

Steps towards the Kalapa Governance structure At Shambhala Centres

Summary

We are establishing the model of Kalapa governance at Shambhala Centres. It is an evolving process. The model is being introduced at the Kalapa Governance Gatherings and several centres have already adopted it or are exploring it.

This paper is a contribution to this process. It has role definitions for governing entities in a Shambhala Centre. It offers a way of applying Kalapa governance in large or medium-size centres. Centres with fewer members can apply the concepts, scaled to fit their specific needs.

The entities described here are the

- Governing Council
- Centre Director
- Executive Committee

There is a short section on the Three Pillars. These form the basis for the governance model. Specific positions include the Centre Director, Director of Practice and Education, Dorje Kasung, Chagdzo (Bursar), and the Representatives of the Office of Societal Health and Well Being and the Office of Culture and Decorum.

Centre leaders will be supported by a manual of governance policy. A sample template is near completion. Local centres will be able to adopt and refine this manual to reflect local circumstances and perspectives.

***Note:** This document does not cover other companion tools for this development: an outline of appointment processes, the community practices and other tools provided to leaders at the Kalapa Governance Gatherings, advice on collaboration and the development of processes for community consultation and participation. Those and other tools will be provided as this process evolves.*

I. The Governing Council

Purpose

The local Governing Council acts on behalf of the Lineage of Sakyongs to ensure that the local centre manifests the values and vision of Shambhala in its practices, programs and organizational conduct.

Role of the Governing Council

The Governing Council is the senior-most body in the governing structure of a Shambhala Centre. It is responsible for the overall vision and policy of the local centre, and its connection to the center of the mandala.

The Council:

- Invites and sustains a deep and energetic *connection with the lineage* of Sakyongs and lineage representatives;
- Holds the *strategic vision* for the Centre's future;
- Develops local *governance policies*. These articulate our governance values and perspectives. For example, what are our values in relation to treatment of staff, volunteers and participants? How specific should we be on this? What is a culture of profound kindness? What would the signs of such a culture be?
- Performs *ongoing assessment* of local centre activity. Are we accomplishing the benefits we aspire to as a council and as a community? Are we living the values we've expressed in policy?
- Nominates to the Kalapa Court candidates for the positions of Centre Director and Chair of the Governing Council.

In addition to these core roles, the Council:

- May take responsibility for capital fundraising campaigns (as differentiated from ongoing program-based appeals), and
- Communicates periodically with the local community to understand its perspectives and to collaborate on developing long-range aspirations for the centre.

The roles, agenda, and process of the Council will be developed in more detail in the forthcoming Shambhala Centre Governance Manual.

Composition of the Council

The composition of the Council is based on several principles.

The role of the Governing Council is to govern on behalf of the lineage of Sakyongs. It commits itself to ensuring that the vision of our Shambhala lineage extends throughout the local mandala. The Council links with the lineage of Sakyongs, articulates Shambhala vision and values in policy, and performs ongoing assessment to ensure the local centre remains true to Shambhala vision.

Those Council members with Kalapa appointment (Centre Director, Director of Practice and Education, Rusung or Chain of Command Designate, Treasury, Culture and Decorum, Societal Health and Well-being) will help to integrate mandala-wide and local policy considerations.

Assessment is one of the three key roles of governance. Here we ask: “Does our activity matches our aspirations, as they are stated in governance policy”. This important work requires that all members of the Council be willing to openly and non-judgmentally explore the results of local efforts. Doing good assessment leads directly to our further development as leaders and as community. A simple example of assessment would be checking periodically to see that local debt-limit policy is being followed. A more complex and subtle one would be assessing the local culture of kindness.

The role of the Governing Council differs from that of the Executive Committee (described below). The two functions maybe carried out by some of the same people, depending on the size and structure of local centres. Nonetheless, it is increasingly important to distinguish between the two distinct roles.

The Governing Council is responsible for articulating local governance policy and assuring that good assessment is happening. Policy examples might include establishing priorities to guide local programming (Will our degree of focus on families and children change in the coming year?) and setting the salary for the Centre Director. While the Governing Council is responsible for articulating local governance policy, the Executive Committee’s function is to manifest and implement that policy and the vision of Shambhala through all local activities, implement governance policy, and to share results and challenges with the Governing Council.

This structure is just being put into place. The existing composition of each centre’s current governing council may already include all or most of the positions that the Sakyong would like to have in place. Not all centres have all these positions filled yet. Nor is the following list definitive – some centres have a Governing Council or board constructed along different lines, and will need to think carefully before adding to it or changing it.

Regardless of each centre's current governance model, the Sakyong would like to see the following elements of the Three Pillars represented on each Governing Council (*a short summary of the Three Pillars is included as Annex A*):

The Pillar of Government

The Centre Director (normally as Chair of the council)

The Treasurer (normally the Chagdzö - Bursar)

The Representative of Culture and Decorum (normally the Representative of the Shambhala Office of Culture and Decorum)

The Representative of Societal Health and Well Being (normally the Representative of the Shambhala Office of Societal Health and Well Being)

The Chair of the Governance Sub-committee (if one exists)

The Council Secretary: the Council Secretary works closely with the Council Chair to plan and convene meetings, and to ensure the ongoing integrity of minutes and the local governance manual.

The Pillar of Practice and Education

The Director of Practice and Education

(See Annex D for a short description of this role and that of the shastri. The shastri role is to focus on teaching and developing the local teaching mandala of a teacher and mentor in the teaching stream of Practice and Education. When this role was created it was specifically designed not to be part of the governance model. Now that the shastris have been in position for more than a year, there will be an overall evaluation of their experience including this point.)

The Pillar of Protection

The Rusung or Chain of Command Designate

Many centres will choose to have on the Council additional community members who do not have portfolio (such as those listed above). These members-at-large also contribute depth and insight to the work of governance.

The key point about the Governing Council is that, regardless of its composition, when these people work together in their roles as members of the Governing Council, they are fulfilling the functions and responsibilities of governing: holding responsibility for the overall vision and policy of the Centre, assuring ongoing assessment and maintaining an energetic connection to the centre of the mandala.

This is different than the executive function described below. In many centres, the same people will be therefore “wearing two hats” – sitting on the Governing Council and also fulfilling the executive function in the week-to-week running of the Centre. Being clear about this difference and knowing which function we are fulfilling at any one time is essential.

Governing Council Decision-Making

The Governing Council draws together the leaders of the Three Pillars and other senior leaders of the local Shambhala Centre. It is a diverse group of committed individuals serving as the link between the centre of the mandala and the centre's own community. Therefore, the conduct of the Governing Council and its decision-making processes need to harmonize both the vision of the lineage and the particular characteristics of the local community.

A Governing Council accomplishes this harmonization best when it is clear about the vision of the lineage and, on that basis, invites diversity and openness into its deliberations. The council invites the straightforward presentation of different points of view, and welcomes other viewpoints that may be expressed by those not on the council. Disagreement and probing questioning are welcomed as a way of sharpening the understanding of complex issues, and as ways of opening up fresh perspectives on whatever is being discussed.

For example, when decisions are being contemplated in the Council, the Chair can remember to always ask if there is anyone who has a different point of view or who disagrees with the proposal on the table, making it clear that diversity of views can help to deepen and enrich the discussion.

The council works together to reach broad agreement. Normally, this takes the form of acknowledging that a broadly shared point of view has arisen in the course of discussion. It is the responsibility of the chair to facilitate this process. Normally the chair provides a summing up of the discussion, which may include a specific proposal on the next steps and then seeks broad agreement.

The council relies on its collective wisdom and integrity, including that of the chair, to ensure that the process of reaching broad agreement is based on mutual trust, openness, willingness to consider issues from multiple points of view, and to welcome the insight that arises from space. This is an interactive process.

The method of "Reaching Broad Agreement" is used by the Kalapa Council and a number of Governing Councils. We recommend it for use throughout the mandala. It is included as Annex B. This is linked to a recommended process for effective meetings ("The Artful Circle") presented to our community by the President and included as Annex C.

The Chair of the Governing Council

The Chair of the Council is empowered to ensure the integrity and discipline of the Council process. S/he ensures that the Council behaves in accordance with the vision, value and policies of the mandala, its own agreed policies and any other conditions required by law.

The Chair is guided by the principles and practices of "Reaching Broad Agreement" which are designed to invite and invoke the insight and support of the council as a

whole. This places great importance on the values of consultation, testing for differences and evolving the level of support needed to move forward on issues.

The Chair is authorized to make decisions in interpreting and implementing the Council's internal policies (policies about its own role and work). The Chair does not have authority to unilaterally overrule policies adopted by the Governing Council, except in accordance with the decision-making procedure set out in point 9 of Annex B or to make decisions in areas where the Council specifically delegates authority to others.

In the long-range view of the Sakyong, the Centre Director will fill the role of Council Chair. This is already the case in a number of centres. In other centres a separately appointed Chair of the Council currently fills this role. In those centres where the Centre Director plays the role of Council Chair, it is always important to distinguish between the role the Centre Director is playing in that capacity and the role s/he plays as Chief Executive. This distinction is explained below.

The role of the Chair of the Governing Council will be developed in more detail in the forthcoming Shambhala Centre Governance Manual.

Working with disagreements in the Governing Council

Normally, it is always possible to reach an adequate level of broad agreement (since it does not require unanimity or consensus). If this is not possible, it is one of the responsibilities of the chair of the council to determine the outcome of the discussion and make the decision. Often in such situations, the chair will try to find a "next step" that will move the situation forward, without necessarily locking everyone into a final outcome on the matter. In doing so, the chair takes into account the range of views expressed and seeks to secure sufficient support, especially in the area of policy formulation, to ensure that decisions are properly understood and implemented.

In the event of a deeply divisive conflict arising in the Council that cannot be resolved locally, such as a breakdown in the process of "reaching broad agreement", this should first be dealt with by the process described at the end of this document ("Resolving Disagreements"). This may lead to the matter being referred either to the regional envoy or the head of the relevant region for resolution, and where no such entity exists, to the Director of Centre and Group Support on the Kalapa Executive.

For example, the Council may be unable to reach broad agreement on a proposal supported by the Centre Director to move to a new location that requires increases in capital fundraising and operational revenue.

II. The Centre Director

It is the Sakyong's wish that the role of Centre Director be more empowered within the local centre, in line with the role played by the Head of the Government Pillar in

the Kalapa Council. As an expression of this, he has asked that we work towards having the Centre Director, as head of the Government Pillar, both Chair the Governing Council and act as the Chief Executive.

Where this represents a change from existing practice, it should be undertaken with the following principles:

First, local leaders should understand and discuss the roles of Executive Director and Council Chair as they are newly defined here and further developed in the forthcoming governance manual. This exploration should be in some detail and depth, and the Centre Director should have the confidence of self and others that she can manage the separate agendas and meetings of both the Governing Council and the Executive Committee. To do this successfully, the director will understand the distinction between the agendas of governance and the executive and know how to keep them separate. Support in understanding this distinction will be offered mandala-wide.

Second, this change should be implemented over a period of time, in a way that does not undermine the momentum and progress of the current leadership. It is hoped that the contributions and service of the current governance chair or board chair can be appreciated and involved in moving towards the next iterations of local leadership, rather than prematurely ended.

As this model evolves, and depending on the human resources available at each centre, the Centre Director may choose to Chair the Governance Council and have a Coordinator (by whatever title) chair the Executive Committee and manage the day-to-day activities of the centre.

The primary aspiration is that the contributions of both governance and the executive are effective and reflect Shambhala vision. Shambhala continues to invite communication about local governance and executive roles and structure.

The role and authority of the Centre Director will be developed in more detail in the forthcoming Shambhala Centre Governance Manual. Sharing ideas and practices for becoming an effective, collaborative leader is the ongoing work of Governance as Path Working Group.

The Center Director as Chief Executive

In this role of Chief Executive, The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring that the vision of Shambhala is manifest in and throughout the operations of the Centre. The director is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Governing Council and for ensuring that the contributions of local leaders and members are shaped into a cohesive, effective mandala.

Thus, the Director is the authoritative link ***between governance and local operations***. In this capacity, s/he is responsible for three areas. Using the wisdom and resources available to him, the Director ensures that:

- Governance policy is interpreted operationally (Example: What does a culture of profound kindness actually mean? What would that look like? How is it fostered?);
- The local Governing Council is presented with a clear, undiluted assessment of policy implementation. (Example: "Yes, we are making progress toward creating a culture of profound kindness, and here is why I can say so. Or no, we do not feel like we're making progress in this area. We can't really agree on what it means or how to get started. Some people feel we're just being nice in our committee".);
- The local Centre is represented to the Mandala Council. (Example: The Director or her representative shares knowledge about community health, priorities and needs during Mandala Council calls and meetings.)

The Director is the authoritative link between the ***Kalapa Executive and local operations***. This linkage normally occurs via communication with the Shambhala Office of Centre and Group Support. While there will be a number of local liaisons connected to Kalapa (Practice and Study, Rusung, Chagdzo, Societal Health and Well Being, Culture and Decorum), the Director is the head of the local executive and the overall integrating principle. Therefore, s/he ensures that mandala-wide initiatives are understood locally and integrated across departments.

III. The Executive Committee

In order to carry out the executive functions within the Shambhala Centre, most centres will also have an Executive Committee or other team that works under the leadership of the Centre Director (or in large centres a Head of Operations or Centre Manager) to carry out the week-to-week planning and operations of the centre.

This Executive Committee does not carry the overall responsibility for vision, policy and long-range planning, or the legal or fiduciary responsibility for the centre – that is held by the Governing Council.

The Executive Committee is the leadership group that leads operations at the Centre. Its agenda is centered on interpreting and implementing policy, planning and managing mandala activity, and sharing results with the Council. In some centres, this group may be known by other names, such as Executive Team or Operations Team/Council.

Its composition may vary by local circumstances, but to be fully aligned with the Kalapa executive, the local Executive Committee would include representatives from Practice & Education, Dorje Kasung, Finance, Societal Health and Well-Being, Culture

and Decorum as well as other areas of importance in the life of the local centre. These representatives help to integrate the main executive areas of Shambhala. Other seats would be determined by the Director.

Chair of the Executive Committee

This Committee is either chaired by the Centre Director or a member appointed by the Centre Director for this purpose. If it is someone other than the Centre Director, this person may have a standing invitation to attend the meetings of the Governing Council in order to ensure that they are linked in to the vision and thinking of the council as they lead the executive function of the centre.

The Chair leads the Executive Committee agenda, which includes...

- Aligning operations with policy.
- Leading the work of operational planning, coordinating, allocating resources and managing the Centre's programming, operations and community life.
- Gathering information about results that can be explored and assessed in the Executive Committee and the Governing Council. Most of this assessment would normally be done to ensure that the centre's operations are fulfilling its vision and policy.

IV. Kalapa appointments

The Sakyong introduced this model of governance at the highest levels of the mandala. He established the Kalapa Council as the Governing Council of the mandala. This Council is supported by the Kalapa Executive, which plays the executive function at the centre of the mandala.

In order to bind the mandala together, and strengthen the energetic connection between the centre of the mandala and the leadership of all Shambhala Centres, the Sakyong has stressed the importance of ensuring that a number of the key leaders at each centre, once nominated for their position by the local centre, are then appointed from Kalapa. This principle has been in place for many years, but it is now being clarified and put into effect more widely throughout the mandala.

In this way, there is a process of joining Heaven and Earth. The local centre (Earth) nominates the people for the positions. Kalapa (Heaven) makes the appointment.

The following positions are Kalapa appointments:

The Pillar of Government

- Centre Director
- Chagdzo
- Representative of the Shambhala Office of Culture and Decorum
- Representative of the Shambhala Office of Societal Health and Well Being

The Pillar of Practice and Education

- Acharya
- Shastri
- Director of Practice and Education

The Pillar of Protection

- The members of the Council of the Makkyi Rabjam
- Rusung or Chain of Command Designate (appointed through the chain of command of the Dorje Kasung)

A separate document is being prepared that outlines, in detail, the process for proposing people to these positions and sending those to Kalapa for appointment.

Role of Kalapa appointees

All those who are appointed by Kalapa serve as liaisons (a means of linkage, understanding and communication) between Kalapa and the Shambhala Centre in their specific area of service. They work collaboratively with others in the Centre to ensure internal communication and planning is efficient and meets the needs of all.

While these leaders are appointed by Kalapa and have distinct responsibilities (and in the case of the Dorje Kasung, an independent chain of command), it is the responsibility of the Centre Director, as the head of the government pillar, to integrate their contributions into a cohesive whole, serving the vision of the lineage. It is the responsibility of the appointees themselves to collaborate as effectively as possible in aligning their contributions with the needs of the centre's leadership team.

International and local collaboration

Mandala-wide policy always applies locally. Thus, for example, the policies and procedures established by the centre of the mandala in the area of Practice and Education apply throughout the mandala. It is the responsibility of the Director of Practice and Education to apply these. If there appear to be reasons to make a significant change to these for local use, the proposed change would first be discussed with the Centre Director to establish if there are implications for the functioning of the rest of the Centre. Then, having consulted locally, it is the responsibility of the Director of Practice and Education to seek the agreement of the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education.

In this way, the leadership of the local centre works together to see how best it can apply mandala-wide policies and procedures, and then seeks the approval of the centre of the mandala for the modifications it wishes to apply.

This is another example of joining Heaven and Earth, based on a collaborative way of working together. This process is facilitated by the pillar of government – headed by the Centre Director -- that integrates the work of all three pillars by

- modeling and encouraging good communication among the leaders, and between the leaders and the community; and
- modeling and encouraging collaboration across the three pillars.

Resolving disagreements among leaders

From time to time, there may be situations where agreement cannot be reached locally. The first step is to probe for a resolution. Normally, this process is led by the Centre Director or someone asked to do this on his/her behalf.

This could be done by using one of the community practices, for example, the Listening and Inquiring practice presented at the Kalapa Governance Gatherings. This step could result in either of two outcomes: 1) a resolution to the issue, or 2) agreement that the people involved are unable to resolve the issue, and that they need to refer the matter for resolution at a higher level in their centre.

At this point, most disagreements would then be addressed by the heads of the three pillars at the local Centre, using the process of “Reaching Broad Agreement”, with the Centre Director taking responsibility for leading the process and, if necessary, taking into account all the input from those involved and reaching a decision that he/she thinks will be most beneficial (see Annex B, number 9).

Thus, the first step is for the representatives of the three pillars at the local level to see if they can find a way forward.

If the matter cannot be resolved locally, the relevant representatives of the three pillar activate their individual chain of command. The Centre Director communicates with the Director of Centre and Group Support – or the regional equivalent (as in Europe and Northern California) ; the Director of Practice and Education communicates with the Director of the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education and the Rusung or Chain of Command Designate communicates with the Regional Commander.

The unresolved matter would then end up with the appropriate level of the relevant pillars. If they are unable to resolve the situation using broad agreement, they may refer the matter to the heads of the relevant pillars at the level of the Kalapa Council. This would normally be in exceptional circumstances and usually only when it involved a major matter of principle, policy or structure that needs mandala-wide clarification. (A detailed procedure for this, which may be needed in some circumstances, will be developed and provided to all leaders throughout the mandala.)

In some cases this may result in a refinement of Kalapa policy. In other cases it might result in a decision by the Kalapa Executive that would then apply locally.

This model is based on mandala principle, and reflects the energetic interdependency of governance, both within the local Shambhala Centre and between the Shambhala Centres and Kalapa. Rather than being based on the conventional model of “reporting” and “power”, it serves to address the primary question: “How do the representatives of the pillars work together to serve the vision of the lineage?”

Annex A

The Three Pillars of the Kingdom of Shambhala

This structure brings to life the model of The Three Pillars of the Kingdom of Shambhala, originally set forth by the Druk Sakyong, incorporating into that the many diverse aspects of our contemporary mandala.

“The Three Pillars of the Kingdom of Shambhala” was introduced by the Dorje Dradül of Mukpo as a way of referring to the principal structures that form the basis of establishing the Kingdom of Shambhala: the Pillar of Government, the Pillar of Practice and Education and the Pillar of Protection (the Dorje Kasung).

Each pillar is responsible for its specific area within the kingdom. Each pillar embodies and represents a facet of enlightened society. Each holds a body of teachings and practice and is responsible for applying that wisdom and skillful means in the life of the kingdom.

In an address to the acharyas, the Sakyong told them that all office-holders in the mandala need to visualize themselves as one-third teacher, one-third governor and one-third protector. At any one moment, an individual may be manifesting one of those aspects more fully, but never to the exclusion of the others. This logic applies to all three pillars, is being fully implemented at the level of the Kalapa Council, and it is the Sakyong’s wish that we now develop that understanding and “make it so” at the level of all Shambhala Centres.

- The Pillar of Government embodies, presents and manifests the principles of enlightened leadership and serves to integrate all three pillars.
- The Pillar of Practice and Education embodies and guides the teaching of the view and practices of the Shambhala dharma.
- The Pillar of Protection embodies and presents the teachings and practices of the Dorje Kasung, and is responsible for the protection of the teacher, teachings and the community.

Throughout the mandala, these pillars work together with the aspiration to create enlightened society. They support each other in holding the view of the inseparability of the sacred and the secular and in nurturing the balance of masculine and feminine principles.

Annex B

Governing Council: Reaching Broad Agreement

The Governing Council aims to reach its decisions by drawing on the collective insight of its members and aims to reach broad agreement on all the issues it considers. To open up its discussions to different perspectives and invite the broadest possible understanding, it is guided by the following general principles:

1. The council asks that it be provided with all important, relevant information and solicits additional views and expert advice whenever that is felt to enhance the ground of its decision-making.
2. The contributions of each individual council member add important insights and perspectives to our deliberations and decisions. We convene to contemplate and grapple together with the matters before us. As council members, we aspire to be present for all meetings, knowing that reality will occasionally interfere with that intention. For general business, a quorum will be a simple majority of council membership.
3. The council invites the straightforward presentation of different points of view, and welcomes other viewpoints that may be expressed by those not on the council. Disagreement and probing questioning are welcomed as a way of sharpening the understanding of complex issues, and as ways of opening up fresh perspectives on whatever is being discussed.
4. The council assures that sufficient time is provided for discussion of issues: decisions may be deferred for subsequent discussion if it is felt that more time is needed for reflection and to assess fresh options for a final decision.
5. The council works together to reach broad agreement. Normally, this takes the form of acknowledging that a shared point of view has arisen in the course of discussion. It is the responsibility of the chair to facilitate this process. Normally the chair seeks agreement to a summing up of the discussion or to a proposal put to the council by the chair, or by one of the members at the request of the chair.
6. The council relies on its collective wisdom and integrity, including that of the chair, to ensure that the process of reaching broad agreement is based on mutual trust, openness, willingness to consider issues from multiple points of view, and to welcome the insight that arises from space. This is an interactive process. It is the responsibility of the chair to test for emerging, shared views, to acknowledge areas of disclarity and disagreement, articulate the basis for possible broad agreement, and present that to the council for agreement.

7. The council reviews its deliberations at the end of discussion so that the members can be satisfied that they have reached a reasonable outcome, and are clear on any next steps required.
8. To encourage penetrating and creative discussion, but balance that with the need to move forward on the issues before it, the council does not require the unanimous consent of all members of the council in order to reach broad agreement.
9. In the event that it is not possible to reach an adequate level of broad agreement, it is the prerogative of the chair of the council to determine the outcome of the discussion and make a final decision. In doing so, the chair takes into account the range of views expressed and seeks to secure sufficient support, especially in the area of policy formulation to ensure that decisions are properly understood and implemented.
10. Members of the council who strongly disagree with what has been broadly agreed or determined by the chair of the council are welcome to state their dissent and have their views recorded in the minutes.
11. The council may decide to delegate decision-making to its established committees and working groups, to individual members, or to ad hoc sub-groups it sets up for specific purposes. When it does this it will be clear about any limits on the decision-making authority of those to whom a decision is delegated, and will also be clear that in all cases the Governing Council remains accountable for decisions that it delegates to its sub-parts.
12. To assure clarity and keep all council members well informed, minutes of meetings are drafted and circulated for comment by all council members, prior to posting and notification to the Shambhala community.
13. Once a decision has been reached through this process, council members are expected to be supportive of its implementation. The disagreement of those who dissent will be respected as part of the process of governance; at the same time, within the framework of collective responsibility, it would only be in the most extreme circumstances that it would be regarded as appropriate for a council member actively to oppose implementation of a decision once it has been adopted.
14. There should be a voting procedure for situations where it is clear that a resolution is required by law on financial or other legal matters. The voting procedure should be regarded as an exceptional practice, used to comply with financial and legal requirements, such as banking procedures and so forth.

Based on procedures adopted by the Sakyong's Council in 2006 and revised by the President of Shambhala in 2011, following the establishment of the Kalapa Council.

Annex C

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS: The Artful Circle

"We are ruling a dream, and we all share the same dream."

~The Sakyong Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche

Openness

Precision

Ground

Contemplate the agenda, invite others' suggestions

Circulate agenda in advance
clear start and finish time

Complex technical, legal, or financial issues
often need advance preparation

Circulate documents in advance

Don't overload the agenda

Normally, don't add "any other business"

Path

Invite spacious mind; open with
shamatha practice

Start on time with Practice

Invite the dralas; raise windhorse

Open circle of communication;
brief touch-in: how are we?

Briefly review agenda to set the
scene

Establish "time reminder" for
meeting

For each item:

Benevolent and fearless:
Trust the power of our own windhorse

→ Present background, helpful
information, key point(s) for
discussion, and, if possible, a
recommended way forward.

Invite clarifications, questions, proposals.

Seek multiple points of view.

Invite the unspoken, allow for silence.

Open for discussion

Trust our karmic connection with the
lineage and each other.

Probe for hidden differences:
clear the cloudy mirror.



Annex D

The Pillar of Practice and Education: The teaching stream and the executive stream

For some time now, the Sakyong has been strengthening the Pillar of Practice and Education throughout the Shambhala Mandala, along with the pillars of government and the pillar of protection (the Dorje Kasung).

The Practice and Education Pillar includes a teaching stream and an executive stream.

The executive stream is led by the Office of Practice and Education, and extends through the local Directors of Practice and Education in centres. The Director of Practice and Education is responsible for

Governance:

Representing the Pillar of Practice and Education on the Governing Council of the Centre

Local executive:

Overseeing and developing all levels of Practice and Study

Chairing a Practice and Education Committee

Collaborating with the Centre Shastri(s)

Mandala-wide executive:

Interface with the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education/Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education, as well as other centres and groups in the region

Personal:

Serving as a meditation instructor, assistant director, or teacher as appropriate.

The role of a Director of Practice and Education at a Shambhala Centre is spelled out in detail in *Director – P&E- centres*. This document is available from local Directors of Practice and Education or from the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education.

[<ADD LIVE LINK>](#)

For the teaching stream of the Pillar of Practice and Education, the Sakyong has envisioned a hierarchy of appointed teachers, similar to the structure of the Dorje Kasung. In this case, the Sakyong is the ultimate leader and mentor of all of the teachers in Shambhala. He has now articulated a clear hierarchy of teachers, including a new level of senior teachers, the shastris, (literally in Sanskrit, “teacher learned in the texts and commentaries”). The hierarchy of teachers will now flow

from the Sakyong to the acharyas, from the acharyas to the shastris, and from the shastris to the local and regional teachers and meditation instructors.

Shastri functions.

Communicate the Shambhala Buddhist path. The shastris role is to bring the current understanding of the Shambhala Buddhist vision and teachings to their centres, to be a reference point for questions about the path, and in particular to help establish The Way of Shambhala curriculum as the core path. This includes the Shambhala Training weekends.

Teach. The shastris teach in their centres, empowered to present the Way of Shambhala and to guide others in offering these teachings.

Mentor and strengthen the local teaching mandala. A major role of the shastri is to personally bring along other teachers and meditation instructors in the local centre, as appropriate.

Provide path guidance to students of all levels.

Communicate with the Office of Practice and Education on the Way of Shambhala curriculum, based on the local teaching team's experience of teaching it.

Collaborate with the local leadership.

The role of a shastri is spelled out in detail in *Practice and Study Pillar: The Shastri role*. This document is available from local shastris or from the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education.