

## PRESIDENT OF SHAMBHALA

Dear Shambhala Centre Director or group leader,

### **Shambhala Care and Conduct**

Greetings. I am writing to inform you about the “Shambhala Care and Conduct” initiative that aims to help our community respond with compassion and insight to the question: “How do we conduct ourselves and care for others?”

Over the past three years, the Board of Shambhala worked to define the responsibility we have at all levels of the mandala, including individual Shambhala Centres, to protect program participants and other individuals from harm. This is the normal “duty of care” that any such organization is obliged to provide. Understanding how we can best provide this care is still a work in progress, but there are several aspects that are clear.

*Shambhala Care and Conduct* has two purposes. First, it aims to assist the entire community in working with the development of enlightened society. Second, it serves to reinforce the protection we offer to all community members and participants in Shambhala activities.

It is good practice to post a notice or otherwise inform the people who attend your centre or group to let them know whom they should contact if they wish to make a complaint. A suggested notice is on the last page of this letter. It is your responsibility as Director or group leader to ensure that such a notice is posted and that action is taken promptly in response to any such complaint. I would appreciate your posting such a notice in time for Shambhala Day this year.

Please take the time to read the accompanying document, *Shambhala Care and Conduct*. This will tell you how we aim to deal with conflicts that arise between individuals within the mandala, and the role of the Shambhala leadership at all levels in helping with this. You will note that the document says that the Desung Corps (“Bliss Protectors”) may be contacted at any time through the Rusung, Director of the Shambhala Centre or leader of the group. Please ensure that you and your Rusung know how to do this. It is hoped that most complaints and conflicts within the community can be resolved by the skilful means of our local leadership, with assistance from the Desung Corps if needed.

You will see that *Shambhala Care and Conduct* sets out core principles for conducting ourselves in accordance with the key teachings of the Shambhala Buddhist path. These are not commandments, but guides for training on the path. These principles also illuminate our way of dealing with conflicts and complaints within the community.

There is a specific Misconduct Procedure. It is important that you be aware of this. The procedure states that any individual may seek to have the procedure invoked by contacting any office holder of Shambhala. It is the responsibility of that office holder to work with others in an effort to deal with the matter locally. If that is not possible, the matter must then be referred either to the President or Desung General. Kindly discuss with the leadership of your centre or group how you will apply this in practice.

I hope you are able to work with this information and that it provides you with a sufficient basis to manifest the duty of care we wish to provide for all those who enter our mandala.

While these are the procedures we have evolved at this time, based on recent experience of working with specific cases, we nonetheless regard our efforts in this area as a work-in-progress. Any suggestions, questions or critical observations are welcome, particularly now at this formative stage.

As part of the Shambhala Community Plan we have created an Advisory Group on Shambhala Conduct, whose purpose is to review the procedures in the document and suggest any improvements in the light of practical experience. This group will not be handling individual cases, but looking at improvements to the process as a whole. If you wish to make any suggestions to the Advisory Group, please contact them through their chair, Kathleen Roberts <kroberts@usm.maine.edu>

Yours in the Vision of The Great Eastern Sun,

Richard Reoch  
President

19 January 2005

(Please see following page for draft Notice)

**NOTICE**  
**Shambhala Care and Conduct**

*Shambhala is committed to a practice, study, and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. In addition to being bound individually and as a community to basic Shambhala and Buddhist standards of conduct, we are also citizens of the larger communities in which our centres are located worldwide and, therefore, must abide by public laws. These include but are not limited to laws pertaining to alcohol, drugs and sexual conduct. Each individual has the right to practice, study and work in an atmosphere that is free from discrimination.*

-- The Board of Directors

If any individual is concerned that the behaviour of a member of the Shambhala community, including any of its office-holders, may not have been in accordance with this statement of principle, please contact the Director of this Centre, the Rusung of the Dorje Kasung, or any appropriate person in the local leadership. Any such communications will be handled in accordance with the procedures set down in *Shambhala Care and Conduct*, a copy of which is available at this centre.