



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, and INCLUSION at Tara Mandala: PURVIEW and SCOPE

GROUND:

Beings across the globe encounter a wide variety of oppression, prejudices, and privileges in their real lived experience. Given the history of slavery, genocide of Indigenous people, and repression and exploitation of marginalized groups in the foundations of American economic and social systems, in the spirit of our Chöd lineage, we recognize that we must sever our attachment to white supremacy and keep these issues at the forefront of our mission and teachings. The histories of imperialism, slavery, colonization, and oppression are present throughout the globe and apply to every aspect of social organization. The EDI Council is dedicated to recognizing the unique and relevant ways white supremacy is at play in the settings of the global Tara Mandala Sangha, and we can utilize our Chöd lineage in how we respond.

Within the organization of Tara Mandala, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Council is the hub of the mandala that constellates these efforts to sever our attachment to the privilege of white supremacy and to keep these issues at the forefront of our activities and practices. Even as we acknowledge the concepts of race, sex, gender, sexuality, and bodily ability, etc. to be fundamentally transient and illusory, we commit ourselves to applying our lineage teachings to collective liberation within the Sangha and for all beings.

PATH:

The purpose of Tara Mandala's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work is:

- To promote cultural literacy in our Sangha
- To foster diversity, inclusion, and equity in the Dharma, specifically at Tara Mandala and her global Sangha around the world
- To be a place of refuge and healing for those who have been marginalized, discriminated against, and/or oppressed

- To bring the Dharma principles of compassion, love, wisdom, and interdependence into our relationships and practice path

The EDI council consists of seven Council Members and seven Advisors.

Current EDI Council Members

- Co-Chair Lopön Karla Jackson-Brewer, MS (Senior Teacher)
- Co-Chair Lopön Chandra Easton (Dorje Lopön/ Lead Senior Teacher)
- MacAndrew Jack, PhD (Former President of the Board)
- Celeste Young (Board Member)
- Cady Allione (Executive Director)
- Tenzin Sangpo (Tara Mandala Resident Translator/Librarian)
- Pamela Ambrose (Senior Student and leader of Thousands Arms Sangha)

Current EDI Advisors:

- Sylvie Djeddah (French Sangha leader)
- Iwona Khandro (Polish Sangha Founding member)
- Paul Motaung-Mndaweni (South Africa Sangha Leader and Apprentice Teacher)
- Sazraith Ferguson (Sangha Member)
- Courtni Tansey (Sangha Member)
- Jake Nagasawa (Sangha Member)
- Paula Aranibar (Senior Programs Manager)

The EDI Council identifies, recommends, and supports education and training, including internal-facing training for the staff, board, and teachers as well as external-facing training for the Sangha and global community. This can include supporting the Executive Director in selecting and engaging EDI consultants for the organization, programs such as Severing Attachment to White Supremacy (SAWS) and Transforming Racism, and consulting with teachers and Sangha leaders on predictable challenges with language (such as contextualizing uses of “white” and “black” descriptors of dakinis, or moving beyond heteronormative models of yab yum and guru/consort relationships). Through this, we aspire to preserve the power of the authentic lineages while adapting and applying them to modern understandings of relative harm and how to minimize it. The EDI Council supports accessibility to programs through analysis of how to overcome barriers posed by pricing or the lack of diversity among teachers.

The EDI Council serves as a hub for listening to and addressing examples of harm and grievance around issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, etc. The forms of this listening may involve restorative practices, council practices, or recommendations to the organizational human resource staff.

The EDI Council provides input on issues of marketing, fundraising, and organizational policies to reduce bias, promote inclusion, and reduce harm.

Areas of EDI Contribution:

1. Supporting Affinity groups (BBAIPOC, SAWS, LGBTQIA+) as they arise, and supporting Sanghas who wish to form their own affinity groups
2. EDI Council initiatives for Teachers, Board Members, and Staff
3. Supporting and/or overseeing the creation of relevant sub-committees as appropriate
4. Establishing and nurturing safe/brave spaces for community feedback on EDI-related issues
5. Input/influence in teacher training in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion
6. Supporting visiting teachers with consultation around inclusive methods of teaching and contextualizing delicate topics
7. Receiving EDI-related grievances and making an appropriate response or referral for next steps based on where the complaint originated, be it among the Tara Mandala Staff or Sangha members.

FRUITION:

The EDI Council holds that it is possible for all sentient beings to be liberated from sexism, racism, white supremacy, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and other forms of bias through concerted awareness-raising, severing of attachment to privilege, and practicing the Dharma of our lineages. Tara Mandala can set an example in the Buddhist world and contribute to the blossoming of Dharma as it is applied to dismantling systems of oppression. This fruition is intimately linked to the ongoing acknowledgment of harm and application of view, path, and fruition for the liberation of all beings, such that the ongoing path is also the fruition, and the fruit is the path.