

Making the Dalai Lama heard

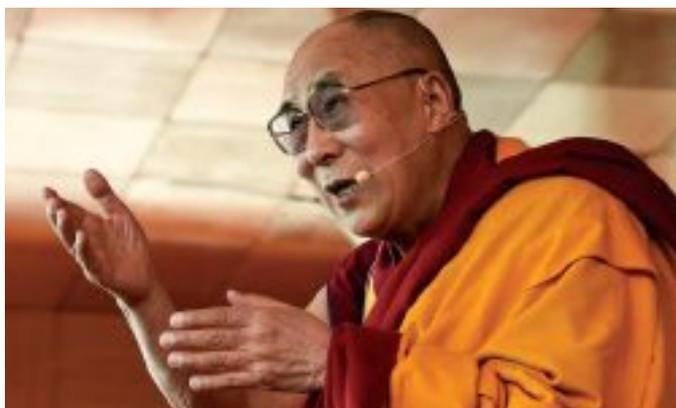
Consistent voice reproduction over sustained periods were the key challenges for mic selection at the 10-day Kalachakra Buddhist ceremony

KALACHAKRA is a Buddhist religious event hosted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama that takes place at various locations around the world every few years. The most recent event was held in Ladakh in the Himalayas, nearly 5,000m above sea level.

With a now 79-year-old figure at the helm for the 10-day long prayer meeting, high importance was placed on finding a microphone that would project his voice to the nearly 200,000 followers who attended. The solution was found in DPA Microphones' d:fine dual-ear cardioid headset mic, which was supplied by the manufacturer's US office.

As the sound company of choice for the Dalai Lama, Reynolds Sound & Lighting Services of Bangalore was once again called in to support the prayer ceremony. In addition to the DPA mic, the company also supplied a large Meyer Sound solution consisting of 44 Milo, 32 Mica, 24 MSL-4 and 20 CQ cabinets.

While the loudspeaker selection was important, it was the microphone choice that was the major issue for the rental company. **One of the biggest challenges for us was that the Dalai Lama would speak for about five hours every day, so we needed a high quality microphone that would provide excellent gain before feedback, excellent off axis rejection and a low**



His Holiness the Dalai Lama using the DPA microphone

noise floor,' explains Felix Remedios, owner of Reynolds Sound & Lighting Services. 'This event focuses on His Holiness speaking to a crowd of 100,000 to 200,000 people over a period of 10 to 12 days. This would be stressful on anyone's voice, and required the assurance of long term comfort and the ability to maintain critical placement. The DPA d:fine made it possible for us to ensure that his voice was loud and clear, and that all of the attendees could hear every word he spoke.'

The Kalachakra 2014 event was held in a large space with the audience stretching almost a kilometer away from the stage. 'We had to be really careful to ensure that his voice was

heard across the whole venue,' explains Mr Remedios. 'In addition to needing perfect reliability, given only one mic for a large audience, there was a high level of stage monitoring required for the surrounding monks.'

'I had contacted my friend and colleague Ron Lorman in New York, and explained that I was unsure that my previous mics would have the amount of gain that I needed. We additionally discussed the unique monitor needs for this event, as it was mandatory that the source element provided a flat response with substantial rear rejection,' continues Mr Remedios. 'Ron recommended the d:fine products and he put me in touch with the company during a visit to the US. DPA Inc supplied me with four mics to try out, which I brought back to India. My team was extremely happy with the quality.'

Once the mics traveled up into the Himalayas, **The Reynolds' audio team, led by sound engineer Suresh J, was able to put them to the test for the first time. 'We chose to use the cardioid version of the mic for the Kalachakra,'** notes Mr Remedios. **'We had never used DPA mics before, but one of the first things we noticed was that there was no colouration in the signal. His Holiness' voice sounded extremely natural and transparent, and we were able to get the gain levels we wanted. The DPA d:fine is**

certainly a quantum leap from what we are used to, both in signal levels from the mic and overall quality of the design.'

In addition to the location of the prayer meeting, the overall setup of the stage and personal preferences of His Holiness also provided a unique set of challenges. The Dalai Lama sits on a high throne, surrounded by several senior monks both in front of and to each side of him. 'Since we have worked with him for several years, we know that the microphone must always be placed beside him on stage so he or a member of his team can put it on him,' explains Mr Remedios. 'In order for a mic to get the perfect amount of gain it must

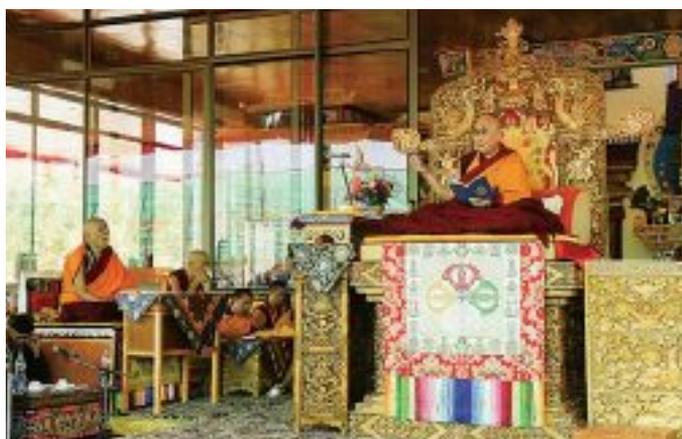


The Dalai Lama was confident enough to fit the microphone himself for the final day

sit exactly in the correct position. Luckily, the DPA d:fine is designed in a manner that even an untrained person can affix the mic. The Dalai Lama's media team representative, Jigme Tsering, was able to fit it onto His Holiness each day. It worked out so well that on the last day the Dalai Lama put the microphone on himself and was very pleased.'

The end result saw a clearly very satisfied user. 'The Dalai Lama's media team was so pleased with the quality of the microphone that they asked to keep it for his smaller prayer meetings,' notes Mr Remedios. 'Of course we obliged and gifted them one.'

www.dpamicrophones.com
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The Dalai Lama sits on a high throne, surrounded by several senior monks

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