

DIVERSITY WORKING GROUP
Conference Calls to Discuss Global Access to Shambhala
November 12, 2006, 12 PM and 9 PM (Eastern)
NOTES

1. Background: On Sunday, November 12th, at 12 Noon and at 9PM, Eastern Standard Time, conference calls were held with the Diversity Working Group members. The following persons were present at either of these conference calls:

Raana Bastini, Iran
Marian Bond, New Zealand
Mabinti Dennis, Canada
Acharya Simon Luna, Chile
Hamish Maclaren, USA
Javier Murillo, Chile
Ka'ohulani McGuire, Hawaii
Cortez Rainey, USA
Chris Tamdjidi, Germany
Jennifer Woodhull, South Africa

2. Purpose: The purpose of these calls was to allow for final comments concerning *Recommendations for Cultivating a Globally Diverse Mandala*. In particular, the 12 Noon conference call was intended as a forum during which the group could discuss with Chris Tamdjidi several Shambhala Europe programs that are aimed at helping small groups in Europe, programs that might also have relevance for other regions.

3. Key Observations:

- Europe has 65 Shambhala groups, in 18 countries, many of which are in isolated regions. Shambhala Europe has several programs that are designed to assist in their development:

Small Group Development Initiative
Mentoring System for Small Groups
European Study and Scholarship Fund
European Teachers Travel Fund

- All four of the above programs, which are funded by European Donor Group, Dechen Choling and Shambhala Europe—but not the Shambhala Trust, are presented to the Diversity Working Group as *models* that Mandala Services may want to replicate for use in developing Shambhala groups in remote regions. Of note, under the Small Group Development Initiative funds are awarded for advertising, center space, etc., and under the European Study and Scholarship

Fund, financial assistance is given to individuals who reside in economically poor countries, for example Ukraine and Romania.

- In Europe, Shambhala teachers who have a good relationship with certain groups are recruited to serve as mentors of the group for several years. Often these individuals are willing to become mentors and pay their own travel expenses. Individuals who are selected by groups to serve as their mentors take a mentor's oath.
- Although funds provided by the four Shambhala Europe programs are restricted to groups in Europe, several conference call participants indicate that such programs would be helpful to groups in their region. Although money from these programs are not available to groups outside Europe, Shambhala Europe is willing to help individuals from groups in Iran and South Africa with program costs at Dechen Choling. But it cannot provide assistance for travel.
- For groups that have only one sangha member in need of training, it might be better financially for them to obtain the training by visiting a practice center. In instances where there are several group members in need of the same training, it might be better financially to have the training provided locally by a visiting teacher, trainer or mentor.
- In remote regions, help covering travel expenses is a priority. For instance, in New Zealand, if teacher airfare costs could be provided up-front, the cost could be reimbursed with proceeds from the program led by the teacher.
- It would be helpful if there was some way to identify the recommendations that are most pressing, short-term or long term, about which something can be done now. For instance, with regard to distance learning, it great if there was a way to get tapes of certain teachers by either asking teacher directly or through some centralized distribution system.
- It is important for the leadership of groups in remote regions to be involved in Shambhala governance, leadership and activities that affect the development of their region.
- Within a couple of weeks, a description of the North American Person of Color Scholarship Fund (developed by leaders of the Chicago, New York and Toronto Shambhala Centers) will be distributed to the Diversity Working Group members for comment.
- Conference call participants agree that *Recommendations for Cultivating a Globally Diverse Mandala* adequately address the challenges and needs of sanghas in their regions.

- Cortez said that raising awareness of the needs of geographically isolated regions, will help groups in those regions to get the help they need. He said he will discuss the recommendations with President Reoch, submit them to Sakyong's Council and Mandala Governing Council for consideration at their December meetings in Boulder. After the meetings he will follow up with Diversity Working Group members.
- The group email address "globalscholarship@baltimoresambhala.org" will remain active until December 31st. There was no further business to discuss.

The conference call ended with the Dedication of Merit.