



S H A M B H A L A

## The Intention of a Shambhala Centre

A Shambhala Centre aspires to be a beacon of enlightened society and a gathering place where people from all walks of life are able to have a direct experience of basic goodness in themselves and in others. Students, seekers, activists, and leaders from all traditions are welcomed into a space that focuses on the vision and practices that lead to the creation of enlightened society.

### Core Values

The unique Shambhala teachings of basic goodness and the vision of creating enlightened society are the core values of the centre. Starting with the Shambhala Vow and the Enlightened Society vow introduced last fall, the Sakyong is introducing teachings and practices that will help us connect with and stabilize our realization of basic goodness personally and as a ground for society.

### Offerings

Although the experience of basic goodness is universal, our mandala plays a distinctive role in that we hold the unique *terma* teachings of Shambhala. It is our responsibility and honour, as Shambhala practitioners, to uphold this lineage. The Shambhala Centres are the primary place where the teachings of Shambhala are expressed and transmitted. At the same time, Shambhala incorporates and welcomes wisdom from many traditions and lineages. These enrich and support our understanding of the Shambhala terma teachings.

The Shambhala teachings span the most outer elements—placing the mind of fearfulness in the cradle of loving-kindness, to the innermost depths of the nature of reality—the Scorpion Seal.

### **Outer level: Introducing People to their Minds**

With forty years of experience, Shambhala Centres are widely recognized as excellent places to learn meditation and to pursue a clear path of practice and study. In particular, we focus on how we can live our modern-day lives based on the inspiration and wisdom developed through the practice and study of our teachings.

- We offer meditation instruction for anyone. Open Houses, Meditation in Everyday Life, Shambhala Training Level I, and Learn to Meditate days are our major gateways.
- In order to provide other gateways and to offer breadth to students progressing along the path, (to the extent that our local capacity allows), we also offer courses on contemplative arts and practical support for recognizing basic goodness in everyday life; parenting, working with sickness and death, mindful social and

ecological action, and other engaged courses. In some of our centres we are able to offer courses in Buddhist studies as well.

- In addition, our centres are a community gathering point for our seasonal cultural celebrations, family and children events, baby blessings, marriages, and funerals.

### **Inner level: Deeper Training**

It is not easy to remain confident and open in the midst of the dark ages; the centre is a place to go further in stabilizing our ability to rest in basic goodness and manifest as warriors.

- We offer the Way of Shambhala core path, as well as other courses in Buddhist studies, social themes, and inner vajrayana training.
- The Shambhala centre is the training ground for a never-ending deepening of warriorship: the path of Shambhala Art unfolds in deeper levels; the path of the Dorje Kasung is a complete and lifelong journey; the sacred path of leadership unfolds for anyone who begins to staff, coordinate, and lead.
- Feasts and vajrayana practices are hosted within the Shambhala environment. This includes Werma feasts, Padmasambhava feasts, Vajrayogini, Chakrasamavara, and Vajrakilaya, depending on the inspiration of the local tantrikas. The Shambhala centre is a place for more senior students to continue to learn, develop, gather, and offer their wisdom and experience to guide newer students along the Shambhala path.

### **Secret level: Sakyong Lineage**

A Shambhala Centre is the energetic seat of the Sakyong lineage and the dralas of Shambhala. There is a magical element to the Shambhala centre, which in turn energizes the outer and inner activities.

The single pointed purpose of the outer, inner, and secret levels is to humbly and confidently represent the teachings, practices, and path of basic goodness. We represent an ancient, global stream of human wisdom that longs to create enlightened society.

### **Looking ahead**

Simultaneously, the Sakyong wishes for each of our Centres to be an open gathering and networking place for anyone who cares about creating good society, especially for those who see the interconnection between spiritual and social transformation. The Shambhala lineage has a powerful offering to make to the world, and as we continue to grow and deepen, we are all discovering how much our teachings and vision can really help. Each Shambhala Centre can reflect on its purpose at this urgent moment in human history and contemplate how we might move toward embodying that purpose together.