



Shambhala Office of Practice and Education

Dear Centre Directors, Teachers, Group Coordinators and Practice and Study Leaders:

We are pleased to send you this first issue of the new Shambhala Office of Practice and Education newsletter!

Using the web-based Shambhala Database, the Office of Practice and Education will be able to communicate with all of you on a regular basis to keep you updated and answer many frequently asked questions.

With this monthly newsletter, we hope to work more efficiently, providing you with information you need to do your jobs with more ease and confidence. We aim to keep these newsletters succinct (recognizing that this first one is quite long!), with timely news, practice guidelines, and instructions about where to find the resources you need, many of which are available on the Shambhala website. We welcome your input as to how this newsletter can best serve your needs.

Program Schedules and Current Events

Shambhala Core Path Programs

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche will open a second Scorpion Seal Assembly in 2010 at Shambhala Mountain Center July 18-30. Qualified first-time participants as well as students who have attended an assembly in 2009 are eligible to apply.

Many students who attended 2009 assemblies have asked whether the Sakyong will teach week two material in 2010. The Sakyong has indicated that students at this level, as a result of their practice, should begin to show signs of realization, manifesting with greater kindness and compassion. The 2010 assembly will offer continuing students an opportunity to go deeper, and the Sakyong will decide what teachings will be presented based on his assessment of what the students need to go forward.

For a full schedule of international programs scheduled in 2010 go to this web page - <http://www.shambhala.org/community/sns/index.php?id=490>

Applications for these programs will be available soon here - <http://www.shambhala.org/programs/advanced.php>

8.5" x 11" posters for 2010 Sutrayana Seminary, Vajrayana Seminary, and Warrior Assembly are now available online - <http://www.shambhala.org/programs/advanced.php>

For best results, print them on photographic (or coated) paper.

Practices in advance of the Sakyong's retreat

A large number of centres and groups, as well as individuals worldwide gathered to do the practices that we had been asked to do prior to the Sakyong's retreat. We are delighted to announce that we were able to report to His Eminence Namkha Drimed Rinpoche and the Sakyong Wangmo on the day of the Tenshuk that Shambhala tantrikas accumulated double the number we were asked to do!

His Eminence was extremely happy with the practice efforts of our sangha and the Tenshuk ceremony, all of which have provided an auspicious ground for the Sakyong to enter into retreat.

Curriculum

The Way of Shambhala curriculum – getting started

Many of you are asking about how to begin offering the Way of Shambhala program at your centres. The first step is to read the administrative manual and then contact the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education or the Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education for further guidance on how to begin. You can find the manual on this web page - <http://www.shambhala.org/members/ps/coordinator.php>

Way of Shambhala update

1. Administrative Manual

The Administrative Manual for the Way of Shambhala has all the information that centres need to offer this program. The manual is updated regularly and posted on the Way of Shambhala web page. Each time it is updated, we will show the date of the update on the link itself, and highlight the most recently revised sections in red. That way, you can skim the manual for news.

2. Prerequisites for Way of Shambhala courses

Based on the content of the new 5-week syllabi for the Way of Shambhala I courses, and feedback that we have received, we are now updating the prerequisites to make it possible for participants to attend the Way of Shambhala courses in sequence, without having attended Shambhala Training weekends. That is, anyone who has completed Contentment In Everyday Life could go on to do Joy in Everyday Life even if they have never done a Shambhala Training level. Anyone could go on to Wisdom in Everyday Life who has taken Fearlessness in Everyday Life, even if they have not taken level I. However, we will continue to offer the classes between the levels, continue to advertise them as modules, and we will continue to communicate to students that they would benefit greatly from doing the Levels and soaking in practice. This change is mostly to allow the Way of Shambhala to be more accessible and practical. The view remains the same: it would be ideal to attend the Shambhala Training level and then be part of the companion classes.

The Rigden weekend will still only be open to participants who have done the 5 levels and 5 courses, (or people who have previously gone through the Sacred Path) and Way of Shambhala II will require completion of the full Way of Shambhala I program.

3. New five-week syllabi

Meditation in Everyday Life: The old six-week syllabus is still on the website, but it is accompanied by a letter from Acharya Lobel suggesting the best way to organize the content for a five-week course. He has also included a sample handout that he has used in teaching the course.

Contentment and Joy: The new five-week syllabi for the Contentment in Everyday Life and Joy in Everyday Life courses are now posted on the Way of Shambhala web page.

The contemplation practices for these courses are being revised and are not posted at the moment. Please continue to check the Way of Shambhala web page. If they have not been posted, and you are beginning one of these courses very soon, please contact the Office of Practice and Education.

Fearlessness and Wisdom: These courses are currently being reworked. The old six -week syllabi for Garuda and Dragon are still posted. If your centre or group is planning to offer either of these soon, please contact the Office of Practice and Education for the latest draft syllabus. These will be posted as soon as they are completed.

4. Attendance at Way of Shambhala programs

Many centres are reporting good attendance at Way of Shambhala programs. If this is NOT the experience of your centre or group, please contact the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education or the Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education to discuss scheduling, publicity and other factors that may be coming into play.

5. Publicity for Way of Shambhala

Posters:

8.5" x 11" posters for the five Way of Shambhala courses are now available on the Way of Shambhala web page for your use. We have posted an In Design file, which can be modified by anyone who has the program, to include your particular dates, address, prices and so on. The description of the courses was worded carefully, and we ask centres to make suggestions for changes directly to the OPE rather than changing the wording directly.

Brochure:

The Office of Practice and Education promised to supply a brochure for this year's Way of Shambhala program. We are sorry that we haven't produced it yet, and that we did not communicate this in time for some centres to produce your own for the beginning of your program cycle.

We feel strongly that we need to consult professionals to help us design and envisage the best way to communicate what we have to offer—including printed materials, web materials and so on. We will do that in the near future. For now, we do plan to produce a temporary brochure that can be copied inexpensively-- by mid December. We'll send a short announcement when that comes out. Please use whatever you have developed until then, and don't worry about replacing it right away with the new one if you already have something in wide circulation. It would be good however, to find ways to indicate to your participants that the prerequisites for the courses have changed.

6. Level V pin and certificate

Up until now, participants have received a certificate and Great Eastern Sun pin at the conclusion of Shambhala Training Level V. This is still the case in centres that have not yet introduced The Way of Shambhala.

If your centre is offering the Rigden weekend soon, and according to our instructions, you did not give out a pin and certificate at Level V, please order the pins from the Shambhala Shop and give them out at the Rigden weekend. The certificates have Level V printed on them and wouldn't be appropriate for the Rigden weekend.

We are currently discussing the best context to receive a pin in the Way of Shambhala, recognizing that the Rigden weekend is now the formal ending of the Way of Shambhala I, and also that Level V may represent an end point for some who have chosen to do the weekends exclusively.

Based upon feedback we've received, we are considering continuing to give pins and certificates at the conclusion of Level V (the former Shambhala Training Heart of Warriorship program) and giving something else to mark the completion of Way of Shambhala I at the Rigden weekend. We will provide an update once a decision has been made.

Since we have not made a decision yet, if Level V is coming up in your centre in the near future, and you want to know whether or not to order pins and certificates for Level V, please contact the Office of Practice and Education or the Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education. Please note that pins need to be ordered from the Shambhala Shop at least six weeks in advance.

Training programs

Meditation Instructor training

If you are thinking of scheduling a Shambhala Guide, Meditation Instructor, or Assistant Director training program, the first step is to contact Jill Scott in the Office of Practice and Education or Saskia Broker in the Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education to discuss dates, the application and review process, student preparation, qualified teachers, and to obtain templates for the application, recommendation form, and acceptance letter.

The following are upcoming programs we have dates for:

Assistant Director, Jan 8-10, Seattle, Heather Crone heathercrone@gmail.com
Meditation Instructor, Jan 29-31 New York, Anne Kenan annekenan@verizon.net
Shambhala Guide, Feb 18-21 Durham, NC, Susan Head susanhead1@verizon.net
Meditation Instructor, Feb 24-28, Dorje Denma Ling, info@dorjedenmaling.com

For training programs in Europe, please visit <http://shambhala-europe.org/calendar.php>

New Shambhala Buddhist Teacher Training

We have begun to develop and offer a new unified teacher training path that both reflects the integrated nature of the current curriculum, yet also honors the system of teacher authorization that has been in place until now.

These programs are scheduled exclusively by the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education and the Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education exclusively. If there is a regional for need this training, please contact Carolyn Mandelker in Halifax or Sabine Rolf in Europe.

Director Authorization Level I

(Previous system: authorization for Level II and III directors)

Part I will now authorize teachers as:

- directors for Shambhala Training Levels II and III, and
- co-directors for the first three courses of the Way of Shambhala.

These new directors, as well as all directors who are currently authorized to teach levels II and III may co-direct the Way of Shambhala courses, with a director who is authorized to teach level IV and the Dignity weekends. (Similarly, all teachers who have experience teaching Shambhala School of Buddhist studies but are not Shambhala Training directors may also co-direct the first three courses of Way of Shambhala with a director authorized to teach the Dignity weekends.)

Boulder and Berkeley will hold these trainings this winter. The application process is now closed for these two programs.

Dechen Choling will offer this training from February 27- March 5, 2010. To apply, please go to: <http://www.shambhala.org/programs/advanced.php>

We expect to hold another training of this kind in North America in the fall of 2010. This will be advertised on the Shambhala News Service, as well as in these monthly newsletters.

Director Authorization level II: Upgrading one's teaching authorization

(Old system: authorized for Levels IV and the dignity weekends)

Many directors are asking how they can upgrade their teaching authorizations, once they have gained experience teaching levels II and III. This March we will offer the first advanced training, providing the second level of director authorization. The training will be held at Karne Chöling, from March 5-10, 2010. We are in the process of developing the application site for this program, and will communicate details soon.

Director Authorization level III:

(Old system: Authorization for levels V, GES, Windhorse, Drala and Golden Key)

We hope to develop the Way of Shambhala II program this year, in time to pilot it in September 2010. We are not planning to offer a training to upgrade authorizations for those directors with experience teaching levels I-IV and the Dignity weekends until the details of the Way of Shambhala II are clarified. The next levels of authorization will include level V and the Wisdom in Everyday Life course, as well as aspects of the Way of Shambhala II (to include Sacred Path material and Buddhist studies).

Shrine for the Sacred Path program

Centres have been asking if it is still necessary to have a Warrior Assembly shrine for Sacred Path weekends—with a stroke brush, ink, paper, 5 sense offerings, a tea and sake offering and so on. In centres with a permanent Rigden shrine in their main shrine rooms, it is not necessary to provide a Warrior Assembly shrine for the Sacred Path program. The Rigden shrine can be introduced in the Drala weekend, just as the Warrior Assembly shrine used to be. Directors should become familiar with the symbolism of this shrine. Acharya David Schneider has produced a beautiful and informative booklet on the Rigden thangka, which is being reprinted and will be available soon through the Shambhala Shop.

Practice and Education Miscellany (from frequently asked questions)

Vajrayana Practice Intensives

It's wonderful that so many centres are holding regular practice intensives for their vajra sangha. Guidelines for how to organize these so they fulfill the group practice requirements can be found on this web page-<http://shambhala.org/members/ps/coordinator.php>

How we can keep communicating

We have some ideas about ways we can stay in touch to answer your questions and generally support your work. Tell us what you think and send along your ideas about what would be helpful to you.

- We plan to create a start-up package for new Practice and Education coordinators to help you take your seat more quickly.
- With Shambhala Online, we can also do a walk-through of the Practice & Study area of the members section of the Shambhala website, so you can learn about the resources that are available on the web.
- We'd like to schedule regular phone conference calls for Practice and Education coordinators to help us stay connected.

Thank you for all your hard work and for your patience with our delayed responses to your important questions. We hope this newsletter will be helpful.

Until next time,

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