

Shambhala Governing Structure: Empowering participation in the mandala

Introduction: Shambhala – vision and mandala

The momentum of the First Shambhala Congress energized a broad participatory process throughout the mandala that is guiding us towards improved governance structures aligned with our values and goals. As we consider these structures and processes it is imperative that we do so in light of what is fundamental to Shambhala.

Through every shift in our development there has been one consistent binding factor – the core principle that Shambhala Vision is integral to everything we do. Through our connection to the lineage of warrior bodhisattvas we access the primordial, natural energy of goodness, the basis of who and what we are and can be. This view encompasses an inner path dedicated to realizing and expressing the trainings, culture and forms of Shambhala within our lives, our centres and our society as a whole. This in turn forms the basis from which we can ‘turn the flower outward’ towards realizing enlightened society, the Kingdom of Shambhala, for the benefit of our world.

Everything we do occurs within the environment of this perspective. All we can accomplish as Shambhala Buddhists arises as we journey genuinely on this path as laid down by the royal lineage of Sakyongs. Our connection and loyalty to that lineage – past, present and future – and to the practices and disciplines of the Kagyü, Nyingma and Shambhala teachings, are at the very heart of the governing structure described here.

This document presents the processes and forms for the governance and organization of our evolving Shambhala community or clan. It endeavours to be true to the principles expounded by our Sakyongs and our Shambhala traditions. Therefore, we hope to accelerate our progress towards fulfilling the mission of Shambhala – to manifest the principles of the Kalapa Court and enlightened society. This is what should distinguish us and our forms from other well-meaning organizations. As the Druk Sakyong is remembered to have said, “When we manifest genuinely within the Kalapa Court, the Kingdom of Shambhala is created on the spot!”

In accord with this outlook the Sakyong has indicated that he would prefer and it is time to start using "Shambhala" to refer to the entire mandala, rather than the term "Shambhala International". We should understand that using "Shambhala" (or "the Shambhala Mandala") in this way is an outer reference to the inner meaning: "Kingdom of Shambhala".

I. Finding a new balance

With the Sakyong's decision to convene the Shambhala Congress, our community has embarked on a process of finding a new balance between hierarchy and participation. Establishing a creative working relationship between the two was at the heart of the Shambhala vision of the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the Druk Sakyong, who created the delegs and many other community institutions. The need for both is also at the heart of the Sakyong's *Treatise on Society and Organization*.

It was clear from the First Shambhala Congress that, among the many challenges facing the mandala, it was necessary to:

- open up genuine participation by community members in the governance of the mandala;
- establish a decision-making system that is clear, transparent and accountable.

The Congress report stated:

*It is essential that the participatory process started with the Shambhala Congress continue on an on-going basis to ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability across all levels of our mandala. Based on the results of this Congress, considering both pragmatic and emotional levels, we feel that this is the only approach that will lead to re-building trust, harmony and well-being within our Shambhala so that we truly **have** a flower to turn outwards.*

This aspiration was echoed in the Shambhala Community Plan, launched on Shambhala Day 2004, which included, as a core principle:

Understanding and developing the practical skills needed to create mechanisms of governance that are appropriately open, transparent and accountable, as part of our community-wide experiment with natural hierarchy...

An evolving process

Since the last Congress, working groups drawn from across the mandala have been developing recommendations to present both to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and to the upcoming Shambhala Congress. By establishing review groups, publishing minutes of their meetings on the Shambhala website, issuing bulletins on the Shambhala News Service and participating in a joint meeting with centre directors, the working groups have tried to open their discussions up as widely as possible. The chairs of all the groups have seats on the Mandala Governing Council, which has also included the board of directors and representatives of a dozen major entities within the broad mandala of Shambhala.

While this has been one of the most extensive processes of dialogue and consultation in our community for some time, nonetheless it has not yet reached a point where a majority of Shambhala members necessarily feel involved, informed and engaged. It is clear that achieving that goal will take more time, as will the effective implementation of any recommendations and changes.

Therefore the following model and recommended processes should be understood as a framework that leaves the door open to further change, while creating a core structure for governing the mandala over the next two years.

One example of this approach is the creation of a Mandala Council with specific powers on which every Shambhala Centre will have a seat in this period, thus radically increasing representation in the central governance of the mandala. At the same time, in view of the aim to develop regional cooperation between centres throughout the mandala, it may well be that the Mandala Council evolves in the course of those two years into a somewhat more workable body comprising regional representatives.

A two-year plan

The principal task we face in the coming two years is to build further trust and participation in the governance of our mandala through the process of discussing and implementing the Shambhala Community Plan. This governance structure is based primarily on carrying out that work. The aim is to ensure maximum communication and participation by our grass-roots membership at all levels. Based on the experience of those two years, we will be in a better position to determine the next stage in developing a longer-term governing structure. This model, therefore, would operate from Shambhala Day 2005 up to Shambhala Day 2007, at which time whatever new model is developed would be put in place.

II. Fundamental Principles

The central operating principle: a mandala

Shambhala may seem, at any one time, to resemble a religion, an educational system, a business, a non-profit, an association, and so on. But we are not any single one of those. Our essential structure is that of a mandala. It is within the structure of the Shambhala Mandala that all our various activities of teaching, practice, study, governance and communication take place. This governance model is based on that central operating principle.

Visualizing the mandala

In a classical mandala, there is a central square surrounded by large concentric circles. The square in the middle is the palace or court, housing the central figure. The outer circles are the realms in which that core energy is manifested.

The Shambhala Mandala conforms to the same principle. The central square is The Kalapa Court. Within that is the lineage of Sakyongs. The radiating circles constitute the Shambhala community. The whole mandala is the Kingdom of Shambhala.

Mandala structure: Court and Kingdom

Mandala structure has been described as “centre and fringe.” This doesn’t quite convey the essential character of a mandala as a network of communication and relationships. In line with mandala principle, it may be more helpful to use the terms “court and kingdom,” not in the sense of one-way, top-down, arbitrary rule over subjects, but as an interplay between natural hierarchy and community participation. The aim, clearly expressed by the Sakyong and by the Shambhala Congress participants, is to strengthen communication at all levels and facilitate participation in the development of Shambhala as a whole. For the next two years, this means giving primacy to the work being done to implement the Shambhala Community Plan and the key role played by Shambhala Centres, local groups and delegs.

Shambhala Centres, Groups and Delegs: basic community structures

We can look at our mandala as a network of structures and processes. The whole mandala flourishes if those structures ensure participation in the governance of the mandala. A first step towards participation is to encourage genuine communication so that people feel they are truly participating, not just in running Shambhala, but also in building an enlightened society. The governing structure to come into effect on Shambhala Day 2005 therefore actively encourages participation through local Shambhala Centres in our core governance.

All Shambhala Centres will be strongly encouraged to discuss the proposals coming from the Working Groups to the Shambhala Congress, and to ensure that they send representatives to the Congress each year. We have increased the subsidies to support smaller and more remote centres and groups to attend the Congress. All Shambhala Centres will take their seats on the Mandala Council described below, so that they can exercise a formal role in the consultative and decision-making processes of the mandala.

Delegs

It would greatly help if we could open up a process (involving our current delegs) to examine all possible ways of supporting a fresh effort to establish delegs throughout the mandala as the basic building blocks of community participation in our kingdom. In doing this, it will be important to understand what is needed to sustain a network of delegs since in so many areas of our mandala they are no longer functioning.

Local centre authority and empowerment

Over the coming two years, it is important that we become much clearer about the authority that local Shambhala Centres and groups have and are encouraged to exercise on their own. The Sakyong particularly wants Shambhala Centres to be courts within the kingdom, having the status of Lineage Institutions under the Shambhala Charter (see below), proclaiming the Shambhala Buddhist teachings, running their own programs, managing their own finances under their own leadership. This is part of the Shambhala Community Plan: to ensure a sense of empowerment throughout the entire mandala with a functioning network of lateral communication and a clear sense of mutual connection between the court and the kingdom.

Integrating feminine and masculine principles

This document, by its very nature, talks about a governing structure. The structure itself can be understood as a skillful means—embodying the tangible, masculine principle of governance. At the same time, the wisdom and heart of governance arises from the feminine principle, which is the intangible and non-conceptual space that gives birth to and accommodates the structure.

As in executing the stroke of Ashe, the structure is the tangible stroke, whereas the feminine principle is both the vast and vibrant space from which the stroke manifests and the white paper that absorbs and holds it. In the same way, the Sakyong Wangmo principle is the inseparable partner of the Sakyong principle. This balance is essential to Shambhala governance: the skilful means of the structure needs to be informed by the collective wisdom that an open and communicative process brings out.

Feminine principle manifests in this document (and in the governing structure) in a number of ways:

- providing space for genuine communication and participation (key binding factors) that need to be encouraged throughout Shambhala;
- giving attention to talking circles and other forms that help people to really listen and speak from their hearts about issues of concern to them;
- emphasizing the aspects of Shambhala that respect, nurture and create community, culture and the arts;
- signalling the vital role of court principle at all levels of the mandala, including in the Kalapa Court, the listening and communicating roles of the President and the office of the Kalapa Court;
- integrating the Dorje Kasung, created by the Druk Sakyong as a protector of the sacred space of Shambhala, into governance throughout the mandala;
- increasing awareness of the need to understand and manifest the inseparable union of the masculine and feminine principles as recently articulated by the Shambhala Commission on the Status of Women and Feminine Principle.

III. The Structure

The Shambhala Congress

The Shambhala Congress will continue to be the principal mandala-wide gathering for discussion and consultation on matters of concern to the mandala as a whole. It has three main purposes:

1. The Congress is a consultative meeting in which representatives of all parts of the mandala, as well as participating individuals, express views, offer suggestions and make recommendations on the topics discussed by the Congress.
2. The Congress enables participants to present the outcome of prior community meetings held at centres on the Congress topics or theme.
3. The Congress offers a structure for exchange between the participants and the Sakyong, President and other leaders of the mandala.

The views expressed by the participants and recommendations made in the course of the congress contribute to the deliberations of the Sakyong's Council and Mandala Council. The Congress itself could develop into a formal structure, voting on recommendations. That would be part of the evolution of our governance to be considered during the next two years.

All Shambhala Centres, groups and delegs are urged to attend the Congress. Centres are asked to send two representatives, one of whom is the Centre Director and the other anyone proposed by the community. The Congress is open to individuals who wish to attend, subject only to the limitations of space.

There has also been a notion that the Congress could be a place where some form of local leadership development and training occurs – for example learning to lead talking circles, seminars in finance and accounting, publicity. By developing the skills of all our leaders, we will improve the level of community participation and representation at all levels, including at the Congress.

A further proposal is that each Congress could have a major theme. For example, in one year the Congress could focus on practice and study; in another year, on community and culture. In addition to local leadership, delegates could be invited to the Congress who have particular expertise/interest in the themes being explored at that particular year's Congress – such as those who have particular expertise and interest in contributing locally and internationally in the area of practice and study. From that "expert" pool present at the Congress, teams could be organized to provide mandala-wide leadership in the key areas. That group could work together in the follow-up to the Congress. This would prevent Congress burn-out, provide content focus, and will gradually build broad, horizontal participation across the mandala.

A separate document on the Congress has been prepared as part of the overall work of the Mandala Structure and Governance Working Group. Most of the points here are included as detailed recommendations in that paper.

At the Centre of the Mandala: The Kalapa Court

The Shambhala Congress is the largest forum of the global kingdom of Shambhala. It provides the space for direct exchanges with the centre of the mandala, The Kalapa Court. The court is the point from which the central energy of the mandala emanates. “The Kalapa Court” refers to much more than a specific residence of the Sakyong. To make this clear, the Sakyong will be giving specific names to the different residences used by the lineage. He would now like us to use the term “The Kalapa Court” to refer to the central governing point of our mandala.

The Kalapa Court includes the Sakyong, the Sakyong Wangmo of the Druk Sakyong, the other members of the Mukpo family, and the President who exercises executive authority on behalf of the Sakyong. Serving the court is the Office of the Kalapa Court and other staff and advisers to the Sakyong.

Linked together: the court and two councils

In order to facilitate communication and feedback between court and the community as a whole, there will be two closely linked councils. This structure aims to clarify the processes we need for consultation throughout the mandala and provide greater unification and consistency in our core consultation and decision-making processes. The two councils will be:

The Sakyong’s Council
The Mandala Council

These councils will meet regularly at intervals arranged in relation to the annual Shambhala Congress.

The Sakyong’s Council

The council functions under the authority of the Sakyong and is chaired on his behalf by the President. The members of the Council include the Ashe Acharya, the Makpön, the Head of Practice and Education, the Warrior General, the Chair of the Dekyong Council, a representative of Shambhala Centres, the chairs of the eight Working Groups with the overall chair of the eight, the Director of Shambhala Europe, a representative from Latin America, the Chief Legal Counsel, the Chief Financial Officer, a representative of the International Panel for Shambhala Care and Conduct, a community member reflecting the needs of people with disabilities, and a long-standing member of the Board of Directors to ensure continuity of expertise in the area of law and finance during this period.

The Sakyong’s Council:

- Is the overall governing body of the Shambhala Mandala;
- Holds the primary responsibility for implementing the Shambhala Community Plan;
- Exercises the full decision-making authority of a board;
- Establishes and reviews the core budget of Shambhala, after making an annual financial presentation to the Shambhala Congress. This will be scrutinized by the

Mandala Council, particularly to ensure that the overall envelope of the budget is not being exceeded without appropriate consultation;

- Considers all other matters related to the good governance of the mandala brought to it by the Sakyong, President or the members of the Council;

The Sakyong's Council will meet at least three times a year (see the yearly schedule below). It will be free to establish sub-groups to work on particular issues, ensuring that the full Council is well informed of work accomplished in that way.

Corporate Affairs Committee

To provide expert legal and financial advice, particularly relating to the interface between Shambhala and the legal systems in Canada, Europe, the United States and other locations in which we operate, the Chief Legal Counsel will chair a Corporate Affairs Committee and be responsible for bringing any policy matters arising from that committee to the Sakyong's Council. This committee reports to the Sakyong's Council. Its chair, the Chief Legal Counsel, is a member of the Sakyong's Council.

The Mandala Council

The Mandala Council will consist of the Directors of all Shambhala Centres, plus the representatives of other major entities in the mandala currently on this year's interim Mandala Governing Council. It will also include the members of the Sakyong's Council. It will be chaired by the President, assisted by two or more Vice-chairs. Initially the Vice-Chairs will be appointed by the President; these positions may later evolve into posts selected by the members of the Mandala Council.

The Mandala Council will:

- Receive reports from the Sakyong's Council, including regular financial reports;
- Be consulted as part of the process for drawing up the core budget of the mandala and related fund-raising plans for the coming year – so that the Sakyong's Council can include the views of the members of the Mandala Council in its decision making;
- Be involved in approving major expenditure by the centre of the mandala that could significantly exceed the yearly budget total (not changes to the budget within the agreed total), and the allocation of major donations and bequests that are not ear-marked ;
- Review and make recommendations about the core services provided to Shambhala Centres and others in the community;
- Hold a mid-year review of the implementation of plans resulting from the discussions at the Shambhala Congress;
- Be responsible for planning and preparing the Shambhala Congress (and its members would amount to approximately one third of those attending the Congress);
- Devote attention to the community aspects of the Shambhala Community Plan: community care, membership issues, diversity and accessibility, outreach, leadership training and succession planning;

- Work on effective regionalization as a basis for a regionally representative mandala council. This could be an effective way to create a good working balance and relationship between large and small centres and groups.

The Mandala Council will meet two or three times a year (see the yearly schedule below) and conduct much of its business through a committee structure and on conference calls.

While it would be technically possible for these functions to be rolled into the Shambhala Congress, a reliable decision-making process would be much harder to manage since the Congress has a shifting population of participants. The advantage of having a Mandala Council is that it can meet more than once a year and create a more continuous network of representatives of the various entities in the mandala. The link with the Congress can be achieved by having the representatives on the Mandala Council present and participating in the Congress itself.

The Council of Warriors and the Warriors of the Centre

The Council of Warriors, mandated by the Sakyong, is represented by the Warrior General on the Sakyong's Council and the Mandala Council. The Council of Warriors, which includes all Warriors of Centres as well as its international governors, was established to build momentum towards materializing the Kingdom of Shambhala.

In recent conversations between the Sakyong, President and Warrior General, the Sakyong affirmed the ongoing leadership role of the Warrior General, Warriors and Council within the government of Shambhala. Their guiding principle is that Shambhala vision is integral to everything we are doing as a mandala. In general this is seen to encompass a few broad aspects:

- enriching the manifestation of Court principles (the expressions of sacred world and the culture of Shambhala) in and beyond our Shambhala Centres;
- facilitating dedication to Shambhala drola and lungta practices in collaboration with the Acharyas, Centres and Office of Practice and Study;
- bringing focus to how we as a Shambhala culture and society can open to meet, exchange and contribute to the larger culture (social engagement, citizenship and dialogue); and
- building the strategic, integrated momentum for realizing the societal mission of Shambhala, both within Maritime Canada as the root and globally.

In the coming period, in concert with the Sakyong's emerging vision, we will need to further clarify, connect and integrate the Warrior's role to our other structures, lines of authority and decision-making.

Continuity, renewal and succession

The composition of the two councils is based on the roles that people play in the mandala – such as Ashe Acharya, centre director, chair of a working group or representative of an entity like the Nalanda Translation Committee, etc. The result is a mixture of long-

standing members of the community, many of them holding senior positions; a proportion of newer practitioners; and a number of second generation individuals now taking on leadership responsibility.

IV. Decision making and Consultation

The role of the Sakyong

The Sakyong is the spiritual and temporal head of the Shambhala Mandala. In terms of our legal obligations, the Sakyong is the Director of the First Class of the board of directors. That legal primacy is maintained in this structure. The relationship of the lineage of Sakyongs to the Shambhala Mandala is described by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche in his *Treatise on Society and Organization*:

“The Sakyong is the centre of the Shambhala Mandala. The center of the mandala manifests as the Kalapa Court, the seat of the Sakyong and the heart of his government. The energy generated within the Court radiates outwards through the teachings, culture, and structure of the mandala. The energy that is generated towards the Kalapa Court is harnessed by the organization...When the organization can extend the energy of the Court as the basis of inspiration throughout the mandala, the members of the community look in and around themselves for solutions, realizing their responsibility to motivate themselves and to communicate with others.”

The role of the President

The President is appointed by the Sakyong and exercises executive authority on behalf of the Sakyong. The President chairs the Sakyong’s Council, Mandala Council and Shambhala Congress.

The President’s responsibilities in the governance process include:

- overseeing the core services of the mandala;
- proposing the core budget of Shambhala to the Sakyong’s Council;
- ensuring adherence to the core budget of the mandala;
- appointing the core staff, chairs of working groups and advisory groups, and the directors of dzongs (major centres like Boulder etc.) and most of the practice centres (in most cases as a result of the recruitment processes of local boards);
- sending timely reports to the Sakyong’s Council and the Mandala Council;
- hearing appeals under the Misconduct Procedure. (In the event of a complaint against the President, the matter is referred for deliberation and action to the Makpön and the Command Council of the Dorje Kasung. (The Sakyong has indicated that if there are any concerns or complaints relating to him, that these may be raised through the good offices of the President.)

Shambhala Governance: a process of consultation and decision-making

The Working Group on Mandala Structure and Governance has proposed a set of draft Tenets of Shambhala Governance that will be considered by the Shambhala Congress in 2005. These tenets aim to define more clearly the relationships between consultation and decision-making in our mandala. Both are essential to the process of governance that we will be using, and learning from, for these next two years – as demonstrated by the yearly cycle and the example of budget planning set out below.

The yearly cycle

For the two-year period, the yearly cycle would look like this.

The Shambhala Congress meets once a year after Shambhala Day

The Mandala Council meets twice a year:

- immediately before and after the Shambhala Congress (its members attend the Congress)
- mid-year for review of implementation

The Sakyong's Council meets at least three times a year:

- two or three months before the Shambhala Congress
- immediately before and after the Shambhala Congress (with the Mandala Council)
- mid-year with the Mandala Council
- through conference calls as needed

The budget cycle: an example

- After Shambhala Day: Open process begins by gathering suggestions for the coming year's budget, including points raised at the previous Congress. All centres and other bodies invited, through their directors, to make suggestions. This can be done at the post-Congress meeting of the governing body and by email requests made to the Centre Directors.
- Late Spring: Shambhala staff draft a budget (and items for discussion) under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer and the President.
- Mid-year meetings of the Sakyong's Council and Mandala Council review draft budget
- After mid-year meetings: Shambhala staff revises budget, reflecting feedback from mid-year meetings.
- Late-year meeting of Sakyong's Council receives revised budget. Council takes final decision on approving budget.
- Approved budget sent to all centres for information and provided in documentation for the next Shambhala Congress.

This would be a calendar year budget.

Managing exceptions (revenue or expense):

- Sakyong’s Council will set guidelines for approval of expenditure by the Chief Financial Officer and the President that falls within the overall envelope of the approved budget. They are responsible for the management of the budget and for sending quarterly reports to the Sakyong’s Council and the Mandala Council.
- Exceptions for expenditure or revenue that exceed the agreed envelope of the budget will be presented to the Mandala Governing council for its decision.

V. Core Services of the Mandala

The term “core services” indicates those services provided by Shambhala to its centres, groups and members. The term “core services” enables us to broaden our understanding of how we serve the mandala and overcome the limiting notion of all such services being provided solely by paid staff in a single location.

A Core Services Group would include the Directors of Practice and retreat centres and Gampo Abbey, some form of input from the Centre Directors, and the heads of offices such as Practice and Education, Finance and Development, International Affairs, Shambhala Europe and so on. The group, as whole, works under the overall responsibility of the Sakyong’s Council; many of its members report directly to their own boards in their own areas of responsibility

VI. The Shambhala Charter and the law

The Chief Legal Adviser, together with the Mandala Structure and Governance Working Group, has drafted a “Shambhala Charter” that would define the relationships of the various parts of the mandala to each other. It would be similar to the existing by-laws, and be drafted to meet the internal needs of regulating our mandala – along the lines previously discussed by the Board of Directors and presented in the pre-Congress papers in 2002/3. Once agreed and put into effect, the Shambhala Charter would be the regulating document for the structure and business of the mandala. It would create a basis of collaborative self-governance among a range of entities, including those now separately incorporated or seeking such separate incorporation. The courts of each country in which we function would be referred to solely for the purposes of enforcing the agreements and procedures freely entered into by all the participating parts of the mandala.

To settle disputes between entities in the mandala (not individuals) or rule on interpretation or adherence to the charter (through mediation and arbitration), there would be a group of highly respected and experienced members of the community appointed by

the Kalapa Court who could be asked by the Sakyong or the President to assist the Sakyong's Council in resolving disputes.

Other legal work is being undertaken to examine the possibility of creating out of our present relatively complex framework a more simplified structure, as recommended in the report on our finances compiled for the first Shambhala Congress.

The legal match

While we have the ambition to create a self-governing mandala with its own set of internal relationships, often based on vows and samayas, we also operate within the context of national legal systems. These require that Shambhala be registered and governed and fulfill reporting and other requirements.

One of those requirements in both Canadian and United States law – which also applies to Shambhala Europe – is that there be a board. In this governance structure, that responsibility is carried by the Sakyong's Council, whose members will be listed in reporting documents as the board, together with the Sakyong who remains the Director of the First Class with sole authority to establish and dismiss the board.

It will be the responsibility of the Chief Legal Counsel, with the Corporate Affairs Committee that he chairs, to assist the Sakyong's Council in fulfilling the obligations of a board, advise it on legal matters and ensure an appropriate match between Shambhala's objectives and processes and the requirements of the law.

VII. Next steps (and outstanding questions)

Participation is a process

Although this Governing Structure aims at focussing on the community building aspects of the Shambhala Community Plan, a structure alone cannot create participation. It can only open the door to it. There are a number of steps needed to encourage and facilitate the fuller participation of our community.

In addition to those mentioned briefly below, there remains the question of how best to explore the balance between different forms of decision making, ranging across a spectrum from “chain of command”, through “spontaneous insight” to “voting.” Exploring this question and bringing forward well thought out recommendations to a future Congress will be part of what has to happen over the next two years.

Communicating within the community

Steps need to be taken to explain the governing structure to the community, so that there is greater understanding about the model and how it is meant to encourage participation. It is time to be candid with each other, both about areas that need clarification and areas that we need to be more explicit about.

There is a broad measure of agreement that we need to strengthen the communications aspect so that information flows freely and rapidly. One suggestion is to build a “news team” with autonomous reporters so that the news function within Shambhala is independent from the core services. An alternative is to have that function recognized as part of the core services, and funded accordingly, but with a good measure of editorial independence, as is the case with The DOT.

Clarifying responsibilities

There is a felt need for greater clarity about “who decides what.” Among the questions that frequently come up are: “What are the pre-requisites for leadership positions? Who determines this?” “How are centre directors appointed and what is their authority?” “What are program requirements and who authorizes exceptions?” There could also be numerous questions of this type asked about this Governing Structure. There are also relationships between kasung and non-kasung responsibilities in our structures and programs that need to be put on a more harmonious and clearly understandable basis at all levels of the mandala.

It has not been possible to resolve everything at this level of detail between the First Congress and now. This is an example of the work that remains to be done by the Working Groups, and which requires a greater level of consultation with centres and members that has been possible so far.

Implications for Shambala Centres

This structure does not specify the way the implications of this structure will be implemented at the level of Shambhala Centres. Local circumstances vary widely. Further thought is needed to achieve this level of cooperation and collaboration at all levels of the mandala. Nonetheless, it would be important that all centres aim to ensure that their governing body include, in addition to the Centre Director and Warrior of the Centre, the rusung or other officer of the Dorje Kasung, a teacher or representative of practice and education.

Over the coming year it will be important to develop function cooperation and collaboration between the different lines of communication which co-exist in local centers and which come together at the level of the Sakyong’s Council. An effective, coordinated relationship between these depends on clear policy from above as well as respect and collaboration on the ground. With good relationships, there can be protection and corrective influence in this arrangement which comes from a sharing and balance of power.

Regionalization

Increased cooperation among Shambhala Centres and groups is a widely shared goal of many people throughout the mandala. Regional structures need to be encouraged so that there is a far greater level of collaboration between networks of centres and groups, if possible within this two-year period.

One approach would be to support and encourage regional collaboration on projects that each centre has a hard time doing alone, such as MI and teacher training, data base development, high quality publicity, and so on. It would also be possible to hold a number of regional conferences over the next two years to secure deeper commitment to appropriate structures and systems for communicating and collaborating.

Regionalization could be one of the themes for the Shambhala Congress in 2006. It is important to emphasize this development as laying a basis for the evolution of the Mandala Council into a body of regional representatives, among others, as rapidly as possible.

Budgeting and staffing

To facilitate the work of the new structure and provide the services sought by the community, the Sakyong's Council will review the core budget of Shambhala immediately after the Shambhala Congress to allocate funds to support the necessary activities. It has been suggested that a secretary to the three councils could greatly assist with communication between the members, and outwards to the community as a whole.

There are also suggestions for appointments to be made to the staff. The highest priority in the view of the New Economic Model Working Group is for a Chief Financial Officer. Other proposals have been made for a Chief Executive Officer, a Centre Affairs Officer and so on. All decisions will have to take into account what level of commitment the mandala can sustain while still paying off the accumulated operating debt.

It is also important that the creation of staff positions be in accordance with the evolving demands for services and the expressed wish of many for a more decentralized provision of core services that takes into account regionalism and the expertise available throughout the mandala. Thus we also need to consider pragmatic and urgently needed core services personnel like a webmaster and helpdesk as recommended by other Working Groups.

Background note: Development of this model and the decision-making process

The core governance of the Shambhala mandala is a matter for decision by the Sakyong. The current Mandala Governing Council was established with his consent for the year of the Wood Monkey as an interim measure that would open up the governance of the mandala to a large number of representatives of bodies within the mandala. Among its other responsibilities, it was tasked with recommending a governance model to the Sakyong. The intention, which has been respected, was to present recommendations to him in time for a new structure to come into effect on Shambhala Day 2005.

The whole question of mandala structure and governance was discussed by a working group specifically charged with this responsibility. The group was established after Shambhala Day 2004 and has worked consistently since then, with much of its work

being conducted by sub-groups within it. The question of mandala structure was one of the main topics considered by the Mandala Governing Council at its meeting in July 2004, based on exploratory suggestions from the working group.

Following the meeting of the Mandala Governing Council, Board of Directors and Shambhala Centre Directors in July this year, the president drafted a core governance model for the coming two years that aimed to embody the Sakyong's evolving views and meet the needs of the period ahead. After discussing the draft model with the president, the Sakyong consulted the chief legal counsel of the Board of Directors and gave his approval for the model to be considered by the Mandala Governing Council.

The president proposed to the Chair of the Mandala Structure and Governance Working Group that the first draft of the model be considered by a group consisting of the Chairs of the Working Groups and the sub-group of the Mandala Structure and Governance Working Group dealing with structures.

Following that consultation, the president prepared a revised draft of the model and circulated it to that same group plus members of the board of directors. The revised draft included key questions for consideration. Based on the responses to those questions, the president, after a further round of circulation to the full Mandala Governing Council, presented a further amended draft to the full Mandala Governing Council at its meeting in Boston in December 2004. Taking into account views expressed in that meeting, the Sakyong gave his assent for the governing structure outlined in this document to come into effect on Shambhala Day 2005.