similar three part structure as the overall Shambhala mandala, that gives representation and coherence to all of these important parts and creates a forum for their interaction.

- 5. Education:** Continue developing our entire education system that offers a coherent view of the Shambhala Buddhist path.

- a. Buddhist Path: We need two additional Buddhist curriculums in addition to the current ssbs – one for vajrayana study, and one for advanced non-tantrika study for those in our mandala that are not tantrikas but have completed ssbs (either on the way to vy seminary or not interested, which is fine by the way!), a shambhala shedra or mipham institute program.
 - b. Shambhala Path: need to separate vajrayana shambhala training from the graduate program and put that part into the Buddhist path as the core teaching of our path. Work the revised graduate program into nalanda disciplines that become a lifelong endeavor instead of ending at level whatever.
- 6. Economics:** Establish a new economic model for the mandala. This needs to include a system that increasingly supports the teachers within our mandala.

There should be a tiered economic and legal scheme –

- The major practice centers should be legally part of Shambhala – either Canada, US or Europe (is that one county yet?). Thus the board representation. Funds and operations should be handled nationally. Each should be a separate corporation so that the consolidation, audit and so forth of each doesn't drag on the other.
- All of the city centers should operate on the franchise model, relating to the shambhala organization in their country. The exchange of funds and services need to be worked out by agreement, basically the same for all centers. Since too small to have the same three part structure as the overall mandala, each center should have BoD and a Shambhala council, both of which should consist of both functional and programmatic areas – the BoD should be senior students and the council should be active staff.
- All of the various “interest” or focus groups we have – shambhala arts, kasung, body disciplines, etc. should be operated as franchises with different agreements than the city centers and should be supervised by their current separate boards and should have representatives on the shambhala board of directors.
- International should be separately incorporated from all of these, but be the sole member of the national shambhala's. It should support our sakyong, family and household with the transfer payments from the centers. The central staff should be run as a profit center and be supported by services it provides for fees to the centers and the sakyong.

100% of dues goes to the local center, but local center pays portion of this to International based upon the franchise agreement. This will create the financial base for International plus a system of regional Acharyas coordinated and supported by the National Shambhala organizations in conjunction and in contract with the Acharyas.

This will also make it much easier to standardize employment policies and implementation, and limit liability since only the major centers are legally owned centers. Much easier than doing it for a zillion city centers also which would then be independent franchisees.

- 7. Financial Management:** Overhaul, simplify and speed transaction processing and reporting from up our central financial systems.

Central needs to direct, control or manage borrowing, liability, risk, employment practices, major real estate holdings, intangible assets, donations and dues.

In order to achieve this objective, we need to simplify.

Do this by implementing the following:

- Reduce the number of entities being accounted for – only the practice centers will be required under the legal structure described above.
- Use outside providers for dues and donations collection and allocation. This will also be our main database – we need access to that part to maintain and report from. The provider provides the software platform (web based of course!) and the financial transaction part (hitting bank accounts, etc)
- Standardize accounting systems (software if possible, but certainly things like chart of accounts, ways of accounting for certain transactions – and int'l needs to provide a manual for this)

- 8. Sakyong Support:** Establish the basis of funding and financial planning for the Sakyong and the support provided by the Shambhala Mandala to members of the Mukpo family.

The sharing of dues from the franchise agreements plus some share of major international programs will support these. Each member of the family supported should have a role and function – Lady Konchok and even Gesar!

- 9. MIS:** Lay the basis for a mandala-wide system of compatible computer records needed for program planning, publicity, communications and financial data.

The outsourced dues and donations system will provide this. Not good to have a separate system from the financial one – wasteful duplication. Customize it for our needs with a system of secured access and passwords.

Working with Community

Concerns For many people this is a time of change in the community, which can be unsettling and disturbing. The recent conference calls brought to light some of the more charged issues that have divided some of our members, but have the potential to bring our differences into harmony. These include:

1. The meaning and implications of Shambhala Buddhism:
 - Has the incorporation of the Shambhala principles into the presentation of the buddha dharma created a “new” form of buddhism?

In essence we are simply acknowledging and formalizing what has been going on in Tibet for centuries and also here since VCTR created VDH. The manifestation has evolved. Blending of Kagyu/Nyingma is age old. Formal inclusion of Ridgen as source of mind or sign transmission to Sakyongs is new, similar to Tilopa's transmission from Vajradhara and the Sambhogakaya Dakinis.

- Conversely, does the bringing of the Shambhala teachings within the umbrella of buddhism transform what was presented as a secular alternative to religion?

The current ST program is great and one of the most powerful packages of skillful means to appear in the West and possibly in the world. Its purpose is to bring humanity closer to individual sanity either by becoming Buddhists or by incorporating sitting into their lives forever. More likely for the latter it is very temporary. Needs to lead into a life long more all engaging activities that include teacher/teaching/community. Those are the shambhala arts and body disciplines.

At some point it needs to funnel into our Buddhist track in order to progress to the highest levels as these are pure tantra. Werma needs to require pointing out transmission and samaya. Graduate program is vajrayana Buddhism, not shambhala training. ST needs to be de-religiousized. The religious parts of graduate program need to be removed from ST and worked into the new version of the shambhala vajrayana path which is a combination of traditional vajrayana and our founders terma from the Rigdens. All of our vajrayana students should have this combination, not only those that do shambhala training graduate program. Should be part of our standard vajrayana path, like ngondro – perhaps werma would be the fifth ngondro! These termas are the very essence of shambhala Buddhism, our world, and need to be integral to it, not just part of st.

2. The place of the Vajra Regent in our history and integration of his teachings within the presentation of the dharma. How can we heal the breach that has divided some members for over a decade?

We need to acknowledge both his brilliance and his failings. In particular we need to pay homage to him having made progress on the path, and thus as the representative of the notion that non-Tibetans can actually progress on the path! It is not restricted to Tibetans! VROT's successor should be appointed an Acharya. We need to include him in our history and be proud not embarrassed of him. Each Sakyong will have a regent, we need to honor that role. At same time, we need to realize the potential to screw up and so need to lessen the importance of this role so it is not far above the Acharyas.

3. Providing training and practice for older students

A shedra program. Many of our most senior teachers know nothing about core traditional Buddhist topics (e.g. prasangika) And renewed emphasis on the advanced practices - chakrasamvara on up.

4. What is needed to establish a new level of trust of leadership at all levels of the community?

Managerial competence. A natural (ie real world) system for financial, organizational and personal accountability and integrity. These, and not spiritual attainment are the key for such success! The system of accountability should be modeled on a tripartite system of democratic government (democratic or parliamentary monarchy) with representation and checks and balances:

- Executive – leadership and staff of shambhala int'l and national orgs
- Judicial – board of acharyas, need to take role of upaya council and maha human resources, in addition to the spiritual leaders and holders of the doctrine.
- Legislative – the “house”
 - i. Upper – national orgs and land centers
 - ii. Middle – major city centers
 - iii. Lower – all other centers