

Kanyu, Fengshui and Court Energetics

PART II

**ON THE ENERGETICS OF
SHAMBHALA CENTRES**

Based on the teachings of Eva Wong

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INTRODUCTION

As human beings we aim at leading a happy and meaningful life, in which we not only need to care for ourselves and those around us, but also want to develop in a spiritual sense in order to work with our daily experiences. Many traditions over many millennia have aimed at providing the conditions for a happy life and spiritual development. In Asia some traditions stand out in this sense: in Tibet it is the Buddhist spiritual path and the Warrior traditions that have evolved over many lifetimes. In China the Daoist path and the wisdom traditions of K'an-yü and Fengshui have provided the means for spiritual development as well as the means to live harmoniously with the land.

In their efforts, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and Eva Wong strive to bring these traditions together to shape a bright and clear path for spiritual development as warriors in the modern day world. In this document we will discuss Sacred Space, or the spatial conditions that will allow us to connect with our Basic Goodness or Buddha Nature, through meditation practices, rituals and ceremonies. The depth of the connection made depends of course on many factors such as effort, insight, wisdom and karma. But apart from the mental space, it also depends on the physical space one is in.

In this document we focus on the Shambhala Court principle and its energetics. This knowledge will help us with its application in our Shambhala practice centres.



SHAMBHALA

Introduction

Throughout history, men and women have aspired to create societies that enable them to live dignified and decent lives with care for each other and our surrounding world within a flourishing culture. This is the vision of Enlightened Society of Shambhala.

Shambhala is a community of people practicing the Shambhala Buddhist traditions of enlightened living, as well as other contemplative disciplines. These practices bring into our ordinary lives a natural sense of goodness, fearlessness, and humour.



The Shambhala Buddhist teachings are practised and studied in a worldwide association of meditation centres founded by Vidyadhara the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and now directed by his son and spiritual heir, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.



A practicing tradition

The Shambhala community draws on a wide variety of contemplative traditions. The core practice is mindfulness-awareness meditation. Instruction follows the tradition of oral transmission from teacher to student—an unbroken lineage that goes back twenty-five hundred years.

Buddhism is an ancient teaching based on the practice of meditation and study of our minds and lives, to awaken our true nature, enlightenment. The Shambhala teachings, taught by the Buddha to the first King of Shambhala, are teachings on how to live in the world, with an open heart and a fearless-awake mind. The ground of both these teachings is the practice of Mindfulness/Awareness meditation, and we offer thorough training in meditation in our Shambhala Centres and programs.

Contemplative Disciplines

The spiritual path and our practice of meditation are not an escape from the world, but a way to wake up to the world and appreciate its wealth. Therefore, in addition to meditation, we also use other forms of contemplative disciplines such as art, archery and photography to work with our minds and experience the world fully.

For more information:

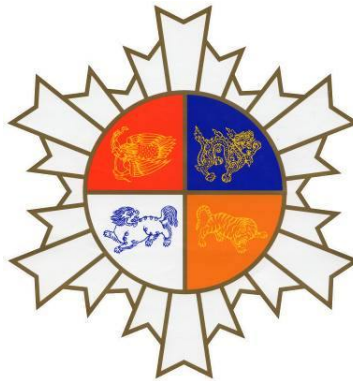
[Shambhala worldwide](http://www.shambhala.org/): (<http://www.shambhala.org/>)

[Shambhala Europe](http://www.shambhala-europe.org/) (<http://www.shambhala-europe.org/>)

[Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche](http://www.mipham.com/) (<http://www.mipham.com/>)

[Shambhala Publications](http://www.shambhala.com/) (<http://www.shambhala.com/>)

SHAMBHALA CENTRES: THE COURT PRINCIPLE



The view

The Kingdom of Shambhala, which culture and teachings arose from the four great ancestral lineages of India, Tibet, China and Japan - aims at creating enlightened society for all sentient beings. This is based upon the principles of fearlessness and gentleness and grounded in the meditation practices of mindfulness and awareness.

In our Shambhala Tradition, our practice as human beings has to do with connecting heaven and earth. That is the task of humanity, and being human is very much connected to bridging the gap between heaven and earth. In our tradition we talk of the energy of the Great Eastern Sun, a basic energy which is always available to us. We connect to that energy through invoking drala. Working with the three aspects of drala: ultimate, inner and outer, are ways in which we overcome aggression and experience the Great Eastern Sun. We want to invite the dralas back into the world, they have left because of the degradation of the world. We can connect with dralas everywhere, but some places it is easier to do this. And some places more connected to the specific dralas of the Shambhala world. Shambhala dralas are particularly concerned with overcoming aggression.

In order to facilitate spiritual development the principles of Sacred Space and Court are used. The description follows the logic of Outer - Inner - Secret. However, since the underlying view and principles of court and sacred space are discussed in the 'Secret' section - this will be presented first. Then the application of these principles in 'Inner' and 'Outer' will clearly follow from the previous.

It is this view that guides our path to fruition, without which we would not know what it means to live and work and meditate in a court – a place of wakefulness.

Introduction to the Court principle

The Kingdom of Shambhala, which culture and teachings arose from the four great ancestral lineages of India, Tibet, China and Japan - aims at creating enlightened society for all sentient beings. This is based upon the principles of fearlessness and gentleness and grounded in the meditation practices of mindfulness and awareness. In this sense, the modern day Shambhala tradition as founded by Dorje Dradül Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, is a direct heir of the ancestral lineage of King Gesar of Ling, who represented Shambhala on earth. In this tradition, the secular and spiritual are combined - based on the vision of the Rigden, the vision of the family of Basic Goodness / Buddha Nature and the Vajra Principle of indestructible space.

Shambhala is therefore lead by a Sage King - Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche- who is as his title says: *Protector of the Earth*, a meaning that reaches beyond the mere notion of kingship. The Sakyong is celestially appointed and joins heaven and earth together in establishing enlightened human society. The court of the Sakyong is the manifestation of the Buddhist and Shambhala lineages and its principles of meek, perky, outrageous and inscrutable.

The Sakyong needs a Court to fulfil his role – which is to join Heaven, Earth and Humanity. Here this means that Heaven is the vision of establishing the will of the Rigden – the salvation of the world through creating an Enlightened Society, based upon the notion of Basic Goodness. Earth here is the understanding of the local Dralas - how they work, how to interact with them in setting up the container for court, practice and study. Finally Humanity is the aspect of Enlightened Society or Enlightened World. So the Court is a place that serves as a binding factor, it prevents chaos and a place to raise lungta! The Court gives a sense of belonging, of care, of sangha and a reminder of bodhicitta.

Much information on court is already published in 'The Court Vision and Practice'. As it says in it's foreword, the aim of that document is *'to free this world from the dark age of materialism, and to promote great vision and the splendour of vast mind beyond poverty and pettiness (...)'*. This is also an interesting way to look at the role of the Court.

The court principle has six aspects with regards to its energetics, how it is manifested. In that sense these aspects describe the court as a mandala - or geometry of power: the alignment of the energetics of power at all its levels. The description of the court principle is found in great detail in the sacred texts as the Ghuyagarbha Tantra and in the 'Golden Sun of the Great East'.

Functions and structure of the court

These relationships within the court revolve around the Sage King, who is the centre of the court. He has people on his left and right sides, everyone at his or her appropriate position and distance: ministers, governors, generals, advisors, etc. When a king receives his subjects - the relationships are clear, visible and therefore natural hierarchy can arise. In this context the order of *Heaven <-> Earth <-> Man* can be equated with *King <-> Ministers <-> Subjects*. This is also clear from the description provided in 'The golden Sun of the Great East': *'In Kalapa, the capital, the dharma king of Shambhala first executed the primordial Ashe. On his right sat ministers on tiger-skin seats; on his left, queens on leopard-skin seats; before him, dapöns on bear-skin seats; surrounding his domain, the Rigden dralas (...)'*. When a king receives his subjects - the relationships are clear, visible and therefore natural hierarchy can arise.

In the context of a Shambhala Centre this notion of a King, his advisers and subjects can be translated into the order of *Heaven <-> Humanity <-> Earth*. This means that people (*humanity*) are appointed to a certain post within the centre and they are responsible for translating the view of the teachings (*heaven*) into the actual workings of the centre (*earth*). There is a large responsibility that comes with such a post. The right people should be appointed to the right post, for mismatches can cause harm. . In 'The golden Sun of the Great East': *'If the horse has no saddle, there is no dignity in riding. If the sun had no rays, the people would be blind. If the warrior has no sword, the blessings of the dralas cannot be gathered (...)'*.

In a Shambhala Centre it also means that people should have a proper seat, not only on a board or as a title, but also a real physical seat. This means that a number of people -especially the director and the Rusung- should have a desk in an office from which to work. The function pertains to the role and position and duties individuals hold within the court: who does what.

A Shambhala Court should be viewed as a mandala, another expression of the word 'container'. In a mandala different levels exist all of them connected through a bright and clear path. In the table below, the various levels of the mandala are indicated according to the various traditions as well as the functions and activities of those levels.

Shambhalian / Drala: Outer Court / Lu / External Kalapa Court

- **Buddhist:** Nirmanakaya
- **Dorje Kasung:** Perimeter / Ramparts
- **Properties and Activities:** This is the level of the mundane world and deals with the concrete every day aspects of people's lives and activities. Activities here are of planning, outreach, education and administration.

Shambhalian / Drala: Inner Court / Nyen / Internal Kalapa Court

- **Buddhist:** Sambhogakaya
- **Dorje Kasung:** Bailey

- **Properties and Activities:** On this level the environment, people and their activities are all seen as energy fields and fluxes of energy. Perception at this level is just radiance and luminosity. Activities here are meditation practice and teaching and study of the Dharma.

Shambhalian / Drala: Secret Court / Lha / Ultimate Kalapa Court

- **Buddhist:** Dharmakaya
- **Dorje Kasung:** Keep / Donjon
- **Properties and Activities:** This is the level which consists of nonconceptual space and which cannot be described further. The activity here is related with the higher vajrayana practices, with lungs and transmission.

In 1978, the Dorje Dradül talks about the Cosmic Mirror accommodating everything since it has NO middle and NO fringe. This in contrast to the notion of mandala -which means `centre and fringe`. However the reason for the existence of the Court is to act as a mandala principle, in which things can be centralized rather than diffused. So the mandala principle is there to guide us on a relative level in working with something similar, but boundless on an absolute level.).

COURT ENERGETICS



Space

This aspect has two parts: a) the mundane part: what will bring out the energy of the land that supports practice; and b) the space that the court creates by itself.

The energy of the land:

All places on earth carry energy. Some places carry more energy than others and it may come in terms of beneficial, neutral, wrathful or even malevolent. Selecting the appropriate location on the land will have a strong influence on the spiritual practice that takes place there, for good or for bad. Jamgön Kongtrul the Great (1813-1899) pointed these aspects out in his guides to retreat and to pilgrimage. In his book 'Sacred Ground', Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche has written extensively on pilgrimage and sacred geography. In his book he for example discusses at great length how a particular sacred place originated; what different categories of sacred places exist; a proof of the existence of sacred places; descriptions of the particular place itself and how it appears to both lay people, initiated ones and exalted ones; how that place was blessed and its energy opened; the features of the place how to perform a pilgrimage there and what the benefits of that pilgrimage are. In particular that last aspect is interesting since it clearly and repeatedly and from many sources states that *'One day of meditation in these places, Brings one closer to attainment than a year of meditation in an ordinary place'*.

Now the great Tibetan teachers are first and foremost practical people who do not want to waste effort on the spiritual path. They understand that one needs all the help one can get to attain enlightenment and walk the bodhisattva path. The teachers, the teachings and the sangha are crucial, as is one's effort and diligence. But what Jamgön Kongtrul here also clearly shows is that the physical location where one practices can literally make -or conversely break when in the wrong spot, although he doesn't say that- the accomplishment of one's practice. In Tibet entire volumes were filled with descriptions of such sacred sites along the lines of Jamgön Kongtrul's chapters above. Lists of sacred sites were sometimes

found as *'terma'* or treasure texts, hidden in magical places such as rocks, lakes or the sky, by Padmasambhava or Guru Rinpoche as he is called, or by his consort Yeshe Tsogyal.

The very spaces we use for practice should be a physical representation of and support for the spiritual path we are following. The structure of a space follows the sequence of three zones: Outer - Inner - Secret. These are connected by the bright and clear path. When such a structure is in place, practitioners know where they are, and where they are heading and gives them clear guidance on this path of transformation of attitude. In addition to this structure of three zones and their connection, is the principle of protection. Good protection allows energy to be gathered and collected and not run out. Protection in this sense deals with ensuring the possibility for practice and safeguarding the accomplishment of the practitioners.

The space created by the court itself:

When a court is in place at any location: its energetics are generated by the container and the people within it. These energetics are created through activity, ceremony and ritual, all performed in the proper way, at the proper moment by the appropriate people. A good example is the mandala of Magyel Pomra Encampment by the Dorje Kasung.

Time

This aspect is the same as in the principle of timeliness by Sun Tzu. When the preconditions for a situation have been set up - then the fruition will come at the right moment. The skill is to choose the precise moment when to initiate which action. If the window of opportunity is missed - then we cannot capture the energetics. All comes down to building up the right set of preconditions - so that when the moment comes, everything is in place and can be set in motion in order to achieve the best result.

Sun Tzu, in his work 'The Art of War', devoted much time in explaining the need to build up that potential energy and its release. He equates it to the drawing of the bow and the release of the arrow. In chapter 5 of his work he writes: *'The rush of water, to the point of tossing rocks about. This is shih. The strike of a hawk, at the killing snap. This is the node. Therefore, one skilled at battle: his shih is steep. His node is short. Shih is like drawing the crossbow. The node is like pulling the trigger (...).'* So only when one knows how to set up the preconditions and when to actualise the motion - one is able to bring out all inherent possibilities and energies of a situation.

Ambient

This is equated as the state of constant preparedness. The state of sustained energetics, maintaining a constant preparedness for the arrival of the court - is like a constant background hum that has the potential of actualisation, but has not actualised yet. It sits ready for action every moment of every day.

The state of constant preparedness can be equated like a bowl with food: an elegant and functional container has been created - the food sits ready and all that needs to happen is that it will be picked up and eaten. When a centre is in a state of constant preparedness: there is no nervousness, no panic, no anger or frustration. When the Sage King arrives at any given moment: there is no problem at all - Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche can arrive and take his seat in this part of his Kingdom of Shambhala.

Emergent

Energy like a spike of power. When the Sage King - Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche travels with his court - there must be a constant state of preparedness through having set up the preconditions to receive him. There must be a ground present. When that is the case, then a sudden spike of power will happen: something flares up out of this and dissolves again. Because of the preconditions that were set up, because of all preparedness - the power that bursts forth has no choice but to go forward and do it. The mandala is pregnant and the only thing that can happen next is giving birth. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche in this case is like a key turning a lock. If there is no lock to be turned - there will be no progress and the key lies idle.

It is like executing the stroke of Ashe: after having set up the ink, paper and brush - after having gone through the preliminaries - the stroke is inevitable, it must happen. Afterwards there is nothing to go back to. The stroke has happened, we fold up the paper and discard it. However the surge of emergent energy, of power is used in our personal transformation because we have set up the environment so carefully and with attention to every detail. A beautiful description is given in 'The golden Sun of the Great East': *'The king held the fearless brush, soaked in the ink of mercy. He touched it to the tip of his tongue, invoking the dralas of the past, present and future. First he placed the A dot (...) up to: At that moment the Eastern Sun matured (...).'*

The whole

When all parts are in place: when a space has been set up in the proper manner: Outer - Inner - Secret plus its connecting Bright and Clear Path, with good protection; when the appropriate ceremonies have been performed; when all officials and participants are in their appropriate position, doing the right things; when conducted at the proper time and as a result of constant preparedness: all of these accumulated will through their amplification - when the Sage King comes and takes his seat flare as a spark of emergent energy. Given the preparedness and container - this emergent energy is then available to transform the world.

Lha, Nyen and Lu

The principles of Lha, Nyen and Lu are at the heart of the Shambhala teachings. In 'The Letter of the Golden Key', the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche devoted a substantial part of the text to these principles. In fact the text states that if the order of these three is not obeyed - damage will follow: *'If the order of Lha, Nyen and Lu is violated, slander arises and windhorse weakens; a kalpa of sickness and war is born (...).'*

However, we should realize that the principles of Lha, Nyen and Lu apply to more levels than the one illustrated: ranging from the position of the Shambhala centre in the landscape down to the organization of the shelves in a cupboard. Ideally one needs a good proportion of all three principles, as there are three levels of practitioners: in 'The Letter of the Black Ashe', the Dorje Dradül described the warriors who went to the highland mountains and erected crystal palaces to live in. Others went to the lands of lakes and islands and started to live there. Finally the last group went to live in the pleasant plains. All these are practitioners of different accomplishment, but all have their role in society.

The space of the court

All places on earth carry energy. Some places carry more energy than others and it may come in terms of beneficial, neutral, wrathful or even malevolent. Selecting the appropriate location on the land will have a strong influence on the activity that takes place there, for good or for bad. This is particularly true for spiritual practices.

The very spaces we use for practice should be a physical representation of and support for the spiritual path we are following. The structure of a space follows the sequence of three zones: Outer - Inner - Secret. These are connected by the bright and clear path. When such a structure is in place, practitioners know where they are, and where they are heading and gives them clear guidance on this path of transformation of attitude.

In addition to this structure of three zones and their connection, is the principle of protection. Good protection allows energy to be gathered and collected and not run out. Protection in this sense deals with ensuring the possibility for practice and safeguarding the accomplishment of the practitioners.

When a court is in place somewhere: the container and the people within it generate energy. These energetics are created through activity, ceremony and ritual, all performed in the proper way, at the proper moment by the appropriate people.

The seat of the king

For the Sakyong, to facilitate his contact with the sangha on his travels, there must be a constant state of preparedness in the whole mandala to receive him. There must be a ground present. So when a Shambhala Centre is in some constant

state of preparedness for the Sakyong to arrive, then when he does, a sudden burst of power can happen: something flares up and dissolves again. Because of the preconditions that were set up, because of all preparedness - this power that bursts forth has no choice but to go forward and do it. The mandala is pregnant and the only thing that can happen next is giving birth.

All comes down to building up the right set of preconditions - so that when the moment comes, everything is in place and can be set in motion in order to achieve the best result. Sun Tzu, in his work 'The Art of War', devoted much time in explaining the need to build up that potential energy and its release. So only when one knows how to set up the preconditions and when to actualize the motion - one is able to bring out all inherent possibilities and energies of a situation.

This constant state of preparedness also has another effect: the presence of the Sakyong is more immediately felt in the Shambhala Centre. If we view Shambhala as a mandala, then it has by definition a centre and a fringe. The Shambhala Centre is an actual mental and physical gate into the Shambhala mandala. As a fringe, it should reflect the centre, reflect the embodiment of the Shambhala lineage: Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. By being prepared for his arrival, that connection becomes alive and powerful.

So when all parts are in place: when a space has been set up in the proper manner: Outer - Inner - Secret plus its connecting Bright and Clear Path, with good protection; when the appropriate ceremonies have been performed; when all officials and participants are in their appropriate position, doing the right things; when conducted at the proper time and as a result of constant preparedness: all of these accumulated will through their amplification - when the Sage King comes and takes his seat flare as a spark of emergent energy. Given the preparedness and container - this emergent energy is then available to transform the world.

SACRED SPACE OF THE SHAMBHALA CENTRE.

Introduction

A practice centre is not just the container for the practice and the teachings, it is also a physical representation of the path we go. We come in as new students and start with getting into contact with this world of Shambhala. That is the outer situation. Then we our first interview and start settling down in the practice. We practice, we study and meet with the sangha, we share meals, we pay dues, we join meetings - all of this belongs to the inner situation. Finally we progress in our path, we enter the Vajrayana teachings or higher Shambhala teachings. All of this is considered the Secret aspect. Our centre should reflect that particular path: Outer -> Inner -> Secret. So when we choose a new location, this should be kept in mind.

No centre can do without a leadership: the executive committee and the director and Rusung should all have a place where they can have a seat. This comes straight from the view on the Shambhala Court as outlined above. From these seats (read: desks) it is possible to help the community and help bring the centre forward. By denying these people a seat: one invites confusion and internal strife and problems. The view that can be generated for the centre is dependent on the actual view you have from the place itself. The more expansive your field of vision, the further you get; conversely - a small or limited view will not help you forward very much.

In the same vein: viewing the centre as a mandala - the fruition of any type of activity, you hold in a particular place -the radius of its impact- will also depend on the shape of that location. Your environment either amplifies or diminishes the effect of your work. The view and aspects of court energetics outlined above have clear implications on a practical level in our Shambhala centres. A few are worth mentioning here shortly:

Well positioned and designed Shambhala centres, are a powerful form of sacred space that will attract and guide many practitioners on the path of practice of meditation. In order to make this happen, below a number of aspects are discussed to realise such a space.

The following are a number of key points to be aware of when selecting and working with a space, in order to make it a suitable place for our practices. They themselves are not enough to select a space - one really needs the advice of an experience Kanyu practitioner for this. But for those centres that have received a consultation, or are about to receive a consultation, these points might serve as helpful guidelines.

It is also very important to remember that the dralas will not come solely because of the energy of the land and the way we set up the space. It depends very much also on our activity. We are aware of these teachings from our Shambhala tradition - the importance of the environment and the space, being brave and dignified, engaging in our practice in a genuine manner, and refraining from neurotic or harmful activities. Without this basis of right activity, we will not be able to invite dralas into our space.

Outer, inner and secret

In terms of a Shambhala centre, the *Outer/Lu* is represented by the reception, social space and kitchen, the director's room and the administration. The *Inner/Nyen* is formed by the Shambhala/Buddhist general shrine room and the teacher's room. Finally the *Secret/Lha* is formed by the Vajrayana/Werma shrine rooms. This order should be kept in order to maintain harmony.

As mentioned above: the principles of Lha, Nyen and Lu apply to various levels: one being the position of a Shambhala centre in the landscape. For example a centre that occupies a place that is dominated by *Lu* is not suitable for the meditation practices we use. It will mean one has to move. A centre in a place that is very *Nyen* is solid, but the development will stay rather basic. A place that is very *Lha* also is suitable for a few very advanced practitioners only.

Ideally one needs a good proportion of all three principles. However the principles of Lha, Nyen and Lu apply also to more detailed matters within the centre itself and practical application of this follows below.

Location of the Shambhala Centre

Within the Shambhala mandala we have many centres, all with a different role. More is said on this topic in a separate document. The aims and efforts within any particular centre should be in accord with its role within the mandala on a larger scale.

Outside of the Shambhala Centre.

A Shambhala centre should be visible. Our logo's, symbols and pins are not just convenient ways of figuring out 'who is who', but are seed syllables and should be regarded and treated that way - both in putting up and in taking down. In practical terms - this means setting up clear, elegant and functional signs on the door(s) leading to our centre. It also means making an effort in publishing the existence of the Shambhala centre.

Organization of space within the centre.

The way a Shambhala centre is structured, according to the principles of Outer - Inner - Secret plus the connecting Bright and Clear Path, as well as the protection will strongly influence the practitioners and their efforts on the path. Wrong lay out may lead to people leaving very quick, people getting 'lost' in the practice and in the organization, no progress on the path or even -in the more extreme cases- to the formation of factions and divisions within the local sangha - with all nasty politics associated with that. A strong Outer - Inner - Secret zoning, and an inviting connecting Bright and Clear Path will help practitioners along, inspire them and make them full part of the sangha.

Organization of hierarchy.

In the section on 'Function' of the court energetics, the importance of seats was clearly laid out. This is also very relevant on the local level of the Shambhala centre. Within the centre, the Executive Committee has the responsibility of maintaining good view, order and care for the possibility for people to practice. This comes with a host of details that need to be attended whilst maintaining this larger view.

The Executive Committee therefore needs a space where it can convene and have meetings. Especially the director of the centre and the Rusung as head of the local Dorje Kasung squad need to have a real physical place -a desk- where they can sit down and do their duties. This is not the same as an administrative desk - these are three separate places. Now not all circumstances permit having three desks, but at the very least both the director and the Rusung need a seat. This is not a luxury!

Centre and fringe, and the state of constant preparedness.

A Shambhala centre is not just any place where one can practice meditation or learn how to arrange flowers. It is an integral part of the entire mandala of Shambhala. Because mandala means 'centre and fringe' - the central Kalapa Court is reflected in the local Shambhala centre. It is both a gate to the Kingdom of Shambhala, as well as a place where the Sage King might appear to visit his subjects at any moment.

When the state of a local Shambhala centre degrades - it reflects back on the mandala as a whole and on the Court in particular. It is like a pool: when through practice and effort the initial small mandala widens from a small pool into a large lake: blessings can travel faster from the middle of the lake to the shores - reaching a wider public. Conversely - poison from the shores travels to all other parts of the lake more easily too!

A state of constant preparedness means that all aspects of Outer - Inner - Secret plus the connecting Bright and Clear Path, as well as the protection and hierarchy are in place and function well. Scenarios, resources and finances lie waiting for those moments when the King will arrive. People are trained and ready. Then the presence of the Sage King is felt

everywhere, even during his absence. That constant preparedness will guide and inspire practitioners and transform the atmosphere.

Land

Land carries energy. Mountains carry more energy, which can be powerfully conducive to practice, but also harmful if too wild. Rivers and bodies of water carry energy associated with wealth and enterprise. Overall, land energy can be either helpful or harmful for a spiritual place.

Looking at the location of monasteries in Asia, it is clear to see that they are in specific places where the energy is conducive to practice. Identifying such places and whether land energy is beneficial or harmful requires a lot of training. Common sense, however, is a good starting point.

Access and location

The location of our centre, needs to be established in relation to the key sources of land energy typically available in cities - rivers, waterways and lakes, and also mountains, hills and ridges, etc. Also need to take heed of major roads and railroad tracks - these can cut the energy-flow.

Since our teachings are about helping others, it is important that people can reach us easily. This means that our space is easily locatable and easy to reach. It is also important that it is close to the community - if most of the community have a hard time getting there, then they will not come and if the community is not there, then the space will be dead. So the place we are looking for is in streets that have a lively but not overly crowded atmosphere. People should be walking there. Also a centre should preferably be visible from the street and not being hidden in a courtyard. Also a building should preferably not be on a T-junction or at a corner.

Usually we have need for a Shambhala Buddhist shrine room, a Vajrayana shrine room, interview rooms, and a kitchen, an office etc. Some groups find they need to take a large space in an out of the way, sometimes decaying area. Unfortunately, it is hard for new people to come to such a space, and it is hard to invite dralas into a decaying area. Such groups and centres often get stuck there for a long time. Decaying space - decaying buildings or a building in an environment with a lot of decay is not good - it contributes to a general loss of energetics within the centre.

Narrow streets have no view/horizon. Far vision means good horizon, the distance you see equals how far is your vision, if not far you always pay attention to little details in front of you, be completely buried; like thinking whether there is enough toilet-paper and not about how the program can be better.

Architecture

Architecture of a building or a space can strengthen or destroy positive energy. Both the external and the internal architecture/layout have an effect, and we need to be aware of this. Generally triangular shapes and sharp lines are more connected with aggressive energy and are not helpful. Regular or rounded shapes are more beneficial. Good architecture on a powerful land energy can not only significantly strengthen such a power spot - but combined with sacred activity there, this can make a power spot into a sacred place. A place where we can invite dralas.

Perimeter

The perimeter defines our space - it defines what is inside and what is outside. This perimeter can be the edges of our space physically (simply the walls) or we can also extend it out by using signs, markings etc to mark the boundary of our space.

Approach

When practitioners approach a place of practice, it is important that they are already prepare their mind for the practice. This can be conscious, or simply through the style of the approach. We know about how to prepare ourselves for our practice through our use of the Post Meditation Hall. Equally, before entering our buildings, people always walk through an approach. This may be walking along a loud, dirty street with a simple doorway, or an long dark corridor and an entry into a courtyard. Both of these affect the state of mind of the person arriving, and their experience of our space. Thus it is very important to work with the approach and ensure that it is accessible and inviting.

It is also important to be aware that the first experience someone has of the dharma, is what they experience in their approach. If they walk into an office space - then that is the first impression of a practice place. It would be better if they arrived in a space with some Dharma Art, some heraldry and flowers. The type of art used should match the use of the room involved: so for example one can use a flower arrangement for the entrance to the Shambhala shrine room, and an Buddhist image in the approach to the Vajrayana shrine room.

Signs, heraldry and logos

Signs serve to make people aware where we are. On a more deeper level, they can mark the boundary to our space, and also act as seed syllables - they represent the teachings. Thus they also affect the mind of the person arriving. Clear, prominent signs with the Shambhala Sun on them are very important.

Our heraldry and symbols are very potent, and the Vidyadhara and the Sakyong spent a lot of time thinking about them and creating them. We need to use them appropriately. It is good to display the Shambhala Sun prominently at the entrance and at each boundary to clearly display the symbols. For example, before the shrine room, we could display the Dharmadhatu Evam symbol, or the Shambhala Training symbol. In the community room, there could be a small Dechen Chöling symbol above the Dechen Chöling calendar

A Shambhala centre should be visible. Our logo's, symbols and pins are not just convenient ways of figuring out 'who is who', but are seed syllables and should be regarded and treated that way - both in putting up and in taking down.

In practical terms - this means setting up clear, elegant and functional signs on the door(s) leading to our centre. It also means making an effort in publishing the existence of the Shambhala centre.

Gates and protection

Gates mark the threshold between spaces. They serve to focus energy going from one space to the next, and also to act as a protection. Walking through a gate is walking through an energy threshold. In demarcating our space into Outer, Inner and Secret, we need to work carefully with gates. Gates (such as doorways) can be strengthened by adding protection (such as pictures of mahakalas) as well as heraldry or banners.

Protection is a very important issue in a Shambhala Centre. Protection does not mean shutting out or turning people away: it means the proper way to welcome practitioners in. The teachings and the teacher and the people practicing need a space that is both a safe place to be in -without disturbances or accidents- and that will promote and keep the results of the practice -the accomplishment of the practitioners should not be lost or corrupted from and through the space-. Also the practice space should be a proper container that will amplify the teachings when they are being given and practiced.

Protecting the practice situation is a responsibility of all sangha-members but in particular of the Dorje Kasung. A Shambhala Centre should have at least a few people who practice on this particular path, lead by a Rusung. For further information one should make enquiries through Shambhala Europe.

Zones

As was stated above: a Shambhala centre is the physical manifestation of our spiritual path and should therefore be structured according to the principles of Outer - Inner - Secret connected by the Bright and Clear Path. In addition there

are the principles of protection, which guard the teacher, the teachings and the practitioners and their efforts on the path. So within our own building, we need to think very clearly about these three zones. The order of *Outer - Inner - Secret* are matched by the principles of *Lu - Nyen* and *Lha* respectively. In terms of a Shambhala centre:

- The *Outer/Lu* is represented by the welcoming space and reception, the social space, administration, director's seat and kitchen. This could also be the space where art can be exhibited.
- The *Inner/Nyen* is formed by the Shambhala/Buddhist general shrine room and the interview rooms and the teacher's room.
- Finally the *Secret/Lha* is formed by the Vajrayana/Werma shrine rooms.

Following the warning in the traditional teachings on this topic, this order should not be confused or peril will result. However, we should realize that the principles of *Lha*, *Nyen* and *Lu* apply to more levels than the one illustrated: ranging from the position of the Shambhala centre in the landscape down to the organization of your shelves. For example a centre that occupies a place that is dominated by *Lu* is not suitable for the meditation practices we use. It will mean one has to move. A centre in a place that is very *Nyen* is solid, but the development will stay rather basic. A place that is very *Lha* also is suitable for a few very advanced practitioners only. Ideally one needs a good proportion of all three principles.

Applying these principles of *Outer - Inner - Secret* and *Lu - Nyen and Lha* provides us with a clear ordering of the functions of our Shambhala Centre. For example it implies that we should house the highest (*Lha*) practices (Tantra -Werma) in the innermost or *Secret* parts. In the first place this serves to provide a reminder of the progression of the spiritual path. Secondly if these practices are not given any space, this means they will never increase in strength and have more people practicing this. This in turn will mean that the sangha will get spiritually stuck. Finally suppose there is *Lu* activity in this *Lha* space: it could for example mean that young inexperienced students take over from older practitioners, which would lead to serious disruptions within the sangha.

When looking at temples or monasteries of different Asian traditions, when can see some different ways of laying out these three. Some use the linear approach, with each space successively following on from the previous - this is more connected to direct paths to realization - Zen or Vajrayana. Other traditions use the mandala layout of concentric rings - with the *Outer* being outermost, and the *Secret* being innermost and in the middle the *Inner*. This model is more associated with gradual paths. Typically, because of the layout of our centres, we use either the linear approach, or simply a basic separation with no clear order. Below a number of additional aspects are indicated that we can think about:

Do we have these three spaces *Outer*, *Inner* and *Secret* and are they clearly defined and delineated? No clear demarcation of *Outer/Inner* and *Secret* - often results in it being hard to bring people into the community. If one fixes a problem of people drifting straight out the door, another associated problem may be that they come but never go deeper. They do not become members. At the same time, older students do not feel welcome, because the energy of the centre has been taken over by newcomer energy. Clear demarcation of *Outer*, *Inner* and *Secret* areas makes it experientially clearer to people that there is a progression on the path. In addition, older students feel more welcome and comfortable.

Are there real boundaries (gates)? Boundaries serve to make you aware of the transitions on the path and serve for protection.

Are spaces correctly sized for the community: for example many communities have a large shrine room, an office and no space for the community. Thus there is space for the advanced practitioners, but no space to invite in new members - alternately, there is often only a tiny space for the administration - can the space for the administration support the proportionate amount of responsibility.

No community space - some centres have a monolithic shrine space, but no space for the community etc. This means there is no space for people to gather, but also no boundary between the outside world and the *Secret* space. It is better to get a series of smaller rooms, and perhaps rent an additional space for the one large program a year.

There is no post meditation space. This post meditation space is very important, because it creates a container. The possibility to reflect on what they have been doing. We need some kind of transformation.

Confusion of spaces - Mixing use of spaces. Using shrine space for dancing or other very different activities. Hard to build up energy in a space.

The corridors are long and dark: you don't know where you're going, where the end point is. People grasp in the dark. These dominating corridors are a perfect spot for ambush, traps, attacks, intrigues, people spying others, backstabbing. It creates many dark activities. The whole politics is controlled from back, in *secret*. Because incoming people don't have a long view and don't see the different levels of practice, they don't know there are all these practices and after a few months go home. Sitting they can do at home, after all.

Energy flows straight through the door to the meditation hall. This happens when the shrine room opens straight out to the exit. The outside world energy flows right in, it is hard to build up any energy in the shrine hall, and people spill right outside again - they do not stay or return (let alone become members). It is hard to contain any energy.

Light - good natural light is very beneficial for people's well-being.

Cellars - not good for spiritual practice - a lot of Lu energy, hard to invite dralas.

Neighbours

Activity generates energy, which can affect us. Since neighbours engage in activity, we need to be aware what our neighbours are doing. Butchers, pornography shops etc are not helpful neighbours. Residences and businesses can be neutral (depending on what is going on there) and healing activities can be beneficial.

Activity and sharing space with others

Activity creates energy. We perceive activity and it affects our minds. Thus spiritual practice can strengthen the energy of a space, and even make a potent sacred space out of our centres. Equally, harmful activity can be detrimental to us. Thus we need to be very aware what kind of activity goes on in our centres, and what activity goes on around us.

It is important not to mix too many activities in spaces. Thus the shrine room should be mainly used for practice, study and feasts. Where possible, meetings and large social gatherings should be held outside, in the community area. Equally it is not so good to use a shrine room for dance or totally different activities.

Based on the above points about activity and neighbours, we need to think carefully about how we share spaces with others. If we can mark a clear perimeter, and we can ensure that our spaces are not used for entirely different purposes, then it is fine. If not, it will be harder for people to enter into our community and deepen our practice.

When a building is too small - one must make economic use of the space. This means sharing the same room for various practices. One has to know that every practice leaves a certain amount of its energy in the room. So if you do a lot of taking down and setting up, you might lose what you have built up so diligently. You should then figure out a clever plan what practices/usage can be shared with what.

In the same vein: when a building is too expensive - subletting / room sharing etc. etc. is all brought forward as a solution. It might be from a financial point of view, but it might not be from a practice point of view. All for the same reasons as above. Subletting might be useful, but only when certain conditions are met!

It is recommended doing some research on the history and previous owners of this building. See if there have (not) been any violent crimes or tragedies in the past. The presence and nature of those could help determine if this is a proper practice place and if something has happened: what to do about it.

Visible and invisible energies

The way to assess the building of the Shambhala Centre is through analysis of the various energies present. These can be separated in visible and invisible. Visible means you can see or touch it and generally relates to:

The external architecture: what the building looks like - beneficial or harmful architecture.

The internal partitioning: what room or space lies where; size of each one.

The Flying Stars method of *Fengshui* provide information on the invisible energies, at work in the building. *Fengshui* (literally: 'wind and water') is a Taoist art, that aims at aligning the efforts of mankind, with the resident energies of heaven and earth. In *Fengshui* these energies are studied and applied by means of landforms, dates and directions. The invisible energies are created the moment that the house is built or rejuvenated when substantially renovated (this is a *time component*) and through the front and rear compass directions of the house (*directional component*). The data gathered through the building date and the compass-direction, are used to create a so called 'Flying Stars' chart. This chart reveals these hidden energies of the building and is projected on the floor plan of the building in question. This enables us to provide information on:

- Type and distribution of energy pattern in the building.

- Nature of the energy in each part of the building.
- Agreements or conflicts with present usage of spaces.
- Prediction of energy patterns for future years.
- Specific interaction of building with occupants.

Based on the evaluation of the exterior, the interior and the Flying Stars, an assessment can be made of positive and negative influences. These influences are from around the building, part of it and inside. The following suggestions can be provided:

- Best use of each room.
- Placement of shrines and furniture.
- Enhancing positive situations.
- Countermeasures for negative and harmful situations.

The interpretation of these charts and the application of its information requires substantial training and experience. During a consultation such a chart was made and explained. If one searches for a new place, a new charts needs to be made for a prospective centre and interpreted in the proper manner.

Conclusion

All centres have their role within the larger context of the Shambhala mandala. We should make an effort to work on positioning, developing and supporting Shambhala centres at key locations in accord with this larger view. In addition - well designed Shambhala centres, are a powerful form of sacred space that will attract and guide many practitioners on the path of practice of meditation.

PROTECTOR PRINCIPLE



Introduction

What is protection? Who is a protector? And what is being protected? Protection is a form of guardianship. Guardianship is intimately tied to spiritual practice. Before we can practice, we need to make sure that the practice space is protected. The mandala is a type of protection circle. With its gates and concentric circles of power, the mandala protects all those who practice within its circle when it is properly constructed and empowered. If the protection circle is breached, then not only will the practitioners be exposed to attacks, but dharma energy cultivated during practice will dissipate. Consequently, the practice is compromised as best.

Protectors

Protectors can be understood in several levels. Here the Shambhala terminology of the Three Courts is used to illustrate this.

Outer

- In the lowest level, which is the Outer or Kalapa Court, the Shambhala Court mandala and its protectors are embodied in the physical space of the macrocosm of the Shambhala Centre and the microcosm of each shrine or meditation hall. The nature of this court is indestructibility; the qualities of its inhabitants are skilful means, daringness and patience
- In this level, the manifesting protectors are the Kasung. The Kasung station, garrison, and gate keeper form the protection circle of the Outer Court.
- Thus, they are linked to the Outer Sakyong and the qualities of Just and Powerful. Protection here is related to mundane aspects such as the safety and integrity and dignity of the physical surroundings of the Shambhala Centre or Court. It also relates to preventing mishap or accidents to occur or loss of dignity and respect for the environment.

Inner

- The next level of protection is embodied in the Inner Court, which is the domain of the dralas. Here, we are working with the energies of protection rather than the physical protector personnel. The nature of this court is complete luminosity; the qualities of its inhabitants are gentleness, fearlessness and prajna
- In this level, the manifesting protectors are the deities - for example Mahakala or Rahula. The Chakrasamvra protection principles and the Bodhisattva warriors are also dominant in this level of protection. Without these protector deities, the protection energies of the drala level cannot be realized.
- Protection at this level is linked to the Inner Sakyong and the quality of Brilliance. Here protection revolves around the Three Jewels:
- The teacher: protecting the body and the manifestation of the teacher and his immediate surroundings.
- The teachings: protection so that the teachings can be heard, practiced and studied, but also that they are not lost, diluted or corrupted.
- The sangha: protection from falling into the traps of ego: waking up from habitual patterns.

Secret

- The highest level of protection is embodied in the Ultimate Court. Here there are no forms, but only eternal awakening. The nature of this court is the cosmic mirror; the qualities of its inhabitants are primordialness, unchangingness and braveness
- The eternal awakening and the forever dawning of the Great Eastern Sun, and the Great Blade of the Primordial Ashe are the protectors.
- Forever present, without needing to be invoked or invited, this is intrinsic protection, and is linked to the Ultimate Sakyong, identified with the Rigden's mind, and synonymous with Profundity.

When all three levels of protection are aligned and in place, the Outer, Inner, and Ultimate Courts are connected, and the Shambhala Court blazes with the ground, principle, and energy of the Profound, Brilliance, Just, and All-Powerful.

When protection is in place the Sakyong, the Dharma, the practitioners (the sangha), and the enlightened society of Shambhala are guarded from attacks. Attacks originate in ignorance, passion, aggression, and attachment. In other words, when we look at attacks closely, we always find ego to be at the bottom of them all. Thus, we can say that the protectors are essentially protecting us from ourselves.

Expression

When we examine the icons of the protection deities, such as Mahakala, we find that the deity is wrathful and is stomping on or tearing apart grotesque beings. These images are used as metaphors:

- The grotesque beings are the manifestations of the persistent blindness that keeps us from seeing and realizing the true nature of mind and phenomena.
- The wrathfulness of the deity expresses the invincible and all-victorious power of wisdom and compassion.
- When the deity has one head, it expresses the uncompromising power of the absolute truth; when it has three heads, it expresses the trikaya and the transformation of the three mental poisons of desire, ignorance, aggression, and ignorance.
- If it has two arms, it expresses the union of wisdom and skillful means; if it has six arms, it expresses the six paramitas of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom.
- If it has two legs, it expresses the inseparability of the space of Dharmadhatu and the awareness of vidya; if it has four legs, it expresses the boundless qualities of love, compassion, joy, and impartiality.
- The sharp and pointed wings express the power of penetrating wisdom and the ability of the Ashe to cut itself.
- The three eyes express the perfect knowledge of past, present, and future.

If the protector deity is compromised, then all of the above manifestations will be compromised.



The grounding of a protector deity is necessary to manifesting its power. The protector deity exudes an aura or circle of protection, emanating from the centre outward. By grounding, we mean focus and stability. Just as the job of a security guard in a building is compromised when we ask the guard to hang our coats and get our hats, the job of Mahakala is hampered if we distract him. His ambient protection energy is always present, even when there is no one in the space. His emergent protection energy is heightened when practitioners are present. Ambient protection energy is less affected while emergent energy is affected more by disturbance and distraction.

Protector shrine

Our activities around a protector shrine need to be understood in the context of protection principles. It is not simply about usage of storage space and activity. When the space under the protector shrine is used to store objects related to sacred activity, the protection circle of the Mahakala is extended to protecting objects stored underneath his shrine - sacred texts, bell, dorje, cymbals etc. Thus, storing sacred objects under a Mahakala shrine is actually beneficial. However, when the emergent energy of Mahakala is most potent (during a meditation session, or feast, or sadhana), disrupting the space by opening and closing cabinet doors can severely compromise the protection circle that the Mahakala is providing.

COLOPHON

This overview is a small reminder of the various aspects that have been addressed during the consultation by Eva Wong. It is based on notes made during several consultations throughout Europe between 2002 and 2006.