

Office of Practice and Education

MEDITATION INSTRUCTION

Shambhala Guides, Assistant Directors, and 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.

As instructors we must be dedicated to uphold and embody wisdom and gentleness in combination with tremendous trustworthiness and decorum.

Recently the Sakyong has asked us to deepen our capacity to train strong and skillful teachers and meditation instructors throughout our mandala. Work has been done over the past year to rethink our approach and establish a new development path for meditation instructors and teachers.

The overall new approach to training guides, ADs, and MIs includes study and experience of shamatha, vipashyana, and Shambhala meditation. It integrates understanding and personal experience of our Buddhist lineages of meditation, the oral instructions of Trungpa Rinpoche, as well as the Sakyong's recent teachings and the unique practices in the Shambhala tradition, such as windhorse.

The following summary describes the 3-stage path to become a Meditation Instructor.

Shambhala Guide

The role of the Shambhala Guide remains the same as it has been. There will be updated aspects to the training, including Shambhala Meditation.

The Shambhala Guide is a resource, guide, friend, and host to newcomers within the context of Shambhala centre 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. 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.

Another task of the Shambhala Guide is to be able to describe each step in the Shambhala path in ordinary and accessible language. 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.

Office of Practice and Education

Shambhala Assistant Director

The new role of the Assistant Director will now include helping to support the Way of Shambhala classes as well as the weekend Shambhala Training levels.

The training will include study of shamatha and vipashyana as well as Shambhala Training techniques.

Meditation Instructor

The new approach to Meditation Instructor training emphasizes skills for working directly with our students' emotions and whole life experience, not only their meditation practice.

As a building block of enlightened society the on-going relationship of the Meditation Instructor and student is particularly important.

The Training

Part 1.A : The Shambhala Guide Training

Three day weekend + one day follow-up

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

Requirements to take the training

1. Level V, Way of Shambhala Everyday Life series, Unconditional Confidence: Rigden, and a weekthün
2. Strong daily meditation practice
3. Membership in a centre or Shambhala
4. 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 20 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 meditation techniques as taught in both Shambhala Training as well as the Everyday Life series
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 or a Vajrayana Seminary may also give group instruction.)

Office of Practice and Education

2. Meditation practice requirement of 30 hours a month
3. Be an active SG, if possible, for at least 6 months before taking Assistant Director training. (Those who have attended a Warrior Assembly or Vajrayana Seminary may begin Part II as soon as it is offered.)

Part 1.B The Six Classes – To be developed. In the interim, a reading list is being prepared for study.

The Six Classes

There is a six class online course for the AD weekend and a six class online course for the MI training. All six classes for each training are required and would be taken after being accepted to and before attending either the AD or MI weekend..

These courses can be taken individually if needed,. However, ideally the videos would be shown as part of a group course in the local Shambhala centre, followed by discussion and conversation.

Pre-Study

The Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors This sourcebook is necessary for both the Directors as well as the students. (Will there be different sourcebooks for AD and MI training?)

Part 2: The Assistant Director Training

One weekend program

Requirements to take the training

1. Shambhala Guide Training
2. Warrior Assembly
3. The AD six class online course

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

Office of Practice and Education

1. Applying the decorum and culture of Shambhala and skills of an AD
2. Giving meditation instruction at all five Shambhala Training.
3. Leading discussion groups
4. Incorporating the teachings from each of the Everyday Life courses and five weekends into the immediate experience of the participant.
5. Studying and practicing in preparation for a course or Shambhala Training weekend
6. 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, Everyday Life courses, and then the Sacred Path levels.
2. Participant is authorized to meet with students between the weekends and classes on an on-going basis.

Part 1.B The Six Classes – To be developed. In the interim, a reading list is being prepared for study.

The Six Classes

There is a six class online course for the MI weekend and a six class online course for the MI training. All six classes for each training are required and would be taken after being accepted to and before attending either the AD or MI weekend..

These courses can be taken individually if needed,. However, ideally the videos would be shown as part of a group course in the local Shambhala centre, followed by discussion and conversation.

Pre-Study

The Six Class Sourcebook for Shambhala Instructors This sourcebook is necessary for both the Directors as well as the students. (Will there be different sourcebooks for AD and MI training?)

Part 3: Meditation Instructor Training

Two weekends

Requirements

1. Sacred World Assembly
2. AD training (including SG training, Warrior Assembly, AD six class online course, AD training weekend
3. The MI six class online course

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.

Office of Practice and Education

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. Training in listening, reflection, and inquiry methods to enrich our capacity to support new warriors in our emerging society
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. 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

SG/ AD /MI 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 – in development*