

# Dorje Kasung

Victory Over War

## CMR Letter Feb. 2020

February 2020

To the Dorje Kasung:

It has been some time since you have heard from us. We want to share with you what the Kasung leadership has been doing and going through over the past 18 months. This letter includes: a brief recounting of the past year, an outline of where the Dorje Kasung leadership is headed in the immediate future, and what we all can do to continue the path of Kasungship moving forward.

For the CMR, as for the entire Shambhala community, the past 18 months have been a time of deep reflection—both collectively and individually. We have been reflecting upon many questions including: What is the right next step for the Dorje Kasung? How do we care for ourselves and all of you at the same time? How do we provide guidance for Dorje Kasung in navigating the difficult and challenging waters in which we find ourselves? How can we hold a measure of accountability for harm that has occurred in our community while remaining steadfast in our trust in the Kasung teachings? How can we continue to serve in the absence of guidance from the Makkyi Rabjam? Given the chaotic and toxic aspects of social media, how can we shape a message that might provide a beacon of wisdom and sanity for the Dorje Kasung?

We have struggled to hold all of the many aspects of loyalty and protection that we feel are part of our mandate. The Kasung – just like the rest of the Shambhala sangha – have expressed many strongly held and conflicting views. The CMR has been very careful not to make decisions in reaction to extreme views. Our deliberate response to our reflections on these difficult questions has been to hold the space for the Dorje Kasung, and we recognize that for many of you, this has been regarded as mere silence. When we have had to make choices and take action, we have endeavored to act in ways that reflect our intention to protect the lineage, the teachings, the practice of Kasungship, and the greater Shambhala community. From June 2018 to January 2019, there were numerous communications between the CMR and the Dorje Kasung through zoom calls and practice sessions and letters. Over the last months, large zoom calls seemed less and less helpful, and we prioritized individual conversations.

During this period, it became clear to us that an updated and expanded leadership model was needed to lead the Dorje Kasung into the next phase. To that end, 6 months ago the “Dorje Kasung Advisory Group” was formed to advise the CMR and

represent our desire to include more diverse voices and perspectives into our discussions and decision-making process.

One of the key questions for the CMR has been the nature of our relationship with the Makkyi Rabjam. Although we have reached out several times, the CMR has not had any direct communication from the Makkyi for the past 18 months and it has become apparent to us that we are no longer a “Council” to the “Makkyi Rabjam” as we once were.

During the past months, we know there have been three visits to the Shambhala community (to Shambhala Mountain Center, Vermont, and the Netherlands) by the Makkyi Rabjam since his formal departure from the Boulder Court. We have not been a part of the communication, organization, or in the chain of command for any of those visits and we were unaware of the details of these visits.

We see a new informal chain of command emerging around the Makkyi as he reaches out to individual Kasung, and we now understand that this reflects his current vision for Dorje Kasung service in his Court mandala.

It has become clear to us that, while changes need to be made, without an ongoing connection of some kind with the Makkyi Rabjam, we cannot continue as a CMR. The Makkyi appointed each of us to our posts on the CMR to lead the Dorje Kasung under a particular command structure and vision. It is clear that that mandate has now changed, and that our terms are at an end. Shortly we will be formally and publicly dissolving the current CMR and have already informed the Makkyi Rabjam by letter of this decision. It is the role and responsibility of the Makkyi Rabjam to designate each of our posts, so we will not be appointing a new CMR or the posts associated with the CMR.

Instead we are transitioning command to a Dorje Kasung General Staff group to support the daily activity of the Kasung. The new leadership body will hold responsibility for guiding the Dorje Kasung until such time as the Makkyi Rabjam chooses to appoint a new CMR or move forward in a different way. This new group will not direct the Kasung or Kasung service that is directly in service to the Makkyi and his family, as this is now determined directly by the Makkyi, although it is our hope that eventually there will be some kind of connection to this new Dorje Kasung General Staff group. All existing chains of command, including regional line command in all arms of service, are represented in this new structure, so that all

Kasung in active service will have a clear reference point. Two CMR members also hold posts outside of the CMR: Kasung Shastri Andrew Sacamano and Kasung Acharya Mitchell Levy. Those posts are different from their CMR-specific posts, so they will not be leaving those posts as part of this change. Neither will sit on this new leadership group but will be a practice and education resource to it if called upon.

The exact composition and terms of the new Dorje Kasung General Staff group are being finalized now and we will inform you of the details very soon.

It is hoped that the Advisory Group mentioned above will continue to support the Dorje Kasung General Staff group.

It is our deepest wish that our action does not lead to more divisiveness, but rather can facilitate healing and harmony.

Many of you have been serving over these past months in roles similar to what we have all done in the past – protecting our Shambhala Center communities and practice spaces, showing up as Garsung staff for Assemblies, running Sun Camp, and teaching EHOK classes and Trident Assemblies. The intention of this transition is to maintain and preserve the tradition of Kasung forms, practices, and chain of command. We strongly encourage all of you to continue in these Kasung activities and support our community in ways that you feel are appropriate at this time.

As always, thank you for your continued service, fundamental goodness, and your strong Kasung hearts. We will keep you informed as things move forward.

Yours in the True Command,

Jesse Grimes, Kasung Kyi Khyap

Mitchell Levy, Lamden Kyi Khyap

Jan Jercinovic, Desung Arm Commander

Andrew Sacamano, Kasung Shastri

Toby Sifton, Gesar Arm Commander

Anna Weinstein, Dorje Kasung Sergeant Major

This entry was posted in Recent Events on 27/02/2020 [<https://dk001.kasung.org/cmr-letter-feb-2020/>] by Shelly\_Webb.

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