



SHAMBHALA TIMES

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Jan 14

Tuesday

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David Schneider Steps Back from the role of Acharya

January 14, 2020 – 12:42 pm | [Permalink](#) | [12 Comments](#)

Former acharya David Schneider has requested the Shambhala Times to publish his letter describing why he has given back the title of acharya.

Per leggere questo articolo in italiano, per favore clicca [qui](#).

Pour lire cet article en français, cliquez [ici](#).

Este artículo ha sido traducido al español [aquí](#).

To read this article in German, please click here: [Deutsche Übersetzung](#).

Dear Friends in the Noble Sangha and Shambhala Community,

This is to say that after serious consideration, I am stepping back from the role of acharya. Trying to do this properly, I have written a letter to the Sakyong, since he was the person who appointed me. That letter, like the decision, is highly personal; I am not suggesting that any other acharya—nor anyone else in the community—do other than what their heart tells them to do. My letter to the Sakyong expresses much gratitude. It was an honor to serve in that capacity for many years. Then gradually it wasn’t.

Similarly, I want to thank you for the opportunity to go into the teachings and practices together these past 23 years. It has been very moving; a tremendously rich path. I would not have traded it for any other, even if I could have. This is not to say that everything has been OK. Clearly, everything has not been OK. We would not have experienced such a powerful societal explosion—ongoing—if everything had been OK.

I myself did not see the things initially alleged against the Sakyong; but I did observe, and I was part of, an unhealthy, selectively hierarchical system of privilege and power, one that led to many people getting hurt, women mostly. I personally tried never to cause harm, but I am sure that through the years, I have done so. This will have come from my stupidity, greed, and concupiscence. These qualities, and actions arising from them, are a source of personal shame and of karmic consequence. I can only hope to find forgiveness.

further practice and study with genuine teachers.

While I love many acharyas as individuals, I feel very differently about us as a group. We have never been cohesive, nor are we now. In leaving, I hope to avoid divisive internal politics, sudden barrages of useless email, and especially attempts—in which I have also participated—to push our group into reductive or simplistic positions. I hope no longer to be thinking about whether or how the Sakyong will answer our entreaties for communication; to no longer be chewing over questions of loyalty, or definitions of our role. I want to set down the title — one that seems to me to have no future, and to exist in the present on a very questionable basis—and use the remainder of my time thinking more creative thoughts.

At the same time, I’m not planning to go anywhere. I will continue to practice, as I have tried to do for the past 49 years; and if I am invited to teach, direct, or lead a program, I will also try to do that, consistent with my abilities and understanding.

Good luck and good lungta to us all!

In the Buddhist & Shambhala dharma, I remain yours,


David Schneider

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12 responses to “ David Schneider Steps Back from the role of Acharya ”

1. Peter Nowak
[Jan 25, 2020](#)
[Reply](#)

Dear David,

thank you for this clear and heartfelt statement. It was always a pleasure for me and empowering to listen to you teaching the Dharma! No apologies needed for your teaching but much gratitude! Please stay around and in communication. We need you as a friend and warrior!

With friendship and gratitude,
Peter

2. Nadine Rugani
[Jan 23, 2020](#)
[Reply](#)

Dear David,
If it wasn’t for you I might never have continued my Shambhala path (or any other Buddhist path for that matter). You were the first teacher within Shambhala whom I felt a genuine connection to, and that’s about 30 year ago now. You have accompanied my Shambhala path all along, ever since my study times in Marburg, and I am deeply grateful for that.
I hope we will continue to share this wonderful journey, in whatever way shape or form that may be.
Thank you for all the amazing and authentic teachings you have given all of us. I am very touched that you decided to step down as Acharya and I wish you only the very best,
Nadine Rugani
(Avignon, France)

3. Desirée Broeders
[Jan 22, 2020](#)
[Reply](#)

Dear David,
Thank you for your presence so far and for this courageous act of openness
With gratefulness and appreciation,
Desirée Broeders

4. Mary Cunov
[Jan 22, 2020](#)
[Reply](#)

Ah David—this letter spins me back to a time we both lived at Page Street—and times spent yakking away in your room. Then I was able to see you at Wendy and Peter’s house. This seems like a very big change for you—-what will you be doing and where? I’m living up in Sonoma County now—close to my daughter Kendra—and stay in close touch with all the Zennies up here! Do let me know if you’re coming out this way again.

[Reply](#)

Dear David,
I share your pain, and applaud your sincerity, which I have always known to be at the center of your heart.
Thank you for being you!
Much love,

Meg

6. Tessa RACINE

[Jan 21, 2020](#)

[Reply](#)

Dear David
Thank you for your letter.
I can feel your true warrior heart full of sadness and longing.
I hope we will meet again and I really liked when you came in Dechen Choling.
Your friend
Tessa Racine

7. [Katy Butler](#)

[Jan 20, 2020](#)

[Reply](#)

Dear David,
Good for you.
I remember you from Zen Center, and it's beautiful to see that you (as do I) continue to grow as reality continues to teach us.
—Katy Butler

8. Colin Cordner

[Jan 19, 2020](#)

[Reply](#)

Dear David,

Thank-you very much for your heartfelt letter, your reflection, and your honest engagement with the letter and spirit of the Path. May we all walk the walk as well.

Colin
(Ottawa, ON)

9. Patti Morgan

[Jan 17, 2020](#)

[Reply](#)

Dear David, I so appreciate your letter for your honesty and for putting into words much of what I feel and how I continue to spin my wheels trying to find the right choices to make. I honor you for your choice and your heartfelt wish to do no harm.
I first met you at Dechen Choling in 2000 when you led my Dathun. . I really learned so much from you on many levels. You were precise, kind and at times quite funny!

All the best to you and may our paths cross again.

Yours in the vision of the Great Eastern Sun. Patti

10. Richard Darsie

[Jan 16, 2020](#)

[Reply](#)

Dear David, thank you for so clearly stating your truth. I have great gratitude for how you furthered my path as my refuge preceptor. While I am no longer in Shambhala, my path continues and deepens. May yours do so as well.

Richard Darsie
Davis, CA

11. Gabriela Cordova

[Jan 16, 2020](#)

[Reply](#)

Dear David,
Your resignation touched me deeply as the way you worded it in your letter.

It was an honor and a joy to staff as the Spanish Interpreter in several Programs you have given at DCL. I learned a lot and it always gave me a more profound and insightful understanding of the Dharma.

Thank you very much for the MI meetings i had with you, specially the last one in the summer of 2017 during the Warriors Assemble, at the beginning of the crise. The fact that you were talking from your heart and your experience was very healing and pacifying for me: it help me be as patient and open hearted as possible during those, and still these, confusing times.

With friendship and gratefulness,
Gabriela Cordova-Novion

Dear David, I thank you for your letter, very clear and so very personal. I remember you from our 1986 Seminary. I have always been grateful for your service as an acharya. I am very glad that you will continue to part of our sangha.


Deborah
Halifax

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The Shambhala Times is a community forum for news and views from all over the Shambhala mandala. The Shambhala Times presents people’s individual points of view and takes no position itself on the content and views expressed. Our editors welcome a wide range of contributions and perspectives and seek to... [read more...](#)

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Shambhala Vision is rooted in the principle that every human being has a fundamental nature of basic goodness. This nature can be developed in daily life so that it radiates out to family, friends, community and society. According to the Shambhala tradition we are living through an age of greed and aggression. We harm ourselves, each other and our planet. The Shambhala teachings offer an antidote to this crisis. [read more...](#)

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