

SHAMBHALA INTERNATIONAL POLICY HANDBOOK

FOR DOCUMENTING DHARMA TALKS



Shambhala Media

Kalapa Recordings

Shambhala Archives

Vajradhatu Publications

Shambhala International Recordings Guidelines

This document is intended to help the staff and volunteers at Shambhala Centers, throughout the world, who have been entrusted with the responsibility for making recordings of Shambhala dharma talks.

The Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche originally created the Vajradhatu Recordings department to ensure that the teachings by lineage holders within the Vajradhatu mandala are documented and preserved. The Shambhala Archives is the storage and preservation facility for these teachings. The teachings are catalogued into a database that acts as a resource for the sangha on locating information on specific talks. Kalapa Recordings is responsible for managing the documentation of the teachings and making these materials available to dharma centers.

Proper documentation of the teachings is a major responsibility of our whole organization. When your center hosts a lineage holder or other Buddhist teacher, it becomes the center's responsibility to record their teachings. This includes recording the talks in audio and, when hosting Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, in video. The host center is also required to provide transcripts and a synopsis of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche's talks. Your original materials are then sent to Shambhala Archives where they are entered into the database and become the source material for books, transcripts, audiovisual products, magazine articles, etc.

Each center's efforts to follow recommended procedures and punctual shipping will ensure the quality and longevity of these teachings. To this end we have provided detailed information and guidelines in this handbook.

Your work in preserving the dharma is greatly appreciated. Together, with your help, we will provide future generations with access to the teachings of the Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the Sakyong, Jamgön Mipham Rinpoche, visiting teachers, Acharyas and senior students.

We invite you to contact us at 902-420-1118, ext. 21 or gkidd@shambhala.org if you need further information.

Section 1:

Host centers are responsible for recording the following teachers:

- **Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche** (audio, video, transcripts, and a synopsis)
- **Sakyong Wangmo Khandro Tseyang** (audio and, when possible, video)
- **Druk Sakyong Wangmo Diana Mukpo** (audio and, when possible, video)
- Any other **lineage holders or visiting teachers** (audio and, when possible, video)

His Eminence Nhamka Drimed Rinpoche, Ven. Jigme Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Ven. Thrangu Rinpoche, Ven. Tenga Rinpoche, Ven. Mingyur Rinpoche, etc.

Some visiting teachers, including Khandro Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, and Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche have their own organizations, which archive and distribute their teachings; we therefore record their programs, keep a copy for the host library, and send the originals to their designated custodians.

- **The Acharyas** (audio and, when appropriate, video)

The Acharyas are representatives of the Sakyong and Shambhala. What happens to the recordings after they have been made is generally the Acharya's decision, *with the exception of programs being taught together with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. Audio and any video of these teachings should be included when forwarding the Sakyong's recordings*

The Acharya should always be consulted regarding the following recording procedures:

- 1) **Which teachings to record:** types of programs to be taped include major teaching programs, weekend seminars, and vow ceremonies.
- 2) **Copyright arrangements:** these are the responsibility of the Acharyas to specify. Unless the Acharya indicates otherwise, original copies of all teachings should be sent to Shambhala Archives.
- 3) **Copies of audio for participants:** with the Acharya's permission, copies of audio files can be made for participants immediately after an Acharya program at the host centre. These should be made from a back-up set that will stay at the centre.

Section 2:

Staffing Issues

Finding experienced audio/ video staff and volunteers is a central issue in performing this service for the mandala. It is imperative that centres, especially land centres hosting large programs with our principal teachers, devote time to securing experienced sound and video personnel. Providing scholarships is one way to bring people willingly to these positions. Gordon Kidd, Technical Director of Kalapa Recordings is eager to assist you with identifying your staff. He is available at 902-420-1118, ext 21, or by email at gkidd@shambhala.org

Potential staff recruits need to understand that while their role is a technical position, it is inseparable from practice, as are all other roles in our mandala. It involves devotion, focus, and commitment to the degree of any other in the mandala. As a/v roles are involved with 'speech protection' they are analogous to Dorje Kasung roles in embracing the theory of the "left-out practice," in which a person's service sometimes puts she/he in a position to "miss" some portion of the main focus of an event. As with the kasung and so many other roles in Shambhala, those who take on this role realize that their primary responsibility is service to the greater mandala, and that that service in itself is the most important practice they can do in that moment. In the spirit of recognizing this practice and its essential place in the mandala, Kalapa Recordings has created a service pin as well a service oath as an additional empowerment of this role.

Oath Of Office and Service Pin

For Kalapa Recordings Staff and Technical Volunteers: to be administered by centre directors during an appropriate ceremony.

The three jewels, the three roots, masters of the lineages, saints and sages of the world, warriors and great leaders of the East and West who have promoted enlightened society; guide me, inspire me. Following the command of Sakyong Mipham Jampal Trinley Dradiil Rinpoche, I (refuge name, Shambhala name, given name), as a member of the Kalapa Recordings staff, vow to uphold and propagate the vision of Shambhala and to administer my duties in a gentle and fearless manner.

I vow to preserve and protect the sacred oral teachings of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, learned masters, and senior teachers of Shambhala. I promise to follow the directives, policies, and guidelines established by Kalapa Recordings. In taking this oath, I reaffirm my commitment to the disciplines of sitting meditation and meditation in action. I pledge to persevere in training my mind in the way of the vast and profound path of the warrior bodhisattva.

Pins: the Recordings pin is a service pin for speech protection, and should be worn with a sense of responsibility for one's post when providing audio and video service at programs. It can also serve to identify you for participants with concerns. Wear it with pride! Recordings pins are available from Shambhala Media at minimal cost.



The Recordings Service Pin

Section 3:

Procedures for Before and During Programs

1. Before

- 1) Make sure you PLAN to document all programs (including meetings and ceremonies) by our main teachers, i.e. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and the Acharyas, which occur at your center. Your planning should include budgeting for materials and equipment, and engaging staff or volunteers experienced in audio and videotaping.
- 2) Call and inform our department of a major event beforehand. This will help us plan distribution and provide any technical assistance you might need. You are welcome to call Kalapa Recordings at 902-420-1118, ext 21 with questions, or email Gordon Kidd at gkidd@shambhala.org. Please do so well ahead of time.
- 3) Provide your technical volunteers with the specific guidelines for recording dharma talks included in this handbook. If you are hosting Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche you will need to supply your transcribing volunteers with the Vajradhatu Publications Transcribing Guidelines as well. A copy of these guidelines is available at this web-link:
<http://www.shambhala.org/members/ps/coordinator.php> Look for - **Land Centre resources for Shambhala core path programs** near the bottom of the page.
- 4) For questions regarding transcription please contact Ms. Emily Sell at Shambhala Media either by phone at 902-421-1550, ext 5 or by e-mail at kalapeditor@gmail.com.

2. Sound Re-enforcement Set up Overview

If the dharma talk audience is large enough, a sound reinforcement system (PA - public address) will be required - along with a recording system. The components of the recording and sound reinforcement systems are usually combined and operated by the same individual, although in larger programs this will often require two people. Microphones, via an audio mixer, are fed into both the recording and sound reinforcement systems. The selection of sound system components is beyond the scope of this manual; however, good quality sound recording and reinforcement is easier and less expensive to achieve than it was in the days of Trungpa, Rinpoche. Tiny, high-resolution color cameras, compact loudspeakers, wireless microphones, and digital recording have vastly improved our capability to preserve the teachings. Despite these technological improvements, the proper placement of microphones and loudspeakers, precise connection and use of sound system controls, and mindfulness during operation, are still required to produce good audio.

Sound systems are comprised of:

- Microphone(s) - connected to a mixer with microphone cables, referred to below as 'wired' mics.
- Wireless microphones have two parts; the transmitter—usually in the form of a handheld microphone—and the receiver - usually a small box with antennas that is directly cabled to the mixer.
- Mixer – “mixes” the mic signals together into one output signal for both PA and recording.

- Equalizer (optional) – a device or control that can improve sound quality and reduce unwanted audio “feedback.” An equalizer may be a part of a mixer or a separate unit.
- Amplifier – amplifies the signal level outputted by the mixer to drive the loudspeakers. May be combined with the mixer in one unit. Many speakers nowadays are ‘self-powered’ meaning they have built-in amplifiers. This simplifies the system, although you will have to arrange for a power feed to each speaker. In this case, mixer outputs are cabled directly to the speaker input.
- Loudspeakers (speakers) – usually on stands or mounted on wall or ceiling.
- Recording system(s) – recording format may be digital (creating computer files) or analog tape.
- Connecting cables.
- Internet-capable computer and Internet connection (optional).

1) System Setup:

- **Loudspeakers** – ideally, loudspeakers and microphones should be set up as far away as possible from each other to prevent audio “feedback” (see below). If required, loudspeakers are usually placed on both sides of the shrine, stage or platform and raised as high as possible. Avoid having speakers directly behind or near microphones, i.e., avoid sound from the speakers being picked up by the microphones.
- **Monitor speakers (optional)** – monitor speakers are used only when the person giving the talk (the principal) cannot hear the sound from the audience question microphones clearly. Monitor speakers require a special audio “mix” that excludes the audio from the principal’s microphone.
- **Sound “table”** – the mixer, recording devices and other controls should be together in a location that allows the sound technician(s) to hear the loudspeakers and room sounds clearly, usually at the back of the space opposite the principal. The technicians should also have a clear view of all the microphones.
- **Microphones** - Discuss the event with the event coordinator to determine the event schedule and location of all the microphones. Wired vs. wireless – both have advantages, which should be factored into your set-up planning. Wired mics use cables to connect to the mixer instead of radio signals. This is a more reliable approach, and, **when cables are laid during event set-up**, it can make for less troubleshooting during the program, especially if you take the time to label both ends of the cables. Wired mics are highly recommended for the main teacher giving the talks at a program. Sometimes for major events we recommend installing a spare cable run in case something unexpected happens such as a broken wire, or an additional microphone is needed on short notice. Wireless mics are good for question mics as they can be handed around easily, avoiding cabling hassles. One downside of wireless mics is keeping up with battery replacement. This is especially an issue in cold weather, in an unheated space or tent. Other downsides of wireless mics are their range, which may be unreliable and unpredictable and their occasional susceptibility to radio frequency (RF) interference from other wireless or electrical devices in the room. If you use batteries, such as for wireless mics, have a battery tester on hand.
- The following are standard microphones and types for an event:
 - Main talk mic – a **wired** professional lapel mic is best *if* the principal speaker will speak loud enough for the system to operate properly (without feedback – see below). The Audio Technica AT899 is a good choice. If the principal speaks too softly, a directional “ball” type mic on a stand is preferable, such as a Shure type SM58. The Sakyong prefers a lapel mic and will clip it on himself once he is ready to begin a talk.
 - Question mics – Current practice is to use good quality wireless ball-type mics on stands, perhaps one in each aisle. The old method was to have several mics on long cables with mic handlers to carry them to the questioner.
 - Translator mic – ask the translator what they prefer.
 - Announcements – wireless mic on plain mic stand. A wireless type can be useful when another mic fails.
 - Umdze mic – wired ball mic on a “boom” stand.

Further remarks on microphone usage are found in the Microphone Usage document also posted to the web-site at: <http://www.shambhala.org/members/ps/coordinator.php> under the **Land Centre resources for Shambhala core path programs** near the bottom of the page.

- **Test the system completely before use.**
 - Reduce any low frequency hum caused by AC currents by connecting all of your equipment to the same AC supply outlet, or “lifting the ground” at the wall plug. To do this use a two prong AC adapter into the wall outlet. Note: “lifting grounds” can, in some cases, create a safety hazard – it’s better to bring in a professional electrician to do trouble-shooting if you have regular problems with audio hum and noise.
 - With someone else speaking into the microphones, one at a time:
 - Label the mixer with the names or positions of the mics.
 - Label both ends of any cable runs (for quicker troubleshooting).
 - Set the overall volume of the system for the speakers and make sure the recording system is getting the right amount of signal as well.
 - If available, adjust the tone (equalization) settings for minimum “feedback”, maximum clarity and friendly (balanced) tone.
 - If possible, ask the principal speaker to test the microphone to ensure they know how to use the microphone and are speaking loudly enough to prevent feedback caused by levels being set too high. Make sure to ask them to speak at the volume they expect to speak during their talk.
 - Make test recordings to verify that the recording is loud enough and is noise and distortion free.
 - Slate and label recordings, (outlined below).
 - Test playback levels and quality by making test recording if there are any recordings to play back during the program. This may include CDs, if requested
 - Setup and test system components well in advance if this is a Shambhala Online event (see Shambhala Online web site for more details).

Helpful reference for sound reinforcement: The Sound Reinforcement Handbook, Gary Davis and Ralph Jones, 1989 Yamaha publications.

2) Operation:

- Note: Assuming that the sound is loud and clear enough for everyone to hear, the problem known as “feedback” is the principal one for sound technicians, particularly since many principal speakers have soft voices. Feedback is caused by having to raise the microphone level so high that the sound from the speakers is picked up by the microphone, creating a “resonant circuit”, and resulting in a loud tone, ringing, or howl from the loudspeakers. Typical solutions for this problem are:
 - Lowering the volume of the microphone
 - Placing the microphone closer to the mouth
 - Move loudspeakers forward towards the audience or turn them further away from the teaching seat and microphone
 - Having the principal speaker speak louder (good luck :).
 - Adjust the tone controls, or equalization. This will be most effective if the equalization is in the form of a graphic or parametric type. Skill is required for using these devices.
- To prevent “feedback” and reduce room noise, always place the principal’s microphone (mic) close to the mouth (for a ball type mic: approx. 3 inches/7.5 cm). The rule of thumb measurement is about the length of the speaker’s fist. If using a lapel (lavalier) mic, make sure it is attached in the center and, if possible, approximately 4-5 inches/10-13 cm beneath the principal’s chin. Placement should also avoid any rubbing on clothing, which makes a scratchy noise. Put fresh batteries in any lapel mics that use them. Inexpensive battery testers reduce stress. If there is any doubt about the strength of a battery, replace it!

3. Guidelines for Audio Recording:

- **Digital Audio.** Most centers are now recording to a digital audio recorder or computer hard drive for transfer to an external hard-drive, or optical media, (DVD or CD). Digitally recording in *full resolution* .aiff, .wav, .au, or other lossless audio file formats is the standard we require. Audio recording directly into compressed file formats such as MP3 are not recommended due to the substantial loss of sound quality information and for the tendency for the loss to be exacerbated when copied. MP3s can be made from full resolution (i.e., .wav) audio files as a back up, and for use by the transcribing personnel. A set of files on a hard-drive, or completed DVDs (preferred over CDs if there are large files) should go to the Shambhala Archives, together with any analog tapes. Any further copying of your digital files for distribution must be discussed with Shambhala Media. Keep a back-up set of full resolution and MP3 files for your center library.
- **Make sure that your sound files/ tapes are recorded at adequate levels but without distortion.** Digital recording allows a much wide range of signal level without noise. However, the peak signal level must never exceed 0 dB; maximum level should stay well below -5dB. Digital recordings made above the 0dB will likely result in unusable recordings because of distortion. Test recordings should always be made before the event. If you are still using audiotape, the most common problem we see is recording at too *low* a level, resulting in noticeable noise (hiss) when played back. Most recording meter readings should reach -3 to 0db units with occasional peaks to +3. (Note the difference between this specification and that of making a digital recording!) Make sure that these peaks are occasional. If all your sound is recorded above 0db, (in the red), distortion will result. Too little or too much level results in poor quality copies, so make sure the person recording the talk understands the need for good strong signal. Please test and listen!
- **Set up and test your recording equipment ahead of time.** Make test recordings and subsequently check the digital sound files or tapes for audio/ video quality, (the audio quality of videos is often neglected). **Lack of preparation is the most frequent cause of poor recordings. (note bolding in last sentence)**
- **Record a “slate” at the beginning of your recording.** This means record the event name, talk number, speaker, date and place at the beginning of the recording. Write it out on paper and read it into a mic at the sound table kept for this purpose. Here is a sample – “This is the 2011 Shambhala Seminary, Talk Five, given by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche on July 15, 2011, at Shambhala Mountain Center.” This will help immensely with identifying talks in the future. You may add your name to the slate for future reference.
- **Label media clearly with event, talk, speaker, date, and place information.** Make computer file names intelligible and compact, i.e., (using the above slate) **yyyymmddiii_ppp**, shown as 20110715SMR_SMC which can be understood as date, speaker initials and place initials. This is enough information for database entry, given that the media is also physically labeled with the event and talk information. Optical media should be written on with CD pens, not regular sharpies. Include tape number if more than one is used.
- **When not in use, keep question mics at low level during question and answer periods**, unless there is a lively back and forth, and keep your fingers on the mixer level controls during questions. This keeps the recording free of unwanted background noise and reduces feedback. You will have to watch the discussion closely to anticipate adjusting the question mic levels.

- **Wear headphones to monitor your recording as you are recording,** This will help ensure that the recording is of good quality and does not include extraneous noise like subtle ringing or feedback, unintentional noise from extra microphones, or a wireless mic that is not working properly.
- **It is important to adjust the sound in the speakers,** so that everyone in the room can hear clearly. This should be done with the use of a mixer output control that is separate from your recording output control. The level of sound in the room (or tent) must be adequate for all to hear and your signals for recording must be clean and without distortion. These should be monitored independently if possible. Listen for “feedback”, a ringing, whistling noise in the loudspeakers that indicates the loudspeaker volume may be too high (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audio_feedback). Try a lower speaker volume, or, if possible and if you have expertise, use a graphic or parametric equalizer to lower the sound system sensitivity at the frequency (pitch) that is causing the feedback. Note that this requires some skill and attention—one reason why in larger programs there are two or more technicians on duty.
- **For audio cassettes buy only normal bias, type I tape.** Do not use 100 or 120 minute cassettes. The tape is too thin, and it will stretch and degrade too quickly. For tape and recordable DVDs or CDs, purchase name brand stock: Maxell, TDK, Sony, Fuji, etc.
- **If using tape, try to find a good place to flip the tape** so you will not lose any of the talk. A minute or two before the end of side one is a good time, or at the start of questions. Watch the tape and time yourself from the start of recording to keep track.
- **Avoid using obsolete formats,** such as DAT or Mini-disk. Digital recorders are cheaper and more flexible; e.g., Zoom H2.

4. Guidelines for Video Recording:

- ❑ When a program includes the Sakyong, his designated Panasonic tapeless camera should be used. This camera package is managed by Gordon Kidd at Kalapa Recordings and James Hoagland, technical advisor to the Office of the President. The specific instructions for use of this camera are included <http://www.shambhala.org/members/ps/coordinator.php> Look for - **Land Centre resources for Shambhala core path programs** near the bottom of the page. James Hoagland, is available to help with questions, as well as on video taping in general. He can be reached at home at (902) 429-1223, or by e-mail at jhoagland@shambhala.org

If the Sakyong is not teaching, but video recording is still warranted, the following instructions will help in planning your video documentation:

- ❑ Buy the best camera tape you can. For centers using digital video formats such as DV or DVCam, we recommend Panasonic digital tape. If you are recording with an analog SVHS camera, use Sony, or Fuji-SVHS, semi-professional format.
- ❑ Remember to record a vocal slate at the beginning of each tape and label tapes properly. See specific guidelines above.
- ❑ When making videotapes, lighting is crucial. Consider renting professional lights, or a camera that can function in low light. Even with a low light camera, adjust your lights to keep shadows off the face of the speaker.
- ❑ Again, make sure you take an audio feed from your PA system, or from a direct mic if need be. Do NOT rely on any in-camera microphone. The way to input this line-in signal may vary from machine to machine, but usually it's in a source menu under AUDIO with AUX input selected. It is essential to make a test recording and playback your test to make sure the sound is of good quality! Some pre-planning is necessary here, but is well worth it. You will have a continuous 2-hour tape recording in HiFi audio, and very good quality!

Avoid stopping and starting during recording, as it causes control track interruptions and subsequent problems during playback and duplication, you can always edit the tape later, but can never re-capture the unexpected teaching. Long blessing lines can be an exception, try capturing a little of the beginning and the end.

Section 4:

Procedures for after recording:

- ❑ Please treat all materials with the respect they deserve as dharma teachings. This means that Vajrayana and Shambhala materials are adequately protected, and that all materials are used in appropriate ways, i.e. videos are shown in a setting of practice and study, not at a social event, and that tapes are treated the way you would treat a text, etc.
- ❑ Break the record enable tabs on any audio or video cassettes. This is the best way to protect a tape from being erased.
- ❑ Make sure all recorded material is clearly and completely labeled, including tape number of total tapes, on the case and on the tape itself.
- ❑ Immediately following the program, the original master files, DVD-Rs or CD-Rs, or tapes, both audio and visual, should be sent insured mail to:

**Shambhala Archives,
attn: Gordon Kidd,
1084 Tower Road,
Halifax, Nova Scotia,
Canada B3H 2Y5**

- ❑ If your center is hosting Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche you are also responsible for providing transcripts and a synopsis of the talks. Make a set of transcription sound files, usually MP3s, from the talk files. Make sure your volunteers have read Vajradhatu Publication Transcription Guidelines before they begin transcribing. It is very important for your transcribers to follow all of the steps in the guidelines. We suggest transcription and synopsis should take no longer than three months. Once they are completed send them by e-mail as an attachment to Emily Sell at kalapeditor@gmail.com. You may keep a hard copy for your center's files but you are not permitted to reproduce or circulate the raw transcript.

Thank you for your generosity in recording and preserving the teachings. There is tremendous benefit to what you are doing, during our lifetime, and for future generations.