



OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

Cheerful year of the Iron Ox to the Sangha of Warriors,

Last summer, Diana Mukpo convened a group to advise her on how best to support the dharma legacy of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. We are part of that multigenerational group of teachers and practitioners who were asked to contemplate our sangha's present circumstances and offer ideas about the road forward.

During the last several months, we met to discuss questions facing the future of the life's work of Trungpa Rinpoche, and in particular the availability of his essential practice instructions and transmissions. The results of those discussions are presented in this letter, which is intended to be a first step and starting point for further dialogue and action.

First, to briefly clarify what we mean by "sangha." During the Vidyadhara's lifetime, his students formed a close-knit community, which held the forms, transmissions, and energy that he cultivated. Much has changed since then.

In the years following his death, his students moved in a number of different and complementary directions. Some chose to work closely with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. Others moved in more independent directions, developing new sanghas in forms as varied as meditation groups, book clubs, study initiatives, and group retreats.

Given the events of the past few years, this movement towards diversity of presentation and inspiration has accelerated, providing new approaches to share the Vidyadhara's insights into spirituality and human life. New and seasoned practitioners alike have begun to explore what works for them along with the communities they serve.

We unequivocally believe this diversity is a good thing. The dharma flourishes when it is given space to be creative and experimental. There is no one-size-fits-all approach that works for everyone. This sentiment inspired the rimé masters of eastern Tibet and many of the Kagyu and Nyingma teachers who fled into exile and brought the dharma to the West.

We acknowledge that our community has a shadow side that has perpetuated harm in various forms across generations. Facing that history, fearlessly acknowledging it, and then remedying it is the only path to protecting the Vidyadhara's teachings and ensuring they flourish in the future. This is a collective responsibility shared by all who wish to build that future and care for their fellow practitioners.

But the path forward may not look the same for everyone, and in recognition of that, we want to offer as many tools as we can to the mahasangha and all within it who are inspired to cultivate new approaches. In particular, we feel strongly that students seeking to receive vows and transmissions outside of a samaya commitment to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche should have avenues to do so.



OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

The Vidyadhara established a vast array of forms, paths, and environments for students to connect with their own dignity and wakeful mind. This included the Shambhala path, and also dharma art, traditional Kagyu and Nyingma practices, Kasungship, and beyond. Rooted in the practice of meditation, these creative approaches were a product of two-way communication with his students, reflecting his intuitive sense that there were different ways for people to connect with the essence of the traditions he held.

We are committed to ensuring that everyone who is carrying these traditions forward will have all the support that we can provide.

Kagyū and Nyingma Practice Paths

The Kagyu and Nyingma teaching streams are central to the Vidyadhara's presentation of dharma in the West. He is a revered figure within the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions, and many practitioners have expressed their desire to enter into those streams.

As copyright holder of Trungpa Rinpoche's written work, Diana Mukpo will be ensuring that the texts, instructions, and sadhanas associated with his presentation of the Kagyu and Nyingma paths of meditation and study will be available to qualified practitioners who wish to receive them. We will support programs and spaces where engagement with these paths can deepen, providing the availability of refuge and bodhisattva vows in contexts where the hinayana and mahayana foundations are being studied.

If you are an administrator of a local center, hold a practice and education role, or are a member interested in continued study of the Buddhist mahayana and vajrayana teachings at your center, we hope to support you, and we hope you can support and advise us. The Shambhala membership and its center leaders have strong training and understanding of how to present these teachings, as well as how to create containers for the transmission of practice and sacred outlook. We see no reason why many centers should not be able to continue presenting dharma as they have done for years.

If you are a teacher or member of a group that currently operates outside the official Shambhala organization, but is motivated by dedication to the Vidyadhara's traditions, we also wish to offer support to you. As much as possible, we hope that we can amplify your work and help to facilitate communication across the broader mahasangha.

In the coming months, we will reach out to our friends — teachers and practitioners — within the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions to discuss how best to facilitate access to vajrayana practices in ways that honor the integrity of those lineages. If you feel connected to this path and are looking for ways to engage with it more deeply, please contact us at OpenTorii@gmail.com.

Werma Sadhana and Shambhala Termas



OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

The culmination of the Vidyadhara's work with his students was his presentation of the Shambhala teachings. Rooted in the Kalachakra and Vajrakilaya tantras along with Tibetan and other traditions of secular warriorship from around the world, this body of teachings is well-suited for our time. Incorporating and based on Buddhist wisdom, the Vidyadhara presented these teachings as his essential work, emphasizing our celebration of the phenomenal world, our fundamental worthiness to be a part of it, and the vision of creating a good human society.

We are all fully committed to the perpetuation and continued transmission of those teachings.

Thus, we will ensure that those who wish to receive the texts, transmissions, and sadhanas associated with the Shambhala termas will have that opportunity. This includes the *Werma Sadhana*. We know that many of you have worked diligently to prepare for this practice, and Diana Mukpo will facilitate access and support for students to receive it within programs at Shambhala centers, as well as to empower others working outside the organization to transmit the lung so it can be more broadly accessible.

With this, we will facilitate an expansion of the opportunities for students to receive this practice, as well as *The Letter of the Black Ashe* and the other core texts of the Shambhala tradition. We recognize this is a significant change in how these practices have been offered in the recent past. However, we view this expansion as a continuation of the Vidyadhara's original approach whereby the lung or "reading transmission" for Werma practice was given by various preceptors at a culminating assembly of warriors.

To address questions that may arise from these decisions, we have posted two articles online, with links below. These offer brief histories of how these practices were introduced to students in past eras. We hope these accounts will demonstrate that there are many legitimate ways to receive them. Ultimately, they are tools to help us live our lives infused with warriorship, decency, fearlessness, and confidence. The more people who are practicing them, the better.

Mapping the Legacy

Some of us are now working to create a website-hub where the many communities practicing and studying the teachings of Trungpa Rinpoche can be represented, so that those who feel a heart connection to his teachings can find each other, share resources, and communicate. This hub will be nonsectarian and inclusive — not associated with any one lineage or institution in particular. Our intention for this mapping project is to create a potent resource of already existing communities, rather than an additional organization. Those of us who are working on it are in the process of surveying those communities, and will publish information and contact details for the groups that opt in.

If you would like your group to be included in this project, or would like to offer other resources, please contact us, again at OpenTorii@gmail.com.



OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

Mahasangha Gathering this Summer

The Shambhala teachings were intended to be cradled within a society — a community rooted in warriorship, celebration, and basic goodness. Clearly, we have received a sharp message that we have much to do to give rise to such a society. For those who are inspired to carry that effort forward, let's heed the messages we have received and together co-create spaces for real and lasting change.

We acknowledge that a path of healing from past harms across generations in our community will not be an easy or short one. But we believe it can be done concurrently with co-creating an inclusive vision for the future. We invite you into this process with us — to be part of the change that so many of us would like to see happen.

We want to acknowledge that there are divisions in our sangha. Nonetheless, we hope that we can be generous enough to see ourselves as a part of a larger family and remain connected, even as we arrive at different conclusions about the way forward and the environments we want to practice in. We all have a shared opportunity to decide what a society based in warriorship and spiritual integrity looks like in 2021 and beyond.

To this end, we have begun to plan a ten-day assembly that is tentatively scheduled to take place in July this summer at Shambhala Mountain Center, public health safety requirements permitting. This event will offer time to practice, dialogue, heal, celebrate, and envision the future together. We hope this assembly will be a chance for the sangha to connect with one another after a few very difficult years, and for new ideas to have the space to arise.

The assembly will run as two consecutive, but joined programs. The first will be a community-focused gathering open to all, which will include opportunities to take part in a broad range of practices, community dialogues, and activities in separate spaces during the day, with evening talks and group dinners. There will be opportunities to engage in conversations about our past history, present challenges, and future aspirations, with participants free to opt into the topics and activities that they feel inspired to join.

The second program within the assembly will be an intensive retreat for Werma practitioners and those ready to receive the practice. This will include a lung for the practice itself, given by a preceptor who was authorized by the Vidyadhara to transmit it, as well as several days of deep training with experienced teachers. Remote digital attendance for this lung and training will be an option.

We are eager to solicit feedback from the sangha about how this assembly can serve all those who wish to spend time together in a practice environment. The more creative, the better. If you are interested in attending this assembly or contributing input, please email us at OpenTorii@gmail.com to let us know or fill out [this survey](#). We can't say what will arise at this



OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

gathering and how its timing will be affected by the pandemic, but we hope it can be one starting point for whatever might come next.

This program is being planned independently of, and in consultation with, the Shambhala Board. Participants and teachers in attendance will agree to fully comply with Shambhala's new Code of Conduct and SMC's Code of Ethics.

Ultimately, there is much work to be done from here. We recognize that the composition of our group does not reflect the diversity of the sangha and represents only a limited range of perspectives. Any next steps will require many more voices and sources of energy.

Our work has been inspired by a desire to remain in dialogue, gather in person, and move forward with tangible actions. We hope that by offering encouragement for the sangha to empower itself, we are supporting our dharma traditions to flourish, and that all of us will be active in helping to set a new course.

What arises next will be determined by the commitment and confidence of the students and teachers who hold the Vidyadhara's lineage in their hearts, and the willingness of younger generations to begin taking ownership of the future. We stand ready and willing to help in any way we can.

The Vidyadhara often spoke of the world entering a dark age. Looking around, there is a sense of foresight in that prediction. More than ever, we remain committed to the compassion and bravery embodied in his teachings, and which our tradition is intended to spark in us as humans on this earth. As he would say, good luck to us all.

In the vision of the Great Eastern Sun,

Diana Mukpo
Emily Bower
Dorje Loppön Lodrö Dorje
Catherine Fordham
Holly Gayley
Carolyn Gimian
David Hope
Sara Lewis
Judy Lief
Larry Mermelstein
Ashoka Mukpo
Tillie Perks
Colin Stubbert



OFFICE OF THE DRUK SAKYONG WANGMO

References:

<https://www.ldmletter.com/early-history-of-werma>

<https://www.ldmletter.com/k-n-three-yanas>