We, as the Board of Directors of Shambhala, are pleased to be able to ratify and introduce to the Shambhala Community the new Shambhala Code of Conduct consisting of the Code of Conduct and four Policy Documents (*Child Protection; People Holding Positions of Authority; Addressing Sexual Misconduct; and Diversity, Inclusivity and Anti-discrimination.*) (together, the Shambhala Code of Conduct or the “Code”).

**OUR GRATITUDE TO THE SUPPORT GROUP**

The Code is largely the work of the Code of Conduct Support Group (CCSG) (formerly the Code of Conduct Group of the Process team) who spent countless hours reviewing past codes, other sangha organizations, getting feedback from experts within and without the sangha, and then drafting in collaboration with others. The work of the CCSG has been outstanding. They listened and researched the painful parts of our history, developed a framework for behaviors, and thoroughly trusted in a community dialogue. Their work is truly a gift to Shambhala. We thank them wholeheartedly and look forward to them continuing the work of shaping the procedures and infrastructure of the Code.

While this is a “new” Code, we would be remiss if we did not point out that it stands on the shoulders of much skillful and caring work over 50 years by so many people, including specifically the Care & Conduct Panel Members, the Desung Corps, and many others. Likewise, it arises out of, and seeks to build upon, the rich teachings we have received such as creating an enlightened and just society, wholesome human conduct, and joining heaven and earth.
SCOPE AND EFFECTIVE DATE

The Code, as distinct from past efforts, applies to everyone in Shambhala, from the lineage holder to the introductory program participant and at every activity sponsored by Shambhala. The procedures and infrastructure, a critically important part of the Code, are still in the process of being developed and put in place. As a result, the Code is to be effective on Shambhala Day, February 12, 2021 and will only cover complaints based on occurrences on or after that effective date.

THE CODE IS A COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

The Code is an offering by and for the mandala. The Code sets forth a collective understanding as to the parameters of our path as warriors. It is a commitment to the quality of the environment we seek to establish and maintain for ourselves and provide for our guests and new members. In that way, the Code is a map or a guide. How effective it is relies upon the users. It is not a guarantee of good behavior or the elimination of bad behavior. It humbly offers a set of guardrails on the path.

The Code is not an edict, or a top down attempt either to monitor or regulate conduct or seek superficial conformity or hyper-vigilance. By ratifying this Code, and soon its procedures and infrastructure, Shambhala does not undertake a duty or responsibility to “enforce” this Code. There is no prosecutorial function in Shambhala, nor should there be. The Code is a catalyst for taking responsibility individually and for individual self-regulation. The skillful use of the Code depends entirely on the participation and decision making of each one of us. In addition, the implementation of the Code depends upon the good will and exertion of trained sangha volunteers.

Our understanding and awareness, our trust in our and others’ basic goodness, our compassion and skillful means, right action, and our aspiration for good human society are our individual work and the core of what it means to be part of Shambhala. Warriorship cannot be delegated or abdicated, to this or any Code, nor can the Code be relied on as a substitute for practice and doing this work. This responsibility is succinctly stated as the second aspect of good conduct as “Taking responsibility for one’s own mind”.

That said, misconduct, if brought to light, will have consequences. While the remedies available to the sangha or the Council to address a complaint may be limited, the Code of Conduct Council will have authority to assist claimants, hold hearings, adjudicate disputes and take preventative measures.

THE CODE IS APPLICABLE TO EVERYONE

In a significant departure from former codes, the Code “applies to everyone present in any activity associated with Shambhala, in person or online, regardless of where the activity occurs.” It applies to the entire mandala. The responsibility for the Code and the manifestation of its principles is evenly spread throughout the hierarchy. The Code is meant to be a natural
manifestation of the wisdom of basic goodness as applied on the warrior path as we aspire to create enlightened society. It builds upon our experience in fifty years of practice and training in joining heaven and earth and holding and protecting the space. It is not a fruition, but renewed growth.

The Code describes a range of misconduct outside of the norm, that can have serious consequences to individuals and tear at the fabric of our society. It is not a bureaucratic substitute for working with often difficult human interactions, disagreements, relationships, or emotionally charged situations, which are the grist for our post meditation practice. The Code should wake us up to the difference, the contrast between the personal insult and serious abuse, between the tactless and the truly obscene, and the momentary lapse versus chronic behavior. In this work, we should be conscious of the guideline “that the warrior never gives up on anyone” in tension with the teachings on “idiot” compassion.

Sometimes, we hear, “we will take care of this matter ourselves” – not proffered out of genuine confidence in our superior approach, but as an excuse for not revealing our dark side. When one hears “we can handle this within Shambhala”, one should think again. As the Code states, often the best response to evident misconduct is to call the police. In incidents of significant misconduct or serious abuse, the Code and its enforcement is dependent upon outside agencies, such as the police and the courts, on its prevention and safety aspects. Similarly, perhaps, we should advise a friend to see a lawyer or other professional rather than “sit more” with a clearly harmful situation. Hopefully, the Code should make us more conscious of our motivations in making such choices.

**SEEING OUR COLLECTIVE COCOON**

We have had serious problems and, in time, developed blind spots to the habitual or repetitive nature of these problems. Even worse, when we have noticed misconduct or abuse, we have ignored them, swept them under the rug, out of resignation, powerlessness, or even a contorted dharmic justification. We have mistaken the brilliance of the Three Jewels for the absence of darkness. The Code in this sense is offered as a provocation for discussion, for illumination of our collective cocoon, for dialogue and education – a mutual waking up.

The Code is an attempt to address past problems by expressing our agreement to their unacceptability for the future, to empower our capacity for awareness, regulating our behavior, validating constructive feedback for ourselves and others, and protecting the vulnerable. Nevertheless, the Code is prospective in its application, and, thus, not an avenue to litigate past abuses. The Board has set in motion other initiatives to address that work.

The Code focuses on our habitual blind spots. In the four policy statements, the Code addresses in detail areas which are identified as demanding scrutiny. These areas of special consideration are: *Child Protection; People Holding Positions of Authority; Addressing Sexual Misconduct; and Diversity, Inclusivity and Anti-discrimination*. The recurring themes responded to in these sections are worthy of our most rigorous attention.
THE BOARD'S COMMITMENT

We wholeheartedly endorse the Code, and collectively, as individuals, and as “people in authority”, agree to abide by its provisions. We have each of us signed the Oath of Commitment. We endorse, and will strive to abide by, the basic values underlying the Code and its processes, so articulately set forth by the CCSG, that of restoring Trust, through Care, Transparency, Inclusivity and Accountability.

We commit to finding the resources to make the Code and its processes accessible, trustworthy, workable, and an inspiration to all members. The Board is strongly committed to making this process and its decisions fair and meaningful to the individual participants and to the organization of community members (CCSG avoided using Sanskrit or dharmic terms to make words understandable by anyone). We will steadfastly support and back up the work, findings, and recommendations of the Council as it takes up issues of significance.

IN CONCLUSION

The Code is a gift to the community and a reminder to all of us of our power to harness our innate goodness in any situation. We offer this Code of Conduct as a foundation for the Shambhala community in the manifestation of Enlightened Society. The principles set forth in the Code are a basis for forming a good human society and are a starting point, rather than a final word, on how we exist together.