



THE KALAPA COURT

Letter of the Morning Sun A Retreat Message from the Sakyong

I send very warm greetings and love from retreat. This year of retreat has been a very powerful and pivotal time for the Sakyong Wangmo and me, and all of Shambhala. With the birth of our daughter, Jetsun Drukmo, as well as having had an entire year to gather strength, contemplate, and reflect on my life, the last twelve months have been a personal time of transformation and joy— a watershed.

The purpose of writing this letter is to express some of my inner thoughts, experiences, and intentions to you. After this year of retreat, I wish to have a more open and direct relationship with all of you as Shambhala warriors. Thus far, over the last twenty years as leader of Shambhala, I have refrained from expressing myself as fully as I wished because our community was going through a healing process, as well as a process of maturing. At this point I feel we are all mature enough to take a deep breath and reflect on what Shambhala is, and more importantly, what its future will be.

In my mind, Shambhala is the heart essence of the Dorje Dradül. He was an extremely gifted individual, a teacher of unparalleled skill and bravery, and the embodiment and holder of many ancient traditions. Especially during the latter stages of his life, he expressed to me that his purpose in coming to this world was to plant the Shambhala dharma. Shambhala was the culmination of everything he understood.

On several occasions, the Dorje Dradül emphatically but warmly expressed to me his wish and deep aspiration that the Shambhala dharma become my work and life. We went to great lengths so that I was educated in both the Eastern and Western approaches, since he felt this wisdom would be a powerful truth that could help transform the world. In this age of incredible aggression, fear, and materialism, these Shambhala teachings could turn the tide from the setting sun to the Great Eastern Sun. He saw that no matter how much spiritual insight we might have, we would also need bravery and courage: each one of us would have to manifest heroically. Therefore, we would have to be warriors of awakening.

Thus the Dorje Dradül emphasized the term *warrior*: above all, we must be courageous. If we are truly going to turn the tide, despite seemingly impossible odds, we need unequivocal confidence. Such confidence needs to be wholehearted and thoroughly rooted in the conviction of basic goodness. Thus, the warriors of Shambhala draw their strength from unequivocal conviction in goodness.

According to the Dorje Dradül, this goodness has no beginning, and therefore will have no end. When humans become fearful and doubt this goodness, we begin to cower, falling prey to our own thought patterns. Thus we become suspicious of others. We stop generating kindness and compassion and instead begin to focus intently on “other,” blaming it for all the world’s woes. This mistrust begins to spiral into fear and anger. Such a cycle is not simply a psychological state: it begins to affect our environment. Through a fundamental insecurity about our own worthiness, we begin to destroy our world.

The teachings of Shambhala attempt to bring the warrior gently but confidently back to the origin of time, where that primordial goodness can be rediscovered. This the Dorje Dradül called the Kalapayana. Kalapa was not only the ancient capital of Shambhala, but for the Dorje Dradül, it refers to a journey of time where the warrior goes beyond the three times—past, present, and future—and returns to the origin of time to find basic goodness.

When such a journey occurs, a sense of overwhelming power, fluidity, expedience, and delight manifests. This is known in the Shambhala teachings as *lungta*, or “windhorse.” When human beings discover genuine purpose, they become unstoppable. Life is full; life is beautiful. Life may be painful as well, but life is seen as fully worth living.

Discovering the power of thoroughly engaging in one’s life is how we become warriors in the world. We realize there is no need for dark shadows: if we allow the sun of goodness to shine, we can live our life fully, approach all aspects of our life thoroughly, and learn from them as well. The Shambhala teachings liberate us from constantly feeling we must make up for some fundamental mistake. There is no mistake in the Shambhala universe as such—simply a lack of courageousness and acknowledgement of our goodness. This is what the Dorje Dradül meant by Shambhala. He had discovered this wisdom as a young man in Tibet, and he continued to unveil it as he taught in the West. Thus these treasures of Shambhala are the heart of the Shambhala lineage.

The history and legend of Shambhala is based upon a great community that was able to reach a higher level of consciousness. This community could occur because its individual members participated fully in creating a culture of kindness, generosity, and courage. Therefore, their innate good qualities were able to manifest.

The heart teachings of Shambhala would later be known as the Shambhala *terma*, a Tibetan word meaning “treasures.” Throughout the history of the buddhadharma, enlightened beings have discovered terma for the benefit of beings who were living at that particular age. It is said that such teachings materialize in the mind of an appropriate awakened being who can disseminate them, and that they are particularly adapted for sentient beings living at that time. This was the case with the Dorje Dradül, who even in his own time was uniquely gifted at discovering terma. Thus he felt that the stream of Shambhala terma was flowing through him because it was needed at this particular time. On several occasions he expressed that this terma holds the complete path to enlightenment. As well, it addresses the current dilemma of how to live in society with decency, wakefulness, and precision. Thus, Shambhala was addressing the complete

realm of humanity—from how we live within a family, to how we perform our work, to how we engage in a journey of sacredness.

Thus the Dorje Dradül coined the term *warriorship*. As a reminder that all Shambhalians are trying to live their life courageously—not stuck in the past, not fantasizing about the future, but living now—we are known as warriors. The epitome of such warriorship is embodied in the Sakyong and the Sakyong Wangmo, male and female warriors of Shambhala. How men and women behave and conduct their lives, in particular how they relate to their children and future generations, has a profound effect on the society itself. The Dorje Dradül said that society cannot simply be run by governments or conducted by science. He felt that many social ills have come about because we have somehow forgotten that at the nucleus of all human relationships is the mother and father principle. We all need a beating heart of goodness, love, and courage.

Thus Shambhala is based on a mandala principle, where each man and woman manifests as the king and queen of their own domain: they must take their seat in their life. When this occurs, a natural rapport begins to take place. By manifesting fully and respecting each other, harmony ensues. The Shambhala teachings emphasize being in society, because at this time we do not have the luxury of isolating ourselves from the world. They teach that true spirituality cannot be isolated in a “spiritual,” or “holy” quadrant of our life. Rather, when we make a fundamental connection with basic goodness, bravery, and lungta, our entire life can be used as a pathway for awakening.

This profound and holistic approach is the legacy of the Dorje Dradül. He felt that based on these teachings, Shambhala could greatly help the world, and that this tradition would be its own lineage—the lineage of Shambhala—which would be held by generations of Sakyongs. Thus the Dorje Dradül handed this great responsibility on to me. During this year of retreat, as I reflected on how best to bring this vision forward, it became evident to me that we need to clearly understand the essence and purpose of Shambhala dharma.

First and foremost, Shambhala is based upon a societal vision. Even though it can be seen as a path by which an individual can travel into the great depths of enlightenment, this journey has a greater purpose than that. Shambhala vision is changing the whole social paradigm. For humanity not only to survive, but to flourish and prosper, the whole question and purpose of social existence needs to be addressed. As human beings we are exceptionally vulnerable to our environment. Environment begins to color our behavior, as well as our thought patterns. Therefore environment needs to be addressed, and in this case, it is the social paradigm that we are addressing. If we only make some minor internal adjustments, then we are only addressing our personal dilemma, not confronting the overall societal trend.

The teachings of the Dorje Dradül therefore look at all of society as the basis of the journey to awakening, as opposed to a journey that encourages us to fall asleep with the passive hope that somehow things will get better. A sobering slogan of his is that Shambhala is not based on automation, but on manual labor. Hoping that things will magically change will not change the world for the better. Changing the world for the better requires all of us to constantly apply the mindfulness of the tiger. Our personal involvement, our emotions, and our life as a whole are the ingredients for creating magic.

The rich dharma of Shambhala has the ability to heal the world. As Shambhalians, we need to be doctors instead of thinking we are patients. In this light, the Dorje Dradül has said, “The whole world is in absolute turmoil. Shambhala vision teaches that in the face of the world’s great problems, we can be heroic and kind at the same time. Shambhala vision is the opposite of selfishness.” Therefore, Shambhala warriorship is a path to social enlightenment. It transcends the path of individual enlightenment and increases our motivation so that we can apply it to the greater social prism.

We have these sublime teachings at our fingertips, but if they are to render powerful results, our community must feel confident in its own teaching and its own lineage. Unless we ourselves know who we are and have a deep sense of appreciation and wonderment about the genuineness of the Dorje Dradül and the teachings he has entrusted to us, the world will neither pay heed nor respect us or our vision. Such conviction is not pride or misguidedness. Rather, it comes from a deep sense of integrity and genuineness.

If the Shambhala teachings are to benefit the world, our very own community must now begin to embody these core principles: courageousness, kindness, dependability, skillfulness, and confidence. I am touched as I see that we are beginning to take on some of these traits. Simply put, with such magical teachings as our legacy, if our community is not kind, cheerful, and confident, then the world should not pay us heed; our arrogance should be checked. If these teachings are to live up to their full potential and make headway in these critical times, we need to double the efforts to train and educate ourselves in them so we may truly benefit others by demonstrating an alternate way of living.

Thus far, our community has healed and recovered, and it is growing. If Shambhala as a vision, a lineage, and a community is to have any real effect on the world, the next ten years are essential. We must now begin to organize, train, and develop ourselves with greater commitment and determination. Therefore, I ask all Shambhalians to see the next ten years as a time to truly challenge ourselves. If we can make substantial progress over this time, I believe we will have shifted the momentum of the lineage and vision toward being able to fulfill the Dorje Dradül’s intentions.

We are only at the beginning stages of this vision, and there is much for future generations to do, but if our generation does not make the valiant effort, we will be seriously jeopardizing the possibility of generations to come. In order to effect this shift, we will need to work together as never before. I feel that by the year 2020, we should have made ample progress in a number of key areas.

The success of our community will depend on what kind of culture we create. In that light, the appeal of Shambhala and our ability to benefit, influence, and inspire the world will come directly from our ability to manifest kindness, embody goodness, and create a genuine feeling of delightfulness. Therefore, culture and decorum are essential elements.

Ultimately, the greatest influence on us and the larger world is the social culture we are fostering. Again, I detect maturity in this area. We are definitely kinder as a community. In a recent conversation with Lady Diana Mukpo, she commented that the community is

as kind and as caring as she has ever experienced. I was encouraged by this observation. We have to manifest the principles we are expounding, especially in a world where there is constant finger-pointing, complaint, and cynicism.

If we as practitioners participate in such animosity, we are neither demonstrating good principles nor offering a solution. Our community must be optimistic. When conditions become more difficult, we should become even stronger and more committed to our valiant principles. It appears that materialism and the setting sun are determined and one-pointed in their objective. If we ourselves, both personally and socially, do not counter these forces with equal intensity and resolve, we will find ourselves slowly and aimlessly seduced into a state of mind where we are unsure what we stand for. With this kind of doubt, life takes on a slightly meaningless quality, we pursue only short-term pleasures, and the overall potential of humanity seems like a fading star.

Creating an awake culture is demanding. It requires us to participate day-to-day, moment-to-moment. That demanding feeling is actually arising from a perspective of sleepiness, where we constantly want to fade away and fall asleep. This attitude is not simply mental; it begins to affect our body in the form of illness, and our environment in the form of accidents. From the perspective of awakening, creating an awake culture is not demanding, but energizing. Therefore let us gather as Shambhalians, wake ourselves up communally, and be unafraid of manifesting our capabilities.

If Shambhala is to have a global effect, two things need to occur—one on an inner level, one on an outer level. The power of Shambhala and the potency of our message will be determined by the heart strength of our mandala. Thus, at the inner level, we must be completely confident of our own lineage and teachings. At the core of who we are, we should have a feeling of deep connection and commitment to the teachings and lineage of Shambhala. To be thoroughly grounded in the Shambhala terma and the path of the Great Eastern Sun enables us to be strong at the core. When we as individuals work with the acharyas, the shastris, and the senior teachers, we should take the view that we are working under the guidance of the Sakyong and the Sakyong Wangmo. Thus, at the inner level we have one unifying dharma and path.

Such unity gives society a mutual sense of purpose, bonding, and inspiration. The terma itself contains the highest vajrayana teachings. This profound teaching, rooted upon the expansive vision of basic goodness, allows us to protect and practice the various lineages of tantra and sutra that are the heritage of the Mukpo lineage. Thus the Rigden becomes the central embodiment of awakening, and as an enlightened universal monarch, it has the power and vision to protect all genuine wisdom traditions.

In order for this unity to occur, our own Shambhala leadership will have to strengthen. The three pillars of Shambhala—practice and education, the government, and the Dorje Kasung—as well as those engaged in the arts, will have to work collectively. If we are able to do this, we can take the Shambhala teachings out to the greater world of leadership, arts, business, social services, families, and households. With a deep certainty in who we are, we can extend our confidence and joy to others, which allows us to connect more easily with them. This is the external manifestation of our mandala, where we can interface with the world by offering myriad programs that connect with other

organizations, communities, businesses, and government agencies, enabling healthy and productive networking to occur. Such interface will foster the growth of a greater community of enlightened culture. However, others will not take us seriously if they do not see Shambhala as a unified community that is itself wholeheartedly working with these principles.

How can Shambhala extend into a global community? The Shambhala teachings have the potential to reach many millions of people, starting with our centres. These may diversify into satellite centres and neighborhood meditation groups that provide regular classes, meditation programs, and social and environmental engagement. Some will come into the centres, and at other times we will fan out into the greater community. I also hope that Shambhala will emerge as one of the most potent means by which to train leaders who themselves are capable of transforming the world around them. Individuals from all walks of life and professions will come to Shambhala for this training. Also, I hope Shambhala can play a substantial role in bringing about peace. Whether at a personal or global level, at its heart, peace is the ability for humans to be mindful of their thoughts and actions.

In any case, it is clear that Shambhala's main asset will be its people. Therefore, I hope that as a community we can work on our own culture and society. Can we be truly kind and generous with each other? We certainly are not bringing anything new to the table by just complaining about the world; we ourselves need to think of solutions and alternatives. Each wrong we see should engender a deeper commitment to our kindness.

Within my retreat, I have pondered three questions that have been very provocative and illuminating. These questions have led me to write this letter. I would like to ask each of you as a Shambhalian to contemplate them and send me your answers before the conclusion of my retreat. Not only is this a very meaningful exercise, it also allows me to see your feelings, insights, and commitment to our vision. Thus, as we enter into the next era of Shambhala, we can begin with unity, rapport, and clarity.

1. What personal commitment will you make to practice and study?

Since personal training and transformation is a lifelong journey, it is the method by which we constantly remind ourselves that, as beings with tremendous potential, it is up to us to constantly see each day as an opportunity to deepen and grow—that in fact the journey itself is the joy of life.

2. What will you offer to Shambhala?

Shambhala is a profound lineage, but its goodness and glory depends solely on the commitment of its warrior students. This sublime wisdom is our responsibility.

3. What do you aim to do in the world as a Shambhalian?

The ultimate purpose of Shambhala is to benefit the world, to reawaken basic goodness in all of humanity. This is the way we can manifest fully as warriors and benefit the world.

If all Shambhalians can contemplate these three questions at this critical juncture, it will help clarify and strengthen who we are, what Shambhala means to us, and how Shambhala can actually manifest in the world. I feel that if we as a community can take a moment and separate ourselves from the current of our lives to contemplate these questions, such communal self-reflection could considerably help clarify and strengthen our entire mandala. This in turn will give us depth of mind and character to take our vision into the future.

These three questions have been incredibly beneficial for my own path. Through contemplating them, I have realized that my clarity and commitment has grown. As we move forward as a community, and as our connection deepens as teacher and students—as well as warriors of awakening and human beings—a healthy, strong, and more loving bond can occur. I feel pleased that I am able to communicate this with all of you; our rapport is healthier than ever before. For many years people expressed their feelings to me, and now I feel like there is trust and love for me to express my feelings to you; certainly my love for all of you has grown tremendously.

What we are doing is not easy; we are all mutually coming out of our own cocoons. While that process can be quite intimidating, it is also a relief and a joy. Now the maturity of our community has begun to arise. Love and kindness is much more prevalent, as well as discipline, responsibility, and loyalty. I believe that we now have the fundamental basis of a strong relationship and society.

I am certainly willing to commit myself and my whole life to you and to Shambhala. I want to do that wholeheartedly. Life is precious, and none of us wants to be wasting our time with halfhearted effort, not knowing if others are sincere or not. That is the heart of warriorship: dedication to something bigger than ourselves. In this world, Shambhala is one of many admirable causes worthy of loyalty and dedication.

Therefore, I feel we have come to a crossroads. I understand that there are many complicated emotions and feelings. However, at this time we must wade through those feelings in order to reach some basic, fundamental conclusions about what our life is, and what we are committed to. Is Shambhala at the core of that commitment?

If we can participate fully as a community, when we look at each other we can detect a basic level of trust and love, even though there may be various feelings and emotions. If that is the case, I feel Shambhala will survive. Not only that, it will grow from strength to strength. However, if we do not make the effort to be honest and challenge ourselves emotionally at this crossroads, in ten years time we will have just prolonged our vacillation and encouraged another generation of vacillating minds.

At this particular time, we are challenged by the onslaught of materialism, as well as a barrage of psychological and emotional views and interpretations. The Dorje Dradül predicted that in this dark age, gadgets and technology would entertain and occupy the mind, weaken the life-force energy, and confuse our intention. He expressed that Shambhala offers the antidote of simplicity. Fundamentally, the warrior has to be simple. That simplicity brings strength, conviction, and—surprisingly—joy and intelligence. As Shambhalians, we must simplify and understand who and what is at the core of our life.

As I reemerge from retreat, I very much look forward to establishing the Shambhala lineage and Shambhala dharma. I intend for the next period of my life to be a time when I can direct our energy toward the future instead of the past. I see it as a time of fully discovering who we are, being unashamed of it, and clearly and confidently proclaiming it to the world. This I believe would most definitely bring a smile to the Dorje Dradül's face.

Before he passed away, the Dorje Dradül told me, "I have done what I can, now you must do the rest." Doing the rest depends on my connection with all of you, which is now good and will only get better. It is better to try than to not try at all, but it is even better to try cheerfully and wholeheartedly. This is how I plan to move ahead. I welcome all of you. I thoroughly look forward to working with you in creating a golden dawn for humanity.

With much love and blessings,

The Sakyong

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