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Letter From Lady Diana

February 12, 2018 – 9:32 pm | [Permalink](#) |

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OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

This has been a very dark dön season for many people. It has exposed a tremendous amount of pain that people have experienced both in the Shambhala community and in the greater world.

Having the Shambhala community as the focal point for the majority of my life, I have witnessed numerous times when many members of our community, myself included, have not been protected in a way that reflects our ideals and strengths. Culturally we are at a powerful moment in time, which allows women a voice to express their pain. This has not always been the case in the past. We have a responsibility to one another to facilitate a conversation that is actually of benefit to our community and therefore the greater world.

Distortion of facts is extremely damaging and is counterproductive for this process. While I respect the need for everyone who has experienced trauma to find a way to be heard and to find healing, that does not absolve us of the poison of presenting assumptions and untruths. This has caused a great deal of pain and confusion and this is what I need to address.

When I first heard about Project Sunshine I thought it would be a wonderful way to embark on this important process. But now that I've seen its connection to the spreading of inaccurate, misleading facts, I no longer have faith in its ability to assist with this important task in an unbiased and honest manner. Embarking on the process of healing is a greater call to our sangha to come together and address these issues. This process is being hindered by a personal agenda to launch an attack on the Mukpo family.

Unlike many Buddhist teachers, Trungpa Rinpoche was committed to transparency. He had a very outrageous lifestyle. Some of the events that transpired during that era clearly caused some people pain and we need to create a process where these people can be heard. In the vein of transparency, I have written extensively about this time in my book *Dragon Thunder*. The reason that I wrote this book was that, in order for people to learn from Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings and to have their own insight into the lifestyle that surrounded those teachings. Personally, I feel that the Shambhala teachings provide

[Translate »](#)

tremendous benefit to people and will continue to do so for generations to come, but only if we truly commit to helping one another heal and chart a path toward a better sangha.

When and where a transparent, measured, and responsible accounting of the facts shows that misconduct or abuse has taken place, or that the response by administrators and teachers has failed to adequately protect and care for those who were harmed, I am committed to healing and acknowledgment, even if that requires consequences for those at fault. But our tradition is not one that allows for mindless mob justice spun from aggression and half-truths.

May the remainder of this dōn season be free of obstacles. I extend the love of the Mukpo family to all of you. May this new year bring in a time of healing and change in which we are committed to finding the correct forum for this process to take place.



Lady Diana Mukpo

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16 responses to “ Letter From Lady Diana ”

1. Timaree Bierle-Dodds
[Feb 12, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Thank you Lady Diana. with love to you, Sangha and beyond.

2. Yeshe Tsogyal Sangye
[Feb 13, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

All sangha sisters and brothers should unite in posting a #metoo if you have ever been inappropriately sexually harrassed/ demeaned, raped, physically abused or emotionally abused by any sangha member or teacher. We need right action to bring these issues to the forefront in deeping our own awareness collectively and bring insight into the suffering to be able to cease the suffering that may be going on within our community. #metoo #awareness

3. Margery Lynch
[Feb 15, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Thank you so much, Lady Diana, for bringing your sanity and wisdom into the heat of this painful time. I feel grateful. It's so easy to get carried a by sympathy or anger, but the exaggerations and accusations are not helpful to healing. Much love to all.

4. Julia Sagebien
[Feb 15, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Thank you Lady Diana for your willingness to jump into the fire. I guess, like you, I believe that people are innocent until proven guilty. However, I also believe that we must have the means to address what we see as grievous harm in our community. Somehow, we must find a way to plunge into a discussion, a debate about the meaning of 'justice' and of law, aspects of rulership we have yet to truly address.

Taking your statement as an offer: “When and where a transparent, measured, and responsible accounting of the facts shows that misconduct or abuse has taken place, or that the response by administrators and teachers has failed to adequately protect and care for those who were harmed, I am committed to healing and acknowledgment, even if that requires consequences for those at fault”... May I, then, request, that you establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and that such a commission be led by outside experts on these matters? We need help. Objectivity perhaps. Due process.

Once again, thank you for your contribution. I hope there is more to come. May everyone's willingness to lean into the razor's edge be liberating.

Cheerful Year of the Earth Dog.

Dr. Julia Sagebien, PhD

5. Denise Kilshaw
[Feb 16, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Thank you, Lady Diana,

Your clarity and thoughtfulness around this issue is much appreciated, and speaking to such a difficult topic with equanimity and truthfulness has great integrity.

Denise

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6. sara
[Feb 16, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Prior to reading this statement I hadn't heard of project Sunshine. I looked it up and read the report. It seems to be objective and solution-focussed. Is there another forum related to project Sunshine where the biases are showing through?

7. Louise
[Feb 19, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

I had this same question. This letter and the Kalapa Council statement seem to have been dropped into the community without any context. Then the Shambhala Day broadcast was very odd. I am a center director and had no direct communication from Shambhala leadership about what these items were referring to. It gave me the uncomfortable feeling that there were things being alluded to but not talked about outright and I as a center leader had no information. Not until later did I hear anything about the Facebook discussions. Not everyone is on Facebook regularly. I would have hoped that if there was something my community should know about, center directors would have been informed. I'm hoping there will be more communication going forward.

8. sara
[Feb 21, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Thank you Louise for sharing. How your response is articulated helped me to understand, in a deeper way, why I felt compelled to post that question.

9. Alma Carpenter
[Feb 16, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Yes, there are quite a few discussions on the Shambhala Facebook page.

10. JDC
[Feb 16, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Lady Diana,

Thank you for your letter.

As a gay man I have been hurt and ridiculed by the Shambhala Community many, many times.

At what point do people like me get to share in the concept of "Basic Goodness."?

How do I heal?

JDC

11. Alexandra Evans
[Feb 17, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

#meetoo – Thank you this, Lady Diana. I am interested in participating in a forum that will humbly and honestly address healing the trauma of misconduct and abuse in our Shambhala community.
 Alexandra Evans, Tatamagouche, NS

12. Basia Solarz
[Feb 17, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Thank you, Lady Diana, for your letter.

The significant harm that is being shared, often accompanied by long-standing pain, seems to be breaking through individual, collective, and system layers of ignorance and confusion. There is an innate healthiness to this, even if working through it will be difficult at best, but as you suggest, Lady Diana, how we do this matters.

From my perspective, people deserve to be heard in the presence of others, where there can be a sense of witness, empowerment of themselves, and recognition of the experiences of others. The Truth and Reconciliation process that Julia suggests is certainly one option. In fact, it may be helpful to make more than one process available so that people can address these experiences in whatever way feels best to them. No one thing works all the time, in all circumstances, for all people.

That more and more people in the wider culture are talking about the sexualised harms they experienced in their professional environments may make it easier for those who have been harmed in our sangha to speak; however, a serious difference is that the harms here have sometimes resulted in obstacles for peoples' spiritual path. I find this to be particularly reprehensible and it leaves me feeling profound sadness and heartbreak.

13. Abbie Halpern
[Feb 18, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

I think that unlike Asia and Europe, because North America doesn't have rock solid traditions, our societal culture changes at rapid speed and that we, as good citizens are obliged to change with it.

I think the only absolute we have is that all of us grow up with sexual confusion which takes years to be at ease with and is highly personal to each individual. Of course, being influenced and molded by everything we encounter in life is part of being human.

So we seek out Dharma for clarity.

Our Sangha undoubtedly has the full range of personal shortcomings that every community has, but the Dharma is pure. We are blameworthy if an individual walks away from Dharma because of us. I greatly hope they simply find a better community.

It is an beyond outrage to disparage people by name based on noise and gossip. This can only be something that the affected person can illustrate. Someone may or may not wish to do so, but it is solely up to the individual.

I disagree with Julia that an outsider should be called in. In spite of ourselves, I think we are capable of clear seeing, and I think this is our unique family burden. I think the answers lie within the Dharma. I think a forum would be very helpful and fairly easy to arrange.

I think we will deeply.

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14. Judith Howell

[Feb 19, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

A few days shy of being seventy years old, I write to offer what I can to the current discussion. Tears have fallen and at times still do by my siblings and myself. We know. I choose a practitioners path in tandem with professional help and encouragement. All were necessary. I agree with Julia. While sangha can offer discussion, practice, container, and welcome cheer, healing requires help from others who know and know how. Please be kind enough to set aside assumption or conclusion. We bow; and enter a very human space. – Judi

15. Lisa

[Mar 1, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

Greetings all, I echo Louise's experience of the Kalapa letter and Shambhala Day coming without context given to leadership in local centers. Like Sara I too had never heard about the Sunshine Project and so read the report, http://www.andreamwinn.com/pdfs/Project_Sunshine_Final_Report.pdf

I found it to be grounded, sane and caring. The report begins with statements of support for it from Agness Au, Judy Lief and Judith Simmer Brown. I didn't hear an attack on the Mukpo family or a sense of vendetta. No one was named in the stories shared.

As a long time community member I have heard friends' stories of being subject to, and have had my own direct experiences of, sexual misconduct by teachers, leaders and fellow community members. I have witnessed the circling of the wagons by leadership, denials and dismissal, ostracizing and silencing take place when people have spoken up on this. And other uncomfortable topics – like money, power, class, and diversity. Even as I write this I have to debate whether it is "safe" to use my full name, for now it doesn't feel so.

This is a great opportunity for us to open, to listen, to hopefully heal rather than perpetuate harm.

16. Christina Metz

[Mar 2, 2018](#)
[Reply](#)

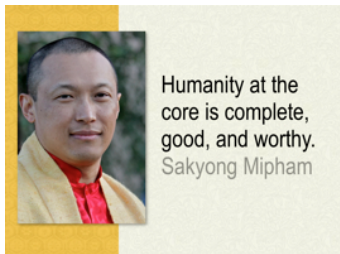
Dear Lady Diana, Thank you for your wise words. My question is this: I do wonder why you make the accusation of the Sunshine Project's "connection to the spreading of inaccurate, misleading facts"?

In a world in which 1 in 3 women reports having experienced sexual violence in her lifetime, I rather fear that the cases reported on will only be the tip of the iceberg. May deep healing processes be supported in all communities effected by sexual violence. Chris

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