

Partnerships in a unified mandala: meeting the needs of diverse realities

Discussion Paper for the Shambhala Congress

This paper is a summary of extensive work contributed by Mr Chris Tamdjidi, Director of Shambhala Europe, who worked closely with Mr Alex Halpern of the Board of Shambhala International, to develop possible options that could be considered by the Shambhala Congress.

One way of thinking about a unified mandala is to imagine a series of concentric circles:

The innermost circle is the circle that directly supports the Sakyong and acts as the heart of his government..

The next innermost circle is the Shambhala Community. This could include all Shambhala Centers and other entities like Shambhala Europe.

The next circle is the broader mandala. This could include groups or centers-in-formation, and bodies that either use the Shambhala name or propagate the Shambhala or Buddhist teachings in some way.

The outermost circle could include associates of Shambhala – institutions that would like to have a connection with Shambhala but wish to be wholly independent in virtually all respects.

The advantage of this approach is that it would not compel anyone or any existing entity to change its current relationship to the mandala as a whole. It simply recognizes that such broad circles already exist and that, broadly speaking, existing and future partners within the mandala could choose the nature of the relationship they wish to have – and have that respected.

To examine this approach in more detail, we could visualize four types of legal/organisational entities within the overall Shambhala Mandala:

Center of the mandala: The center would include the Sakyong and the leadership with which he works most closely. The center would also include entities such as the Office of the Sakyong, and the Central Office of the mandala, providing the core services to the mandala.

First circle: This could include entities that would be full members or partners in the system of membership. These would be entities that are very close in nature to the core activities of Shambhala, and would include the Practice centers, Shambhala centers and other related entities such as Shambhala Europe. These entities hold the full view of the Shambhala mandala, view the Sakyong as a spiritual leader and king, and present (as much as possible) the full scope of the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings.

Second Circle: This could include entities that either use the Shambhala name or propagate the Shambhala or Buddhist teachings in some way, but are not core parts of the mandala or hold the full view of the Shambhala vision. This could include such entities as the Shambhala Institute and the Shambhala Sun. These

see the Sakyong as a spiritual leader, but not necessarily as a King. Present some aspects of the Shambhala teachings but not the full scope.

Third Circle: There may need to be a third category of wholly independent entities that nevertheless have some formal or informal connection with the Shambhala Mandala. This could include entities such as Naropa University, or other institutes founded in other traditions that wish to have a close relationship to the Shambhala mandala. Probably view the Sakyong as a spiritual figure and a source of blessings.

One of the core distinctions among the different circles is the view of the Sakyong that they hold. It seems that there for the purposes of this document, we can distinguish three ways to view the Sakyong and his role.

1. As a King, holding both secular and spiritual powers.
2. As a spiritual leader and lineage holder.
3. As a spiritual figure, and source of blessings and protection.

This difference in view is one of the core aspects characterising the different classes of members, as outlined below.

CLEAR DIFFERENTIATION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF MANDALA ENTITIES

Category	Characteristic	Kalapa Institutions	Lineage Institutions	Mandala Institutions	Shambhala Associates
Legal	Tax Number	Use Shambhala Tax Number	Use own tax number	Use own tax number	Use own tax number
	Trademark	Full use of Shambhala trademarks	Use of Shambhala trademarks subject to license agreement	Use of Shambhala trademarks subject to license agreement	No or limited use of Shambhala trademarks
	Insurance/health insurance	Full coverage	Potential coverage based on agreement	Potential coverage based on agreement	None
View	View of Sakyong	View Sakyong as Spiritual leader and king	View Sakyong as Spiritual leader and king	View Sakyong as spiritual leader	View Sakyong as a source of blessings
	Fully embrace Shambhala Vision	Fully hold and present Shambhala vision	Fully hold and present Shambhala vision	Present some or all of Shambhala vision	Present some aspect Shambhala vision
Teachings	Presentation of teachings	Presentation of full scope of Shambhala teachings	Presentation of full scope of Shambhala teachings	Present some aspect of Shambhala or Buddhist teachings	Present some aspect of Shambhala or Buddhist teachings
	Curriculum	Teachings and teachers according to central curriculum	Teachings and teachers mainly according to central curriculum	Own curriculum coordinated with Shambhala	Presentation of Shambhala teachings with approval of Shambhala
Services	Receive services from center	-	Receive full range of services from the center	Some services from the center	-
Requirements	Control over assets, bylaws etc through Shambhala	Full control over assets, legal articles etc through Shambhala	Some control over assets	No control over assets, only on presentation of teachings	No control over assets, only on presentation of teachings

The characteristics of the partners

The essential features of the First Circle of partners, which would include all Shambhala Centers, could include:

1. Propagation of the Shambhala vision. Presenting the view of basic goodness and the possibility of an uplifting the existence of human beings and creating and enlightened society.
2. Upholding the vision of an enlightened kingdom with the Sakyong as King.

3. Promoting the Buddhist teachings of the Tibetan Kagyu and Nyingma traditions as well as other Buddhist lineages and the Shambhala Teachings.
4. To aid, assist and encourage the establishment, organization, and administration of Shambhala communities in North America, Europe and the rest of the World
5. To organize, administer, and guide Shambhalian communities whose members are dedicated to integrating their daily lives with their religious practice and study.
6. To disseminate the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings and practice as a means to alleviate mental and psychological problems and suffering
7. To promote, encourage, and advance the teachings of the Shambhala and Buddhist traditions through lectures, publication of written materials, seminars, development and dissemination of audio visual materials such as tape recordings and motion picture films, and any other forms of communication
8. To engage in these activities in a non-profit manner.

The characteristics of partners in the Second Circle would vary since some may propagate some of the above teachings in a special context (such as for example the Shambhala Institute) they do not need to subscribe to the full set of views (for example as laid out above)

An Example could be (fictitious)

- 1) To present the Buddhist teachings of the five buddha families and the specific teachings of Maitri space awareness to children in difficult situations
- 2) To train children in the practice of meditation and mindfulness to help them overcome obstacles in their lives.
- 3) To engage in such activity in a not for profit manner.

Participation in a mandala-wide consultative process

The partners will need to participate in a consultative process around issues that are relevant to them and that require their participation. Such a consultative process has not been designed so far. It seems clear however that this has to be managed in a small number of bodies – a core body representing the First Circle in a meaningful way (something like the Executive Council, with regional representatives), and a wider mandala integrative body, which would probably be more consultative.

Role of the center and role of the partners

At the center of the mandala there need to be the core services that transmit the vision from the heaven/Sakyong to the mandala, and at the same time provide feedback to the Sakyong from the earth. This requires a very strong connection to the realities of Shambhala Centers, and the communities they represent. This is not a relationship of control, so much as respect and understanding of the diverse needs, aspirations and capabilities of each aspect of the mandala.

There needs to be a clear relationship between the central leadership of the mandala and the central services that are provided to the community. Those services are

analogous to the Civil Service of a government. These services need to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community and be accountable to the community under the supervision of the central leadership. The key term here is “service” -- rather than “command and control” – based on supporting and meeting the needs of the individuals and institutions of the mandala, but acting within a common framework of values and principles that apply to all.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICES OF KALAPA FALL INTO THREE BROAD CATEGORIES

	Activity	Explanation
Heaven	Curriculum/View	• Defining/Interpreting the Curriculum – the relevant teachings
	Guidelines	• Defining guidelines for administering teachings, programs and containers
	Teaching	• Presenting the teachings
Man	Teacher development	• Developing and training the teachers
	Administrator Development	• Developing and training the administrator/ coordinators
	Community Development	• Administering/developing the community of warriors on this path
	Communication	• Communicating plans and activities
Earth	Structures/Containers	• Providing/administering relevant structures/containers for the dharma
	Administration of activities / Data management	• Administering own activities
	Finances	• Ensuring the finances and richness in place to make things happen
	Materials	• Preparing the relevant materials

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Services to and by First Circle Partners

Teachings and curriculum

The center of the mandala could be expected to provide

1. Developing (with feedback/input from lineage institutions), updating and disseminating the curriculum
2. Developing and dissemination guidelines for hosting programs, manuals for programs and trainings (Including Resident Director manuals, seminary manuals, etc)
3. Arranging/organising key programs in the mandala (such as teacher trainings, meditation instructor trainings, etc)
4. Training and authorising the teachers and MIs. Maintaining information on authorised teachers and MIs.
5. Bringing together the community of teachers/MIs on a regular basis
6. Communicating activities and disseminating materials
7. Organising key programs such as Vajrayana seminary, Warriors Assembly, Kalapa Assembly etc (more to be defined)
8. Providing administrative services such as mailings, database analysis etc
9. Providing relevant materials for programs etc

The Shambhala Centers and others in the First Circle, have a variety of strengths and possibilities to offer. Much depends on the size and strength of each center. This would need to be clarified.

Trademark and legal protection

The center of the mandala would need to hold the rights to the names, teachings and icons associated with the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings and will protect them.

This would include:

1. Paying trademark fees
2. Entering into licenses with lineage institutions, mandala institutions and other relevant parties for the use of the trademark
3. Monitoring the use of the names and icons by lineage institutions and other organisations
4. Enforcing the appropriate use, through legal means if required, to protect the brand and icons of Shambhala.

Shambhala Centers and others in the First Circle of partners would need to use the trademarks in the appropriate manner as outlined in the trademark agreements.

Other Central services

The center of the mandala could be expected to provide services to Shambhala centers and groups, including

1. Confirmation of center directors/directors of lineage institutions based on proposals of these organisations (Confirmation through the Sakyong)
2. Curriculum for Shambhala centers and groups
3. Administration manuals, finance manuals etc
4. Financial accounting and funds
5. Incubation of small groups
6. Appointment of mentors, senior teachers for regions, centers
7. Managing regional teacher councils
8. Administrator training, Dharmadhatu conferences
9. Conferences and clan gatherings, community training programs and advice
10. Regular communication with centers and groups
11. Legal, financial help, bye-laws
12. Access to Membership database,
13. Provide regular financial accounts on use of funds through central offices
14. If necessary, engage in auditing of lineage institutions
15. Create a fund for financial support of lineage institutions
16. Banners, flags, and other materials

The partners would need to be clear about what they can offer in these areas. This will likely vary from Center to Center, depending on their size and strength. It may be possible to come up with a core that is common to all, which can expand to welcome and use the creativity of the most dynamic centers.

Program services

The central organization could be expected to provide:

1. Curriculum for VY Seminary, SY Seminary etc
2. Manuals for programs– Dathün, VY Seminary
3. Select the key teachers for programs
4. Organise the key programs in coordination with the practice centers
5. Coordinator training and development
6. Disseminate Manuals for programs, materials etc

Community affairs

The central offices could be expected to provide:

1. Ensure process of representation available for community representatives through the Consultative congress or Dekyong Councils/Dekyong General.
2. Guidelines about community affairs and events
3. Misconduct procedure
4. Provide and train Desung Corps
5. Organise Shambhala mandala wide community events
6. Provide trainings about Shambhala culture and propagate it
7. Offer conflict resolution services

Again, the nature of the services provided by Shambhala Centers and other bodies in the First Circle of partners will vary considerably, but with discussion it may be possible to develop a common set of services, with the possibilities that stronger centers can offer far more.

Control of assets

The Shambhala Centers would need to have full operative control of their assets, and responsibility for stewarding these. However, in the case of a dissolution of a Center or other bodies in the First Circle, then the assets could revert to the overall Shambhala Mandala. The exact process for this would need to be designed.

Services to and by Second Circle Partners

Teachings and curriculum

The central offices could provide

1. Developing or simply reviewing the relevant curriculum on which the work of the Mandala institutions is based on.
2. Training and authorising the teachers and MIs if curriculum used is a Shambhala Curriculum. Maintaining information on authorised teachers and MIs.
3. Providing administrative services such as mailings, database analysis etc
4. Providing relevant materials for programs etc

The partners could offer

1. Organising and hosting local programs for the participants
2. Following the agreed guidelines of the programs
3. Paying license fees for the organisation of programs to the Kalapa offices
4. Providing relevant information (participant numbers, contact details, empowerment etc) as defined in the specific programs.
5. Providing feedback on the programs/teachings/curriculums

(More details required on this)

Trademark and legal protection

The central offices would need to hold the rights to the names, teachings and icons associated with the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings and will protect them. This would include:

1. Paying trademark fees
2. Entering into licenses with Lineage Institutions, associate members and other relevant parties for the use of the trademark
3. Monitoring the use of the names and icons by lineage institutions and other organisations
4. Enforcing the appropriate use, through legal means if required, to protect the brand and icons of Shambhala.

The partners would use the trademarks in the appropriate manners as outlined in the trademark agreements.

Services provided to and by Shambhala Associates

Teachings and curriculum

The central offices could provide

1. Developing and licensing the relevant curriculum on which the Shambhala work of the Shambhala associates is based on.
2. Training and authorising the teachers and MIs if curriculum used is a Shambhala Curriculum. Maintaining information on authorised teachers and MIs.
3. Providing relevant materials for programs etc

The Shambhala Associates could offer

1. Organising and hosting local programs for the participants
2. Following the agreed guidelines of the programs
3. Paying license fees for the organisation of programs to the Kalapa offices
4. Providing relevant information (participant numbers, contact details, empowerment etc) as defined in the specific programs.
5. Providing feedback on the programs/teachings/curriculums

(More details required on this)

Trademark and legal protection

The central offices would need to hold the rights to the names, teachings and icons associated with the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings and will protect them. This would include:

1. Paying trademark fees
2. Entering into licenses with Lineage Institutions, associate members and other relevant parties for the use of the trademark
3. Monitoring the use of the names and icons by lineage institutions and other organisations
4. Enforcing the appropriate use, through legal means if required, to protect the brand and icons of Shambhala.

The Shambhala associates would use the trademarks in the appropriate manners as outlined in the trademark agreements.

Outline of a potential legal structure for a unified mandala

Shambhala as a legal entity holds the rights associated with the names Shambhala, the teachings, as well as the icons associated with it. In many respects, these symbols are more fundamental unifying characteristics than the corporate form as such. Based on this, one can think of the mandala as a network of intellectual property distributors (*i. e.*, the centers) bound to a central office and each other by franchise and licensing contracts. Such an arrangement will accommodate multiple legal entities in multiple jurisdictions without losing the quality of a unified Mandala or system, the centralized authority to enforce standards within the system, or the ability to take advantage of system-wide services, such as the US group income tax exemption.

The franchise analogy also presented different ways of viewing the relationship between the central office and the divisions. Approaching the issue from the point of view of a competent, self-assertive local division/franchisee, there are critical services it needs that can only be served by a central office. These include such things as maintenance of the Kalapa Court, the spiritual hierarchy, the integrity of the teachings, the inter-division consistency within the mandala, the ability to present a unified face to the world, incubation of new centers, and financial benefits from concerted action. The International Office also has begun to view its role in more operational terms; that is, it sees itself less as a hierarchical place holder and more in terms of the services that it provides for the benefit of the mandala as a whole.

The franchise analogy, however, overstresses the business function within a system that is largely composed of communities and effectively places the central office and the franchisees at arm's-length. A membership model (in legal terms, or in our language partnership in a mandala model) would incorporate some of the benefits of the franchise model, maintaining the family or society aspect that we experience now.

Through a system of organisational membership in the Shambhala Mandala, we can bind together all of the entities that we want to contain within the mandala not merely as subordinate associates or franchisee/licensees, but as "owners" or "partners." To accomplish this, we would amend the articles of incorporation to provide, as a first step, that the members of Shambhala International are the dharma centers and meditation centers that meet criteria established by the Board of Directors and are approved through an application process. By being a member, a center is a partner in the Shambhala mandala, entitled (and required) to be connected to the spiritual vision of the Sakyong and the Court, to represent itself to the world as a Shambhala center, to use the trademarks, trade dress, and copyrighted materials, and to participate as a part of the network of members. This form of partnership would inevitably include the authority to participate in a meaningful way in the management of the international component of the mandala and the correlative obligation to support that component. This model has a number of strengths. Like a franchise system, it permits all sorts of legal entities to be part of the mandala without being literally contained in a mother corporation, but does not dilute the sense of unity or the ability to establish centralized policies. Partnership in a unified mandala (or in legal terms organisational membership) is a stronger bond than being a franchisee. It implies that each member is directly identified with and shares the interests of the group and of the central structure that is providing services for the welfare of the group. The members and the central structure have a natural incentive to mind each others' business.