



Project Sunshine: Final Report

A Firebird Year Initiative To Bring Light And Healing

To Sexualized Violence Embedded Within The Shambhala Community

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Contents

Welcome.....	4
Developing A Contemplative Spiritual Framework	4
An Invitation For How To Read The Report.....	5
Kitchen Table Discussions	6
What is Project Sunshine?.....	6
Why I Started Project Sunshine	7
Vision	8
Mission	8
Values.....	8
Goals.....	9
Project Sunshine had five phases over the time span of one year	9
1. Build emotional safety, skills and resiliency.....	9
2. Document abuse stories	10
3. Form a strong activist group	10
4. Envision the change we want.....	11
5. Launch a Shambhala abuse-awareness campaign in 2018.....	11
Statements From Community Leaders	11
Sangyum Agness Au.....	11
Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown	12
Community Elder, Judy Lief.....	12
Minister Adam Lobel – statement not submitted.....	14
Minister Jane Arthur – statement not submitted	14
Anonymous Stories and Impact Statements from Survivors	14
Story & Impact Statement #1	14
Story & Impact Statement #2	15
Story & Impact Statement #3	16
Story & Impact Statement #4.....	17
Story & Impact Statement #5.....	18
Reflective Learning From Project Sunshine.....	19
General reflections	19
Raising questions about the Conduct and Care Process	22
Attending to those who have been abused.....	23
Attending to the perpetrators	24
Next Steps	26
The importance of good self-care.....	26
Explore ways to talk with others about your thoughts and experience	27
Identify the needs of various groups connected with this issue.....	27
Next steps for Project Sunshine	28

Let's talk – New buds & beginnings: A forum to discuss Project Sunshine.....	28
Concluding Wishes	29
Appendix 1: HORIZON ANALYSIS: Method of Reflection on Readings.....	30
Appendix 2: Example Horizon Analysis of Dzongsar Khentse Rinpoche's essay regarding Sogyal Rinpoche's community	31
Appendix 3: Impact Of Violation On Members*	35
Appendix 4: Impact Of Violation On Communities*	36
Appendix 5: Project Sunshine Shambhala Abuse Awareness Campaign	37
Appendix 6: Abuse-Free Shambhala Vision Session Proposal.....	38

Welcome

Welcome to this pioneering journey of charting a new land: a land where we hope to unite the enlightened wisdom of Shambhala vision with a process of compassionate and very human healing. For Shambhala to flourish, we must heal the intergenerational trauma of sexualized violence that is active within the Shambhala community.

The aim of this report is to raise our community lungta to take on the frightening shadow of sexualized violence lying across the heart of our community. Ultimately, the aim of this work is to inspire healing throughout the Shambhala community, in a fully embodied, fully engaged, comprehensive and collaborative way.

Project Sunshine began with a clear mandate of bringing abused women leaders together to heal and then form an activist group. When this mandate failed, I turned to progressive Shambhala leaders to fulfill the original mandate of gathering leaders, creating a vision, and taking action on sexualized violence within the community. After several productive meetings, these leading edge leaders were not prepared to move forward with creating a vision of an abuse-free Shambhala. In the end, a group of caring people formed together organically within the heated time of the past few weeks. This group will help facilitate an on-line dialog about this report for a period of three weeks.

Through the course of this project there has been a wealth of learning gained. In addition, related conversations have sprung up during the span of this project around the violence and trauma in Sogyal Rinpoche's community and the #MeToo upwelling. This report will share (1) an overview of the project, (2) reflective learning from Project Sunshine, and (3) recommendations and possible next steps.

Developing A Contemplative Spiritual Framework

I recognized early on in the project the necessity for a contemplative approach to dealing with this societal problem. Through dialog with my friend and spiritual companion, Grace Brubaker, we developed what we call a “contemplative spiritual framework” for the work of Project Sunshine.

This framework is a stance or an approach. The analogies we came up with for this approach were mid-wife and gardener. A mid-wife has the role of facilitating a healthy birth. She doesn't do the birth herself. Instead, her focus is on preparing herself in every way to be as faithful and as connected with the divine to facilitate the birth. The mid-wife does not get attached to the outcome, because it is beyond her control. Similarly, a gardener plants and tends the garden. The actual growth is a mystery.

This approach is freeing. It frees us because there is no ultimate responsibility. We are not “gods” who can control. Instead, we can seek to be in sync with and responsive to the goodness that is being born, in its own way and in its own right timing.

Operating in this way provides a framework and influences how we think, how we act, and how we are together. Many of us have taken samaya, and this is a serious and deep vow to all of our vajra brothers and sisters. Many of us also feel a tremendous loyalty and dedication to fulfilling Trungpa Rinpoche’s vision, and now also the vision of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. Underlying all of this is a deep sense of commitment that we wish to live out. Part of this commitment is to be concerned about our community. Developing a contemplative spiritual framework is a way to live into this sense of commitment and explore what changes are needed.

An Invitation For How To Read The Report

Sexualized violence is a scary topic. Most of us will have reactions to any mention of it. These reactions can happen unconsciously, as we may shut down and perhaps even try to shut down the person talking about it. This is a topic that has been suppressed for a long time.

We must take a moment to acknowledge that this moment in time is powerful. It is very powerful when survivors break the silence about abuse. When a community opens its mind and starts to acknowledge the violence that has happened, it can shake the community's foundation. What has happened in our community touches on fundamental beliefs and held truths of our community. People reading this report may have reactions to what is here.

I’d like for you to be able to engage reading this report in a way where you are conscious of what reactions are happening inside of you. Therefore I am introducing a method called, “Horizon Analysis”, that I learned in my studies at Regis College in Toronto. This is a Jesuit run college, and the Jesuits are known for their skilful ways for observing internal responses. The idea with this method is that when we have an immediate reaction to something, this is like the tip of the iceberg that is visible at the surface of the ocean. However, if we take the time to look beneath the surface, there is also a large unconscious response happening. The Horizon Analysis method gives a structure for accessing the large material beneath the surface of our response, in this case, to sexualized violence.

I strongly encourage you to print this entire report and do a Horizon Analysis. Here is the way the Horizon Analysis is done:

1. Print the text (this report)
2. Create an hour of quiet time where you will not be disturbed (Alternatively, you may choose to do several short sessions where you simply read as much as you feel like reading)
3. Use two different coloured pens, and as you read through the text, notice (1) when you are attracted to something you read and (2) when you feel upset or resistant to something you read. Underline those things that attract you with one coloured pen. Underline those things you have resistance to in the other coloured pen.
4. Then fill in the Horizon Analysis form in Appendix 1

I am providing an example of using the Horizon Analysis method in Appendix 2, where I share my own Horizon Analysis of the essay Dzongsar Khentse Rinpoche published regarding the situation in Sogyal Rinpoche's community.

Kitchen Table Discussions

After you have taken your personal reflection time with this report, it would be wonderful for people to gather in their kitchens and talk about this informally over tea and other tasty beverages.

Your ideas matter. How you feel matters. In informal conversations like this, you can share your ideas and hear other's ideas, and some magic can happen. This is an organic way of digesting what you experience from reading this report, and who knows what beautiful things can come out of these kitchen table discussions. Some of the most powerful social movements were born in kitchens in this way!

What is Project Sunshine?

Work on abuse has been done under "Shambhala Care and Conduct." This work has, however, not gone far enough since women are currently being abused without recourse, and past harm has not been attended to. Known child abusers are freely active within the Shambhala community, some are even senior teachers. Meanwhile, many who have been abused have been left with no recourse but to leave the community to heal and move forward as best they can, often with diminished resources of lungta and money.

Project Sunshine is a one-year project that was launched on Shambhala Day 2017 to (1) establish a working body of concerned citizens to address the situation of sexual and social abuse in the Shambhala community, and (2) create a promotional campaign to start a productive conversation about this situation on a community-wide level.

Why I Started Project Sunshine

I started this project out of compassion. Something has gone tragically wrong in the Shambhala community. We have allowed abuse within our community for nearly four decades, and it is time to take practical steps to end it. I experienced profound abuse in this community, and I don't want to see it continue to happen to others like me. I saw a way to help through creating Project Sunshine to establish a strong foundation for change.

A year ago I came to a point in my life where I was ready to come out from under the rock of oppressive silence and bring change that has been long needed in the Shambhala community. I was sexually abused as a child by multiple perpetrators in our community. When I was a young adult, I spoke up about the community's sexual abuse problem and was demonized by my local Shambhala center, ostracized and forced to leave. The shocking truth is that almost all of the young people in my age group were sexually harassed and/or sexually abused. I don't know the statistics on the generations of children after mine. What I do know is that many of us have left the community, and for those who have stayed, their voices have been unheard. Beyond child sexual abuse, women continue to be abused in relationships with community leaders and by their sanghas.

I have been doing intensive healing for the last 15 years. After the first couple of years of my own healing, I trained in ways to help others. I've completed an MEd Counselling Psychology at the University of Toronto specializing in treating relational trauma, and I completed a six-month certificate in dispute resolution at York University.

One thing that is clear to me is that a single woman can be silenced. However, a group of organized concerned citizens will be a completely different ball game. Creating such a group is a way to create sanity for ourselves in the midst of this crazy situation, and then we can look at how to share that sanity with others.

Through my work as a therapist, a mediator, and as a Heroic Leadership Coach, I have lead this 1-year initiative. I put a number of supports in place so I could serve as a steady leader for Project Sunshine. Perhaps the most important of these was regularly meeting with Karlene, a strategic counsellor at the Toronto Rape Crisis Center. Karlene has accompanied a number of grass roots groups who successfully influenced their communities to open up dialog about abuse, deal effectively with abusers, and make positive change. One such

group confronted a group of Catholic Priests, giving Karlene experience with activist work in a religious community. Karlene strongly suggests the power of writing our stories, both as survivors of the abuse and as leaders who have witnessed abusive situations happening within the community. She suggests sharing these stories widely in the community as a tool for invoking conversation and change.

Vision

This one-year vision was to gather a powerful group of concerned citizens to protect the integrity of the Shambhala lineage. We will do this through influencing the Shambhala community to acknowledge and repair past abuse of women and children in the community, and integrate new values that honour tenderness, vulnerability and other strengths typically associated with the feminine.

Mission

To accomplish this vision I worked to organize a powerful activist group engaging a 5-stage process: (1) Build emotional safety, skills and resiliency; (2) Document abuse stories; (3) Form a strong activist group; (4) Envision the change we want; and (5) Launch a Shambhala abuse-awareness campaign in 2018.

Values

The values I worked to inspire both in myself and those who engaged the project were:

- We are fiercely loyal to the vision of the Shambhala Teachings
- We look to the Great Eastern Sun to lead us
- We work to create safety and stability in our own minds and in community through practicing Shamatha daily
- We fearlessly and compassionately acknowledge the impact of violation**(See appendices on impact)
- We practice boundaries as defined by Dr. David Gruder: "A boundary is any limit I need to honour in order to love or work with you without resentment and with integrity. A boundary is not a line drawn in the sand, a position, posture, ideology, ultimatum or other tool for manipulation or control."

- We work with our own projections and act powerfully from the wisdom of our deep self-knowing: In moments of rage, we take a sacred pause to have mercy for our self and unpack what has happened before acting.
- We have decided to reclaim the power of our heart and voice for our own benefit and the benefit of all sentient beings.

Goals

1. Create a wise and empowered Shambhala right-relations activist group
2. Create the space to have emotionally safe and clear dialogs about abuse that has been suffered in our community
3. Collect impact stories from people who have experienced abuse and from leaders who have witnessed abusive situations in the Shambhala community
4. Create a promotion campaign to launch in 2018 so that Shambhala citizens across the globe are able to hear the truth of what has happened to women, children and other vulnerable people, and participate in creating healthy relational changes in the community

Project Sunshine had five phases over the time span of one year

1. Build emotional safety, skills and resiliency

We are building skills for dealing with triggers, processing experiences with a greater sense of inner safety, and growing a deeper understanding of our boundaries. We are working specifically to deal with fears around making these community changes by contemplating the following:

- See your personal resilience: (1) You know your needs, (2) You are responsive to your own needs, (3) Know you will take care of yourself no matter what happens
- Think strategically about systems that protect abusers: (1) Attacking people who speak up perpetuates systemic abuse of women and children, (2) Know at times people will attack you, (3) Since you know it is coming, you can be strong in yourself, know what you need and want, and know that ultimately not much harm can be done to you because you will take care of yourself
- Working with projections: Create a strong sense of self-awareness to be able to identify when you are projecting and when others are projecting on you.
- Understanding the nature of doing disruptive work: This activism is about shifting a community's mindset toward right relationship around sexual relations and

emotional boundaries. Attacks will come, so a key skill is to develop space to anticipate the unknown and the ability to know how to tend yourself in the midst of doing disruptive work.

- Understanding the nature of "Lateral violence" or "micro aggressions" among the activist group: Differences can lead us astray and pull us apart. We can suddenly find ourselves having a really awful moment together. We can remind ourselves that we are not enemies. We have had a weird moment that felt hurtful, but it is yet to be determined if it was destructive. It is wise to take a pause, remember our goals, and have dialog to come to greater clarity.

2. Document abuse stories

We originally aimed to collect four anonymous one-page stories from people who experienced abuse in the Shambhala community. We wanted to publish these stories in two major Shambhala publications in 2018 to raise awareness and get the conversation towards change going. Since the stories are anonymous, there will be no back and forth between the survivors, perpetrators and the community; if names were used, this could turn into combative relationships. Also by not using names, the authors and the publishers are not at risk for being sued. The tool I created for this is available in Appendix 5 of this report.

We are interested in providing a context in which these stories will be received in a productive, rather than reactive, way. Therefore, we are also collecting statements from Shambhala leaders who can help to frame our activism in a workable and committed manner. This will instil greater confidence in community members to receive and reflect constructively upon the stories.

3. Form a strong activist group

This is not one single person's problem. This is a serious community-wide problem that will continue to suck the lungta from our community until it is addressed. There are people who have insight, skill and passion who know in their heart that they must come forward and contribute their part in this. Andrea Winn arose as the initial instigator, and others are now exploring their role in being part of the movement to end sexualized violence within Shambhala, which includes healing what has happened in the past.

4. Envision the change we want

We are developing a contemplative spiritual framework for creating community change that is in alignment with Shambhala values. In the future we would like to engage fun activities to envision a Shambhala community that deals effectively with abuse, and even a Shambhala community free of abuse! What could that look like? The session I designed for this is shared in Appendix 6.

5. Launch a Shambhala abuse-awareness campaign in 2018

We would like to reach out to a couple of community-wide Shambhala publications to organize a 4-month series to publish the documented abuse stories and accompanying pieces from Shambhala leaders. We'd like to plan this in a way that fosters emotional safety for community members to engage and personally reflect. We also want to provide places for members to engage in dialog when they are ready, such as a moderated social media discussion forum.

The work of Project Sunshine has become known world-wide at this point. This final report is serving as the community-wide publication.

Statements From Community Leaders

Sangyum Agness Au

To the Goodness in All -

Not unlike the previous, general ignorance about the effects of climate change on the planet, and the slow awakening, awareness and activism in that area, there's currently a similar seeing and awakening to the incidences of sexual abuse and impropriety within the general society, including misbehaviors in our Shambhala community's past, up to the present day. As a noble sangha, we mustn't wait for the effects of 'flash floods', 'uncontrollable fires', and 'sinking islands' at our shores, before turning our wise minds and big hearts to address the suffering at hand.

Although a number of individuals and entities within the community, in the past and continuing to the present, are trying hard to listen and be open to misbehaviors and abuse within our ranks, the reality is that the karmic and societal behaviors that we individually brought with us on the path, are deeply ingrained and difficult to dissolve. Our ongoing experiment in creating a kind and sane society has also manifested its share of confusion and suffering, which continues, in perhaps less obvious ways, to this day.

At the same time, there is a vast treasury of profound, rich, and authentic wisdom and skillful means in our lineages and teachings, and a genuine community that has also manifested much benefit and sanity in the world.

However, our courageous and heart infused work to bring benefit is far from over. A vital exploration to understand, educate and bring change to our community's ignorance, unwitting support or complicity of abuse of any type, from any time, is essential. This includes a safe, respectful and supportive process, for all involved - bringing opportunity for transformation, the possibility of genuine healing and ongoing path for all.

Respectfully submitted in support of the necessary work to end sexual violence,

Sangyum Agness Au

Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown

"In keeping with our treasured Shambhala vision of creating enlightened society, it is essential that the Shambhala community address the importance of creating a safe, abuse-free environment for participants in our programs, retreats, and community gatherings. I laud the visionary leadership of Project Sunshine for opening the conversation and initiating a path of healing. As we acknowledge the harm experienced by survivors of sexual abuse in our community and commit to healing individuals, systems, and communities, we ensure the blooming of tenderness and kindness so important in our founding vision."

---Acharya Judith Simmer-Brown

Community Elder, Judy Lief

I am very impressed with all the work and heart you have put into this project. It is very timely—long overdue. Although I myself have not been abused, in my various roles, I have been repeatedly frustrated by the lack of response and even understanding of this problem from the leadership. As you say, it is a deeply entrenched pattern of power, chauvinism, and denial that mirrors the patterns of the larger society. I fully support this work and will be happy to help in any way I can. In any case, I'd like to keep in touch as this healing work takes root. I know too many fine young people who have left the sangha based on experiences such as yours, or who have stayed connected but with their voices unheard.

It is so good that you have created a forum for women to connect and support one another. It seems to me that there are two tough issues. One, of course, is the initial bad behavior and its

harmful results and how to facilitate healing. The second is the institutional avoidance of this shadow side of things and the pattern of ignoring these incidents, making light of them, or even retaliating on or shutting down the people who speak up. I'm pretty sure this combination is a familiar pattern in the larger world, as well.

On the individual level, my concern is not only to help women heal from such trauma, but to regain their power and not fall prey to the trap of identifying as a "victim." Being a victim is one thing, taking that as an identity is another. I see you as a role model for women in speaking up and taking action, being able to feel and release the pain, and not letting your frustration with the blindness and indifference control you. Personally, I find it is so painful that women genuinely interested in the dharma and in the path of meditation feel there is no safe place for them to study and practice together.

At the institutional level, we are a culture (Shambhala), within a culture (Buddhism), within a culture (USA), within a culture (Tibet), all very patriarchal. Yet in spite of this, personally I am so grateful and rather than being held back in any way, I only felt pushed by the Vidyadhara in a good way to come into my own potential and confidence.

There is a broader context that it might be good to ask some folks to work on, which is the source tradition of Tibetan Buddhism and its entrenched patriarchal hierarchy. I think that Trungpa Rinpoche did make a break with this to some degree, but I still feel it as another shadow hanging over the broader community and at some level influencing the discussion as well.

This patriarchal hierarchy is very evident if you travel to Asia. There is a deep patriarchal view in many Asian cultures, at a level beyond Western culture. There are a lot of joyful wonderful women in Tibet. However, at the same time women are viewed very poorly, as second class citizens. Women seem to be viewed as inferior to men and are not well treated. Theoretically, in Tibetan Buddhist texts, women are revered as an embodiment of prajna, but in reality they are not treated well. In the vinaya, it is taught that the highest ranking nun needs to defer to lowest ranking monk. Monastic resources go to monks, and very few go to nuns. Nuns lack the educational opportunities that monks have. The good news is that this is changing. There are currently male Tibetan Buddhist teachers that are trying to offer more to nuns. And there are exceptional Tibetan woman teachers who are revered.

In terms of Project Sunshine, it's important that you are taking this pain and making something positive out of it, in a way that can change things for others. This is about dealing with a lot of emotional energies, and not burying them, but rather it is about dealing with them and then letting them go.

Doing the things you are doing in Project Sunshine is bringing healing. You are looking beyond yourself, engaging and not hiding from the difficult and painful situations that exist, and not solidifying them. This is about helping others.

It means the world to me that you are brave enough to take something like this on. You are helping make progress in people's understanding of these kind of things, and hopefully we can begin to put some mechanisms in place to prevent this happening as much as it does now.

Minister Adam Lobel – statement not submitted

Minister Lobel was invited to make a statement for this report, and he declined.

Minister Jane Arthur – statement not submitted

Minister Arthur was invited to make a statement for this report, and she declined.

Anonymous Stories and Impact Statements from Survivors

Story & Impact Statement #1

I grew up in the Shambhala community. I was sexually abused by several men. The greatest impact came from one, who I will call John. When I was a teenager, I did my first serving shift with a primary teacher in the teacher's residence. John was close with the family and living in the same house. I had to pass by his room every time I did something for the principle I was serving. John kept stopping me at his door to talk with him. Then, one time he asked me to come in the room and shut the door. He was sitting under the covers of his bed and removed the covers and I saw he was naked on the bottom half. He had me sit by him on the bed and told me to kiss his penis. I was young, a girl, and I wanted to respect him and "be nice". I was profoundly confused. A friend of mine years later was physically attacked by John, and five of us dharma brats came to my friend saying we had been abused by John. This is when I learned his child abuse was wide spread. The rape counsellor I was seeing said that if five of us came forward, there were likely many more who had been abused by him since it is rare for anyone to speak about child abuse. I spoke about my experience of child abuse in my local community. The leadership held secret meetings and sent me a threatening email telling me to stop speaking about the abuse.

My experience of abuse in the Shambhala community has impacted my life over the decades. Every intimate relationship I've been in has been a high intensity nightmare. I

want to be close with someone, but I am terrified. It's like I don't have the ground within me to build healthy trust. Having been both sexually abused and demonized by my community when I spoke about it, I have had no community connection for over 15 years. I've resorted to living very alone. For instance, recently I had a bad pneumonia and nearly died. I had no one in my life to visit me in the hospital, except for one Christian man who saw it as his Christian duty to visit me twice. It's hard to admit this, but my intense loneliness hits me at night. I stuff myself with food and watch TV until late. I am quite sad about this. My rape counsellor says this profound loneliness is part of the cost. I love the Vidyadhara and I am deeply committed to Shambhala. At the same time, having been abused by many leaders in the community tears at the fabric of my being. The psychological pressure has been overwhelming. It has been hard to establish a life and also hard to have a meaningful or safe relationship with meditation.

Story & Impact Statement #2

I was married to an emotionally and verbally abusive husband who was a senior teacher in the Shambhala community. It was very hard to finally realize I had no choice but to end the marriage. I tried every way I could to keep it private and not upset the community or expose my husband, because that somehow seemed the right thing to do. It became necessary for me to seek help from Shambhala when the next Scorpion Seal retreat was approaching (year 6 for me), because I needed to do the program so that I could continue on my spiritual path. I asked for help from a number of people: first my husband himself, who declined to step aside, then the local centre Health & Wellbeing officers, then the Desung, then the President of Shambhala, who finally referred me to the acharyas. I was asking to be able to attend the Scorpion Seal retreat, and I was asking my husband, as a senior teacher, to graciously staff it elsewhere, without blame. (I had program credit at this particular centre and couldn't afford to pay tuition and travel somewhere else, while my ex-husband was paid to attend wherever he went.) A person in the Office of Social Wellbeing was assigned to facilitate this situation. She wanted me to attend the program with my husband present, and she said arrangements would be made so I would never see my husband and that they would 'protect' me from him. I knew that it would be impossible for me to feel safe in such a small and intense group retreat setting, and I made it clear that I could not do the retreat in an atmosphere like this. Shambhala at all levels, including the acharya group, labeled me as the problem when I couldn't consent to do the retreat with him with their 'protection,' and they declined to assist me at that point. In short, the well-being of my ex-husband, the perpetrator, was given a greater value than mine. So, adding to the trauma I was experiencing from the years of abuse and upending my life by leaving the marriage, I was unable to continue on my practice path and stay with my closest sangha

who had been going through the retreat together. I felt that I was not believed, not valued, not cared for, and simply thrown away to allow the status quo to continue.

Furthermore, this official met with my husband (we were in the process of a divorce through all of this) and she told him that I had filed a complaint against him, which was untrue and threatened to derail our delicate divorce negotiations. I felt deeply betrayed by this official's actions.

The atmosphere resulting from all of this was toxic, with all but my close friends either ignoring the issue when they saw me or actually avoiding me. The silence from every level of the organization spoke volumes about the "culture of blindness" pervading and poisoning the societal aspect of Shambhala. I eventually decided to leave my home and community in Canada, which was triggering and painful for me, and I now live in the city where I am originally from in the United States. No one from any level of the Shambhala hierarchy has ever contacted me since then to offer any kindness or guidance about my spiritual path or to inquire about my well-being. After being a highly contributing member of this community for over forty years, fulfilling roles at various levels, including secretary to the Sakyong at one time, this has been a profoundly devastating experience that has broken my heart and completely changed my life.

Story & Impact Statement #3

I was staffing a Shambhala Level 5 around 15 years ago. The visiting teacher was particularly exciting, and I was caught off guard in her Saturday evening talk. She said people in therapy just moan and groan, and she said it several times. She said it yet again in the question and answer period, and I raised my hand. When she called on me I said, "I find your statements about people in therapy insensitive. I was sexually abused throughout my childhood in the Shambhala community, as were most of the children, and I got a lot from therapy that the Shambhala teachings never helped me with. I wonder if this kind of insensitivity is why the adults allowed so much sexual abuse to happen to us kids." The teacher sat fully upright as a warrior, and there was a pregnant silence. Then she replied, "Maybe you will teach us that sensitivity."

Despite her response, the local leadership was terrified. I had been a dedicated leader for years in this community, and the council chose to meet secretly about me. Of note, three of my best friends and my Meditation Instructor were part of these meetings. The council then sent me an email telling me to: (1) stop doing any teaching, (2) step down as leader of the small Shambhala LGBT sub-community I had started, and (3) stop talking about inappropriate things.

Over the next 6 months I met with two visiting teachers - an Acharya and a senior ranking Kasung officer - explaining what was happening and asking for their help. Both refused to help. I felt at that point that I had no choice but to leave the Shambhala community.

Years later I bumped into one of the participants of that Level 5. He said he missed seeing me around. I said that the leadership had gotten upset about my talking about the childhood sex abuse problem because it could negatively affect newer students. He replied that his experience was quite the opposite; when he heard us talking openly and respectfully about the abuse, it heartened him and made him see us as a healthy community.

It is hard to succinctly describe the impact these abuses have had on me. The original sexual abuse has made it very hard to feel safe in my body. As an adult, I felt profoundly betrayed by my good friends and Meditation Instructor, people who I trusted. I believed they felt connected with me and loyal to me in a way that could weather an upheaval. I stopped trusting people through this and have socially isolated myself for over 15 years. Although I am intensely lonely, I seem unable to form intimate connections because I am terrified of experiencing a betrayal like this again. Even with no sangha, I am a diehard practitioner and have continued my Vajrayogini and werma practices on my own all these years. I've been limping along at a snail's pace, lacking the vibrancy that comes from participating in programs, having an MI, and being part of a sangha. Inside, I feel like a very long, cold winter with no hope of the warmth of the spring.

Story & Impact Statement #4

I am a gender queer person, who uses the pronouns "they" and "he"; I was socialized as a male. I'm a survivor of clergy victimization from my experiences in the Catholic Church where I was groomed and raped as a young teen by 2 different priests over a period of years. After years of recovery and therapy, I entered Shambhala as an adult thinking that was all "behind me". I became a dedicated Scorpion Seal practitioner. I had heard stories about sexual misconduct in Shambhala. I had heard that a senior teacher had raped men. I felt concerned. For over a decade I experienced a few incidences of sexual violence from both men and women in Shambhala. The greatest impact came from a male sangha member who sexually violated me on retreats and trainings. He exposed his entire naked body to me and asked me "Do you like what you see" he told me that I would have to use his "dick" to unlock the community computer, He would make regular references to his "balls" and "ass", and made homophobic comments to me by calling me a "Sissy". He had a pattern of acting out on retreats and trainings. Complaints had been made against him. I had even mentioned his behaviors to my therapist, who was a sangha member, but nothing

seemed to change and it all got really confusing. I eventually wrote a letter to the community leaders that included an Acharya, Shastris and Kasung. The accused was finally suspended from leadership. He tried to justify and defend his behaviors. He was then immediately allowed to be a Kasung at Children's Day, and I realized I needed support outside the community. I obtained an outside sexual assault advocate and non-sangha - therapist to support me in the process. I spoke to a lawyer who wanted to "sue the socks off" of Karuna Training and Shambhala. I was not interested in pursuing a lawsuit. The community leadership seemed confused on how to address the issue skillfully. They put together a panel to work with the accused. I felt concerned about a spiritual organization like Shambhala trying to assess and treat someone with issues of sexual pathology. It seemed outside the scope of our local center to do this. I think the accused needed a professional psychosexual evaluation and outside treatment program. My outside advocate helped me in obtaining a temporary sexual assault protection order and filing a police report.

The impact has been painful on many different levels. I have experienced a reoccurrence of PTSD symptoms from past abuse. I have wanted to leave the sangha. Even though he did not touch me, his assaults felt like a rape. I have experienced anxiety, mistrust of sangha, fear, guilt and isolation. Due to the stress of speaking out about the sexual violence, I got in a bike wreck and broke my arm. The treatment is expensive. I have felt overwhelmed at times and also enraged at the denial of certain community members. I also have felt supported by some of the sangha and empowered by my outside advocate, and new therapist.

Story & Impact Statement #5

What happened to me is that I was sexually assaulted during a gathering at the home of a friend and fellow sangha member, who I will call Mary. For reason(s) never revealed to me she refused to give me the name of the man who assaulted me. She also indicated that perhaps I was fabricating being assaulted. Mary is a Meditation Instructor, Kasung, Programme Coordinator, and gives out information regarding end of life planning at my local Shambhala Centre.

I made a number of attempts to obtain the name of the man who assaulted me. After a mediation session with the local Desung, Mary threatened me that if she gave me the man's name and I went to the police, she and I would likely no longer be friends.

Eventually I went to the police without the identity of the man and made a statement. Only after Mary was questioned and the man charged did I learn his identity. After the inhumane way Mary has treated me, I ended our friendship.

Care and Conduct have said that there was no disciplinary action they would take toward Mary since she was not in an official Shambhala role (At an event or at the centre) during the assault, or when she denied me the name and indicated that I was lying about the sexual assault. My husband has been a great support to me through this ordeal, and points out that we are in our Shambhala role 100% of the time. I do wonder what will happen if someone else reveals to Mary they were assaulted. As a representative for Shambhala, how will she treat them?

Now I seek an apology from Mary for not telling me the name of the man who sexually assaulted me, and for indicating I was lying about being assaulted (let alone her comment, if I was to go to the police she would end our friendship). I spoke with the Regional Commander in Halifax today by phone. He said Mary feels she has nothing to apologize for.

Presently, I do not feel comfortable to attend programmes and practise sessions at the Halifax Centre. I wonder about continuing my role as a Kasung/Shabchi. I have in the past attended programmes, but when Mary is attending or coordinating, it takes too large of a toll on me being fake and pretending everything is OK. I feel heartbroken.

Reflective Learning From Project Sunshine

General reflections

My first reflection is on what happened when I reached out to women leaders in the beginning of the project. Six of them came to be part of a private discussion forum to explore questions about Project Sunshine. Once they became members, they did not engage – they simply watched. A couple of months into the project, when I began to approach and meet with Acharyas, half of the women left the group.

What I have learned is there is a break down in trust between abused women and the Shambhala leadership. This is an area that needs attention, and I would suggest Shambhala leaders could benefit from trauma-informed education so they can take their seat more confidently as leaders around issues of sexualized violence.

Secondly, it is very, very hard for abused women to rouse the energy to engage. I know this from my own experience of many years of feeling completely beaten down with no sense of hope. Some of the women told me that they found my social activism terrifying – they were sincerely afraid for my safety in engaging the Shambhala leadership.

When I met with the Shambhala leaders, most expressed denial of the problem. At first they would tell me that this problem was taken care of years ago. I had to be persistent in stating that women are still being abused and women are still being forced to leave the

community. These leaders were open to my persistence and began to acknowledge there is a problem and in fact starting telling me about new cases of abuse that I was unaware of.

All of the leaders I met with were generous with their time and attention to this important work. I would like to highlight the contribution of one of these leaders, Acharya Adam Lobel, as he made work on Project Sunshine a priority, specifically seeking out useful connections for integrating the work of Project Sunshine with existing Shambhala initiatives.

Another reflection on working with the Shambhala leaders is their reluctance to dedicate resource to this issue and their reluctance to take the step of envisioning what Shambhala could look like as a community that deals well with abuse. Through my work I have found that creating a vision for where you want to go is key to creating inspired change. I designed a simple vision session and proposed it to the Shambhala leaders who were engaged with Project Sunshine. Their responses were, "This is not a priority for me", "There is no juice here for me", and "I am not interested". One leader said she would be willing to do the vision session if it happened at a time that was convenient for her. Of note, towards the completion of Project Sunshine, I was told that the leaders of Shambhala, including the Sakyong, now see this work as a priority for the community.

Despite the inability to move forward with both the abused women leaders and the Shambhala leaders, I must highlight the courage and good will I experienced from both groups. Although the women would not engage with me, they made a point of encouraging me in this important work. Although the Shambhala leaders were not ready to act on shifting the pattern of violence in Shambhala, they made it clear that they care and they want this healing to happen, they just don't know how to engage.

There is fear in the hearts of everyone who I talked with, and this is easily expected. Sexual violence is frightening. It is powerful. It has a great impact on the lives of those who are abused and everyone who is touched by the incident of abuse.

In my discussions with Shambhala leaders there was also a desire expressed for finding a way of working with the perpetrators that encourages their development on their path. We do not see the solution being to lock them up in prison. There are existing community-based processes, such as restorative justice processes that can involve everyone who is touched by a violation, and as a community, find a way for the perpetrator to make right what he or she has done. Ideally these are well-facilitated, organic processes that we could modify to include values intrinsic to the Shambhala community.

A further reflection is the timing of this project and events that happened outside the community that relate to violence. First, the situation with Sogyal Rinpoche and his extreme abuse of his students came into the light, and he stepped down as the leader of his

community. This situation spurred much dialog and analysis of what is happening in Tibetan Buddhist communities in the West. I read a somewhat concerning essay¹ from a well-respected teacher, and I can see that he is struggling to provide leadership to the world-wide Tibetan Buddhist community. It is my hope that leaders like him will see that no one person has the solution or answer to this problem. This is a situation where we need to intelligently bring people together, including women of wisdom, to discern the appropriate way forward in planting Tibetan Buddhism more strongly in the West.

Then the #MeToo movement sprang up, where women are speaking out and naming men who have abused them. There has been great support for this empowerment of women, some of whom remained silent for decades about the abuse they suffered.

As my final general reflection, I myself went through the initial phases of the project. I threw myself into building emotional safety, skill and resiliency for doing this work. I learned a great deal about strategies from Karlene, the Rape Crisis Center counsellor, and I met with my friend, Grace, every week in a support call that allowed for a deeply reflective and compassionate connection for developing insight and understanding through each step of the project. By doing this work myself, I feel some foundation for others to do the same has been established.

¹ <https://www.buddhistdoor.net/news/dzongsar-khyentse-rinpoche-issues-public-statement-on-recent-criticism-of-sogyal-rinpoche> (note, you will have to copy and paste this link to make it work in your browser)

Raising questions about the Conduct and Care Process

In my conversations with people over the past year, I learned of many situations of Conduct and Care Processes that resulted in further harm done by the process itself. Rather than resolving conflict, those facilitating the process created greater harm. I have no doubt that they had the best of intentions. However, we need to look more deeply into what is working in this process and what is not, and make changes.

I was asked to review the process when it was first being created by Richard Reoch (then President of Shambhala) and Simone LeHaye (then Desung General). In fact, the original process had my name and the name of a man who sexually abused me used throughout the process! My response to the draft sent to me was first, they should not be using my name in it.

Second, I saw clear problems in the process. I pleaded with Mr. LeHaye to consult his local rape crisis center for help with the process, as he was located in France and I understood at that time that the French feminist movement was strong. He and Mr. Reoch refused to do any such outside consultation.

It is clear to me that both Mr. Reoch and Mr. LeHaye were white men in positions of power, and I can't help but wonder if some bias may have inadvertently entered the process, perhaps to protect white men in power. I have learned in the past week that the Care and Conduct Process is confidential to the point that men have gone through the process, were found to have caused harm, and the community never knows of this. This doesn't feel right to me and does not resonate with my sense of justice or care for community harmony.

I also understand that the result of some Care and Conduct Processes has led to a handful of male teachers being removed from their position and told they can never again teach in Shambhala. There is a basic Shambhala value around working with people and never giving up on them. I feel that value may not be fully met with our existing Care and Conduct Process and the options available for addressing harm. Can we find truly responsive ways of stopping their harm AND helping them? I feel that as a community, we MUST explore ways for addressing harm that resonate with the values we hold dear within Shambhala.

Furthermore, given the failures of our in-house Care and Conduct process, we clearly need to consult with organizations outside of Shambhala with expertise in restorative practices, gendered violence and abuse, and are feminist.

Attending to those who have been abused

I have been part of many conversations over the past year with women who have been abused in the Shambhala community. The stories of abuse are nothing short of horrific. Quite simply, the violence that has happened and the lack of response from the Shambhala organization has resulted in a profound corruption in the heart of our community over the lifespan of this community - since the early 1970's.

There is a pattern that I personally experienced, and many women experienced, of being fiercely loyal to this community and taking every step imaginable to get support from community leaders. With the lack of responsiveness, for many of us, the only sane response was to make the heart breaking decision to leave the community. It is not only the worst imaginable decision to have to make, but it is confounded by deep questions about breaking samaya for those of us who entered the Vajrayana path in Shambhala.

One teacher and survivor of abuse in Shambhala responded to things I wrote about samaya in this report, and I feel it is important to bring her words forward, with her permission:

I never ever feel that any of us have broken our samaya by leaving, speaking up, etc. I think that is a misunderstanding that is used to keep people quiet and afraid. I'm glad I saw that and I am so, so, so sorry you have that thought, and I hope we can either talk about that or just somehow that you can let that one dissolve into space. Your heart and mind are so luminous. Samaya isn't just keeping to outer things, or even practices. The violation is when someone abuses someone, turns someone away from the dharma, etc., all those things on the list, and the secret level is if you shut down the love in your own mind and make it an enemy, which obviously you haven't. So that's all off the top of my head, but for me it's a very sore point that is another form of abuse, to make people think they're breaking their samaya if they speak out, have to leave, etc.

Other abuse survivors have chosen to stay in the community, and it has been a challenging and confusing experience. There is a deep psychological challenge to stay in emotional connection with a community in which you were abused and the community either responded with lack of care, or worse, further abuse. You can read the impact statements a little further along in this report. Writing these initial impact statements was a huge first step for these people. I do not believe, however, that they communicate the profound trauma these people have experienced.

In some of the community discussions now happening, some are advocating for a trauma-informed healing model that integrates Shambhala values and wisdom. I believe this is absolutely necessary.

Furthermore, some women have been so devastated and have lost every last shred of hope that the Shambhala community could ever become a healthy place for them. For these women, we will need to offer a space for healing that is outside the community.

For these women to ever return, the community needs to become an emotionally safe place. This can be done, but it will take time and continuous effort to create this community taming. The community will need to embrace change and turn and face this demon of abuse. This effort will be worth it, for all of us. It is about creating a sane and healthy community for us and for the greater world that we serve.

Of note, I had no communication with any other second-generation members of this community. This remains a deeply hidden wound. I would like to see this community rouse the resource to have a dedicated person to seek out the lost generation, to see how they are, and to offer healing and support. I am haunted by the line in one of Trungpa Rinpoche's songs, "Confident that our children see the Great Eastern Sun." It haunts me because so many of our children are suffering in profound darkness. This is unacceptable, and it is time for us to bring healing and light to our lost second generation.

Attending to the perpetrators

What is going through the mind of someone when they are preying on, luring, sexually forcing themselves, or enacting a host of other ways that sexual violence is perpetrated? Many of us simply want to vilify and distance ourselves from the perpetrators.

To heal our community, we need to turn and face the problem and all of the players within the problem, including the perpetrators.

There are two experiences I've had that come to mind as beginning to open a door to what it could look like to work with perpetrators. The first is when I attended the 2000 Kasung Encampment at Dorje Denma Ling. During this playful Kasung training program, someone from outside the program decided to cause some trouble and attacked our encampment in some playful way that I do not remember. What I do remember is that this troublemaker was put in a wire fence stockade in the middle of the camp. He was fed three good meals a day, and someone went in and spoke with him regularly. My understanding is that these conversations were about helping him work with his mind.

After two days the "prisoner" was released and he was invited to join our program. What I witnessed was the man became more grounded and present and was no longer interested in causing mayhem for the fun of it. He had learned about the training happening at the program, and he became interested in joining in.

I feel there is something powerful in giving a “time out”, as we do with children. Stopping activity and being present with our mind in a simple way. This cuts through the speed of aggression and can help us become more connected with our heart. I feel the example I witnessed at this Encampment is something useful for finding our way for dealing with perpetrators of abuse in our community.

The second experience that comes to mind for me around how to provide a firm and supportive structure for dealing with perpetrators is when I volunteered for three months for the Family Services Association in Toronto with their group for abusive men. This was a court-mandated group; the men in the group had been convicted of abusing their partners and had the choice of going to prison or attending this group. The men in the group chose to attend the group rather than go to prison. This group met weekly for a 2-hour evening meeting.

I felt particularly connected with a tall Korean man who joined the group at the same time that I started volunteering. I remember him leaning back in his chair, arms firmly crossed across his chest, and with his legs outstretched and crossed in front of him. From this highly defended posture, he looked coolly out at what was happening in the group.

In this group the two trained facilitators started conversations, and they were very firm with the men. Whenever a man started going to a place of denial, these counsellors were sometimes even abrasive in calling the man’s denial out. Also, men who had been in the group longer would do the same thing, and call out the denial that they heard in their newer fellow members.

These sessions were pretty hard hitting, and at the same time, many of the men would go along and share in the exercises. Part of what they shared about was what it was like for them as children growing up in their families. It comes as no surprise: each of these men endured severe violence in their homes growing up.

The group skipped one week because the facilitators went on vacation. When we returned the following week, that tall Korean man came to the check in desk in a completely different way - softer. He said he had come the week before, and that he was so disappointed that no one showed up for the group. He had forgotten the group was cancelled. Something had obviously been sneaking in behind his defences through being in this group, to the point that through this experience he (and all of us) discovered that he was looking forward to coming to the group meetings.

When I think about it, being part of this group was probably the first experience these men had where they could feel close with other men in an emotionally vulnerable way. They could bring who they were to a special, and perhaps even sacred, community. What at first seemed to be a punishment may have turned into the greatest gift they ever received.

My last evening with the group I led a session with the men teaching them how to mirror a conversation partner. What this meant was they would listen to a conversation partner and simply communicate what they heard their conversation partner say. They did not need to have a personal response or defend themselves. Their one and only task was to listen to the other person and communicate back what they understood the other person said.

A man volunteered to do a demonstration round with me, and I played the role of his female partner. He did not understand the exercise. He kept going to his default of defending himself. So I patiently reminded him that even if he disagreed with what I was saying, that was okay. All this exercise was about was listening and then communicating back what he understood.

After several more tries, he finally got it. This was a watershed moment for him and for the whole group. The wave of relief and hope that swept through the room was palpable. These men suddenly saw a new way of communicating with their partners that was less painful, was gentle and caring, and could lead to much better relationships. After they had all given the exercise a try, these “hardened criminals” came up to me at the end of the group session and hugged me and thanked me.

Working with these men showed me that they do have soft hearts beneath all the rough stuff. It also showed me the kind of compassionate force and assertiveness that are required for working with perpetrators, because their outer shell is so thick.

We as a community need to begin to look at how we can create support for perpetrators to begin to develop softness and resource within themselves. I believe that once they have a firmer grounding within themselves, then they can participate in a community process to make amends for the harm they have caused to individuals and the community from their perpetration of violence.

Next Steps

The importance of good self-care

On an individual level, we need to find ways of centering ourselves so we can take a step-by-step journey of personally comprehending this situation. Pacing is important. Honouring our limits is important. If we are feeling flooded by information, it is important to take an adequate break and refresh our spirit. Also, basic self care is very important – things like eating healthy food, drinking plenty of water, getting exercise, sleeping well, and taking at least a few minutes every day to work with our mind through a formal practice. It can also be very helpful to have a regular daily routine. Routine is grounding, and we need

to have our feet firmly planted on the ground as we engage this situation both individually and as a community.

Explore ways to talk with others about your thoughts and experience

Once we have good connection within ourselves, then we need to find ways of engaging each other in conversations about how to deal with the pervasive dynamic of abuse within the Shambhala community. Please talk with your neighbors and friends. And please join us for an online discussion, as described below.

Identify the needs of various groups connected with this issue

We need to explore how to support the greater resilience and confidence of our Shambhala leaders. It is important that they have the supports needed as they step more fully into their role of providing leadership, collaboration and support for this process.

We need to support the work of the sangha abuse survivors. The survivors need to be heard. For those who have been forced to leave the community, when and if they want a pathway back into a respecting relationship within the sangha, then we need to find ways to facilitate a process for this.

And what about the children of Shambhala? In my view it is unacceptable that so many of the second generation of this community have been forced to leave the community due to being abused, scapegoated and shamed. This happened to me, and it has happened to unknown numbers of other young people. We need to set up a discovery process to find the lost children of this community and tend to their needs for healing and reconnection.

We need to stop protecting the abusers, and instead empower them to step into reconciliation processes where they can make rightful amends for their abuses. One senior Shambhala teacher suggested that since it has been many years since one of the primary child molesters was active that we should just move on. This teacher does not understand that the harm still lives: in those he abused, those who were impacted by his abuse, and he himself cannot act in full integrity as a Shambhala leader carrying the burden of unreconciled harm he has done within our community. Things do not magically disappear over time. And abuses continue to happen to this present day. What is called for is for us to dig in deeper, create resource, embody this lineage of confidence, and clean up these situations for the overall health and well-being of our community.

Oppression through sexual violence has clear relationships with other forms of oppression, such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, etc. Dialog needs to happen around the intersection of all forms of social violence happening within the Shambhala community.

Next steps for Project Sunshine

It is time to bring the light of the Great Eastern Sun to a widespread societal problem that exists also within our community. It is a matter of deciding to make a difference and then taking one small step after another. That is what I have done with Project Sunshine, and it has had measurable success in just one year. This project shows that it is possible to investigate, be curious, dialog, form alliances with those who were abused and with Shambhala leaders, and create inroads towards peace. Genuine peace. Peace that comes with pain and stepping through fears to create a space of greater and greater integrity.

I took this 1-year project on as one lone person who cares about the health of the Shambhala community. It was more work than I ever could have imagined! This has been done with my full heart, and I am grateful that I gave myself this gift, and that it will hopefully be received as a gift to the community.

My volunteer position radically scales down today. I will continue giving 5 hours of time a week to follow ups from the project, including fielding questions and contributing to the discussion in the Facebook forum that will be offered soon. If the community gathers energy to take further action needing a project manager, we will need to raise funds for that. But for now, let's just talk!

Let's talk – New buds & beginnings: A forum to discuss Project Sunshine

The most important next steps are to see who has the ability to step in to this conversation about healing sexualized violence, and has the staying power to stay with that conversation. So far I have seen a lot of people dip their toe in and then drop back into a place of denial and/or paralysis, or worse yet, condemning this work and trying to silence it. This is certainly an area that can be remedied partially by taking better care of ourselves (please see the section on self-care).

If you are interested in some of the ideas and approaches discussed in this report and want to be part of the solution, please join us in a moderated social media discussion forum.

First, we respectfully ask you to take one week for personal reflection, and we hope you will give the Horizon Analysis method a try. Then bring what you learned from your

Horizon Analysis to our moderated Project Sunshine discussion forum opening on Thursday February 22nd. Watch the Project Sunshine webpage for the access link on February 22nd!

Concluding Wishes

May the dakas and dakinis rejoice! May the werma and dralas rejoice! May humanity's heart be lifted up in ways never before experienced! May we take our seat as genuine, caring, patient and appropriately impatient members of this sacred community.

Let us confidently take steps to root out this darkness and invoke the light of the Great Eastern Sun to dawn on a new age of authentic peace and harmony!

Appendix 1: HORIZON ANALYSIS: Method of Reflection on Readings

NAME:

Date:

1. Reading(s)(byAuthor):

2.(a) What is my strongest attraction or attractions to the reading/s. Why?

(b) What might be the source of my attractions(s) to the reading/s?

3. (a) What is my strongest resistance or resistances to the reading/s. Why?

(B) What might be the source of my resistance(s) to the reading/s?

4. How do these attractions and resistances challenge or affirm me as I engage in this reflection process? (Notice where the invitation to transformation is.)

Appendix 2: Example Horizon Analysis of Dzongsar Khentse Rinpoche's essay regarding Sogyal Rinpoche's community

NAME: Andrea M. Winn

Date: December 17, 2017

1. Reading(s) (by Author): Dzongsar Kyentse Rinpoche Issues Public Statement on Recent Criticism of Sogyal Rinpoche

2. (a) What is my strongest attraction or attractions to the reading/s. Why?

1. His strong request for patience and mindful/complete reading of his essay.
2. The strength and stability of his understanding of Vajrayana Buddhism.
3. His seeing this situation through an understanding of culture, part of the problem lies in how Tibetans are teaching.
4. His acknowledgement of the stability of Trungpa Rinpoche's approach.

(b) What might be the source of my attractions(s) to the reading/s?

I'm looking for coherence and stability in working with this situation. I want people to stay embodied and take one step after another, without skipping steps in addressing this situation. I deeply appreciate the way Trungpa Rinpoche created a path with a solid foundation, again because I am longing for stability for more deeply understanding dharma and experiences. The cultural understanding helps to understand the dynamic that has grown with Tibetan Buddhism being seeded in the west. Understanding this can help us to repair this situation and grow a stronger base for future practice of Buddhism in the West.

3. (a) What is my strongest resistance or resistances to the reading/s. Why?

His putting forward a picture that offers no path for redemption for either the 8 who wrote the letter or Sogyal Rinpoche. He wrote, "Sogyal Rinpoche's misbehaviour may be his ruin and, sadly, it may be the ruin of some of his students." In my tradition, this is called setting sun. Why not devote our energy to cleaning up this situation, instead of labelling it as hopeless, and leaving the students as outcasts and Sogyal Rinpoche to Vajra hell?

His lack of understanding and respect for the 8 students. His lack of respect for people of the West by referring to Western society as, "a world that's full to overflowing with smart-arses".

He wrote, "The students criticizing Sogyal Rinpoche seem to be highly intelligent. Why then, weren't they smart enough to examine and analyze this teacher before signing up?" Although he puts this forward as a question, he is actually making a statement of judgement, appearing to suggest the students are highly confused. It bothers me to hear him judge these students because the students appear to be sane, caring and proclaimed sanity within a very confused situation.

"I really don't understand why they waited ten or even thirty years before saying anything?." He is making a statement and putting a question mark after it. If he was truly curious, he would take time to learn about why people stay silent for so long. It is common in most abuse situations. Instead, he is simply putting the students down, and leaving the entire situation in a place of ambivalence – HIS ambivalence.

It always disturbs me to witness a religious leader lead people into a place of confusion and ambivalence.

His lack of coherence, (1) "a Vajrayana guru will use anything he can to challenge and go against each individual student's ego, pride, self-cherishing and dualistic mind." And (2) "the Vajrayana master must know his students' limits – what they can and can't take." On the one hand he seems to suggest the master should teach with a bazooka, and then in the next breath he suggests sensitivity to guiding the student according to their capacities.

His use of the word, "alleged" and suggesting the students are not true Vajrayana practitioners because they have spoken out about this situation. He writes, "students, who also consider themselves to be practitioners in the Vajrayana tradition." As a Buddhist leader he is acting as a judge, making judgements, using legal language, and proclaiming his judgments world wide. I'd prefer more sensitivity and respect – for him to take his seat as a leader and act with decency and decorum that supports a stronger and saner approach to sorting out this situation.

When he writes, "If an impure perception – such as criticism of one's guru – is made deliberately and consciously, and if it then goes on to become a well-organized, choreographed public discussion with no room for amendment or correction, it constitutes a total breakage of samaya." Here he is leading the reader to believe that this relates to the situation of the 8 students – the reader is very easily led to assume he is speaking of this situation. However in this situation these students took care of a degraded situation, and

their letter clearly left room for explanation to be made, aka amendment. DKR is making a very serious allegation regarding the students, which does not reflect the actual situation. This is harmful to everyone touched by this situation.

When he says, "It's a big mistake to speculate about the possibility of continuing to analyze and criticize the guru after having received a major initiation, actually it's totally wrong." He seems to be suggesting as Vajrayana practitioners we must step into blind faith and disengage from the genuine, uninhibited intelligence that resides within us.

When he says, "We can't change the Vajrayana view to invent some 'moderate' version of Vajrayana Buddhism just to suit the 21st century Western mind-set", it feels to me like he is bringing forward a heavy handed fist of Vajrayana Buddhism that will bulldoze through any situation, dismissing all context, and more importantly suggesting skilful means is not necessary in the relative world to reach people and lead them on the true path of dharma.

He talks in circles. On the one hand he calls the students, " so-called Vajrayana students... stepped onto the Vajrayana path voluntarily." And in a different section he clearly states that he believes the Rigpa students were not adequately prepared or warned of what they were getting into. This disconnected, circular approach is simply crazy-making, and it is adding to the confusion and upset caused by this situation.

I appreciate how he is drawing attention to larger problems in Buddhism, however I feel that he is drawing our attention away from healing this situation in doing so. He is training people to avert their eyes to another direction, which creates one more tragic disconnection from the true situation - it will not disappear by averting our eyes. The impacts of abuse within community are far-reaching, and I feel from this essay that DKR lacks an understanding of this.

(B) What might be the source of my resistance(s) to the reading/s?

A man in authority who lacks understanding of human situations and is imposing harsh views without any consideration for the context in which he is forcing his views. He seems to have no understanding of the harm he is creating through publishing this essay.

I have been silent for four decades about the abuse I suffered in the Shambhala community. Therefore I relate with the students. I feel the dismissal and accusations the 8 students have received in this essay – I feel this very personally. It is deeply upsetting and unacceptable to me.

I am no longer willing to stay silent about abuses in Buddhist communities. It does not serve us to take a simplistic view when someone is clearly being abusive and putting huge obstacles in the path of sincere practitioners. It is wrong, and it should be called out.

This is more about learning the dynamics of Tibetan Buddhism entering the West and how we can more skilfully create a good ground for westerners to receive this precious dharma. This should not be about scapegoating the 8 students and demonizing Sogyal Rinpoche. This *should* be about learning, maturing and growing more serious in our pursuit of embedding Tibetan Buddhism in the West.

4. How do these attractions and resistances challenge or affirm me as I engage in this theological reflection process?

The challenge is to my anger about the thoughtlessness of men in power, of their throwing their weight around and harming the vulnerable, naïve and good. I pray for my own transformation and growth, that I may become a more mature and loving woman with the skilful means to speak in response to these men.

I am affirmed in this reflection through realizing how important stability, care and coherence are to me in my approach to life, and my wish for this in Tibetan Buddhism in the west. I have a much clearer understanding of how important this is to me now.

Appendix 3: Impact Of Violation On Members*

Note: “Leader” refers to anyone in a position of authority, such as a community leader, teacher, meditation instructor, etc.

If your rights are violated by a leader of the Shambhala community, the impact is similar to other kinds of abuse. The effects of the violation will depend on factors such as: the length of your relationship with the leader and how long the violation went on; your degree of vulnerability while in the relationship; your history of abuse; and the kinds of support available to you.

If your rights have been violated, you may experience any of the following:

- general distrust and fear of others (especially anyone in the Shambhala community)
- rage and anger at the leader who has violated you
- deep sense of betrayal and abandonment
- loss, grief, sadness and helplessness
- self blame, shame and guilt (“if only I’d been a smarter, nicer or an easier person”)
- self doubt (“maybe I’ve misunderstood or maybe I’m being too critical of the leader”)
- overwhelmed and in crisis (wanting to harm yourself)
- fear that others will not believe you
- depression or deep sense of despair
- feeling as though you have been “raped”, even if the violation was not sexual
- a need to protect the leader who has violated you
- a need to protect other members who are at risk
- a need for resolution and compensation
- confusion when other members working with the same leader are not violated
- confusion because the leader was also helpful to you
- fear the leader may cause you further harm if you speak out
- resentment for the loss of time and money
- isolation from the lack of resources and support
- a disruption in your intimate relationships
- an inability or disruption of carrying out your daily activities
- Adapted from Client Rights in Psychotherapy & Counselling: A Handbook of Client Rights and Therapist Responsibilities

Appendix 4: Impact Of Violation On Communities*

The personal violation of one member, by one leader, will affect the lives of many people. If the violation is not addressed on a community level, the impact of the violation will, in time, erode the general sense of trust and safety within that community.

When your rights have been violated, your community may experience any of the following:

- general sense of fear or distrust of leaders and the Shambhala organization in general
- feelings of division and suspicion (dividing leaders into “the unethical” and “the ethical”)
- leaders protecting themselves or one another instead of the rights of members
- feelings of betrayal and abandonment by those who witness the violation and by members who are not believed or are unsupported
- feelings of guilt and confusion by community members who struggle to find ways to support violated members
- feelings of confusion by community members who are searching for ways to confront and hold offending leaders accountable for their actions
- loss of solidarity and faith among members and leaders, among member, and among leaders
- the disruption or destruction of intimate relationships because of the distress the violation brings to the lives of violated members, offending leaders, and other members of a community who witness the violation
- frustration because of the lack of education and training about ethics and member rights

* Adapted from Client Rights in Psychotherapy & Counselling: A Handbook of Client Rights and Therapist Responsibilities

Appendix 5: Project Sunshine Shambhala Abuse Awareness Campaign

Note: This is the document sent out to people in 2017.

Project Sunshine is a one-year project that was launched on Shambhala Day 2017 to (1) establish a working body of concerned citizens to address the situation of sexual and social abuse in the Shambhala community, and (2) create a promotional campaign to start a productive conversation about this situation on a community-wide level.

We are actively seeking written submissions from survivors of abuse within the Shambhala community to be part of this abuse awareness campaign in 2018. As a survivor myself, I know this is a big thing to ask. This is about getting the community together to talk. We are gathering these stories because we want people to be emotionally affected by this.

The goal of this awareness campaign is to get the community thinking about this situation and for them to care.

This phase of the work is about raising awareness. This is not about accusing an individual. Creating structures for justice will follow, and that will be the right time to name the abusers.

Submissions are:

- Anonymous: no names and no historical features that reveal identities
- 1 page – 250 words - with two sections:
- Your Story – written with love and self-respect
- Impact – how has experiencing this abuse impacted your quality of life, including sense of well-being, relationships, finances, etc.

You can see two abuse story examples in the pages that follow. I am willing to assist with editing your story, if that will be helpful.

KI KI SO SO!

Appendix 6: Abuse-Free Shambhala Vision Session Proposal

This is a design for 4 hour vision session presented to Shambhala leaders in the Fall of 2017. They chose not to do this vision session.

This session can be held remotely using Zoom to dialog and a private Facebook group to post photos of art and written insights. Open the session in a way that creates an environment of emotional safety and playfulness.

A certified Soul Art facilitator can lead a Soul Art vision session. Using a strategic expressive art-based vision method produces profound insights and visions (see the DRALA program as an example of this work with leaders

(<http://heroicleadershipcoaching.com/programs/drala/>, and please see below to see an overview of what a typical vision session looks like)

As part of this process, participants have an opportunity to post photos of their art to the private Facebook group, and post their key insights from the process

Follow ups after the vision session can include discussing how the session went, and how the resulting insights from this session could be leveraged as part of a community wide communication. This initial vision session could possibly lead to the next level of visioning, perhaps as an in-person conference later in 2018.

What happens in a Soul Art vision session?

Soul Art is a 5-step visioning process:

A certified Soul Art Guide facilitates a process to identify a clear Intention for your Soul Art journey. By taking the time to identify a clear Intention, you create a powerful guiding light for the rest of the visioning journey.

You are then guided to connect with your Root Chakra. Attending and attuning to this Chakra creates a clear channel for the flow of your Soul wisdom for the session. Next you will draw a body map of your Root Chakra on paper to bring your experience of this Chakra in as the base structure for your Soul Art.

Participants are then lead through a “creativity door” to enter into a creative expression process to create a collage with magazine cutouts. The art you create will be direct communication from your Soul in response to your Intention.

Participants are then guided through an exercise to identify your insights from the Soul Art.

Lastly, you will identify a Spirit Action to activate these insights in your life.

This method is playful in spirit and gives you clear answers to overcome even the biggest challenges so you can move forward with creating the life you desire. It's a lot of fun! No art skill or experience is needed – just bring your desire for clarity and to have a fun experience. Leave with a powerful sense of purpose, direction and inner alignment!

