



Shambhala Guide Resource Manual

A Resource for Directors, Students, and Centre
Administrators
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The Role of the Shambhala Guide

The Shambhala Guide can be likened to a representative or emissary from the culture of Shambhala. One of the ways that people may experience a culture of basic goodness is through being in a community based upon meditation, wakefulness, inclusion, and kindness. The Guide helps to share this experience. For example, if we wanted to share what it is like to live in Venice, Italy we might describe the numerous canals linked by small bridges, the Renaissance architecture and artworks, the pigeons in the square, the seafood pastas, the briny smell of the water... As enlightened society emerges in our world we need some way to communicate the felt-sense of being part of Shambhala. Because Shambhala is about the basic goodness of humanity, such a felt-sense is not foreign, but can be simple and accessible to all people regardless of race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, language, religion, physical or mental ability, psychological condition, age, political beliefs, etc. The experience of meditation is one way to share the culture of Shambhala. When we sit and the discursive mind settles, we synchronize mind and body, the heart softens, and the senses clarify—we feel and touch our own goodness. This is akin to getting a “feel” for living in enlightened society. It is a way to describe what it is like to live in a culture that nourishes, deepens, and celebrates human-hearted brilliance.

In addition to meditation, Shambhala is also host to wakeful culture. Shambhala Guides must understand our forms, the history of our lineage, the basic arch of our path and why it is relevant to modern human beings. As an emissary, the Shambhala Guide can express our basic practices, path, culture, and social vision as a way to give a glimpse of the Shambhala world. The Guide offers people an experience of a mindful and compassionate culture. First, through deep and receptive listening, the Guide embodies the selfless curiosity and openness of warriorship. Anyone with whom the Guide comes in contact should feel heard—their basic goodness witnessed. By giving initial meditation instruction the Guide transmits an experience of basic goodness. By helping to clarify the history and culture of Shambhala, our path of training, and the meaning behind some of our forms, the Shambhala Guide is able to welcome people further into Shambhala.

Training to become a Guide is the foundation for future work as a teacher, leader, Meditation Instructor, and Mentor.

This resource manual provides the history of our Shambhala lineage, a description of our meditation teachings, the logic of our path of practice and education, and a survey of our cultural offerings. This information will support the Shambhala Guide in representing and expressing the Shambhala world and practices. Please enjoy studying this manual. You do not need to memorize all of the details. There are study questions at the end of the manual to help organize this large amount of

material into simple categories. The thorough presentation of our lineage, path, and culture is to enrich your own understanding.

The Shambhala Lineage

The idea of lineage in the Shambhala teachings relates to one's connection with primordial wisdom. That wisdom is accessible and extremely simple, but also vast and profound...Lineage in the Shambhala teachings...is how the complete realization of sanity can be handed down to a human being in the Shambhala world so that he or she can embody that sanity and promote its attainment in others—*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, "The Shambhala Lineage"

On Lineage

The meaning and importance of lineage may not be immediately obvious or respected in modern society. In a world in which knowledge is as close as a Google search, it may not be clear why a living lineage is needed. In general, a lineage embodies and nourishes inspiration, principles, and practices and then passes those on. This could be as simple as artisans in a guild passing on their methods, teachers passing on knowledge, or parents passing on child-rearing principles, or chefs passing on their techniques. Meditation and contemplative wisdom, just like many arts, must be passed on in a living way. The principles must be "alive" in actual human beings who pass on the inspiration. This living quality includes authenticity and a connection with experience from the past. But it also includes freshness and the capacity to innovate and adapt to an ever changing world that now includes a wide diversity of people who have access to the Shambhala teachings. A living lineage joins authenticity with adaptation. The more authenticity and skill, the more a lineage can sustain their principles in a way that they remain vital and relevant. There have been many wisdom traditions that have disappeared from the earth because there was no lineage able to sustain their principles, or the way in which they were passed on became irrelevant. In Shambhala, we respect the authenticity and freshness of lineage.

As a Shambhala Guide, we are taking a place within the living Shambhala lineage. The authenticity comes from our personal and cultural humility. We recognize the effort and experience of those who have come before us. We are willing to learn the principles, path, and culture of Shambhala, and accurately represent them. As a member of the Shambhala lineage, we are part of something bigger than any one of us as individuals. At the same time, the freshness comes from confidence in your own experience and perspective. What inspires you about meditation, Shambhala, and about the basic goodness of humanity? The answer to this question is as important as the experience of previous lineage holders in the past, and as important as the content in this manual. Please take time to contemplate what feels most alive to you about this lineage and why it is relevant in your life.

Finally, it is equally important to tune into the experience, longing, and interests of the people that you encounter as a Guide whatever their social identity. What are *they* questioning and looking for? If we bring together 1) the authenticity of our lineage with 2) our own living inspiration and 3) openness and curiosity about the people that we meet, a genuine connection can occur. All three are essential. As you study and reflect on the history and meaning of Shambhala, please continue to return to the simplicity of your own inspiration and how you can offer that to others.

This manual provides a thorough description of the history of our lineage so that you have a sense of our background. Please do not feel that you need to memorize all of this information. It is more important that it becomes part of your general understanding. You can also use this manual as a resource if you are asked specific questions in the future.

What Is Shambhala Today?

A good response to the question, “What is Shambhala?” could be, “Shambhala is a global community of meditators, committed to the basic goodness of humanity, and who are interested in bringing out the best in our society.”

Due to the inclusive scope of our vision, the Shambhala tradition today is not easy to categorize. We are a spiritual community, a path of meditation, a culture, a social vision and movement. We are holders of unique Shambhala teachings, but we also are committed to protecting and hosting many global wisdom traditions. We are rooted in Buddhism, and especially the vajrayana Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibet. We also emphasize secular, human teachings that go beyond any particular religion. Shambhala is a diverse, global community with many different languages. While we have a shared culture, Shambhala also expresses itself differently among different nationalities and local cultures. As the lineage founded by the pioneering meditation master, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, we are the heirs of his profound and revolutionary teachings. As students of the current Sakyong, Mipham Rinpoche, we soak in his ongoing transmissions and inspiration. Shambhala offers training in contemplative arts and leadership. As one of the largest and oldest dharma communities outside of Asia, we have three generations of practitioners, family camps, and many traditions such as seasonal celebrations, songs, and rites of passage for children, teens, and adults. We have many Affinity Groups that focus on bringing out the Shambhala principle of basic goodness in politics, ecology, education, medicine, the arts, business, family life, diversity, and more. One of our primary teachings is the Dorje Kasung path of protection that uses military forms to transform aggression into peace. Shambhala has its own government, a developing economy including a trust, credit card, and a currency called the *ratna*. A number of contemplative land centers in North America and Europe offer retreats, organic farming, and protect the natural ecosystem. Most important of all, we have many pins. In short, we may best be described as an emerging society, replete with the various cultural, spiritual, and societal forms and aspirations that can manifest a

wise human civilization. In recent teachings, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche stated that we are “architects of a new civilization” helping—along with many other communities and traditions—to cultivate the best of human potential on our earth.

In many circumstances, it will feel too grand or abstract to describe Shambhala in this way. Therefore, again, a good response to the question, “What is Shambhala?” could be something like, “Shambhala is a global community of meditators, committed to the basic goodness of humanity, and who are interested in bringing out the best in our society.”

The Legend of an Enlightened Society

The Shambhala lineage is inspired by the ancient legend of the Kingdom of Shambhala, said to be an enlightened society based on gentle and fearless action, and on the practice of meditation. The Kingdom of Shambhala has been a guiding vision for many centuries in Asian culture. Shambhala expresses the view that the awake, or enlightened mind discovered in individual spiritual practice can be extended to all areas of human society. All that makes up civilization—family, economy, education, law, science, technology, medicine, the arts, politics, human rights, religion etc.—can be permeated by basic goodness and wakefulness. This innate human wisdom and basic goodness does not belong to any one religion or doctrine. The vision of Shambhala represents a union of social life and spiritual wakefulness.

Today, when it is easy to lose heart that such an exemplary human society could actually exist, reflecting on the the kingdom of Shambhala can help us reignite an ageless longing to create a more beautiful world. Our contemplative training is in service of this Shambhala vision. Our world needs wise and powerful inspiration to face our social, ecological, and spiritual challenges.

The History of the Shambhala Teachings

The Shambhala lineage is the host and protector of a number of different wisdom traditions while still being a specific lineage with its own identity, teachings, and leadership. The unique Shambhala lineage is based on the Shambhala teachings presented by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and our leadership is the lineage of Sakyongs.

There is no other tradition on the planet that holds all of these particular practices, expressed in this way. The Shambhala methods are unique to the Mukpo family lineage, passed through the lineage of Sakyongs and Sakyong Wangmos. Over the past years, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche has furthered the Shambhala teachings through numerous volumes of commentaries and supportive practices, including the development of the *Way of Shambhala*, Shambhala Meditation, the Shambhala Sadhana, and especially his prolific writings on the Scorpion Seal.

When we say that the Shambhala lineage is the host and protector of a number of different wisdom streams while still being a specific lineage with its own identity, this lineage that we hold is the unique presentation of the Shambhala teachings. At the same time the very purpose of these teachings and practices is to create an enlightened society that can protect and manifest a diverse “tradition of human warriorship that has existed in many cultures at many times throughout human history.” (Trungpa Rinpoche, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*). Through entering into deep study and practice of the Shambhala teachings, we are able to touch the essence of many different wisdom traditions.

According to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, “the teachings we know of as the Shambhala teachings come out of the visions and revelations of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche” (*Shambhala Buddhism*, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Kalapa Assembly (May 23, 2000). Such revelations are traditionally known as *terma*, literally meaning “treasure.” Terma refers to a unique way of receiving teachings. In some cases in Tibet, texts were literally buried in the earth or rocks for later times. In other cases, a teacher enters into a state of meditation in which they write down specific instructions. These are often poetic and inspired writings, full of subtlety. Although they are not common in modernity, poets, prophets, and visionaries from around the world often describe such experiences.

There is a very old tradition of such experiences in Asia, and the Druk Sakyong, Trungpa Rinpoche, was known as being a particularly gifted master in receiving such teachings, even when he was a young man in Tibet. Trungpa Rinpoche’s teachers were among the greatest luminaries of the last generation of Tibetan lamas raised in the ancient Tibetan civilization, before the Chinese invasion in the 1950’s. These masters poured the highest teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism into Trungpa Rinpoche and tasked him with protecting and carrying them into the modern world. In addition to his extensive training in tantric Buddhism, the Druk Sakyong also carried with him a unique family and ancestral body of teachings that stretch back into the pre-Buddhist “warrior” tradition of Tibet, China, and Mongolia. He was proud of his Mukpo family lineage, which traced itself to the 11th century spiritual warrior-king, Gesar of Ling. Trungpa Rinpoche was also particularly interested in the lore and teachings of Shambhala, and how it could help in the future.

During the last days before the invasion of Tibet, Trungpa Rinpoche worked closely with Khenpo Gangshar, an outrageous, brilliant young master. At this time, Khenpo Gangshar was notorious for giving advanced mind transmission to large groups of people, not holding back the essential teachings in any way. Trungpa Rinpoche carried forward this approach with the way he worked with his students in the West, teaching the heart of the matter, without holding back. At the same time, he was interested in establishing the deep roots of a systematic path of training that would make the heart of the matter really penetrate. He developed countless creative methods to achieve this in a relatively short amount of time, and the Shambhala teachings may be understood as his crowning achievement. Like

Khenpo Gangshar, extending the teachings to everyone, the Shambhala teachings extend beyond traditional boundaries in an effort to reach all people.

As Trungpa Rinpoche escaped from Tibet in 1959, he went on a month of retreat in an isolated area of the escape route and wrote down extensive Shambhala teachings about the spiritual methods to create enlightened society. Unfortunately, these were lost en route, but this Shambhala inspiration carried forward into all of his activities as he came to the West.

It was not until 1976 that Trungpa Rinpoche formally transmitted these Shambhala teachings. He first worked to establish the ground of authentic Buddhist meditation training. Only after this foundation had been laid did he feel it was time to speak of Shambhala vision. From 1976 until his death in 1987, Trungpa Rinpoche taught a full cycle of Shambhala teachings, ranging from cultural forms and simple meditation techniques, to inner teachings, as presented through the Scorpion Seal path. He had a series of visions and wrote them down in the texts, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*, *The Letter of the Black Ashe*, *The Letter of the Golden Key*, the *Scorpion Seal* texts, and *The Lightning of Blessings*.

After a period of time teaching in the West, Trungpa Rinpoche began to notice that he needed to not only teach meditation and the dharma, but that he needed to instill in his students a certain cultural background which could act as a “vessel” in which to pour the teachings. For example, he famously encouraged his students to “cut through spiritual materialism” and stop seeing the dharma as exotic or foreign. He did not want his students to dismiss their society and hide in a spiritual fantasy, so he asked everyone to take off their 1960’s hippie attire, get a haircut, find a career and raise families. He taught the importance of mindfulness in everyday life, or “meditation in action,” and he emphasized the value in the contemplative arts as a way to tune into the beauty and wisdom of the present moment. These are each examples of the way Trungpa Rinpoche tried to establish the cultural ground to teach wisdom. As the Shambhala terma teachings began to influence the culture that Trungpa Rinpoche established, the dignity, beauty, and wisdom of Shambhala became manifest.

As the Sakyong wrote:

Each group of people that has embraced Buddhism has infused the teachings with its own cultural style. The heart of the teachings was not changed, but because of strong preexisting cultural traditions, Buddhism took on different flavors in different parts of the world. These different cultural traditions each had a unique approach to living fully as a human being in the world, which provided a genuine foundation for dharma practice.

In the modern era, however, it seems we are faced with a vacuum of sorts. Our culture’s traditions of chivalry, honor, and bravery have been largely

lost. Within this vacuum, the Vidyadhara presented the teachings of Shambhala. How can the teachings of the Buddha be incorporated into our society, especially in a way that does not require us all to become monastic or reclusive? We can do that by remembering to take every situation as an opportunity to practice the profound path. (*Shambhala Buddhism*, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Kalapa Assembly, May 23, 2000).

Timing: Shambhala Teachings and the Modern World

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche writes that “The inspiration to present the Shambhala teachings so energetically comes from their timeliness” (*Shambhala Buddhism*, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Kalapa Assembly (May 23, 2000)). The Shambhala teachings are the methods, culture, and social vision that have arisen precisely for our time. Terma teachings are always timely. The degradation of our ecosystem, our social relationships, and our culture, and the vast challenges that we face in modern society inspired the Shambhala teachings to emerge at this particular time. Trungpa Rinpoche saw the need to establish the social context in which to genuinely experience the heart of meditation. Such a social context would not be divorced from the Buddhadharma, but would also extend beyond any particular religion.

The Shambhala teachings penetrate into the complex needs of our age, in a very different time and place than ancient Tibet. They present a way of living in the world with dignity and grace. Trungpa Rinpoche drew upon the wisdom that he encountered in the West, Japan, China, and India. Contained within the Shambhala teachings are the principles and spiritual practices to transform our relationship with our psychology, health, the mind-body relationship, the natural world, the elements, invisible realms, local places, wealth, social identity, ethics, political and economic structures, sacred architecture, intimate relationships, parenting, our households, military aggression, fear, doubt, time, and the nature of reality altogether. We are still just beginning to unpack all of these possibilities.

Our Diverse World and Cultural Humility

Sakyong Mipham asks: “How are we to communicate across cultural boundaries?” He further states: “In strengthening the global family, we will need to learn to communicate by learning to feel the heart.” *The Shambhala Principle*, p. 156-157.”

As meditation instructors and leaders in our Shambhala Centers, we often find ourselves working with individuals who have diverse qualities, backgrounds, and motivations. Part of our practice as leaders is to develop genuine communication and connection with all people and their manifestation of basic goodness. To do this, it is useful to consider how skillfully we interact with people whose “diversity” is different from our own.

Culture is dynamic, rather than static. It is constantly re-created and negotiated in specific social contexts. As people (and as meditation instructors) we and our

students both embody and experience a multidimensionality of cultural aspects in our everyday lives. We do not neatly "fit" into singular categories. In the face of such multiplicity, it is useful to develop an attitude of inquiry, sensitivity and active listening as there are too many cultures for any of us to know them all.

This open attitude has been called "cultural humility". Cultural humility does not require the mastery of lists of different beliefs and behaviors pertaining to various groups. Rather, cultural humility encourages respectful partnerships through the exploration of similarities and differences between the histories, priorities, goals, and capacities of these groups. A barrier to culturally appropriate behavior is often not a lack of knowledge of the details of any given cultural orientation, but the failure to develop cultural self-awareness and a respectful attitude toward diverse points of view.

*Tervalon M, Murray-Garcia J. (1998). *J Health Care Poor Underserved* 9(2):17-25.

Thus, cultural humility becomes a lifelong process of meek self-reflection that supports cultural difference. Although humility sometimes has the connotation of being weak or submissive, here humility refers to our strength to listen to others - their speech, appearance, and values - as well as to our own speech, appearance, and values. In listening to ourselves, we begin to recognize our own biases, limitations and unconscious stereotypes as well as our strengths and abilities. As a result we simultaneously become more authentically open to ourselves and to others. In practicing cultural humility, we deepen and develop our personal, interpersonal, and societal relationships in order to bring about a more enlightened society.

Sakyong Mipham: "We can use our interconnectedness to cultivate human dignity – the bedrock of all diversity." *The Shambhala Principle*, p. 156.

The Lineage of Sakyongs

Trungpa Rinpoche personally began to manifest and embody these teachings in his own being. This was the emergence of the role of Sakyong as both spiritual and secular teacher in the modern world. "Sa" means earth, and "kyong" means protector. So the Sakyong is an "Earth Protector" whose job is to protect the earth, remind human beings of basic goodness, and inspire enlightened society. The renowned master Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche who was the head of the Nyingma lineage, empowered Trungpa Rinpoche as Sakyong. In addition to manifesting this principle in his own life, Trungpa Rinpoche also trained his son in the art of being an Earth Protector. He formally empowered his oldest son as the future Earth Protector at the Investiture of the Sawang on February 27, 1979, designating him as the future Sakyong of Shambhala, establishing a dung gyu of "family lineage" of Sakyongs. Penor Rinpoche, Head of the Nyingma Lineage after the passing of Khyentse Rinpoche, formally empowered Sakyong Mipham as Sakyong in 1995. The lineage of

Sakyongs sustains and transmits the unique Shambhala teachings and vision of enlightened society.

Historical Sources and Wisdom Traditions

An enlightened society aspires to form a container or “umbrella” to protect and manifest the wisdom of humanity. We could even think of our work in the Shambhala lineage today as being like a “greenhouse:” we aspire to create the societal atmosphere that can sustain cultural and contemplative “flowers” that may struggle to survive within the speed and materialism of modern society. For example, meditation practice, contemplative arts, certain philosophical teachings, community connection, and cultural practices such as rites of passage for children, or even a dignified relationship with death—each are difficult to sustain in modern life. In order to create such a container, we need to learn to embody these older wisdom streams in the present. It is the present and living experience that matters the most. Shambhala vision is not only focused on preserving the past; it is also a furthering and evolution of the past as we face the challenges and opportunities of the present.

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche stated for the purposes of this manual:

“The Shambhala teachings and texts of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche are our foundation. We start with mastering our own tradition and teachings, and then we naturally see the way in which this wisdom is also present in other traditions. For example as we fully understand basic goodness, we can then see that it’s essence is present in many other traditions as well, even if it is expressed with different words or methods. This is just like a great martial arts master, who, having mastered *qi* or inner energy through deep training in his own lineage tradition, is also able to recognize this same energy in all genuine martial arts. He does not need to try to master every lineage; that would be impossible. Instead, he goes deeply into his practice and through this connects with others.

The teachings of Shambhala are based on the fundamental search throughout history to understand humanity’s dignity and wisdom. We therefore respect and protect those elements in a number of traditions. Shambhala should be seen as a protector of the wisdom traditions of the world. This is no more evident than in the ancestral roots of the Mukpo family, who are the inheritors of the tradition of the Gesar and the Ancestral Sovereigns, Buddhism and Bön traditions.”

The particular streams of culture, spirituality, and history that converge in the Shambhala lineage can be separated out into at least five main areas:

1. Buddhism, especially the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibet
2. The Kalachakra

3. The Imperial Lineages: The Four Ancestral Sovereigns
4. Indigenous Central Asian spirituality
5. Global Human Wisdom throughout History

1. Buddhism

What is Buddhism?

The word “Buddhism” comes from the Sanskrit word “buddha,” which means “the awakened one.” Buddhism, or buddhadharma, is the proclamation of, and journey toward, an awakening of human potential.

The historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was born around 500 BC at Lumbini, in present-day Nepal. He was brought up as a prince of the Shakya clan and excelled in all the worldly arts. After realizing the truth of impermanence at the age of twenty-nine, he left his kingdom to seek spiritual understanding.

After studying for six years with many spiritual teachers, Siddhartha realized that neither the extreme of worldly success nor of asceticism could lead him to full awakening. He sat under a bodhi tree on the banks of the Ganges and vowed not to rise until he had attained enlightenment. Through examining the nature of his body and mind, he attained complete awakening. Before a small assembly, he began to offer simple teachings based on his own experience. These teachings, referred to as the “dharma,” meaning “truth,” were practical instructions on how to relate to one's everyday experience of life and mind.

Because his realization was profound, he became known as the “Buddha,” the awakened one. The teachings he offered came to be known as buddhadharma (“the teachings of the awakened one”), and ultimately as Buddhism. Buddhism is a living tradition, passed from teacher to student as a set of pragmatic instructions and techniques for cultivating sanity and brilliance in our selves and our world. Its ancient wisdom is as relevant and useful today as over the centuries of its long history.

The Buddha's discovery of awakened mind cannot adequately be described as a religion, a philosophy, or a psychology. It is better described as a way of living. The buddhadharma provides a method for attaining the realization of which it speaks. The practical path passed down from generation to generation of Buddhists, can be described as the threefold practice of: ethical discipline (*shila*), meditation (*samadhi*), and insight/knowledge (*prajna*). Ethical discipline refers to living a life without creating harm and learning to be of benefit to all beings. Meditation is mindfulness and awareness practice, a natural process of allowing oneself to rest in peace, to examine the nature of thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations and to discover the inherent purity of one's being. It is a practice based on real experience, rather than on blind belief. Knowledge and insight is the path of contemplative

learning, study and reflection in which the practitioner explores the nature of reality.

Buddhism is a living tradition, passed from teacher to student as a set of pragmatic instructions and techniques for cultivating sanity and brilliance in our selves and our world. Its ancient wisdom is as relevant and useful today as over the centuries of its long history.

Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche was one of the pioneers to bring the Buddhist teachings into the modern world. He was one of the most influential translators of the Tibetan vajrayana teachings in particular, but he was committed to the buddhadharma in general. The Shambhala lineage holds his unique oral instructions and meditation teachings. In addition to his years of training with his father, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche studied with some of the greatest masters of the dharma. He focused on the philosophical teachings of his predecessor, Mipham the Great, and especially the Great Perfection (*dzogchen*), teachings. Shambhala also holds the Buddhist teachings taught by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

After the Buddha's death, a variety of schools of Buddhism developed in India,

- The schools that were prominent earlier, which the Tibetan tradition calls the **hinayana**, or “smaller vehicle,” placed primary emphasis on self-liberation through personal discipline. Today, elements of this tradition are represented in the Theravada teachings, often known as the Vipassana, and Insight communities in the West.
- The schools that were prominent later, called the **mahayana**, or “great vehicle,” placed greater emphasis on working for the liberation of all beings. Both schools were disseminated from India throughout Asia. Today, there are many mahayana schools, including Zen. All of the Tibetan schools are also mahayana.
- Tibetan Buddhism also holds the tantric, **vajrayana**, or “indestructible vehicle,” teachings, referring to the particularly powerful and direct methods of realization it employs. Before the demise of Buddhism in India, the vajrayana was one of the more prominent schools, represented in most major monastic institutions as well as among lay practitioners. This was the form of Buddhism transmitted to Tibet.

The Buddhist Lineages of Tibet

There are four major lineages of Buddhism in Tibet: Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, and Gelug. Though all schools balance study and practice, some lineages, like the Sakya and Gelug, put special emphasis on an intellectual approach to the teachings, training students as scholars and logicians. Others, like the Nyingma and Kagyü, put special emphasis on the practice of meditation; they are often called the “Practice Lineages.” Both Sakyongs are holders of Kagyü and Nyingma lineages.

The Nyingma Lineage

The Nyingma (“the ancient ones”) lineage is the oldest of the four Tibetan lineages, dating back to the ninth century. One of the sources of this ancient lineage was the tantric master Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, who was invited from India to Tibet to help tame the land around the first Tibetan monastery, Samye. He remained in Tibet for many years, travelling widely and infusing the very land of Tibet with his teachings. Padmasambhava was the teacher to 25 renowned early practitioners, including Yeshe Tsogyal, King Trisong Detsen, and the translator Vairochana.

Unlike the newer schools, the Nyingma did not have a centrally organized leadership, and instead identified based around unique teachings and practices. One unique feature that has already been mentioned is the tradition of terma, or treasure teachings. Others include the emphasis on the “Nine Yana” or Nine Vehicle description of the path. The ultimate “vehicle” or method of practicing meditation is called the Great Perfection (*dzokchen*) teachings, which are the specialty of the Nyingma lineage.

After the time of Padmasambhava, the Tibetan empire dissolved and without the royal support of the monastic tradition, Buddhism declined in Tibet. Many of the early teachings presented during the first translation period had to “go underground” and were maintained by small family lineages. It was in this context that the Nyingma teachings survived for many years. These teachings were not known as Nyingma at that time—they were just the dharma. It was only in the 11th century, during the new translation period, that the older teachings came to be associated with a school called “Nyingma.” To this day, many Nyingma lamas have families and there has never been a strong, centralized Nyingma institution. In fact, the first “head” of the Nyingma lineage was only appointed in India, after the escape from Tibet.

In addition to Padmasambhava, key figures in the Nyingma lineage include:

Yeshe Tsogyal (8th century). An early vajrayana practitioner, the consort and colleague of Padmasambhava. She was an exceptional meditator who faced tremendous hardship as a young woman, including being raped. Through her intensive practice, she transformed adversity and became a master teacher, helping Padmasambhava to conceal many teachings for future generations. Later, she took a practitioner named Acharya Salé as her own consort. She is an inspiration to all practitioners and is like a mother figure to Tibetans. For more on Yeshe Tsogyal see Keith Dowman, *Sky Dancer: The Secret Life & Songs of the Lady Yeshe Tsogyel*, Snow Lion, 1997.

The early Dzokchen lineage holders:

Garap Dorje (Prahevajra in Sanskrit)

Manjushrimitra

Shri Simha

Jnanasutra

Vimalamitra

(For more on the Great Perfection lineage holders see Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Wisdom Publications, 1991 and Tulku Thondup and Harold Talbott (Editor). *Masters of Meditation and Miracles: Lives of the Great Buddhist Masters of India and Tibet*, Shambhala Publications, 1996.)

Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (1012-1088). A great scholar and early propagator of the Great Perfection view, his many scholarly writings were a major influence on philosophers such as Mipham the Great many years later. His teaching described the Great Perfection in relation to Mahayana schools and logic. He is the first of the “omniscient ones” of the Nyingma lineage, the other two being Longchenpa and Mipham. For more on Rongzom see Heidi Koppl, *Establishing Appearances as Divine*. Snow Lion Publications 2008.

Longchen Rabjam (1308-1364). Perhaps the foremost elucidator of the Great Perfection, Longchenpa was first trained as a scholar and ordained as a monk in the university at Samye. He studied with the great Nyingma masters of the time, but also connected with the 3rd Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339). He had visions of Padmasambhava and especially Yeshe Tsogyal and helped gather the Khandro Nyingtik teachings. Longchenpa then met his root teacher, Kumaraja, who was a holder of Vimalamitra’s innermost teachings. Longchenpa was forced into exile in Bhutan for a period due to political turbulence in central Tibet. Renowned for his poetic and brilliant texts that synthesized the Great Perfection into a coherent system, Longchenpa’s writings form an immense corpus including the *Seven Treasures*, the *Trilogy of Finding Comfort and Ease*, the *Trilogy of Self-Liberation*, and the *Heart Essence of Profundity*.

Jigme Lingpa (1730-1798), is renowned today as the revealer and author of the Longchen Nyingtik treasure cycle. This cycle of teachings influenced almost all meditators who practice the Great Perfection, including the great Rime (nonsectarian) teachers of the 19th century and Trungpa Rinpoche. Jigme Lingpa was relatively uneducated, but immersed himself in practice and retreat. While practicing in isolation in the caves behind Samye monastery, he received three visions of Longchenpa and through these visions attained realization. He then discovered the Longchen Nyingtik cycle as a terma and spent his life propagating and commenting on this path of practice.

Mipham the Great (1846-1912), the predecessor of Sakyong Mipham, was one of the greatest philosophers in the entire history of Tibet and a major scholar of the Rime, nonsectarian movement. Born to the Ju family clan, he began study and memorization when he was just six years old and quickly mastered many teachings. When he ordained as a monk in a branch of Shechen monastery at the age of 12, he became known as “the little scholar monk.” He was a child prodigy and could understand a text just by hearing it read aloud, and began writing his own teachings very early. He mastered the dominant Gelugpa intellectual and debating system and was therefore able to express the Great Perfection teachings in terms that all could understand, in this way almost single-handedly securing a place for Nyingma thought among the other schools. This proved to be pivotal for the tradition after the escape from Tibet and to this day it is Mipham’s works that are widely studied in monastic universities. In addition to his commentaries on Mahayana and tantric literature, he was the primary compiler of the Gesar songs and took tremendous interest in the teachings of windhorse and tiger, lion, garuda, dragon. Mipham the Great wrote the Gesar dances mastered by the Sakyong Wangmo. One of his last major works was a commentary on the Kalachakra and teachings about the kingdom of Shambhala. When he was about to pass away, he turned to a disciple and said that he would not be reborn in Tibet, but would travel “to Shambhala in the North.” As an old man, he wrote the syllable of Manjushri, DHIH on the tongue of the infant Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, who then became an important teacher to Sakyong Mipham.

His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche was the leader of the Nyingma lineage in exile until his parinirvana in 1987. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche assumed that role until his own passing in 1991. Khyentse Rinpoche was a teacher and close associate of the Vidyadhara; he was also an important teacher of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. Penor Rinpoche was the head of the Nyingma until his recent death, and the lineage is now led by Kyabje Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche.

The Kagyü Lineage

The Indian mahasiddha Tilopa was the founder of what would later be called the Kagyü lineage. He spent much of his life wandering from place to place and studying meditation with various teachers. Finally, he meditated alone for several years in a grass hut on the banks of the Ganges until he attained realization. He received direct transmission of the mahamudra teachings from the dharmakaya buddha Vajradhara.

One of his most important disciples was the Indian mahasiddha and scholar, Naropa. At the height of his career as head of Nalanda University, Naropa sacrificed everything he had accomplished in order to search for an authentic teacher. He found Tilopa and studied with him for twelve years until attaining enlightenment. His life story is one of the best examples of devoted training.

One of Naropa's principal students was the Tibetan translator, Marpa Chökyi Lodrö. At exceptional risk to himself, Marpa made three long journeys over the Himalayas to India to study the dharma with Naropa and other great teachers. Marpa had a family and farm and attracted many students. He transmitted the teachings to the Tibetan ascetic and hermit Milarepa. Milarepa was one of the great “saints” of Tibet, renowned for his many songs of enlightenment. He spent his life in isolated retreat in mountainous caves. Milarepa in turn transmitted the mahamudra teachings to Gampopa, who had already received training in the monastic Kadampa lineage. From that time until the present, the teachings of the Kagyü have been transmitted in an unbroken lineage from teacher to student.

From the time of Gampopa, the Kagyü lineage developed into a number of branches, called “the four great and the eight lesser schools.” The four “great” lineages (referring to the first generation of disciples) derive from students of Gampopa (1079-1153) and his nephew Takpo Gomtsül (1116-1169). These four are:

1. Karma Kagyü or Karma Kamtsang, founded by Tüsum Khyenpa, the first Karmapa
2. Tsarpa Kagyü, founded by Gampopa's nephew Takpo Gomtsül (1110-1109) and his student Shang Yudrakpa Tsöndril Drakpa (1123-1193)
3. Baram Kagyü, founded by Baram Dharma Wangchuk
4. Phagmo dru Kagyü, founded by Phagmo dru Dorje Gyalpo (1110-1170).

The eight “lesser” schools (referring to the second generation of disciples) developed from Phagmo Drupa's disciples. They are known as Drigung, Taglung, Trophu, Drukpa, Martsang, Yelpe, Shuksep, and Yamsang. Only three of these survive today: Drukpa, Drikung, and Taklung. In addition, there are several other well-known Kagyü lineages such as the Shangpa Kagyü and the Ugyen Nyendrup.

The Karmapas

The Karmapa is regarded by most Tibetans as second in rank only to the Dalai Lama. He is the head of the Karma Kagyü lineage. Traditionally the Karmapa presided over the chief monastery of the Kagyü lineage, Tsurphu, outside of Lhasa in central Tibet until 1959. His Holiness Rangjung Rikpe Dorje, the Sixteenth Karmapa, was a root teacher of the Vidyadhara and visited the West to teach and to perform the Black Crown Ceremony several times. Until his parinirvana in 1981, he was a close and revered teacher for the Vajradhatu sangha. There is currently the 17th reincarnation of this ancient and powerful lineage of Karmapas.

The Four Regent Tülkus

The regents are high-ranking tülkus who have a particularly close relationship with the Karmapas. The current incarnations were discovered by the Sixteenth Karmapa,

who aided their escape from Tibet in 1959 and was primarily responsible for their training at Rumtek. Until the Seventeenth Karmapa was old enough to assume his role as leader of the lineage, the regents shared this function. They were also responsible for his education. The two living regents are: His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche (b. 1954), and His Eminence Joshri Gyaltsab Rinpoche (b. 1954). The fourth regent, His Eminence Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche (b.1954), was killed in a car accident in 1992 and His Holiness Künzig Shamar Rinpoche (b. 1952) died in 2014.

For other information on the Buddhist lineages that flow into the Shambhala tradition, please see the following sections commenting on the *Supplication to the Shambhala Lineage*.

2. The Kalachakra

Another important wisdom stream particularly connected with Shambhala is the Kalachakra. Kalachakra literally means, “the wheel of time.” This tradition is a complex body of meditative, yogic, philosophical, historical, and astrological views. In general, this vajrayana teaching concerns the relationship between the macrocosmic universe, (the constellations and the orbits of the planets), with the microcosmic universe, (the development of the human body and the movement of the subtle energies in the body). In turn, these movements are connected with the movement of time and history, making for a very complete system. Most of the main schools of Tibetan Buddhism have a Kalachakra tradition. The connection with Shambhala is most explicit in the history of how the Buddha taught this tantra. In *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, the Druk Sakyong wrote:

It is said that Buddhism played an important role in the development of the Shambhala society. The legends tell us that Shakyamuni Buddha gave advanced tantric teachings to the first king of Shambhala, Dawa Sangpo. These teachings, which are preserved as the *Kalacakra Tantra*, are considered to be among the most profound wisdom of Tibetan Buddhism. After the king had received this instruction, the stories say that all of the people of Shambhala began to practice meditation and to follow the Buddhist path of loving kindness and concern for all beings. In this way, not just the rulers but all of the subjects of the kingdom became highly developed people.

Among the Tibetan people, there is a popular belief that the kingdom of Shambhala can still be found, hidden in a remote valley somewhere in the Himalayas. There are, as well, a number of Buddhist texts that give detailed but obscure directions for reaching Shambhala, but there are mixed opinions as to whether these should be taken literally or metaphorically. There are also many texts that give us elaborate descriptions of the kingdom. For example, according to the *Great Commentary on the Kalacakra* by the renowned nineteenth-century Buddhist teacher Mipham, the land of Shambhala is north of the river Sita, and the country is divided by eight mountain ranges. The palace of the Rigdens, or the imperial rulers of

Shambhala, is built on top of a circular mountain in the center of the country. This mountain, Mipham tells us, is named Kailasa. The palace, which is called the palace of Kalapa, comprises many square miles. In front of it to the south is a beautiful park known as Malaya, and in the middle of the park is a temple devoted to Kalacakra that was built by Dawa Sangpo.

In *The Shambhala Principle*, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche adds further commentary on this history:

It is said that the first king of Shambhala, Dawa Sangpo, “Good Moon,” went to the Buddha and requested wisdom so powerful that he could attain enlightenment without being forced to abandon his kingdom. Dawa Sangpo said, “With my many responsibilities, I do not have the luxury to retire to a monastery to seek personal enlightenment. Can you give me spiritual teachings I can use in daily life to bring peace and harmony to myself, my subjects, and my kingdom?”

The Buddha replied that indeed he could offer such teachings on using society as a spiritual path, but that only a very powerful individual could accomplish them. However, the mind of Dawa Sangpo was so clear that even as the Buddha was bestowing those teachings, Dawa Sangpo understood them. Then he returned to Shambhala to teach. At that time, there were conflicting factions within the society, but after Dawa Sangpo began to teach, the entire kingdom was unified in goodness. Once people woke up to the goodness in themselves, they were able to see it in each other, and their society was naturally enlightened. Socially and politically, the world needs the light of Shambhala right now.

Dawa Sangpo was the first of the seven dharma kings (dharmarajas) of Shambhala. A social fragmentation in Shambhala during the reign of the 8th King, named Manjushrikirti, (Jampal Drakpa in Tibetan), inspired him to offer Kalachakra teachings to the whole population to again reunite the kingdom into a single family. He was therefore named the first Rigden (*rigs ldan*) King. Rigden literally means “holder or possessor of the family.” These stories about Shambhala, Dawa Sangpo, and the Rigden Kings and Queens all come from the Kalachakra and therefore the Kalachakra is an important part of our history. The idea of a cosmic conflict between forces of compassion and forces of aggression is also part of the Kalachakra narrative.

3. The Imperial Lineages: The Four Ancestral Sovereigns

Shambhala is not just a spiritual path; it is a cultural and societal tradition. Shambhala hosts, protects, and propagates the dignity and splendor of some of the most wise and glorious civilizations in human history. In particular, we draw upon the great civilizations of ancient India, China, Japan, and Tibet. Each of these four

civilizations was like a mother to entire traditions of visual art, literature, political systems, ethics, military strategy, cuisine, spirituality, and philosophy. It is hard to fathom the influence that even one of these civilizations has had on human experience, yet this wisdom is often ignored in the modern world. In Shambhala today, each of these four great imperial traditions is honored through a representative ruler or spiritual king, known as the four Ancestral Sovereigns. Ashoka represents the wisdom of India, Shotoku Taishi, that of Japan, Yung-lo, the Chinese civilization, and Gesar of Ling represents Tibet. Taken together, this is a vast body of cultural, artistic, and spiritual wisdom. For more on these specific Ancestral Sovereigns themselves see the section below on the *Homage*.

In addition to what is noted below about the four Ancestral Sovereigns, it is also important to emphasize the role that each of these great civilizations play for our Shambhala lineage. We will mention the three non-Tibetan civilizations here and say more about Tibet in the following section.

- **INDIA:** Indian civilization is the source of many wisdom streams including the ancient tradition of the Vedas, the Upanisadic tradition which was a direct influence on the Buddha, philosophies such as the Samkhya, Mimamsa, and Nyaya schools of logic, Buddhism itself, Jainism, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and the tradition of Hatha Yoga, and the bhakti or devotional schools. From the yogic traditions, Shambhala is especially influenced by the principle of inner, vital energy (*prana*), which connects with the teaching of windhorse. The nondual Advaita Vedanta teachings presented especially by Shankara are a profound source of wisdom. Tantric lineages such as Kashmiri Shaivism and the Nath teachings are related cousins to our own Vajrayana heritage. Mahayana Buddhism and Tantric Buddhism are deeply indebted to Indian culture. In addition, great ethical and legal systems, such as those produced by Ashoka's own Mauryan empire inspire skillful and strategic politics. The courtly culture of such empires produced resplendent poetry, drama, dance, music, spiritual-aesthetic theories (such as Abhinavagupta's), and visual art. The brilliance, beauty, and profundity of Indian civilization is impossible to capture briefly and all of this richness feeds into the Shambhala world through our artistry and symbolism, spiritual practices, mythological themes, and philosophies.
- **CHINA:** The Chinese Confucian and Taoist traditions are of particular importance for Shambhala. It could even be said that the Shambhala terma draws as much from Chinese civilization as it does from India and Tibet. For example, the significant Shambhala theme of "joining heaven and earth" is central for Confucian thought, an idea repeated in the structure of the I Ching (Book of Changes). The notion of a Sakyong who joins heaven and earth to create enlightened society is very similar to the Confucian ideal of a "Sage-king" who joins the way of heaven with the earth to establish a virtuous and

harmonious empire. The principle of “basic goodness” seems directly related to the Chinese Confucian term *ren* meaning original goodness, benevolence, altruism, and human-heartedness. In expositions by the great Confucian sage Mencius (4th century B.C.) the natural goodness of humanity (*ren*) leads to virtue and righteousness (*yi*), especially in behavior and ritual conduct (*li*) in daily life. For Mencius, goodness and virtue are natural to the human heart (*xin*), and the profound person is the one who cultivates the original or true heart and is then able to bring this out in society. There is a growing interest in Confucianism for modern thinkers who seek a form of natural ethics, not based in a transcendent theistic principle. Many historians see a connection between Taoist themes of effortless, non-action (*wu wei*) and the highest Tibetan teachings of the Great Perfection (*dzokchen*). A major influence on the Ch’an tradition of Buddhism, Chinese Taoism is part of a worldview closely related to many Shambhala themes, including but not limited to the cultivation of inner energy (*qi*), and the possibility of leadership effortlessly expressing the natural harmony of the universe.

- JAPAN: The Japanese culture and aesthetic world was particularly important to the Druk Sakyong. He drew upon the art of flower arrangement (*ikebana*), tea ceremony (*chado*), poetry (*haiku*), Zen archery (*kyudo*), and calligraphy to express the way wisdom and elegance could manifest in a society. Sakyong Mipham studied Japanese visual and martial arts for many years and is an accomplished calligrapher, poet, and archer. Our style of sitting meditation, followed by walking meditation, and the basic protocols of our meditation halls are directly influenced by the Zen tradition, especially through Trungpa Rinpoche’s close connection with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. We inherit our contemplative meal practice (*oryoki*) from a Zen lineage. The philosophy and lifestyle of *bushido*, the “way of the samurai” is an important example of spiritual warriorship. The indigenous Japanese Shinto tradition honors the *kami*, or local natural deities, which are very similar to the drala tradition of Shambhala. At Shambhala Mountain Center, the Shambhala community protects and honors a Shinto shrine devoted to Omaterasu O-mi Kami, the sun goddess and most important *kami*. The Druk Sakyong invited her presence back to the United States during a trip to Japan with the Sakyong in the 1980s.

4. Indigenous Central Asian Spirituality

An ancient tradition of spirituality stretches back to the oldest known human history in Central Asia. This tradition covers territory from China and Mongolia all the way into Turkey, and shares many similarities with indigenous traditions from

around the world, such as the Shinto religion of Japan. It contains elements of both shamanism and what anthropologists used to refer to as animism. The term “shaman” itself comes from a native Siberian word, *šamán*, and refers to a healer and guide into the natural and invisible realms, including a guide into the afterlife. Shamanism tends to be present in hunting as well as pastoral societies. The term “animism” comes from the Greek *animus*, meaning spirit or soul. It is an anthropological concept that describes a worldview in which humans, animals, and facets of the natural world such as mountains, trees, rocks, and lakes, each have an animating spirit. The world is sentient and alive.

“Bön” is the term most often connected with the indigenous Tibetan form of this spirituality. Bön is a very significant influence upon the Shambhala teachings, making a direct link between Shambhala today and a wisdom tradition that stretches back to the very dawn of humanity. In “The Bön Way of Life” published in *The Heart of the Buddha*, Trungpa Rinpoche writes:

Bön, which in Tibetan means “way of life,” is traditionally interpreted in the sense of “basic law.” The Tibetan name for Tibet is Bö, which is basically the same word....

According to the historian, Per Kvaerne, (*The Bon Religion of Tibet: The Iconography of a Living Tradition* by, Serinda Publications, London, 1995) there are three overlapping ways in which the term “Bön” is used today:

1. As the pre-Buddhist spirituality of Tibet and the surrounding Himalayan region, including a variety of shamanic and animistic practices and popular beliefs, especially connected with healing.
2. A range of practices linked to the cult of Tibetan kings, focused on guiding the dead to a land of bliss and the well-being of the community.
3. The religion that identified itself as distinct from Buddhism in the 10th and 11th centuries. This religion traces itself to the land Olmo Lungring or the Zhang-zhung empire, an ancient civilization to the west of Tibet, connected with Mt. Meru and often associated with the Shambhala Kingdom. The founder or “Buddha-figure” of the Bön tradition is named Tonpo Shenrap Miwoche. Bön has its own Great Perfection (*dzokchen*) tradition.

Bön and Shambhala

The Bön cosmology, earth-based practices, rituals, and warrior teachings particularly influence our Shambhala tradition. For example, important categories such as: the Four Dignities, windhorse, smoke-offering (*lhasang*), confidence (*ziji*), and authentic presence (*wangthang*), natural richness (*yun*), and the three levels of *lha* (above), *nyen* (middle), and *lu* (below), are all inspired by Bön teachings.

In this indigenous spirituality, there was tremendous focus on the sacredness of the natural environment and practices that help human society connect with the elements. Again Trungpa Rinpoche writes,

Bön philosophy speaks of Yeshe [the primordial principle] as being reflected in the interplay between heaven and earth. Thus the Bön aspirant seeks magical power through union with the Yeshe nature as manifested in mountains, trees, lakes, and rivers—all of which are impressively present in Tibet. There is a strong orientation towards waterfalls, falling snow, clouds, and mist arising from the deep valleys, since all these are regarded as activities of Yeshe. Belief in the magic of these natural features is paramount. (Chögyam Trungpa, “The Bön way of Life” published in *The Heart of the Buddha*).

In addition, the legend and teachings of Gesar of Ling, collected in the famous Gesar epic, are filled with teachings such as windhorse, the Four Dignities, and the native Bön cosmology. The ancient horse and warrior culture of the high-mountain plains of Tibet inspires a vigorous, earthy, confidence embodied in Gesar. The importance of Gesar for the Mukpo family and the Shambhala lineage further links us with ancient Tibetan and Mongolian spirituality that pre-dates the arrival of Buddhism.

Today

Why did Trungpa Rinpoche and the Shambhala terma texts draw upon this ancient, earth-based body of teachings and practices? There are many answers to this question, but in general we could suggest that there was a need to support a culture that could express and protect a wise and confident way of life.

The indigenous spirituality of Tibet offered a rich resource for establishing such a wise society. Here are four examples of specific ways Bön-inspired wisdom could help with this intention:

First, these very old teachings have to do with human goodness and confidence. The warrior tradition inspires us to trust our selves and live with dignity. For many people in modern society, there is a sense of self-doubt and a general sense of anxiety and there is a need to re-inspire confidence. Humanity has lost touch with our worthiness, which often results in our questioning the worthiness of those who are different from us, those we fear. The warrior tradition such as the Gesar epic has to do with strength, fearlessness, health, and vitality. The windhorse practices in particular allow us to abruptly and immediately connect with confidence and powerful energy.

Second, these native teachings are “secular” in the sense that they are not about transcending the world, but about living fully in this world, in everyday life, and in community. As Trungpa Rinpoche wrote, “Bön is concerned with the creation of the universe in such a way as to consecrate the existence of the country, customs and

habits of the Tibetan people.” In other words, this body of teachings supported everyday life and traditions, rather than asking people to leave behind their everyday, “secular” life in order to seek salvation or transcendence.

Third, these ancient teachings offer methods and concrete practices to connect with the sacredness of the natural world. Modern consumer society often forgets our connection with the local land, the crops, the animals, and the seasons. The result is the violent disruption of our climate, threatening the survival of our species. Contemplative practices help to connect us with nature. *Drala* teachings open our senses to the living quality of the phenomenal world. The principle of *lha* is connected with the sky, *nyen* with the mountains, and *lu* with the waters. Simultaneously they are connected with our own head, shoulders, and feet, where we place our hat and shoes, and the seasons and times of the day. In this way, these categories offer a perspective that links everyday human experience (where we put our shoes) with the features of the natural world, and the movement of the seasons.

Altogether, these older teachings form a sacred “background” cosmological understanding of society and the human relationship with the rest of the universe. By background, we here mean a way of understanding that is built into the culture. It is a worldview that we do not have to think about; it’s just how we see things. For most modern people, for example, our assumed background worldview comes from our (often limited) understanding of science. The Shambhala teachings do not contradict the scientific worldview, but enrich this perspective through a very old connection with the sacredness of the natural world, the goodness of humanity, and ways in which everyday life can express mindfulness, wisdom, and celebration.

The worldview present in ancient Central Asian spirituality, and expressed in the Gesar epic helped to create a sacred and living experience of the world for all people of Eastern Tibet, even those who did not become monks or highly trained practitioners. This worldview was in harmony with the highest philosophical and meditative teachings, such as the Great Perfection. The innermost wisdom of the spiritual teachings, and the greatest practitioners of those teachings, refused to hide their experience. They become integrated into the everyday life of society.

Perhaps such an approach can help respond to the cultural “vacuum” mentioned above by the Sakyong. The Shambhala teachings draw upon this timeless wisdom to help establish a worldview that supports, trusts, and celebrates the basic goodness of all, and accommodates its complete diversity. It also employs powerful practices such as raising windhorse that have been engaged for millennia. The “highest” teachings became the everyday experience of all people. It was on this foundation that a strong contemplative culture was established in Tibet, and we in Shambhala draw upon this old body of indigenous wisdom today.

5. Global Human Warriorship throughout History

The final and perhaps most important influence on the Shambhala lineage is the tradition of human warriorship that has existed in many different times and cultures throughout human history. Basic goodness does not belong to one religion or one culture, either East or West, past or future. Shambhala vision is an inspiration to awaken the best of human potential, on the spot. Shambhala vision is not about recreating Tibet, or any of the ancient Asian civilizations. Enlightened society is always fresh, like the sunrise. In the *Shambhala Principle*, the Sakyong writes about his father:

This Shambhala vision of enlightened society—as he later called it—revealed to him how a good human society could occur, and it happened at the same time that his ancient culture was being destroyed. His inspiration about enlightened society was not to recreate Tibet, for he had reflected intimately on the shortcomings of his own culture. Rather, he was harnessing the deep wish for a good society that has existed throughout the evolution of humanity. The deep, strong, and palpable desire that humanity exist on earth in a good and dignified manner became the focus of his life. He engaged his intelligence, heart, and exertion in order to bring about this profound inspiration.

Shambhala vision recognizes that as long as humans have been on this earth, there has been a longing for a wakeful society. Great intelligence and dignity is present in the arts, novels, symphonies, dances, cuisines, philosophies, governments, economies, human rights movements, traditions, architecture, technology, and parenting wisdom of human beings around the globe. The indigenous wisdom of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas has much to offer a vision of enlightened society. Again, from *The Shambhala Principle*:

My father was a great believer in humanity. In both the East and the West, he was always synthesizing the knowledge that he had gained, seeking to understand and compare not only what the Buddha had taught, but also the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, Jesus, and those of Judaism and Islam, as well as the great minds of China—Lao Tzu and Confucius. He particularly respected India's great ruler, King Ashoka, as well as Dogen of the Zen tradition and Shotoku Taishi of Japan. As diverse as these traditions are, each of them could be reduced in size but concentrated in intensity, to encapsulate two simple ideas: humanity is good, and that good is the nature of society.

It was through study and reflection that I began to sense an inner shift in my understanding that the Shambhala principle is an underlying universal theme that exists throughout obvious and not-so-obvious threads of human thought. This universality is not a watering down of any tradition; it is the nucleus at the heart of all tradition. It is not something we create. It is something we discover.

In addition to older wisdom traditions, Shambhala is influenced by modernity and the largely-Western context in which the teachings have flourished in recent decades. We draw upon British courtly and military forms as well as Japanese forms, for example. Trungpa Rinpoche often mentioned the legend of King Arthur as an example of a warrior ancestor from Europe. Further, it is difficult to imagine the modern Shambhala tradition without the experience of the twentieth century. Trungpa Rinpoche was immersed in the modern world. Even though the Sakyong was born in a cave in Bodh Gaya India and is deeply connected to his Asian roots, he is also a totally modern person having been raised for most of his life in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Our actual practices of governance in Shambhala are influenced by democracy and trust in the wisdom of the whole community. For example, we have had the Shambhala Congress and local councils inspired by the membership. The aesthetic and cultural flavor of our Shambhala centres and community are modern, and we are proud of the nationalities of our diverse global community and our efforts to include the wide diversity of people who have historically been excluded from so many communities and institutions. Our path of practice and education is explicitly designed to work within the constraints and opportunities of a modern lifestyle and schedule. And we have a light touch and sense of humor that comes from the modern (and post-modern) knowledge that there are many different perspectives.

Far more than only an interest in preserving the wisdom streams of the past, our true vision is to reawaken wisdom and inspiration in the present, through helping us recover and respect who we are. For example, there is a story of a young Christian priest who attended Naropa Institute and became very inspired by the teachings. In an interview with Trungpa Rinpoche, he asked if he should leave Christianity and become a Buddhist. Trungpa Rinpoche responded by asking him to promise to never give up on his own tradition, to continue his training thoroughly, and return to Naropa to teach Christian theology. Shambhala vision helps cut through any cynicism about our own ancestry, and helps modern society rediscover the wisdom that is already present in our own cultures. In turn, this opens up new possibilities for a wise, flourishing civilization, in harmony with the natural world and delighting in the diverse wisdom of human cultures, ethnicities, and traditions.

Conclusion

In summary, the Shambhala lineage is based on the Shambhala teachings presented in the modern world by the Druk Sakyong and brings together our Buddhist heritage, the Kalachakra tradition, ancient indigenous spirituality, and global wisdom. All of these streams flow together into our unique identity, and coalesce in the vision of an enlightened society that can protect and manifest the wisdom of humanity. In particular, this vision arises in a moment in which our civilization is out of balance, threatening our ecosystem and the future of human flourishing on

our planet. These wisdom practices and views can help our world; that's the whole point. As the Druk Sakyong proclaimed:

You can help the world. You, you, you, you, and you—all of you—can help the world. You know what the problems are. You know the difficulties. Let us do something. Let us not chicken out. Let us actually do it properly. Please, please, please! We are trying to reach the higher realms and help others to do so, instead of being stuck in the hell realm...Let's do it. Please think about that. I wish that you would all take a personal vow to help others who are going through such turmoil. (*Great Eastern Sun*, "Attaining the Higher Realms").

Shambhala Buddhism

In his teaching on Shambhala Buddhism, the Sakyong wrote:

"My father understood that there was no conflict between Buddhism and Shambhala. To him, they were a beautiful combination and each had its role to play.

The Buddhist and Shambhala teachings both have the view that spiritual and secular activities are inseparable. They both join the ultimate and relative realities, Heaven and Earth. However, in terms of their application to our lives, they each have their own special strength, their own particular emphasis. Buddhism is basically about how one achieves complete enlightenment and becomes a buddha. What does that mean? It means completely overcoming the obscurity of ignorance; it means realizing that the myth of permanence brings about suffering and cyclical existence in samsara; it means seeing the display of all phenomena as the expression of great bliss, the nature of reality.

... In essence, the emphasis of the Buddhist path is to help us attain enlightenment, and the emphasis of the Shambhala path is to help us create and maintain a good society. When we put these two together, we have the Shambhalian Buddhist view of enlightened society. Thus the two paths work in tandem, not in competition." (*Shambhala Buddhism*, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Kalapa Assembly, May 23, 2000).

Excerpt from *The Heart of Warriorship Teaching Guide*

When we refer to our tradition as "Shambhala Buddhism" this name is like a dot or seed syllable—the shortest expression of the lineages we have inherited and the foundation of what we practice, study, and teach. The use of this term has been a call

for directors, open house teachers, meditation instructors and administrators alike to refine and deepen the ways in which we express our understanding of Shambhala, Buddhism, the community that holds them in union, and the community whose social mandate depends on the wider participation of people from other spiritual traditions.

In the first few years that we have begun to use the term Shambhala Buddhism, areas requiring further clarification and articulation arose. For example, some may think that Shambhala Buddhism is describing a new form of Buddhism—that “Shambhala” is an adjective describing a new Buddhist order. Rather, Shambhala Buddhism refers to a confluence of Buddhist and Shambhala lineages that together influence our practice and educational heritage—the ancient lineage of Nyingma, the practice lineage of Kagyü Buddhism, and the warrior family lineage of Shambhala. Therefore, “Shambhala” of Shambhala Buddhism is a noun that describes a body of teachings, a cultural environment inspired by the Kalapa Court, and an expansive social vision based on human wisdom.

At the same time, Shambhala welcomes people of all faiths and backgrounds to learn meditation, study our Shambhala, Buddhist, cultural and artistic courses, and become members. Our centres celebrate the inclusion of Shambhala Christians, Shambhala Jews, Shambhala Muslims, Shambhala Taoists, people involved in indigenous traditions, and others who are not involved in a religious tradition at all. In this way, the Shambhala dharma does not present itself as an alternative religion, but a path that is concerned with social transformation—a common goal and source of inspiration among people of a variety of spiritual backgrounds. It is not necessary to hide our Buddhist iconography, shrines, or the spiritual emphasis of our centres to bring about such an inclusive social vision.

Questions continually arise with regard to the differences and sameness of the two traditions, Shambhala and Buddhism. Here is a thumbnail sketch of how the two traditions are the **same**, how they are **different**, and how they are **inseparable**.

Same

The wisdom streams of Buddhism and the Shambhala tradition share one and the same vision. Shambhala and buddhadharma see the basic goodness or wakefulness of the human heart as well as the fears and neuroses that obscure this ever pure nature. In terms of practice, Shambhala and buddhadharma have several aspects in common: shamatha-vipashyana as a basis; a vast view of benefiting others through expansive activity; and the ultimate view of sacred outlook and invocation of magic.

The Dorje Dradül often correlated the Shambhala dharma with certain Buddhist teachings to help clarify the meaning to his all-Buddhist audience. At times, he equated certain terms, saying they were just different words for the same thing.

"I think there is a sort of umbrella feeling to it [Shambhala teaching]. It's a kind of imperial yana, sort of an ati kind of mentality. In ati yana it is said that since every aspect of your life is filled with space, any little gatherings of confusion and doubts have no room; they begin to pop out. That's what is called kadak-you know, completely pure, primordially pure."

Different

While much of the Shambhala tradition is based on the sanity and wisdom of the buddhadharma, it is incomplete to say that Shambhala and Buddhism are simply the same.

They also have their unique applications, purposes and processes. Fundamentally, Buddhism has its basis in individual enlightenment, to which practitioners aspire for the benefit of all beings. Shambhala, on the other hand, focuses on social enlightenment—the skill of bringing sanity to the fabric of family, work, politics, the arts, relationship to money and the natural world. It is not just a body of teachings, but also a culture that pervades every aspect of our life.

Again, the Shambhala teachings assume much of the Buddhist understanding of the nature of mind, but they are not another form of Buddhism nor are they identified with the Buddhist religion alone. For example, we see Bön “shining through” in a variety of ways: our ceremonial functions; the Shambhala emphasis on oneness with the natural world rather than personal salvation; the notion of auspicious coincidence occurring when one is in tune with the cosmos and natural laws; the lhasang that brings down gods and brings up the quality of the event; the practice and personal quality of lungta, the dignities of the four directions; the notion of dōns and teachings to overcome obstacles, and so on.

Shambhala also draws from the Epic of Gesar and the lore of his heroism and power. It also draws from life examples of the other three Ancestral Sovereigns and the notion that compassionate rulership has the power to dispel darkness on the most practical levels. We see Confucianism and Taoism reflected in a variety of the Shambhala teachings including principles of heaven, earth, and man, joining heaven and earth; basic goodness as a guiding social principle, etc. Finally, Shambhala has adopted various English and Japanese protocols, court, and governing principles.

A key point in the Dorje Dradül's Shambhala teaching was establishing enlightened society. One could perhaps say that this was the essence of it. In this context he spoke of Buddhism as a mountain, (the open background of prajna) on which Shambhala flourished as the trees, flowers, and animals living on the mountain (the manifesting upayas of Shambhala). He used many

different analogies to distinguish these two lineages, and underscore their differences, for example:

“When one enters the Shambhala world there are certain things one deals with—identification with the Rigden fathers, the Rigden aspects, and a relationship with that. The way one identifies with the Rigidens is by actually becoming a warrior oneself. Not copying, mimicking them, but actually those qualities become the warrior, and the warrior becomes those qualities. The warrior takes on the same qualities as the Rigidens. So there is total identification. There is a parallel in Buddhism—our Buddhist practice is total identification with Buddha, or awakening; Shambhala practice is total identification with the Rigidens, or earthholders. Even in the Buddhist tradition, when Sakyamuni became the Buddha, he was known as the world-renowned one, the ruler of the earth.

“So Rigden and Buddha are the secular and spiritual side of awakening. And the path of the Rigidens and Buddha's path are parallel paths. They go hand in hand, but have their own particular practices, their own particular philosophy, with one thing in common. Do you want to guess what the one thing in common is? Shamatha-vipashyana practice. We talked yesterday about the fact that neither the Shambhala world nor the Buddhist world had any copyright on awakening, but I am going to make a rather outrageous statement: There is no awakening without shamatha-vipashyana as a basic, underlying quality. The link to awakening and the method, the path to awakening, is always associated with shamatha-vipashyana.”

From a public talk published in the “Karma
Dzong Community Newsletter” July/August
1978

Further elucidation on the point of secular and spiritual is found in the following quote from a talk given at the 1979 Kalapa Assembly:

“It is a very interesting twist —nobody has thought before that you could have modern society with medieval dignity. Modern society always thinks that medieval dignity is a myth, and that the only thing that is left is Buddha, Christ, Mohammed. They were all right, they were good guys; they taught religion. But nobody seems to respect any of the rulers of those days, who made it possible for Buddha to exist in India, for Christ to exist, and for Mohammed to teach in that environment. Nobody thinks of that.”

Again, the Dorje Dradül describes the differences between the Shambhala and Buddhist traditions, but also their inseparability:

"The vision of the vajrayana and the vision of the Great Eastern Sun are one. The vision of the Great Eastern Sun expresses the idea of how to organize a society, to inspire a nation. And the vision of the vajrayana expresses how to develop indestructible being, indestructible individual. And both of those are met together without any complaints or hiatus."

Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche
The Great Eastern Sun Vajra Assembly

Inseparable

As human beings, we are individuals who are ultimately alone, yet we always dwell within a social context, in a world with other people and beings of all sorts. In this way, our spiritual and worldly sides are inseparable. Our body, speech, and mind and our world are not divided up into secular and spiritual parts. Our life is a whole, and so we are the ones who bring these two traditions together, by our very nature. As the Dorje Dradül wrote in his diary at Oxford in the late 1960s:

"I have never made a difference between the spiritual and temporal. And if I maintain the ultimate aspect of dharma, there is the ultimate aspect of temporal. If I understand the ultimate aspect of the temporal, this must be in harmony with the dharma. I alone am the one who presents the tradition of thinking this way."

Beyond

The Dorje Dradül expounded upon these three points—their same vision, their different applications, and their inseparability—in a variety of teaching situations during his life. It is difficult to hold all these points in mind at the same time. We can slip into thinking that Buddhism and Shambhala are just the same, or that they really are separate from each other. Hopefully, studying various Kalapa Assembly talks and other source materials will not only free us from any wrong or partial view, but also keep us from trying to solidify one "right" view. The Vidyadhara once commented on the religious and secular aspects: "Here, you don't wear two hats. You have only one—in fact you have no hat."

Shambhala Kingdom

The following is part of a talk given by the Dorje Dradül to members of the Shambhala Lodge in January of 1979:

"... Also in our kingdom, we might have a percentage of citizens or subjects who might be Christians or Jews in their own right, and of their

own faith. And it is necessary for them to take Shambhala Training as we run our country, and beyond that, they will find their own religious conviction of becoming true and good Christians or good Jews, speaking Hebrew perfectly. We should try to institute that particular approach. People of any faith that come along to our kingdom would practice their own discipline. Their theism has no problem if there is any contemplative discipline of their theism.

“So you are not taking this oath just to make people into Buddhists, but you are taking this oath so that you can afford to be beyond Buddhism. That’s why we call it Shambhala. The oath water that you are going to drink is the water of greater vision.”

It is the spirit and mandate of inclusiveness that is able to create a kingdom at all. From *The Great Eastern Sun*, by Chogyam Trungpa, p. 133:

“Shambhala vision applies to people of any faith, not just people who believe in Buddhism. Anyone can benefit from the Shambhala training and Shambhala vision, without its undermining their faith or their relationship with their minister, their priest, their bishop, their pope, whatever religious leaders they may follow. The Shambhala vision does not distinguish a Buddhist from a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, a Moslem, a Hindu. That’s why we call it the Shambhala kingdom. A kingdom should have lots of different spiritual disciplines in it. That’s why we are here.”

With his permission, what follows is a letter from a Halifax participant of a Level I in the Fall of 2002:

“Folks,

“I just finished the Art of Being Human training session at your Centre. I wanted to thank you, not so much for the training, as I did not learn a lot that I had not already read in various texts, but rather I wanted to thank you for welcoming me into your community. Here I am, an atheist, and you welcomed me into your centre to be trained in a room which houses shrines which are obviously of significant spiritual importance to many of you. I can be an atheist, and still appreciate and respect your spiritualism. For allowing me into your spiritual, private space, I thank you.”

Further Reading: The Office of Practice and Education has written a manual called the *Shambhala Buddhism Sourcebook*, available through Shambhala Media.

Shambhala Buddhism

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Kalapa Assembly (May 23, 2000)

Who are we? What kind of a group are we? Are we Buddhist? Are we Shambhalian? Are we both? Or are we neither? I think we often ask ourselves who we are, exactly. When I was growing up, my father, the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, was always very straightforward about who we were. It was so obvious that it did not even need to be said, so in my mind our purpose has always been clear. However, in recent years many people have been asking me what Shambhala is: Is it one path? How does it compare with Buddhism? What are we trying to pass on to future generations of Shambhalians?

Some of us like to think that Shambhala encompasses all traditions, and that nothing is excluded. We are not theists, yet we have Jews and Christians in our Shambhala Training programs. Maybe we are everything after all—both theistic and nontheistic, both religious and secular. Often we say that the Shambhala teachings capture the wisdom that exists in all humans, so different themes melt together and give birth to a vision of future society. Yet when it comes down to the details, what does it mean to encompass everything?

When we get down to specifics, the details become hazy. Some of us may feel that we are a secular group interested in education and the arts, but how does Buddhism fit? Do we mean that we practice the buddhadharma and also perform tea ceremony and arrange flowers? Is it more that culturally we accept everything, but spiritually and philosophically we adhere to the Buddhist and Shambhala views? Or is it that we are equally comfortable with Buddhism, Judaism, and shamanistic traditions? When people ask us about the specifics, we might present them with a jumble of run-on sentences that are met with a blank stare.

The Vision of the Great Eastern Sun Has Matured

It seems that over time we have been through a maturation process. It began when the Vidyadhara took a group of students and introduced them to a bigger world, that of the Great Eastern Sun, so that they would not become overly infatuated with Buddhism and tantra and meditation. He tried to educate them, to help them mature. He tried to show them the beauty of the world, and in particular, the wisdom of their own and other cultures.

That vision, along with the students, has matured over time. Many ideas have come together to formulate the world we have now that is known as Shambhala. It is a unique blend of traditions and cultures, and a very diverse mix of individuals. Although the culture of Shambhala is still developing, it seems time now to clarify

exactly who we are. It seems time that we take a look into the focus and the purpose of our vision.

The Buddhist and Shambhala Paths

My father understood that there was no conflict between Buddhism and Shambhala. To him, they were a beautiful combination and each had its role to play.

The Buddhist and Shambhala teachings both have the view that spiritual and secular activities are inseparable. They both join the ultimate and relative realities, Heaven and Earth. However, in terms of their application to our lives, they each have their own special strength, their own particular emphasis.

Buddhism is basically about how one achieves complete enlightenment and becomes a buddha. What does that mean? It means completely overcoming the obscurity of ignorance; it means realizing that the myth of permanence brings about suffering and cyclical existence in samsara; it means seeing the display of all phenomena as the expression of great bliss, the nature of reality.

The teachings of Shambhala are about king's view, how we rule our world and help others by tapping into the power, magic, and brilliance that exist in the cosmic mirror, the natural elements, and the human domain. As Shambhala warriors, we become sane, courageous individuals living in the world, always seeing and proclaiming the Great Eastern Sun.

In essence, the emphasis of the Buddhist path is to help us attain enlightenment, and the emphasis of the Shambhala path is help us create and maintain a good society. When we put these two together, we have the Shambhalian Buddhist view of enlightened society. Thus the two paths work in tandem, not in competition.

The Shambhala Terma

The teachings we know of as the Shambhala teachings come out of the visions and revelations of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. He had a series of visions and wrote them down in the texts *The Golden Sun of the Great East*, *The Letter of the Black Ashe*, *The Letter of the Golden Key*, the *Scorpion Seal* texts, and *The Lightning of Blessings*. His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche confirmed these texts as terma, which means "hidden treasures." Generally, terma were hidden by the eighth-century enlightened Buddhist saint, Padmasambhava, and his consort Yeshe Tsogyal to be revealed by the appropriate tertons ("treasure discoverers") at the time that they would be most needed by sentient beings. Some terma are physical objects and some are in the mindstream.

When asked who the source of the Shambhala texts was, the Dorje Dradül replied, "the Rigden Fathers and Mr. Gesar." He further explained that Gesar was a manifestation of Padmasambhava and the vanguard to the Shambhala teachings. Therefore, there is a deep-rooted connection between the terma revealed by the

Vidyadhara as the Shambhala teachings and the tradition of Buddhism in Tibet. In fact, they are inseparable from the Buddhist teachings.

The Shambhala terma present a way of living in the world with dignity and creative expression. These teachings invoke werma, drala, windhorse, and the powers of tiger, lion, garuda, and dragon. Instructions on how to magnetize and raise confidence are found in other teachings, especially in the works of the late Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, who wrote extensively about Shambhala, drala, and werma.

So when we understand the historical context, we see that the Vidyadhara was not pulling these teachings from thin air, but was drawing on ancestry that dates back to ancient Central and South Asia. He had visions inspired by Padmasambhava, Gesar, and the Rigdens; he was also drawing on his own upbringing in Tibet and the teachings he received based on the principles of Shambhala. Terma teachings also occur within the overall context of the “kama” or “oral” lineage of Buddhism. Whereas oral lineage teachings have been handed down directly from teacher to student since the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, terma teachings are hidden for a period of time and are only revealed at the particular time and place that they are needed. Why is it that the Shambhala teachings are so powerful and necessary now?

Worldly Wisdom for Our Time

The Shambhala teachings relate to how we can live with confidence and genuineness, always keeping basic goodness unequivocally in our mindstream. The Great Eastern Sun shines to help us remember that human beings can, in fact, live together harmoniously in a society based on the principles of nonaggression and basic goodness. This term, “basic goodness,” refers to the nature of humans, which from the beginning is profoundly good. Good means profound, brilliant, just, powerful, all victorious. There is wisdom in the minds of all sentient beings and this wisdom is our nature, as opposed to ignorance and aggression.

The Shambhala tradition also draws on the principles of the warrior, who is not a recluse cowering from the burdens of the world, but fully expresses himself or herself in the world. We humans do not have to be embarrassed. We do not have to try to protect ourselves from the intensity of the suffering in our world. We can challenge that suffering and be courageous in our proclamation of basic goodness. By proclaiming joy and fearlessness, we discover a sense of our destiny, as opposed to giving in to a mind of defeatism.

The inspiration to present the Shambhala teachings so energetically comes from their timeliness. The constant courage to go forward is the Great Eastern Sun. In love, in work, and in play, the Shambhala warrior engages in the world. The Shambhalian sees the magic and wisdom in life and realizes that it is worth living.

The Ground of Sanity

Within the first levels of the Shambhala teachings, we are developing ourselves in order to reclaim fully our inheritance as humans. One interesting point about the

intersection of Buddhism and Shambhala is that in order to truly engage in Buddhist practice, we need to have a sense of who we are. The Buddhist teachings assume that we are already individuals who are sane, who understand how to be confident, and who know how to work with our mind. Because it is so arduous, one must have a healthy sense of self, a strong grounding in sanity, and stability of mind to travel on the Buddhist path.

Each group of people that has embraced Buddhism has infused the teachings with its own cultural style. The heart of the teachings was not changed, but because of strong preexisting cultural traditions, Buddhism took on different flavors in different parts of the world. These different cultural traditions each had a unique approach to living fully as a human being in the world, which provided a genuine foundation for dharma practice.

In the modern era, however, it seems we are faced with a vacuum of sorts. Our culture's traditions of chivalry, honor, and bravery have been largely lost. Within this vacuum, the Vidyadhara presented the teachings of Shambhala. How can the teachings of the Buddha be incorporated into our society, especially in a way that does not require us all to become monastic or reclusive? We can do that by remembering to take every situation as an opportunity to practice the profound path.

The Shambhala teachings do not need to guide us through death, through the bardo, or through the succession of our lives. They do not need to present the five skandhas, the twelve nidanas, or the Madhyamika teachings in which we use prajna to see that emptiness is the nature of all phenomena. We already have these sorts of teachings within Buddhism. On a deeper level, the Shambhala teachings bring about the completion of one's Buddhist training through the skillful means of creating an enlightened society. They purify and protect the Buddhist discipline.

Shambhala Buddhist View

There was a time when people asked the Vidyadhara whether or not one had to be Buddhist to practice the Shambhala teachings. He answered that these teachings could accommodate practitioners of any faith, that many people could be inspired by the vision of Shambhala. These teachings are accessible enough, and yet deep and profound enough, that many people from different traditions will find value in them.

We want to encourage everyone to study and practice the teachings presented in the Shambhala Training program, whether or not they are interested in Buddhism. However, there may be a tendency to think that the purpose of Shambhala Training was to create an organization in which all these religious interests would have equal standing. All of us must understand that our view consists of the Shambhalian and Buddhist understanding of how to combine worldly and spiritual wisdom.

One inspiration for the teachings of Shambhala is to help people who are living in the world to be dignified. The principles of Shambhala are the principles of

enlightened culture. This culture prepares and trains us to understand the profundity and preciousness of being in the human realm. The other inspiration is to help people to discover their basic sanity and stability so that they could pursue a spiritual path, predominantly the Buddhist one, because that is the tradition that we have inherited.

What Are We Passing On?

It seems that we now find ourselves at a crossroad. We are faced with a noticeable shift as the dharma is being passed on from one generation to another, and we need to look ahead.

What will future generations call themselves? We have a unique culture. Our Buddhist teachings, originating from the great teachers of India and Tibet and in particular from the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages, are influenced by Japanese culture in the way we practice the way of the bow, eat oryoki, and arrange our shrine. The way that we educate ourselves in the dharma and our unique etiquette and manners draw inspiration from both the West and the East. By performing the lhasang, we participate in the rituals of Bön, and we include Shintoism by having shrines to the kamis. We also practice the Chinese and Japanese arts of calligraphy, Zen archery, and the equestrian arts.

These are all practices that were strongly encouraged by the Vidyadhara . We are not like other Buddhist or Zen sanghas. Much of what we assume to be Buddhist in our community is heavily influenced by the teachings of Shambhala. Ideally speaking, we should all be trained to some degree in both sets of teachings. The Vidyadhara saw the need for Buddhism to adapt to this new world, and he also saw what this world needs. The Shambhala teachings came to him in these visions and he saw that this is the perfect time for them. Furthermore, people who are inspired by Shambhala teachings who practice a different religion are welcomed, and they will enrich the Shambhala mandala as Shambhalian Christians, Shambhalian Jews, and so forth.

Now it is time for us to clarify what we are presenting in the centres. We should be able to easily express, in one sentence, to anyone who asks, who we are and what we do. That we should try to be all things to all people does not seem feasible. So, what are we passing on?

What has been passed on to me are the teachings of the buddhadharma—the lineages of hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana, and mahamudra and dzokchen within tantra—and the lineage of Shambhala. And this is what will be passed on to the future Sakyongs. Future Sakyongs will be Shambhalian Buddhists, just as this one is and the previous Sakyong was. The role of the Sakyong is to protect and propagate both the Shambhala and Buddhist teachings.

So what is at the heart of our organization, our society? What are we? We are the lineage of Shambhala Buddhism. That is what we are.

Realizing Enlightened Society Seminar
Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche
Karmê Chöling, February 1986

TALK ONE: GROUND OF BASIC GOODNESS

We are definitely turning the wheel sunwards. And it is my greatest privilege to announce the inseparability of the Shambhala approach and the buddhadharma.

How are we going to incorporate two seemingly different approaches into one entity? We have Buddhists and we have Shambharians. How are we going to mix them together?

I think it is very simple, in my way of thinking, anyway. The Shambhala approach could be regarded as the river or the trees, and the buddhadharma is the mountains on which the trees will grow and the river will flow. So buddhadharma is basic nature. In other words, white paper could be regarded as the buddhadharma, and what will occur or develop on that white paper, which is known as calligraphy, is Shambhala. In this approach, buddhadharma is regarded as the basic intrinsic nature, or background, and the Shambhala teachings will grow out of that, as the foreground. It is very basic.

We had a certain amount of difficulty in interior-decorating this particular building and this particular room [Karmê Chöling shrine room]. The architect argued with us, saying that we could not put up these columns. Finally he came to the conclusion that it was geographically and architecturally necessary to provide such columns. Let alone the gold-leafing and other decorations that went along with it. It is a very interesting perspective. According to the architect, if you looked at it from the point of view of architectural possibilities you wouldn't suggest such columns unless it became technically necessary—but apparently it is technically necessary. That is known as basic goodness strikes once more. Basic goodness is not just embellishment, but basic goodness is required in order for us to concentrate on such a situation. If you would care to ask any questions, you are more than welcome.

STUDENT: Sir, with mountains as the background, as buddhadharma, and the Shambhala teachings as the trees and rivers, where do the world's other religious traditions fit in?

VIDYADHARA: All of them.

S. Just like that?

V. Just like that!

S: Specifically then, where does Christianity fit in?

V: Sometimes it is a part of the foreground, and sometimes it is background.

S: Judaism and Hinduism?

V: Same thing.

S: What part does the sky play in all of this?

V: What?! [Laughter]

S: What part does the sky play in this scheme of mountains and trees and rivers?

V: Big rock.

S: Is it a beginning?

V: It's a beginning, yes. You'll be surprised how large it will be.

S: Sir, in the past you've used another analogy in discussing the relationship between Shambhala and buddhadharma. You've said that Shambhala is the vessel that will contain buddhadharma. The analogy that you're using tonight seems the opposite of that.

V: I think it's saying the same thing. Shambhala is more embellishment; buddhadharma is more what is being embellished.

TALK TWO: PATH OF SIMPLICITY

Good evening. Tonight's presentation should be very simple and very direct. It involves the basic nature of Shambhala and buddhadharma, with a strong emphasis on the Shambhala approach.

The Shambhala approach is the general application of cosmetics to reality. And buddhadharma is basic space, or the basic ground on which you put the cosmetics.

The general emphasis here is on how well defined your situations is, without just simply cracking jokes about reality. It involves some sense of solemnity—as far as realizing that basic goodness is not a laughing matter, but a solemn situation. Basic goodness is very genuine. It goes through your general perspective about how you feel about life.

[Long pause]

How to cheer up—or how not to cheer up—is the point.

[Long pause]

It seems that the key point is how to make oneself awake, how to make oneself available to awake.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's pretty much it. I don't want to make it too complicated or make it further unnecessary conversation.

Stop conversing more than necessary and simplify your life as much as you can. Thank you.

[Long pause]

I don't think there is much conversation happening tonight—if there is, you're welcome.

STUDENT: Sir, could you explain how we could achieve this sense of solemnity without becoming deadly serious?

VIDYADHARA: I think it's a question of being in contact with reality, then we don't have to crank up something else.

S: Sir, would you say something more about putting cosmetics on reality, as opposed to cranking up something to do with reality?

V: I think the point is to do it on the spot, rather than pretend to do it.

S: Sir, you spoke about buddhadharma as relating with basic space and the Shambhala teachings as a kind of embellishment. Later you said to simplify and reduce conversation. To me, conversation seems like a kind of embellishment. If we reduce our conversation, where is the embellishment of our social contact with each other?

V: I think it's just there. It happens by itself.

S: So by being simple with each other we are being Shambhalian.

V: Yes.

TALK THREE: FRUTION OF ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's the third day of our study of Shambhala and buddhadharma, how buddhadharma and Shambhala could be put together.

In our first talk we discussed background and foreground. With that reference point we are continuing to work on how to lead life properly. Leading life may be putting together some kind of dichotomy, but it's workable. Basically speaking, it is creating enlightened society.

Society, from this point of view, is the general set-up of putting people together within their own reference point. It doesn't have to be particularly revolutionary. It is very simple and direct—what people need. And what people need is security, comfort—which we could relate with very simply—and moreover some sense of psychological environment.

If people would like to get involved with a discussion on that, that's fine.

STUDENT: Sir, I've been living in Nova Scotia for two years now, and I find a tremendous sense of sadness there.

VIDYADHARA: I think that's precisely the reference point of why we should go there.

S: Thank you. I guess I'm in the right place.

S: Sir, you said that living life involved a sense of resolving a dichotomy. What dichotomy did you mean?

V: Cheerful, but strange.

S: Are these in the environment -- or are they things that we project onto it?

V: In any case it's slightly strange.

S: How do we begin to relate with sadness?

V: Being more sad: sadder and sadder.

S: Forever sadder and sadder?

V: Yes.

S: Purely for its own sake?

V: Just simply being sad. You wouldn't understand how to be sad. Simply being sadder.

S: Sir, you said that in working to realize an enlightened society, we can feel comfortable in giving people what they need if what they need is security and comfort. Is that one of the things we have to do, give people what we see they need?

V: I think so, yes.

S: To follow that a little further, sir—in order to do this and to try to realize an enlightened society in that way, are you suggesting more emphasis on the Shambhala approach?

V: Yes.

S: And in the way that we carry on conversations and reach out to people?

V: That's questionable.

S: That's questionable?

V: Conversations we discussed last night.

S: But you said we create a psychological environment for people.

V: You'd better watch out for that!

S: Well, I know that in Shambhala Training a lot of attention is paid to the environment.

V: We'd better watch out even for that!

S: I don't remember your words exactly but I think you said you would be talking about the inseparability of buddhadharma and Shambhala. If they're inseparable, would it be right to say that basic goodness is inseparable from awareness?

V: Yes. Thank you for arriving here safely—in one piece—and for taking part in this short but very potent training program—though we have a long way to go. It is very definite and very serious. Thank you.

Secular Enlightenment and the Way of Shambhala

Secular Enlightenment: The Manifested Heart by Acharya Christie Cashman

The prophecy made before the birth of the Buddha indicated that he would be a great person—either a universal monarch or a buddha. As a universal monarch, he would remain in his palace and presumably bring assistance to people and dignity to the precarious processes of birth, sickness, old age, and death. As a buddha, he would abandon his royal palace and, attaining complete enlightenment, would transcend birth, old age, sickness, and death. The tension between these two approaches became the basis for the early life of Prince Siddhartha, who chose finally to leave his palace, and eventually became a buddha. As Buddhists, this is the story and example that we hold close to our hearts.

By contrast, as Shambhalians, our practice is not to leave the palace, so to speak, but to establish courts and court-like environments for others. Most of the people with whom many of us work day to day do not have palaces to renounce—that is to say, we are living at a time and in a world in which beings, some of whom may be materially wealthy, are experiencing poverty at the very root of their lives. There is a universal need to proclaim human dignity and inherent richness, and to support the natural and social environments that nurture these.

Our times are captured so poignantly by Thrangu Rinpoche's "Fulfilling the Aspirations of the Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche":

"May the growing suffering of poverty and destitution due to the decline in prosperity, the affliction of various diseases previously unknown, the horrors of a war that could destroy the world ...be completely quelled...may drala and werma gather like clouds."

What Is Secular Enlightenment?

This aspiration was at the root of the Dorje Dradül's work to bring about secular enlightenment—inspired educational institutions, refined sense of culture, far-reaching governing structures, egoless art, and the infusion of sacredness into every corner of our lives. As he said in the years in which he was working to express why he had initiated a Shambhala educational path,

"The world is not going to be saved purely by religion alone, but the world can be saved also by secular enlightenment as well. So that is the meaning of Shambhala." (1982, New York City)

Now, many years later, many of us are still stumbling as we try to express why we offer a Shambhala path. We often hear, “Well, at a Shambhala centre we teach the buddhadharma, but we also have Shambhala Training—a way for non-Buddhists to learn how to meditate.” Such a description misses an opportunity to express the Shambhala path's deep social purpose.

The Manifested Heart

Meditation may be best known for its ability to dissolve our concrete, confused, and conceptual realities into openness. The path of the meditator may be less recognized as a path of social engagement—one in which definite, graceful, and penetrating social practicalities are manifested. The Shambhala path is often misunderstood in this regard, and mistaken for a journey of deep inner transformation alone. The first five levels of Shambhala Training give a strong foundation in meditation practice, providing a sense of personal nurturing within the complexity of daily life. But the remaining levels cultivate a person's natural gifts and dignities that could serve the world. The unfolding of the four dignities, for example, describes a warrior's maturing and widening sphere of compassionate influence.

The culmination of *The Way of Shambhala* path is to apply one's training and wisdom to alleviate the suffering and degradation now taking place throughout the world; to help ourselves and others connect to our fundamental human nature and the sacredness of the earth. One pledges to manifest the sane and compassionate ideals of Shambhala in whatever ways one's skills meet auspiciously with the needs of one's community; to not retreat politically, artistically, emotionally, or ecologically, but to help—in any way one can—to cure the world of pain. This is the ideal.

How Are We Doing?

Our ability to manifest the path we espouse is of great interest and curiosity to both old and new students. Of course, we are strong in some areas and weaker in others. On the very positive side, many thousands of individuals throughout the world are fusing their work, with the power and creativity of the meditative mind—all these bodhisattva warriors have unique and often amazing stories to tell. Where the numbers of these individuals are great, and selfless collaboration with their wider community is taking place, Shambhala begins to become real.

When individuals work together, as has happened so often in the Shambhala community, particularly around education, the influence of overlapping spheres of social engagement becomes tremendous. After only forty years, many hundreds of leaders, teachers, and meditation instructors have been trained to provide authentic dharma to others; children and adults alike are educated and practicing meditation in various specialized formal contexts; archival preservation of the teachings ensures that the original words of our teachers will survive for future generations; high quality publications, magazines, and books are widely distributed; Tibetan translation has taken root; dharma art and wisdom energies serve to create sacred

containers; and increasingly large numbers of centres provide places for people to gather, find wisdom, comfort, and celebration.

Amazing for a young community. And yet, we have further to go.

Coming to Earth

Much of our education continues to be view-oriented. Frontline warriors are asking for courses which come down to earth to address and prepare us for the life-threatening forces of materialism we are surrounded by every day—the seduction of speed and workaholism, the isolation of family life, the power of consumerism and entertainment, and so on. Courses are being developed in these and other areas; along with guidelines, such as those on Wholesome Human Conduct, which further and more specifically address a number of the social issues facing our community today.

Alliances With Others

As we contemplate where, as a community, we need to grow, our minds will naturally turn to those social initiatives that respond directly to urgent world events: war, environmental degradation, and other human crises. It would appear that the time has come to engage in this arena. These larger, outward turning campaigns, will not, and should not necessarily be “ours” alone. In recognizing the fundamental egolessness and wisdom of others, we recognize the people of the world as our ultimate community, our matrix from which the next level of service will need to come. The Sakyong supports this approach in his simple, but profound statement about Shambhala membership, which he does not envision as a small, exclusive group of several thousand meditators, but a world community; “I can think of very few people who do not already have a connection to meditation.” As meditation is the way we open our minds to each other and overcome the boundaries that separate us, such a perspective is the magic key. Important alliances with like-minded individuals and organizations have begun to take place, such as the collaboration on leadership training between Authentic Leadership in Action and the United Way, in Nova Scotia.

At The Core

At the core of any genuine inspiration to serve the cause of peace in the world must be the determined but gentle heart. And so it is that the Shambhala path offers the potent and quick, heart-opening, heart-strengthening practice of *Ashe*. In a world of unbridled aggression and self-doubt, strength of heart is no small gift. Seen here at the level of mastery, the Vidyadhara addresses a Nova Scotia public audience in 1982. He was responding to the discouragement of his audience, to their marvelous questions, and to their fear regarding the power brokers of war and greed:

“Personally speaking I have never been put off, I never give up at all. I am not going to give up the cause of peace that might occur in this world. And I am looking forward to it in some sense. The more chaos happens, I feel more possibility of creating greater peace, and when I see

more aggression, more chaos, I feel more encouraged. That is, my smile is never diminished. I always smile."

Lineage Chants

The following commentary on the Shambhala lineage chants is included as a way to provide a further overview of the Shambhala lineage and demonstrates how the various lineage streams discussed above come together in the present-day manifestation of Shambhala.

Homage

Both the Homage and the Invocation are based on the opening section of the terma text, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*, received by the Druk Sakyong in October of 1976. The Invocation and Homage are identical except for the last line of each stanza. Invocation: *May the goodness of the Rigden King be present.*

Stanza One: The Rigden King

He who has neither beginning nor end,

Who possesses the glory of Tiger Lion Garuda Dragon,

Who possesses the confidence beyond words:

I pay homage at the feet of the Rigden King.

This first stanza is in the form of a verse typically found in Buddhist tantric literature, paying homage to a particular deity. In this case, the homage is to the Rigden King. Rigden is a Tibetan term meaning, “endowed with the family,” which refers to the indestructible family to which all Shambhala students belong. The Rigden principle of primordial warriorship represents the wisdom contained in the open and relaxed mind before thought. In the later levels of *The Way of Shambhala*, the student warrior is taught to invoke the Rigden principle through practices that open the heart on the spot and bring about a sense of majesty and insight. In this context, the notion of “king” is the reigning principle of unbiased meditative awareness, which is like the sky. It is important to note that this is not a description of a remote and therefore somewhat meaningless reality. The Rigden King is met over time, through practice, when one dares to directly engage in the penetrating, precise, and at times claustrophobic textures we encounter in everyday complex situations, emotions, and relationships. It is here that one discovers the confident and loving dignity of one's natural mind.

Stanza Two: The Ancestral Sovereigns

They who possess great wisdom, brilliant and profound,

Who are ever just and benevolent to their subjects,

Who subjugate their enemies and are supremely powerful—

By the golden yoke of their imperial rule

They ward off döns of plague, famine, and war—

Gesar Norbu Dradül, Ashoka Maharaja, Emperors of Japan, China, and so on:

I pay homage to the ancestral sovereigns.

This stanza speaks of the "ancestral sovereigns"—a specific reference to four historical figures who were revealed to the Dorje Dradül through his Shambhala terma: Ashoka Maharaja of India, Prince Shotoku of Japan, Emperor Yung-Lo of China, and King Gesar of Tibet. They are invoked here as brilliant leaders of humanity. Several members of the Shambhala community have researched their lives beyond the usual historical depictions, attempting to explore what may be their true place in history. Articles and community talks on the sovereigns by Robin Kornman, Fenja Heupers, and others are available for the interested reader; the following, however, provides a very brief snapshot of each of their lives.

Generally speaking, it would seem that Dharmaraja Ashoka, Prince Shotoku, Emperor Yung-Lo, and King Gesar were able to overcome much of the social depression of their times and accomplish a great degree of cultural revitalization—in short, enlighten their societies. Although they were born within various cultural norms, they had the fearlessness and vision to go beyond these norms. Their initiatives, generally speaking, were ordinary in nature but extraordinary for their time, providing basic care for the elderly, easing the voyages of travelers, relieving the suffering of animals, increasing accessibility of medicines, and bringing about reforms in education. Under each of their influences, Buddhism was elevated and established and its ideals of benevolence and harmony incorporated into the culture.

The Indian King Ashoka lived in the third century BC. Known as one of the greatest emperors of India, Ashoka is famous for his dramatic life change upon hearing of the horrors caused by his conquest of Orissa. He experienced extreme anguish and remorse, and embarked upon a journey of personal transformation and awakening. He converted from Brahmanism to Buddhism and vowed to rule his people according to the principles of compassion and nonviolence from that day forward. His activities were pragmatic and effective: he gave up the royal sport of hunting, prohibited the slaughter of animals for the royal kitchen, built hospitals for both animals and people, constructed rest houses and dug wells for travelers, and had roadside trees planted for shade. He is perhaps most widely known for broadcasting teachings of personal and social well being. These became known as the "Edicts of Ashoka," and were engraved on large stone pillars and rocks throughout India.

Ashoka convened the famous “Third Council” after the death of the Buddha in Pataliputra to settle certain doctrinal controversies. He also expanded Buddhism eastward to large areas of Southeast Asia, including Burma, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Prince Shotoku Taishi of Japan was born in 574 AD. Seven hundred years after Ashoka, Prince Shotoku was instrumental in the transformation of Japanese culture. Although only the Regent to his Aunt, Empress Suiko, he exerted enormous influence, and is known today as the “George Washington” of Japan. Among his many accomplishments:

- He encouraged merit as a qualification beyond that of heredity as a requirement for holding public office.
- He issued the Constitution of 17 articles setting down Confucian principles of government and ethics, and introduced the Chinese calendar and Chinese aesthetic values to Japan.
- He was an influential royal patron of the arts. Under his direction, Chinese and Korean craft-workers were invited to Japan to build, paint, and sculpt.
- Under his patronage, Buddhism became firmly established in Japan.
- He prohibited the killing of all animals; however, after much pressure, he conceded to allowing the killing of fish, maintaining strict protection of all four-legged creatures.

Gesar Mukpo of Tibet is said to have lived around the 11-12th centuries. He is seen as a restorative figure in a time of social upheaval—a time when people's minds had become “hard as rock and stone.” Most of our knowledge of Gesar comes from stories passed down from generation to generation through an oral tradition called the Epic of Gesar of Ling. Gesar's monumental task was to overcome the influence of four kings who, through their perverted aspirations, had spread harm to people and caused the destruction of the buddhadharma. In our current Shambhala teachings, these four kings have come to represent “the enemies of the four directions,” or forces of materialism, which we are taught to engage directly and transform through our dignity and awakened heart. The stories of Gesar, his Aunt Manene, and others put the teachings of lungta, drala, auspicious coincidence, authentic presence, and so on into a living historical context.

Emperor Yung-Lo of China was born in 1360. As the third emperor of the Ming dynasty, Yung-Lo is known for his sense of overwhelming power, political acumen, and expansive societal vision. He accomplished enormous projects. In the area of education, he had a body of scientific, cultural, and religious knowledge gathered, printed, and preserved in an eleven- thousand volume encyclopedia, which was published within the first few years of his reign. He oversaw the moving of the capital and the building of the Forbidden City in Beijing, and was dedicated to the flourishing of the arts—painting, art theory, drama, and porcelain were at an all-time high in this dynasty. He promoted the principles of non-aggression and devotion, which he had learned through his teacher, the Fifth Karmapa, Teshin Shekpa, whom he placed above and before himself—a most unusual approach for an

emperor of his time. It was Yung-Lo who saw a vision of a black hat or crown upon the head of Teshin Shekpa, and physically replicated it. This is the hat that has been worn subsequently by the lineage of Karmapas to bestow the famed Black Crown Ceremony.

Stanza Three: The Mukpo Clan

The ones who are nobly born as Mukpo clan,

Who defeat the eclipse of the Great Eastern Sun

And sharpen the blade of primordial Ashe:

They are victorious over all their enemies, the forces of materialism.

They see the Tiger Lion Garuda Dragon vision.

They are fearless in the midst of barbarian arrogance.

They tame the untamable beings.

They inspire the savages of the setting sun Into the sophistication of the Great Eastern Sun:

I pay homage to the Sakyong and the Sakyong Wangmo.

The Shambhala tradition has been passed down through a family lineage of warriors, the Mukpo clan—one of six main tribes of Tibet. (The “u” in “Mukpo” is pronounced as in the word “book.”) The great warrior Gesar was the progenitor of the Mukpo family and the vanguard of our Shambhala world.

“Mukpo” is a Tibetan word that literally means dark, black. As the story goes, it was a term used to describe a warrior who came from India to Tibet—he never spoke Tibetan, he just arrived, and because of his dark skin, the Tibetans called him by the honorific term, “Mukpo,” meaning “dark complexion”. The Dorje Dradül would affectionately refer to the Mukpo name as being connected with earth—that heaven and earth are joined on earth. He spoke of the need to ground ourselves constantly on the earth, in the dark soil of the Mukpo style, rather than just dream the dreams that float in our imaginations alone.

Although both the Dorje Dradül and the Sakyong are known by their Buddhist titles—Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Mipham Rinpoche—they are also proud inheritors of the family lineage of Mukpo warriors, and therefore retain the Mukpo name. In this way, they are holders of both lineages, as are their Shambhala Buddhist students. Those of us who are students of Shambhala and followers of

other religious traditions, are also, quite naturally, included in the Shambhala community and family of Mukpo warriorship.

The last line of the stanza is a specific reference to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. “Sakyong” is the Tibetan word for “Earth Protector”—one who has been empowered or enthroned to protect this world through the fusion of sacredness with the very real, often gritty realities of our personal and communal lives. A “Sakyong Wangmo” (“Lady Earth Protector”) embodies the principles of harvesting peace, fostering communication and culture. She binds a society together with the yielding quality of her tears and gentleness along with unflinching toughness and ability to speak the truth. Both Sakyong and Sakyong Wangmo are teachers and embodiments of warriorship. Together they establish a “court” or Potrang in Tibetan, which is the center of Shambhala rulership, teaching, family, and culture. It is the model of a Shambhala household. The education of a Sakyong or Sakyong Wangmo is exceedingly complete—either a Sakyong Wangmo or Sakyong can manifest as the ruler of a society if she or he is raised in this capacity from an early age.

Stanza Four: The Great Eastern Sun

Radiating confidence, peaceful,

Illuminating the way of discipline,

Eternal ruler of the three worlds:

May the Great Eastern Sun be victorious.

The Great Eastern Sun is the unsetting awareness that arises as the power and dignity of human beings. Such lucid and direct awareness is magical—it is what opens the gold-like treasury of phenomena. At the same time, it is the experience of waking up from personal confusion and darkness to a connection with our own courage. Sometimes referred to as the genuine sun that rises in one's heart, the radiance of the Great Eastern Sun is perceived through the senses as the luminosity of the world. Such light is not ordinary light, but is the innate brilliance of mind that shows one how to proceed and how to care for others. As the feminine aspect of warriorship, the Great Eastern Sun illuminates the deep, subtle, and fluid energies of reality, bringing unshakable confidence and doubtless precision to the warrior's mind.

Supplication to the Shambhala Lineage

[adapted from commentary prepared by the Nalanda Translation committee].

In this chant, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche acknowledges the various sources of the Shambhala Lineage.

Primordial Rigden,

All-good Samantabhadra,

Great Vajradhara;

The first three lines address the dharmakaya origins of the Shambhala Lineage. The “primordial Rigden” (Tib. *rigs ldan*; “holder of the family”) is the symbolic source of the Shambhala Lineage. “Samantabhadra” is the dharmakaya buddha of the Nyingma lineage, just as Vajradhara is that of the Kagyü lineage. Samantabhadra symbolizes complete primordial purity and utter wakefulness.

Lotus-born Padmaakara,

Wisdom Yeshe Tsogyal,

Prahevajra, Shri Simha,

Holders of the ancient Great Perfection;

The next four lines address founders of the Nyingma lineage. Prahevajra (also known as Garap Dorje) was the first human in the ati tradition. Shri Simha followed shortly after that. Yeshe Tsogyal was Padmasambhava’s Nepalese consort, who became a powerful teacher in her own right.

Tilo, Naro, Marpa, Mila,

Siddhi-accomplishing masters of mahamudra:

Please approach and grant your blessings.

This is a supplication to the first human holders of the Kagyü lineage, whose special practice is mahamudra.

Dawa Sangpo, the other dharmarajas, and the twenty-five Rigdens,

Who guide beings to the sacred land of Shambhala,

You are the sun and moon, the wish-fulfilling jewel.

Your brilliant mind is the ornament of the world.

Protect my vajra awareness.

Grant your blessings so that I may realize great bliss-wisdom.

King Dawa Sangpo is the first lineage holder of Shambhala. It is said that he requested the Buddha to give him teachings that he could practice while still ruling and being engaged in his society. The Buddha gave him teachings that could be

practiced by lay people in the context of their usual societal obligations. It is said that, in the kingdom of Shambhala, it was easy to practice dharma and the society was vastly uplifted. The “twenty-five Rigdens” are the kings who followed Dawa Sangpo. These rulers protect our own awareness through their unshakable commitment to basic goodness.

Gesar Norbu Dradül, you are the great activity lion. All-victorious Sakyong, you reveal the treasure of basic goodness And radiate the Great Eastern Sun. Gesar is the quintessential warrior of Shambhala, fearless in the face of all psychological and physical obstacles. “Sakyong” (Tib. for “earth protector”) is an enlightened ruler who joins the vast vision of heaven with the practicality of earth, thus creating a sacred human society. “Great Eastern Sun” represents the inherently awake quality of mind, ever dawning anew.

Ashe, the essence of life, fearlessly reveals confidence and compassion;

May all discover the power of this magic.

The drala lineage of Mukpo, you bring about the new golden age.

Grant your blessings so that I may liberate all beings.

The Ashe is a symbol of wakefulness, bravery, and gentle openness in the human heart. “Drala lineage of Mukpo” refers to the Mukpo clan, Trungpa Rinpoche’s ancestral family lineage. It is called the “drala lineage” because it has the power to overcome confusion and setting-sun outlook.

Buddhas, bodhisattvas, warriors, masters of the three times,

You guide us along the path to liberation.

You awaken bodhichitta.

You teach us the great view of emptiness.

You reveal the joy of luminosity.

Transmitting awareness-wisdom,

You lead us to perfect enlightenment.

Grant your blessings so that I may realize my nature

As the profound brilliant Rigden.

In the concluding lines, we honor all of the previous masters from all wisdom traditions around the world. The path is then summarized with the gradual emphasis on liberation, compassion, emptiness, and ultimately the joy of luminosity and awareness-wisdom. This leads to perfect enlightenment. Finally, we aspire to accomplish the completely awake, spacious state of the Rigden, which is our own nature. In this way, the closing lines of homage to the Primordial Rigden connect

back to the opening lines, and which is ultimately our basic goodness, revealing that the whole lineage is already present in our own being.

Biographies of the Sakyongs

The Druk Sakyong, the Vidyadhara, Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

The Druk or “Dragon” Sakyong, the Ven. Chögyam Trungpa was born in the province of Kham in Eastern Tibet, in 1940. When he was just thirteen months old, Chögyam Trungpa was recognized as a major *tülku*, or incarnate teacher. Chögyam Trungpa was the eleventh in the teaching lineage known as the Trungpa tülkus.

Once young tülkus are recognized, they enter a period of intensive training in the theory and practice of the Buddhist teachings. Trungpa Rinpoche (*Rinpoche* being an honorific term meaning “precious one”), having been enthroned as Supreme Abbot of Surmang Monasteries and Governor of Surmang District, began a period of training that would last eighteen years, until his departure from Tibet in 1959. As a Kagyü tülku, his training was based on the systematic practice of meditation and on a refined theoretical understanding of Buddhist philosophy. One of the four great lineages of Tibet, the Kagyü is known as “the Practice Lineage.”

At the age of eight, Chögyam Trungpa received ordination as a novice monk. After his ordination, he engaged in intensive study and practice of the traditional monastic disciplines as well as in the arts of calligraphy, thangka painting, and monastic dance. His primary teachers were Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen and Khenpo Gangshar—leading teachers in the Nyingma lineage. In 1958, at the age of eighteen, Trungpa Rinpoche completed his studies, receiving the degrees of *kyorpön* (Doctor of Divinity) and *khenpo* (Master of Studies). He also received full monastic ordination.

The late fifties were a time of great upheaval in Tibet. As it became clear that the Chinese Communists fully intended to take over the country by force, many people, both monastic and lay, fled the country. Trungpa Rinpoche spent many months in a harrowing trek over the Himalayas (described in his book, *Born in Tibet*). After narrowly escaping death or capture by the Chinese, he at last reached India in 1959. While in India, Chögyam Trungpa was appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to serve as the spiritual advisor to the Young Lamas Home School in Dalhousie, India. He served in this capacity from 1959 to 1963.

Trungpa Rinpoche's eldest son, Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo, was born in India in 1962, at which time the Vidyadhara bestowed many empowerments and long life abhishekas on him. Although it was Trungpa Rinpoche's desire to bring his son with him to

England when he went there the following year, he was unable to do so until several years later.

Trungpa Rinpoche's first encounter with the West came when he received a Spaulding sponsorship to attend Oxford University. While at Oxford he studied comparative religion, philosophy, and fine arts. He also studied Japanese flower arranging, receiving a degrees from the Sogetsu School. While in England, Trungpa Rinpoche began to instruct Western students in the dharma (the teachings of the Buddha), and in 1968 he founded the Samye Ling Meditation Centre in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. While in Great Britain, Chögyam Trungpa published his first two books in English: *Born in Tibet* and *Meditation in Action*.

In 1969, Trungpa Rinpoche traveled to Bhutan where he engaged in a solitary meditation retreat. This retreat marked a pivotal change in his approach to teaching. Immediately upon returning he became a lay person, no longer wearing his monastic robes but dressing in ordinary Western attire. He married a young English girl and moved to North America. Many of his early students found these changes shocking and upsetting. However, Trungpa felt strongly that in order to take root in the West, the dharma needed to be taught free from cultural trappings and religious fascination.

During the seventies America was in a period of political and cultural ferment. It was a time of fascination with the East. Within that context, Trungpa criticized the materialistic and the commercialized approach to spirituality he described as “the spiritual supermarket.” Through his lectures and in his books, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* and *Myth of Freedom*, Trungpa emphasized the simplicity and directness of the practice of sitting meditation as the way to cut through such distortions of the spiritual journey.

During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, Trungpa Rinpoche developed a reputation as a dynamic and controversial teacher. Fluent in the English language, he was one of the first lamas who could speak to Western students directly, without the aid of a translator. Traveling extensively throughout North America and Europe, Trungpa Rinpoche gave hundreds of talks and seminars, and established major centres in Vermont, Colorado, and Nova Scotia. Vajradhatu was formed in 1973 as the central administrative body, directing the activities of his many meditation and study centres located throughout North America and Europe.

In 1974, Trungpa Rinpoche founded The Naropa Institute, the only accredited Buddhist-inspired university in North America. He lectured extensively at the Institute, and his book *Journey Without Goal* is based on a course he taught there.

Trungpa Rinpoche soon took a major step in his teaching which was to transform his spiritual community. In 1976, he received the first of the Shambhala *terma* or “treasure” teachings. This teaching emphasized basic goodness and the path to create enlightened society. It drew upon the ancestral “warrior” teachings and the

possibility of secular enlightenment. He established the Shambhala Training program, a powerful series of weekend programs and seminars that teach participants the skills needed to create a sane society. His book *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* provides an overview of the Shambhala teachings. His name in the Shambhala context is the Dorje Dradül (Indestructible Warrior) of Mukpo and he is sometimes known as the Druk (Dragon) Sakyong.

In 1976, Trungpa Rinpoche appointed Ösel Tendzin (Thomas F. Rich) as his Vajra Regent, or dharma heir. Ösel Tendzin worked closely with Trungpa Rinpoche in the administration of Vajradhatu and Shambhala Training. He taught extensively from 1976 until his death in 1990, and is the author of *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand*.

In 1978, the Vidyadhara performed a ceremony conferring on his eldest son, Ösel Rangdröl the title of Sawang (Earth Lord), formally empowering him as his heir. The Vidyadhara continued the Sakyong's training under his close guidance with the understanding that his son would one day be empowered as Sakyong, as he himself had been.

Trungpa Rinpoche was also active in the field of translation. Working with Francesca Freemantle, he brought out a new translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* in 1975. Later he formed the Nalanda Translation Committee to translate texts and liturgies for his own students, as well as to make important texts available publicly.

Trungpa Rinpoche was also known for his interest in the arts, and particularly for his insights into the relationship between contemplative discipline and the creative process. His own art work included calligraphy, painting, flower arranging, poetry, playwriting, and environmental installations. In addition, at The Naropa Institute he created an educational atmosphere that attracted many leading artists and poets. The exploration of the creative process in light of contemplative training continues there as a provocative dialogue. Trungpa Rinpoche has published two books of poetry, *Mudra* and *First Thought, Best Thought*.

Trungpa Rinpoche's published books represent only a fraction of the rich legacy of his teachings. During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, he crafted the structures necessary to provide his students with systematic training in the dharma. From introductory talks and courses to advanced group retreat practices, these programs emphasize the balance of study and practice, of intellect and intuition. Students at all levels can pursue their interest in meditation and the Buddhist path through these many forms of training. Senior students of Trungpa Rinpoche are involved in both teaching and meditation instruction in such programs and at the centres. In addition to his extensive teaching of the Buddhist tradition, Trungpa placed great emphasis on the Shambhala teachings, which emphasize the importance of mind training as distinct from religious practice; community involvement and the creation of an enlightened society; and appreciation of one's day-to-day life. Preserved in the Shambhala Archives in both taped and written

form, further works will be edited and made available to the public, as circumstances permit.

Trungpa Rinpoche passed away in 1987 at the age of forty-seven. He is survived by his wife, Lady Diana, and five sons. His eldest son and heir, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, succeeds him as head of Shambhala. By the time of his death, Trungpa Rinpoche had become known as a pivotal figure in introducing dharma in the Western world. The joining of his great appreciation for Western culture and his deep understanding of his own tradition led to a revolutionary approach to teaching the dharma, in which the most ancient and profound teachings were presented in a thoroughly contemporary way. Trungpa Rinpoche was known for his fearless proclamation of the dharma: free from hesitation, true to the purity of the tradition, and utterly fresh. May these teachings take root and flourish for the benefit of all sentient beings.

The Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche

[thanks to Shastri Benoît Côté for excerpts from the article, “Twenty Years of Ruling and Teaching”]

The Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, eldest son of Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, was born on the full moon day of the tenth month of the Year of the Water Tiger, December 11, 1962, in Bodhgaya, India. When he was three days old, he was given the name Ösel Rangdröl (Self-liberated Luminosity) by his father.

Before the Sakyong's birth, the Vidyadhara predicted that he would be a divine emanation. At the Vidyadhara's request, Lady Könchok Paldrön, the Sakyong's mother, went on a pilgrimage of sacred Buddhist sites in India. At the time of his birth, she was in Bodhgaya, where the Buddha attained enlightenment.

The Sakyong spent his early years with Lady Könchok in a Tibetan refugee village in northwest India. When he was a year old, his mother took the Sakyong on a pilgrimage to sacred Buddhist sites in India, including Minali, Simla, and Bir. At the age of seven, he went to live with the Vidyadhara at Samye Ling Meditation Centre in Scotland. In 1971, the Sakyong joined his father and stepmother, Lady Diana Mukpo, in Boulder, Colorado. There he continued his Buddhist studies as well as his western education. In addition, the Sakyong received training in various contemplative arts, such as Japanese archery, calligraphy, flower arranging, tea ceremony, and horsemanship.

In 1978, the Vidyadhara performed a ceremony conferring on Ösel Rangdröl the title of Sawang (Earth Lord), formally empowering him as his heir. The Vidyadhara continued the Sakyong's training under his close guidance with the understanding that his son would one day be empowered as Sakyong, as he himself had been.

The Sakyong also received many teachings and empowerments from the great teachers of the Karma Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, among them His Holiness the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, the Venerable Tenga Rinpoche, the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, the Venerable Tulku Urgyen, and His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, supreme head of the Nyingma lineage, Khenpo Namdrol and Dodrupchen Rinpoche. The great Nyingma teacher and previous head of the Nyingma lineage, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, was like a second father to the Sakyong.

While the Sakyong was continuing his western academic studies in England, Khyentse Rinpoche requested him to come to Asia to live and study with him, noting that he would have to “take responsibility for continuing his father’s teachings.” In 1987, after the death of his father, the Sakyong moved to Nepal and studied with Khyentse Rinpoche for many years, receiving teachings and empowerments from him.

In 1990, with the passing of the Vajra Regent and at Khyentse Rinpoche’s urging, the Sakyong returned from this period of practice and study to lead the international community and direct the work his father had begun. The Sakyong’s first major initiative was to bring the many activities of the Vidyadhara’s students under the umbrella of Shambhala. City centres throughout the world, until that time known as Dharmadhatus, became Shambhala Meditation Centres, offering Buddhist meditation and study programs, Shambhala Training, and cultural activities all under one roof. In the Sakyong’s words, this allowed “all the various traditions that we have inherited to blossom in their own way.”

The Sakyong then began years of touring and teaching throughout the world, as well as presiding over major intensive training programs such as Seminaries and Kalapa Assemblies. The Sakyong divided his time between these teaching activities and practice and writing retreats. As well as writing numerous commentaries on the Vidyadhara’s works, the Sakyong published a book of poetry, *Smile of the Tiger*, and composed several sadhanas—traditional practice texts.

In May 1995, the Sawang was formally installed as Sakyong, leader of both the spiritual and secular aspects of Shambhala, and given the name and title: Sakyong Mipham Jampal Trinley Dradül Rinpoche. A Sakyong, or “earth protector,” is one who inspires a sense of sacredness, caring for others, and basic goodness in both individuals and society as a whole. His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, who conducted the enthronement, also recognized the Sakyong as an incarnation of Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso, the revered nineteenth-century Tibetan meditation master and scholar. The enthronement formalized Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche’s lifelong commitment to work with others towards creating enlightened society.

In 1997, the Sakyong left for Asia, for an intensive period of practice and study with Khenpo Namdröl, one of the greatest living scholars of Mipham the Great. The Sakyong received empowerments and additional teachings from His Holiness Penor Rinpoche. He came back to teach the 1999 three-month seminary where he

introduced an extensive body of philosophical and tantric teachings based upon his period of study.

From June 6 to July 17, 2001, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche traveled to Tibet. The purpose of the journey was to visit the Surmang monasteries, home to the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and the Golok region, where descendants of the family of the previous Mipham still live. At Surmang, he met with the then twelve-year-old Chökyi Senge, the Twelfth Trungpa Tulku. During this trip, he performed the Sadhana of Mahamudra abhisheka several times, once to a crowd of over 3,000 people. In Golok, he was honored by officials, lamas and family descendants as the reincarnation of Mipham the Great and was given relics and objects that belonged to his predecessor. Among these was the jade personal seal of Mipham the Great, his tea bowl, and a handwritten text.

In 2003 the Sakyong published his first public dharma book, entitled *Turning the Mind into an Ally*, which went on to become a best-seller.

During the first week of the 2004 Vajrayana Seminary, the Sakyong wrote *The Primordial Rigden, The Magical Heart of Shambhala*. This is a ngöndro liturgy, a preliminary practice that leads to a particular empowerment, the Rigden abhisheka, that introduces a sadhana practice called Werma. From now on, that ngöndro would be the practice introduced at Sacred World Assembly. This was a major step in a realignment of the whole Shambhala Buddhist path around the terma received by the Dorje Dradül.

Later that year and in the beginning of 2005, the Sakyong completed the Scorpion Seal retreat. One of the final terma texts received in 1981 by the Dorje Dradül is called *The Scorpion Seal of the Golden Sun*. This text introduces advanced Shambhala practices. It is the basis for the Werma Sadhana as well as the Rigden abhisheka. It contains the description of an advanced retreat practice. Many times, the Dorje Dradül mentioned that he wanted to do this retreat but for some reasons it never happened. For this retreat to become available to students, it first had to be done by a Sakyong. During the preceding years, senior students had requested Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche to do this retreat. He had finally decided that the proper conditions had been gathered and that it was the appropriate time. For that occasion, a special cabin was built at Kalapa Valley, in Cape Breton, the land that had been discovered by the Dorje Dradül many years before and recognized as a particular power spot for the Shambhala lineage.

After completing this retreat, in the summer of 2005, at Shambhala Mountain Center, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche bestowed the Rigden abhisheka for the first time to a group of around one thousand students.

The year before, during a performance of Gesar dances at Namdröling monastery, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche had shown interest in the main dancer. This was princess Semo Tseyang, the youngest daughter of His Eminence Namkha Drimed,

supreme holder of the Ripa lineage. She and her family were formally invited for tea and soon the Sakyong proposed marriage.

The day after bestowing the Rigden abhisheka, the Sakyong and Semo Tseyang were married in a civil service, presided over by the Mayor of Boulder. Then there was a mandala-wide wedding festival, “Blossoming of the Sun,” in Halifax in the summer of 2006, and a Tibetan wedding festival hosted by the Ripa family in Orissa, India, in the spring of 2007. In August 2008, in Halifax, His Holiness Penor Rinpoche empowered Khandro Tseyang as the Sakyong Wangmo of the Shambhala lineage. The Sakyong and Sakyong Wangmo’s first daughter, Jetsun Drukmo was born in August of 2010 and their second daughter, Jetsun Yudra, was born in March, 2013.

The Sakyong’s second public book, called *Ruling Your World*, which emphasized the path of leadership through the four dignities, came out in 2005. *Running with the Mind of Meditation* was published in 2012. This book reflects the experience of the Sakyong’s longtime career as a marathon runner. Through his numerous races, he raised funds for humanitarian and educational work in Tibet.

In June 2008, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche formally opened the Scorpion Seal retreat to all Shambhala warriors having completed the proper preparation. This began a series of advanced retreats called *Scorpion Seal Assemblies* that started at Karmê Chöling in June 2009.

In 2010-2011 the Sakyong entered a year of retreat, during which he composed a series of texts and practices, including Shambhala Meditation, the Shambhala Sadhana, numerous Scorpion Seal writings, and “The Letter of the Morning Sun.” In this letter, the Sakyong emphasized the importance of Shambhala as a social vision. This emphasis culminated in the publication of the public book *The Shambhala Principle: Discovering Humanity’s Hidden Treasure* in 2013.

Inspired by the principle of basic goodness, the Sakyong engaged more directly with specific facets of society, working with, for example, inner-city violence in Chicago, the training of police and judicial officials with the Mayor of Kentucky, and connecting with leaders in contemplative education, ecology, health care, and business.

The Sakyong engages with large public audiences and intensive advanced trainings as he travels and teaches around the world.

Meditation

Introduction

Meditation in Shambhala is much more than a simple technique—though it *is* a simple technique. Meditation instruction is one powerful way to share the possibilities of basic goodness. There is an accumulation of thousands of years of experience in the technique that we use, and the language that we choose. As the Sakyong writes:

“It is important for us to appreciate and understand the evolution of meditative words; if we do, even ancient words can yield benefit in modern times. At the same time, we need modern meditative words. In this spirit of continuity and freshness, Shambhala uses particular words to convey the essence of meditation. Thus, the language we use in Shambhala meditation is itself a transmission.” *Shambhala Meditation*, p. 10.

The language of meditation can be likened to a recipe for chocolate chip cookies. Each family lineage or restaurant lineage has their own recipe—some come out crispier, others are soft and chewy. Some have nuts and others very dark chocolate. Some are salty and others very sugary. All recipes for chocolate chip cookies have their own qualities. Similarly, the language and emphasis that each tradition uses to pass on meditation teachings have their own qualities and all should be respected. Some may emphasize mindful attention to the body, others may emphasize stillness and non-thought, while others highlight the health benefits. In Shambhala, we inherit a rich lineage of meditation teachings that bring together the Shambhala principle of basic goodness and the depth and sophistication of the Buddhist traditions of mindfulness and awareness. This leads to a very complete and balanced “recipe.” The particular emphasis and quality of meditation in Shambhala is experiential trust in the basic goodness of all. The specific language that we use allows us to communicate the experience of rediscovering the goodness of human life on this earth.

In Shambhala Guide training we simultaneously train in 1) the skill to utilize this language effectively and 2) our own experience of basic goodness so that the words flow from our authentic understanding. This training includes knowledge of the geometry of the posture, how to work with the breath, and how to work with the mind and heart. Equally important is the subtle, pre-language feeling of natural awareness that we learn to communicate. During the Guide training, we will work on both the technical skill and the personal experience of basic goodness.

Guides and Initial Instructions

Shambhala Guides are empowered to offer initial meditation instruction to individuals in Shambhala Centres or at work, at home, or in schools. *However, Guides should not be the first point person for receiving instructions during Open Houses or*

other events in which new practitioners first learn about meditation. As much as possible, first-time instructions should be offered by senior teachers, shastris, and acharyas during an Open House, Learn to Meditate, Level, or course. The Guide position was designed to make sure that Shambhalians could offer basic instruction to friends, family, colleagues at work or school etc. It was never envisioned to be the primary way that new practitioners first hear meditation instructions in Centres, unless this is necessary. For example, some smaller Centres or groups may have to rely on Guides for this function for a period. Though this has occurred in many Centres, we should make an active effort to readjust this situation. Again, first-time practitioners entering our community should receive instruction in a group or individual situation from our strongest and most experienced teachers, or MIs, or Mentors whenever possible. This means that at an Open House, the teacher of the dharma talk should give instruction to first time guests before the dharma talk. It is only when this cannot happen that a Guide would give initial instruction.

Meditation in Shambhala

When we offer meditation instruction in Shambhala, we are welcoming humanity into a full and natural experience of who we are and what our world is. This includes an experience of our basic goodness, which can unfold as openness to others and a relaxed perception of elemental reality. So meditation includes an understanding of what it means to be human, what it means to be social beings, and what it means to live in a sacred world. Meditation accommodates our human feelings and experience, and encourages us to relax within that, and not struggle with who we are.

In Shambhala, meditation even includes the process of enlightened society. As the Sakyong writes, the “natural process” of meditation “builds unwavering conviction in basic goodness, nurturing kind and confident warriors who, by meditating, can create a culture of goodness.” (*Shambhala Meditation: Proclaiming Basic Goodness*, 16). Very simply, and without a lot of theory, we offer a method in which the innate confidence and freedom of our being can reveal itself. As Guides, Meditation Instructors, and Shambhala Mentors, we do not only talk about our view—we transmit a simple practice that embodies and communicates our view in real experience. We practice a way for our sensitive human hearts to simplify, let go, and rest, while at the same time expanding the brilliance of awareness, allowing us to “follow and delight in the confidence which is primordially free” (*Letter of the Black Ashe*).

This practice and experience has been passed down through the ages in an unbroken lineage of teachers and students, especially in the meditation traditions inspired by the Buddha’s awakening. After many years of intense ascetic training, the Buddha remembered a simple experience of freshness sitting in nature when he was a young boy. He then sat down beneath a tree and resolved to awaken. This enlightenment experience is the ultimate model of meditation. Throughout the

years, this experience has taken many forms and has been expressed as a variety of techniques and emphases. Sometimes, the peaceful abiding quality is emphasized, and this is the tradition of *shamatha*. Sometimes the awareness aspect is emphasized, and this is the tradition of *vipashyana*. Sometimes precise intelligence is emphasized, as in the analytical contemplation approach. Sometimes the spacious elements are emphasized, as in the Shambhala Training levels as well as in the Mahamudra and Ati traditions. Sometimes effortlessness is expressed, sometimes the need for intense discipline. Sometimes the bliss of the body is emphasized, as in certain vajrayana methods. In Shambhala Meditation, we immerse ourselves directly in feeling, being, and touching primordial goodness, which can be the basis for any form of meditation or for our human lives. All of these techniques are facets of the same diamond of meditation and mutually support each other in revealing awareness. There is no need for a conflict between these techniques. The Shambhala lineage includes all of these views and approaches. And the heart of all of these approaches is present in our simple, basic technique.

Each tradition passes on their unique expression or “recipe” for meditation practice. In Shambhala, we emphasize basic goodness as the ground, path, and fruition.

Basic goodness as ground refers to our view of reality as primordially pure, fresh, and sacred. Our human being is originally wakeful, worthy, and genuine. We approach meditation without the idea of a fundamental mistake that we need to correct. We begin by simply feeling how we are feeling without evaluating ourselves, attempting to change, or stop our thoughts. This is total, aware accommodation.

With this ground, **basic goodness as path** refers to the way the very experience of meditation can be an expression of trust and blamelessness. We feel our experience with care while we are practicing. The experience of meditation itself can be gentle, genuine, and tender, allowing us to befriend the totality of our experience. It can be precise, unwavering, and clear, allowing us to touch an unshakable quality of mind. Although a meditator discovers hidden neurosis of all kinds, they are not viewed as problems or mistakes, but as the only basis for waking up and becoming stronger. For example, when we are open and honest with ourselves about being deceptive and take responsibility for that, this is the shining through of wisdom. So we do not have to wait for the fruition to experience basic goodness—it can be integrated into the journey, or it is the vehicle through which we make the journey.

Basic goodness as fruition means that the end result of practicing in this way is a more full experience of the basic goodness of all—which has been primordially present. **When you combine the basic goodness of ground, path, and fruition, you have a summary of the Shambhala approach to meditation.**

Within these qualities of basic goodness, there will be aspects of peaceful abiding, aspects of awareness, and aspects of insight. We work with the full-range of our human experience, including our embodiment, our breathing, our mind, heart, emotions, and perceptions. We draw on the sophistication and depth of the Buddhist meditation lineages, especially within the practice lineages of vajrayana Buddhism, as well as the unique transmissions of the warrior tradition such as windhorse and enriching presence practice. And importantly, our basic technique is infused with the care, trust, and all-embracing kindness of Shambhala Meditation.

Our Basic Instruction

The basic instruction that we offer in all of our entry programs, Open Houses, and for our initial instruction in Shambhala is:

View: Based on the view of basic goodness: whatever arises in the meditation session can be embraced with gentle, present awareness infused with tenderness, care, and precise simplicity. We do not have to be afraid of who we are.

Posture: The posture is natural and uplifted, relying on the 7 points of posture, with a soft, open gaze looking slightly downwards, a few feet in front.

Breath: We settle into the present by feeling the body breathing. We can feel the breath come in and fill the body; then we feel the breath dissolve out into the space around us. We let go as we go out with the breath, and then we feel the breath coming in again in an ongoing flow.

Mind/Heart: We feel whatever arises, letting our self be human, and be as we are. If the mind wanders into the past or future, we simply and gently notice this. Then we let go and return to the posture and the breathing in the present. There is no problem with thinking—that is part of being human. We include thoughts as part of the practice. We gently notice if the mind wanders and return to being as we are, again and again.

This is the approach to practice that we offer as Shambhala Guides. This is our foundation technique, which we call our “basic meditation.” It is not Shambhala Meditation, which is a formal, guided practice of moving through the three gestures of feeling, being, and touching. Only specific teachers are empowered to transmit Shambhala Meditation and the three gestures. Our basic meditation is just sitting, in the meditation posture, feeling the in and outbreath, with senses open, feeling whatever arises with gentleness, and just being. We come back to the breath and our body as our connection with the present, so this is a very gentle form of shamatha mindfulness. We are also aware of our thoughts, emotions, and perceptions, so this is a spacious form of vipashyana awareness, or panoramic awareness. We can give the instruction to notice the breath dissolving out and opening into the space

around us. And we also feel the breath coming in. The overall attitude and view is basic goodness, and a feeling of gentleness and humanity.

History of Meditation Teachings in the Shambhala Lineage

It would be too unwieldy to summarize all of the ancient meditation lineage streams that flow into the present manifestation of Shambhala. However, we can mention the importance of: the ancient tradition of warriorship and windhorse, the Mahamudra tradition of mindfulness-awareness, the Great Perfection (*dzokchen*) tradition of effortless and spontaneous practice, and the “just-sitting” (*shikan taza*) meditation in the Zen tradition. Other than these brief references to the older traditions, we will begin with the modern history.

In the early years of his teaching in the West, the Druk Sakyong introduced a range of techniques individualized for different students. Sometimes he taught a very relaxed instruction that had almost no technique. Sometimes he gave the instruction, “just be,” when students entered long retreats. It was not until the 1973 Seminary that the Vidyadhara began to establish a more unified and standardized initial instruction. In 1974, during the first summer of Naropa Institute, the Druk Sakyong offered this standard approach to public audiences. This instruction emphasized identifying with the outbreath as it dissolved into space, a gap following the outbreath and the in-breath happened naturally. When the practitioner noticed that the mind had wandered, the instruction was to silently label this “thinking” and return to the breath. Trungpa Rinpoche emphasized “touch and go:”

You are in contact, you're touching the experience of being there, actually being there, and then you let go. That applies to awareness of your breath and also to your day-to-day living awareness. The point of *touch and go* is that there is a sense of feel. The point of *touch* is that there is a sense of existence, that you are who you are.

When you sit on the cushion, you feel you are sitting on the cushion and that you actually exist. You don't need too much encouragement to develop that kind of attitude. You are there, you are sitting, you are there, you are sitting. That's the *touch* part. And the *go* part is that you are there, and then you don't hang on to it. You don't sustain your sense of being, but you let go of even that. Touch and go. There's a sense of individuality, a sense of person. Actually, we are here, we exist. (*Dathun Letter*)

This instruction is subtle and profound. It includes a simple technique for working with the mind to train in returning gently to the present; it integrates space with awareness; it joins elements of peaceful abiding with open and panoramic awareness. During his annual Seminary teachings, the Druk Sakyong offered traditional commentaries on the 9 Stages of shamatha as well as teachings on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness and vipashyana. All of these teachings helped to

clarify the basic technique of working with the outbreath and opening further, letting go of the claustrophobia of the ego.

Shambhala Training

After 1976, the introduction of the Shambhala Training techniques emphasized and expanded upon these various aspects of meditation, including precision, spaciousness, and openness. The evolution from the Level I to the Level V technique of non-technique represented a gradual arch of training and for many years this arch told the story of how meditation unfolded within our tradition. In this approach, we gradually open beyond the cocoon of fear and expand into space, resting with our own basic goodness.

Shamatha in Turning the Mind into an Ally

The next major step in the evolution of meditation instruction within Shambhala began during the 1999 Seminary. The Sakyong offered traditional shamatha and contemplation instructions that differed in specific ways from the standardized mindfulness-awareness technique. The Sakyong's approach at this time utilized both the in and out breath and emphasized a classical understanding of shamatha as stabilization on an object of meditation. In such a "precise" relationship with shamatha, the practitioner lets go of all sensory and mental distractions and cultivates one-pointed attention on the object. There is not much emphasis on space or insight. However, this "precise" approach to shamatha is not tight. Rather it is a way to train consciousness in complete stillness. The Sakyong's instructions of the 9 stages emphasized the possibility of transforming the "waterfall" of discursive and untrained mind into a "still lake" or "vast ocean" of peace. This approach differed from what had been the standardized instruction because it used both the in and outbreath and because of its precise emphasis on one-pointed stability more than on opening out into spaciousness.

Contemplation

However, the Sakyong was clear that such stillness is not complete. In order to awaken, this stillness needs to be joined with knowing and therefore the Sakyong described how awareness develops with this form of precise shamatha. Again, this approach to awareness differed from the vipashyana instructions of the Druk Sakyong. Here, awareness begins as "presently-knowing" —*sheshin* in Tibetan. Presently knowing means knowing what is happening in the present; it is a bare knowing that is not insight, but a kind of introspection that is simply aware of what is happening in our practice at any given moment.

With the basis of this presently-knowing awareness, we can cultivate insight through contemplation. The meditator utilizes the one-pointed mind of shamatha, and then places that mind on an object of contemplation, such as a thought. In pure shamatha, we place the mind on the breath as our object of meditation. This is as

clear and deliberate as placing a stone on a piece of paper. In contemplation practice, we do not place the still mind on the breath; instead we place the mind on a question, a theme, or a word or phrase. For example, we could place the calm mind on the word “contentment” or “selflessness.” Then we would intentionally use our intelligence to contemplate, or think about, this word. We would rely upon previous study and ask ourselves, “what does selflessness really mean?” We think about the meaning, but we do not wander into other themes. If the mind wanders, we come back to our word, “selflessness.” Then, if insight or some non-conceptual knowing starts to arise, we can drop the words and rest in that insight. This is the process of contemplation.

The one-pointed or precise shamatha is the first step. Contemplative insight is the second step. In this way, calm-abiding and insight work together. The peaceful abiding helps cultivate stillness and helps to ease the suffering of a wild mind. It is also the foundation for the traditional path of insight through contemplating all of the teachings and penetrating into the nature of reality. These teachings are summarized in the book *Turning the Mind into an Ally*.

Controversy and the “Breath Wars”

When the Sakyong first presented this approach, and especially the technique that uses both the in-breath and the out-breath, there was some controversy in the Shambhala community. In what had previously been the standard technique, Trungpa Rinpoche had usually emphasized only following the outbreath. This technique was especially powerful in cultivating a sense of spaciousness and a willingness to let go. By using just the outbreath, there is much less to hold on to and meditation practice becomes a continual training in egolessness—with outbreath after outbreath, we let go and dissolve. We open beyond the need to have any reference point or object of attention. We even let go of the need to be one-pointed or stable. Therefore, when the Sakyong introduced an approach to shamatha that emphasized stabilizing the mind on a continual object and using both the in and out-breath, there was some controversy. We jokingly refer to this moment as the “breath wars.” It should be noted that Trungpa Rinpoche did at times teach a technique using both in and outbreaths, and that the Sakyong continued to teach more spacious and open methods of meditation as well. Both teachers reminded us continually that we should not get hung up on technique.

Precise, Open, Beyond

After some time, we arrived at a unified approach that brought together both the precise peaceful abiding and the more open out-breath and Shambhala Training techniques. The following sections summarize the synthesis that we came to, which “weaves together the Sakyong’s step-by-step teachings on shamatha with the more fruition meditation instruction given by the Vidyadhara:”

There is no real conflict between the two approaches. The Sakyong has consistently presented the view that if you can practice the outbreath approach without spacing out, then there is no problem. For example, at the 1999 Seminary he said:

Some people have been asking me about this outbreath/inbreath business. You can follow the outbreath and you can follow the inbreath. People say, “I thought we were just supposed to follow the outbreath.” Obviously you can do that, but you could say that just following the outbreath is a little more advanced. The first thing we’re trying to do is just regulate the breathing. The breath is going in and out, in and out. Initially we’re trying to just calm our minds, so we have a feeling or thought of the breath going out, the breath going in: “I’m breathing out, I’m breathing in.”

If you just follow the outbreath, that means you’re able to maintain the continuity of your mindfulness to the point where you don’t lose it on the inbreath, you don’t drift off. If you find yourself following the outbreath, spacing out, and then coming back a few minutes later and following another outbreath, the practice is not working. If you’re able to maintain the space while just following the outbreath, fine. If someone can maintain perfect awareness without having to follow the breath, then following the breath should be pretty easy. (1999 Seminary Transcripts: Teachings from the Sutra Tradition—Book One, p. 16)

In light of this view, the Sakyong’s approach has been to provide a more gradual approach to beginners to help them tame their mind. It is also the case that even the most “advanced” practitioners at times have benefited from working more closely with their breath in order to stabilize their mind...

We do not replace one instruction with another, since if we look closer, we can see that there is no “one” instruction. The Vidyadhara in his lifetime gave a range of instructions. For example, his instruction in *Meditation in Action* was:

One tries to feel the breath—outbreathing, inbreathing, outbreathing, inbreathing—and it usually happens that the outbreathing is longer than the inbreathing, which helps one to become aware of space and the expansion of breathing outwards. (pp. 63-4)

The Vidyadhara also gave refinements and variations even after he had standardized the technique (for example, the instructions in his talk on the nine stages of shamatha in the 1979 Hinayana-Mahayana Seminary Transcript). There is also the very pithy talk that the Vidyadhara gave in London in January of 1986, in which he emphasizes the key point of meditating on nothing, although “nothing could mean something.” He then gives the instruction that you should pay equal attention to the out and inbreath. In the same way, we intend to keep the big view of meditating on nothing that could mean something, and to be flexible in our instruction.

Three Approaches

To simplify, we could say that there are three major approaches:

1. A “precise” technique in which we are working very closely with the breathing process, gaze, posture, and thought process. The emphasis here is on drawing in the mind, relaxing, and stabilizing our mindfulness so that our mind begins to rest in itself.
2. An “open” technique in which we have stabilized our mind to a degree that the technique becomes more natural and spacious. The main point is to enjoy the space of our mind, using the outbreath as a bridge, and to include sense perceptions as part of our awareness.
3. A “beyond” technique in which our mind is well stabilized and naturally rests within itself, feeling very spacious and not needing to apply any technique. In fact, the main technique here is to disown any attempts to “meditate,” and yet not to wander for an instant.

Obviously, there can be further fine tunings and gradations within each of these approaches. For example, in the talk “Taking Our Seat,” the Sakyong gives the main “precise” instruction and then mentions the technique of counting the cycles of breaths. This could be used as a remedy for someone whose mind is so wild that they cannot even find and follow the breath at all. Then, once they have stabilized their mind, they can just work with the breathing without needing to count. As long as we understand what we are doing and why, this flexibility of instruction is practical and beneficial. In fact, the Sakyong emphasizes that we each need to “be our own meditation instructor” and know what our mind needs on any given day. Sometimes we need more stability, sometimes more space.

Trungpa Rinpoche’s Earliest Instruction

There is a correspondence between these three approaches and the way Trungpa Rinpoche described meditation in an early seminar he gave in England. The following notes were recorded by Michael Hookham and compiled:

First, let the mind follow the in and out rhythm of the breath until it becomes calm and tranquil; then rest the mind more and more on the breath until one's whole being seems to be identified with it.

Finally, become aware of the breath leaving the body and going out into space, and gradually transfer the attention away from the breath and towards the sensation of spaciousness and expansion.

By letting this final sensation merge into complete openness, one moves into the sphere of formless meditation proper.

Shambhala Training and Precise, Open, Beyond

Shambhala Training already presents a graded instruction over the first five levels of The Heart of Warriorship, in which the subject matter and meditation instruction go hand in hand. Level I teaches the unconditional quality of basic goodness. The technique of touch and go, mixing mind with space, points out that moments of resting in openness are natural and need not be created by effort or a technique. Therefore, the Level I instruction is to place mindfulness on the outbreath and, at the end of the outbreath, let go and relax in the space.

Level II presents the need for precise attention to habitual patterns, calling for a more focused practice. This instruction most closely resembles the precise instruction that the Sakyong has presented. Therefore, the Level II instructions incorporate the Sakyong's teachings on stability, attention to the whole breathing process, and practicing with a gentle yet exacting precision. In Levels III through V, the meditation opens up further to include more space and awareness. Overall, the range of precise, open, and beyond techniques is presented fully, and at the end of the five levels, students can practice the approach that best suits the state of mind they are working with.

Level I: Open Technique

Level I teaches the unconditional quality of basic goodness. The techniques of *touch and go*, identifying with the outbreath, dissolving, and mixing mind with space, point to moments of resting in openness. These are natural and need not be created by effort. One notices the thinking process and acknowledges it by labeling whatever arise in one's experience as "thinking." Out of that attention to detail, the participants may experience various kinds of awareness, the most common being to notice how pervasive the thinking process itself is. Beyond that, the insight cultivated in this level is often that there is an alternative to being constantly enmeshed in habitual patterns; if one practices, it is impossible to avoid the contrast between habitual patterns and the experience of basic goodness.

Level II: Precise Technique

Level II teachings present the power and wisdom of investigating and knowing the cocoon and the nature of fear as a way of releasing ourselves from habitual patterns. This exploration calls for a more focused meditation practice—continuity of the whole breathing process, mindful of both in- and outbreaths. This technique is not tight, but relaxed and stable and grounding, so that the student can witness the ways in which habitual patterns are created.

Level III: Open Technique

The Level III instruction suggests relaxing the technique to allow one's awareness to include the surrounding environment around one, so that sense perceptions (such as the sound of someone shouting outside the meditation room) can be used as reminders to be present, rather than shut out as distractions. The shift in emphasis to the environment together with the content of the weekend, *Warrior in the World*, makes this the natural place to introduce the idea that only 25% of one's awareness is focusing on the breath, while the remainder is open to the environment. At this point participants may have begun to understand the purpose of the technique; it is a tool to cultivate one-pointedness, the ability to be alert and on the spot. As one begins to develop familiarity with this state, clinging to the technique can become an obstacle to further openness—hence the instruction to relax the emphasis on mindfulness of the breath. Mindfulness in action is also introduced at this level, and participants may be given simple mindfulness exercises to try during the meal breaks, overnight, or between weekends.

At the end of Level III students should be very strongly encouraged to begin a regular daily practice period if they have not already done so. Emphasize that practicing only on the occasional weekends when they attend a level really does not go very far and that a regular practice is essential—daily or at least several times a week. At Level III most participants have begun to feel that they are ready to make a serious commitment to this path, and so this kind of encouragement will probably be appreciated. Students are invited to continue to meet regularly with their assistant director, or another assistant director if they prefer, to discuss mindfulness-awareness practice.

Level IV: Open Technique

Level IV instruction takes a further step toward precision and openness, suggesting that participants raise their gaze, thus inviting more *pure perception*. Awareness expands out with the breath as it fills the space of the room. Now participants could be encouraged to notice their reactions to their experiences: the internal dialogue evaluating one's practice, the arising of feelings of aversion, attraction, or indifference, and the conceptual labeling of them so rapidly after the *pure perception* as to seem almost inseparable (e.g., "an unpleasant odor" or "an exquisite flower"). Encourage people's inquisitiveness, looking closely at more subtle habitual patterns and feeling the texture of thoughts and emotions—the environment they bring with them. They can trust their own intelligence to indicate when to make a more conscious effort with the technique and when to let go and expand.

Level V: Beyond Technique

The practice at this level joins the principles of mindfulness and awareness. You can relate the meditation practice to the Friday night talk: *open sky* is a sense of relaxation into vastness, based on trust in basic goodness. That open sky within which each moment arises is the awareness aspect. The dot of experience, the soft spot that leads us to communicate with the world and be kind to others, can be considered the one-pointedness and moment-by-moment precision of mindfulness.

This dot of experience is always fresh and unfabricated. Our habit of picking and choosing becomes superfluous. The Dorje Dradül said, “You have your dot already, whether you like it or not.” With this attitude, perceptions can be seen as basic goodness, thoughts arising can be seen as basic goodness, and our habitual tendency to judge it all can be seen as basic goodness. When we rest in the vast space of basic goodness in this way, attending to each moment as it arises, we join heaven and earth and experience our existence as regal.

Levels I-V Guided Meditation Instruction At a Glance

I. Open Technique

Begin by suggesting the practice corresponding to Level I: gaze a few feet in front, identification on the outbreath, which goes out and dissolves into space. Label one's thoughts as thinking. Perceptions are also treated like thoughts: label them and return to the outbreath.

II. Precise Technique

Next, corresponding to Level II, bring even further precision to the practice, lowering the gaze a little and identifying with the continuity of the whole breath as it goes in and out.

III. Open Technique

Next, as in Level III, ask them to rest their gaze at about 9-10 feet (gaze is still down, however, this is not yet “raising the gaze”), placing some attention on environment (guideline of 25% on the breath and 75% on the environment). Perceptions are included, rather than regarded as distractions.

IV. Open Technique

Corresponding to Level IV, now ask them to “raise the gaze” to look straight ahead, still having some awareness of the outbreath; have a sense of going out from the whole body as you breathe out; pay particular attention to the gap at the end of the breath and the sense of space.

V. Beyond Technique

Finally, at Level V, invite them to drop the technique, letting go of awareness of breath and labeling, feel the vast space above and all around and the firm ground below. Let perceptions and thoughts occur within that space; whenever you find yourself lost come back to awareness of space. Participants could be invited to try letting the technique drop altogether for a short period; being aware of the breath naturally without putting special attention on it, nor deliberately trying to ignore it. One can simply rest, wakeful, with a light touch. In the environment of nowness, both breath and the thinking process simply happen. Practice sitting like a monarch with a broken open heart. Let your energy and awareness fill the space of the room. When you become distracted, return to that simple presence.

Meditation Instruction in *The Way of Shambhala*

Because a practitioner may take the Everyday Life courses without having attended the Shambhala Training levels, each of the IEL classes rely upon our basic meditation technique. If a student has attended a level that taught another technique, a student could choose to practice that technique. However, the instruction to the group is always the basic meditation, following the fully cycle of the breath, feeling the body, heart, mind, and perceptions within a space of gentleness. The Basic Goodness Series introduces Shambhala Meditation as the main approach to practice. The Sacred Path weekends use various techniques from Levels I-V.

Shambhala Meditation

The three stages of precise, open, and beyond were our map of the meditation path until 2011 when the Sakyong introduced another major step in the evolution of Shambhala. This is the profound transmission of Shambhala Meditation. We have fully incorporated this experience into our basic technique, which, in a way, leads us full-circle back to where we started.

Just Be

As stated in the Introduction to *Shambhala Meditation: Proclaiming Basic Goodness*, “Shambhala Meditation originated with the Sakyong, Jampal Trinley Dradül in Autumn 2011 in Pharping, Nepal. While receiving the kama empowerments—the transmission of the lineages of tantric teachings that were brought from India to Tibet—on the morning of the full moon day, December 10, 2011, at the culmination of the event the Sakyong had a strong experience of the need for humanity to connect to its own worthiness. He then reflected on how the Dorje Dradül had expressed to him that the essence of meditation is simple *being*. Thus, the text *Shambhala Meditation* arose both as a vision and an empowerment.

Shambhala meditation is the heart of the Shambhala message: *feeling* worthy to *be*, and *touching* our basic goodness. The entire vision of Shambhala can be experienced in this simple yet profound practice.”

The opening sentence of *Shambhala Meditation* states, “At this time, great confusion and suffering exist because humanity cannot simply be.” Shambhala Meditation arose from the Sakyong as a meditative way to allow simplicity, being, and a sense of worthiness. When he teaches on this practice the Sakyong often tells a story of sitting outside with his father when he was a young boy. Trungpa Rinpoche simply reached out and took the young Sakyong’s hand, held it gently and said, “let’s just be.” Later, the Sakyong realized that this was the most ultimate, and the most human, meditation teaching. Through Shambhala Meditation, the Sakyong would

like to remind us of the warmth of meditation. Meditation is not just a cognitive training; it includes our whole being.

In a sense, Shambhala Meditation is not another meditation technique. Instead, it is like the “atmosphere” in which we practice. We could say that it is the atmosphere of living in enlightened society, with complete acceptance of who we are. Through the three stages of feeling, being, and touching, we relax and simply be. This opens up an experiential space in which mindfulness happens naturally and effortlessly. Within that space we could meditate, or we could kiss someone, or create art, or enter into a difficult conversation, or make a political speech. In this way, Shambhala Meditation is not exactly a way to train the mind. It is “before” we engage in a specific practice. It is more akin to reconnecting with our own heart and just resting with that. It is just being human without struggling to correct or improve or even become more relaxed. Within that atmosphere we could engage other practices or techniques such as shamatha, vipashyana, or visualization.

In addition to an “atmosphere” we could metaphorically think of Shambhala Meditation as like the “earth” that supports all things. Then various flowers or trees of experience can grow, and we can build many structures. Or Shambhala Meditation is like a “container” that holds, supports, and protects the experience of basic goodness. Or it is like the “confluence” of the various streams of meditation experience. It is also like a “sky” in which the stars, sun, and moon of experience appear. It is like a “dot” or a “seed” from which a variety of different experiences may ripen. This dot is the human heart.

The “feeling” stage of Shambhala Meditation is particularly important. It orients practice towards open, non-manipulation. We just feel, without trying to fix or change anything. Feeling is not just “being present.” It is an attuned sensitivity—as the Sakyong says, it is a “tactile aliveness” present in our senses and our emotions. It is utterly inclusive of our humanity. Once we have some experience of this way of feeling, we could think of the rest of the path of meditation as an endless and ongoing deepening of feeling. We feel more and more, until we include everything.

Shambhala Meditation is an experience or way of being that can be integrated within all other methods or practices. Once we have our own experience of this warmth, simplicity, and confidence, we may find that it influences how we engage in the rest of our path and our life.

Shambhala Meditation and Our Basic Meditation Instruction

Gentleness and Basic Goodness

Shambhala Meditation has influenced how the Sakyong would like us to present meditation in general. Rather than describe our basic instruction as “precise” which

then becomes more open, we could describe our basic instruction as a way to feel and be as we are. This does **not** mean that we teach the three stages of Shambhala Meditation, but that even as we give initial meditation instructions, we are emphasizing a gentle approach to practice that allows us to simply feel, and rest in basic goodness. The sense of allowing our selves to feel and be is our beginning and foundation of the path of meditation. This is how we can communicate our mindfulness and awareness practice. The initial experience of feeling can deepen almost infinitely as the practice unfolds.

For some beginning practitioners, however, the experience of working with mind on the meditation seat is very difficult and practice is far from peaceful. Self-aggression, judgment, and harshness often arise. Many people feel discouraged that the mind is not free from thoughts, and no matter how many times we say “be gentle,” practice can still seem like a battle with our own mind. Even long-term practitioners who have been meditating for decades may still try to manipulate their minds in order to create a certain experience. Such manipulation is ultimately not relaxation, and not allowing our selves to simply feel and be.

Influenced by Shambhala Meditation, the Shambhala approach to basic meditation emphasizes tremendous gentleness as a way to work with this self-aggression or manipulation. Friendliness to oneself is key. This is true for basic mindfulness and awareness practice as well as the more spacious techniques. We cannot underestimate the importance of emphasizing loving-kindness as our approach to meditation. As we follow the breathing in the present, we are cultivating a gentle openness to our experience. Rather than trying to fight with thoughts, suppress emotions, or silence the mind, we are learning to finally allow ourselves to feel, and be as we are. The basic or initial instruction that we give is mindfulness and awareness infused with the view of basic goodness and especially a sense of gentleness.

“Ultimately meditation is a deep relaxation of the mind. However, if that mind feels insecure about its nature—basic goodness—then it can never truly relax. When it does attempt to relax it will eventually come to rest in what appears to be the nature of the mind—inadequacy. That seeming inadequacy comes from being brought up in a culture of doubting basic goodness. When we meditate from the perspective of confidence in basic goodness, there is no doubt, and we can relax.” —Sakyong Mipham, *Shambhala Meditation*, “Creating a Culture”

“The key point of meditation practice is to develop sympathy for yourself. You could enjoy being yourself. You don’t have to borrow anything or bring any foreign influences into your life. You are self-sufficient therefore you can make yourself comfortable. In meditation, you create a very natural situation for yourself... Meditation practice is based on the idea of being yourself, as you are—something you have rarely done. All along you have had problems

with that.” —Chögyam Trungpa, *The Profound Treasury: The Path of Individual Liberation*, Chapter 23.

The Instruction Offered by A Shambhala Guide

The “basic technique” (see Basic Technique above, pg. 65) is the approach to practice that we offer as Shambhala Guides. This is our foundation technique, which we call our “basic meditation.” It is not Shambhala Meditation, which is a formal, guided practice of moving through the three gestures of feeling, being, and touching. Our basic meditation is just sitting, in the meditation posture, feeling the in and outbreath, feeling whatever arises with gentleness, and just being. We come back to the breath and our body as our connection with the present, so this is a very gentle form of shamatha mindfulness. We are also aware of our thoughts, emotions, and perceptions, so this is a spacious form of vipashyana awareness, or panoramic awareness. In this sense, our basic meditation is quite similar to the initial and standard instructions that Trungpa Rinpoche gave, so we have come full circle. The only slight difference is that we relate with both in and out breath. We can give the instruction to notice the breath dissolving out and opening into the space around us. And we also feel the breath coming in. The overall attitude and view is basic goodness, and a feeling of gentleness and humanity.

With this profound foundation, we can extend our experience as we engage in the other more open and beyond techniques in Shambhala Training. Rather than think of the basic technique as less-advanced, or tighter, we could consider it as the primordial experience of basic goodness from which other techniques can unfold.

Below, are notes quoting the Dorje Dradül’s Shambhala Training Director talks on January 3 and 10 of 1978. They describe the heart of the Shambhala approach, which is particularly helpful for understanding our basic meditation:

“Everybody’s opinions and attitudes about himself are very important in this case. If there is a slightest tendency within you to feel a little bit wretched, inadequate and fundamentally distrustful of yourself, it shows through. That doesn’t mean that you are not allowed to think anything bad about yourself, particularly, but there is another side of you, which is good. It is just a simple attitude to ourselves... That kind of spark, which exists in you, is the seed that we are trying to spread to the rest of the world.

...And the first thought that comes to mind when we think about what we can do with this is some sense of friendliness to ourselves. Some sense of friendliness begins there, that it is worthwhile and you are worthwhile. And some sense of softness to ourselves begins to develop.

...And when we present these things to ourselves, they should be moving rather than a big deal. It is almost like touching the aspect of whatever exists in us, which is positive, but at the same time, slightly sad. Because it is very

positive, it's very tender. So it has to be truly human, you see, a very human kind of thing. So we are talking about a human situation and how to feel like a human being. And the human thing, which exists in us is a kind of positive cervix which is very tender. That seems to be the heart of the Shambhala approach, if you like, that kind of tremendous gentleness. That has been one of the problems of the world, that people don't feel themselves. So we are trying to feel ourselves from that point of view."

Cutting Fixation on Techniques

With all this discussion of the different techniques, we might start to miss the larger perspective. As already mentioned, in the early 1970s in North America, the Vidyadhara experimented with giving a variety of approaches to his students in his personal interviews with them. He either gave them the meditation on the outbreath, or a direct introduction to being present without technique. Over time, particularly with the introduction of longer meditation intensives, he found that people could not sustain just resting without any technique, and so, at the 1973 Seminary, he made it clear that working with the outbreath, labeling, etc., was the standard approach for everyone at that point. One student was confused by this more "primitive" approach and asked:

Question: I am trying to get my attitude straight towards the labeling approach. Right now I have the attitude that in the beginning we began to sit with our relatively sophisticated meditation technique, which was somewhat shamatha and had tremendous space of vipashyana. And then you were recommending the labeling practice, which is somehow less sophisticated and has less room for vipashyana. It is strict shamatha in the sense of being strictly mindfulness experience.

Rinpoche: That seems to be a typical Western approach to technique—that techniques are the only things that make us valid, or tell us where we stand. Somehow it doesn't work that way.

The development of meditation practice doesn't come from what you do with your method, your technique. Technique doesn't have that much power to bring you down to the hinayana level particularly. Techniques are just sort of lip service—a very convenient lip service that you pay. Underneath that, what happens is the real thing. So you can have ati type labeling, you can have mahamudra type labeling, or all kinds of things. The labeling itself doesn't make that much difference. Labeling seems to be just another way of relating with the manifest world, if we could look at it that way. Underneath, the whole thing might be heightened, but still you know that gesture is good—just like sitting in meditation itself is a hinayana style. (Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors, pp. II-21)

The important point here is that even though a student is given many instructions on their path, they will go at their own rate. Just because we give students a more “full” vipashyana-like instruction, e.g., in Levels IV and V, does not mean that they will be able to practice this instruction in an ongoing way. It will depend on how much they have stabilized their practice and how much they understand what they are doing.

Most students quite naturally progress in their insight along the path, whatever their instruction may be. No matter what technique they start with, their experience and understanding of that technique will naturally evolve over time. At times they will receive different instructions to try out in the context of a weekend program, or their meditation instructor may suggest a slightly different technique to work with. All of this is a natural process on the path. The key point is knowing what we are doing and having the confidence and experience to stabilize it.

Ultimately, the point is to go beyond the technique itself. The technique is just a method to help us uncover basic goodness and expand our innate awareness. It is not that the technique itself creates basic goodness and awareness. Therefore, it is said that by applying the technique, we can eventually wear the technique out, like a pair of shoes. When our mind becomes very stable and clear through applying the technique, the focus on the technique will naturally decrease and finally dissolve. Other times, we can experiment with letting go of the technique to experience what that feels like and see how easy or difficult it is to do.

We would encourage everyone to take to heart that our basic meditation instructions preserve the full heart of our lineage transmissions, including mindfulness, awareness, open spaciousness, and Shambhala Meditation. As always, we will make sure to educate our students as to the basic purpose of meditation and to the full range of techniques such that they can ultimately become their own meditation instructors. Even though a meditation instructor can help a person along the path, fundamentally each one of us is on our own. Only we can judge whether we are mindfully present or spaced out. Only we know what is happening with our mind.

As Shambhala Guides we are responsible for transmitting the experience of basic goodness, welcoming human beings to simply be. Even though the above history can feel complicated, it is just the ongoing process of expressing basic goodness in a variety of ways. The basic meditation instruction that we offer is a very simple foundational practice that incorporates all of the experience that we have of teaching meditation in the modern world. Ultimately, this practice is one of our most powerful methods for creating enlightened society.

As warriors of Shambhala, it is up to us to gently blow on the ember of goodness with courageous windhorse, aspiring that we may personally take responsibility for uplifting ourselves and society. We do so not by castigating, ourselves but by appreciating who we are as human beings. By

relaxing and contacting basic goodness, we arouse our inherent tenderness, which opens up the sky of possibilities. Great vision occurs: without guilt or arrogance, we see clearly our potentials and problems, experiencing our existence without deception, this is genuineness. (*Shambhala Meditation*).

The Shambhala Path

Shambhala Guides and the Path of Practice and Education

Shambhala hosts a complete, authentic, and transformative path of meditation and learning. The *Way of Shambhala* begins with simple and accessible meditation teachings. Yet over time, the education of the warrior unfolds with increasing subtlety, power, and depth. The later stages of the path, such as Warrior Assembly and even the Scorpion Seal may seem esoteric and beyond the understanding of new meditators. However, the task of the Shambhala Guide is to be able to describe the whole journey in ordinary language. Even if the Guide is also still relatively new to the path, they can learn to articulate the logic and order of the path. For example, the Guide can describe the journey of evening classes and weekend retreats that lead up to Unconditional Confidence: the Rigden. The Guide can describe why we take the Shambhala Vow and how this acts as a support for eventually attending Enlightened Society Assembly. The Guide can share how the experience of a weekthün retreat deepens the experience of meditation. Further, the Guide can describe how Sacred World Assembly is the point in which practitioners formally enter into the authentic vajrayana practices that we hold.

More important than the order of the path is the ability to share the inner meaning of the journey. In our world, the path can sometimes seem complex, long, and perhaps exotic. The Guide needs to be able to describe each step in ordinary and accessible language. For example, the Scorpion Seal is indeed a very inner and esoteric practice. However, we could say something like: “The Shambhala path culminates in a series of Assemblies which provide systematic training in the vajrayana teachings, such as visualization, working with mantras, and the subtle energies of the body. These Assemblies are guided directly by the Sakyong, our main teacher, to help to prepare us for a full month of meditation out in nature in which we directly explore the nature of our mind and reality itself.” Though we have not experienced this retreat ourselves, we can share a sense of excitement, trust in the profundity, and even pride in the depth of training held in the Shambhala lineage.

For some new practitioners, hearing about such depth will inspire trust in the integrity and completeness of our practice path. For others, it may sound overwhelming. Shambhala Guides must therefore understand the basic arch of our path, why it is relevant to modern human beings, and when it is or is not skillful to share some descriptions about the advanced trainings. Most importantly, please reflect on your own experience of this path and share what has been of benefit.

Introduction to the Shambhala Path

Most contemplative traditions and mindfulness methods include a path of understanding, training, and transformation. Though many themes are universal, the meanings and qualities of the path are different for each tradition. In order to understand the purpose of spiritual training in any tradition it is helpful to have a map of the journey, a sense of the practices that are utilized, as well as some description of the meaning of how this journey unfolds in our experience. This section overviews the path of practice and education within Shambhala.

Characteristics of the Path

The path of practice and study as it taught in Shambhala centers is characterized by a strong emphasis on mindfulness-awareness meditation as the foundation, the practice and study of the teachings in modern languages, (such as English, Spanish, Dutch, German, French, Polish, and Chinese), and retreats to gradually and systematically deepen our understanding and experience. We focus on real transformation, not only on theoretical study.

The path consists of a series of classes and retreats designed to stabilize and strengthen our meditation practice, and to clarify our understanding of the teachings. These courses offer entry into the wisdom tradition of Shambhala as well as the classical teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. A careful sequence of group practice programs at residential centers ensure the unfolding of deeper training, including: week-long meditation retreats as well as specific Assemblies that introduce more advanced practices.

Mindfulness practice is playing an increasingly prominent role in contemporary society as interest in this approach to life continues to grow. A unique quality of the meditation teachings is that they can be expressed through existing cultural norms, making use of them rather than replacing them. This allows many modern people to practice meditation today without renouncing our cultural heritage or radically changing our lifestyles. The path places strong emphasis on joining the view and practice of meditation with everyday life, rather than the more traditional monastic approach (though we also have a Shambhala monastic order). The Shambhala path has been carefully designed so that we can immerse ourselves in all courses and retreats—even the deeper trainings—while still sustaining a family, career, and service in the world.

Because of our understanding of basic goodness, the Shambhala path is open to anyone, regardless of previous training, religious background, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, nationality, or economic situation. There is no religious commitment required; this is a human path of training mind and body. It is perhaps more of a personal, philosophical, psychological, and spiritual path than a religious one. Rather than beginning with our hopes and fantasies about transcendental realms or altered states of consciousness, we begin with the real experience of being

human—with the emotional experience, body, and circumstances of our lives. This is the “stuff” that we work with. We start where we are, as we are, and uncover the potential that abides in our own heart.

The Way of Shambhala Path

Summary

The Shambhala path can be understood through four interrelated, experiential phases of practice and education. The themes in these four phases are repeated throughout the journey:

1. The first is the foundational phase in which we train in basic meditation and cultivate a mindful, friendly, and peaceful relationship with our mind and body. The emphasis is on personal basic goodness.
2. The second stage taps into the vital, strong, and healthy energy of our human heart. As the heart opens through contemplative training in compassion, the strength of our capacity to care for others, for our society, and for our planet expands. The emphasis is on the basic goodness of others and society.
3. In the third phase of the path, we learn to let go into the spaciousness of experience that is free from the conceptual mind. This means learning to be fearless as we relax with the expansiveness of awareness itself and intensify the confidence and intelligence of our heart. The emphasis is on the bravery of basic goodness.
4. The fourth phase of the Shambhala path enters into the fullest expression of basic goodness: the complete sacredness of our world. We train in powerful practices that work with perception to connect us with the ordinary magic all around us. We learn to manifest this energy in our lives and in the world.

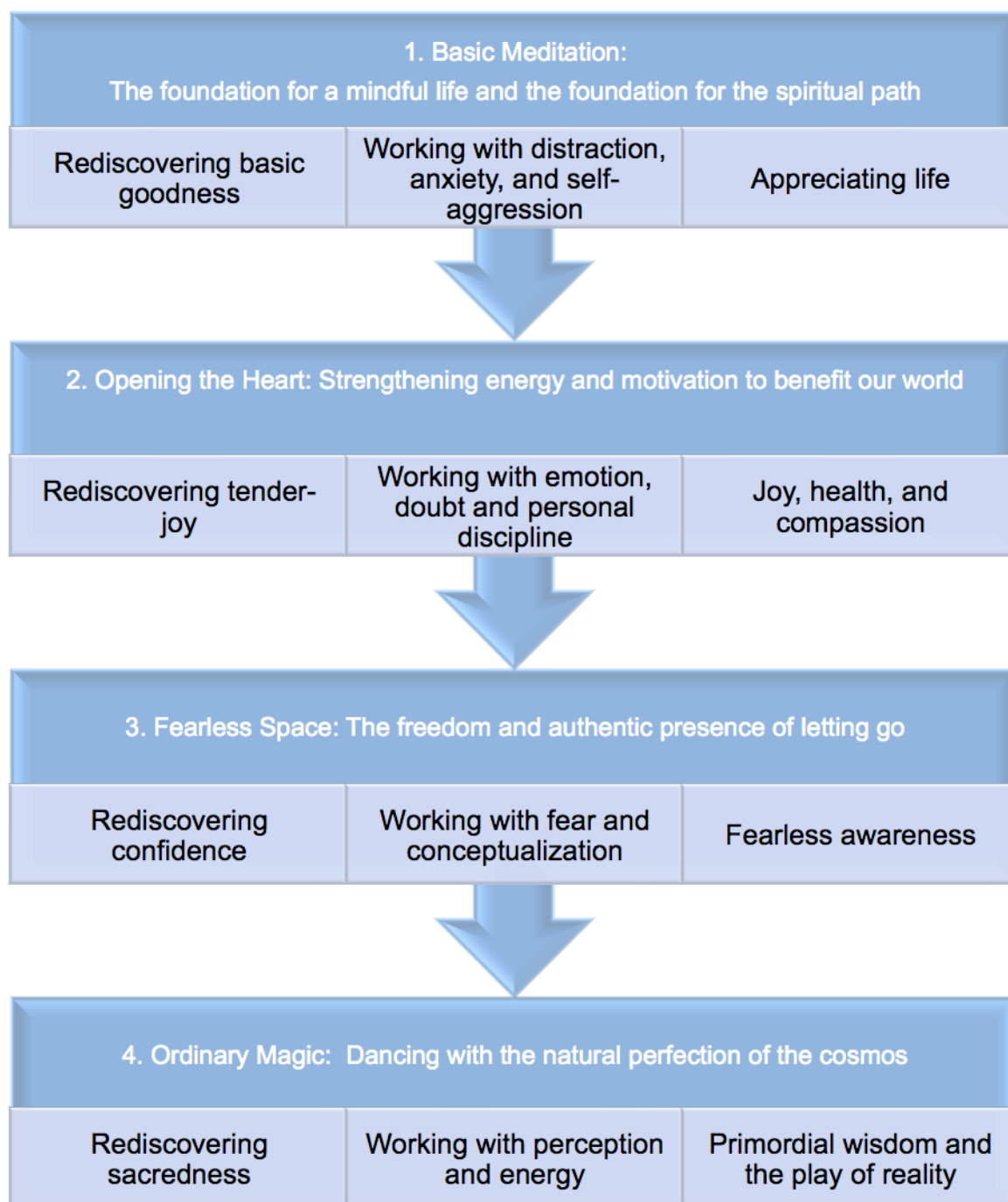
[see chart below]

We get a taste of all four of these stages in the beginning of the Shambhala path through the *Way of Shambhala* courses in Shambhala centers or through ShambhalaOnline.org. A good beginning of the path could be the Everyday Life Series. This series of classes are like an overture to a symphony, in the sense that we hear hints of the melodies before we get to their full expression later in the symphony. In this series we explore each of the phases of the path. The Everyday Life courses are five, 5 week classes which introduce basic meditation (Meditation in Everyday Life) and systematically overview the four main stages of the path. Each class corresponds with the four main stages:

1. Contentment in Everyday Life connects with phase 1
2. Joy in Everyday Life with phase 2

3. Fearlessness in Everyday Life with phase 3
4. Wisdom in Everyday Life with phase 4

While we move through these classes, we deepen our meditation experience through weekend retreats called the Shambhala Training Levels which also connect with the 4 phases. Finally, The Basic Goodness Series is a set of three courses that emphasize the view, or understanding of the Shambhala worldview as well as the experience of Shambhala Meditation. In this way, we can have our own experience of the unfolding of the journey before proceeding to more advanced trainings.



Chronological Order of Path Programs

Phase 1

*The Way of Shambhala: Levels 1-5, Everyday Life Series, and
Basic Goodness Series*

Unconditional Confidence: The Rigden
Shambhala Vow

Simplicity Retreat (weekthün) 1

Phase 2

Enlightened Society Assembly

Enlightened Society Vow
Household Practice
Shambhala Sadhana Practice

Phase 3

Sacred Path weekend retreats (open to graduates of Rigden. ESA is *not* a
prerequisite).

Golden Key

Simplicity Retreat (weekthün) 2

Warrior Assembly

Phase 4

Simplicity Retreat (consecutive weekthüns) 3/4

Entering the Vajra World online course

Sacred World Assembly

Primordial Rigden Ngondro
Rigden Empowerment
Werma Sadhana

Study of Kalapa Assembly Transcripts and *The Kingdom of Sacredness*
Scorpion Seal Assembly

Scorpion Seal

Chronological Description of Path Programs

The Way of Shambhala

The Way of Shambhala is an extensive path of training in authentic meditation practices and wisdom teachings. This program of courses and weekend retreats offers an experiential overview of practices, teachings, dialogues, contemplative arts, and physical disciplines rooted in the ancient traditions of Shambhala and Vajrayana Buddhism. The program is open to people of all religious backgrounds or no religious background. It is recommended for new and experienced meditators as well as those looking to enrich their personal spiritual path and social action. It consists of three introductory components:

- ***The Everyday Life series***—five courses, with five weekly classes in each
- ***The Shambhala Training series***—five weekend retreats
- ***The Basic Goodness series***—three courses, with six weekly classes in each

Everyday Life Series

A complete overview of the path of meditation and spiritual teachings.

Meditation In Everyday Life:

An introduction to basic meditation and how to develop a personal practice.

Contentment in Everyday Life:

Mindful appreciation and gentleness to oneself. Foundational teachings.

Joy in Everyday Life:

Compassion, joyous discipline, and healthy energy. Teachings on aspiring and loving action.

Fearlessness in Everyday Life:

Transforming fear. Teachings exploring ultimate reality.

Wisdom in Everyday Life:

Playfulness, ordinary magic, and innate wisdom. An introduction to the vajrayana Buddhist teachings.

Shambhala Training

Weekend Retreats Levels I-V:

Shambhala Training is a series of secular meditation workshops, suited for both beginning and experienced meditators. Levels I-V provide a strong foundation in

mindfulness-awareness meditation practice. These five workshops include meditation training and practice, talks by senior instructors, personal interviews, and group discussions.

Level I: The Art of Being Human

Discovering basic goodness in the world and in ourselves.

Level II: Birth of the Warrior

Cultivating the willingness to observe our cocoons of fear and our defense mechanisms.

Level III: Warrior in the World

Developing the bravery to step outside our cocoons.

Level IV: Awakened Heart

Opening to increased awareness and inquisitiveness about the world, as it is.

Level V: Open Sky

Sharpening one's awareness, one finds the open clear sky of mind—a delightful source of wisdom and uplifted energy. Trusting our nature enough to let go into the present moment.

The Basic Goodness Series

The Basic Goodness series of weekly classes introduces the view of Shambhala in an experiential way. The primary practice is Shambhala Meditation. The key difference between the Everyday Life courses and the Basic Goodness courses is that the Everyday Life courses emphasize personal transformation in daily life, whereas the Basic Goodness courses emphasize the experiential study of view and meaning.

Course 1: Who Am I? The Basic Goodness of Being Human

This course asks the question, “Who am I?” and explores the sense of self. It includes teachings on selflessness, the arising of ego, and enlightened-nature. We practice contemplative investigations of the self, based on the foundations of mindfulness.

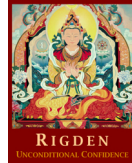
Course 2: How Can I Help? The Basic Goodness of Society

This course asks the question, “How can I help?” and explores our relationships with others and an aspiration to help our world. We ask what enlightened society may be. The course focuses on transforming four aspects of society: family life (household), professional life, entertainment, and economy. We learn the traditional compassion practice of “sending and taking” (tonglen).

Course 3: What Is Real? The Basic Goodness of Reality

This course asks the question, “What is real?” and focuses on a study of the phenomenal world. It emphasizes core Buddhist teachings, such as impermanence, the process of perception, the “mind,” and emptiness. It is oriented toward the experience of sacred world, the magic of the natural elements. The course also has an ecological emphasis.

Rigden: Unconditional Confidence



The Rigden weekend retreat is the culmination of the *Everyday Life, Shambhala Training Levels I-V*, and *Basic Goodness* series. The Rigden is a representation of our enlightened nature and embodies the principle of unconditional confidence. Historically, Rigdens were enlightened rulers— those who could “rule their world” based on their unwavering experience of basic goodness. This retreat is led by a Shambhala master teacher (acharya) and includes a transmission of “windhorse” practice and an opportunity to proclaim a commitment to basic goodness by formally taking the Shambhala Vow. Prerequisite: *Wisdom in Everyday Life*, *Shambhala Training Level V*, and, if possible, *The Basic Goodness Series*.

Simplicity Retreats: Weekthün and Dathün

After beginning meditation practice, many want to deepen this experience through deeper retreats. A week of meditation, known as weekthün (week session), is offered in some local centres and in all of our rural retreat centres. It is a powerful introduction and deepening of mindfulness-awareness meditation, open to anyone. The program includes sitting and walking meditation. Dathün (Tibetan for “month session”) is a one-month group meditation retreat led by a senior teacher. Silence and functional talking are observed and meals are served in the shrine room through a contemplative eating practice. The retreat includes talks, study, and a short work period. After attending a dathün, students may choose to do a solitary retreat, and a number of Shambhala practice centres have facilities for individual retreats.

One simplicity retreat (weekthün) is a pre-requisite for Enlightened Society Assembly

A second simplicity retreat (weekthün) is a pre-requisite for Warrior Assembly

Two concurrent weeks of meditation as part of a Dathün are a pre-requisite for Sacred World Assembly.

In this way, a full month of meditation is built into our path over a number of years. Practitioners may also choose to complete a full month (Dathün) at any point on the path.

Enlightened Society Assembly

Enlightened Society Assembly is a group retreat for all who have completed Rigden: Unconditional Confidence. This deep training emphasizes the view of the intrinsic goodness of all beings and society, practices that rouse compassionate openness, and confident activity that engages fully in the world. In particular, living up to its name, this Assembly will focus on how we can create enlightened society on the spot, at home, in our city and nation, and wherever we go. Participants train in a practice to expand the warmth and strength of our hearts called the Shambhala Sadhana. This program works to integrate study, practice and community with an aim to understanding the basic goodness of oneself, others, society and the phenomenal world. There is a chance to make a personal commitment to be of benefit by taking the Enlightened Society Vow.

Under the guidance of an Acharya and another senior teacher, Enlightened Society Assembly will provide an opportunity to fully engage and integrate these teachings and practices while living in a Shambhala practice environment.

Reaching this stage on the path is very full and rich. At this point, we have received enough teachings and practices to not only work with our own mind, but also to open to others. For many Shambhalian, the practices received at Enlightened Society Assembly are complete and there is no need to go onto further trainings. Monthly practice of the Shambhala Sadhana in the local centre can be a focus of practice and ongoing community without needing to do deeper retreats. Some may choose to rest with this experience, focus on family, volunteering at their local Shambhala centre, and work in the world, and helping to create enlightened society.

The Sacred Path

For those who do choose to continue with further practice and education after completing Enlightened Society Assembly, the next phase on the path are the Sacred Path weekend retreats offered in many local regions. Sacred Path is open to graduates of Rigden; ESA is *not* a prerequisite. The Sacred Path program introduces further warriorship practices, which extend the basic meditation training. These practices are based on societal vision and aspiration to help the world. This level of training cultivates one's dignity and natural gifts that are able to widen one's sphere of compassionate and practical influence. During a series of visionary experiences that took place between 1976 and 1980, Chögyam Trungpa wrote down what became known as the Shambhala texts. The Sacred Path program is a study of these

texts and on the extensive commentaries he and Sakyong Mipham gave on these teachings and how to practice them in modern times.

Great Eastern Sun

This program introduces the Shambhala text *Letter of the Black Ashe* and teaches how to see the Great Eastern Sun, the primordial energy and brilliance that is the basis of all that exists.

Drala

Through exploring the depth of perception, one engages the elemental and magical strength inherent in the world. “Drala” refers to the sacred energy and power that exists when we step beyond aggression.

Windhorse

One studies the text that gives the instruction for “raising windhorse,” which opens the heart and refreshes one's confidence on the spot. The practice is a way to bring about skillful heartfelt social engagement, enabling the warrior to go forward in the midst of whatever challenges occur.

Meek and Perky

The first dignity, *Meek*, is a study of the grounded, humble, and gentle stage of a warrior's journey—one trains to overcome arrogance, the primary obstacle to learning. As the second of the four dignities, *Perky* focuses on cultivating sharp, vibrant, and uplifted energy through natural discipline. Overcoming the trap of doubt, the warrior of perky is able to accomplish his or her activities with a sense of nobility and ease.

Outrageous and Inscrutable

These fruitional dignities refer to the extraordinary skill of the practiced warrior. No longer afraid of making mistakes, the unconventional and visionary perspective of the outrageous warrior combines with the skill of spontaneous inscrutability to create benefit for others on a large scale.

Golden Key

This program is based on a Shambhala text that works with our relationship to the phenomenal world and our sense perceptions. It teaches the practice of *enriching presence*—the ability to instantly sense the inner wealth within oneself, phenomena, and the natural world.

Warrior Assembly

Warrior Assembly, the culmination of Shambhala Training, is a living teaching on creating enlightened society. Participants receive the transmission of advanced Shambhala practices of confidence and study the root text and commentary, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*. This text

describes the principles and practices of *Ashe*, a simple and powerful practice that enables one to transform fear and hesitation into wisdom and authenticity.

Sacred World Assembly

Sacred World Assembly is the gateway for entering the Shambhala lineage of vajrayana practice and study. It is preceded by an online course called “Entering the Vajra World” which is an introduction and prerequisite to attend Sacred World Assembly. This milestone practice and study program builds on the understanding and meditation experience developed through the Way of Shambhala, Enlightened Society Assembly, and Warrior Assembly, and requires a deep personal commitment to the path. This advanced group retreat introduces the inner vajrayana Shambhala practices. As we enter into these practices, we work more closely with the Sakyong as the primary lineage teacher.

At Sacred World Assembly we study teachings about sacredness and the various practices that help us connect with the natural world. We receive an important meditation instruction called “the nature of mind” transmission, offered only by the Sakyong. Entering into the Shambhala vajrayana is one of the most important gateways on the path.

Primordial Rigden Preliminary Practices

Sacred World Assembly introduces the traditional “preliminary practices” (ngöndro), which gradually introduce us to vajrayana methods. After the Assembly, these practices are the primary meditation training in our daily practice. One can complete these preliminary practices over the course of about one to three years of focused daily sessions and a week of group retreat. One of the unique aspects of the Shambhala path is group practice. We are encouraged to come together to learn and practice ngöndro in community.

Rigden Empowerment

Upon completing the preliminaries, the next milestone is called **Rigden Empowerment** (Abhisheka), which is a vajrayana ceremony offered by the Sakyong. Here we are introduced to the central practice of the inner Shambhala teachings, known as the *Werma Sadhana*. Werma is an ancient term for the sacred display of reality and sadhana means, “accomplishment,” or a way to deeply engage with this aspect of the universe. This meditation practice is based upon very simple but profound visualizations and inner meditations to directly experience basic goodness as the primordial ground of being. Then we learn to draw this primordial experience into our own lives and body, and especially into our society.

The Scorpion Seal

After training in the Werma Sadhana for about a year or so, practitioners may apply to enter the Scorpion Seal path. This is the final and innermost step on the path. Here the Sakyong directly guides the most advanced practitioners into the very essence of the Shambhala teachings. Through annual 10-day retreats that last for many years, the Sakyong and acharyas teach practices that include deeper training in the vajrayana techniques, especially very subtle and simple meditation instructions on resting directly in the nature of awareness. These methods are quite similar to practices in the renowned Great Perfection (*dzokchen*) tradition, considered by many to be the highest teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. The Scorpion Seal Assemblies, and the whole Shambhala path, culminate in a month long personal retreat in which we practice these subtle methods in nature.

Detailed Experiential Overview of the Shambhala Path

1. Basic Meditation: Rediscovering Basic Goodness

The path begins with basic sitting meditation as a way to cultivate our awareness, synchronize mind and body, and discover more about who and what we already are. Our original nature, or “basic goodness,” is not just an idea; it is an experience that we can rediscover through practical training. The Shambhala approach to meditation is simple and profound. Our approach is to relax with what is, rather than begin by struggling to correct, fix, and improve our selves. We emphasize a gentle but precise relationship with meditation in which we cultivate friendship with our emotional, physical, and perceptual experience in the present. We learn to simply feel and be, as we are. Such training develops friendliness towards our selves, even in the midst of anxiety, stress, and suffering. Meditation can open up a genuine space in which the frightened and speedy mind can relax into freshness and simplicity. Bodily tightening and mental contraction can unwind and release through daily practice. This allows our sense perceptions to be more attuned and receptive. Human consciousness is naturally clear, and a more basic awareness emerges when it is allowed to.

Obstacles

The obstacles to this experience are the habitual mind of distraction, speed, anxiety, reactivity, and self-aggression—a constant and ongoing inner-dialogue of criticism and judgment. This makes true relaxation difficult and keeps us from feeling our present experience. We close down. Body and mind are not synchronized and we recreate our own patterns of suffering, always looking somewhere else for satisfaction. We miss our life. Therefore, during the stage of basic meditation we learn to acknowledge and work with this level of struggle. We become curious about the causes of suffering in our experience and learn to uproot them. We look directly at our own mind, our habits and fears, and invite care, mindfulness, and curiosity into our life. We train in feeling whatever arises with gentleness and non-conceptual immediacy.

Gentleness and Friendliness

The heart of this foundational stage of practice is discovering friendliness towards our own being. This is known as “placing the mind of fear in the cradle of loving kindness.” We do not have to be afraid of who we are; we do not have to live with a sense of guilt or self-loathing; and we do not have to deceive our selves or others. When many of us first hear this teaching, we may think that friendliness sounds rather simplistic or childish. However, though we may seek out the path of meditation in order to discover peace, if we approach our meditation practice by harshly judging and pushing ourselves, we may simply reproduce our own

aggressive habits and the result of our practice may be more frustration. This is why the atmosphere of gentleness is so significant and practical. Therefore, the Shambhala path begins by discovering an attitude of human-hearted care. If the way we practice is gentle, the result of our practice will be peaceful. The first phase of training is learning this way of practicing. We immerse ourselves in the atmosphere of basic goodness as we sit in silence and stillness with our mind, sense perceptions, and heart soft and open. We feel our body and emotions just as they are, in their raw and direct reality. The mind of habit and fear—the ego—can melt in this pervasive space of feeling infused with care. Or, we could say that the ego mind of fear may surrender in this gentle, wakeful atmosphere. Through this simple and human training, we learn to feel and just be. We can touch the underlying openness that we call basic goodness, our original nature.

The Foundation for a Mindful Life

This discovery can be the basis of an appreciative, confident, and content human life. We train in the art of being human by mindfully engaging in every activity of our day—from the dishes to each footstep to not causing harm with our speech. Mindfulness, peace, and emotional health can already emerge in this first phase of the path. We can take this into our lives, relationships, work, art, and service to the world. When we are more friendly to ourselves, we tend to be less judgmental, more supportive, and kind to others. As we rest with the simplicity of our innate awareness, we discover that we have everything that we need—nothing is missing. Rather than constantly searching for contentment somewhere else, we rest mindfully in nowness. Appreciating our precious lives on this good earth is possible and natural.

The Foundation for the Spiritual Journey

The discovery of basic goodness can also be the ground for the complete spiritual journey. In this foundational stage, we learn how to walk the path. The very way that we meditate and explore our lives can be open, curious, and gentle so that the experience of the path itself expresses basic goodness. Through reconnecting with our natural awareness we help to create a stable and sustainable foundation to go deeper. Without a sense of friendship with our own being, it is very difficult to move forward on the path. When we are at war with our selves, it is hard to be curious about our own mind, curious about others or about reality itself, or curious about how to create enlightened society. We need to learn to be truly curious and receptive, to reawaken a sense of humility and wonder. Therefore, practicing basic meditation is like creating the most potent “vehicle” to go forward. Genuine confidence arises from friendship with our mind, and trust in our ability to skillfully work with whatever arises in our life. Our mind is no longer stolen by ordinary everyday activities nor bloated with arrogance, guilt, or self-aggression. With this good, mindful ground, we can allow a further unfolding of our own path.

Specific Courses of Training

In the Shambhala path of practice and education, Buddhist psychological and philosophical teachings, dialogues, the arts, and contemplations help to support the simplicity of consistent sitting meditation. All Shambhala centers offer weekly introductions to basic meditation as well as the core teachings of basic goodness, gentleness, and natural awareness in our introductory programs. In particular, the themes mentioned above are explored in detail in the following courses and retreats:

Courses	Retreats	Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Meditation in Everyday Life•Contentment in Everyday Life•Who Am I? The Basic Goodness of Being Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Learn to Meditate days•Weekend Retreats: Shambhala Training Levels 1, 2•Deeper Retreats: Simplicity Week (weekthün) or Month long retreat (Dathün)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•The Shambhala Vow offered at Unconditional Confidence: The Rigden weekend retreat•For those who choose to make a connection with Buddhism, the Refuge Vow may be requested.

This foundational stage of the path can be strengthened by attending weekly meditation sessions and talks at your local Shambhala center, through online courses available through ShambhalaOnline.org, and through introductory classes and weekend retreats at the Shambhala center. In particular, the beginning classes of the Everyday Life series: “Meditation in Everyday Life” and “Contentment in Everyday Life” are specifically focused on the themes of this first phase of the path. Shambhala Training Level 1 is also the ideal weekend retreat at this stage. Deeper retreats, such as a week-long meditation retreat called a “simplicity retreat” or “weekthün” may be offered in both city centers and land centers. A full month of meditation, called a Dathün (month-sit), is offered seasonally at our land centers around the world. These longer practice retreats are a way to immerse your self in meditation.

Main Practice: Basic meditation, Shambhala Meditation

2 Opening the Heart: Rediscovering tender-joy

Through the first phase of the path we cultivate mindfulness, friendliness, peace, and simplicity and we will continue to train in these qualities throughout the journey. Each stage is cumulative—the experiences build upon each other and are brought along with us into the next step. We never really “finish” with one of the stages. However, the complexities of our human lives require more than just the mindful calm and contentment of basic meditation. We also will need a spark of uplifted energy, open heartedness, and joy. The second stage on the Shambhala path taps into the vital, strong, and healthy energy of our human heart. Through basic meditation training we might begin to discover how much we have covered over our own heart. So we now train in opening further than we had thought was possible as we gradually step beyond the barriers of our habits and fears. We uncover our own heart, and to our surprise, we may find that the tenderness brings delight and makes us more receptive to others and our world.

Personal Energy

In the speed of our life, when there are constant demands on our energy, each day can feel too short. We can feel like we barely have enough energy to get through the day. How could we possibly have enough energy to go forward on the path of meditation? We need a pure, strong, and sustainable energy supply for the journey. In the second stage of training, we discover for ourselves the human experience of virtuous energy that is taught in many cultures and traditions. Now, in addition to the peace of mindfulness, we uncover a wind of delight that infuses our path with sustainable energy.

Joy of Discipline

One way to understand the second stage of training is to explore our growing relationship with discipline. In the first phase of the path we may run into an interesting contradiction: on the one hand we are invited to be gentle and friendly towards our selves, but on the other hand, we are asked to sit and meditate regularly and to train with some exertion. How can we do both at the same time? What does being gentle to ourselves mean if we don't want to meditate but feel like we are supposed to? How can we walk a path of training without the path feeling heavy, guilt-ridden, and stressful? This paradox reveals the need to discover a joyous relationship with personal discipline. Discipline can be unwavering, delightful, and invigorating rather than based upon aggression, comparison, or harsh striving. This is a focus for the second phase on the path.

Uncovering the Heart

As we uncover the heart, we will likely feel more than just joy, however. We also encounter the full range of emotions from anxiety, to anger, to sadness. On this

second stage we learn to work with our heart so that we can stay open, rather than close down to our life and the challenges we face on our planet. The primary challenge here is doubt in selves. We sometimes doubt whether we can open in this way or whether that is even such a wise idea. This kind of doubt can be a trap and we may find ourselves returning to old habits. In the phase of opening the heart, we explore and transform doubt so that it does not trap us. This releases more energy and our path can unfold with less obstructions.

Conventionally, opening further to our world and opening our heart to other people may seem threatening or foolish. However, from the perspective of Shambhala warriorship, being willing to be touched by our world can lead to freshness. Rather than the claustrophobia of having to maintain our habits, we can let go and cheer up. We can open our eyes and our hearts and connect with others. Although we will encounter difficult people, frightening global circumstances, and painful emotions, it is possible to let these challenges soften our heart, instead of harden our heart. In the Shambhala teachings, joy means living with an open, tender heart and open perceptions. In the second stage we train the body, mind and senses to be synchronized and completely open.

With the gentleness and acceptance of ourselves that we cultivate in the first stage of basic meditation training, we begin to let our genuine heart emerge. When we do, we find that beneath many layers, our heart is tender and full. This awake heart is called *bodhichitta* in the Buddhist tradition. It is a soft, open heart. It is the genuine heart of sadness. It is our innate capacity for love and empathy, our ability to feel and share the pain of another person, community, animal, or ecosystem.

This phase of the journey is divided into two traditional categories of awakened heart: The first is called “aspiring” in which we work with powerful practices to help open the heart, such as generating loving-kindness and compassion, and “sending and taking” (*tonglen*) practice. The second is called “entering” in which we go beyond aspiring and begin to work with real action in the world, especially the “6 transcendent actions:” generosity, discipline, patience, exertion, meditation, and knowledge.

Creating Enlightened Society

The shift in the second stage of the path comes to fruition when we recognize our complete interconnection with our world. In this stage of training, we look especially at our relationships with others and with society. We shift from reflection on our “own” personal experience of basic goodness and begin to ask, “what does basic goodness mean for others and in social experience? What does it mean for our planet?” We explore the possibility of the basic goodness of society by extending the warmth of our hearts out to others and to our whole world.

This is very practical. Many of us assume that spirituality has to do with our own mind and our private meditation practice. Then, when we get up from our

meditation seat and have to face other people we may feel that things get complicated. The Shambhala teachings are about making this transition between the personal and the relational. We train in integrating our social relationships with our spiritual path. The two are inseparable. Society is not just a big abstract thing: it refers to the way two people communicate, our households, our workplaces, local school boards, our towns, cities, economies, and the everyday choices that we make collectively. Shambhala vision recognizes that there is global human wisdom that can encourage a more awakened society.

This second stage culminates in a group retreat called **Enlightened Society Assembly** in which we train in a practice to expand the warmth and strength of our hearts called the Shambhala Sadhana. We have a chance to make a personal commitment to be of benefit. When we return home from Enlightened Society Assembly, we encourage community practice, especially of the Shambhala Sadhana. At this important step on the path, there is emphasis on practicing together with groups of friends, building a strong sense of connection. We build a community of kindness that cares for each other and work together to bring the experience of basic goodness into our households, towns, cities, and global culture. Many practitioners also begin to volunteer at their local Shambhala centers at this stage of the path, and view the Shambhala center as an experiment in creating a culture of kindness.

The softness and tenderness that comes when we uncover our heart is tremendously powerful and strong. There is a sense of having struck pure gold, or having witnessed the sunrise, something completely flawless and true. Awakened heart is so alive and pure that it is also the source of tremendous confidence. Mothers and fathers and compassionate leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., can find great strength and power through the awakened heart. Human beings can go beyond what is comfortable, or beyond what seems possible, because of the strength of the awakened heart. Through this tender but brave heart, we long to be of benefit to our world and this can become our motivation to go even further on the journey to unconditional warriorship.

Reaching this stage on the path is very full and rich. At this point, we have received enough teachings and practices to not only work with our own mind, but also to open to others. For many Shambhalians, the practices received at Enlightened Society Assembly will be sufficient for many years. Some may choose to rest with this experience, focus on family and work in the world, and helping to create enlightened society. This is a milestone on the journey.

Main Practice: Basic meditation, Shambhala Meditation, generating loving-kindness and compassion (4 Immeasurable practice), sending and taking practice (tong len). Working with the 6 transcendent actions. Volunteering at the center and in your community.

Specific Courses of Training

The themes mentioned above are explored in detail in the following courses and retreats:

Courses	Retreats	Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joy in Everyday Life• How can I help? The Basic Goodness of Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekend Retreats: Shambhala Training Level 3• Deeper Retreat: Enlightened Society Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Enlightened Society Vow• For those who choose to make a connection with Māhāyana Buddhism, the Bodhisattva Vow may be requested

Phase 3. Fearless Space: Rediscovering confidence

Having opened the heart and made a commitment to be of benefit to the world, the next stage of the path offers additional practical tools and trainings to cultivate the fearlessness, skill, and open-mind in order to help others. This also invites us into a more inner and profound dimension of the journey. With the gentle and mindful foundation of basic meditation, and the energy, joy, and tenderness of the open heart, the Shambhala practitioner can now open into deeper and more ultimate teachings. So far along the path we have been working with the immediacy of our experience but we have approached our self and our world within a relatively conventional perspective. In the third phase of the path, we learn to let go into a profound and vast dimension of experience that is free from the conceptual mind, and free from the duality of “self and other,” altogether. Here we integrate more and more spaciousness into our being and relax with the expansiveness of awareness itself. We train in intensifying the compassion in our hearts to become so sharp that it abruptly cuts through concepts and opens into freedom.

Metaphorically, the first two stages of the path are connected with the groundedness of the earth. In the third stage we begin to explore “heaven,” the open, space-like qualities of reality. In particular, we look explore the impermanence of all things, acknowledging the reality of change and death. As we look with curiosity and honesty, the third stage of the path invites us to recognize the groundlessness of reality.

Fearlessness

The groundlessness or transience of all things can be frightening, and therefore the primary focus of the third stage of the Shambhala path is to learn to work with fear. Conventionally, we may think of fearlessness as “less fear” or the reduction of fear. But in the tradition of warriorship, we learn to appreciate fear as part of our humanity. Fearlessness means being brave enough to feel fear. This takes training. Now the importance of the gentle mindfulness of the first stage and the joyous discipline and open the heart of the second stage are even more apparent. With these foundations, we cultivate the skill to look at impermanence, death, and the groundlessness of ultimate reality without becoming overwhelmed or disheartened. In fact, it can lead to great freedom and ease.

This topic is at the heart of warriorship itself. The study of our own fear can be approached in a very direct, everyday, and personal way. Fear is rampant in our world. We may experience the anxiety of doubting ourselves. We experience uncertainty as to the direction of our health, our lives, our families, and our financial stability, as well as fear of those different from us, and great fear for the future of our planet and our civilization. Depending on the year, there may be tremendous swells in fear of violence and war, disease, or economic and ecological instability.

For some, fear is experienced as an everyday background of anxiety of which we may or may not be aware. For others, fear is an abstraction, something that we will face “one day.” For others still, fear is a constant, paralyzing threat. Some of us have experienced traumas in our life. Nonetheless, there is always the possibility to train our selves to have a brave and outrageous relationship with fear: We are encouraged to develop a new relationship with fear based on basic goodness. We acknowledge the tender reality of human fear and shakiness and bring this directly onto the path. The warrior learns to smile at fear. In this way, we may experience unconditional confidence.

Ultimate Reality

In addition to providing a practical exploration of fear and bravery, the third stage of the path reveals the profound, ultimate nature of reality. To explore fear is also to look directly into our fear of open space. Ultimate truth is beyond our concepts and reference points. In fact, ultimate truth is beyond all of our ideas and even our sense of self. In Buddhist teachings, this is known as “emptiness.” There is nothing solid to hold on to. Yet this emptiness is not nihilistic, depressing, or void. In this stage of the path, we study the philosophical teachings of emptiness as well as expand our meditation technique to include more and more space. We train in being free of the need to grasp and conceptualize and our practice leads to increasing carefree freedom.

We may be afraid of impermanence, change, and death. We may rather hide from such truths. Penetrating into the nature of fear will lead us to encounter a deeper sense of space. Hope and fear keep us from truly letting go—both in our understanding and in our meditation practice. Hope can also be a trap in the sense that we constantly hope for other meditative experiences, hope for something “better.” As our meditation deepens, we also need to let go of trying to manipulate our experience or hoping for something more. The most ultimate teachings of Buddhism, such as the Great Perfection (*dzokchen*), describe abiding in the nature of mind as beyond hope and fear. If we follow this path beyond hope and fear, it will lead us to the primordial openness of the mind itself.

Therefore, the third stage of the path works on the level of our everyday, habitual anxieties. We train in practical tools for understanding, working with, and conquering fear. At the same time, the third stage works on an absolute level. We study the vast, empty, openness of space beyond limit. We learn to be willing to experience, understand, and open to the fear of such primordial expansiveness. This deepens our experience of the basic goodness of all.

Unconditional Confidence

The third stage of training emphasizes unconditional confidence. Such confidence is understood to be our nature, part of our basic goodness. It is our birthright as humans to be confident.

Conventionally, may think that confidence will arise when everything works in our favor and we feel in control. We may even attempt to feel confident through hiding from fear. In the Shambhala teachings, confidence comes from simply being, without pretense or pretending.

It is important to understand what we mean by the confidence of the warrior. The warrior is not developing confidence in anything. In this case, the warrior has self-existing confidence. This means that s/he remains in a state of confidence free from competition and any notion of struggle. The warrior's confidence is unconditional. In other words, because s/he is undistracted by any cowardly thoughts the warrior can rest in an unwavering and wakeful state of mind, which needs no reference points whatsoever. —Chögyam Trungpa

Unwavering confidence is powerful. It is not only gentle and spacious, but it is sharp, vivid, and cuts through all aggression. We now train in fearlessly intensifying the gentleness and warmth of our human hearts to become a source of unconditional confidence and power. This unshakeable quality is known as *Ashe*, which refers to the power of basic goodness to manifest directly in our world. It is a living and active experience of unconditionality that resides in the human heart and can influence our life. **Warrior Assembly** is dedicated to receiving and practicing such teachings.

Specific Courses

In local Shambhala centers, we train in a series of weekend retreats called the **Sacred Path** that gradually introduce some of the inner Shambhala principles of warriorship, such as principles of luminosity and “windhorse” or the energy of basic goodness, and “drala” or the living and sacred quality of the world. These weekends are the preparation for the group retreat called **Warrior Assembly**. The third stage of training culminates in this Warrior Assembly in which we receive the potent *Ashe* practices to strengthen our sense of fearless, unconditional confidence. Enlightened Society Assembly softens the heart, revealing warmth and compassion. Warrior Assembly then intensifies the confidence in the heart to become strong, sharp, and powerful. We study advanced teachings on absolute reality and the confidence that resides in our human heart and learn a contemplative art practice using brush and ink to express the *Ashe*. The *Ashe* represents non-conceptual awareness, a direct experience of mind beyond thought, and the fearless, gentle, intelligence that resides in our heart. The dignity and precision of this practice helps us experience the *Ashe*, and we learn a simple technique to rouse this fearless strength quickly and effectively in our everyday life.

Main Practice: Expansive and spacious meditation; contemplatively exploring fear, training in inner Shambhala practices of windhorse, and the advanced “*Ashe*” practices introduced at Warrior Assembly.

Specific Courses of Training

The themes mentioned above are explored in detail in the following courses and retreats:

Courses	Retreats	Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fearlessness in Everyday Life• What is Real? The Basic Goodness of Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekend Retreats: Shambhala Training Level 4• Unconditional Confidence: Rigden weekend• The Sacred Path weekend retreats• Deeper Retreat: Warrior Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warrior Assembly Oath

Phase 4. Ordinary Magic: Dancing with the natural perfection of the cosmos

Some practitioners will choose to stay with the practices of the first three stages of the path for many years, and some will never move on to the fourth stage of the path. The meditation methods and teachings established in the initial three stages are very complete in themselves. Shambhala is more than a path of practice; it is also a community and a global society. In any society, there are many different kinds of people, and not all Shambhalians choose to go deeper into the more esoteric and advanced practices contained within the fourth phase of the journey. This is part of the richness of our tradition—some of us are in a stage of life where we are more focused on school, or on raising our families, or on our work in the world, while others of us are more focused on intensive practice. The fourth phase of the journey is a clear step into more intensive practice. One can still sustain a family and career while engaging the fourth phase of the path (even the advanced Shambhala stages are designed to work in an ordinary life) but now meditation practice becomes truly essential in your life.

With the ground of 1) mindful gentleness, 2) open-hearted energy, and 3) the vast awareness free of concepts and fear, the final phase of the Shambhala path enters into the fullest expression of basic goodness: the complete sacredness of our world. The first phase of the path introduces our own basic goodness. The second phase emphasizes the basic goodness of all beings and society itself. In the third and especially the fourth phase, we explore the basic goodness of reality and the ordinary magic of perceptions. Here the meditative training in basic goodness extends beyond boundaries and we learn practices to open awareness to the living harmony, or ordinary magic, of the universe. In the vajrayana tradition of Buddhism this is called “sacred outlook,” a way of perceiving the world and oneself as intrinsically good and unconditionally free.

Ordinary Magic

If the third stage related metaphorically with open space, the fourth stage relates with the fullness, energy, and luminosity of experience. There is a risk that we may get very used to the open space and freedom of the third stage—it is so simple and expansive. Therefore, we are invited to work with the complexity and energetic display of our experience, so that we cannot hide. We are asked to not withdraw from the sharp points of our world, but to move towards the raw vividness, beauty, and pain of reality. You could say that we “return” to the complexities of everyday life after having glimpsed the empty-spaciousness of ultimate truth. Yet we now return to play or dance with reality. In the final stage of the path there is nothing that is rejected. Everything—every experience and every emotion—can be brought onto the path. Even anger and desire can be workable and appreciated as part of the energetic dance of the universe. Practicing in this way also increases confidence that a more awake society can be possible.

Ordinary magic refers to the real world. This is not the magic of turning water into fire, or pulling rabbits from hats. It is the magic of fire itself, water itself, space itself, and earth itself. The elemental realities of forests, oceans, deserts, mountains—even urban sprawl and landfills—have their own magic. Much of the training in the fourth stage of sacredness is learning to tune into this ordinary magic through relaxing our senses. We study the process of perception, engage in contemplative arts, and spend time in nature. We study the “drala” teachings about invoking the living quality of existence present in the everyday world. As the Sakyong writes in *The Shambhala Principle*, “basic goodness is not simply a human experience, or something that is experienced only in deep meditation. Rather, it is alive, humming through the universe as an elemental energy that is very ordinary.”

Vajrayana Practices and Path

Entering fully into the final phase of the Shambhala path means making a deeper commitment to meditation. In addition to basic meditation, compassion practices, and awareness methods to cut through concepts, in the fourth phase of practice we are introduced to vajrayana techniques such as visualization, sacred sound (mantra), and yogic practices that open the subtle body. All of these practices are ways to use the whole range of our human experience as part of the path. We have very powerful imaginative capacities that we learn to develop in visualization practices. We are constantly using speech and relating with sounds, so we learn how to bring sound onto the path. We have complex bodily energies, such as sexual energies, that move through our bodies. We learn practices to skillfully relate with them as part of spiritual practice. These methods are very practical and can help increase our confidence that every part of our being is workable and has its own wisdom.

Though we learn about sacredness and ordinary magic in many of our earlier programs, such as the Drala program, **Sacred World Assembly** is the name of the advanced group retreat in which we are officially and authentically introduced to the inner Shambhala practices. Making a more direct connection with the Sakyong as a teacher is a large part of this step on the journey, so it is helpful to try to attend teachings with the Sakyong before making this step. Before this point, we work with many teachers in the Shambhala community. But as we enter formally into inner practices, we work more closely with the Sakyong as the primary lineage holder of Shambhala.

At Sacred World Assembly we study teachings about sacredness and the various practices that help us connect with the natural world. We receive an important meditation instruction called “the nature of mind” transmission, offered only by the Sakyong. We also begin the traditional “preliminary practices” (ngöndro), which help to strengthen our commitment and gradually introduce us to various methods, such as visualization and mantra. One can complete these preliminary practices over the course of about one to three years of focused daily sessions and a week of group retreat. One of the unique aspects of the Shambhala path is group practice.

We definitely are encouraged to practice daily on our own and in solitary retreats at times, but we are also encouraged to come together, to learn, practice, and celebrate as community.

Upon completing the preliminaries, the next milestone is called **Rigden Empowerment**, which is a vajrayana ceremony offered by the Sakyong. Here we are introduced to the central practice of the inner Shambhala teachings, known as the *Werma Sāadhanā*. Werma is an ancient term for the sacred display of reality and *sāadhanā* means, “accomplishment,” or a way to deeply engage with this aspect of the universe. This meditation practice is based upon very simple but profound visualizations and inner meditations to directly experience basic goodness as the primordial ground of being. Then we learn to draw this primordial experience into our own lives and body, and especially into our society.

The Scorpion Seal

After training in the Werma Sāadhanā for about a year or so, practitioners may apply to enter the Scorpion Seal path. This is the final and innermost step on the path. Here the Sakyong directly guides the most advanced practitioners into the very essence of the Shambhala teachings. Through annual retreats that last for many years, the Sakyong teaches practices that include deeper training in the vajrayana techniques, especially very subtle and simple meditation instructions on resting directly in the nature of awareness. In a sense, we return to the simplicity of basic meditation, and realize that the whole journey has been present from the beginning. These methods are quite similar to practices in the renowned Great Perfection (*dzokchen*) tradition, considered by many to be the highest teachings of Tibetan Buddhism. The Scorpion Seal Assemblies, and the whole Shambhala path, culminate in a month long personal retreat in which we practice these subtle methods in nature.

Creating Enlightened Society

All of these more mystical-seeming practices are very potent methods that draw upon the sophisticated “spiritual technologies” of the Shambhala lineage, stretching back for many thousands of years. Their purpose is to help us master all of the energies of our experience, and therefore be of the most benefit to our world. The ultimate Shambhala practice is creating enlightened society, in which what appeared to be meditative awareness, wisdom, and compassion emerge in our culture and the social institutions of our world. The most advanced vajrayana training is learning to make this a reality. During each phase throughout the path, we are encouraged to be “warriors in the world,” to be brave and skillful as we manifest the teachings in our daily life. In this sense, there is no end to the path. We continually work to create the conditions to allow the most beautiful, wise, and compassionate human presence on this planet, and through this, to celebrate and delight in the fullest potential of our precious lives. Every practice and step on the path is in service of this possibility.

Main Practice: Effortless awareness meditation; the *Ashe* practices, the Preliminary Practices, Werma Sāadhanā, Scorpion Seal practices.

Specific Courses of Training

The themes mentioned above are explored in detail in the following courses and retreats:

Courses	Retreats	Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wisdom in Everyday Life• What is Real? The Basic Goodness of Reality• Entering the Vajra World	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekend Retreats: Shambhala Training Level 5• Unconditional Confidence: Rigden• The Sacred Path weekend retreats, especially Drala and Golden Key• Deeper Retreats: Sacred World Assembly• Rigden Empowerment• Scorpion Seal Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shambhala Samaya (commitment to sacredness)

The Logic of the Assemblies

Enlightened Society Assembly begins with an exploration of the basic goodness of society. The primary practice of this Assembly is the Shambhala Sadhana, a meditation which cultivates confidence in the basic goodness of oneself, others, and society. As we train in opening our being, the experience of warmth and compassion is like a sun of goodness in our heart. We study the Enlightened Society Vow in order to make a lasting commitment to being of benefit to our world.

Warrior Assembly then strengthens and intensifies this sun-like warmth in our hearts. We learn practices to abruptly rouse our confidence and energy, helping to overcome any blockage to accessing our heart. The sun in our heart can transform into a tool or even weapon of gentleness and fearlessness to help us create enlightened society.

Sacred World Assembly introduces teachings and practices that emphasize the living quality of reality. We train in joining the warmth and confident-strength in our hearts with the magic of the whole world. With no separation, the primordial sacredness of phenomena shows itself.

Shambhala Culture

Shambhala Guides are emissaries of Shambhala culture. All cultures have their own “ceremony.” In *The Shambhala Principle*, the Sakyong writes:

“The power of ceremony is that through the rituals of our day, we understand who we are. In details such as what food we eat or how we use our time, we are creating self-identity and establishing value systems. However, the root principles of any particular social ceremony may not necessarily be conscious, or even understood, by the members of the society. Therefore it is important to examine the underlying assumptions that guide our social ceremonies—and to explore whether these principles are natural, genuine, and good. What are our ceremonies celebrating? We may discover that the status quo that we believe is reality was in fact created by somebody else’s game plan.

The shared ceremony of society creates the layout and design of everything from homes and businesses to cities and countries. It celebrates our collective values and priorities, which we are always projecting onto the blank canvas of space and time. There is a New York ceremony, an Amsterdam ceremony, and a Beijing ceremony.

Over the centuries, we humans have held different principles about how reality should be celebrated, reflected by the particular environment. In ancient Greece, life was a ceremony of relating to the gods, who represented forces such as war and wisdom, power and love. Large and intricate temples were built as houses for the gods and their human conduits. They also served as monuments to the ceremony of civic pride, conveying through their form the values of balance and harmony. Later, with the rise of Christianity, churches dominated the landscape, adapting the structure of the Roman civic basilica—which was conveniently shaped in the form of a cross—into the house of a single god. With the rise of humanism, the ceremony centered around philosophy and art, and the architecture melded classical concepts with evolving standards of beauty that communicated humanity as the center of the natural world. In the modern era, where materialism and commercialism dominate, skyscrapers identify our cities, their shiny minimalist forms reflecting the flat, superficial, and power-seeking ceremony of our age. What are we celebrating?

When a group of individuals decides what is real, and then bring that decision into a collective ceremony, this becomes social reality, shaping our homes, our workplaces, our towns, cities, and nations. It is based not just upon any single individual’s concept, but on a collective agreement anchored in the relationship between beliefs and daily actions.

As stated in the *Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility, and Compassionate Conduct*: “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.”

In the Shambhala Principle the Sakyong writes: (pg 155)

Culture is contagious. Our association with it is like a giant self. Without having to think, we know how others feel, and we react to experiences in similar ways. Therefore encountering someone from another culture can be frightening or awkward; it is challenging to communicate. We don't trust what we don't know. Naturally, as human beings become threatened, they dig in deeper.

My father talked about the need for cultural curiosity and appreciating interdependence – in part, no doubt, reflecting upon what had happened in his own country. Ironically, for a Buddhist culture steeped in the principle of interdependence, Tibet's policy toward the rest of the world was isolationist. The nation was unaware of global events, thereby becoming a victim of its own failure to see its interconnectedness with the rest of the world.

If our version of globalization is to simply promote our own culture, we are talking about imperialism, hegemony, or domination – not globalization. In this light, no culture is global, in that to be global is to accommodate diversity.

A Shambhala Guide helps to clarify and express the culture, forms, meditation-room protocols, and symbolism of the Shambhala world. What follows is an introduction to the “ceremonies” that make up the culture of a Shambhala Center and celebrate basic goodness as the underlying principle of the Shambhala vision. Shambhala Centers are not just schools of meditation and philosophy— they are cultural centers that express the heritage and vision of Shambhala. Our culture is influenced by the modern world, vajrayana symbolism, the earth-based cultures of Tibet and central Asia, the imperial courtly cultures of India and China, and the simple and profound contemplative arts of Japan, such as flower-arrangement. The way we chant, our posture, the bow entering the meditation hall, the imagery of the Rigden surrounded by the Dignities, the Yeshe Tsogyal banner, our hand gesture during walking meditation, the way we do not place chants on the floor, and the presence of Sakyong's chair—all have meaning and can be communicated with skill, knowledge, and a sense of humor. As Guides we should be familiar with our shrines, chants, and seasonal celebrations as expressions of Shambhala Culture.

Cultural and Artistic Forms

Shambhala culture comprises a number of secular disciplines and activities that integrate art and culture with everyday life. Each of these disciplines represents a genuine contemplative path; together they bring beauty, vividness, and wisdom to our lives and culture. While every Shambhala centre does not yet have a full-fledged expression of all of these forms, you can receive information from the centre about their programs and activities.

Shambhala culture may be roughly grouped into four major categories: the arts, health, education, and business. The following are some of the disciplines or pathways included within our lineage. Some of these activities occur within structured organizations; others are pursued by individual practitioners with similar inspirations. Festivals offer a major opportunity for the expression of the Shambhala world.

Arts

Bugaku and Gagaku
Calligraphy
Chanoyu (tea ceremony)
Dance/Movement
Shambhala Art (Chögyam Trungpa's teachings on art)
Graphic Design
Horsemanship, Dressage
Ikebana (flower arranging)
Kyudo (archery)
Miksang (contemplative photography)
Mudra Space Awareness
Music
Poetics
Visual Art

Health

Amara Health Professionals
Contemplative Psychotherapy
Home Care
Maitri Space Awareness
Palliative Care
Sarpashana (addiction) [Heart of Recovery]
Karuna Training
Social Identity Support Groups (eg. queer, people of color, young adult, chronic illness)

Business

Leadership Training
Alia Institute

Economy

Education

Early Childhood Education
Contemplative Education
Nalanda Translation Committee
Naropa University
The Shambhala School in Halifax
Education Affinity Group

Here is a brief description of a few of these activities.

Kyudo

Kyudo means the way of the bow and can be described as a form of standing meditation. Under the direction of teachers trained by the late Shibata Kanjuro Sensei and senior instructors, students learn an ancient form of archery using traditional Japanese bows. Kyudo is a form of meditation practice, not sport, and hitting the target is not considered important. The purpose of kyudo is to purify one's heart and mind, to awaken the natural dignity of being human, beyond the obstacles of ambition, aggression, or confusion.

See also www.zenko.org.

Kalapa Ikebana

In 1982, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche formed a new school of ikebana (Japanese flower arranging) inspired by his own training and vision. Kalapa Ikebana, as this school is called, promotes the study and practice of flower arranging, often working closely with masters of other schools of ikebana.

Chanoyu

The art of Chanoyu, preparing and serving a bowl of tea, is a synthesis of many Japanese arts such as flower arranging, calligraphy, poetry, ceramics, lacquer ware, cooking, gardening, and more. As a meditation in action, the practice of tea developed alongside the practice of Zen Buddhism and joins the ordinary aspects of daily life with spiritual practice.

Bugaku

The ancient dance and music of the Japanese Imperial Court, known as bugaku, is more than 1400 years old. The stately dance, performed in richly brocaded and highly stylized costumes, expresses contemplative mind in a cultural context. Several bugaku groups are active and study with master musician and dancer Togi Sensei, a Living National Treasure of Japan.

Mudra Space Awareness

This awareness practice is based on postures and movement from traditional Tibetan monastic dance. Simple yet demanding, these techniques train students in synchronizing body and mind, in relating with space, in maintaining awareness during intense activity, and in communication.

Maitri Space Awareness

This practice is based on the principles of the five buddha families, each of which expresses a particular style and attitude of openness. Maintaining a posture associated with each family in five specifically designed rooms heightens the characteristic patterns of energy of each family, so that both the neurotic and sane aspects of the student's personal style becomes apparent.

Shambhala Art

Shambhala Art is art that springs from the meditative state of mind. It is based on a collection of teachings by Chögyam Trungpa that appreciates the

uniqueness of everyday sensory experience, the art of everyday life. Seeing the simplicity of things as they are provides the ground for genuine creative expression. These teachings are offered in a series of weekend programs.

Shrines

Shambhala Meditation Hall

It is recommended that Shambhala centres have a shrine in the main meditation hall. **NOTE:** Please refer to this main hall as the “meditation hall” or “main meditation room” not the “shrine room.” This title is descriptive of what we do in the space and is has less religious connotations.

In Shambhala centres, the main hall focuses on the Rigden shrine, designed by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche to be the main public shrine in all Shambhala centres. Hanging on the wall above the shrine is a thangka (painting) of the Primordial Rigden. The Primordial Rigden thangka mirrors to viewers an image of their enlightened nature, their basic goodness.

Like all shrine imagery in the non-theistic traditions of Buddhism, the thangka aims to remind viewers of qualities inherent in themselves and their lives. The details of the iconography are highly symbolic, each one pointing to an aspect of the view, the training, or the full realization of this basic nature.

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche designed this thangka to be placed on public shrines in Shambhala centres throughout the world. In doing so, the Sakyong points out the unique spiritual inheritance of the Shambhala community—an inheritance that braids together the Tibetan Buddhist vajrayana lineages of Kagyü and Nyingma with the direct, imperial transmission of Shambhala wisdom.

The main shrine is the heart of any Shambhala centre. Shrines, in general, are meant to remind us, provoke us to wake up from our delusions. The Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, said that having put energy into the creation and care for a shrine, a sense of liveliness then radiates out to the viewer, providing a mirror of their being.

Shambhala centre shrines are also an expression of who we are as a community of practitioners. The Rigden shrine and thangka highlight the Shambhala image of monarch as ruler of the phenomenal world. As well, they manifest the inseparability of the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings and express the unity of our Shambhala Buddhist community.

If there is space, permanent Shambhala and vajrayana shrines may be installed in other rooms within the centre.

The Primordial Rigden Thangka, wrnitten by Acharya David Schneider and available from Shambhala Media offers a detailed description of the iconography and symbolism in this thankga.

(For more details see

<http://www.shambhala.org/members/ps/manual/Shrines.php>.)

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 the Rigden shrine in a Shambhala meditation centre. 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 centre 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 centre shrine. It is similarly painted, with a sheet of glass on top for protection. Use the same thangka and/or photos suggested for the Shambhala centre shrine. On top of the shrine place:

- seven bowls of water
- two candles
- 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

Lighting and Opening Shrines

In general, we should offer water, light the shrine, offer incense (which could be a symbolic offering of unlit incense if there are people who have allergies) and bow any time we are using the meditation hall for meditation or a teaching. If the program is very public and we do not want to emphasize ritual forms, it is appropriate to light the shrine, offer, and bow, before the program begins. If a Guide, leader or teacher feels very strongly that opening the shrine will be inappropriate or offensive in a certain situation, please trust your intelligence and discuss your perspective with colleagues and come to a collective decision about what to do.

It is often appropriate to simply acknowledge that the shrine represents wakeful mind, the lineage of teachers, and good human society. Our offering and bow are ways to acknowledge such teachings and inspiration. It is a reminder and focal point for meditation rooms to help demarcate this as a space of contemplative training.

The shrine should therefore be opened for all Open Houses, *Way of Shambhala* classes and weekend retreats, including Shambhala Training levels.

Werma Shrine Symbolism

With the Rigden shrine as the primary shrine, centres with one meditation hall and shrine would add the items needed for particular practices, in this case for Werma Sadhana. Shambhala centres with more space may have a dedicated Werma shrine.

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.

Teacher's Chair and Side Table

A teacher's chair and side table of good quality are placed to the left side of the main shrine. A large khata is draped across the arms of the chair, but there is no photograph. On the side table a candle is placed, 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 this chair, if he is not teaching from a throne. In general, he will use the teacher's chair itself; if it is awkward to sit on, however, he may request a different chair. In this case, replace the teacher's chair with a suitable chair. Move the teacher's chair to the left side of the shrine; it should remain somewhat elevated. The teacher's candle should be lit as usual.

If another lineage holder is teaching and chooses not to sit on a throne, move the teacher's 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, arrange a chair and side table in front of the shrine 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 Shambhala 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 Shambhala 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's side table rather than on the teacher's chair side table.

Practice Instruments

Shambhala centres should have the following instruments for practice.

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 centres, 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 shrine, with or without a platform. In centres 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-colored molding, and covered with carpet.

At the umdze's seat and table 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)

All these items would be arranged on the platform. 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.

Yeshe Tsogyal Banner...

Chants

[Excerpted from a letter by the Rupa Acharya, Suzann Duquette]

Chanting

Chanting in the morning and evening helps to provide a sense of twenty-four-hour practice. The events of the day and the night are sandwiched between periods of practice. In the morning, the chants provide the first spark of connection to the lineage, the teachings, and to our discipline. In the evening, they can provide a sense of summing up and recalling the entire day in the context of dharmic activity.

Chanting should be considered as a practice in itself. It is important to be present and mindful of what one is doing. We can cultivate awareness of the words we are chanting as well as an awareness of their meaning. Chanting is a proclamation of the teachings themselves. We are not mouthing meaningless words; we can have a sense of their meaning. In this way, hearing, contemplating, and meditating can occur.

Chanting is a proclamation of the dharma. This proclamation touches and informs us as we deepen our practice of meditation. Shambhala Buddhist chants cover the entire expanse of the teachings, and are a profound teaching and practice in and of themselves. By introducing chants progressively, from the newest practitioner to the most advanced, we contemplate teachings that are relevant and guide our practice. Through a clear relationship and resonance with chants and chanting, contemplating the dharma through speech, our minds and hearts harmonize more readily with the meaning of the chants as we gently turn toward the dharma.

The three levels of chant books follow:

- I. ***Shambhala Chant Book***
- II. ***Warrior Chant Book***
- III. ***Collected Vajra Liturgies***
 - A. ***Vajrayana Liturgies***

I. ***Shambhala Chant Book***

The *Shambhala Chant Book* is for sangha-wide use. It reflects the vision and intention of the lineage of Sakyongs, which emphasize the significance of basic goodness and the Shambhala teachings for this time. The selection of chants also is in direct response to supplications that have been made to the Sakyong over many years, asking for daily chants that are more accessible to greater numbers of people. The Sakyong has written three new chants for this purpose ("Proclamation of Goodness," "Shambhala Protector Chant," and the "Aspiration of Shambhala:

Fulfilling the Wishes of the Dorje Dradül”). The intention of the daily chant book is to provide chants that are meaningful and accessible.

The *Shambhala Chant Book* is the daily chant book for Shambhala Meditation Centres and Meditation Groups. These chants can also be used for opening and closing meditation sessions at home. However, practitioners are welcome to choose whichever chants they have been introduced to for home use.

This chant book includes the following chants:

Morning Chants

Proclamation of Basic Goodness

Supplication to the Shambhala Lineage

Homage

Morning chants provide the first spark of connection to the lineage, the teachings and our discipline. They wake us up from our morning fog! Morning chants are done at a relatively perky pace except for the first chant, “Proclamation of Goodness,” which the umdze proclaims alone – slowly and with feeling – after ringing the gong three times and deadening.

Evening Chants

Protector Chant

Shambhala Protector Chant

It is said that around dusk is an in-between time, things are shifting and the practitioner can lose his or her awareness. The protector chants, in particular, are designed to help cut through obstacles and obscurations. These chants are about protecting something precious, our mind of dharma, and protecting from something – our hesitation, doubt and fears. This allows our wisdom to emerge. In doing the protector chants, we are reminded that it is possible to wear our fear or anxiety as adornment or ornament.

The Sakyong has written a protector chant, the “Shambhala Protector Chant,” a general protector chant that replaces other protector chants for Centres. This is the protector chant to be recited at Centres for the evening chants. Other protector chants may be chanted at home, on certain occasions – such as vajrayana or international programs, at Land Centres, and as appropriate to particular programs or levels of practice. The “Shambhala Protector Chant,” as with other protector chants, is done briskly.

The tea offering with this chant is made with the following lines. Hold up the tea offering at the line: “Guardians of Mukpo Dong, do not forget your commitment...” and bow/offer the tea at “dispel outer, inner, and secret obstacles.”

Closing Chants

Supplication for the Longevity of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche
Invocation

Aspiration of Shambhala: Fulfilling the Wishes of the Dorje Dradül
Shambhala Dedication of Merit

At night, the closing chants help us to recall and sum up our day of practice. Once again, they wake us up. In the closing chants, we acknowledge the lineage, aspire for the long lives of teachers and their vision and aspirations. The Sakyong composed the, “Aspiration of Shambhala: Fulfilling the Wishes of the Dorje Dradül.” These closing chants and aspirations are chanted at a moderate pace, a little more fluid.

Shambhala Centres and Meditation Groups are encouraged to begin using the above chants at daily or weekly chant sessions, including nyintüns, as of the Shambhala Lineage Festival. In addition to offering evening sessions that include chants, Centres and groups are welcome to continue to offer selected evening sessions for the public that do not include chants.

II. *Warrior Chant Book*

This second-level chant book is available to those attending Warrior Assembly.

III. *Collected Vajra Liturgies*

The *Collected Vajra Liturgies*, available to graduates of Sacred World Assembly, includes many additional Shambhala Buddhist chants. This is a large collection of Shambhala and Buddhist chant liturgies. They are available to Centres to draw upon for selected programs and Centre events, as appropriate. For example, if a Centre offers a program on the Vajrakilaya Sadhana, the morning and evening chants might include relevant Nyingma chants. Or, for a Primordial Rigden, Kagyü, and Nyingma ngöndro week, the morning and evening chants could include the Kagyü and Nyingma chants. Or, for a program focusing on the mahayana teachings, the morning chants could include the “Sutra of the Heart of Transcendent Knowledge,” and so on.

These three levels of chant books and their harmonious proclamation awaken us to our basic goodness. The “Shambhala Chant Book” is intended for all levels of practitioners. It is offered to further the Shambhala teachings for this time and to make chants and chanting more accessible. All of the Shambhala Buddhist chants support a culture of basic goodness and the inherent goodness in society.

Seasonal Observances at Shambhala Centres

The following events are listed in chronological order, beginning with Shambhala Day. Shambhala follows the Tibetan calendar issued from Dharamsala, rather than the Tsurphu/Rumtek calendar.

- Shambhala Day: Same day as the Tibetan new year (losar). This not a celebration of the Tibetan new year, but a Shambhala cultural event that celebrates the Shambhala new year.
- Spring nyida day (equinox): circa March 21,
- Parinirvana of the eleventh Trungpa Tulku: April 4.
- Vaishakha Day: 15th day (full moon) of the 4th month of the Tibetan lunar calendar; often falls on the full-moon day of May.
- Midsummer Day: summer nyida day (solstice), circa June 21.
- The Harvest of Peace is celebrated on the fall nyida day, circa September 21.
- Birthday celebration for Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche: November 15.
- Children's Day: winter nyida day (solstice), circa December 21.
- Mamo chants: End of the Tibetan year, beginning eleven days before Shambhala Day and lasting for ten days. The chants are not done on the day just before Shambhala Day.
- The Rites of Passage for eight-year-olds is celebrated on either the fall or the spring nyida day (equinox).

Lhasang: Example of an Important Shambhala Ritual

A lhasang is a traditional ceremony performed to dispel neurosis, to purify the environment, and to bring down the blessings of the divine upon the participants and place. In performing a lhasang one's neurosis may be dispelled, one's lungta raised, and an appreciation of sacred world can occur. A lhasang should be included as a part of Shambhala Day and nyida day celebrations, including Midsummer Day and Children's Day. A lhasang is customarily performed at the beginning of Warrior Assembly, Sacred World Assembly, and Magyal Pomra Encampment.

"Lha" in this context means "divine"; "sang" means "to purify." Therefore, a lhasang is an invocation of the principle of heaven. The lhasang smoke purifies the environment and empowers the space, the objects, and the beings within the space by inviting the awakened energy of drala and the principle of lha to descend. A simple lhasang may be used to purify a new home, apartment, or office.

The ceremony begins with the burning of juniper, creating smoke as a pathway for drala to descend. Juniper is regarded as the lha tree, whose smoke invites the principle of heaven, or drala. Chanting and carrying flags also invite drala and the energy of windhorse. Various offerings, such as tea and saké, may be made to the drala principle.

The instructions in this section are intended to reflect the way that the Vidyadhara performed the lhasang ceremony. Other Tibetan teachers have introduced their own style of conducting lhasangs. At Gampo Abbey, for example, Thrangu Rinpoche introduced the Tibetan custom of everyone tossing barley flour into the air at the end of the ceremony.

Shambhala Care & Conduct

Intimate Relationships with Participants

It is the responsibility of directors, assistant directors, meditation instructors, and staff to establish and maintain the formality of the teaching relationship. Given the experiences of genuine open heart that take place along the path, feelings of tenderness, or even sexual attraction, might arise in either the instructor or the participant. It is common and natural to be struck by the brilliance and beauty of people, to feel affection and love for them. Both instructor and student may feel emotionally and physically open, vulnerable, and alive, or alternatively, fearful and needy.

Such feelings must not be acted upon, however, if the integrity of the teaching relationship is to be preserved. The essence of *decorum* in such a situation is to provide a dignified and decent environment in which powerful emotions can be present without triggering the reflexes of our habitual patterns. Without denying the sexual dimensions of our being, the instructor should keep present in his or her mind the purpose of the instructor-participant relationship, which is to guide, encourage, and protect the participant's engagement with meditation practice and the teachings.

The responsibilities and expectations that accompany the instructor role are *not* compatible with those that accompany a casual friend. Thus, the instructor must refrain from any sexualizing gestures, inappropriate touching, verbal innuendo, invasive personal questioning, scheduling of dates, or intimate self-disclosures.

This directive is no different from the professional code of conduct for a doctor, therapist, teacher, manager, or anyone else who can be seen to be in a position of authority or power relative to a participant. No matter how equal two people may feel, no matter how much the participant or student may want or even initiate the sexual nature of the contact, the decision to sexualize the relationship almost invariably means the loss of any ability to properly fulfil the situation's original purpose, and it can cause deep harm to the participant.

Practical Suggestions to Preserve a Helpful Formality in Relation to Students

1. Do not invite students to personal social gatherings, and hold instruction meetings at the local centre, rather than in a home, café, or empty office.
2. Be clear about the time frame of a given meeting before you begin.
3. Within the context of a program, if you feel that a relationship to a participant is becoming sexualized or casual, consult with the director of the program. In such a case, the student should be reassigned to a new instructor.
4. After a program has concluded and conditions are less highly charged, if feelings of sexual attraction continue to arise and are mutual, it would not be unreasonable if one wished to explore these, but at such a time it would be important to make sure that the teacher-student relationship *is concluded and that*

the student has a new instructor. It is obviously inappropriate for a formal teaching relationship to be mixed with a personal one.

Shambhala Care and Conduct

Conducting ourselves and caring for each other.
(Available on the Shambhala website.)

Summary

The Shambhala mandala is committed to creating enlightened society. This commitment involves devoting ourselves to personal transformation, helping to develop a compassionate community of practitioners, and contributing to the creation of enlightened society in the world at large. This document is based on work done at various levels of the mandala in the recent period, and the practical experience of working over the past year with the procedure described in it. The paper sets out four aspects of relating to the care of people within our own community, and dealing with disputes and complaints:

1. Commitment to enlightened society
2. Conflicts within the community
3. Complaints against practitioners
4. Misconduct by Shambhala office holders

1. Commitment to Enlightened Society

The Shambhala mandala is committed to creating enlightened society. This commitment involves devoting ourselves to personal transformation, helping to develop a compassionate community of practitioners, and contributing to the creation of enlightened society in the world at large.

In the teachings of the Shambhala and Buddhist traditions, specific practices and instructions are provided to guide us in this three-fold commitment. These include: The Shambhala Edicts on Wholesome Human Conduct, The Five Precepts, The Four Immeasurables, and The Six Paramitas, among others. These should be regarded as useful reference points for discussion of the issues that follow

Compassionate Transformation

The meditation and other practices given to our community have the ability to heighten and purify intense emotions and behaviors that can otherwise be harmful to ourselves and others. Each person experiences and expresses this process in their own distinctive way. It is natural therefore that we should experience various displays of troubled personal and social behavior, which each individual has to work with as part of his or her path. Difficulties may arise though ignorance and confusion that can tend to make us unaware of the effect of our behavior on others. The forms and disciplines of the Shambhala Buddhist path create a container in which this process can unfold and in which our teachers, the teachings, and all practitioners can be protected as this heightening and purification take place.

At the same time, the path of the bodhisattva warrior involves the cultivation of personal and group discipline. This training takes place, for example, during formal meditation, oryoki practice, the contemplative arts, kasung practice, and meditation in action. This discipline is essential for two reasons. First, it is part of the process of learning to work skillfully with intense human energy on the path of warriorship and the journey to enlightenment. Second, personal discipline is essential on the part of everyone in a community that seeks to provide environments conducive to teaching, practice, and study.

Although each individual is part of what it takes to provide a safe and uplifted environment for teaching, practice, and study, overall responsibility rests with the leadership of Shambhala centres and groups—as well as the overall responsibility that is held by the Sakyong and the bodies that govern the mandala as a whole. Teachers, program directors and coordinators, meditation instructors and other office holders are expected to make every reasonable effort to ensure that such an environment is maintained. The practice of authentic leadership requires us to find ways of helping each other without aggression: provoking each other's innate wisdom and intelligence rather than imposing opinions or personal views on others. This responsibility includes working with individuals who may be experiencing personal difficulties that lead them to disrupt the practice of others or make it impossible to provide an appropriate contemplative environment.

The Vidyadhara created certain forms, such as the Deleg system and the Desung Corps, so that the community would have tools to work with each other as individuals on a common path. Not all Shambhala centres and groups have Delegs or local members of the Desung Corps. One of our goals is to extend these forms more widely through the mandala. The role of the Desung Corps ("Bliss Protectors") is to assist in situations where the well-being of individuals, groups, and the community as a whole is disturbed. The role of the Desung is to endeavor as far as possible to help resolve conflicts, and to enable practitioners to bring manifestations of neurotic behavior to the path of personal and social transformation. Where possible, every effort is made to resolve issues within a compassionate framework of mutual understanding and respect. This framework may involve the Desung as well as other leaders in the community, using a variety of methods for individual and group healing.

The Desung Corps may be contacted at any time through the Rusung or the Director of a Shambhala centre or group. However, it is expected that most difficulties and complaints within the community can be resolved by the skillful means of our local leadership, with assistance from the Desung Corps if needed.

In all instances of conflict, complaint, or allegations of misconduct, it is essential to remember that a number of causes and conditions have come together. The result is suffering on the part of all involved. In the case of a person who feels they have been harmed in some way, it is part of our responsibility to offer care and support. Often

what is needed immediately is spontaneous listening and unconditional attention. If the person is experiencing distress, we need to ensure that they are provided with an environment that supports them in stabilizing their mind and dealing with the situation. Formal procedures that may be appropriate can follow after that.

Codes of Conduct

The general principles of Shambhala conduct are broadly outlined in the Shambhala Edicts on Wholesome Human Conduct and the various instructions and practices of the Buddhist path. They are not comprehensive and, rather than relying on detailed injunctions, practitioners are invited to act in accordance with their understanding of the view of enlightened society. Those who have taken specific vows are, of course, expected to comply with not only the literal wording but also the profound view and motivation that is implicit in taking such vows.

At major events and programs within the mandala, it is increasingly common for participants to be asked to sign a Code of Conduct specifically drawn up for the occasion. These are helpful to all involved as they establish a common framework, the relevant laws of the local jurisdiction, and the procedure to be followed in the event of participants not complying with the code.

2. Conflicts within the Community

Conflicts arise naturally in human communities. Ours is no different. However, we are endeavoring to deal with and to learn from conflicts in ways that are beneficial to those directly involved and to the Shambhala community as a whole.

Conflict and disharmony, even between two people, can affect the whole community. Sometimes we may not want to look at this because it is easier to ignore it than to face it. But working with the raw materials of conflict and harmony is the practice given to us by our lineage.

Conflicts between individuals are often resolved informally between the people involved. However, it is sometimes necessary for the leadership of a Shambhala centre or group to create the conditions that enable the individuals to work together on their differences. Normally, a senior member of the Shambhala centre or group is asked or offers to bring the individuals together in a non-judgmental environment that empowers the people to sit in meditation together, then listen to each other and explore ways of resolving their differences. In most instances it is not the role of the convenor to act as an arbitrator. His or her role is similar to that of a meditation instructor—providing a container of wakeful energy, listening deeply, allowing as much space, silence, and intuitive insight to arise as possible, and manifesting as a protector for the integrity and dignity of both beings. Several such meetings may be needed. In some instances, the individuals may wish to be accompanied by a friend or other companion. In other instances, it may be helpful for the individuals to meet in the stronger container of a group of practitioners. In all cases, however, everyone must understand and agree that they are joining a circle of confidentiality. This provides a container in which individuals may feel freer to talk openly about deep-

seated personal issues. Everyone else in the circle is a protector for that openheartedness and the arising of basic goodness. They have a sacred obligation to respect the privacy of the circle.

When creating a group of people to form such a circle, attention should be paid to the importance of diversity among the individuals. As far as possible, the group should not, for example, be comprised solely of people of the same gender, the same level of practice, or the same professional background. The greater the diversity of the group, the greater the range of perspectives and resonance available for the collective listening and compassionate practice that the group will undertake together with the individuals in conflict.

The possibility of reviving the former Upaya Councils, regionally and internationally, is being explored, along with the training of individuals to serve on such bodies. At the present time, however, attempting to resolve conflicts remains the responsibility of the local leadership at centres and groups. If specialist advice or assistance is needed, the Director of the Shambhala centre or leader of the group, may seek guidance and support from the Desung Corps.

3. Complaints Against Practitioners

Each Shambhala Centre and Group should notify its members and participants in its programs to whom complaints should be made if the behavior of any practitioner is distressing or harmful to others, or illegal. In the event of a complaint being made about the behavior of a practitioner (other than someone acting at the time in their capacity as a teacher, meditation instructor, program director or coordinator, or other office holder), it is the responsibility of the leadership of each centre or group to ensure that the complaint is promptly dealt with. The complaint will need to be looked into in such a way that the inherent dignity of all involved in the matter is respected. If the complaint is well founded, it is the responsibility of the leadership of the centre or group to ensure that appropriate action is taken. In most instances, bringing the individuals together in a circle of confidentiality, as is done for resolving conflicts, is recommended as the first step. The majority of complaints will resolve themselves through that process.

In the event of an extremely serious allegation being made about the behavior of an individual practitioner (other than someone acting at the time in their capacity as a teacher, program director or coordinator, meditation instructor, or other office holder), the centre or group may wish to adapt the Misconduct Procedure described below as a basis for dealing with the matter. However, only where there is no possibility of the centre or group dealing with the issue locally, and the leadership of the local centre or group specifically requests the intervention of the central bodies of the Shambhala mandala, will the matter be accepted under the Misconduct Procedure.

However, if the complaint is about the behavior of someone acting at the time in their capacity as a teacher, meditation instructor, program director or coordinator,

or other office holder, the leadership of the Shambhala centre or group should refer the matter to the Misconduct Procedure described below.

4. Misconduct by Shambhala Office Holders

The Board of Shambhala International, at its meeting of July 2002, adopted a resolution on *Shambhala Buddhist Conduct*. It states:

Shambhala International is committed to 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 communities 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.

In the event of individuals wishing to make complaints about situations or actions that may involve misconduct on the part of staff and others holding office within the Shambhala mandala, the following Misconduct Procedure is now in the process of being developed.

This process is not intended to be, nor should it be confused with, the legal processes of society at large. This process aims to provide a mechanism within our own community for ensuring that individuals who, for whatever reason, wish to make a complaint about the way in which they have been treated by staff, office holders, or leaders of the community may do so. It aims to offer appropriate procedures for such complaints to be investigated, assessed, and acted upon in the best interests of all those involved and for the benefit of the community as a whole.

This process inevitably has aspects that resemble the investigative and judicial mechanisms we are familiar with within society, but the foundation upon which we are proceeding differs in several significant ways. As a contemplative community, we endeavor to bring all activity of body, speech, and mind to the path of meditation, compassion, and wisdom. Behaviors that may be harmful to ourselves and others are regarded as karmic obstacles to be acknowledged, examined, and worked with on the basis that the innate nature of all beings is profound, brilliant sanity.

The basis of the process is not punitive, but restorative: to enable individuals to identify and correct harmful behaviors, to support all those who may have been harmed, and to assist development of mature community life. The nature of this work may involve the individual, those associated with their unfolding karma, as well as the community as a whole or its representatives, all of whom share a deep commitment to the well-being of each other.

The Basis for Invoking the Procedure

This procedure aims to address allegations of misconduct on the part of teachers, meditation instructors, program directors and coordinators, staff, and other office holders in the Shambhala community. It also aims to work with the distress involved in relation to any such allegations. It may be invoked in response to:

- Allegations about behavior that could possibly be unlawful;
- Allegations about actions that appear to violate specific vows taken by teachers, meditation instructors, program directors and coordinators, staff and other office holders in the Shambhala community;
- Allegations that point to a possible pattern of behavior that may have harmfully affected a range of individuals;
- Allegations that cause a level of disturbance within the community that require a formal response.

Misconduct can be understood as, but not necessarily limited to:

- Aggression: aggressive behavior of body, speech, or mind;
- Passion: inappropriate sexual behavior, misuse or misreporting of funds, etc.;
- Ignorance: not fulfilling one's duty in a way that causes harm to others.

The Misconduct Procedure can be invoked at any level of the Shambhala mandala. Any individual may seek to have the process invoked by contacting any office holder of the Shambhala mandala, who will refer the matter either to the President or Desung General. If there is sufficient basis to invoke the procedure, the President initiates the process in consultation with the Desung General. If, on the basis of a preliminary examination, it becomes clear that there is not a sufficient basis on which to apply this particular procedure, the person bringing the complaint will be notified, and also informed if there is any other way in which the Shambhala community can assist them with the difficulty they are having.

The Assessment Panels

The complaint is referred to an Assessment Panel. At the international level, there is an Assessment Panel chaired by the Desung General that includes a representative of the Office of the Sakyong and an Acharya. This panel is empowered to establish regional panels throughout the mandala.

The role of the international and regional assessment panels is to:

- a) provide a container in which the individuals involved can express their grievances and respond to each other in a way that provides the ground for basic goodness to arise;
- b) assist the parties in determining if there has been a violation of the principles that form the basis of our community, and the harm that has been caused by this;

- c) assist the parties in discussing any action that needs to be taken to make amends for any such violation, and the steps that need to be taken to prevent such behavior in the future;
- d) recommend any measure to be taken by any or all parts of the Shambhala mandala that could help lessen the likelihood of any such violation occurring in the future.

Normally the regional panels consist of three senior members of the sangha. They determine their own working methods depending on the situation in each case. Attention is paid to creating panels that have people of diverse characteristics. The panels are normally not comprised of people of the same gender, professional background, and so on; although the panel members normally are selected on the basis of their experience in dealing with this type of matter, their integrity, good judgment, and openheartedness.

Depending on the nature of the allegations being made, the matter may need to be investigated by a regional representative of the Desung Corps or may involve investigation and assessment at the international level—or a combination of both. The President, Desung General, and the other members of the assessment panels consult regularly to monitor the unfolding of this process and make whatever adjustments are needed in the interests of all involved.

If a person wishes to object to the presence of an individual on an assessment panel, they may do so in writing to the Desung General, who will be responsible for deciding the merits of the objection. If the objection is to the presence of the Desung General on the panel in a particular case, the decision will be left to the Acharya on the international assessment panel. If there is a complaint against the President, s/he will recuse himself from all matters to do with that particular complaint, and his/her role at all stages will normally be played by the Chair of the Council of the Makkyi Rabjam.

Stage One: Assessment

There is a need to assess the facts and, if possible, bring the parties together. Normally, a regional assessment panel will be established for this purpose. The regional assessment panel will take all necessary steps to contact the parties, assess the facts and bring the parties together in a circle of confidentiality. More than one meeting may be needed. It is not the role of the regional assessment panel to act either as judges or arbitrators. They provide a container of wakefulness, creating the ground in which basic goodness may arise. At an appropriate stage, they find it helpful to ask questions or to explore possible avenues for dealing with the complaint.

If it becomes clear that the complaint is well founded, a number of options may be explored. These might include the following possibilities, which may arise naturally from good communication within the circle of confidentiality. There may be a written or oral statement of apology. That statement would include a commitment

to specific ways in which the individual agrees to work on him/herself during the ensuing months/years. The individual may agree to work on him/herself in some or all of the following ways:

- Stop all teaching and meeting with meditation students for a period of six months to a year (or longer) depending on the severity of the case.
- Meet with an addictions specialist for an assessment. Engage in sessions of therapy if his/her inappropriate activity is deemed to be chronic or habitual.
- Go into meditation retreats for 4-6 weeks during the next year. Relate to a mentor/senior teacher at regular intervals.
- More severe measures might be needed, possibly to protect the community, depending on the nature of the inappropriate behavior. (See below for the possible criteria of an outcome.)

Circumstances may require the Desung General to assign a representative to take a detailed statement from the individual(s) making the allegation. This needs to be completed as soon as possible. This may take the form of a signed statement, but if that is not possible or clearly not in the best interests of the individual, any other form of recording the individual's complaint that can be reliably worked with can be used for establishing a reasonable basis on which to proceed.

The complaint then needs to be presented to the person(s) against whom the allegation has been made so that s/he can respond. This will normally take place in a manner determined by the regional assessment panel, which will then work with the individuals in the best interests of all concerned.

A teacher, meditation instructor, program director or coordinator, staff member, or other office holder who unreasonably refuses to participate in this process may in their absence be deemed unfit, on the grounds of a lack of confidence, to hold a particular office, and be suspended or have their participation in the community limited in some way until they address the issue at hand.

Stage Two: Outcome

The Regional Panel conducts its work and reports a provisional outcome to the International Assessment Panel. There will normally be a consultation between the panels in the interests of ensuring a reasonable level of consistency throughout the community and to establish if further investigation or discussion is needed before the Regional Panel concludes its work. Further investigation may be needed at this point.

The purpose of this process is not to administer punishment. It is to establish the truth (or truths) of the situation, enable amends to be made for any harm done, to correct the behavior pattern that caused the harm and identify possible ways in

which others can be protected from such harm in future. Therefore, if the complaint is well founded, a suitable outcome will likely consist of some or all of the following components: (1) an acknowledgment by the individual that their behavior caused harm; (2) an apology for the harm done; (3) making amends for the harm caused; (4) an agreement not to repeat the behavior and, as needed, a commitment to undertake practice and/or therapy aimed at changing recurrent behavior; (5) a period that protects the community from such behavior while the change is taking place; (6) an acceptance of periodic monitoring or supervision as needed.

If the parties fail to agree on an outcome within the framework provided by the Regional Assessment Panel, or agree on a provisional outcome with which the Regional Assessment Panel disagrees, the Regional Assessment Panel has the authority to recommend its own provisional outcome to the International Assessment Panel, based on its own view of what may be in the best interests of the individuals involved and the larger interests of the community as a whole.

The aim is to achieve consensus between the Regional and International Assessment Panels, but if that is not possible, a majority view will be sufficient. The Desung General is empowered to make a final decision if necessary, including a finding that there was insufficient basis on which to reach an outcome.

The final outcome is reported in writing by the Regional Assessment Panel to the Desung General. This report is communicated to all those directly involved in the complaint.

All such reports are kept under secure file through arrangements made by the Desung General. Where the outcome requires that a person's name be kept on a register for a period of time, that process is conducted under the supervision of the Desung General.

The Desung General will let Centre Directors, Resident Directors, and Dharmadhatu Directors know that the individual is suspended from particular responsibilities for a specified period of time while s/he is working on him/herself.

If, on examination by the Regional Assessment Panel or the appointed representative of the Desung General, it becomes clear that the complaint has been deliberately made on false grounds and constitutes an act of harm, the Regional Assessment Panel will work with the individuals involved to establish the most effective way in which amends can be made and, as needed, protection given to the reputation of the person against whom the false complaint was brought.

Stage Three: Appeal

Anyone involved in the case may make a written appeal to the President of Shambhala. This must be received within thirty days from the time that everyone has received the written report from the Regional Assessment Panel. The President

will take such action as is necessary to process the appeal. The decision of the President will be final.

Counseling and Conciliation

At all stages of this process, the Regional Assessment Panel is also responsible for ensuring that the individuals involved in this process have access to whatever counseling, conciliation advice, or other appropriate assistance they need. The panel may seek the support of the Desung Corps or other members of the community. The purpose is to enable the individuals involved to deal with the unfolding of the karma of the situation in a way that deepens their understanding and compassion, both towards themselves and others.

A party to the case may be accompanied or advised by a friend or representative at any point in the process, including in any meetings with the assessment panel and so on, up to and including the appeal.

Confidentiality

It is important to ensure that no one involved in the process is subjected to unsubstantiated and harmful gossip, and to create a dignified and concentrated container. This is important both for the person(s) bringing the complaint and for the person(s) against whom the complaint is made. In either instance, false perceptions and possible stigmatization associated with such accusations may inhibit the parties from confiding in anyone, which can have harmful consequences. Therefore, the principle of confidentiality is applied up to and including the conclusion of Stage Three, and allowing for the thirty-day period during which an appeal may be lodged with the President. This principle means that the matter is not discussed with people who are not involved in the process, but may include discussions by the parties with counselors or close confidants, to whom the principle of confidentiality also applies. This is to protect the interests of all parties concerned and to ensure that all communications are undertaken in a spirit of resolving and healing whatever conflicts have arisen or may yet arise in relation to the complaint. This principle should be explained to all those involved and an undertaking to respect confidentiality be obtained from each person prior to their making oral or written statements.

This principle is applied by the President, Desung General, and the assessment panels, taking into account the need for essential information to be disclosed as part of this process, while at the same time safeguarding the well being of the individuals involved.

Reporting to the Shambhala Mandala

The President is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate statement on these issues is made for the benefit of the Shambhala community. This need not involve the citing of individual names, but will be done in a manner that enables the community to understand the issues involved, the outcome, and the lessons to be learned. This may take the form of periodic reports on Care and Conduct, highlighting particular themes that have emerged in working with these issues.

Six Points of Mindful Speech

Speak Slowly

Enunciate Clearly

Be Concise

Listen to Yourself

Listen to Others

Use Silence as a Part of Speech

Shambhala Aspirations on Diversity, Accessibility and Compassionate Conduct

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.

Ten Commitments of a Meditation Instructor

Active meditation instructors are expected to make a commitment to the following standards. Periodically, the Director of Practice and Education, shasrti, or acharya needs to remind MIs of these standards and to put them into practice through skillful administrative policies.

1. *Confidentiality.* An important aspect of instruction is creating and maintaining a feeling of trust between the student and the instructor. Confidentiality is key to fostering trust. Unless an instructor feels that the well-being of a student or of another person is truly at stake, what is discussed or revealed in a meditation interview should **never** be discussed with anyone.
2. *Personal relationship / intimacy with students.* There should **never** be sexual intimacy with a meditation student. If an intimate, personal relationship develops between a student and an instructor, the student should be assigned a new instructor, *before* one acts upon this relationship. It is obviously inappropriate for a formal teaching relationship to be mixed with a personal one.
3. *Frequency of interviews.* It is recommended that instructors meet with students every two months on average. When working with new students, more frequent interviews are recommended. There may be periods when a student needs or wants more time with the instructor, and obviously one should respond to that.
4. The recommended frequency of interviews at different practice levels is:
 - *New students.* The second interview is very important and can be scheduled for two to three weeks after the first interview. Invite the new student to make the appointment at the conclusion of the first interview. This saves a call back, gets around the issue of handing out phone numbers, and is simple and straightforward. It is an invitation to the new practitioner to come back and talk about what has been happening as they begin to practice the technique. This should be regarded as an act of generosity and compassion, not as an act of being too pushy or invasive.
 - *Shamatha students.* It is best to give instruction within a formal context rather than within an informal social setting. Ideally, the instructor could see students during nyinthüns.
 - *Ngöndro students.* Ngöndro instruction should also be given in a formal context, ideally during group practice situations, such as nyinthüns or Vajra Assembly weekends. Sometimes group instruction can be scheduled with a few students doing the same ngöndro practice guided by a senior student. Although this format is useful to discuss many general issues, it is not a substitute for individual instruction.

- *Werma Sadhana students.* Although sadhakas are advanced students, it is recommended that instructors take an interest in the progress of their students and make contact with them on an ongoing basis. Sadhakas can receive much valuable instruction within the context of group discussion.
5. *Distribution of students.* It is recommended that instructors at all levels have some shamatha students. Vajrayana instructors are strongly urged to continue to participate at nyinthüns and give initial instruction, although in some cases this may be unrealistic.
 6. *Responsibility for staffing.* Whenever possible, instructors should assist in staffing practice events at the centre. This could take any number of forms, depending on the individual instructor's inspiration: being umdze at a nyinthün, leading a practice intensive, helping with the tantra group, and so forth.
 7. *Practice continuity.* Instructors should maintain a personal meditation practice of at least 20 hours a month, including feast practice.
 8. *Continuing education.* Instructors should periodically complete one advanced meditation instructor training, such as lojong training, when offered by the local or major regional centre. Individual study such as Ngedön School is strongly recommended.
 9. *Meditation guidance.* Instructors are urged to seek periodic guidance and instruction pertaining to their own practice.
 10. *Inactive status.* Instructors who cannot meet these goals and commitments should discuss with the Practice Department Head whether or not they should become inactive. A decision to become inactive does not imply a penalty or a stigma. Their students will be transferred to other instructors. They may have to meet some qualification requirements to become active again.

Study Questions for Guide Training

Following is a list of study questions for you to consider in preparation for the *Shambhala Guide Training Program*. The questions cover topics organized into Lineage, Meditation Practice, Path, and Culture. Most questions are accompanied by reading references. For some of them you will need to draw upon your own personal understanding and do research into how your centre works.

During the training weekend there will be an oral group wisdom exchange based on the topics listed below. A general understanding of the themes is sufficient. Please do not feel a need to memorize foreign terms, dates, and names. Instead, consider questions that a new student might ask about Shambhala vision, our history and teachers, our approach to practice, our path, and why we use certain forms.

Main Sources

SGRM: Shambhala Guide Resource Manual

The Shambhala Principle by Sakyong Mipham

Turning the Mind Into An Ally by Sakyong Mipham

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior by Chögyam Trungpa

Great Eastern Sun by Chögyam Trungpa

The Heart of the Buddha by Chögyam Trungpa

I. Lineage

1. What is Shambhala?

Sources:

SGRM

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior

The Shambhala Principle

2. What happens at a Shambhala centre?

Sources:

SGRM

Brochures at centre

Independent research

3. What are 5 historical sources and wisdom traditions that flow into Shambhala?

Sources:

SGRM

4. Please describe the meaning of this sentence: "The Shambhala lineage is the host and protector of a number of different wisdom traditions while still being a specific lineage with its own identity, symbols, and leadership."

Sources:

SGRM

5. What is the Shambhala terma?

Sources:

SGRM

6. What is Buddhism? Name the two Tibetan Buddhist lineages that most directly influence Shambhala?

Sources:

SGRM

7. How are Shambhala and Buddhism the same, different, and inseparable?

Sources: *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, pp. 18–32

SGRM: Shambhala Buddhism

8. Who are the 4 Ancestral sovereigns? Why are they relevant today?

Sources:

SGRM

9. Who is Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and what is a Sakyong?

Sources:

SGRM

9. Who is Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche?

Sources:

SGRM

10. What is enlightened society?

Sources:

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior, pp. 25–34

SGRM

The Shambhala Principle

The Enlightened Society Treatise

11. How do we develop “cultural humility”? SGRM

12. What is the Shambhala Aspiration on Diversity, Accessibility, and Compassionate Conduct? (see appendix)

II. Meditation Practice

13. Why do we meditate?

Sources:

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior, “Discovering Basic Goodness”

Turning the Mind Into An Ally, “Peaceful Abiding”

Dathun Letter
SGRM

14. Describe the basic meditation instruction given to a newcomer in an open house, MIEL, and other introductory courses. What is the view? The instructions for posture, breathing, and mind/heart? Is this a “beginner” technique?
Sources: SGRM

15. Describe basic goodness as ground, as path, and as fruition in meditation practice.
Sources: SGRM

16. Describe the meditation instruction given in Level I of Shambhala Training. How and why is this technique slightly different from the open house instruction?
Sources: Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior, pp. 35–31
SGRM: “Dathün Letter” and “Open, Precise, and Beyond”

17. Describe the precise, open, and beyond meditation techniques. Which techniques correspond to each of the Shambhala Training Levels?
Sources: SGRM: “Precise, Open and Beyond”

16. What is shamatha?
Sources: Turning the Mind Into An Ally, “Peaceful Abiding,” p. 24
Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism, pp. 98, 153–7

18. Describe concentric circles of meditation. How might these be applied?
Sources: Turning the Mind Into An Ally, “How to Gather the Scattered Mind,” p. 58

19. Give a definition of mindfulness (trenpa) and awareness (sheshin).
Sources: Turning the Mind Into An Ally, “Mindfulness and Awareness,” p.49

20. What is vipashyana?
Sources: Turning the Mind Into An Ally
The Heart of the Buddha

21. What is Shambhala Meditation? How does it influence our basic instruction?
Sources: SGRM

III. Path

22. What are the four experiential stages of the Shambhala path?

Sources:

SGRM

23. What is the *Way of Shambhala*?

Sources: SGRM

24. What is the Everyday Life Series?

Sources: SGRM

24. What is Shambhala Training? What is the purpose of Levels I-V?

Sources: SGRM

25. What is the Basic Goodness series?

Sources: SGRM

26. What are some of the characteristics of the Shambhala Buddhist approach to the path?

Sources: SGRM

27. Describe the role of simplicity retreats, weekthuns and dathuns on the path?

Sources: SGRM

28. Describe how Enlightened Society Assembly is the ground for Warrior Assembly and how Warrior Assembly leads to Sacred World Assembly?

Sources: SGRM

29. What are the three yanas of Buddhism? How are these presented on the path?

Sources: *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, Introduction

Hinayana: 203, 224, 98, 155–7, 167, 193–4, 231

Mahayana: 158, 99, 168–9, 208, 218–9

Bodhisattva : 99, 102–3 170–8

Vajrayana or Tantra: 47, 217–43

SGRM

30. What is basic goodness?

Sources: *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, pp. 29–33, 35–45, 51, 59, 66, 70, 71, 75, 80–85, 95, 154, 157 (unconditional)

The Shambhala Principle

III. Culture

31. What does it mean to say that Shambhala is a culture? Relate this to the word, “ceremony.”

Sources:

The Shambhala Principle

SGRM

32. What some of the contemplative arts essential for Shambhala?

Sources: SGRM

33. Why is the Rigden in the center of our shrine?

Sources: SGRM

34. Why do we have a chair for the Sakyong in our Shambhala Centers?

Sources: SGRM

35. What do we chant?

Sources: SGRM

36. What do we mean when we talk about creating Shambhala container, or creating sacred space? Be prepared to talk about the shrines, banners, images, bowing, the use of ikebana, and so forth.

Sources: SGRM: Shrines

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior, pp. 110–111, 125–133, 109–115 (drala)

37. In the Shambhala culture we have several holidays, and often use celebratory rituals (such as on Shambhala Day) to create community. What might you say to a newcomer about Shambhala Day, including the meaning of some of the ceremonial aspects, such as lhasang and the monthly practice of the Shambhala Sadhana?

Sources: SGRM: Annual Observances

38. How does a Shambhala Guide, meditation instructor, or leader in the Shambhala community handle intimate relationships during programs?

Sources: SGRM: Intimate Relationships

39. What is the Shambhala Care and Conduct document? Please state the procedure in your own words. What is the purpose of this procedure?

Sources: SGRM: Care and Conduct

40. What are some of the basic principles of Shambhalian speech and communication skills to be cultivated?

Sources: *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, “Letting Go,” pp. 77–84
Myth of Freedom, “Love,” “Working with People,” pp. 86–92
SGRM

Shambhala Guide Vow

May the three jewels, the dralas of Shambhala, and the ancient lineages of male and female warriors guide me and inspire me.

I, (*Shambhala name or given name*), as a Shambhala Guide, aspire to arouse the sanity of human society and of the Shambhala community in particular, in accordance with the guidance and instructions of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

I will maintain my own discipline in the sitting practice of meditation and cultivate mindfulness and awareness in my daily life. I will feel my own basic goodness.

Further, I will train my mind in the vast and profound way of the Shambhala warrior, and, as a Shambhala Guide, I will dedicate myself to the well-being and training of those who aspire to begin the practice of meditation and enter into the glorious culture of Shambhala. I will listen deeply, skillfully transmit the profound practice of meditation, and accurately represent the lineage, culture, and path of Shambhala.

I promise to work under the guidance of senior students and with my fellow Shambhala Guides in ensuring genuine and accurate communication throughout the community. At the same time, I promise to respect the confidentiality of all that might be confided to me during the performance of my role as a Shambhala Guide.

I pledge to faithfully represent the teachings of Shambhala and to encourage harmony within the sangha. I will be part of creating enlightened society.

On the whole, I commit myself to be genuine and good and extraordinarily sane in relating with myself and my fellow warriors in the Shambhala community. If I violate these pledges, I request that I may be removed from my role of Shambhala Guide, while remaining as a practitioner and student, and that I may, when it shall be appropriate, apply for reinstatement as a guide.

In making this vow, I express my loyalty and dedication to the glorious lineage of Shambhala.

May I be genuine, gentle, and fearless.
May I be of benefit to others.

May all beings enjoy profound, brilliant glory!