



S H A M B H A L A
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Karen Wilding, Chair of the Board
Jon Barbieri, Executive Director
Shambhala Mountain Center

Dear Karen and Jon,

Warm greetings from Asia! I have been talking with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche about his vision for the development of Shambhala Mountain Center, the role of practice in accomplishing this, and the way in which practitioners can commit to social service by working at practice centres. Based on that, I am writing this letter to you both. The Sakyong has reviewed my letter and given his blessings to your using this language, in whole or in part, in whatever way you think most helpful:

Shambhala Mountain Center is one of the highest places in the topography of our Shambhala landscape. In terms of our practice path it is a sacred space in which the highest teachings and transmissions take place. It fulfils the inner mission of Shambhala by offering core programming, retreats and empowerments to practitioners on the Shambhala Buddhist path – encompassing entry programs like Enlightened World, through to the Rigden Abhisheka and other landmarks on the path to the Scorpion Seal retreat.

At the same time, Shambhala Mountain Center has a profound outer mission. This is embodied in the rich symbolism of the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya, which simultaneously speaks to us of the outer, inner and secret meaning of Shambhala. It was at the Great Stupa that the Sakyong presented to His Holiness the Dalai Lama the first Living Peace Award. On that occasion he discussed with His Holiness the powerful role that the Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche meant for Shambhala to play in the world, and he has devoted himself ceaselessly to that mission.

Although we face many hurdles in the development of Shambhala Mountain Center in terms of the human, financial and material resources we need to make it a flourishing, humane and sustainable practice centre, we are also at a hinge point in its future. Following the Living Peace event, many people from different walks of life have spoken to the Sakyong, offering to support the vision that radiates, like a beacon, from our stupa in the Rockies.

They see how Shambhala Mountain Center can be a transformative power spot for dialogue between different traditions – religious, cultural and political – that is urgently needed in today's world. Some have spoken of the potential to create a unique teaching

laboratory that would bring together the deep insight of our Shambhala Buddhist heritage with the best expertise in global governance and conflict transformation to create skilful means for the alleviation of suffering in this dark age. Some have said to Rinpoche that what we now know and love as Shambhala Mountain Center will become the seed syllable for a global city of peace – manifesting that aspiration on the spot as well as becoming a forge in which humanity’s aspiration for peace is tempered and moulded.

Meeting the challenge we face at Shambhala Mountain Center is far beyond what, with our limited and discursive mentality, we think would be even remotely possible. If we simply act, throwing ourselves into this fire, bereft of the dharmic view and without regular meditation practice, we will simply be consumed on the charcoals of mundane exertion. And, at the same time as we exhaust ourselves, we will fail in the most important project of all: creating Shambhala society. Therefore, to succeed in this historic mission we must all, leaders, staff and supporters alike, commit to being a community of practitioners. Daily communal meditation must be our hallmark. Meditation should not be regarded as an interruption of our work; it should be revered as the foundation of enlightened activity. In this way, we will progress along the path, learn the skilful means of leadership and service, develop discipline of body, speech and mind, and be of inestimable benefit to others.

The Sakyong has requested those who take the Rigden Abhisheka to devote a period of time to social service. His aspiration is that they would do this in a way that brings the highest view to engagement with the world. He would also like all members of our Shambhala society, no matter what practice they are undertaking, to consider how best they can offer service at this time – whether it be in their family, local community or more broadly. In this regards, he would like us all to understand very clearly that serving the golden dharma of Shambhala is one of the most profound offerings we can make. One way to do this, as so many have done already, is to devote a period of our lives to serving on the staff and leadership of our major practice centres. We are always looking for people who are willing to bring their experience, energy and practice to these unique environments where their contribution will affect countless beings in the most wonderful way.

In the radiant vision of Shambhala,



Richard Reoch
President of Shambhala

10 April 2008