

**Address to the Governance Academy by Lady Diana Mukpo**  
**Boulder Shambhala Center**  
**December 9, 2006**

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*Lady Diana addressed a gathering of leaders in Shambhala for the first “Governance Academy” convened by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. President Reoch introduced Lady Diana.*

**RR:** I’d like to invite the Sakyong Wangmo to address us this morning as part of our overall effort to deepen our understanding of the tradition and the roots of Shambhala governance. I know that His Majesty is absolutely delighted that you were able to find time in your busy schedule to join us and we are, too, so may I invite you to address us?

**LD:** So good morning everybody. Thank you all for being here and thank you actually on a greater level for your existence altogether. All of you as leadership in Shambhala have demonstrated a tremendous amount of generosity to others. And as we all know this is not particularly lucrative positions anybody has here but extraordinarily rich in being able to transmit the wisdom of our lineage to other people to help enrich and benefit their lives. So thank you for your kindness and to the vision of our lineage.

I want to talk a little bit today about some things which all of you really already know but I think it might be helpful to bring some of these pieces together in a way that’s cohesive; that we can look at our past historically and begin to talk as leadership altogether about how those elements can start to become bound in such a way that we can more effectively create the Shambhala world. I think it’s important to know, so to speak, where we came from in order to understand where we’re going.

The Vidhyadhara, Trungpa Rinpoche, as you all know, grew up as a Kagyu tulku in Tibet. His root guru, Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, was Nyingma and he trained in the Nyingma tradition extensively. At the same time, growing up and during his adolescent years in Tibet he started to receive some Shambhala terma and already in his mirror, when he would do the *prasana*, he was having visions of Shambhala kingdom. So, in a way, although he was already a Kagyu tulku, very much intrinsically, he was bound in three traditions, being the Kagyu, Nyingma, as well as Shambhala. And after he left Tibet and came to England, he was also teaching pretty traditional dharma in the Tibetan sense with which he was raised. And then, when he came over to the United States, it’s pretty interesting to see how the whole thing developed. Because, when you see how our Shambhala world developed, firstly it was very clear that Trungpa Rinpoche taught some very very traditional Kagyu lineage teachings and practices. His manifestation was Ati, so you have tremendous Nyingma element, not only in how he lived his life—as mahasiddha and householder—then he began to realize, also, concurrently—and I actually remember in maybe it was in 1975 he began to talk to me more about his ideas about Shambhala kingdom and how those ideas could start to become incorporated into what was happening with his students here in North America. Shortly after that, as you all know, he started to receive the Shambhala terma and all of these forces converged. And he realized, and felt very strongly, that the future of the buddhadharma in the West,

the way he wanted to see it manifest, had to be founded in the basis of having a society founded based on the principles of decency and genuineness, which is the Shambhala society. So he put tremendous energy in creating this huge container of Shambhala society which would incorporate so many other aspects of the Buddhist teachings and aspects of secular life, too.

So, on the one hand, we have a completely new tradition here in North America which he created, which is Shambhala, and on the other hand, this tradition started with the Buddha. So it's a very old tradition as well. And as the dharma has been very—maybe malleable is the wrong word—because the fundamental nature of dharma has been the fact that it is always applicable to human beings, it has managed to evolve and to merge into different cultures. I think it was a tremendous undertaking for dharma to take root in the West and it was a tremendous accomplishment that we have this situation here altogether which is based so much on his generosity and exertion. However, I think the fundamental reason is the same thing that dharma has been able to make itself applicable in many different situations and cultures, it's the same reason that you will have many different links in lineage in the form of lineage holders. Trungpa Rinpoche, as brilliant as he was, was one link in this lineage that has tremendous broad vision stretching into the future. And the reason altogether that he was able to teach and do what he did was because of the teachings of the Buddha as transmitted in an unbroken lineage, most directly from his teacher, Jamgon Kongtrul, to himself. And as things evolved and developed here in the United States, and Canada, North America, which originally was obviously the core, and eventually spread to many parts of the world and Europe, he decided that the most effective way to continue the society for generations to come was to have a family lineage. So the next link in our lineage is Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. And I think to have the breadth of vision to understand how we as leaders are going to be able to benefit others, it is important to look at the fabric and the linkage of our lineage.

Every lineage holder manifests in a different way, in a different method. That's the beauty and that's the hope for all of us individually—that when we practice and develop ourselves according to the teachings, our own basic nature begins to manifest its own luminosity. Each lineage holder, each link in the lineage, has had their own personality and their own method that has been best for them to manifest and to be able to teach. So one lineage holder may be extraordinarily different than another, but they're still reflecting the same primordial mind. As we have this old-new, new-old situation here, which is Shambhala, we have actually one thing which is the first situation, which is the progression from one Sakyong to the next. And because of the time period, the gap, between the Druk Sakyong passing away and our current Sakyong fully taking his seat, there was a period of time when the sangha became maybe a little bit looser than it was with the Druk Sakyong. And I think it's time now that we have all developed and we're now at a particular new critical phase in terms of going forward with leadership.

The first thing I want to emphasize is that there are two situations – we have Shambhala society altogether, Shambhala kingdom which is tremendously broad and encompassing and encompasses all sorts of traditions and appreciates the richness and would like to invite in richness from different traditions and different teachers – and we also have the

core, which is government. I think it's really important that, in order to govern properly, we have to, each of us as leaders, put our finger in the electrical socket. [laughter] And that electrical socket is the unbroken lineage of Shambhala teachings as manifested by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. And I think it's important to clarify that and I absolutely don't want to be misunderstood in any way by saying that we don't want to appreciate and embrace many other teachers who have so much and so much to offer and to give and to enrich our Shambhala world. During the era that Trungpa Rinpoche was alive we, on an ongoing basis invited other teachers in and asked them to share their wisdom to enrich our sangha altogether—His Holiness Karmapa, Dingo Khyentse Rinpoche, Thrangu Rinpoche, all of these teachers have helped form and develop and enrich the broader aspects of our society. Through the generosity of so many other teachers of buddhadharma that we will invite in general to continue to enrich and to help everybody with their practice and with their development. And I hope that expands and I hope that increases. And I definitely don't want in any way for that to be misunderstood. I just think for the leadership it's really important that we understand where the primary loyalties lie, because otherwise it becomes a situation of actually losing some of the direct power of the transmission of the lineage.

It's interesting to go back to that somewhat amorphous time as we began to come into the present. And you see this on a quite regular basis that sometimes it's actually a sad situation that there are certain individuals that are actually extraordinarily intelligent people and have had a very good grasp of the teachings but then they start to sometimes maybe feel very solid about their way of wanting to see the way things go - or also become sometimes extraordinarily critical and a twist happens, not in that basic intelligence. Because firstly I see the Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche as the top of the pyramid but that pyramid is supported by the intelligence and wisdom and exertion of the leadership. That is the next layer in that pyramid. The sangha will support that, too, and we need to have a really close look at our infrastructure there. And I think the twist and the problem becomes when people start to become upset or see when there are problems. There certainly are problems—and there always were in the day of the Vidyadhara, too—and there always will be a thousand years from now too if we still do our job, but I think the best approach for those problems is to see how we can sort of jump in and try to use our personal resources or whatever resources we have to try to help with those problems and try to constantly bring things back to a place where there's sanity and genuineness. And we can do that, as opposed to some of these people who you know have sort of splintered off and it becomes to a certain extent a problem with people having some sort of an ego trip that they think that they have this direct transmission and that they can transmit that to their students. I think that becomes really a negative situation because the core of Trungpa Rinpoche's transmission will always happen through his lineage. And I promise you, the one thing I know, that I'm certain of, is that if Trungpa Rinpoche came back for a day, that he would agree with what I just said. [laughter, applause]

I think it's dangerous that sometimes people, you know older students of Trungpa Rinpoche say, "well you know this is how it was," or whatever. But I think that it's also important to merge the understanding of who Trungpa Rinpoche was with actually how his breadth of vision applied to continuing to apply good Shambhala society throughout

the future generations. So all of you are actually key in that and that's a wonderful thing - a wonderful responsibility that everybody has on their shoulders. I'd really like to invite all of you today to speak your minds and I'd love to have some discussion and for you all not to be hesitant because I know there are a lot of issues and I know I touched on some thorny ground, as I seem to have a tendency to do sometimes [chuckles]. So I'm not embarrassed to share my thorny ground with your thorny ground [laughter]. So please, I'd love to talk with all of you.

**Q:** Good morning and thank you very much for your comments. I don't know if this is the appropriate time to ask this question but we have been having a discussion at our Center in Davis and I think other Centers maybe too about the role of the Director in manifesting the connection to lineage and *Iha* as compared to the Warrior of the Center. I think there's some confusion about the role that the Warrior plays and how they work together to do that.

**LD:** Right. Actually, you know, I may call on President Reoch to do that because [laughter] you've actually been quite involved with that. If I may... [LD chuckles, more laughter]

**RR:** I think that my take on the sense of this that just came up in the moment was that our discussion in the Sakyong's Council these last few days which is that, I think we really do have to acknowledge, as you said ma'am, that there had been a period of our fragmentation in our community. And an analogy that I sometimes use is - it is as if there was a magnificent dinner table set with crystal and beautiful cutlery and that sort of thing, and there was a kind of an earthquake going through the community and a number of incredibly devoted people took what they could of that beautiful crystal and cutlery to preserve the whole dinner service. And I think what we've been working towards is a point where we could actually all come back to the table and to invite people who have held part of that precious inheritance to put it back on the table and see what kind of a configuration comes back up of that. And the form of configuration which comes out of that will be determined by the transmission from the lineage, not by any single one of us individually. I believe that at the end of the Kalapa Assembly in 2003, the Warrior General in fact encouraged the Warriors of the Centers, at this particular time of transition to really try and promote harmony—not harmony in the sense of that we have a complete plan and goal but to try and encourage that quality of warriorship which actually is openness of heart and openness of mind that is welcoming and invites everybody back to this configuration. And in that sense the role of the Warrior of the Center is absolutely indispensable as part of the governance of the whole mandala. And I don't really feel that at this point that it would be correct, honestly, for me to try to pretend who is absolutely the most important in everything because we're all working on trying to figure out how to put this back into a coherent form, which may, in the long run, not be exactly the same as the coherent form we had before, but we have to try and get as many pieces of the puzzle back together and not have people feel that we haven't done our best to honor the original dinner setting, if I can put it, of the Vidyadhara.

**LD:** Thank you. Thank you very much.

**Q:** Lady Diana, thank you for your book. Fearless sanity, that's what I think of when I think of you. I try to find little glimpses of that in my own situation, and I so appreciate what you said about the leadership in the Shambhala context because I've had personal confusion about how to be really open and inviting and having people in the leadership who are clearly not taking...who don't have their finger in the electrical socket, and so I'm inspired to have this conversation. I'm picturing the thorniness of that. And I think what I'd like is just to steep myself in more of your words on this.

**LD:** I think it's a question of having a big forum where a tremendous amount of support can come from other teachers and other situations; that as a Center we can always invite other teachers and appreciate their wisdom and ask them to help us, but I think our core and the core loyalty and relationship must be with our particular lineage because otherwise we really lose the essence of what we're doing. What we are doing is different from what some of the other Buddhist teachers are doing. There are particular practice sanghas where what they are doing is incredibly beneficial but what we're talking about and what Trungpa Rinpoche initially laid down, is that we need to create a society based on these principles, so we are actually doing something that is a little bit different. Within that large situation, that large container, we can accommodate a lot of different things, but I think that if we get confused about where the loyalty and where the fundamental relationship lies, we actually lose the ability to provide a proper container for other people's wisdom to come in, too. So I think it's really a question actually...I think it comes back to mandala. When you look at the mandala, mandala doesn't work if part of it is missing. So we need to learn how to have really good visualization of our mandala, and I think it really stems to that. Okay? Thank you.

**Q:** Thank you for being here. I wanted to see if you could share your sense of wisdom and also timing about the thorny issue in our mandala that there are quite a number of people who feel that they are being true to the lineage and yet really do not accept this current governance and in some cases do not accept the Sakyong. That's just how it is. So, how can you help us as leaders to work with that situation?

**LD:** Are you talking about people who were students of Trungpa Rinpoche who say, "Oh well, everything has changed and it's really terrible now and this is not really his world"? Do you mean that? [laughter]

**Q:** Yes.

**LD:** [LD laughs deeply, audience laughs more] You know, I'll tell you a story. After Rinpoche died, and I was in the Court in Halifax, it was actually a horrible time for me. I had the people serving...you know everybody was going through a really rough time, it's not that I'm pointing any fingers at all because everybody had their own angst at that time. Somebody came to me and said "Well, you know the shabdus won't come and serve dinner any more because you have the children at the dinner table and Trungpa Rinpoche didn't ever like to have the children at the dinner table" – which wasn't actually true anyway, but you had all of this stuff and everyone was in such a panicked

way hanging on to these old forms. And I began to think, “Gosh, how many times did he change the forms, you know, when he was alive?” But people remember the last forms and then that becomes creed. And, really, when you think about what he did, talk about forms, look at the forms he grew up with and look what he did in terms of forms over here in order to present—it’s the same dharma, the same thing—but in order to actually plant that here in the West, he needed to change the external trappings. I think it’s all to do with a fear of groundlessness. You know, that we’re always clinging to something that makes us feel so secure and because of people’s love and devotion to Trungpa Rinpoche, there was a going back to clinging and wanting to sink our teeth into something that felt solid, that almost, you know, he wasn’t really dead, actually, if we could cling to those forms. And I think it’s a pity a little bit altogether because of course he was absolutely magnificent, but he knew that he didn’t stand alone. He knew that he was this link in this chain—he was a hugely shining link in the chain—but the chain goes on for thousands of years, with any luck and I think that’s where people are, to a certain extent missing the point.

I would say to those people, “You know, you guys have a tremendous amount of wisdom. You had such unbelievably fortunate karma, actually, to be alive in the same lifetime as he was, to be on this earth in such a way at the same time in the same place to have that convergence with him and to be able to receive those teachings from him, so now what do you do with it? Are you actually going to complain? Or are you going to say, ‘This wisdom, I’m going to bring into the situation and help support the lineage and son that he put in his place as his lineage-holder, as the future Sakyong.’ Do we bring our wisdom and do we support that and help our society grow?” So I think it’s a question of asking people to actually taste groundlessness. Don’t give lip-service to it because you heard that from the great Ati teacher, but now you’ve planned and you dive off that board and you don’t know what’s underneath so I think it’s the next step in people’s development, really. Okay? Thank you.

**Q:** Thank you ma’am. You spoke about the succession of Sakyongs and I wonder if you would speak to us of the succession of Sakyong Wangmos.

**LD:** Yes.

**Q:** And specifically at this time of transition, I recently re-read in preparing for this weekend the *Court Vision* on the section of the consort Sakyong Wangmo and I’m wondering, when Khandro Tseyang becomes our next Sakyong Wangmo, who do you become?

**LD:** [laughs]

**Q:** And can one have two Sakyong Wangmos? What will your role be?

**LD:** Quite frankly I don’t think my role is going to change very much because I feel responsibility in the seat I was empowered to take by the Druk Sakyong and my title will change to Druk Sakyong Wangmo. I think to the best of my capacity I will continue to try

to serve the sangha, as I hope Khandro Tseyang will also do as she grows into her role as Sakyong Wangmo and carries the torch in that way. So I see it as further enrichment of our world. So I don't think it's particularly any dramatic shift; I think it's further richness. And hopefully she will continue to give and grow in her role and connection with all of you and serve you well. So, I think our kingdom will continue to grow. So, that's that. [chuckles]

Because ultimately, you know, it's actually sort of interesting when you talk about that. The way I see things, it's particularly so much about...obviously the titles we hold keep our hierarchy together and so forth, but ultimately, you know, underneath it is really the quality of your mind and what you can offer to others, and so I think we all have that particular...that has to be what supports our leadership positions altogether; it's not particularly that your position has any weight at all unless it's manifested in trying to care for our world.

**Q:** I'm very happy you are here because this dinner table, or earthquake, actually looks like a chasm to me. I feel that your presence is helping us to build this bridge across it. I think it's extremely painful for the people looking at the chasm. I've had endless discussions with them and I feel like I'm not very skillful, because whoever they are it feels very...well, fear of groundlessness...but I also feel that, for those of us who are willing to walk across the bridge, that we have to strengthen that bridge and I think your presence is a turning point in that because you represent that other world, that they lost, and thank you.

**LD:** Thank you. You see, I think two things there. I think the bridge is not only me; it's all of you. You *are* the bridge, you know, in your understanding and willingness to dedicate yourselves to leadership positions. But I think as much as we can, in our leadership positions that we invite these people because they do have tremendous wisdom that can be given. It would be wonderful to see more of these people, these old students at the Centers. You know, they received so much, you know? And it's such a pity if that cannot continue to enrich our world altogether, so I think we all have to keep working to extend a hand. Thank you.

**Q:** Thank you, Lady Diana. My name is Suzanne. I'm from Amsterdam, Europe. You were talking about that you can have loyalty to teachers whom we invite and who can connect with the Shambhala culture and teachings and I'm sometimes wondering, because in our sangha we have students of Khenpo Tsultrim, or Khandro Rinpoche, and how does...in programming or in vision for programming for me it's like a real question, relating to what you said—how to program and plan with this great connection?

**LD:** Firstly, as we talked about, we have a greater situation, you know, we should accommodate students of other teachers. They should become part of Shambhala world and they have a tremendous amount to offer, but I think it's also really important in terms of what we're offering. We are the *Shambhala* Center. *Shambhala* Center. That's what we *are*, you know. [laughter] We're not calling ourselves "something-else Center", we're "*Shambhala* Center" and so that has to be the core. And that be the pinpoint center of the

mandala and then accommodate those other people. But I think it's really important that we don't lose the focal point that we're presenting the teachings that come down through our lineage in our Centers and then, as long as we remember to do that, and that is the core, then we can have programs and invite in other teachers, and also the students of the other teachers can then practice with us, too. So, I think it's really straightforward, I think we just need to be a little more cohesive in our own way of thinking.

Maybe we could have one more before we finish. Or two more, since we have two people!

**Q:** I'm Candlin Dobbs from the Minneapolis Shambhala Center. I'm not going to be able to say this very well, but I'll try. What I've experienced as being Director of the Center for the last two years—I'm a co-director; I have people I work with—and there's something about being in leadership that brings other people's klesha activity banging straight at you. [laughter]

**LD:** Sure, sure, sure. Yeah.

**Q:** And when you yourself are not a realized being and you have your own things...[laughter] I'm presently in a situation of there are probably five people at the Center who are slightly pissed off at me, just a little, not too much, but a little...[laughter] And one of my personal members of my personal court think this is something that I should really worry about. And other people think, "Oh well, you know, five out of, we have 100 people that are involved and 67 members, that's not too bad!" And I guess I just wanted to know if you had any thoughts on how to work with that. For me, I really am in a debate as to whether that's something that matters or not. One thing I do know about it is [that] one particular person feels this is a systematic problem—that we don't treat leadership properly in Shambhala—and I actually think it's [that] this person has a klesha issue about this thing about my personality and this and that, and I haven't always been as skillful as I could be, which is something I can work on.

**LD:** Well, I think it's sort of the nature of practicing Vajrayana principles within a secular society, too, that I think these things are always going to come up. And we're not going to repress them because we're going to try to find a way to work with them, so I think it's really a question of...in a way that is also the generosity of being in a leadership position: that you're constantly challenging yourself to address these situations in a way that you feel is sane without becoming more insane yourself, you know, which is really easy to do, because you get yourself in this pressure-cooker situation and you have all of this sort of neurosis happening, some of which is actually genuinely honest feedback and some of which is just klesha activity and then you jump into the muddle and then things get more confused for you, too, so I think it's always a constant sort of situation, you know...Trungpa Rinpoche would put people in certain positions and say, "This is who you are" and then you'd go "Oh my God!" and you know then you'd have to live up to that situation, so he would sort of present the *lha* aspect of your being and then you would have to rise to that, like the cream would rise to the top. I think it's the same situation there in that you can also regard this as a vehicle on the path, for you to constantly refine



your own sense of sanity. Not that it's going to be easy but it's a challenge, and obviously you are in a leadership position, so in a way, instead of trying to reject it and make it go away you make a commitment in an ongoing way to embrace this, but yet at the same time to lay down the laws so that when you really trust your ground and you trust yourself that you are sane, that you don't second-guess yourself all the time and then it becomes more confused. It's sort of a question of being hard and soft at the same time. Okay?

**Q:** Thank you.

**LD:** Thank *you*.

**Q:** Ma'am. The part of your book that, in terms of thorny issues, that I found the most profound was your story about how the Sakyong Wangmo had to run for the hills; you had to leave, to get away. I think it's a story that would be helpful to flesh out more, and my greatest wish is that there will never be another Sakyong Wangmo who feels that they need to "head for the hills" so-to-speak.

**LD:** Thank you. Well, you know it's interesting actually because I think that Trungpa Rinpoche's situation was so tremendously powerful that he carried us all. I think after he died that the bottom fell out of everybody's life and there was a tremendous amount of klesha activity. I think that from that, from that particular situation there was also a tremendous amount of personal development. You know, I think I used the analogy in my book of how Ananda served the Buddha, but he didn't really attain any personal realization until the Buddha died. And I think it was the same thing for so many of Trungpa Rinpoche's students, for everybody that in order to really find your own seat and power as a human being that everybody had to go through that process, or many people had to really experience that process after his death. So, although it was unfortunate that the situation reached such a boiling point, I felt that for the sanity of my family that I needed to go away. On the other hand, I think it's actually turned out quite fine. I think that it was a maybe hopefully never to be repeated situation in our sangha, but I think there's been so much growth and development for all of those people who were concerned at that time and I also feel that I'm able to function in my role as well as I can, you know, in spite of geographic location so, yeah, it was a really tough time.

**Q:** It just seems that recounting that might be helpful, too, because we have another Sakyong and he's not going to live forever either. I was taken by Mr. Reoch's comments about the Dalai Lama looking over and saying "Are you ready?". There's lots of big disasters that can happen so, you know, that's what we're supposed to be real good at. Anything you could do to share it, so we could go through it or at least understand it or hear about it, I think it would be real helpful.

**LD:** Yeah, you know, one thing that's really interesting—and I have reflected on that quite a bit—I think that Trungpa Rinpoche was sort of a meteor that came through with this tremendous energy and his students sometimes forgot about being kind, even though they were really able to absorb those teachings. It was almost as if people were really

relating too much with the Mahayana at that point, maybe it wouldn't have really come through 100 percent. So much had to be transmitted in such a short period of time—it was an insane and brilliant time—but I think that our current Sakyong has actually really magnetized the Mahayana principle into our community and it has been sorely needed. And I think that as a sangha we are much kinder to one another than we were when Trungpa Rinpoche was alive. So hopefully those situations won't happen because actually we're more decent now and I really think actually people are more decent now.

**Q:** Thank you very much.

**LD:** Thank *you*. Thank you all for being here and thank you for your kindness. I'm so happy that all of you are here to lead our community forward in a very positive and enriching way, so thank you all. I think we're headed in a great direction.

*Dedication of merit.*

\*\*\* *End of transcript.* \*\*\*

*Transcribed by Chris Montone.  
Washington, DC*