



S H A M B H A L A

## Shambhala Office of Practice and Education

### Program Staff Mandala: Roles and Guidelines

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## I. View

The core path programs of Shambhala are designed to present specific teachings at appropriate points along the student's path. The core path programs include Sutrayana Seminary, Vajrayana Seminary, Warrior Assembly, Scorpion Seal Assemblies and abhishekas. The teachings presented at these residential programs can only be transmitted within a system of support created by acharyas, senior teachers, and advanced practitioners who have a commitment to the Shambhala vision and to helping others along the path.

Being part of the staff for a Shambhala program offers a great service for the Sakyong, acharyas, teachers and practitioners who are traveling the Shambhala Buddhist path. Volunteering as a staff member can also be an enriching and meaningful part of our training and development as Shambhala Warriors. In this way, it is an excellent path of practice in and of itself. Serving as staff for Shambhala core path programs, practitioners will:

- Find delightful and challenging opportunities to work directly and on the spot with their own minds and will find innumerable opportunities to apply the teachings in real situations.
- Gain valuable experience and skills that will lead to further development as mentors, meditation instructors, teachers and leaders of Shambhala.

The staff position descriptions that follow have been developed with input from acharyas, teachers, practice centres and program staff. The positions that are needed for specific programs may vary depending on the location, size and complexity of the program.

## II. Teachers and Teaching Faculty

### *Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche*

The Sakyong is at the centre and heart of all of the Shambhala core path programs. The Sakyong is in attendance and gives teachings at Vajrayana Seminary, abhishekas and the Scorpion Seal Assemblies and Sangha Retreats.

### *Lead Acharya*

The Sakyong appoints one or two Lead Acharyas for his teaching programs – Vajrayana Seminary, Scorpion Seal Assembly, abhishekas. The Lead Acharya(s) serves as the principle reference point for the program and works with the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education (OPE) to invite teaching faculty as needed. During the program, the Lead Acharya acts on behalf of the Sakyong and communicates this information to the program staff. He/She often works closely with the program coordinators; OPE representative and other program staff such as the Head of Practice, Head Meditation Instructor, Garsung and Head of Decorum.

### *Warrior Assembly Directors*

Warrior Assemblies are taught by two teachers, ideally a female and a male. For Warrior Assemblies, Director “A” is the lead teacher and gives the transmission for the Stroke of Ashe and Director “B” gives the Lungta transmission. One or both of the Directors may be an acharya. Regardless of the acharya status, the “A” Director is always the lead teacher. The directors select Shambhala teachers that they would like to invite as Assistant Directors and this process is facilitated through OPE.

### *Sutrayana Seminary Teachers*

For Sutrayana seminars, the teacher combination can be either two acharyas or an acharya and a shastri or senior teacher. As with other programs, the male and female combination works well. The acharya is always considered to be the lead teacher and is usually involved in selecting the co-teacher. The teachers are invited by OPE and the land centres work with the teachers to invite the meditation instructors and support staff.

### *Vajrayana Seminary Teaching Faculty*

At Vajrayana Seminary, in addition to one or two Lead Acharyas, there is faculty of shastris or senior teachers who are invited by the Lead Acharyas. The faculty teaches classes, leads discussion groups and serves as meditation instructors (with fewer students).

### *Scorpion Seal Assemblies Acharya Faculty*

The acharya faculty for Scorpion Seal Assembly is invited by the Ashe Acharya. They lead the practice sessions, serve as discussion group leaders and conduct personal interviews with students as needed.

### *Abhishekas*

The Rigden Abhisheka has one Lead Acharya, appointed by the Sakyong. This acharya will also do the training for the Werma Sadhana, which occurs either before or after the

abhisheka. Other abhishekas may have shastris or senior teachers rather than an acharya as trainers for the sadhana. For more complicated sadhanas such as Vajrayogini, Chakrasamvara and Vajrakiliya, two trainers are needed.

### **III. General Staff Position Descriptions**

#### **A. Core Administration**

*Office of Practice and Education Representative*

*Program Coordinators (2)*

*Assistant Coordinator*

*Materials Manager*

#### **Shambhala Office of Practice and Education**

As part of the core administration of Shambhala Programs, an OPE representative is ideally represented at all core path programs. The OPE representative holds the overall view of the core path programs and provides support for the lead teachers, program staff, hosting centre and participants. This position:

- Holds the view of Shambhala core path programs before and during the programs and provides support for the practice centres in hosting the programs.
- Maintains continuity and standards – process, policy, form, rituals, environment and so on.
- Observes and evaluates in order to gather and transfer information to bring continuity and consistency across the mandala.

In attendance at a program the role of the OPE representative is to:

- Ensure that the program and environment reflect Shambhala view and represents the intention of the Sakyong.
- Serve as the reference point for the lead teachers and program coordinators in maintaining the uniformity of the programs' view, curriculum, evaluation and elements
- Limit the administrative details coming to the lead teachers and teaching staff.
- Ensure that all teacher (acharya) protocols are followed throughout the program
- Act as a protector for the program container.
- Provide a link to core services within the Shambhala mandala (Nalanda Translation Committee, Shambhala Media, other International offices)
- Oversee program expenditures with the land centre finance department.
- Be responsible for all application reviews that may arise on-site at the program from students requesting to participate. This is done in collaboration with the lead teachers
- Make decisions about any changes to the standard program implementation in consultation (as needed) with lead teachers.
- Step in as needed to be part of the program staff as Meditation Instructor or Assistant Director. A lighter student load and responsibility within the program may be necessary depending on the schedule of upcoming programs.

## Program Coordinators

All Shambhala programs will need at least two coordinators, possibly three depending on the size and complexity of the program. Practice centres have found that when possible, it works best to have at least one of the two main coordinators be from outside the practice centre staff. It is helpful if the outside coordinator is very familiar with the practice centre and has sufficient experience in coordinating or staffing large programs. Having this combination of outside and inside coordinators is recommended whenever this is possible.

*Note: Both Shambhala Mountain Center and Karmê Chöling have in-house coordinators who are very experienced with various types of programs.*

It is a good idea to identify coordinators for major programs months in advance and bring them into the early planning discussions between OPE and the practice centre. If possible, it would be helpful to engage the outside coordinator prior to the program. The coordinators could be helpful with:

- Writing and sending the participant letters.
- Reviewing lists of registered participants to ensure that they have been accepted by OPE to the program.
- Helping with staff recruitment.
- Providing information and assistance to program staff as they confirm.
- Arranging for “special needs” of participants as identified by OPE or the land centres.
- Working with other key program staff such as the Head Meditation Instructor to match students with meditation instructors prior to the program.
- Organizing the delek system for the program.
- Assisting with organization of materials for large programs.

### *a) Options for Organizing the Coordination Team*

There are several ways to organize the coordination team and the model used should take into account the needs of the program, teachers and the practice centre. In choosing a model, keep in mind the experience of the coordinators, the experience of the program staff, as well as the skill sets of the coordinators.

- 1) This team can operate using the “Inner/Outer” coordinator model, where one coordinator relates specifically to the inner program mandala and the other acts as liaison between the program and the hosting center. For example, the Inner Coordinator would work more directly with the teachers and program staff, while the Outer Coordinator would relate to specific centre departments such as registration, housing, practice, facilities, etc.
- 2) Coordinators can share responsibilities and alternate days as the point person for the program. In other words, while one coordinator is relating to the current day’s activities, the other is looking ahead to activities that are coming up such as feasts, ceremonies, abhishekas, special events, etc.

3) Coordinator duties can be divided within the program by specific skill sets. For example, one coordinator might work specifically with environmental aspects of the program such as shrine room and special events set-up and the other coordinator relate to program staff and participant issues.

However the coordination team is organized, it is essential that the roles and responsibilities be clearly defined and shared with the lead teachers, faculty, program staff and participants.

*b) Overall Role of Coordinators*

The coordination team serves as glue for all of the different aspects of the program. They understand how the staff mandala should work and assume an overall leadership role for program staff and participants. They are also the point people for the host centre making sure that both the program's needs and the hosting centre's needs are being met.

In selecting coordinator, it is important that these individuals be seasoned students, have experience in coordinating and are able to maintain a sense of composure and awareness of decorum in regards to their body, speech and mind. If the coordinator's mind is speedy or in a state of panic, this will affect the entire program, not to mention that they will crash and burn more quickly during the program. The coordination team should be encouraged to offer support for each other, and coordinators, as with other staff members, should be allowed some "down time" as needed to reduce stress and burn-out.

Finally, in selecting the coordination team for a Shambhala program, it is important to pair experienced Coordinators with those with less experience as a way to mentor and train people to assume more challenging staff positions at future programs.

*c) General Duties of the Land Centre or Lead Coordinator:*

- Be involved with planning for the programs when possible and communicate with OPE several weeks in advance of the program;
- Communicate with land center departments in advance of the program to ensure that there is clarity about the program view, number of participants, special requirements, etc.
- Inform OPE of any special issues that need to be brought to the attention of the lead teachers.
- Communicate with program staff prior to the program.
- Be familiar with roles and responsibilities of each staff position.
- Manage the details of the programs by delegating and helping the other staff members understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Organize a social for lead teachers, program staff and land centre staff before participants arrive to make introductions and welcome program staff to the centre.

*Note: Shambhala Mountain Center offers a very nice social gathering on the evening before participants arrive. It is attended by lead teachers; program staff and centre staff and is a good way for everyone to get to know each other before the program begins.*

- Lead the land centre orientation and invite key land centre staff to attend. During the participant orientation, it is good to introduce the various department heads

and allow them and opportunity to present information that is relevant to the program.

- Chair daily morning meetings, which typically include Coordinators, Lead Teacher(s), Garsung, Court Representative (when the Sakyong is teaching), Head Meditation Instructor, Head of Practice and OPE representative to coordinate the activities of the day and coming days.

*Note: A good way to organize the meeting is for the coordinator to ask for agenda items from everyone present. This process also works well for organizing the general staff meeting that is usually scheduled during work period. Agenda items can be by department.*

- Maintain the overall program schedule and work out the daily schedule in consultation with the acharya. The schedule for the following is ideally posted the preceding day before the final practice session (i.e. day 3 schedule is posted toward the end of day 2).
- Oversee the flow of the day's events.
- Manage the program staff and attend daily staff meetings.
- Make daily announcements.

*Note: It is best to not make announcements following a teaching if at all possible. Remember to dismiss the lead teachers and dignitaries beforehand. If there are announcements that the teachers or dignitaries need to hear, give those first and then dismiss them.*

#### *Working with Schedules:*

The Lead Teachers usually have a draft program schedule prior to the program. This will be provided to the coordinators either from the lead teacher or from OPE. This schedule typically changes several times during the program and it would be good if the coordinators were skilled with Word and Excel applications so that updates can be made during the program, if necessary (sometimes staff simply make notes).

*Note: The program schedule is only shared with the program staff and should not be shared with participants before or during the program. It is likely to change several times.*

In addition to the overall program schedule, the coordinators are responsible for creating and posting a daily schedule for participants and program staff.

*Notes: It is helpful to provide daily schedules for the first three days of the program and include them in the packets that participants receive at registration. This helps them to settle and have some idea of what they will be doing.*

*It is also helpful to create a written schedule for program staff that includes their activities for the days preceding participant arrival – including set-up, meetings, meal times, etc.*

Sometimes it is helpful to provide two levels of the daily schedule – Outer, for the participants and inner for the program staff.

Outer schedule: This is the schedule posted for participants. It should be quite simple. It is often posted in more than one location – Post meditation hall, dining tent, etc.

Inner schedule: This schedule includes all information in the outer schedule, plus information pertaining only to the staff and faculty (meetings, staff practice sessions etc.) This is generally circulated to the staff/faculty at daily staff meetings and posted in area designated only for program staff.

### **Assistant Coordinator(s)**

This position can be an excellent training or mentoring situation for up and coming program coordinators.

- Assist the coordinator in performing their duties, since coordinators can't be everywhere at once.
- Troubleshoot and take responsibility in areas that need help, such as banquets, vow ceremonies, special events, materials, etc.

#### *Working with Materials*

Warrior Assemblies, Vajrayana Seminaries, abhishekas and Scorpion Seal Assemblies all have a lot of materials to work with and various protocols for distribution. The responsibility for managing and inventorying materials is the responsibility of the program administration (OPE representative and coordinators). It is important to keep in mind that if materials must be properly accounted for, so that the land centres do not accrue any additional costs of paying for the materials that were damaged or not distributed.

Here are some guidelines:

1. The materials need to be shipped to one specific person at the land centre.
2. The materials have to be counted and any damaged goods should be accounted for.
3. The centre's finance department and the venders (Shambhala Media or Nalanda Translation Committee) need to be informed as soon as possible of any problems with the goods received (i.e. damaged goods, wrong quantity, etc).
4. Materials are usually distributed with some ceremony at the programs and so the Heads of Practice and Decorum can become involved in organizing materials for distribution.
5. Once materials have been distributed, the remaining materials can either be shipped back to the venders or purchased by the gift shop or Samadhi cushions. This final step is always the most difficult but needs oversight by either the OPE representative or one of the program coordinators. Please check with the land centre to determine how they want to handle any extra materials.

*Note: The vendors often have special standards for return shipments. Also, some goods are returned to Canada while other might go to a North American location. The person taking responsibility for materials should contact the vendors before materials are packed and shipped.*

## **B. Dorje Kasung**

*Garsung*

*Assistant Garsung*

*Desung*

*Sergeant*

The Garsung and Garsung staff play a key role at all of Shambhala programs. The lead Kasung for these events, the Garsung, is considered to be part of the teaching mandala for programs like Warrior Assembly, Sutrayana and Vajrayana Seminary. The role of Garsung for abhishekas focuses on the protection of the container, for the Sakyong and the acharyas. At all programs, the Garsung should be an experienced Kasung and familiar with all of the teacher and container protocols. Individuals are invited to serve as the Garsung by the Dorje Kasung Field Commander based on recommendations and approval by the lead acharya/teachers.

### **Garsung**

It is essential that the Garsung be in regular communication with the coordinators and lead teachers about the day's events. The Garsung or Garsung staff representative should attend the morning meetings.

In general the Garsung:

- Is the Head of Command for the Garsung Staff.
- Is part of the teaching mandala and will give a talk on Kasung practice at Sutrayana Seminary, Warrior Assembly and Vajrayana Seminary.
- Works with the acharya/teachers to present and implement protector practice at the program.
- Oversees the integrity of the program container and works to provide a secure and safe environment.

### **Assistant Garsung**

- Assists the Garsung in coordinating all aspects of kasungship and protector practice at the program.
- Works directly to train and teach the basics of kasung practice to the participants.

### **Desung**

The Desung is an essential player in the area of Health and Well-being. It is highly recommended that there be at least one Desung at every program. Some land centres have found that one Desung for every 25 – 30 participants is a good model. However, this may be impractical for most programs.

*General Duties:*

- Applies Desung training and skills in the area of health and well being to ensure that participants receive proper support. Desung often take the big view of

- participant well being at the program.
- Works closely with the health and well-being program staff to coordinate activities and roles during the program.
- Can serve as a meditation instructor or assistant director during Sutrayana Seminars, Warrior Assemblies and Vajrayana Seminars.
- Works with the Head Dekyong and other program staff positions, local care council to deal with situations as they arise.

### **Sergeant**

- Oversees drill and the daily raising and lowering of the flags.
- Offers instruction for participants on proper uniform and Kasung protocols.

## **C. Court Positions**

*Court Commander*

*Head of Household*

*Kusung*

*Shabchis (Sakyong Wangmo)*

*Secretaries*

*Machen*

When the Sakyong is teaching at a Shambhala Program, particularly any international or extended program at a Shambhala land center, several personnel will support him to establish a Court mandala. The establishment of the Court mandala is vital in order for the Sakyong to manifest appropriately and offer his teachings to the participants.

The Court mandala is established wherever the Sakyong resides during the program – such a location necessarily manifests as his Court. Various personnel will support the Sakyong at the Court: Kusung, household staff, Machen (cooks), and Kasung guards. Likewise, the Sakyong’s Chief of Staff and/or secretaries who are responsible for the communication between the Sakyong and the program staff will likely be present at the Court. If the Sakyong Wangmo is in residence at the Court, shabchis (Tibetan. for “attendant”) will be present to serve her.

### **Court Commander**

There are two primary persons who oversee the Court mandala. A senior Kusung will be appointed as the Court Commander. S/he oversees all Kusung operations and also oversees the operations, environment, harmony and protection of the entire Court mandala, and the Sakyong’s activities beyond the Court for the duration of the program (in Kasung parlance, a program is referred to as “a campaign”).

### **Head of Household**

A Head of Household is likewise responsible for the Court environment. This person oversees civilian service, special events, housekeeping, and fosters a sense of delight and celebration amongst the staff. The Head of Household is also responsible for invoking efficiency and harmony amongst all members of the Court staff.

### **Kusung and Shabchi**

The Sakyong travels with two Kusung who are known as Continuity Kusung because they are responsible for ensuring continuous service and protection for the Sakyong. Additional Kusung are needed for service at residential programs and are invited through the Kusang Arm of the Dorje Kasung. These Kusang often come for only two or three days of service during a program. As the Continuity Kusung serve the Sakyong on a daily basis for extended periods of time, they are typically a good reference point for Court service and other input regarding the Sakyong’s wishes. Likewise, if the Sakyong

Wangmo will be in residence at the Court, she will be attended by one or more Continuity Shabchi.

## **Secretaries**

The Office of the Sakyong will invite regional secretaries to serve during the Sakyong's teaching programs. There are generally two to four secretaries who alternate days in service to the court. The Secretary of the Day is the main contact between the Court and the program staff and is in attendance at the morning meetings with the lead teachers, Garsung, Program Coordinator, Head of Practice, Head Chopon and other positions as appropriate to the program.

## **Machen**

There is a trained corps of machen who cook for the Sakyong and the household during programs. The machen for programs are invited through the Machen Corps.

The above personnel, as well as the Kusung of the Day, a secretary, and a Kasung representative will generally meet every morning at the Court to discuss the day's schedule and coordinate logistics to support the Sakyong. To ensure consistent and clear communication a Court representative, usually the Secretary of the Day attends the morning meetings with the lead teachers, program coordinators OPE representative, Head of Practice, etc.

## **D. Practice and Shrine Room**

*Head of Practice*

*Head Chopon*

*Shrine Room Coordinator*

*Contemplative Meal Coordinator(s)*

*Audio and Video Coordinator(s)*

The practice mandala is central to all Shambhala programs and a well-organized practice mandala is essential in helping participants settle into the routine of the program and maintain a level of sanity throughout the program. There should be a minimum of three main staff positions assigned to the practice mandala for every program. For large, more complex programs such as Vajrayana Seminary and Warrior Assembly, it is usually helpful to add a Practice Assistant, Assistant Chopon and Assistant Shrine Room Coordinator for a total of six positions. Depending on the participant pool, some or all of these assistant positions may be part of the permanent rota positions.

### **Head of Practice**

The Head of Practice is a senior position in the staff mandala and assumes the leadership role in the shrine room in order to maintain a well-organized practice situation. This position ideally will be held by a senior practitioner who has previous experience as program staff and is well versed in the ritual protocols and practices that are introduced in a particular program.

For large programs such as Vajrayana Seminary and Warrior Assemblies, it is recommended that the Head of Practice not serve as a meditation instructor or assistant director. If this is not possible because of limited staff, the Head of Practice should be given fewer students.

#### *General Duties*

- Coordinate with the host center's practice department in advance to ensure all the needed shrine room materials are available.
- Arrive in advance of the program (two or three days as determined by the land centre) for set-up and take responsibility for the shrine room set-up prior to the participant arrival.
- Have ongoing contact with the lead teachers throughout the program to discuss shrine room and practice issues that may arise.
- Is responsible for the distribution of program materials, which will involve coordinating with the materials management person.
- Coordinates with Head of Decorum for ceremonial activities in the shrine room.
- Works with the host center's practice department to have chant books in the shrine room. Chants may vary by program. Consult the specific program guidelines or contact OPE for clarification.
- Works with the Oryoki Master or Contemplative Meal Coordinator for organizing

- the meal(s) in the shrine room and practice protocols.
- Organizes the opening and closing lhasangs, working with the chopon, Dorje Kasung, host center's practice department and the lead teachers for the program.

*Note: Once the lhasang flag bearers are identified by the lead teachers, it is a good idea to meet with them to review how this will work during the lhasang.*

- Attends all morning meetings with the lead teachers, coordinators, Head Meditation Instructor/Assistant Director, OPE representative, Garsung, Secretaries to the Sakyong, Court representative (when the Sakyong is present), acharya secretaries and other key staff as needed.

*Note: For Warrior Assemblies, it is helpful to include the Head of Decorum in the morning meetings for the first several days until the materials are distributed. For Scorpion Seal Assemblies, the Audio person should be there since the teachings are presented via an iPod.*

- Coordinates with lead teacher, Head Chopon or other senior practitioner staff members for participant training for the Sadhana of Mahamudra and other abhishekas that may occur during programs.

## **Head Chopon (Shrine Master)**

The Head Chopon also holds a leadership role over the practice environment and should be considered the second in command. The chopon should be a senior practitioner and well trained in the all of the ritual aspects of the practice environment. In general, this position is an extension of the Vajra Master and the shrine, and for programs where the Sakyong is present, works closely with him to maintain the environment necessary for the teaching situation. The Sakyong often requests that the most senior chopons be on staff for his teaching programs. It is important that the Head Chopon attend the morning meetings at programs with the Sakyong, as changes in the daily schedule often require changes in offerings.

At the request of the Sakyong, chopon training and the development of the *Chopon Corps* across the mandala began in 2008. The purpose of this is to create more consistency in the chopon skills, shrine and shrine room protocols across the mandala, develop a skilled team of chopons who can support abhishekas and other large programs and provide support for their local centers. The chopon position can be scaled down for less elaborate programs such as Warrior Assemblies and Sutrayana Seminars. However, it is strongly recommended that there always be a chopon presence at all Shambhala programs as a way to reflect and teach by example the sacred outlook of the forms that we use to enhance our practice.

### *General duties*

- Is responsible for all ritual protocols in the shrine room.
- Works with practice centre in advance to determine what offerings will be needed and ensure they are ordered far enough ahead of time.
- Is responsible for offerings at lhasangs.
- Assumes a main role in set-up and take down of the shrines and thrones.

- Attends morning meetings as necessary.
- Trains assistant chopon (s) and shrine keepers during the program.
- Is responsible for abhishekas and feast shrine set-up.
- Is responsible for tormas making and leadership for feast preparations.
- Assists the lead teachers with lighting the shrine before talks and offers this to other staff members and participants as appropriate.
- Provides training for participants interested in chopon practice (if time allows during the program).
- Performs other tasks to assist with the practice mandala as determined by the Head of Practice.
- The chopon does not usually serve as a meditation instructor for Vajrayana Seminary.

While the Shambhala programs provide an excellent opportunity to identify and train participants who have an interest in the chopon path, it is important to protect the integrity of the practice mandala by not creating too much disruption with novice chopons assuming certain roles during the program. Programs where the Sakyong is not present are the best situations for training.

## Fire Chopon

The Fire Chopon was introduced into the staff mandala for the Scorpion Seal Assemblies and at this point, is only needed for those programs. This position is responsible for the ongoing lhasang outside the practice area and assists the Head Chopon and chopon team with the opening and closing lhasangs. The Fire Chopon's role can become extensive and will require a person with good stamina.

### *General Duties for ongoing lhasang:*

- Responsible for the set-up of the ongoing lhasangs outside the practice area. Either the Fire Chopon or Head Chopon should be in touch with the Practice Department at the land centre in advance to make sure they have all of the items that are needed: outdoor fire pits with screens and stands between waist and heart level (if possible); hatchet, clippers and juniper; wood for fire (small pieces)
- Identify permanent Rota people as assistants and schedule shifts.

*Note: At minimum, the lhasang should be burning during the entrance and exit of the major four practice periods. The lhasang does not necessarily have to be burning during tea breaks, or other short breaks in the practice. However, the more offering the better.*

- Throughout the program, be in regular communication with the land centre land steward (Mainly just for SMC. Comparable positions at the other land centres may not apply) about the juniper supply needed for the program. Gathering juniper is very labor-intensive and the land centre may not always have adequate staff to do the gathering with very short notice. If possible, arrange to have this as part of Rota to avoid putting too much strain on land centre staff.

Fire safety is obviously a very important aspect of this position and the person in this position should be very knowledgeable of the appropriate way to arrange and maintain these lhasangs. Some knowledge of how to build a small fire quickly and maintain the coals safely so that the fire will start-up again easily is good to have. The Dorje Kasung may be a good resource for this.

*Note: Be sure that the fire bowl is weighted with rocks in the bottom to ensure that there is no danger of it tipping or blowing over in the wind. And it goes without saying (but we must); an open fire should not be left unattended.*

#### *General Duties for Opening and Closing Lhasangs*

The Sakyong likes to burn several types of local wood as offering during the opening and closing lhasangs. The Fire Chopon should be ready to assist with the gathering of the wood and should work with the land centre staff to make sure there will be plenty of offering wood and juniper for both opening and closing events. The Fire Chopon, Assistant and several of the participants assigned to rota positions should be on hand to offer the wood to the fire. The Fire Chopon should invite or schedule the appropriate number of rota fire chopons to assist.

*Note: The fire for the opening and closing lhasangs have to be very hot in order to receive the various offerings. Once the lhasang has concluded the fire can be doused with milk and water, although it is better if it can be left to burn out naturally. The dousing of the fire falls into the realm of the Dorje Kasang; otherwise it could be attended by someone not attending the program, as participants are usually going back to the shrineroom afterward.*

The Fire Chopon position needs a full-time assistant. Usually 4 rota assignments are needed for a 10 day or two week program.

## **Contemplative Meal Coordinators**

The Contemplative Meal Coordinators oversee the contemplative meals that are served in the shrine room/tent and ideally familiar with the one-bowl meal and/or oryoki styles of service. Before the meal begins, review the proposed form for the contemplative meal with the Head of Practice and/or lead acharya/teacher(s) to make sure that all are in agreement about how this should be done. There are a few variations. The main point is that the meal be considered part of the practice container and be done with elegance and efficiency.

Positions needed are -- Head Umdze, Drummer and a Head Server

*Note: Two or three service teams can be scheduled on the rota for every meal. Another option is to rotate deleks as service teams. It is best to select the option that is simplest and does not over stress the kitchen staff with having to repeat instructions to a new group of servers every day for 10 days.*

### *Sequence of Service*

- Kitchen prepares a nutritious meal that can be stacked in one bowl – grain or pasta and something to put on top. Salad that is already dressed can also work.
- Servers are rung out of shrine room (this can be anywhere from 5 to 30 minutes depending on the cook and logistics of the particular location).
- Head server lets the umdze know the menu for the meal and finds out from the umdze and drummer what they would like to be served.
- The umdze announces the menus to participants

*Note: If the meal is self-service, please remind participants to be mindful in their portions so that everyone will be served. Hopefully, seconds will be available.*

- Head server signals the umdze that the meal is ready with two gongs from the post meditation hall and in turn, the umdze responds from the shrine room with two gongs.
- The beginning of service is signaled by a “clack”.
- The umdze invites the teachers and dignitaries, if present, to go first.
- Participants proceed to leave the shrine room and go through the service lines. The umdze may choose to alternate rows or sections each day.
- During service, the umdze and drummer are served their meals.
- To begin service, the umdze begins the chant (Oohh dharmakaya... the dralas of Dege). This section is repeated until all are served. The chanting starts very, very slowly and with each repetition progressively gets a little faster as does the accompanying drum. As the chant comes to a close it should be lively but not speedy.

*Note: The cadence is kept by the umdze, not the drummer and it is a good idea for these two to rehearse before the first meal.*

- The umdze signals the end of service with a “clack”.
- The umdze leads the offering section of the chant (second stanza). Everyone lifts their bowls while reciting this section and all bow at the end after the line “I invoke all the dralas.... ki ki so so”.
- The leftover offering can be 1) provided by everyone, 2) provided only by the umdze, or 3) provided only by the front row (usually dignitaries). This will depend on the size of the program. The Meal Coordinators can make the decision. If everyone does the offering, participants should be instructed to put aside a portion, which is usually placed on a napkin.
- The Head Server lets the umdze know if seconds are available and the umdze will “clack” to signal that people can go for seconds. No particular order of service is necessary.
- After seconds have been served, the servers or the chopon will pick-up the leftovers.
- To end the meal, the umdze leads the Preta Invocation.
- Leftovers are placed by the servers into one large bowl and the server or chopon places incense on the offerings and stands facing the shrine with the bowl raised at head level. At the end of the offering section, the server bows, takes the leftovers outside and offers them in a designated place (the practice centre may

have a special area for offerings so please check with them). Offerings are usually placed in a clean place where people do not walk.

- If only the umdze makes the offering, one of the servers or chopon will collect the offering and place it on the shrine. The chopon can make the offering with the Preta Innovation or at the end of the day, which ever seems most appropriate. This can be decided by the Meals Coordinators.
- The umdze signals the end of meal with two rings of the gong.
- After the meal, rearrange the shrine room if needed and ask people to stay for announcements.
- Participants are dismissed with the rin.

*Note: The bowls and chopsticks can be cleaned on or near the practice area, or stacked in the post meditation hall and returned to the dish room. The servers are responsible for returning the cleaned bowls to the practice area so they are ready for the next meal.*

The Contemplative Meal Coordinator will work with a drummer and the Head Server to determine the best approach for this practice. Small oryoki tables are sometimes used for this meal but it is not necessary and sometimes becomes more complicated in determining how the tables are distributed. Having the people at the end of the row distribute the tables can work well if the program is not too large.

## **Shrine Room Coordinator**

This position must arrive at least two days in advance of the program.

- Assists the Head of Practice and Head Chopon as needed throughout the program.
- Prepares the shrine room rota and shares this information with the Rota Master prior to participant arrival.
- Prepares the daily schedule for all of the shrine room positions.
- Organizes shrine room training for drumming, umdze, gatekeeper, etc. for participants during the program.
- Prepares a written description and the duties for each shrine room position and has these available for review at each position.
- Organizes shrine room seating as needed for special events, practice sessions (like stroke), abhishekas, ceremonies, meals.
- Works with the Head of Decorum and/or the Sakyong's Secretaries to determine VIP seating as appropriate during the program.

More detailed information on the protocol for seating will be available soon from the Shambhala Office of Culture and Decorum. In the meantime, dignitaries should be seated using the Three Pillar Model – Church, Government and Military.

## **Audio and Video Coordinator**

This position falls within the practice area because the audio/video personnel will need to coordinate their activities with the Head of Practice and Shrine Room Coordinator for set-up and to be kept informed of each day's events. The coordinator is typically the most

experienced person on the audio/video crew.

The audiovisual functions at programs are critical and these positions should be filled by individuals with experience in sound systems, audio recording and video recording at the practice centre venue. While it is important that all teachings from all programs be heard clearly by all participants, it is also critical that the quality of recording for all of the Sakyong's teachings are of highest quality. The audio and video recordings of the Sakyong are carefully catalogued and archived to ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

Karmê Chöling, Dechen Chöling and Dorje Denma Ling have established mentoring relationships with audio/video experts in their regions. These relationships have worked very well in keeping technical expertise available and consistent year after year. The mentor is usually a volunteer with professional experience, who is willing to work in exchange for program credit.

*Notes: One of the most important aspects of preparing for sound and video recording is with the set-up. Practice centres that are planning for large programs should definitely have the sound situation in mind in the very early set-up stages. It would be a good idea to have an expert there to assist in doing this, keeping in mind the various programs that are scheduled.*

*During set-up it is important to lay out the sound system cabling so that a minimum of trouble-shooting is needed later. Wired microphones for teacher and umdze, cabled back to the sound table, provide better quality sound for the audience, for transcription and archiving. Wireless microphones mounted on stands for participant questions, need fresh batteries daily, and an experienced technician to raise and lower levels during exchanges with teachers. (The Sound Re-enforcement Set-up section of the Recordings Handbook, 2011 version, mentioned below, gives further detail on these issues).*

For Warrior Assemblies, Sutrayana Seminaries, etc. it is recommended that there be at least one well-trained audio person on the program staff to oversee the sound quality and recording of teachings during the program. If this is not possible, an experienced participant can take this on as a permanent rota assignment if there is technical support from the land centre staff. Scorpion Seal Assembly Year Two can be supported with two audio personnel. A videographer is necessary only when the Sakyong makes an appearance.

For programs where the Sakyong is teaching, it is recommended that there be at least two positions on staff, two for audio and one for video. Most Sakyong programs can also enlist permanent rota assignments to assist but there should always be qualified sound and video personnel on staff to oversee this area. The Sakyong's video camera kit now travels to all of his programs, eliminating the cost to centres of providing video equipment.

The policies and procedures for the Sakyong's teachings are available from the Kalapa Recordings (Gordon Kidd, Technical Director <gkidd@shambhala.org>), the land centres

and the Office of Practice and Education. It is strongly recommended that the individuals assuming the positions as Audio and Video Coordinators review these policies prior to the program.

### **Assistants for all Practice positions**

Each of the positions described above may require assistant positions. When appropriate, these assistant positions can be filled through permanent rota; however, for large programs having assistants as part of the staff is highly recommended.

## **E. Area of Study, Student and Teacher Support**

*Head Meditation Instructor/Assistant Director  
Secretary to the Acharya or Acharya Faculty*

### **Head Meditation Instructor**

This is an important position in all Shambhala Programs and is ideally reserved for a meditation instructor who is developing along the teaching path. It is a position that requires skills in leadership and mentorship, as well as teaching, and should be reserved for an advanced student. It will work best if the person assigned this position begins well in advance of the program (two months to two weeks) to assist the practice centre and the program coordinators. The Head Meditation Instructor may also need to be in touch with the Lead Teachers prior to the program to determine any special issues that need to be addressed and find out how the Teachers want to organize various aspects of the program such as deleks, assignment of meditation students, discussion groups, individual interviews, etc.

#### *General duties*

- Assigns students to Meditation Instructors/Assistant Directors, prior to the participant arrival. If possible, the participant list can be shared in advance of the program in case any changes need to be made.

*Note: It is recommended that the Head of Practice and the Head of Directors Service not serve as meditation instructors or assistant directors during the program. If this is not possible, they should be given fewer no more than four or five students.*

- Works with the program coordinators to choose the location for the interviews and the discussion groups and posts the lists of participants and staff.
- Creates the agenda and then leads the Meditation Instructor/Assistant Directors meetings.
- Attends the morning meetings with the lead teachers.
- Keeps his/her fingers on the pulse of the study through communication with the meditation instructors/assistant directors and works to incorporate study sessions into the schedule.
- Reminds the staff regularly of the proper forms that are being practiced at the program. For example, at some programs such as Warrior Assembly, using Mr. and Mrs. as forms of address are often used among the staff form of address; therefore, setting an example for participants of formality and respect.
- Near the end of the program, initiates the collection for the heart gift for the directors in consultation with the program coordinators.

### **Secretary to Acharya and Acharya Faculty**

This position functions mainly as an administrative assistant but may also involve duties similar to an attendant. This will depend on the program and needs of the acharya. When there is a faculty of acharyas, there is one secretary for the lead and one for the faculty.

The Assistant will work directly with the lead acharya or lead teacher to determine the level of support needed for a particular program. Generally, the duties may include:

- Providing administrative support to the teachers. This may include tasks such as making copies, printing documents, and/or having materials available for distribution to program participants. Access to a computer and email is handy for this position.
- Attending to the personal needs of the teachers, i.e. making sure they have service when they are in meetings, lunch available if they are not attending one-bowl meals, snacks available in their suite, etc.
- Coordinate with the person in charge of teacher and dignitary service (see section on Culture and Environment for a description) to make sure lunch is available if the acharyas are not joining the program participants in the shrine room or dining tent (at some programs, they eat separately with each other or participants).
- Schedule interviews requested by participants.

If there are two lead teachers, it is a good idea to have two secretaries. For large more complicated programs like Vajrayana Seminary, the secretaries and divide their duties to accommodate the needs of the teachers and the program.

*Note: At the 2010 Vajrayana Seminary, the two acharya secretaries divided with duties with one relating to inner program issues and the other handling most of the administrative tasks for both teachers.*

A related position for teacher support is Teacher and Dignitary Service, included under the section Culture and Environment.

## **F. Health and Well-Being**

*Head Dekyong*

*Health and Well-Being Coordinator*

*Desung (See Dorje Kasung Section)*

Every Shambhala Program creates a community of support for participants and is designed to reflect the principles of enlightened society in their approach to working with each other. Warrior Assemblies and Sutrayana Seminars can offer an excellent training ground for participants in Shambhala community life since these programs are usually the first experience students have of a residential program.

At Shambhala programs the delek system is used as a way to provide support for participants. Delek means “good happiness” in Tibetan. Lek means “good” and de means “bliss” or “happiness.” So good bliss or good happiness is the name for a grouping of Shambhala program participants and staff. A member of a delek is called a delekpa and the leader of the delek is the Dekyong, protector of the happiness or bliss. Through the delek system, Shambhala program participants meet and socialize with other participants and it functions like a clan or extended family.

For more information on deleks, visit <http://www.halifax.shambhala.org/deleks.php>

*The delek system has been used as an added support for the Health and Well-being component of the program. A good example of this occurred at the Scorpion Seal Assembly Year 2 at Dorje Denma Ling in 2010. The participants were organized by housing and Dekyongs were recruited prior to the program. The Dekyongs were available to participants to handle minor emergencies and provide information. This system allowed the Health and Well-being staff and Desung to focus on more serious situations. The Dekyongs were given a lighter rota assignment.*

### *Ways to Organize Deleks*

At most programs participants are assigned to Meditation Instructors/Assistant Directors and discussion groups by Deleks. Shrine room seating is also organized by Deleks. The meditation instructors/assistant directors sometimes serve as Dekyongs and can work with participant Dekyongs who are identified by the group through the process of “spontaneous insight”. This model is an excellent way to provide training/mentoring for new Dekyongs. On the other hand, it can become a little isolating for participants and staff by limiting their opportunities to meet others at the program.

Another few points:

- Deleks work well when organized geographically by participant housing.
- Some programs have worked well having a separate Delek for program staff. This can be a very effective way to offer them support.
- Typically, there are several participants who are also land centre staff. Sometimes these individuals are grouped as one Delek. However, a preferred approach is to

- mix these individuals into the larger Delek situation.
- Participants can be asked to work out any changes in their rota assignments through their delek first. This helps to reduce the number of rota announcements during the program and a lot of extra work by the Rota Coordinator.

## Head Dekyong

The Head Dekyong works throughout the program as a point person and mentor for the Dekyongs. This is a particularly important position for Sutrayana Seminary and Warrior Assembly since these programs are an introduction for most students into Shambhala world and its forms and protocols. In general, this position serves as the point person for the Dekyongs and can be useful as well for Vajrayana Seminary and Scorpion Seal Assemblies. They usually are not necessary for abhishekas unless the program is very large.

### *General duties:*

- Works with the Head Meditation Instructor/Assistant Director and the coordinators prior to the program to help organize the delek system.
- Meets with Dekyongs several times during the program for training and support.
- Provides written information for Dekyongs describing the position.
- Provides Dekyong with a list of their Delekpas, their assigned housing and a map of the land centre.
- Provides support for the Dekyongs and educates them about the support service available at the program (such as recovery groups, medical professionals, Health and Well Being Coordinator, Dorje Kasung and Desung).
- Assists with getting information to participants about special diet and special food storage options at the land centre.

*Note: It has been suggested that some of the points covered in the land centre orientation be introduced or reviewed again in delek meetings (since often participants are tired and do not hear important information at these orientations).*

## Health And Well-Being Coordinator

The role involves relating to participants' well being physically, emotionally and psychologically. A person with counseling experience works well. This person works closely with the Desung and the Head Dekyong and is usually "on call" throughout the program as the primary contact for participants who may experience emotional or psychological challenges during the program.

*Note: It would be a good idea to identify from the participant list, those who have medical training and assign them to rota in the Health and Well-being area. This is highly recommended for large programs of more than 50 participants.*

### *General Duties:*

- Review the health forms distributed to participants at registration to identify those with special needs.

- Makes contact with participants identified as potentially needing some support.
- Is “on call” during the program in case of emergency situations.
- Works with the Head Dekyong and Dekyongs as needed.
- Coordinates with the Desung.

The Desung is an important position in this area and a description of that position is included in the section on the Dorje Kasung.

## **G. Community and Land Centre Support**

*Rota Coordinator*

*Meals and Hospitality Coordinators*

*Facilities Support*

The Rota Coordinator is necessary for all programs. Additional support for the land centre with Meals, Hospitality and the Facilities may be useful depending on the core staff situation at the land centre and the size and complexity of the program. The decision about this should come from the land centre, whose staff will know best what would be most useful to support the program.

### **Rota Coordinator**

An efficient and kind rota system is key to a good experience for the participants. Although some participants may be well accustomed to rota or staffing Shambhala programs, many are not, and this is their first experience of the rota, which sometimes comes as a shock.

Basically, the Rota Coordinator needs to have as big a view as possible of how the program will operate while paying particular attention to the mundane level of simple mechanics. Once this is in place, then the master rota schedule can be prepared. There will need to be some flexibility with the schedule because as the program settles there are likely to be several adjustments to the rota schedule.

Some centres like to pre-assign rota positions before the participants arrive and negotiate if any problems arise. Another alternative is to have participants sign up for certain rota assignments at registration. For large programs, the pre-assigned model seems to work best. Land centres often contact registered participants in advance and ask them if they have any rota preferences.

*Note: Shambhala Mountain Center assigns rota before the participants arrive and typically has one of the SMC coordinators assume the Rota Coordinator duties. This usually works well, however, for advanced programs, that the Shambhala Mountain staff person might not be eligible for or programs with a large number of participants, it is highly recommended that there be an internal rota coordinator who can deal directly with the participants as issues arise.*

#### *General Duties:*

- Become as familiar with the overall mandala starting with the general rota needs of the land centre.
- Get information from the centre about past programs.
- Determine any special needs of the upcoming program, accessing from the land centre how many people, per job, per day.
- Check with each of the program departments (i.e. practice and shrine room, meals and service, etc) to determine their needs for permanent rota positions.

*Notes: Some programs like Scorpion Seal Assemblies will use rota assignments to fill assistant staff positions in areas of shrine room, Ikebana, meals and service.*

*For large programs or programs with a high percentage of participants over age 50, the Health and Well-being area will need support. Participants with medical training can be identified from the participant pool and given permanent rota assignments in this area. Be sure to check with the participant first before assigning.*

A successful strategy that helps to reduce the ongoing announcements regarding missed rota shifts is to encourage participants to try to swap unworkable or desirable shifts on their own with other participants in their delek. This usually works well and can save lots of time and confusion for the rota and program coordinators. Sometimes participants are given the schedule of all of the participants in their delek so that it is easy to make changes.

The rota schedule should be displayed in a prominent place at the centre.

## **Meals and Hospitality Coordinator**

Food and mealtimes are often very hot topics at programs and there can sometimes be a lot of activity associated with providing a supportive environment for participants with special diets or general neurosis around food. The overall purpose of this position is to provide some support for the land centre kitchen staff and/or the program coordinators by helping to organize and be a liaison between the program and land centre kitchen staff. If the program is very large, this may need to be split into two positions, one to cover dining issues and one to relate to hospitality offered in the tea service area.

*Note: Dorje Denma Ling uses one general meal coordinator for dining tent and the contemplative meal (set-up and procedures). They also have a hospitality coordinator who manages the tea service area.*

### *General Duties*

- Work directly with participants who have special diet needs and explain the protocols for that particular land centre and program.
- Act as liaison with the kitchen staff providing feedback from the program, information about upcoming events, etc.
- Coordinate the rota around the tea service area to make sure it is well stocked with hot water, coffee, teas, fruit and bread.

## **Facilities Support**

This position is used frequently at Dorje Denma Ling. The purpose is to provide support to the land centre facilities crews. The general duties for this position will depend upon the specific needs of the land centre and a particular program.

## **H. Culture and Decorum**

*Head of Decorum*

*Decorum Assistant*

*Special Events Coordinator*

*Dignitary Service and Hospitality*

### **Head of Decorum**

The Dorje Dradül chose the word decorum because it is connected in sound with both decency and decorating. Decorum brings together the inner quality of gentleness and the outer expression of elegance. The forms that are used at Shambhala programs not only provide a way to beautify and uplift the environment, but decorum is an important practice that further connects practitioners to the teachings and world of Shambhala.

Decorum serves as a continual reminder of the fact that we create this world together. Decorum is particularly important as a support for the teachings at Warrior Assembly and Sutrayana Seminary. Participants are introduced, many for the first time, to a wealth of forms and protocols in the Shambhala World. All program staff should include someone on staff to relate to decorum, provide a gentle reminder and be a reference point for questions from students about Shambhala forms and protocols.

There should be at least one decorum talk at all programs that should include some overall of the following topics depending on the program:

1. Shrine Hall Etiquette: Bowing; standing and bowing to shrine when Director enters for talks; maintaining posture and waiting for bells to leave; treatment of practice materials: Please don't put texts or chants on the floor (on zabutons is fine), but never step over a text or practice table or over someone's practice materials.
2. Creating our environment: Types of events and proper attire; socializing – scheduling, cocktails and/or western dinner for teachers and participants; meal time forms including table manners, chants, smoking, etc: including rota tasks and other work as part of our practice.
3. Working with hierarchy: Service to the teachers and each other offers us the opportunity to learn the forms and practice precision, discretion and unobtrusiveness; in being a guest, as each person will have the chance to do, we can learn how to be gracious and unembarrassed. Kasung practice defines further the boundaries of the mandala.

*Note: Particularly Sutrayana Seminary and Warrior Assemblies, there is often a lot of new information on the forms and protocols, which is difficult for participants to absorb in one talk. Another approach is to offer small reminders throughout the program – such as decorum “tip of the day” as a way to offer decorum teachings and protocols. There should always be an open situation of inquiry and exploration on our use of these forms.*

Finally, for Warrior Assembly and Sutrayana Seminary, it is usually appropriate if the schedule allows having a second decorum talk about maintaining the discipline through the end of the program and how to carry decorum into out daily lives.

#### *General Duties*

- Coordinates with the teachers and Head of Practice to determine the ceremonies scheduled for the program i.e. distribution of texts, pins, etc.
- Creates the seating assignments for dignitaries of the three pillars, coordinating with the shrine room coordinator and/or Sakyong's secretaries on shrine room seating.
- Oversees the set-up for ceremonies in the shrine room and lhasangs, coordinating with the Head of Practice, Head Chopon and others as appropriate.
- For Warrior Assemblies in particular, prepares invitations with plain cards and envelopes for participants and staff who will be formally invited to events scheduled throughout the program – i.e. aperitifs or meals with the Warrior Assembly Directors, or invitation to join the Directors at the Head table for banquets.
- Recruits a calligrapher, or someone with elegant hand writing to assist you throughout the program in writing up the invitations and calligraphing texts.
- Guides the person serving as Dignitary Service and Hospitality to make ensure the proper procedures and styles of etiquette for table setting and service for dignitary hospitality, banquets and feasts.
- Gently guide participants in the proper table manners for banquets and formal occasions.
- Organizes and works with the Special Events Coordinator to prepare place cards for the Head table seating at banquets working with the lead teachers, head of Dining Service and Dignitary Service.
- Organize the toasts and invites people to offer the lineage toasts.
- Works with the Special Event Coordinator for event making certain that there is reasonable number of offerings and that these are appropriate and in good taste. (For the order of toasts, see Special Events Coordinator)

*Note: At the head tables during banquets the ranking female guest is seated on the right of the male Director and the ranking male guest on the right of the female Director with the hosting Center's Directors, the Assistant Directors, the coordinators and staff considered the ranking personnel.*

- Makes sure there are copies of the meal chants available for participants at all western dining meals.
- Works on head table and dignitary seating for western meals and banquets
- Before the final banquet invites staff and participants to make the toasts and provide this list for the Master of Ceremony (See Special Events Coordinator for toasting protocols).

### **Decorum Assistant**

An assistant is necessary for all Warrior Assemblies and recommended for all other programs. This is an excellent opportunity to mentor someone who has an interest in

## **Special Events Coordinator**

The Special Event Coordinator works closely with the Head of Decorum and is responsible for all of the practical issues related to creating the proper environment for special events such as banquets, cocktail gatherings with teachers and staff, Shambhala Arts demonstrations/performances and any other special events that might occur at programs.

*For Warrior Assembly, Sutrayana Seminary and Vajrayana Seminary there are usually two banquets, one mid-program, and one at the end. Scorpion Seal Assemblies typically have a formal banquet to close the assembly. Other special events can include artistic presentations such as tea ceremony or other Shambhala Arts presentations.*

In relating to the details for events, the Special Events Coordinator also works closely with the Head of Dignitary Service to ensure that they are seated and served properly during special events.

The Special Events Coordinator will need to connect with the coordinators early in the program to review the schedule for the entire program as a way to prepare. In general, a western banquet is the most formal; western dinners are semi formal and picnics and barbecues are cafeteria/buffet style. With consultation from the Head of Decorum, the Special Events Coordinator makes certain that the lead teachers and dignitaries are seated in a prominent place during the event.

### *General Duties*

- Work with the program coordinators to define special events that are planned by the lead teachers.
- Work with Head of Decorum to arrange the seating for head tables at banquets or other dignitary seating as needed.
- Arrange seating for teachers and participants for all events from most formal to casual.
- Work with Head of Dignitary Service to arrange for a system of service for the Head table and for the participants at each meal event.
- Assist as needed in creating the environments for social events where the teachers host small groups of participants.
- Work with the coordinators to manage any rental equipment that is used for events.
- Use the appropriate channels of communication for working with the practice centre kitchen staff. The coordination team will establish this.

### *Preparation for banquets*

The dinners take place in a tent or in a hall indoors. There is a lot of planning that needs to be done before the participants arrive: making sure there are proper arrangements of the head table -- sufficient tables and chairs for participants and a suitable areas for serving for both the participants and head table; renting plates, glasses, silverware, tables, tablecloths, tea and coffee cups and pots, etc., in the correct quantities to list a but a few.

At the end of the program you are also responsible for returning all rentals to their source. This is very important as it can cost a lot of money if not done correctly. So before the end of the program arrange with the coordinators for a crew of people to work on this with you on the last day.

Liaison with the Rota Coordinator to arrange the rota so that you have the same crew for setting the tables during afternoon work period and serving the dinner banquet that evening. The clean up crew can be a completely different set of people that night, so that the job load is distributed equitably. Alternatively the serving crew can be the clean up crew one day and the set up crew can be different. Whatever arrangement you make sure it is clear with the rota people and that you have enough people for each job.

*Note: It is best to have many of these tasks organized several days before the event and there should only be one simple announcement regarding additional rota shifts that may be needed to help with the events.*

#### *Set-up for Banquets*

1. Make sure the floors are cleaned.
2. Organize the table arrangement (a seating chart helps.) Remember servers need to have easy access to tables.
3. Plan for serving stations – it is helpful to have two stations for putting food on plates or bowls, and when plates are removed, to have a service station for scraping plates.
4. Tablecloths on and set the table with flowers, candles, salt and pepper, wine glasses.
5. Chose a Master of Ceremony.
6. Coordinate with the Head of Dignitary Service to make sure there is a well-trained head server.

*Note: There are about six glasses in a regular bottle of wine and nine in a liter. If sherry is served with the soup, small glasses should be used and there are about twelve glasses in a bottle. As a general rule, white wine is served with fish, rose or a light red wine with white meat, red wines with red meats. If the occasion warrants, a sweet white wine or champagne can be served with dessert.*

#### *Head Table*

At formal or semi formal banquets, when the head table enters the Master of Ceremony announces with “All rise for the head table”. Each person at the head table is introduced as they come onto the platform (applause is not appropriate). Everyone remains standing until the head table is seated. The Master of Ceremony will announce the beginning of the meal chant, which is usually led by the lead teacher. Once the chant is done, service begins.

*Note: The Head Table will need two servers in addition to a Head Server.*

#### *Some Service Guidelines*

- Think of service as practice.
- Be formal and relaxed (engaging in conversation only if asked).

- L(ower) to the L(eft) {serve} and R(aise) from the R(ight) {clear}.
- Radiate elegance, richness and generosity.

### *Order of Service*

The Lead Acharyas or Directors are served first. The service follows first to the right and then to the left of him/her and continues in the most orderly fashion possible. Food is served from the left and plates are removed from the right. No plates should be removed from the table until everyone has finished the course. The best service is that which is the least visible, for example there shouldn't be need for much conversation between the servers and guests.

At the participants' tables there are three alternative methods of service:

1. The most formal, employed for banquets: Two people from each table (of six or eight) serve the others - going up to the serving area and bring back the individuals' plates of food. The servers clear table when the meal is finished.
2. At Western Dinners (semi formal): Two people get the serving bowls for the table, and return them at the end of the meal. Tables will need to be cleared by everyone.
3. At picnics and barbeques: Each person serves himself or herself buffet style as they enter the dining area.

The Master of Ceremony should announce the serving style that is taking place at the event before the arrival of the head table.

### *Chants*

The Shambhala meal chant is used for all dining events. Copies should be available on the tables at those programs where participants are likely to not have this memorized. The chant is recited after everyone is served. The Dedication of Merit is done after the main course is cleared and before, or as, the dessert is served.

### *Toasts*

The first toast of the evening, offered following the meal chants, just as dinner begins, is the Loyal Toast offered by a Junior Officer of the Dorje Kasung.

Presently, this is the recommended script.

*Ladies and Gentlemen, let us pledge our loyalty to the Profound, Brilliant, Just, Powerful, All-Victorious Sakyong, \* Jampal Trinley Dradul. May he continue to guide and inspire us in the vision of the Great Eastern Sun. To the Sakyong!*

*(\* In a Dorje Kasung context, insert "The Makkyi Rabjam" here.)*

This is a formal toast, and exact wording might vary depending on the program. Check with the Head of Decorum and the Garsung to clarify.

When guests have finished eating, and closing meal chants have been offered, participants are asked to rise again for toasts to the lineage holders. If there is dessert, it is served after closing meal chants.

These can be a bit more spontaneous, and can be organized in a way that seems most appropriate for the program. The recommended order for toasts is as follows:

1. Druk Sakyong, the Dorje Dradül, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.
2. The Sakyong, Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche *Note: these two toasts can be combined if it seems appropriate.*
3. Even though the Sakyong was toasted in the loyal toast, an unscripted toast from a student is always good.
4. Sakyong Wangmo(s) Sakyong Wangmo Khandro Tseyang (appropriate title for most occasions) Also known as the Sakyong Wangmo, Dechen Choying Sangmo (for very formal occasions)
5. It is also appropriate to toast the Druk Sakyong Wangmo, Lady Diana or His Eminence, Namkha Drimed Rinpoche if they are present or have been part of a program or event.

There are usually additional toasts to the teachers; assistant directors/meditation instructors; program and land centre staff, participants and others as seems appropriate to the program. It can work very well to combine most of these toasts into one toast. After all of the general toasts have been offered, the floor may be opened for spontaneous toasts. This is done at the discretion of the teachers or dignitaries presiding.

Depending on the program and particular practice centre efforts, thank you toasts could be offered to various centre departments (i.e. kitchen, facilities, registration) based on extra effort involved with assisting with the program. Again, it can work quite well to combine these toasts.

The Head of Decorum and Special Events Coordinator should get together to determine the appropriate time to begin the toasts during the banquet.

Generally, toasts should be perky, heartfelt and enjoyable for everyone. It is always good to work with the balance of acknowledging and thanking people, while keeping the meal or banquet a reasonable duration.

## **Head of Dignitary Service and Hospitality**

The major responsibility of this job is to create a supportive environment for the teachers and dignitaries who might be in attendance for all or a portion of programs. For Warrior Assemblies, Sutrayana and Vajrayana Seminars, it is important that each participant and staff have the opportunity to connect with the teachers in a social context. This is accomplished by organizing participant and teacher luncheons or dinners or cocktails parties before dinner. This is usually done by delek. For some programs, the staff are invited to sit at the head table for one of the banquets and join the teachers for cocktails prior to the event to socialize.

Each participant can also have an opportunity to offer service to the teachers, such as meals that are taken in the teacher's quarters, water service during talks, head table service for banquets, and service for social gatherings with participants (luncheons, dinners, cocktails, etc.). This position has a huge amount of work. The Head of Service

is a key position in providing the atmosphere necessary for these social gatherings to occur with elegance and ease, and provides training for participants in the proper form of service. It is suggested that the person taking this position be very familiar with court principle and the many nuances of service.

Given the amount of work involved with this position, this person should not serve as a meditation instructor/assistant director unless it is absolutely necessary. In the event that they need to take on students, they should be given fewer (only 4 or 5).

#### *General duties*

- Coordinates with the Head of Decorum to organize major events.
- Is present at registration to explain the view of service at the programs and invite participants to sign up for service shifts.
- Coordinates with the host centre in preparing the budget for refreshments and food for cocktail parties or luncheons.
- Offers training sessions for participants explaining that a certain amount of formality is expected. The emphasis can be placed on meditation in action practice, maintaining an unobtrusive gentle presence with enormous awareness as guests' orders are taken and served.
- Meets with the teachers to get an over-all feeling for the program and for their needs.
- Takes care of the needs of the teachers and their quarters as appropriate. (Clean stroke brushes and keep a supply of ink and paper in the suite for Warrior Assembly).
- Schedules participants for service.

#### *General Guidelines for Scheduling Service*

These guidelines pertain mainly to programs with a strong service component such as Warrior Assemblies but may be useful for other programs depending on the level of service wanted by the teachers.

- Schedule one server for each talk from about one hour before the talk for service in the teacher's suite, before and after the talk, and for water service during the talk. Head of Service needs to be available as back up for these times and to make sure there is water etc. in the shrine room. This can also be delegated to the Shrine Room Coordinator if the service element for the program is especially full.
- Schedule one server for suite service one hour prior to the banquets and formal dinners. Two servers are necessary if there are extra guests invited for drinks. Schedule three (or more) servers for Teacher/Participant luncheons as needed.

The Head of Service coordinates the service for the head table for Western Banquets, coordinating with the Head of Special events.

#### *Some suggested supplies for Service*

- Short glasses - 2 dozen matching.
- Tall water glasses (1 dozen) and crystal pitcher (or nicest available)

- Stem glasses for wine
- Corkscrews
- Ice bucket and tongs
- Two small round silver trays (one for suite use, one for shrine room use)
- Two large trays for meal or tea service
- Tea pot, sugar bowl and creamer; salt and pepper shakers
- Set of matching cups and saucers and spoons (enough for the teachers and a few guests)
- Paper cocktail napkins
- White cloth napkins to cover trays.
- Sake. The amount of sake should be discussed with the coordinators, and ahead of time and should be stored in a locked place when not being served formally. Seltzer, sparkling water and beer should also be on hand, as well as any particular requests of the teachers themselves.

## **I. Environment**

*Environment Coordinator*

*Head of Ikebana*

*Ikebana Assistant*

The environment for Shambhala programs is an essential element to the transmission of the Shambhala teachings and vision. It is important to have someone who is relating to the various venues at a land centre, helping to guide and maintain an uplifted atmosphere throughout the program.

### **Environment Coordinator**

For some programs such as Scorpion Seal Assemblies and abhishekas, there is often a separate staff position to take responsibility for setting the environment in the shrine room and beyond. For other programs, such as seminars and Warrior Assemblies the oversight of the environment can fall to either the Head of Practice or the Director of the Practice Department on staff at the land centre.

### **Head of Ikebana (or Coordinator of Flowers)**

*Note: This title for this position should not include the term Ikebana if the true form of this Shambhala Art is not practiced. For some programs, this position can be called Head of Flowers.*

This person is responsible for the flower arrangements throughout the program. This includes the shrine room, the dining area, the teachers' rooms and all other areas as appropriate. Residential programs are often a major leap for students and the uplifted quality of the flower arrangements can be very helpful in their journey. It is advisable for the Head of Ikebana to plan the arrangements in tune with the flow of the program ahead of time, so a review of the schedule and meetings with the Head of Decorum or co-coordinators from time to time would be good. For example, some banquets are more formal than others; a fresh arrangement in the shrine room for the Transmission talk would be nice, etc., etc.

#### *General Duties:*

- Finds out from the coordinators in advance what the budget is for flowers and any special issues regarding availability of flowers from the land.
- Recruits participant volunteers as needed to serve as assistants or trainees in ikebana. If a permanent rota position is needed, organize this with the Rota coordinator.
- If the program schedule allows, do an ikebana demonstration for participants.
- If possible, check with the land centre in advance of the program to determine the budget and availability of equipment. Be prepared to bring items to supplement the arrangements.

*Note: At the 2010 Warrior Assembly at Shambhala Mountain Center, the Shambhala Art demonstration was presented as a teaching on the form of Ikebana and included all 90+ participants. Each participant was given flowers and a container and was guided by the Head of Ikebana through the process of creating an arrangement. The final works were displayed in various locations on the land -- dining tent, coordinator offices, lodge lobbies, etc.*

## **Ikebana Assistant**

An Ikebana assistant is needed for most programs, especially those with many participants and several venues. An assistant does not necessarily have to be an Ikebana practitioner but rather can be the person who is a good organizer and can establish the ground for Ikebana. This can be very labor intensive and requires someone who is willing and able to haul flowers and equipment to various locations. In addition, there are usually 2 or 3 permanent rota positions to help in this area.