

2. Shrines

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2. Shrines

Note: The directions "left" and "right" are from the viewpoint of facing the shrine.

Shambhala Shrine Hall

It is recommended that Shambhala Centers have both a Buddhist and a Shambhala shrine in the main meditation hall, rather than just the Buddhist shrine as has been the style in the Dharmadhatus for many years. If the size and shape of the room allow, it is best to have the shrines placed on the same wall with the teacher's chair in between the shrines. If this is not possible, then the shrines can be placed on separate walls, as is done in Halifax and Boulder. In either case, the shrine boxes should be the same size and of similar design. In other words, if the Buddhist shrine is constructed with two tiers, the Shambhala shrine should be as well, and so forth.

1. *Floor.* A naturally finished wood floor is most comfortable for the gaze during sitting practice. An industrial quality carpet of a soft, neutral color is also good. Patterned carpets are usually too distracting for sitting practice.
3. *Walls and trim.* Walls are usually white. The doors of the shrine hall, columns, window casements, and other wood trim are often painted with brightly contrasting orange and blue enamel. For trim, Benjamin Moore Maritime Marine Finish International Orange (Pantone #172c), and Marine Blue (or an equivalent in another brand) will yield the proper shades and brightness. This would also be the shade of orange for a painted Buddhist shrine. Enamel paint in white would be used for the Shambhala shrine.
4. *Banners.* It is fitting to hang banners or thangkas on the walls. Shambhala Centers should acquire a Shambhala Center banner from Paul Hannon & Associates in Halifax and then contact the Office of the Sakyong to make arrangements to have the banner sealed and calligraphed by the Sakyong. The dharmadhatu banner and a GES banner would also be quite appropriate to hang in the room. Thangkas may also be hung in the room, but it is important not to use images or iconography if you don't know what they represent.

5. *Chant storage.* A cabinet, or at least a small table, should be placed near the door of the shrine hall. Daily chant books and other regularly used liturgies can be arranged on top. A cabinet would be best, so that all liturgies could be stored in this one place. Some shrine supplies could also be stored inside.
6. *Room arrangement.* Zabutons and gomdens should be arranged in straight rows facing the shrine. As much space as possible should be left surrounding each zabuton, especially between rows. Rows of cushions should be staggered, so that practitioners do not have to sit directly behind one another. If the room is large, one or more aisles can be created to facilitate movement.

If there are practice tables, they can be stacked at the back or sides of the room. A few chairs could be placed in the back for people who cannot sit on gomdens. Wooden risers, seiza benches, zafus, and support cushions could also be placed in the back of the room for people who need to use them.

Shrine Boxes

The main shrine boxes are large wooden boxes, either painted with enamel paint, or covered with a thin layer of cotton batting and satin. A thick piece of plate glass (quarter-inch with finished edges) covers the top shrine surface. There are no required proportions for the box although it is generally rectangular in shape, longer in width than in height. The surface should be large enough to generously accommodate the offerings and representations that it will hold. The actual size depends on the dimensions of the shrine hall and what looks harmonious. The surface of the shrine should be at least as high as the heart level of practitioners sitting on gomdens and zabutons, preferably higher. It should not be so high, however, that practitioners cannot see the objects placed on it.

Teacher Chair and Side Table

A teachers chair and side table of good quality are placed between the Buddhist and Shambhala shrines. The placement of the chair in relation to the two shrines represents the lineages of buddhadharma and Shambhala. A large kata is draped across the arms of the chair, but there is no photograph. On the side table is placed a candle representing the

continual presence of the guru. This candle is always lit during group practice or a talk. A flower arrangement and/or a Japanese fan may also be placed on the table.

The Sakyong is the only person who teaches from the this chair, generally speaking. In general, he will use the teacher chair itself; if it is awkward to sit on, however, he may request a different chair. In this case, replace the teacher chair with a suitable chair. Move the teacher chair to the left side of the shrine; it should remain somewhat elevated. The teacher candle should be lit as usual.

If another lineage holder is teaching and chooses not to sit on a throne, move the teacher chair aside and arrange another chair in its place, as above. For teachers who are not lineage holders, such as Acharyas or other senior students of the Vidyadhara, arrange a chair and side table in front of the shrines in whatever way seems aesthetically most appropriate.

Thrones

If Tibetan lineage holders visit your centre, you may need to provide a throne for them. Consult the Vajradhatu Office of International Affairs in Halifax to find out what is appropriate. They can also give you instructions on building and covering the throne. In order to furnish the throne properly, you may need to borrow brocades and cushions from a larger centre. Consult the Vajradhatu visit manual for further details on throne set-up.

If your centre's shrine room has a throne and matching throne table, you could place the guru candle on the throne side table rather than on the teacher chair side table.

Practice Instruments

Shambhala Centers should have the following instruments for practice. Refer to the Appendix for sources.

1. *Drum*. Used for chanting the Heart Sutra and the protector chants. A suitable tom-tom drum and strikers can be purchased at a music store. Paint a coil-of-joy in the centre of the skin on

both sides. Large drums in the Tibetan style, such as the ones used at Seminary and at Shambhala Centers, can be specially ordered from Michael Reshetnik (Boulder, CO).

2. *Drum stand*. Mount the drum so that it is very stable. Position it at a height where it can be struck easily while kneeling next to it. In the absence of a proper mounting, the drum could rest on a zabuton.
3. *Gong*. Used for beginning and ending practice sessions; also for leading chants.
4. *Rin*. A small Japanese gong used for dismissing people at the end of a practice session; also used for oryoki.
5. *Gandi*. The wooden striker used to signal the end of walking meditation; also used for oryoki.

Umdze's Seat

For leading practice, the umdze sits to one side of the main shrines, with or without a platform. In Centers where the shrines are on different walls, the umdze platform is placed next to whichever shrine is being used for practice. If an umdze platform is built, it should be lower than the shrine platform, and just large enough to fit everything that will be placed on it. It is painted with orange or black enamel, possibly trimmed with gold-coloured molding, and covered with carpet.

At the umdze's seat arrange

- a zabuton, gomden, and support cushion (optional)
- gong and striker
- gandi and striker
- rin and striker
- a notebook containing annotated copies of the daily chants done at your centre
- a microphone stand (if used)
- a small table (optional)

All these items would be arranged on the platform, if there is one. If there is no platform, the chants must be kept off the floor. A small table is useful for supporting the chant book when the umdze is leading chants. It can be set to the side of umdze's seat, on or off the platform, when not in use.

Drummer's Seat

The drummer should be positioned near, or at least within good view of, the umdze. A zabuton, gomden, and annotated copy of the chants should be arranged next to the drum. The drummer does not have a platform.

Elaborations

Shrines may be more elaborate than what has been described above. Shambhala Centers considering more complex formats should contact the Practice and Study administrator in Halifax for advice. Following are some possibilities.

1. The main shrine box can be constructed in two tiers. The top and bottom boxes are the same height. The bottom box is wider and broader than top, creating a ledge of about eight inches around the front and both sides of the shrine. The incense bowl, rock, and matches can be placed on this ledge, perhaps on a piece of brocade or a small tray.
2. The main shrine boxes along with the guru chair can be set on a raised platform about eight inches high. The satin backdrops would be extended to the width of the platforms. The sides of the platform are painted with black enamel, trimmed with gold-coloured moulding, and the tops covered with a carpet. Alternatively, three platforms of the same height could be built: one for the each shrine and one for the teacher chair and side table. If this is done, the platforms could be painted black, with gold moulding, or the same color as the respective shrines. The shrine platform can be higher than eight inches. In that case, steps must be built.
3. For added richness, chevrons of five colours can be hung at the edges of the backdrop. The suggested order of colours is white, blue, yellow, red, and green; fewer colours can also be used. A valance can be constructed at the top.

Shambhala Meditation Group Shrine

The style of the Shambhala Meditation Group shrine depends upon the membership and whether there is a permanent shrine hall. In general, the shrine set-up and design would follow as closely as possible the specifications for a Shambhala Meditation Center. Groups composed primarily of new students may have a very simple shrine; groups composed of a significant number of tantrikas should definitely follow the Shambhala Center format as much as possible. In either case, if your centre has no permanent shrine hall, you may follow a simpler format.

The main shrine box should have the same general proportions as a Shambhala Center shrine. It is similarly covered with satin or painted, with a sheet of glass on top for protection. Use the same thangka and/or photos suggested for the Shambhala Center shrine. On top of the shrine place

- seven bowls of water
- two candles
- an incense bowl
- matches, rock, and incense
- a dharma text wrapped in good fabric
- flowers (recommended but optional)
- tea offering: if your group does the protector chants and does not have a mahakala shrine, place the tea at the rear of the shrine

Mahakala Shrine

All contemplative centres and Shambhala Centers should have mahakala shrines; this also applies to Shambhala Meditation Groups that have a significant percentage of tantrikas as members. If possible, this shrine should be placed in a rear corner of the shrine hall. At some centres, the shrine is simply a shelf at the back of the room. Whenever the main shrine is lit, the mahakala shrine should also be lit; it is the first to be opened, and the last to be closed.

The proportions of the shrine box are not fixed. The box should be painted black or covered with black satin. Black curtains may be hung on either side. Against a backdrop of

black paint or satin, hang a framed HUM BHYO calligraphy by the Vidyadhara, or a thangka/photograph of Four-Armed Mahakala.

The tea offering bowl is placed at the centre of the shrine. The Sakyong prefers that we use a metal Tibetan-style tea-offering bowl or cup with matching stand (Tib: phükong; used for serkyem, or "golden drink" offering). A good-quality bowl with matching saucer can be substituted. Also place an incense bowl, incense, matches, and rock on the shrine. A red light may be installed on the ceiling of the shrine. Black or red candles are set next to the tea offering.

Buddhist Shrine

The shrine is covered in yellow or gold satin, or painted with a high gloss enamel paint (see below for elaboration to the basic shrine design). A brocade runner may be added at the front of the shrine. This extends from underneath the glass to the bottom of the shrine box. Its width may vary. The runner should extend at least far enough under the glass so that the incense bowl can sit on it. It may extend under the glass to the rear of the shrine.

At the rear center of the main shrine box rests a smaller box covered with blue satin or brocade. This box has no required proportions. Its size depends on its relationship to the main box and what goes on top of it. On top of the blue box lies a square piece of red and yellow brocade whose corners hang over the middle of its sides; a triangular corner of cloth appears in front.

Principal Shrine Objects

1. *Crystal ball.* At the center of the blue box rests a clear crystal ball, preferably four inches or more in diameter. The use of a crystal ball makes the shrine an ati or vajrayana shrine. The crystal ball should have a stand; for example, a homemade version might be a brocade-covered tea cup. Caution: The crystal ball should be kept out of direct sunlight at all times, since the focused light can start a fire.
2. *Rupa.* In addition, the blue box can have a buddha rupa (statue). If a buddha rupa is used, it should be one seated in vajrasana (cross-legged meditation posture). A

traditional mahayana shrine uses such a buddha rupa. If both a crystal ball and buddha rupa are used, place both on top of the blue box, with the crystal ball in front.

3. *Text.* At the rear of the blue box is a dharma text wrapped in brocade, silk, or other nice cloth. It should be slightly elevated on another small box or satin-covered block.
4. *Vajra.* At the front of the blue box, a vajra (Tib: dorje) is placed on top of five heaps of rice; it points to the left and right of the shrine, not front to back. The heaps are placed in a specific order: first one in the centre, second towards the front of the shrine, then to the left, to the rear, and to the right.
5. *Reliquaries.* If you have one, a reliquary stupa containing a bone relic of the Vidyadhara should be placed in front of the crystal ball on the blue box, or on the shrine surface.
6. *Backdrop.* A backdrop, usually of gold or yellow satin, is hung on the wall behind the shrine. It should be at least as wide as the shrine box; it may be wider, depending on the overall arrangement. If a thin layer of cotton batting is stapled to the wall underneath the satin, the backdrop will have a smoother appearance.
7. *Central representation.* At the centre of the backdrop, hang a thangka or framed picture of a buddha seated in vajrasana. This representation could be of Shakyamuni, Vajradhara, or another buddha figure. Do not drape a khata (Tibetan white scarf) over this central representation. If the thangka is not Vajradhara then hang a framed photograph of Vajradhara over the central representation.
8. *Lineage photographs.* There are four lineage holders hung on the shrine backdrop: on the upper left side of the central thangka there is a framed photograph of the H.H. Gyalwa Karmapa, preferably with the black crown. On the lower left, a framed photograph of the Vidyadhara Trungpa Rinpoche, preferably in his yellow robe. On the upper right there is a framed photograph of H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. On the lower right is a framed photograph of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche; the Joining Heaven and Earth enthronement photo is appropriate. These four photos should be draped with khatas. Certain formal photographs have been chosen as appropriate for shrine use. Casual or candid photos of teachers are not appropriate.

Shrine Offerings

1. *Water bowls.* Near the front edge of the shrine are placed seven offering bowls of water. You may use more than one set of offering bowls: one row of glass, for example, and one of silver, copper, or brass. Bowls should have rims that open outward or go straight up, rather than curl inward. They should be nicely spaced, neither clumped together rim-to-rim nor spread across the entire width of the shrine.
2. *Incense.* Place an incense bowl, filled with white sand or incense powder (not rice which will burn), in front of the water offering bowls and centered on a line with the crystal ball and the vajra. The bowl could also go on a small table in front of the main shrine if such is used. Lacquer ware is best not used for incense bowls, as it may burn.

Type. Place a bundle of incense in front of the bowl. Daigen-Koh Rosewood incense (Japanese purple stick) is frequently used on Vajradhatu shrines. Viva Pine incense (Japanese green stick) is also acceptable. Tibetan incense is used for visiting Tibetan teachers and for specific occasions: the parinirvana days of H. H. Karmapa XVI and H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Milarepa Day, and Vaishakha Day.

Powdered incense and charcoal may be used for special occasions. These supplies should be placed on the shrine only when needed.

Also arrange these items on either side of the incense bowl: a container of "strike anywhere" matches, a container for burnt matches, and a small rock for striking matches.

Note: Incense stubs should not be thrown in the trash. Collect them in a container and offer outside periodically in a clean place.

3. *Candles.* Place a pair of candles, usually white or red tapers (blue and yellow are also acceptable), on each side of the shrine behind the row of water bowls, and slightly beyond the outermost bowls. Candle stubs may be discarded. A candle snuffer should be located near the shrine; it can be placed on the front table.
4. *Flowers.* A pair of flower arrangements placed near the back of the shrine on either side is recommended, but not necessary. Symmetrical arrangements work best on shrines.

5. *Front table.* A small table may be placed in front of the shrine to support the incense bowl, matches, rock, candle snuffer, and extra candles. Offerings should not be placed on the floor, even on a tray. The table should be narrow enough so that it does not hinder the umdze from lighting the shrine.

A table or a box could be built specifically for this purpose. It could be painted and trimmed to match the main shrine, or covered with a brocade runner. If the shrine sits on a platform, the platform should be deep enough to include this table.

Buddhist Shrine Symbolism

The Buddhist shrine as a whole is a representation of the three jewels: the Buddha and the qualities of enlightened mind; the dharma, or teachings of the Buddha and other enlightened teachers; and the sangha, or community of practitioners on the path.

The shrine is not particularly an object of worship, but a powerful reminder of wakefulness.

Shrine Colours:	Represent the trikaya: yellow, the nirmanakaya; red, the sambhogakaya; and blue, the dharmakaya. Blue can also represent the primordial ground or space of Vajradhatu.
Crystal ball:	Crystal represents the clarity of unborn mind, primordially awake, which is capable of accurately reflecting all perceptions of the phenomenal world. Crystal is also another symbol of the dharmakaya. Its use on the shrine exemplifies the ati tradition.
Vajra:	Ritual scepter, "the thunderbolt of Indra," used in vajrayana practice, symbolizing skillful means. The word vajra means "adamantine" or "indestructible," and refers to the fearless quality of enlightenment.
Piles of rice:	The five piles of rice represent the five skandhas, or constituents of ego. The vajra on top represents their transformation into the five wisdoms of a buddha.

Book:	Represents the dharma, the teachings of the Buddha and other realized teachers, which is based on experience arising from meditation.
Rupas:	Sanskrit word meaning "form"; statues of the Buddha or other figures in Buddhist iconography
Water bowls:	Offerings of generosity to the lineage of enlightened beings; pure water is said to represent the inherent clarity and purity of mind.
Candles:	Offerings of meditation; light is said to represent prajna, the flame of awakened intellect which illumines reality "as it is".
Guru candle:	Burned during group practice as a reminder of the continual presence of the guru.
Flowers:	Offerings of exertion; flowers are said to represent the paramita of exertion.
Incense:	Offerings of patience; incense is said to represent the paramita of patience which pervades all practice.

Shambhala Shrine

The following is a description of the basic Shambhala shrine. Additional items would need to be added for Werma Sadhana practice.

1. The main box is covered with a thin layer of cotton batting and white satin. Alternatively, it may be painted with full gloss white enamel and trimmed with gold leaf or gold-coloured moulding. The proportions are not fixed, but in general it would be the same as the Buddhist shrine. The top of the Shambhala shrine should be at the same level as the Buddhist shrine, if they are both in the same room. The top is covered with plate glass for protection. White and gold brocade may be used to cover the surface of the shrine under the glass, or as a runner.

2. On top of the main box is a smaller white box, either covered with white satin or painted white. It should be in proportion to the main box.
3. A small table or box is placed in front of the shrine to support the incense bowl, bundle of incense, two containers for matches, and a small rock. It should be narrow enough so that it does not hinder the umdze from lighting the shrine. It should be in proportion to the main shrine box. It can be painted and trimmed to match, or can be covered with white and gold brocade. If a platform is used for the main shrine, it should be made deep enough to include this table.
4. The main box may be set on a raised platform about eight inches high. The platform is painted with white enamel, trimmed with gold-coloured moulding, and covered with a white carpet.
5. A backdrop of white satin may be used. If the wall behind is white, however, it is not necessary. An Ashe banner or framed Ashe calligraphy should be hung above the shrine.

Shrine Offerings

1. On the small white box is placed an immaculate sheet of paper or a shikishi board. On top of that sits an elegant bowl filled with sand. A shrine-quality calligraphy brush, its tip saturated with Sumi ink, stands in the bowl.
2. Immediately in front of the white box, in a line with the Ashe and the brush, sits an elegant lidded bowl filled with Sumi ink. The bowl is flanked on the left and right by the inner offerings of saké and tea, respectively.
3. Near the front edge of the shrine the offerings of the five sense perceptions are arranged from left to right:
 - a mirror (sight)
 - a small musical instrument or conch (sound)
 - a bowl of saffron water (smell)
 - food, such as a torma or a fresh piece of fruit (taste)
 - a stick tied with a red silk or satin ribbon (touch)
4. Except for saffron water, all the offerings are sitting in a bowl of white rice. These bowls can be rather large if the main shrine box is large.
5. A pair of white taper candles is placed on the shrine.

The Shambhala Shrine Symbolism

Ashe:	Warrior's heart, stroke of primordial confidence.
Brush:	Warrior's weapon—awakeness, fearlessness, gentleness (cuts aggression)
Ink	Warrior's heart's blood—tenderness and loyalty to lineage of warriors
Tea Offering:	Cutting conceptual mind, discursive thought
Sake Offering:	Intoxication of emotionalism with Great Eastern Sun vision
Outer Offerings:	Sense perceptions, sacred world. Mirror (sight), cymbals or shell (sound), saffron water (smell), food (taste), red ribbon (touch)
Candles and Incense:	Warrior's discipline, constant awareness

Other Types of Shrines

Home Shrine

All practitioners are encouraged to have a shrine in their homes. This is especially important for vajrayana students. The shrine should be brilliant and cheerful: a reminder of awakened mind and of the lineage of teachers who have transmitted the teachings to us from the Buddha. It should always be kept spotless.

The Shrine box

A home shrine can be very simple. A shelf or a small table covered with nice fabric are fine. Bright yellow, red, blue, orange, or white are suitable colours. When one is seated,

the surface of the shrine should be at least as high as your heart centre when you are sitting on a gomden and zabuton, preferably higher. It should be large enough to hold offering bowls of water, candles, and a dharma book. The fabric on top should be protected with plate glass.

The Dharma Book

The dharma book is the main shrine object. It is wrapped in a piece of brocade or nice fabric. No other article, such as a statue of the Buddha, should be placed higher than the text. For this reason, the dharma book is often raised on another small box. A Western dharma book, such as *Myth of Freedom*, is suitable, as is a Tibetan dharma text.

Offerings

Five or seven offering bowls of fresh water should be placed on the shrine and changed daily. If you have forgotten to empty the bowls the night before, they should still be emptied and refilled before the next morning's practice session. The water offering should be tossed outside in a clear and unobstructed place. Since it is basically ungenerous to "offer" empty bowls, the bowls should be replaced on the shrine upside down, with a matchstick under each to help it dry.

Incense may be burned either on the shrine or at its base. Do not use lacquer ware for the incense bowls, as it may burn. Burn incense in sand, not rice. Two candles are traditionally burned while practicing. Flowers may be placed on the rear of the shrine box, or at its base. Note: It is considered disrespectful to blow out candles; snuff them or wave them out with your hand.

Tea Offering

If the protector chants are done at your centre, or if you are a vajrayana student, a tea offering is placed on the shrine at the rear. This offering should be the first tea prepared in the morning. Offer it during the first verse of the Concluding Request to the Protectors chant in the evening. The tea offering should be thrown outside in a clear and unobstructed place, not where people walk. The tea bowl is also replaced upside down in its saucer on the shrine with a matchstick under it. It is cleaned only once a year, on Shambhala Day.

Thangkas and Photos

Thangkas and photos of the Vidyadhara or other lineage holders may be hung above the shrine. A satin backdrop is traditional, as are khatas (Tibetan white scarves) draped over

photos. Formal, authorized shrine photos are preferred. If you have a thangka of a figure unknown to you, it should be identified before being used.

Daily Practice at Home

Practitioners are encouraged to open and to close their home shrine whether or not they practice there on any given day. It is not necessary to repeat any chants at home if you do them at your centre. Simply offer the tea and water.

Each morning, fill the offering bowls with fresh water. It is convenient to have a pitcher that is used exclusively for shrine water. The mahakala tea offering should be filled at the same time.

For morning practice, light the candles and incense and chant the appropriate morning chants. Then do your main practice. End your practice session with a dedication of merit, such as "By this merit . . ."

For evening practice, light the shrine, do your main practice, and close with the appropriate evening chants and dedication of merit. Offer the tea with a gesture towards the shrine during the first line of the Concluding Request to the Protectors, then offer it outside while you continue to chant. Sit down again and conclude the evening chants.

At the end of the day, empty the water bowls, dry them, and place them upside down on wooden match sticks. The offering water can be poured outside in a clean place or on plants inside. Clean the shrine if needed.

Kitchen Shrine

The Vidyadhara encouraged the use of kitchen shrines. You could set aside a shelf in your kitchen or build a special shelf for shrine use. The shrine in the Vidyadhara's own household, the Kalapa Court, included the following:

- a JAM calligraphy at the back
- a bowl of rice containing a food offering of fruit or candy on the left. This offering does not need to be changed every day.

- a bowl of good quality black or green tea on the right. This should be the first cup of tea prepared in the morning. The tea can be offered in the evening at the that same time you close your Buddhist shrine.

Incense is not used on the shrine. Shibata Sensei has said that kitchen incense is the fragrance of food. No particular chants are done in front of the shrine. If available, you could place a ceremonial rice paddle and chopsticks at the middle rear of the shrine, supported in an offering bowl of rice. If not available, do not substitute an ordinary rice paddle and chopsticks.

Vajrayana Shrine

If your centre has enough space and a significant number of tantrikas, you may wish to have a separate vajrayana shrine room suitable for both ngöndro and sadhana practices. In general, this all-purpose vajrayana shrine would be similar to the main shrine in design. Here are a few differences:

1. Red satin is used more often than gold or yellow for the shrine box and backdrop on vajrayana shrines. The shrine box, of course, could be painted orange.
2. The central thangka/picture would probably be of Vajradhara or of the Kagyü lineage tree. It is not appropriate to do ngöndro practice before a wrathful or semi-wrathful deity.
3. A rupa, such as that of Vajrasattva, Vajradhara, or Padmasambhava could be used in place of, or in addition to, the crystal ball.
4. Prostration boards should be stored neatly in the room.
5. A mandala plate with five heaps of saffron rice should sit on the shrine, if members wish to do mandala practice.
6. A Vajrayogini mirror mandala (placed on top of a mandala plate with five piles of saffron rice) should sit on the shrine, if members wish to do daily Vajrayogini practice. Be sure that this is covered with the customary eight- layered cloth.
7. A Chakrasamvara phuktor can remain on the shrine, if members wish to do daily Chakrasamvara practice.
8. Bowls of water, rather than outer offerings to Vajrayogini or Chakrasamvara, would generally be offered on the shrine, unless only sadhana practice is taking place.

Shrines Described Elsewhere

The following shrine setups are adequately described in other manuals or practice instructions. Anyone who has received the abhisheka, transmission, or lung to do these practices should already have a copy of such descriptions.

- Chakrasamvara Sadhana
- Jambhala Sadhana
- ngöndro
- Vajrayogini Sadhana
- Werma Sadhana
- Vajrakilaya

The following shrine setups are described elsewhere in this manual, under the sections that deal with the ceremonies themselves.

- Children's Day
- Milarepa Day
- Sukhavati
- Vaishakha Day
- Wedding

Shrinekeeping

The shrine master or mistress is the person who has overall responsibility for setting up, cleaning, taking down, and supplying the shrines at your centre. She or he also has the honour of lighting the shrine at ceremonial occasions, along with the Sakyong or other visiting teacher. The responsibility of attending the shrine may actually depend on several persons. It could be a permanent staff position, a job which is rotated on a monthly basis, or part of the umdze's responsibilities.

Daily Shrine Maintenance

1. *Water offering bowls.* Bowls should be filled each morning. If there is no morning practice at your centre, they can be filled just before the scheduled practice. Even if you discover that the bowls have not been emptied from the day before, empty them anyway and fill them with fresh water. A special pitcher can be used for filling and emptying bowls.

Bowls should be emptied in the evening after practice. The water should be offered outside in a clean and unobstructed place, where people will not walk on it. Water can also be poured into a window box or onto indoor plants. The bowls should be wiped with a towel and placed upside down on match sticks to dry. Alternatively, bowls can be arranged upside down on the edge of a dowel which lies on a cloth towel. Empty offering bowls should never be placed upright on a shrine; this would be an ungenerous gesture.

2. *Tea offering.* Prepare fresh black tea in the morning and place it at the centre of the mahakala shrine. There is no particular brand of black tea preferred; tea bags or loose tea may be used. If your centre has no separate mahakala shrine, place the tea near the rear of the main shrine.

Tea should be made fresh every day. It is offered every evening during the Concluding Request to the Protectors chant, preferably at dusk. After making the offering, return the cup to the shrine; if it is a pökong cup, place it on its side in the matching bowl. If you use a regular cup and saucer, place the cup upside down on its saucer. These are only cleaned once a year, on Shambhala Day. The mahakala candle is lit during all practice sessions.