

Office of Practice and Education

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION **Shambhala Guides and Shambhala Meditation Instructors**

Overview

People come to our Shambhala Centers for many reasons –to find refuge from suffering, find friendship or spiritual awakening, cope with stress, work through personal issues, and so forth. Some are instantly connected, some come along slowly, some we never see again. Whoever they are, and however they might or might not make a relationship with Shambhala, they are worthy of our complete generosity. We always seem to need more 'troops' at the gates in order to fulfill that sacred commitment. This is the view at the heart of creating the role of Shambhala Guide as a complement to the role of meditation instructor.

Background

Several years ago, the Sakyong began to speak of creating two tiers of meditation instructors for beginning and intermediate students. The first level instructor could give initial instruction in a broad context, e.g. to friends, co-workers or newcomers in the Shambhala Centers and Groups. The second level would be a more advanced level of instructor—fully trained to work on an on-going basis with students who wish to engage more deeply with their meditation practice.

We have a pool of enthusiastic people in our Centers and Groups who are well qualified to begin their journey and training as teachers and meditation instructors before attending either Warrior Assembly or Vajrayana Seminary. In addition we have a large body of experienced instructors who have received and practice the core Shambhala and Buddhist transmissions. Having trained a number of Shambhala Guides over the past three years, we have begun to extend our capacity to provide initial meditation instruction as well as use the more experienced instructors for deep, on-going meditation teaching.

Shambhala Guide

The role of the Shambhala Guide is to be a resource, guide, friend, and host to newcomers within the context of Shambhala Center educational programs and events. One important aspect of their activity is to offer one-on-one meditation instruction to newcomers. However, the emphasis is on meeting newcomers as they enter Shambhala, and giving them guidance and instruction according to their particular aspiration and needs.

A Shambhala Guide is authorized to give initial instruction and one follow-up meditation interview to review the technique. They are not authorized to give group instruction. In fact, one of the outcomes of having people in this role would be to move away from group instruction and re-institute individual initial instruction. During the second interview the Shambhala Guide offers to refer the student to a Meditation Instructor if the person wants further, deeper training in meditation. The Shambhala Guide also offers to be available as an on-going practice friend and guide for the new student.

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Shambhala Meditation Instructor

Buddhist meditation instructor/ Shambhala Training Assistant Director

The Shambhala Meditation Instructor is trained to work with students who aspire to engage an on-going, thorough training in meditation and the path of practice and study offered in the Shambhala Centers and Groups. We could say that this role is akin to that of spiritual friend. It is a sacred and engaged relationship dedicated to maturing a student's spiritual journey. The instructor is an advisor and guide for a student in meditation and post-meditation practice. It is also a role with boundaries—for example instructors must know when meditation instruction is not appropriate and be able to steer students accordingly.

This is a role that requires spiritual maturity on the part of the instructor who must be dedicated to uphold and embody wisdom and gentleness in combination with tremendous trustworthiness and decorum.

There are currently two categories of Shambhala Meditation Instructor—**Buddhist Meditation Instructor and Shambhala Training Assistant Director**. It is highly recommended that those instructors who are Buddhist be qualified and trained in both the Shambhala and Buddhist paths. The MI is a specialist in the practice and study of buddhadharma and has received the vajrayana transmission at Vajrayana Seminary. As a graduate of Warrior Assembly the AD is a specialist in the Shambhala Training path, having received the transmission level practices of stroke and lungta.

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MI / AD Training Overview

Part I: Shambhala Guide Training

Three day weekend + one day follow-up

This revised program is now Part I of all MI/AD training, replacing the 1st weekend of the 1997 MI/AD training.

The Shambhala Guide Resource Manual is for both teachers and students.)

Requirements to take the training

1. Level V, one year Buddhist studies education, and a weekthün
2. Strong daily meditation practice and relationship to a Center
3. Three positive letters of recommendation (Applications must be reviewed by OPE and local administration)

Pre Study and Practice

1. *The Shambhala Guide Student Resource Manual*
2. *Turning the Mind Into An Ally*
3. Begin the practice requirement of 30 hours a month for three months

Skills Taught

1. Giving initial instruction and conducting follow-up interview
2. Communicating skillfully on topics of: our lineages, culture, iconography, shrines, chants, ceremonies, and an overview of all our training paths
3. Deep listening
4. Understanding and communicating the precise, open and beyond meditation techniques as taught in both Shambhala Training as well as the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies
5. All shrine hall protocols and functions: how to umdze, drum, correct posture.

Responsibilities Upon Completion of Training

1. Giving initial and follow-up private meditation instruction. (Those who have attended Warrior Assembly and dathün or a Vajrayana Seminary may also give group instruction.)
2. Meditation practice requirement of 30 hours a month until the follow-up day, or (for those who have already attended a Warrior Assembly/dathün or Vajrayana Seminary) the requirement of 30 hours a month holds through their attendance of the Six Class Training and completion of AD or MI weekend.
3. Be an active SG, if possible, for at least 6 months before taking Part II. (Those who have attended a Warrior Assembly or Vajrayana Seminary may begin Part II as soon as it is offered.)

Addition to the old (1997) MI/AD Weekend

1. Participants are required to be versed in both Shambhala Training as well as the buddhadharma
2. The training in initial instruction is more thorough: 4 days rather than 2.
3. Training goes beyond the scope of initial instruction (see above skills)

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4. Participants may begin to give initial instruction immediately following the first weekend
5. Participants begin to give initial instruction earlier in their dharmic journey as per the Sakyong's wishes.
6. There is a strong pre-study component
7. Students study and represent the Sakyong's *Turning the Mind Into An Ally*

Part II: MI/AD Training

The Six Classes

Format

All six classes are required for both MI and AD Training Weekends, and ideally occur *before* AD and MI Training Weekends. Each class is offered every other week to allow ample time to study between classes.

These classes have their own sourcebook: *The Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors* available through Vajradhatu Publications shop@Shambhala.org or 902 421-1550, ext. 1. The sourcebook contains references listed below and includes the Vidyadhara's original *Manual for Shamatha Instructors*.

Requirements

1. Shambhala Guide Training
2. Completion of either a Warrior Assembly and a dathun or a Vajrayana Seminary
3. Two letters of recommendation (No letters of recommendation are needed for those who took Shambhala Guide Training after then had already attended a Warrior Assembly and dathun or Vajrayana Seminary and where this six class course closely follows the Shambhala Guide Training.)

Pre-Study

The Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors **This sourcebook is necessary for both the Directors as well as the students.**

Skills Taught

Students learn how to articulate the differences between the precise, open and beyond techniques of meditation. In particular, these classes are training in deepening one's understanding of "open" shamatha as taught in early (1970's) MI training by the Vidyadhara, a further training of the Sakyong's "precise" technique as taught in *Turning the Mind Into An Ally*, the obstacles and antidotes, the four foundations of mindfulness, vipashyana as taught by both the Sakyong and the Vidyadhara, five skandhas and egolessness as taught in both Shambhala and Buddhist formats, and training in special issues.

Responsibilities after the Training

1. Continue to practice 30 hours a month
2. Those who have attended a Warrior Assembly and wish to take the AD training, begin the study of *The Heart of Warriorship Teachers Guide* a couple of months in advance

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of the AD weekend. In addition to studying the manual, participants prepare by practicing according to the meditation instruction given at each of the five levels of Shambhala Training.

Additions to the old 1997 Six Class Training

1. Readings for each of the six classes includes readings from the Sakyong material.
2. The practice of contemplation has been added to the training.
3. *Shambhala Care and Conduct* and *Intimate Relationships* information has been added to the curriculum.

Part II-A: Assistant Director Training Weekend

Requirements

1. Part I: Shambhala Guide Training
2. Part II: The Six Classes
3. Warrior Assembly and dathün (MI's who wish to become AD's, must also attended a Warrior Assembly)

Pre -Study

1. *The Heart of Warriorship Teaching Guide*: Seven weeks prior to the weekend, students are informed of their acceptance to the weekend to give them time to study "A Guide to Directing and Assistant Directing" and "Overview of the Heart of Warriorship." These sections cover how to:
 - prepare for a weekend
 - lead discussion groups
 - give instruction at each of the five levels
 - represent the material taught at all five levels,
 - address questions on Shambhala Buddhism, and
 - relate to participants and delight in warrior culture and hospitality
2. In the weeks leading up to the training, participants make each of the five instructions their primary practice for a given period of time.
3. Review the Care and Conduct information from the *Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors*

Skills Taught

1. Applying the decorum and culture of Shambhala and skills of an AD
2. Giving meditation instruction at all five levels and post levels
3. Leading discussion groups
4. Incorporating the teachings from each of the five levels into the immediate experience of the participant.
5. Joining the teachings with the instruction at each of the five levels.
6. Studying and practicing in preparation for a Shambhala Training weekend
7. Giving educated feedback according to the principles of content, style and presence

Responsibilities

1. Passing this weekend authorizes the participant to be an assistant director first for the Heart of Warriorship and then the Sacred Path levels.
2. Participant is authorized to meet with students between the weekends on an on-going basis.

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Additions to the 1997 AD training

1. The training is more thorough. The MI and AD portions of the training have been separated to create a deeper and more concentrated study of Shambhala Training the MI training.
2. There is a strong pre-study component so the training is deeper.
3. The practice interviews incorporate post-level topics and require the AD to join the wisdom of the lecture material with the meditation practice.
4. Material on Shambhala Buddhism and training in identification with the Rigden principle is included.
4. Leading discussion groups within context of five levels of material

Part II-B: Buddhist Meditation Instructor Training Weekend

Requirements

1. Part I Shambhala Guide Training
2. Part II: Six Classes
3. Vajrayana Seminary
4. Highly recommended: Warrior Assembly

Pre Study

1. Review the obstacle and antidotes and vipashyana material from the *Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors* and from *Training the Mind*, Chögyam Trungpa, study "Relative Bodhicitta Slogans."
2. Study the *Vajradhatu Practice Manual* becoming familiar with all aspects of practice mandala, ceremonies, abhishekas, etc.
3. Review the "Shambhala Care and Conduct" material in light of student's path as well as from the perspective of personal ethics from the *Shambhala guide Resource Manual*
4. Review "Open, Precise and Beyond" from the *Shambhala guide Resource Manual*

Skills Taught

1. Deepening of contemplative practice and instruction
2. Application of tonglen practice
3. Recognition of the signs of a student's meditative experience and stages of their path
4. How to guide Shambhala practitioners on their paths
5. How to advise students on materials contained in the *Vajradhatu Practice Manuals* and on Seminary preparation through the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies
6. Leading discussion groups and program interviews

Responsibilities

1. Staff a weekthun or dathun to gain depth of experience
2. Take on students and guide them in their practice and life experience issues
3. Let local center know of your availability to work with students
4. Retain a deep relationship to the practice of meditation

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Additions to the 1997 MI training

1. The ability to go deeper— because participants in this program have already begun to give initial instruction through Part I of the training, and have had four days of training in initial instruction (instead of two), the teachers can now go deeper into the practice and issues faced by more mature students.
2. Further study and articulation of precise, open and beyond techniques as studied in both Shambhala Training and the Shambhala School of Buddhist Studies
3. The study of tonglen
4. Leading discussion groups and conducting program interviews

MI /AD Training Sourcebooks for Both Directors and Students:

- The *MI / AD Teaching Guide* (for Directors and Coordinators only)
- *Shambhala Guide Resource Manual*
- *The Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors*
- *Heart of Warriorship Teaching Guide – **For the AD weekend***

These manuals are available through the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education and/or on the Shambhala website with a password. Please write to jscott@shambhala.org or cmandelker@shambhala.org to request a copy.