

R E P O R T   O N

# Diversity in Shambhala

Prepared by the Diversity Working Group



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“The awakened heart of bodhichitta is  
the basic goodness of all beings.”

-Pema Chödrön

# Contents



In order to benefit others, we have to be willing to sail into deep waters—at least a little bit! Accumulating merit alone won't do it. We need wisdom. For wisdom, we need to incorporate life's subtleties. We need to abandon fixed beliefs. We need to appreciate diversity. The enlightenment of ourselves and others can't be separated. We are in this together—without exception, all of us.

—Cynthia Kneen  
On Diversity

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# Message from the Chair of the Diversity Working Group



If we ourselves learn how to deal with prejudice, aggression and all the obstacles we face, then we might become luminous as a group of people and inspire others to say, "Oh look, there is a group of human beings who have actually figured out how to live together!"

—Shambhala President  
Richard Reoch

March 2008



Dear Noble Sangha,

Everyone in Shambhala is a diversity worker. Through our study and practice of the Shambhala teachings, we are cultivating greater openness and inclusion and going beyond barriers in order to help others. This discipline is helping us to create, in the words of Shambhala President Richard Reoch, "a lived experience of being part of a genuinely diverse and truly multicultural Shambhala."

Quoting from the statement "Diversity in Shambhala," which appears on the Diversity Resources webpage of the Shambhala website:

"Shambhala is a diverse community. Our centres are located in different regions of the world, and reflect different nationalities, cultures, languages, ethnicities and races. In addition, people who come to our centres may have different religious faiths, follow different spiritual traditions or teachers, or have different paths of practice and opinions, including political views. They have different ages and genders, as well as different sexual orientations, and physical, perceptual and mental abilities.

"What we share as a community is a desire to lead sane, dignified, and confident lives. Through the practice of meditation we cultivate the capacity to be fully open to our experience, and the ability to respond to everyday life situations with greater clarity and respect—respect not only for our life situations and ourselves, but for all individuals, social groups and cultures as well.

"This does not mean that Shambhala is a perfect society. If you visit one of our centres, you may find that it does not mirror in every way the characteristics of the people who live in the cities or

towns where our centres are located. But please note that it is the intention—and the stated policy—of our centres to welcome everyone who enters. This intention is at the very core of the Shambhala Buddhist teachings.”

The following pages contain information that makes clear that we are working to fulfill our aspiration to be a genuinely diverse and truly multicultural community.

Still, there is work to be done. For example, addressing diversity in the core curriculum as well as in training for our guides, meditation instructors, teachers and other Shambhala leaders will need to continue and accelerate. Many of the diversity initiatives that have been undertaken by the Diversity Working Group, local centers, groups and individuals will need support so they can continue to grow.

Fortunately, there are many diversity resources, suggestions, and recommendations on these pages as well as on the Diversity in Shambhala webpage at [www.Shambhala.org](http://www.Shambhala.org) that can help us.

Together, we have done a lot of work to fulfill our aspirations on diversity. Yet, there is much work that remains to be done. On behalf of the Diversity Working Group, I want to thank you for your contributions to our renewal and to the work that we will do in the future to create “a genuinely diverse and truly multicultural Shambhala.”

Many thanks,

Cortez Rainey

Chair, Diversity Working Group

# I. *Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility and Compassionate Conduct*



How many excuses do we have daily, on a moment to moment basis, not to open to another? "I'm too busy." "I'm tired." "Let someone else relate to her." However, we could come to realize that others, both their wellbeing and our relationship to them, are profoundly transformative. Only then can we understand and rejoice in the rich and amazing diversity of humanity.

—Irin Rockwell

Diversity and Our Common Ground

*The Shambhala Aspirations were developed with input from all areas of the mandala and adopted by the Sakyong's Council. Shambhala President Richard Reoch distributed the statement to all Center directors and asked them to display it conspicuously in their meeting places for the benefit of visitors and members. The statement serves to let visitors to our centres know what our aspirations concerning diversity are and reminds us of our stated intention.*

The teachings held by the Shambhala mandala challenge us as individuals to recognize and dissolve barriers that separate us from others. As a community of practitioners, we strongly encourage understanding of and respect for the basic goodness inherent in all individuals, social groups and cultures.

At this centre, we are committed to the teachings of our lineages, to the practice of meditation and meditation-in-action, and to genuine communication. As part of our intention to create enlightened society, these also help us gain insight into others' realities, appreciate diversity and work with conflict.

We strive to foster a welcoming atmosphere free of prejudice and to develop an inclusive and enlightened society with facilities fully accessible to all persons. Although some of our programs and events are open only to those who have fulfilled certain prerequisites, everyone is welcome at our centre regardless of religion, spiritual tradition or teachers, path of practice, opinions, class, nationality, culture, ethnicity, race, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical, perceptual or mental abilities.

Our centre is committed to creating 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 societies 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.

As with all intentions, personal or collective, these aspirations chart our way forward, and it is our mutual responsibility to work together with each other to respect them. If any individual wishes to make recommendations to Shambhala, or is concerned that the actions of a member of Shambhala, including any of its office-holders, may not have been in accordance with these aspirations, please contact the Director of this Centre, the Rusung of the Dorje Kasung, or any appropriate person in the local leadership. Concerns about the behaviour of office-holders will be handled in accordance with the procedures set down in Shambhala Care and Conduct, a copy of which is available at this centre.

## II. Remarks from Shambhala President Richard Reoch



*Sixty people of African, Asian/Pacific, Caribbean, Hispanic/Latina, Middle Eastern, or Native American ancestry, from many Shambhala Centres in our diverse, global mandala, participated in a recent survey, working group, and/or conference call. The group is developing plans for supporting people of color on the Shambhala Buddhist path. Many of these participants gathered via conference call to present and hear reports on the status of their efforts. A listing of persons participating in this initiative and notes of the conference call are now located on the Diversity Resources webpage at [www.Shambhala.org](http://www.Shambhala.org). The conference call was addressed by President Reoch, who presented the efforts being made throughout the mandala.*

*Following are extracts from his remarks.*



Very warm greetings to everyone who has called in today. Not only do I want to thank each of you, but I particularly want to pay tribute to the work of the Diversity Working Group.

The Diversity Working Group is the largest and most active of all the working groups in our mandala, established after the historic first Shambhala Congress. It has a tremendous number of link people and representatives in Shambhala Centres right across the mandala, and the extensive annual reports it publishes are truly impressive.

All individuals have a place in Shambhala society. There should not be a sense of outer and inner, but rather a sense of being included in the compassionate embrace of heaven and earth.

—Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche  
Treatise on Society  
and Organization

Much of this is due to tireless, often unsung, work by people all over our mandala... I think you all know how strongly I feel about this myself, and I want to assure you of the strong support we have from the Sakyong. I sometimes find it helpful to remember that we are a community headed by a person of colour. Our lineage is a lineage of colour. And I know that Rinpoche has personally experienced what its like to be part of a minority racially, culturally, linguistically and politically.

Just the other day he was talking to Carolyn Mandelker, the Director of our Shambhala Office of Practice and Education and Acharya Adam Lobel, about how we can address the question of diversity in the development of our new core curriculum for example, in bodhichitta practice around diversity, and how we need to move forward with diversity training for our meditation instructors, teachers and other leaders in Shambhala. This has to be more than lip service to a general notion of inclusiveness: we have to be willing to look at the unspoken, unacknowledged barriers that need to be addressed so that we can fulfill the aspiration to be a genuinely diverse and truly multicultural community.

One of the great things that our Diversity Working Group has done has been to identify this issue and put it on the table, in a way that links this challenge unmistakably to the heart of our Shambhala Aspirations. If you walk into any Shambhala Centre these days, you are supposed to

see posted prominently, a one-page statement: *The Shambhala aspirations on diversity, accessibility and compassionate conduct*.

It opens with these words:

“The teachings held by the Shambhala mandala challenge us as individuals to recognize and dissolve barriers that separate us from others. As a community of practitioners, we strongly encourage understanding of and respect for the basic goodness inherent in all individuals, social groups and cultures.

“We strive to foster a welcoming atmosphere free of prejudice... and to develop an inclusive and enlightened society... everyone is welcome at our centre regardless of religion, spiritual tradition or teachers, path of practice, opinions, class, nationality, culture, ethnicity, race, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, or physical, perceptual or mental abilities.”

The task ahead of us now is how to implement this in a way that really makes a noticeable difference and that changes everyone’s experience so that we all have a lived experience of being part of a genuinely diverse and truly multicultural Shambhala.

A lot of people are thinking about how to work on this now. We have had excellent, heartfelt programs at a number of centers: People of Colour Weekends, some led by Acharya Gaylon Ferguson who is with us on this call, and Diversity weekends. I’m delighted that some of the wonderful images from those programs feature in the opening slide show of our new Shambhala website. The Sakyong’s Council itself undertook a diversity training program, led by a team headed by Sangyum Agness Au, titled “Going Beyond Bias.” Another very important development is programs that help Caucasians look more deeply at what it means to be a white person in society.

We need to build on these initiatives and make all this more systematic. I hope you all know about the creation of the North American People of Colour Scholarship Fund. The purpose of the fund is to support Shambhala’s aspirations related to diversity by making financial assistance available to people of colour who

aspire to attend programs that will enable them to contribute more fully to Shambhala society and to be of benefit to people who share their backgrounds. The Sakyong’s Council was very much involved in supporting this, and I am hopeful that we can make a good contribution towards the endowment fund that will sustain this.

The Diversity Working Group has made a wide-ranging set of recommendations that would dramatically increase the support we give to new groups and members who are establishing themselves in regions throughout the world into which Shambhala is expanding. That includes radically increasing the volume of material that is available in languages other than English. This is imperative, not only for the global development of Shambhala, but also in order to make the Shambhala dharma available and accessible to people in countries, like the United States and Canada, with diverse ethnic communities speaking a wide range of languages. Again, I am hopeful that we can begin providing some level of funding for this now.

The Diversity Working Group has also pointed out the importance of training leaders, meditation instructors, teachers and others who come from a wide range of backgrounds. That would really start to transform the experience of people from those backgrounds who come to our centres. We are going to work on integrating this into our training programs, and think about this internationally.

I have also been thinking about other steps we might take to raise the profile of this issue and thereby deepening our collective understanding. One could be to have an issue of *The Dot* devoted to the theme of Diversity, which I have suggested, and the other would be to have a Shambhala Diversity Conference that would bring people together from all over the mandala, just as we had the extremely productive children and families conference two years ago and really magnetized a lot of energy around that and helped people really move forward.

So, again, with warmest wishes from the Sakyong, I want to thank you all for being on the call today and to thank Cortez and his team for really laying the ground so brilliantly for us.

### III. *Diversity Initiatives of Centers/Groups*



When we take the Bodhisattva vow to save all sentient beings, no matter how numberless, we are making an inconceivable commitment to diversity and accessibility. No one is left out of this aspiration.

—Dan Hessey  
Notes on Diversity  
and Accessibility

*There is a genuine aspiration throughout Shambhala to cultivate centers and groups that are open, inclusive and welcoming of diversity; centers where individuals are willing to go beyond their comfort zones in order to help others. Following is list of some of the diversity initiatives that have been undertaken by these Shambhala Centers and Groups within the last couple of years. Note that most of these initiatives and statements are from members of the Centers themselves, in their own words.*

#### *Arizona, California, and Hawaii*

##### **Berkeley, California**

- Held a People of Color retreat in 2006 and 2007
- Has members who volunteer at a halfway house for single mothers with substance abuse issues
- Has members involved with prison community project
- Observed Martin Luther King Day with a talk on the Beloved Community and Enlightened Society
- Members participated in the People of Color Conference Call initiative
- Center member selected regional chair of Diversity contacts for Northern California

##### **Davis, California**

- Our Children's Program continues with great enthusiasm
- Our weekly 12-Step program has been a success
- Has an active Men's group that sponsors a monthly "movie night"
- Prison dharma program continues to offer support at a number of facilities
- Established a Diversity/Accessibility Coordinator position on the council
- Membership coordinator works with the diversity/accessibility coordinator to further broaden our membership
- All are welcome in our center and programs which include scholarships and work/study opportunities
- Diversity Council Member writes a monthly column in the newsletter

## **Kailua, Hawaii**

- Brings in teachers of color whenever there is an opportunity to do so
- Networks with other Buddhist groups/individuals
- Collects toiletries for distribution to the homeless during Thanksgiving & Christmas holidays
- Works with an interfaith group to help homeless families
- Has open door policy for classes and programs: "No one is turned away."
- Whenever possible, includes Hawaiian culture into activities at the center

## **Los Angeles, California**

- Offered a series of free public programs on Thursday evenings
- Offered programs with tiered payments/reduced prices for seniors and students
- Has a work-study program
- Has membership fees with suggested amounts for people to pay less
- Carries Spanish translations of dharma books
- Provides childcare during Sunday nynthun once a month and at public programs
- Have a diversity council as part of our Community Mandala
- Diversity Council is developing programs to reach out and be more inclusive of minorities and educate the sangha on the issues of minorities

## **Phoenix, Arizona**

- Has established a scholarship program
- Offers hospitality to all members and guests
- Offers practice and study that focuses on areas we share in common
- Is a sangha that acknowledges individual differences

## **San Francisco, California**

- Is moving into a more central San Francisco neighborhood
- Has a commitment to accessibility in the new building
- Handed out the *Shambhala Aspirations* to the Upaya Council
- Posted the *Shambhala Aspirations* in the Center
- Shared "The Warrior's Heart" contemplation with education and practice leaders
- Is planning to include the *Shambhala Aspirations* in next newsletter
- Has a working group exploring diversity issues/holding diversity workshop
- Has diversity contact person

## **Santa Cruz, California**

- Has had homeless people and ex-offenders who come to sit
- Includes Queer Shambhalians
- Has diversity contact person

## **Tamalpais, California**

- Makes everyone feel welcome and encourages that attitude among the small membership
- Exposes participants to interracial/intergenerational relationships

## **Tucson, Arizona**

- Looking for ways to connect to the Latino community
- Has diversity contact person

## *Central Canada*



Being a diverse community is more than looking around the shrine room and seeing more black people or gay people or young people. Diversity arises from active inquisitiveness about the larger world beyond our own four walls and a willingness to drop our assumptions about anything and everything.

—Mary D. Thomson  
Diversity and Richness

## **Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

- Provides bilingual translations (French/English) for all Shambhala levels
- Offers monthly introduction to meditation for each of the 2 linguistic groups
- Offers monthly public talks alternately for each of the 2 linguistic groups
- Offers Buddhist courses for each of the 2 linguistic groups
- Working on the accessibility of advanced programs for francophones outside Montreal
- Provides different kinds of help to increase the financial accessibility of Shambhala levels and Buddhist courses

## **Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**

- Held a community meeting to discuss the Diversity Working Group recommendations
- Set up a Queer Dharma Group that meets monthly
- Set up a Bodhi School that meets monthly
- Implemented a Generosity Policy that removes financial barriers to program participation.
- Started a Scholarship Fund to help members attend major residential dharma programs
- Provided consecutive translation at a Golden Key program to enable francophones to participate.
- Held a celebratory evening event for sangha women
- Has diversity contact person

## Toronto, Canada

- Displayed *Shambhala Aspirations*
- Have a Diversity contact person
- Center leadership briefed on Diversity program in Baltimore
- Developing Diversity programming, with the Diversity representative in Toronto, for the leadership and members of the center
- Held monthly Shambhala Rainbow discussion meetings for queer folk and friends in 2007.

## Great Lakes



True consideration is not diplomacy, putting on a façade of smiles or polite conversation. It is something more than that. It requires much energy and intelligence. It requires opening up our territory rather than marching into someone else's.

—Chögyam Trungpa  
The Myth of Freedom

## Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Displays the *Shambhala Aspirations* at group meetings and gatherings
- Explores ways to invite more people from all neighborhoods
- Selected a diversity contact person

## Chicago, Illinois

- Offered workshops related to women and gender issues
- Offered a public talk directed and advertised to the LGBTQ community
- Offered a monthly meeting for a Queer Dharma group—weekly attendance has increased
- Hosted a workshop on People of Color in Dharma
- Center leadership participated in a discussion with Agness Au concerning her “Going Beyond Bias” talk
- Working to establish a People of Color Scholarship Fund
- Displays the *Shambhala Aspirations* on the bulletin board
- Displays photographs of Pema Chödrön and Khandro Rinpoche
- Discussed diversity issues during meditation instructor's meetings
- Discussed diversity issues during community meetings
- Helped to co-sponsor a Conference on Women in Buddhism
- Has diversity contact person

### **Cleveland, Ohio**

- Has diversity contact person
- Now has wheelchair access to Center
- Offers "Pay what you can" option for programs
- Working on forming a Diversity Committee to raise awareness of diversity within the local Shambhala Community and further explore ways to expand programs sensitive to a diverse population

### **Kansas City, Missouri**

- Has diversity contact person

### **Madison, Wisconsin**

- Discussed whether to take a stand on a civil rights/discrimination issue in the state
- Discussed Mandala-Wide Diversity Workgroup initiatives and their importance to our sangha.
- Has diversity contact person

### **Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

- Formed group interested in Prison Training – training in 2008
- Participating in Diversity Conference calls (2 contact people)
- Planning an update to sangha for Shambhala Day
- Some children's programming

### **Minneapolis, Minnesota**

- Has a scholarship fund to help sangha members go to dathun, seminary and Warrior Assembly
- Has a variety of program pricing, including a free book group on Wednesday nights
- Has Center directors who attended diversity training
- Has a monthly Children's program
- Conducted a diversity survey of members and friends, culminating in a 10 page diversity report that included recommendations that we have been working with in our working groups
- Piloted a new "budget" program pricing plan where members can pay a single monthly amount for all their programs over the year (this came out of the diversity survey work)
- We are looking to find a replacement for our diversity coordinator
- We have instituted a crisis fund and are able to help members who are about to become homeless
- Has diversity contact person

## Southwest Michigan, Michigan

- Makes sure that posters and flyers are distributed in all communities in the area
- Makes sure that everyone feels welcome
- Displays the *Shambhala Aspirations* on diversity at group meetings

## Latin America



Training in equanimity is learning to open the door to all, welcoming all beings, inviting life to come visit.

—Pema Chödrön  
*Comfortable with Uncertainty*

## Santiago, Chile

- Diversity is manifesting!!
- Hosted a “wonderful Seminary with a Latin flavor,” including participants from 10 different countries with simultaneous translation from English to Spanish and Portuguese, and the chants in those three languages and Polish (as there were 3 participants from Poland); there was lots of singing and dancing, hugging and kissing, and much joyful discipline in practice and study

## Louisiana and Texas



The practice of meditation is a way of unmasking ourselves, our deceptions of all kinds, and also the practice of meditation is a way of bringing out the subtleties of intelligence that exist within us.

—Chögyam Trungpa  
*The Path is the Goal*

## Acadiana, Louisiana

- Offers reduced/free tuition for students and folks who can't pay full price

## Austin, Texas

- Continues to support a Gay Men's Group
- Has a Children's program
- Continues to support prison outreach
- Is exploring formation of a women's group

## Houston, Texas

- Is committed to Shambhala's aspirations on diversity
- Will be looking for a new point person to help with diversity issues

## San Antonio, Texas

- Offered a Turning the Mind Into an Ally weekend class in Spanish
- Advertise in Spanish in local publications
- Has Spanish-translation dharma books
- Has a listing in a Gay and Lesbian newsletter
- Have a clear program pricing policy that excludes no one on the basis of financial need
- Established a seat for Family Program Director on the Shambhala Council
- Has an ongoing Prison Outreach
- Offered Level One in a Prison with 12 participants
- Displays the *Shambhala Aspirations*
- Box for food bank donations on an ongoing basis
- A wheelchair ramp is in the works

## Mid-Atlantic



Discriminating awareness in its wisdom form perceives clearly, without developing bias towards our own liking, disliking, or ignoring of the vividness.

—Agness Au  
*Going Beyond Bias*

## Baltimore, Maryland

- Has moved to a wheelchair-and public transportation-accessible space
- Uses diversity images in advertising
- Continues to use generosity policy
- Created a scholarship fund to members wishing to attend advanced programs
- Was honored to offer space for the diversity dinner hosted by President Reoch
- Held a 4-week course that explored our relationship to difference and prejudice
- Has continued to build leadership that is diverse

- Visibly displays the *Shambhala Aspirations* at entrance to center
- Selected a member to work on issues related to families and children
- Displays pictures of Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the room we use for initial meditation instruction (as examples of modern-day bodhisattva warriors)
- Held program that explored racism and bias, with participants from throughout the Baltimore community
- Held observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
- Performed community service in a low-income neighborhood
- Created a listserve for use by people of color in Shambhala.
- Displays the Yeshe Tsogyal banner in shrine room and has held classes on feminine principle
- Has diversity contact person

### **Media, Pennsylvania**

- Members make an effort to warmly greet anyone walks in the door
- Member is involved in initiative to support people of color in Shambhala
- Has a diversity contact person

### **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

- Posted the *Shambhala Aspirations* on the bulletin board
- Helped organize the diversity dinner that President Reoch hosted in Baltimore
- Held community meeting to discuss diversity
- Held monthly diversity circle meetings with a focus on looking at our own bias
- Conducted a study of Dharma, Color & Culture edited by Hilda Gutierrez Baldoquin
- Organized a meditation retreat for People of Color
- Organized a weekend program to explore the The White Experience
- Observed the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
- Has diversity contact person

### **Washington, DC**

- Offered a Learn to Meditate workshop at Gallaudet University for the deaf community
- Offered a Learn to Meditate program in Spanish
- Had a student give a talk on Buddhism at a Jewish synagogue and a queer dharma group
- Working toward inclusiveness and turning the flower outward at the same time
- Has diversity contact person

# Mountain States



Wherever we are, we can train as a warrior. Our tools are sitting meditation, tonglen, slogan practice, and cultivating the four limitless qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity. With the help of these practices, we will find the tenderness of bodhichitta in sorrow and in gratitude, behind the hardness or rage and in the shakiness of fear. In loneliness as well as in kindness, we can uncover the soft spot of basic goodness.

—Pema Chödrön  
*Comfortable with Uncertainty*

## **Albuquerque, New Mexico**

- Center is wheelchair accessible
- Has recently added a wheelchair accessible bathroom
- Disabled parking is now available
- All programs are half price for individuals 21 and younger or 65 and older
- GLBT friendly
- Sangha members correspond with incarcerated individuals

## **Boulder, Colorado**

- Built ramp to increase accessibility to handicapped persons
- Provides meditation in prison
- Work somewhat with the Buddhist Coalition for Bodhisattva Activity which serves underprivileged and diverse populations
- Held a weekend diversity training put on by the youth
- Has diversity contact person

## **Shambhala Mountain Center, Colorado**

- Center was represented at the MECHA convention in Denver, a college organization focused on bringing the Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano movements together
- Hosted a group of 15 MECHA students from Washington State; they received Meditation instruction in the Great Stupa, visited Sacred Studies Hall and the Amateratsu-Kami Shrine
- Shotoku has received accreditation as a Child Development Center with a Religious exemption which enables SMC to have children and youth programs year round
- Created a program for inner city girls of color from the Denver area in cooperation with Girls, Inc, a non profit private institution dedicated to giving inner city youth opportunities ill afforded to them
- Currently have five native Spanish Speakers (2 of which are MI's and Shambhala Training Directors) on our land and 7 other staff members who know Spanish as a second language

- Continue to have our Sweat lodge which is mostly directed by Jim Tolstrup who is a lineage holder in the Native American tradition
- Maintains a close relationship with Angie, a Medicine woman in a local Indian Nation who visits and teaches staff various classes such as dream catchers, medicine pouches, totem animals and fire circles; she has begun the Heart of Warriorship training program.

## Northeast



Whenever we experience separation in any form, look at it and try to understand it. How can we include our feeling of separation into our practice? What is there about that other situation we want to separate from, and what can we learn from that? The goal is not to homogenize everything. Everything has its distinct, vivid, diverse quality. How can we just accommodate all of it – “accommodating” meaning “to allow space for” – and still maintain the view, to allow space for whatever we may encounter, be it setting sun or Great Eastern Sun, confusion or wisdom?

—Agness Au  
Going Beyond Bias

### Albany, New York

- Held discussions about what a diverse sangha would look like at our Center
- Included the Warrior’s Heart diversity contemplation in Buddhist Basics course
- Distributed the Warrior’s Heart contemplation on Shambhala Day
- Read the *Shambhala Aspirations* during community meeting on Shambhala Day
- Posted diversity images on Center website
- Continued policy of making programs financially available to all
- Included diversity issues in long range planning for center and search for new space
- Participated in Diversity conference calls
- Has diversity contact person

### Boston, Massachusetts

- Looking for Spanish-speaking MIs for newcomers who are not fluent in English
- Has diversified images on publicity postcards
- Has made introductory programs “pay what you can”
- Developed scholarship funds for people to attend programs elsewhere in the mandala
- Center director makes it a point to reach out to persons of color during open house programs
- Has begun to contact YMCA’s, boys and girls clubs to teach meditation

- Encouraged and supported the Queer Buddhist Fellowship and Under Thirty groups
- Hired childcare person for nynthuns so parents can practice on Sundays
- Has diversity contact person

### **Brunswick, Maine**

- Uses an international diversity photo for most of Level I advertisements
- Has urged sangha to contemplate diversity initiatives
- Has asked a member to serve as diversity contact person

### **Buffalo, New York**

- Has diversity contact person

### **New York, New York**

- Helped organize the diversity dinner hosted by President Reoch in Baltimore
- Had community meeting to discuss the topic of diversity
- Held meditation retreat for People of Color (80 participants)
- Has monthly meditation group for people of color

### **Karmê Chöling, Barnet, Vermont**

- Spent \$8,000.00 to upgrade accessibility, including new wheelchair ramps
- Is consulting with architects to have all buildings ADA compliant
- Is constructing new housing that will have fully accessible rooms, bathrooms and showers
- Has budgeted \$100,000.00 for scholarships for those who cannot afford listed program rates
- Discussed prejudice in community meeting attended by students, staff and managers
- Invited Queer Dharma to hold annual group retreats at KCL
- Has nurtured a community that covers 7 decades of the human lifespan, teens through 70's
- Has diversity contact person

### **Montpelier, Vermont**

- Finds diversity to be very important!

### **St Johnsbury, Vermont**

- Has members of the center who visit prisoners at their work camp
- Has had prisoners who come to practice and study at Center
- Has a scholarship fund for those who cannot afford programs or classes
- Has started a fund/solicited donations to find an accessible space for the center

### **Troy, New York**

- Meet in an accessible venue, with a wheelchair stair lift and elevator
- Rely on donations and program fees for all costs, allowing a number of members living at poverty level to participate fully

- Responded to speaking requests from local community programs serving people in the mental health and correctional systems
- Hosted two community talks on meditation in prisons, with Bill Karelis
- Facilitated linkages between Bill Karelis and departments in The Sage Colleges to discuss use of meditation in prisons
- Member offered an eight-week course on Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for People with Chronic Illness
- Offer work-study or scholarships for sponsored programs to people who need them
- Several members are employed with hospice programs and offer outreach and support

## *Northeastern Canada*



If we take a moment to look around, we notice that nothing is the same and everything is different. Opening to such profound "diversity" with all its wonder, shock and uncertainty is the warrior's challenge; and opening to this in one another is how we build an enlightened society.

—Michael Carroll  
The Warriors' Challenge

### **Annapolis, Nova Scotia**

- Offers mainly programs that are open to all
- Sometimes offers two sessions of class for those who can't come on Sundays due to family commitments

### **Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada**

- Has posted the "Going Beyond Bias" diversity training info on the bulletin board
- Has a diversity contact person who remains open to issues that might arise within the centre and keeps the council/centre informed of the Diversity Working Group's ongoing initiatives
- Has a Generosity Policy
- Sponsored people who need financial assistance for programs
- Encourages Car Pooling
- Has a Karuna Group
- Has a Status of Women and Feminine Principle Group
- Has a Bodhi School
- Has a Buddhist Study and a Sacred Path Study Group
- Has diversity contact person
- Has shared sitting practice with a mix of colors, faiths, economic levels, sexes and ages

- Has openness to all faiths mentioned in promotional flyer
- Has diversity contact person

### **Otsa-Shingsa, Italy Cross, Nova Scotia, Canada**

- Offers half-price specials for low-income folks

### **Prince Edward Island, Canada**

- Welcomes people of all faiths
- Includes a visible minority in the group, an indication that we encourage diversity
- Has enabled people of limited economic means to participate in programs

### **St John's, New Brunswick, Canada**

- Welcomes foreign students to sit with us
- Reaches out to the poor as its biggest outreach to "minorities"

### **St Margaret's Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada**

- Has taken measures to allow persons with environmental sensitivities to participate in programs
- Has a Generosity Policy
- Has diversity contact person

## *Pacific Northwest*



Only when we stop the battle within ourselves can we lay the groundwork for the truly compassionate activity of helping others to overcome suffering.

—Gaylon Ferguson  
“Liberation from Suffering” in  
Dharma, Color, and Culture

### **Calgary, Alberta, Canada**

- Has flexible pricing policy for all programs
- Has diversity contact person

### **Corvallis, Oregon**

- Supports Shambhala diversity initiatives

### **Edmonton, Alberta, Canada**

- Has been involved with various Buddhist groups, Vietnamese, Burmese, etc

- Has individual members involved in women/gender issues, native youth and palliative-care patients
- Is considering working on accessibility issues and programs for those house-bound

### **Kootenay Shambhala Meditation Centre, Nelson, British Columbia, Canada**

- Doubled the Centre's floor space allowing a variety of activities to take place at the same time
- Encourages all members to participate in Council and committee meetings
- Rents the Centre to outside groups
- Has a diversity contact person
- Aims through a wide range of publicity vehicles to make the Centre visible and welcoming to all
- Publicizes all public programs and events as open to anyone
- Has an accommodating "Generosity Policy"
- Offers SSBS courses online enabling participation by students who can't come to the Centre
- Offers a variety of community activities (e.g., drala hikes, dance parties, movie nights)
- Offers "circles of support" for people with health-related (and other) challenges
- Emphasizes making the Centre more user-friendly in every way
- Displays art from the wider community
- Partners with social action groups in the wider community
- Marches with a Shambhala Centre banner in the annual Gay Pride Parade

### **Portland, Oregon**

- Selected two sangha members to help with diversity issues

### **Seattle, Washington**

- Established a diversity liaison position on the Seattle Shambhala Center Council
- Continues to have a generosity policy offering reduced/free tuition to most programs
- Plans underway to make a calligraphy of the *Shambhala Aspirations* and post prominently
- Began developing and offering diversity outreach meditation classes
- Working on improving advertising to maximize diversity outreach
- Offered meditation instruction for Deaf-Blind practitioners
- Exploring how to make the full practice facilities accessible
- Has a Children's program

- Establishing a youth group
- Starting Vajra Dawn West to explore Young adults and Community leadership
- Looking to build diverse leadership
- Has diversity contact person

### **Vancouver, Canada**

- Raised awareness in our community about the diversity committee
- Asked council to establish a diversity committee
- Forwarded emails from Diversity Working Group

### **Victoria, British Columbia, Canada**

- Has an on-going Family Program
- Hosts grade school, high school and university students interested in meditation/Buddhism
- Raising funds for and planning for interior wheelchair ramps
- Active member of local interfaith group in Victoria

## *Southeast States*



If you look back at history or you look at any place in the world where religious groups or ethnic groups or racial groups or political groups are killing each other, or families have been feuding for years and years, you can see—because you're not particularly invested in that particular argument—that there will never be peace until somebody softens what is rigid in their heart.

—Pema Chödrön

*Practicing Peace in Times of War*

### **Atlanta, Georgia**

- Started a Shambhala prison dharma program
- Co-sponsored a presentation by Bo Lozoff
- Has correspondence and visitation program with prisoners
- Regularly hosted meetings of a woman's group that meets and explores spiritual traditions
- Hosts a weekly AA meeting
- Hosts a weekly visitation from students from a local private school
- Has only one room in the new facility that is not accessible
- Is exploring how to make the grounds accessible to wheelchairs

## **Birmingham, Alabama**

- Located in urban location
- Advertises programs widely
- Held performance by a student of Indian dance
- Held informal discussions on how to be inviting to all
- Has stayed in communication with churches that provide social outreach in area
- Participates in some local social action initiatives
- Had African-American teacher give public talk
- Hopes one of our African American members attends Shambhala Guide Training

## **Durham, North Carolina**

- Sent a representative to the diversity dinner hosted by President Reoch in Baltimore
- Introducing a community work group of 3 or 4 people that is dedicated to diversity issues.
- Has diversity contact person

## **Gainesville, Florida**

- Has doors open to anyone!

## **Lexington, Kentucky**

- Hosted Mid-Eastern Party to honor Mid-Eastern sangha members
- Is preparing to offer a Sarpashana Alcoholics Anonymous Group
- Has a Men's Group that has been meeting for about 4 years
- Has a Women's Group that has been meeting for about 1 year
- Has readers for a man who is legally blind
- Offered special help to women with multiple sclerosis
- Has diversity contact person

## **St. Petersburg, Florida**

- Never turns away anyone because of cost

## **Tallahassee, Florida**

- Holds two regular open houses in addition to twice-weekly meditation sessions
- Recently installed a ramp to make the facility more accessible
- Has posted flyers in a variety of locations

# Shambhala Europe



In the modern world, diversity awareness has become a fundamental and basic skill that is necessary for all leaders, in particular leaders who have been entrusted with the vision of enlightened society, within a growing multicultural community that has become more and more diverse.

—Agness Au  
*Going Beyond Bias*

**Shambhala Europe**, with over 70 centers and groups in approximately 20 countries, is very diverse, particularly in terms of nationality, culture and language. Following are some activities that are related to diversity which appear in Shambhala Europe's most recent annual report.

## Congress

- Shambhala Europe hosted the Third Shambhala Congress and the first one outside of North America. Approximately 180 Sambharians from 67 centres in 10 countries on 4 continents gathered at the Kalapa Centre in Cologne, Germany from May 3rd to 7th and heard the Sakyong speak of his vision for the coming years and then discussed the state of the mandala and presented recommendations to the Mandala Council and the Sakyongs Council.

## Denmark and Sweden

- The Danish and Swedish sangha gathered for a weekend regional retreat on the west coast of Sweden. It was a great boost of energy for everyone there in our northern outposts.

## European Donor Group

- The European Donor Group, which supports Shambhala Projects in Europe, provided funding for the families and children's work, scholarships for Eastern Europeans, travel funds for mentors, a special fund for the development of the Ukraine and a number of other important projects for all in Europe.

## France

- The Sakyong returned to Europe for a further public talk in Paris on the newly appeared French version of the *Ruling Your World* book. This was followed up in Dechen Choling with a longer programme for new people, entirely translated in French, including Refuge Vows.

## **New Groups and Centres**

- This year Shambhala Europe welcomed Tübingen (Germany), Dorchester (U.K.), Tel Aviv (Israel), and Bangkok (Thailand) as new Shambhala Meditation Groups, and a small meditation group starting up in Finland. Stockholm is in the process of becoming a Shambhala Meditation Centre.

## **Poland**

- The Polish sangha is excitedly preparing for the first Warrior Assembly in Poland, to take place in March 2008.

## **Romania**

- A new group got off the ground in Bucharest, where they held several nyinths, conducted two introductory programmes, and are planning their first Level 1. The group in Brasov continues to meet regularly and to grow slowly but surely.

## **Regional Conferences**

- In this past year, regional conferences or sangha gatherings were held in the North German, French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and Nordic regions. In the next year Shambhala Europe will encourage all regions to start regular and annual regional conferences as a way of coming together and helping each other.

## **Russia**

- Jane Hope taught the first Shambhala Program in Russia – Cutting through Spiritual Materialism.

## **Sakyong in Europe**

- The Sakyong and Khandro Tseyang completed a book tour for the “Ruling Your World” book, visiting Amsterdam, Leiden, Arnhem, Hamburg, Munich, Heinsheim and Marburg. There was large interest in all the locations and the one-day workshops were sold out.

## **Shambhala Europe**

- Completed an extensive collection of manuals and guidelines for centre leaders and members, all of which are now available in the members section of [www.shambhala-europe.org](http://www.shambhala-europe.org).

## **Shambhala Europe and Dechen Choling**

- With the support of the European Donor Group gave out almost 40,000 Euro in scholarships for programme participants from Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, further funds were made available for: a scholarship fund for

Congress participation; several thousand euros in travel funds for mentors to remote regions; and support for new centres and spaces in a number of locations in Europe.

### **Shambhala Europe Vision Meeting**

- The Shambhala Europe staff and the Shambhala Europe Council met to discuss topics that needed attention in the coming years including: welcoming the many new people coming into the mandala more training opportunities, including regional conferences, for centre and group staff; further training for teachers; and strengthening the MI system.

### **Shambhala Guide training**

- The Prague sangha hosted a successful Shambhala Guide training attended by 35 participants from literally all over the world and on average below the age of 35 – including one from Singapore. The teachings, food, atmosphere and participants were all delightful.

### **Shambhala Training Europe**

- Launched a successful publicity pilot programme, bringing in 42 people for a Level 1 in Cologne with the help of a city-wide poster campaign. It also continued to support the recently founded Maastricht Shambhala Meditatie Groep (Netherlands) and the Ruhrgebiet Shambhalagruppe (Germany).

### **Spain**

- Spain held its third regional conference in January, with Madrid centre hosting representatives from six of the seven Spanish groups to discuss the vision of being a sangha member, being a leader, and spreading the dharma throughout Spain (including finding more Spanish-speaking teachers).

### **Teachers training**

- The Kalapa Centre Europe hosted the annual teachers training attended by 45 participants. It offered a chance for beginning teachers to work with precious feedback and get their first training, or receive authorisation for teaching.

### **Ukraine**

- The energetic groups in Lviv, Kiev, Odessa, and Ivano Frankivsk hosted a number of programmes, and sent a number of warriors to programmes outside Ukraine, including MI training, the Shambhala Congress, Warrior Assembly, Sutrayana Seminary, and Magyel Pomra Encampment.

### **Youth Conference**

- The first Shambhala Europe Youth Conference took place during the Shambhala Congress, bringing together Shambhalians aged fifteen to early

thirties to meet with the Sakyong, President Reoch, and Chris Tamdjidi, and to discuss issues related to being a young Shambhala practitioner in Europe.

### Youth Festival

- Shambhala Europe together with the German Buddhist Union hosted the first European Buddhist Youth Festival, with attendees from far flung places such as Iceland, the U.S., and most of Europe.

## Japan, Korea, South Africa



The “journey” across the street to meet our neighbors is the same as the journey to a slum in India and just as revealing. There is much to give and much to learn all around us if we open our eyes and hearts. Each of us can diversify, and thus enrich, our lives and, ultimately, the lives of others, by simply stepping beyond what is familiar and safe.

—Mary D. Thomson  
Diversity and Richness

### Kyoto, Japan

- Contributed to *Recommendations for Cultivating a Diverse Global Mandala*

### Seoul, Korea

- Contributed to *Recommendations for Cultivating a Diverse Global Mandala*.

### Capetown, South Africa

- Contributed to *Recommendations for Cultivating a Diverse Global Mandala*

## Iran



If we would really feel our interconnectedness, our interdependency in this realm, we would not be so judgmental.


—Josje Pollmann  
Cosmic Breath: Interdependency as a Stepping Stone to Get Rid of Judgements

### Tehran, Iran

- Contributed to *Recommendations for Cultivating a Diverse Global Mandala*
- Translated Sakyong’s book into Farsi
- Building a gender-diverse sangha

# IV.

## Diversity Contact Persons as of January 2008



Intentional engagement with difference educates, as virtually nothing else does.

—Thomas Coburn  
Where Does the 'Calling' to  
Convocation Come From?

*Diversity contact persons help center/group members with diversity issues, participate in a telephone conference twice a year with other diversity contact persons to share information and experiences; are available to provide consultation to the Diversity Working Group; and practice being open without bias.*

### **Berkeley Shambhala Meditation Center**

Jesse Miller, JMill54@aol.com

Charlene Leung, Charlene\_leung@sbcglobal.net

Diana Lion, dlion@igc.org

### **Boston Shambhala Center**

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### **Boulder Shambhala Center**

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Laurie Silver, buddhakitties@yahoo.com

Anne Marie DiGiacomo, reedamdg@mac.com

### **Brunswick Portland Shambhala Center**

Kathleen Roberts, kroberts@usm.maine.edu

### **Buffalo Shambhala Meditation Group**

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### **Calgary Shambhala Meditation Group**

Kevin Kidd, kevkidd@shaw.ca

### **Chicago Shambhala Center**

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John Feller, jonfeller@comcast.net

### **Cleveland Shambhala Meditation Group**

Sujata Burgess, sujata@parasamgate.com

### **Acadiana Shambhala Meditation Group**

Sharon Doucet, SADosay@aol.com

### **Albany Shambhala Center**

Priscilla Tannoya, toro8639@aol.com

Ann Greenleaf, agonpc@nycap.rr.com

### **Annapolis Shambhala Meditation Group**

Nancy McCabe, nancymccabe@ns.sympatico.ca

### **Ann Arbor Shambhala Meditation Group**

Mark Froelich, Froelich@aol.com

### **Shambhala Meditation Center of Atlanta**

Anyana Banerjee, anyanab@comcast.net

### **Baltimore Shambhala Center**

Ashutosh Raina, rainaashutosh@yahoo.co.in

Olivia Fite, junefite@yahoo.com

### **Bellingham Shambhala Group**

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**Davis Shambhala Center**

Leal Abbott, lealabbott@yahoo.com

**Durham Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Fredericton Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Gainesville Shambhala Meditation Group**

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**Gampo Abbey**

Sopa Sonam, hijone@gmail.com

**Halifax Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Harford Shambhala Meditation Group**

Randy Kaplan, drkaplan4000@yahoo.com

**Houston Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Kansas City Shambhala Meditation Group**

Alec Arnold, Kaarnold2@aol.com

**Karmê Chöling**

Deborah Marshall, dmarsh@aol.com

**Kootenay Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Lexington Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Los Angeles Shambhala Meditation Center**

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Lucia Edmonds, ledmonds4@verizon.net

**Madison Shambhala Meditation Center**

Connie Anderson, canderson@andersonkent.com

**Media Shambhala Meditation Group**

(Myra Robinson) Pema Tsomo

robmy59@earthlink.net

**Minneapolis Shambhala Center**

Ed Colon, edcolon06@yahoo.com

**New York Shambhala Center**

William Auerbach, Bauerbach@nyc.rr.com

Laura Simms, storydevi@earthlink.net

(Head of Community Life)

**Northern California**

Gale Young, Regional Chair of Diversity Contact

Persons for Northern California

kikisoso@pacbell.net

**Ottawa Shambhala Centre**

Suzanne Côté, rigden@sympatico.ca

**Philadelphia Shambhala Center**

Ivette Guillermo, ivette\_guillermo@hotmail.com

**Portland Shambhala Center**

Michael McCormick, mam47@comcast.net

Annie Popkin, ahpokin@comcast.net

**Prince Edward Island Shambhala Meditation Group**

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**Sakyong's Council**

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**San Antonio Shambhala Center**

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**San Francisco Shambhala Center**

Nancy Grant, NCGrant@aol.com

**Seattle Shambhala Center**

Patience Paradox, kshanti@oz.net

Megan Kennedy, tigerliongaruda@comcast.net

**Shambhala Mountain Center**

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**St. Johns Shambhala Meditation Group**

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**St. Margaret's Bay Shambhala Centre**

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**Tamalpais Shambhala Meditation Group**

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**Toronto Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Tucson Shambhala Meditation Center**

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**Vancouver Shambhala Center**

Theresa Harding, theresaharding@shaw.ca.

**Washington, DC Shambhala Meditation Center**

Linda Watson, geisha\_grl1@yahoo.com

# V. Summary of Diversity Working Group Activities



*The Diversity Working Group was formed in 2004. The emphasis has been placed on a variety of projects and activities rather than on maintaining a permanent membership. This emphasis has allowed the group to form and re-form itself as needed. Therefore, the individuals who have worked under the auspices of the DWG have been numerous, including individuals who helped establish the initial guiding principles and directions for diversity work in Shambhala as well as those whose involvement has been more focused on specific issues such as cultivating a diverse global mandala, the people of color conference call, the Diversity Contact Persons, etc.*

During the First Shambhala Congress, diversity was identified as one of the “most pressing issues” that the Shambhala community needs to address.

Following the Congress, the then-Shambhala Board created the Diversity and Accessibility Working Group and asked it to formulate recommendations for improving diversity and accessibility in Shambhala. The working group consulted with hundreds of sangha members throughout the Shambhala international community, and identified areas where action is needed.

During the Second Shambhala Congress, the Diversity and Accessibility Working Group presented the

Can we accept each person's reality and condition as it is, recognizing each person's needs, and make our primary reference point being willing to serve others?

—Verónica Guzmán  
“Testimonies”

Diversity in Shambhala website

results of its mandala-wide consultations: *Recommendations for Improving Diversity and Accessibility in Shambhala*. It also presented *Resources for Improving Diversity and Accessibility in Shambhala* as well as *Notes on Diversity and Accessibility*, a treatise offering a Shambhala Buddhist view on diversity and accessibility. All these documents—as well as those mentioned below and others—may be viewed in the Diversity Resources webpage on the new Shambhala.org website.

After the second Congress, the Sakyong's Council created a separate working group to focus specifically on issues regarding physical accessibility. Since then, the Diversity Working Group has focused only on supporting Shambhala's aspirations concerning diversity.

The Diversity Working Group has lent its support to a variety of diversity initiatives, including:

- **A diversity statement** (*Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility and Compassionate Conduct*) adopted by the Sakyong's Council for display in all Shambhala centers, and translated into French and Spanish—on the Diversity Resources webpage.

- **A Diversity Dinner** event in Baltimore hosted by President Reoch to celebrate diversity in Shambhala.

- **A diversity training course** (Going Beyond Bias) created by an ad hoc group of Sakyong's Council members in which the Shambhala leadership participated at Shambhala Mountain Center.

- Shambhala's participation in the planning of a **National Conference** on Race and Ethnicity in American Buddhism.

- **The North American People of Color Scholarship Fund** created by members of Shambhala centers in Chicago, New York City and Toronto.

- The **Going Beyond Bias** program in the Baltimore center, which explored bias, racism and diversity issues, as well as the center's **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance** program that was held on the US holiday; and the **Meditation Retreat for People of Color** held at the New York center.

- The **Shambhala Diversity Alliance**, a grassroots group that formed during Warrior Assembly 2007 to support efforts to address diversity issues in the Shambhala practice and study programs.

In addition, the Diversity Working Group has:

- **Encouraged communication about diversity issues** in Shambhala centers and groups by inviting their leadership to designate a sangha member as the center/group point person for diversity issues; more than 40 centers/groups in North America have designated a "diversity contact person." A list of these individuals is posted on the Diversity Resources webpage.

- **Fostered mandala-wide conversation and information exchange** about diversity issues by creating *DiversityTalk*, an e-mail list for center/group diversity contact persons and others interested in diversity issues, and holding periodic conference calls with center/group diversity contact persons including *A Conversation with Gale Young*—many centers were represented on these calls, and notes are posted on the Diversity Resources webpage.

- **Raised awareness of diversity activities and diversity resources** in the Shambhala community by encouraging diversity event organizers to submit articles on their events to *The Dot*, creating the annual report on diversity in Shambhala, supporting creation of the Diversity in Shambhala webpage and diversity best practices area on the new Shambhala.org website, and collecting diversity resources for the Diversity Resources webpage.

- **Raised awareness of the challenges** affecting the diversity of our global community (with the input of representatives from Iran, South Africa, Korea, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, New Zealand, Canada, and Hawaii) and ways the Shambhala community can help (see the report *Recommendations for Cultivating a Globally Diverse Mandala* on the Diversity Resources webpage).

- **Encouraged contemplation, conversation and dialogue on diversity** in Shambhala's training programs by submitting recommendations for integrating diversity awareness in the new curriculum to the Curriculum Committee, working with diversity contact persons to develop *Diversity Quotations: Words Beyond Bias*, requesting that the *Contemplation and Dialogue*

on *Diversity* module, as well as the *Going Beyond Bias* talk by Sangyum Agness Au, *Notes on Diversity and Accessibility* by Dan Hessey, and *All Colors, No Color* by Acharya Gaylon Ferguson, be used in Shambhala programs (these documents are on the Diversity Resources webpage) and supporting efforts of the Shambhala Diversity Alliance, which is seeking to address diversity issues in the Shambhala curriculum and training programs.

- **Invited Shambhala teachers to offer guidance** on how we individually and as a community can work with diversity and difference in everyday life situations, by arranging transcription of the Sangyum Agness Au's *Going Beyond Bias* talk (on the diversity webpage) and creating the *Diversity Teaching Project*, a collection of diversity teachings by Shambhala teachers (on the Diversity Resources webpage).

- **Launched a People of Color Conference Call initiative** in which 60 people of color in Shambhala participated in the survey, working group and/or conference call phase of the initiative which is developing anti-racism, study and practice, outreach, and scholarship/mentoring projects to support people of color on the Shambhala Buddhist path. Conference call notes and a transcript of President Reoch's remarks to the group are on the Diversity Resources webpage.

In brief, since its inception, the Diversity Working Group has taken action—with the support of President Reoch, the Sakyong's Council, Center directors, Shambhala teachers, diversity contact persons, and many individual sangha members throughout the international Mandala—to lay a foundation for achieving Shambhala's aspiration to be open, inclusive and welcoming of diversity.

## VI. *Opportunities for Further Growth*



*There are groups besides the Diversity Working Group whose efforts toward inclusion and understanding the community would be wise to continue supporting:*

- **Accessibility Working Group.** Works to ensure that people, with physical, mental and perceptual challenges, including chronic illnesses, have access to all Shambhala activities, programs, practices, any teachings they would otherwise be able to receive, community events, etc. and ensures that access is safe, workable, uplifted and dignified. For more information, contact Hamish Maclaren at: [maclaren@earthlink.net](mailto:maclaren@earthlink.net) or visit the Disability and Accessibility Resources webpage: [www.shambhala.org](http://www.shambhala.org).

- **Cankatola Ti Ospaye** (chan kha toh la-tee oshe pah yeah). There have been numerous connections between Shambhala and various indigenous traditions and the hope is that there will be further dialog about the ways in which these traditions can be shared authentically within Shambhala society. In 2003, a group of non-natives including individuals from the Shambhala community were adopted into the Ti Ospaye (clan) of one Lakota spiritual leader. Out of that event Cankatola Ti Ospaye, a non-profit, was formed. This organization's mission is focused on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation

There are no castes in the kingdom of Shambhala. We are all Rigden—"possessor of the family"—because we already possess our own awareness fully. To see this on the individual level, we need to wake up to the natural energy of our mind.

—Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche  
Ruling Your World

in South Dakota, the lowest per capita income region in the country. The Foundation works with tribal leaders in their struggle to preserve families by promoting native cultural ways and spiritual traditions. To support and/or dialog: Jim Tolstrup: [jim@suburbitat.org](mailto:jim@suburbitat.org)

- **Commission on the Status of Women and Feminine Principle.** The purpose of the Commission is to enhance the blessings of the feminine principle, so that both the feminine and masculine principles can fully manifest in our Shambhala Buddhist mandala and community. Information is available at [Shambhala.org](http://Shambhala.org). Questions: Sangyum Agness Au: [agnessau@turtlemap.com](mailto:agnessau@turtlemap.com)

- **International Translation Committee.** This committee translates Shambhala buddhist texts from English into all other languages spoken in the mandala and for programs such as seminars provides simultaneous interpretation of talks into several languages. All members of our sangha interested in translation, interpretation and publication are warmly invited to get in touch with Rohini Schiff: [rohini.schiff@free.fr](mailto:rohini.schiff@free.fr)

• **North American People of Color Scholarship Fund.** Fund created to facilitate participation in advanced Shambhala Buddhist programs to people of color. For information, contact Mabinti Dennis (mabintid@yahoo.ca).

For donation information, visit:

<http://www.shambhalatrust.org/>

• **Queer Dharma.** Provides a safe space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transexual meditators, cultivating a network of practitioners from a variety of Buddhist traditions.

Website: <http://www.queerdharma.org/>

Questions: [info@queerdharma.org](mailto:info@queerdharma.org)

Donations: [outreach@queerdharma.org](mailto:outreach@queerdharma.org)

• **People of Color in Shambhala.** There is a group of people of color in our mandala that recently formed to offer support to people of color on the Shambhala Buddhist path. This group is presently working on projects pertaining to scholarships and mentoring, study and practice, outreach, and anti-racism training.

For more information:

Victor Castro, [ngejungyellow@yahoo.com](mailto:ngejungyellow@yahoo.com);

Mabinti Dennis, [mabintid@yahoo.ca](mailto:mabintid@yahoo.ca)

Charlene Leung, [charlene\\_leung@sbcglobal.net](mailto:charlene_leung@sbcglobal.net)

Justin Miles, [infinite\\_edén@hotmail.com](mailto:infinite_edén@hotmail.com)

Cortez Rainey, [crainey52@aol.com](mailto:crainey52@aol.com)

• **Shambhala Prison Community.** The Shambhala Prison Community (SPC) is founded to serve spiritual and educational needs arising within Federal, state, county and municipal prison systems and jails, and their associated communities, both in the United States and internationally.

Email: [prison@indra.com](mailto:prison@indra.com);

Telephone: 720-565-1352

Web address: [www.shambhalaprisoncommunity.org](http://www.shambhalaprisoncommunity.org)

• **Ratna Prison Community.** Provides meditation instruction, correspondence, teaching and other supports to prisoners throughout the United States.

Information: <http://www.ratnaprisoninitiative.org/>

For donation information, visit:

<http://www.shambhalatrust.org/>

• **Shambhala Diversity Alliance.** Supports the work of the Shambhala Curriculum Committee toward incorporating diversity understanding and teachings into the Shambhala Buddhist curriculum.

Questions: Michael McCormick,

[mam47@comcast.net](mailto:mam47@comcast.net)

• **Shambhala Iran Fund.** The 20 members of our Shambhala sangha in Iran are geographically isolated and want to receive further teachings. The Shambhala Iran Fund will help them in the following ways: Identify 1–3 mentors for Iran; pay for a mentor to travel to Iran 2 times per year; pay for travel and training of Raana Bastani and other emerging Iranian leaders – including MI training, teacher training, and Shambhala leadership training; and support Iran with the translation tools that have been developed for all non-English languages. If you want to help us strengthen the Shambhala Center in Iran and thereby firmly plant the flag of Shambhala in the Middle East, contact Marc Matheson at [tigermind@earthlink.net](mailto:tigermind@earthlink.net).

• **Simon Luna Scholarship for Latin America at Shambhala Mountain Center.** In honor of Acharya Luna and his many accomplishments in Latin America, Shambhala Mountain Center has created a scholarship fund especially for students living in Latin America. The monies will aid students in Shambhala Buddhist Core

Curriculum courses/programs at Shambhala Mountain Center. The focus will be on programs not often offered in their part of the world (i.e. dathun, seminary, encampment etc.). Please join us in celebrating Acharya Luna's life and work and continuing what he so bravely began. Mandando muchas gracias y cariño. To make a donation to the Simon Luna Fund, please visit our website at [http://www.shambhalamountain.org/asl\\_donation.php](http://www.shambhalamountain.org/asl_donation.php)

- **Vajra Dawn.** A conference for emerging leaders—young adults ages 18-30—where participants receive teachings from the Sakyong and meet with each other to practice and reflect deeply about the true meaning of peace and their visions of Shambhala for the future. Check with Shambhala Mountain Center or Karme Choling for new dates for this program.

There are many other individuals and groups in countries throughout our mandala, including **Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Israel, Mexico, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand** that are involved in activities and initiatives that present us with opportunities to build a more diverse global mandala. It is up to each of us to support the efforts under way in the Community—from the center of the mandala to individual Centres and Groups—in order for those efforts to bear fruit.

Every day provides us countless moment-by-moment opportunities for waking up to our world and stepping out of our cocoon by opening our hearts and minds to those who are different from us. Let us renew our intention to extend the diversity work that we practice on the cushion to ourselves and to those in our homes, workplaces, centres, neighbourhoods, and throughout the world. May this benefit everyone!

## VII.

# *A Diversity Offering*



### DISABLED WARRIORS

Society has named us;  
the physically challenged,  
the unsighted and disabled.

The words must sound politically correct.  
To whom is the challenge referring?

The struggle to survive, at times,  
feels so immense and profound.

We strive for independence  
and personal dignity.

Yet, the road is paved with prejudice,  
fraud, and abuse.

Some come armed in wheelchairs.  
Others are locked inside their silent brain,  
unable to speak their tales,  
but patiently they still remain.

Don't be too mystified,  
as the warriors grow mighty and united.  
Their minds are filled with wonder,  
of all the possibilities.

Please look beyond the scars,  
the ravaged faces of abnormality.

Throw away the concepts  
of what is considered normality.

The Shambhala vision of Enlightened Society is by its nature a model of inclusivity and accessibility: it is a society where every aspect of human activity is integrated into the path, and where each person can practice genuinely according to their aspiration and capability. To paraphrase a passage from a Shambhala text, "The power of supreme humanness exists in everyone."

—Dan Hessey  
*Notes on Diversity and Accessibility*

Open your minds and hearts  
With genuine compassion.  
We are messengers of impermanence,  
vital parts of this social system,  
interconnected in this global mess.

How could I have known  
that I would join the ranks?  
Yes, I too am a disabled warrior,  
who seeks to touch the sky.

My heart cries out for recognition.  
I am one of your students,  
after finally remembering how to read.  
it is a lonely mission.

—Ann Greenleaf

# *In Gratitude*



## **Acharya Simon Luna**

April 28, 1945 – August 14, 2007

*Acharya Luna was a leading Shambhala Buddhist acharya  
and teacher who led the sangha in Latin America.*

“I asked him to go to Latin America to lead the sangha and he did a wonderful  
job. He left everything and he only had the practice of dharma in his mind.”

–Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche

# *Acknowledgments*



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## **Photo Sources**

Photos were found on websites  
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