

April 27, 2009

Memo to:
Centre Directors
Group Coordinators
Heads of Practice and Study

From: The Shambhala Office of Practice and Education

Re: Communicating changes in teacher authorization status

Noble leaders,

Shortly after Shambhala Day, President Reoch sent out new guidelines for inviting teachers to teach in the Shambhala mandala. Those guidelines pertain specifically to Buddhist lineage holders and teachers of related disciplines who are invited into our mandala to teach. Today I am writing about teachers and meditation instructors authorized by the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education—these include Shambhala Guides, Shambhala Training Assistant Directors, Meditation Instructors, Buddhist teachers, Shambhala Training Directors and so on.

As you know, the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education is responsible for upholding and communicating a complete list of authorized teachers and meditation instructors in Shambhala. We add newly authorized teachers and meditation instructors to the international list following training programs. We also authorize the removal or temporary suspension of teachers or meditation instructors when the person no longer meets the requirements of the position, has acted in violation of their vows or when it is clear to our office that the person would benefit from this. This is an international responsibility held by the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education on behalf of the Sakyong and can only be exercised by this office.

It is also the responsibility of the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education to communicate that a particular teacher or meditation instructor has been suspended. Please note that it is not appropriate for any leader or leadership group to communicate this.

There is one exception to this. The teaching team of a weekend or residential program may ask a particular teacher or meditation instructor to leave the program if it is clear that the person has violated the provisions in their vow. The provisions of the meditation instructor vow apply to the entire teaching team, regardless of what capacity they are acting in during the particular weekend. (please see the link at the bottom of this letter to view the most recent meditation instructor vow). In this case, we ask the lead teacher to communicate with the Office of Practice and Education about the situation after the weekend (or during the program if it is a longer program).

How will a change in authorization be communicated to centres?

The Shambhala Office of Practice and Education does not wish to maintain a list of suspended teachers and meditation instructors, nor do we wish to publicly announce that a teacher or meditation instructor has been suspended. Either of these could be open to serious misinterpretation and would be painful for everyone involved. However, we do need to have a way to update the status of teachers and meditation instructors so that centres can easily find information about who is currently authorized to teach and act as a meditation instructor in the mandala. We have decided to do so using the Shambhala Database.

For any out-of-town teacher or meditation instructor that you wish to invite (or any local teacher around whom there have been conduct issues or concerns), we ask that you verify their status on the database **before inviting them**. First, find their membership profile, and then check that they are authorized at the level required to teach the program that you wish them to teach. You would only invite them if they are **currently** authorized to teach the program that you wish to offer, even though they may have taught that program before.

If you feel that the database entry may be incorrect, please contact jscott@shambhala.org in the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education to verify the entry.

The Shambhala Office of Practice and Education will do its best to inform local leadership in a timely fashion of any authorization changes relating to a particular local teacher or meditation instructor.

You will not find specific authorizations on the database to indicate which teachers are qualified to lead meditation instructor training programs (including Shambhala Guide and Assistant Director trainings), teacher trainings programs or Shambhala Director trainings. Please contact the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education jscott@shambhala.org for North and South America, or Shambhala Europe Office of Practice and Education sabine@shambhala-europe.org for Europe, Asia and Africa, to discuss these invitations **prior to issuing them**.

How do I use the database to verify teaching/meditation instructor authorizations?

In order to check for teacher and meditation instructor authorizations you will need access to the Shambhala Database (SDB) in the **Administrator's view**.

To get an Administrative Password: Please ask your local database administrator (or your center director) to request access for one or two key members of the Practice and Education leadership in your centre, who issue invitations to teachers directly. It would also be appropriate for centre directors and group coordinators to have this access. To receive an administrative password, please email Candlin Dobbs candlin@bitstream.org (for North and South America) or Ed Keizer <keizered@gmail.com> (for Europe, Africa, Asia).

To check teacher/meditation instructor authorizations:

Once you have your username and password, follow these steps:

- 1) Login to the Shambhala Database using Firefox as your browser:
<https://sslsites.de/shambhala.name>
- 2) Enter the teacher's name in the member search field in the navigation bar at the top of each page.
- 3) Click **Go**.
- 4) When the teacher's profile comes up, scroll to the bottom of the page to see their authorizations.

Apart from this usage, the database is a wonderful source of contact information, regional program information, and so on. We are confident that once you begin using it, you will find it easy to use and indispensable to your work.

Please pass this information onto your successor, should you retire from your post! Also, please pass this along to anyone currently holding a post who needs to understand these procedures. It is

important that everyone working with teacher invitations be aware of the way in which authorizations and suspensions are communicated by the Shambhala Office of Practice and Education.

We hope that this procedure will prove both compassionate and practical.

In mutual service to the three jewels,

Carolyn Mandelker, Director
Shambhala Office of Practice and Education

To view the Care and Conduct procedure document, the MI/Student relationship document, or the meditation instructor vows, please click here:

<http://www.shambhala.org/members/ps/mi.php>

They are listed under the heading: Guidelines/Policies/Vows