

Summary Sharing Shambhala Part 1 - October 12th 2021

The first of two consecutive series of broad community conversations, having to do with sharing. WE are the Shambhala sangha, and we include individuals with different views, experiences and aspirations. Can we share Shambhala with others who may have different views?

The idea of this first series is to really deeply listen to each other's views around this question by exchange in a breakout group of approximately the same views – and after that compare experiences. The starting question for all 3 types of breakout groups was:

What is your heart wish, or deep longing, with respect to your relationship with the Sakyong and the Shambhala community?"

The conversations in the breakout groups have not been recorded. The general conversation that followed started with participants' summaries of what transpired in each of the 3 groups, followed by plenary exchange.

Below you find a summary of the plenary part of the conversation. For good measure it is followed by the recording as well as the texts participants put in the general chat (both anonymized). There were 9 participants in this conversation.

Summary

All participants had the choice of being in the group they felt most affinity with:

- A group not currently wanting to study with the Sakyong
- A group committed to studying with the Sakyong
- An 'in between' group, coming up with the term 'ambivalent' as a label

The quotes from the groups themselves are clear enough not to need a summary in other words:

Group not studying with the Sakyong

- o *There's a strong sense of community, agreeing wanting those who want to study with the Sakyong to be able to do so - but be able to include everyone.*
- o *I'm concerned about what would happen for our future centers, if we are only able to do one thing, [...] Just the question about will people be able to feel that they can be part of the United Sangha*
- o *A sense of so much mistrust and division in the world and not wanting that also to be replicated and hardened in Shambhala.*

Ambivalent Group

- o *The sense of the heart wish is that we have received so many precious things from our teachers, the teachings, but also the magic of walking into a shrine room – the magic of the connection to the guru and the heart wish that that can be carried that can be preserved and preserved as much that*

that can be alive for the current generation and generations to come. And what that form looks like, not a clue. I think that's, that's it.

Group studying with the Sakyong

- o A general sense of wanting to for there to be a way for everybody in Shambhala to be able to pursue their own paths without, without conflict amongst ourselves and, and to be able to work together*
- o We had an interesting discussion about using the trauma paradigm in this situation to see our community as having been traumatized and then looking at the path for healing from trauma that might be quite worth looking into more.*

And specific for the group 'studying with the Sakyong':

- o Students studying with the Sakyong, it's not a monolithic thing. Everybody has a different angle on what's going on. So there's no like party line.*
- o And there was also a wish that that people who were not so into the Sakyong would understand that by being a student of the Sakyong, it does not imply condoning any past behavior.*

General discussion and conclusions

One widely shared trend emerges: a wish by all participants for the sangha to remain together; as exemplified above by the first quotes from the groups.

- It seems most of us do want to see Shambhala altogether in some way or other*

Still, there is the worry that we cannot conclude this is true for the whole of Shambhala. At least one person expresses doubts:

- the two communities, if you will, coming together, I mean, I don't I just don't know. I mean, I remain predisposed to listen, but it would be premature for me to respond to that question now.*

This voice might represent many more who do not partake in these general conversations:

- This is a conversation about sharing and how that's possible. And we invite people who want to talk about what that would look like, knowing it could look a lot of different ways. There are definitely people who aren't wanting to talk about what that what sharing looks like, and so be it.*
- But there's this huge group of people that will never come to these zoom meetings, who have these very definite feelings about the Sakyong and Shambhala. And what about them? Are they out there? You know, I feel so bad about that.*

Another shared point is the wish for more information – about how things are proceeding in general, but also from the part of the Sakyong:

- Wishing for some more clarity about the whole situation. And it would be very interesting to know more about the Sakyong's journey his journey and its itself.*
- Yeah. simply need to hear more, more information*
- One heart wish for closure, a heart wish that the Sakyong would talk to us explain himself, his appearance, some form to members to explain*

Some important issues

The total group was small, but in the general exchange some important points were raised, as already noted during the meeting:

- *there's some really important points here that are going to be really helpful for the community.*

And here they are, issues to be contemplated seriously and maybe brought along in future conversations. These are simply given as quotes so every reader can know for themselves what they point to. Interested people could turn to the full transcript that follows the summary to get a better flavor.

Traumatized community

- o *the whole disturbance that has echoes of being a child watching parents divorce*
- o *we're a traumatized community. And I wonder if, if, I mean, I'd like to hear more thoughts about that as a paradigm. Maybe we should stop yelling at ourselves for not following our teachings and instead look at that.*
- o *the healing of trauma requires a sense of safety and trust. [...] Well, I think we're beginning to get a sense of what that requires or what that means. And actually, I think we're all kind of healing our own traumas, and beginning to work with other's traumas in our community*

Corrupting institutions

- o *I've recently I have been thinking about how institutions become corrupt. And thinking about, you know, not that people do, you know, people in an institution do bad things. But that people, you know, I'm thinking about the making of the institution corruption through protecting the institution. You know, in the Judeo Christian tradition, you would say, making the institution into an idol. And, you know, thinking about how many years I have been an officeholder in Shambhala, and how much of my life I have spent on committees. And how much of that was not directly about the Dharma, but continuing the institutions that I thought provided access to the Dharma to people. And I think you have to do that, but I don't know where the balance comes. You know, at what point you've lost the Dharma in order to protect the institution*
- o *I take the corruption could come in the form of having genuinely convinced yourself that something feels in some way. There. It's more like a cognitive bias*

2021.10.12 Sharing Shambhala transcript

Tue, 10/12 7:57PM • 31:19

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Shambhala, people, group, community, feel, wanting, situation, hear, sense, question, thinking, students, corruption, echoed, conversation, Sakyong, helpful, institution, dharma

00:01

So let me move to the next section which will our recording. We want each group to present what came up in your group. And with the attitude that we want to hear. The others want to hear wholeheartedly openly, what do they feel? What do they think? We pray that it doesn't mean that we have to be self-censoring, but we want to be expressing our opinions and respect and care for others. What genuine view and opinion and yet let others be able to communicate with us without being sharp, so sharp that it's the communication. So, from each group, we want somebody to present what came up in your group, and then everyone can add more to that if you feel like.

01:23

Yes. If everybody else is happy, may I read what I've got in my notes? And please, I would invite [...] as and [...] please to add anything that I've missed as important. Is that good? Alright, so I'm just repeating individual people's words. Yes, my heart wish that the students of the Sakyong can continue to study with him to last we also have a renewal of the Kagyu Nyingma practice. And yes, agreement with that, and strongly that Shambhala will hold together and expand its view as Sakyong and a body of students who want to study with him. But we're a big enough community to be very inclusive of the wider tradition of Buddhist and also Zen teachers and so forth in X, Y, Z community, not naming any names. There's a word pluralism and outlook that has helped our community all together. We're in a reasonably good condition, though we lost members but there's a strong sense of community, agreeing wanting those who want to study with the Sakyong to be able to do so - but be able to include everyone. A sense of so much mistrust and division in the world and not wanting that also to be replicated and hardened in Shambhala. One heart wish for closure, a heart wish that the Sakyong would talk to us explain himself, his appearance, some form to members to explain. And also a sense of wanting to know what's going on, it's still just feels like we're up in the air without closure. Some sense of dealing with that, and an agreement about that the Sakyong should make amends would like to see that was from one person. And I'm wondering whether or not the Sakyong has talked to his own students about such issues. And also that he doesn't want to throw himself to the dogs will be attacked in in a Shambhala, where people are likely to do that, that itself would be very divisive and sound a bit awkward situation. And also, that maybe then there are people who are not that concerned about what the Sakyong is going to do. They have their own practice. And the Sakyong is not part of that. But what I'm concerned about is what would happen for our future centers, if we are only able to do one thing, either secular teachings or geometers [??] teaching teachings or something, we want so much more to hold things together. But will people go with that, wishing and wanting for the situation to be able to

manifest in a way that we can live with ourselves individually and we can identify with that everybody can identify with? Just the question about will people be able to feel that they can be part of the United Sangha, and also a general question that the community is pretty under-informed and really needs information. And it would be very helpful to have some kind of Q&A sessions, maybe even with the process team to say, You know what's going on so much confusion. So much speculation really doesn't help things. So that was the group that is not studying with the Sakyong.

05:19

Yep. Okay, thank you. You know, the two other groups.

05:23

Yeah, so a small group of ambivalence is as good a word as any I know. Damned if I know, it's probably more accurate, but I think the sense of the heart wish is that we have received so many precious things from our teachers, the teachings, but also the magic of walking into a shrine room - the magic of the connection to the guru and the heart wish that that can be carried that can be preserved and preserved as much that that can be alive for the current generation and generations to come. And what that form looks like, not a clue. I think that's, that's it.

07:17

Thank you. And the group that is studying with the Sakyong

07:23

Yeah, I guess I took some notes so the other guys can jump in? Well, I think one thing was to be clear - that students studying with the Sakyong, it's not a monolithic thing. Everybody has a different angle on what's going on. So there's no like party line. This is the way students who have this outcome think about things. I think what came up for the three of us was wanting would be wishing for some, some more clarity about the whole situation. And it would be very interesting to know more about the Sakyong's journey is his journey and its itself. There also was, I think, a general sense of wanting to or hard wish for, for there to be a way for everybody in Shambhala to be able to you know, pursue their own paths without, without conflict amongst ourselves and, and to be able to work together. And there was also we had some discussion about a wish that everyone involved would, to the extent they can bring their own experiences, to the path to their own practice. And see this as an opportunity to, to apply our practice to quite a difficult situation. We had an interesting discussion about using the trauma paradigm in this situation to see our community as having been traumatized and then looking at the path for healing from trauma that might be quite worth looking into more. And there was also a wish that that people who were not so into the Sakyong would understand that by being a student of the Sakyong, it does not imply condoning any past behavior. So the Sakyong things that were inappropriate, there seem to be a sense that some people make that implication or make that connection, which is like to convey that that's not the case. And then finally, I guess the sense that we would like the community to always go back to our roots, in terms of our view of basic goodness, and apply that to everything we do. And hopefully, that would help us to, to create a community that where there is enough level of trust and a sense of safety that people could have meaningful relationships and conversations with each other. So let's see others. want to add to that, please do. That was great.

11:22

Yeah, the floor is open, we have another eight minutes to have a general discussion. If you want to add anything more to this ask questions for answers if you have any.

11:50

I just kind of say the whole disturbance that has echoes of being a child watching parents divorce, and I expected incoherent, sudden violence on the street. All of this is like sort of weirdly echoed in the macrocosm of what's going on in America today. And it's all sort of, at least for me, there's times when I just get up in the morning and go, where's that? Where's the asteroid? Enough is enough. You know, it just doesn't seem to get any better. And any other any new news that you hear Oh, only seems to be slightly more frightening. So there's this, there's this really heavy, heavy on black cloud. And it's all not generated by us. But it resonates. So when that cheerful note?

13:09

Yeah, I don't know if this is out of the host role or not. But, um, what you just said, about echoing parental divorce, kind of resonates to me with what [...] said about we're a traumatized community. And I wonder if, if, I mean, I'd like to hear more thoughts about that as a paradigm. Maybe we should stop yelling at ourselves for not following our teachings and instead look at that.

13:52

From what I'm learning, the healing of trauma requires a sense of safety and trust. And I think we're all I'll speak from my Well, I think we're beginning to get a sense of what that requires or what that means. And actually, I think we're all kind of healing our own traumas, and beginning to work with other's traumas in our community.

14:35

When did you get so optimistic?

14:49

I think it's very interesting to hear this from both the groups about this sense of note that something major has happened and it was not resolved for us.

15:08

And that is, even though we can say let's have a vision of our future society and that we're all empowered, and we can all come together and welcome each other, this is a community level. It's not about 'Hey, but we had this terrible situation and although individuals did - I think - get help, and it was particularly in relation to sexual abuse'. There was as I recall a lot of people's feeling. But hang on. I don't find any books on spiritual betrayal, or no I don't know how I'm supposed to work with this. And it's somehow it's become like that it's become a taboo thing because you can't talk about this because it's so divisive. And so I think you know why this is an unreconciled thingy. And when you have those kinds of things in your body, you get spots you know, backache and arthritis and we're not quite whole in that regard I don't know how it can be dealt with. I'm just interested that both groups have brought this up

16:34

Okay, so my, my, my sort of gut intuitive feeling about what what's needed to begin with is that we somehow managed to stumble our way back towards some kind of sense of humor about the whole thing. That that's the, you know what, once it becomes so humorless, and dry, you just feel like you're being beat up. And so one of my favorite quotes about a situation like that is from I think it's from 10 stories by JD Salinger. And the quote is, yes, I have an ulcer, for Christ's sake. This is the Kali Yuga. Buddy, the Iron Age, anybody over 16 without an ulcer is a goddamn spy.

17:34

Alright, look, I don't know if this is in any way helpful, but I've recently I have been thinking about how institutions become corrupt. And thinking about, you know, not that people do, you know, people in an institution do bad things. But that people, you know, I'm thinking about the making of the institution corruption through protecting the institution. You know, in the Judeo Christian tradition, you would say, making the institution into an idol. And, you know, thinking about how many years I have been an officeholder in Shambhala, and how much of my life I have spent on committees. And how much of that was not directly about the Dharma, but continuing the institutions that I thought provided access to the Dharma to people. And I think you have to do that, but I don't know where the balance comes. You know, at what point you've lost the Dharma in order to protect the institution. So I mean, these are some questions that I'm asking I. They seem to be useful to me in thinking.

19:24

I think interjecting the word corruption into the discussion is both extremely accurate, and highly dangerous. And I don't know if it's effective, but I think it's very brave to say it. Because there's all kinds of forms of corruption. Not everybody is the kind of corrupt that we saw in our past president's behavior. I take the corruption could come in the form of having genuinely convinced yourself that something feels in some way. There. It's more like a cognitive bias. And I don't know what to do about it. But just to gloss over all the crap on every side and say there is not a tape of corruption in there is inaccurate.

20:45

Thank you. Time for coming to the last section. One question - I hadn't thought I didn't notice any statements made by any of the group that would contradict another group. Seems to regardless where you are, or if you feel your Shambhala and you want to be in touch in the same community with everybody else, regardless if they are studying with the Sakyong or they don't. Am I accurate? Or did I miss something in this group?

21:21

I think you I think you are accurate, but this is a self selected sample. And, you know, if if we didn't feel that way, we wouldn't spend an hour and a half doing this.

21:33

Yeah, but we ask people from three different groups assuming you're in that specific group, right?

21:46

Yeah, I think this - they're not gonna argue methodology now.

21:50

I do feel like this group, there's there is some sort of consensus. And I feel like that's been very helpful. And so even though we're, we're different breakup groups, we're still coming together. But there's this huge group of people that will never come to these zoom meetings, who have these very definite feelings about the Sakyong and Shambhala. And what about them? Are they out there? You know, I feel so bad about that.

22:24

I agree that that is the area of the pierces my heart may be the most - more than the Sakyong. I'm not directly talking about this. More than a lot of the other things. It's the brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and cousins, being so ad hominem, and vindictive. And it just makes you weep.

23:06

Okay, thank you. I just wanted to say in response to the question of the two, you know, the, that you had posed about the two communities, if you will, coming together, I mean, I don't I just don't know. I mean, I remain predisposed to listen, but it would be premature for me to respond to that question now. Yeah. simply need to hear more, more information.

23:39

I'm optimistic about the general feeling and Shambhala. And, you know, there's three of us in this room, who were involved in the analysis of the Sense of Shambhala survey, [...] and [...]. And I read so many comments about you know, assuming that we go forward together, and then every so often, just every so often, there is one that says, I only want actually the Sakyong to be the teacher, I don't mind what happens to everybody else. I know what my what happens to the rest of the organization, but then such a small minority came to me anyway. We all have our own take, but it seems to me that most people want everybody

24:35

Yeah, I wanted to say, we worked on the format of this conversation for a long time, and many times it was called can we share Shambhala and, and then, you know, we decided you know, we're going to take a stand here. This is a conversation about sharing and how that's possible. And we invite people who want to talk about what that would look like, knowing it could look a lot of different ways. There are definitely people who aren't wanting to talk about what that what sharing looks like, and so be it. So we consciously know that that's what we've offered, we haven't posed a debate situation. So that, so I guess I did want to say that about the methodology, and then really, I want to - just as we as we opened, we can close and I will not mandate everybody to safe closing words, but it would be wonderful to hear how you're feeling now. how you're feeling at the close of this conversation?

25:58

For opening, I'm no longer nervous.

26:03

Thank you. Surprised I lasted this long. It was it was more interesting than I thought. But I'm feeling more connected both with the people here as well as my own feelings and my own questions.

26:36

Thank you. I might sleep a little bit more tonight. That's what I said, That's not a small thing. I can't tell you the dreams that I have. I have. I have dreams about once every month about tearing down or building up seminary at SMC or sitting in the shrine room in Boulder, or doing this or doing that. And it's all it's all. Where he wasn't just promising what he said he'd be haunting us.

27:25

Along with the drama's [...] appreciate the members of the breakout group who I was with, and also to say it would be nice to be in a breakout group with everybody else at some point as well.

27:53

I remain hopeful. It was good to hear. It was good to hear to hear everyone's speak. And I remain cautiously optimistic.

28:11

Right. Similarly, myself, you know, I didn't have any big idea as to what was supposed to come of this conversation. So I guess I'm feeling you know, that I've been introduced to this kind of discussion through this. It didn't feel good not to know that it seems most of us do want to see Shambhala altogether in some way or other. Although it's not surprising, this particular kind of a group that that would be, but I consider that to be a good sign. Thank you.

29:04

Actually, could I make one more guess? closing comment? Thank you very much. And thank you to the facilitators. Amazingly good job.

29:15

Thank you. Okay, my closing is I can't wait to have the transcript of this. summarize it and post it because I think there's some really important points here that are going to be really helpful for the community. So I appreciate your brilliance.

29:35

We're here.

29:37

What did you say? wisdom will be shared. I'm going to go on the we have a page on the process team website that has the summaries of all the conversations, all 35 or 40 that we've had and it's going to go there and then I have my colleague on the team is wanting to actually have us actually compile these all and present them in a compiled way to the board and the Process Team and everybody else, but I

think most, most importantly for all of all of us in Shambhala to know that there's, I mean, it's very powerful a pool of people across these supposedly polarized groups can meet together. Remember we're connected and come up with something that seems to be novel thought - so it's demonstrating that. You'll get a - I think what I'll do is send you a thank you note when these are posted with the link to it so you can see the summary that came out and also invitations to the part two that's in November.

30:52

Huge gratitude, thank you. So thank you. best one yet. So we could close with about that.

31:14

Well, everybody take care. Thank you.

Chat

NB: every time indicator indicates a separate entry/person.

18:28:14 From Facilitator to Everyone: **What is your heart wish, or deep longing, with respect to your relationship with the Sakyong and the Shambhala community? What you would like others to know about the heart wishes of your group?**

19:03:07 NOW is the time to manifest what we have practiced all these years.

19:04:12 Longing/hope that we can preserve some the of the preciousness of what we have received from both of our teachers

19:04:12 It's up to us to manifest Shambhala not wait for the grownups to give us permission

19:04:17 appreciating how much we all care.

19:04:40 Good to share real experiences

19:05:18 Can we move closer together with listening, respecting, and understanding what has happened and what is happening now?

19:05:19 This breakout group format has proved to be important

19:30:36 This one is a bit long - you could skip: Once I saw this guy on a bridge about to jump. I said, "Don't do it!" He said, "Nobody loves me." I said, "God loves you. Do you believe in God?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Are you a Christian or a Jew?" He said, "A Christian." I said, "Me, too! Protestant or Catholic?" He said, "Protestant." I said, "Me, too! What franchise?" He said, "Baptist." I said, "Me, too! Northern Baptist or Southern Baptist?" He said, "Northern Baptist." I said, "Me, too! Northern Conservative Baptist or Northern Liberal Baptist?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist." I said, "Me, too! Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region, or Northern Conservative Baptist Eastern Region?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region." I said, "Me, too!" Northern Conservative†Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1879, or Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912?" He said, "Northern Conservative Baptist Great Lakes Region Council of 1912." I said, "Die, heretic!" And I pushed him over.