

# **THE GREAT THOUSAND BUDDHA RELIC STUPA**

COMMEMORATING THE GREAT MAHASIDDHA

GESHE LAMA KONCHOG

# THE THOUSAND BUDDHA RELIC STUPA

COMMEMORATING  
THE GREAT MAHASIDDHA  
GESHE LAMA KONCHOK



COMPILED BY TENZIN ZOLA<sup>5</sup>  
EDITED BY ROBINA COURTIN



“The main purpose of building this excellent Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa of the late great Mahasiddha Geshe Lama Konchog is to repay his infinite kindness and to help all the sentient beings purify their negative imprints and accumulate extensive positive imprints in order to gain extensive merit and wisdom, both of which are prerequisites for reaching enlightenment.”

*Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*



## *Preface*

*by Geshe Tenzin Zopa*



*Geshe Tenzin Zopa and Geshe Lama Konchog*

The worst day of my life was the day that I lost the precious Guru whose kindness is indefinite, more than the tree times' Buddhas, the precious Dharma Father, Geshe Lama Konchog. I never want to be separated from him. I only want to please him and serve him in accordance with the Buddha wishes of all the Buddhas.

At about nine in the morning of October 16 last year, the day after Geshe-la

passed away, he appeared strongly in my mind, reminding me of the occasion when he told me how delighted he was to have the opportunity to build a stupa. It was in Singapore that he said this, the day before Geshe-la was to be operated on for cancer. From the expression on his face and from his words, it was clear he expressed his joy to me on that day.



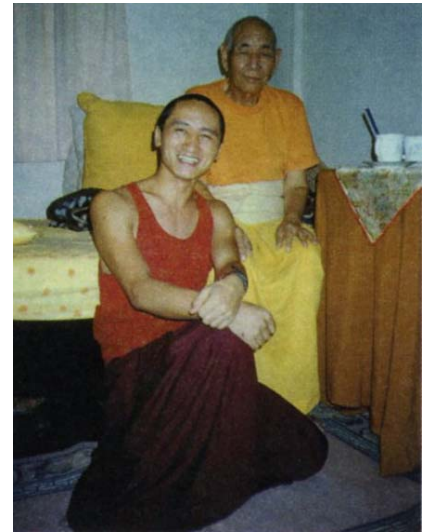
Before leaving Kopan to teach in Singapore and Taiwan in May last year, at the request of Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Geshe-la had gone to Ven Tenpa Choden, Kopan's Manager and asked him to organize the building of a stupa on his behalf on the circumambulation path at Swayambunath, on the outskirts of Nepal.

In fact, Geshe-la had already built at least ten stupas, some of them 35 feet tall. With his own hands he had constructed them, rock by rock, on the peaks of rocky mountains in Tsum, where he had meditated for the 25 years before coming to Kopan in 1984.

So, my clear memory on that morning of Geshe-la's delight made me decide right then to build a stupa to commemorate Geshe-la, knowing that it would truly pleased him. I decide that Kopan would be the best location for it, because it is a

good place for Geshe-la's students from all over the world and because it is the place where Geshe-la's cremation was held.

By December 13 it was certain that the stupa would be build. But at first it didn't seem possible. My brother Ven. Thubten Lhundrup scolded me when I mentioned to Khen Rinpoche Lama Lhundrup and Ven. Tenpa Choden that I wished to build a stupa taller than 70 feet. "You don't even have five rupees in your pocket! How are you going to build a stupa like that?" Ven Tenpa Choden said to me, "Do you know how much money even the small stupas in Kopan cost?" Khen Rinpoche said, "We must build a stupa for Geshe-la, but what you are saying is very very big. Are you sure about how we are going to do it?" Other people thought I was crazy.



*In Singapore after the operation with  
Tenzin Zopa*



All this never affected me. I always remembered the kindness and guru devotion of Geshe-la and Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Khen Rinpoche. I always felt that what I was doing for my teacher was nothing; that what I was trying to do was beneficial for all beings and pleasing to all the Buddhas. So my motivation was pure, very pure. I was very sure the success and for this I felt I could give up everything. Even if I needed to work in the street like poor workers, I was ready for that in order actualize this project.

I was happy to push in every way to make this project happen, because it related to the quick and safe and unmistakable reincarnation of Geshe Lama Konchog, who will be one of the wisdom eyes for all of us disciples and friends, for the world, and especially for the Buddhadharma.

Originally the thought came into my mind to build the stupa over 70 feet tall and I totally felt this was Geshe-la's instruction. However, due to building restrictions we were only allowed to make it 40 feet. Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommended that we build a Wheel-turning Stupa, which is significant to Geshe-la's reincarnation.

For months I was very, very worried about how to find the money. Even in my dreams I was having a hard time finding it. I couldn't sleep well and my mind was always thinking, thinking only about the stupa.

For the fundraising I went to Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia for several months. I met many different people and everyone helped me so much. But I missed Geshe-la very, very much. Many times I cried and many times I felt like giving up. When I was with Geshe-la, I was always happy, always luxurious, with no worries, nothing to deal with, seeing so many people. I would just follow Geshe-la. I enjoyed making food for Geshe-la, I enjoyed listening to Geshe-la teachings. Now I was on my own and I missed it all so much. I cried at least seven times, mostly at night and in the toilet. I felt like this poor Nepalese person put down in the middle of New York City, not knowing what to do.



But I learned a lot. And all I wanted to do was fulfill the wishes of the Gurus. I would just keep going by constantly remembering how Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche works day and night and Geshe-la too. I would think to myself that what I am doing is just small, baby job.

So now, due to the blessings and prayers of Geshe Lama Konchog and Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Khen Rinpoche; and the day and night work of Gelek Rinpoche and Ven. Tenpa Choden and Ven. Thubten Lhundrup and many others; and the help of all the students and friends and benefactors and so many people – due to all of this, in just one year everything has come true.

What began as a project to build just a stupa continues to expand. The Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa is surrounded by the Vajra Yogini Pure Land Park, which contains various statues; and a three-year retreat house and a building to Kopan's Tantric College, projects close to Geshe-la's heart, are also being constructed at Kopan.

All this costing, so far more than \$350,000, much of which has been offered or pledged by the kind benefactors.

And to continue the tradition started by Geshe-la, regular Nyung-ne retreats have been set up in several nunneries and monasteries in Tsum and a Tibetan school for children opened there in April this year.

The Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa of Geshe Lama Konchog is one of the most significant relic stupas in the world, housing relics of body, speech and mind of many holy beings. Thus it has become the object of an extensive accumulation of merit and an extensive accumulation to destroy all the negativities of all living beings.

Due to the blessings of Geshe-la and all the holy beings and due to the pure motivation and the purity and significance of this holy object, I have full confidence that the Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa of Geshe Lama Konchog and the Vajra Yogini Pure Land Park will



please Geshe Lama Konchog, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Khen Rinpoche Lama Lhundrup and all the holy beings.

May anyone who relates to this stupa or the others rejoice and accumulate numberless merits forever. May all your dedications be fulfilled.

In this book I have tried to share with you information about all the relics of body, speech and mind and all the holy objects that are housed in Geshe-la's stupa. I have given brief explanations of this stupa, this historical purpose of Buddhist stupas and how building them and practicing in relation to them can benefit all living beings. I have used valid texts and valid lamas as my sources for this information. While preparing this book I felt that I received great blessings from Geshe Lama Konchog, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Khen Rinpoche Lama Lhundrup and all the holy Gurus. You can feel totally comfortable and confident that his information is reliable.

By reading this book may you straight away generate the pure thought to build numberless significant Buddhist stupas throughout the world for the benefit of all sentient beings and to grant them great merit, to please and serve all the Buddhas and to bring everlasting peace to the entire world. May you obtain all the necessary conditions immediately, without any obstacles and may that be a direct cause for you to obtain full enlightenment solely for the benefit of all living beings.

In my recent discussions with Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche and Ven. Tenpa Choden, we calculated that the costs of the various projects now being built at Kopan have grown to be more than \$500,000 from the initial budget of \$300,000. In my hand today, on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003, I received less than half of this (some has been pledged but not yet received).

In our attempt to make holy objects such as stupas and temples most meaningful and perfect, everything seems to get bigger and more elaborate. Geshe Lama Konchog's stupa itself has grown and grown, becoming more beautiful and meaningful everyday. The tantric college





will now have four storeys and more than 40 rooms for the sanghas and a temple that can fit more than 150. The retreat house will have more than 15 rooms, plus a temple and other facilities.

We are truly grateful to whoever helps in this project. All the holy gurus and all the holy beings will surely rejoice in all your help and devotion and the merits you accumulate are infinite and the purification you create is infinite too.

This project is very meaningful for the preservation and flourishing of Lord Buddha's tantra and sutra teachings by its providing the opportunity for study and meditation and accumulation of merit.

May all of your wishes be fulfilled immediately, without delay even a second. May the virtues accumulated through your involvement in this project become the direct cause of your full enlightenment and may you gain enlightenment immediately, without delay, even a second.

We are now working on the biography of Geshe Lama Konchog, to be published by Wisdom Publications.



## *Acknowledgement*

Many people have helped actualize this precious stupa. I offer countless thanks to the Great Mahasiddha Geshe Lama Konchog, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Khen Rinpoche Lama Lhundrup, all the Holy Gurus, Buddhas, Dharma and Sangha for their prayers and blessings.

Forever I will remember the greatest kindness of Kopan Monastery for accepting to provide the land for the stupa and memorial park for Geshe-la.

Very special thanks to Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche and Ven. Tenpa Choden for their day and night work. Thanks to all the nuns of Khachoe Ghakyil Nunnery for rolling the numberless mantras.

A million thanks to all the benefactors and volunteers who are the people who really made the stupa happen: Mr Derek Goh and family; Mr Fred Cheong and family; Mr Hup Cheng, Mr Henry Lau and family, Cassandra Cheong and family; Jason Honey and family; all the Amitabha Buddhist Centre staff, members, students and friends; Geshe Chonyi; Mr Lee; Lama Thubten Namdrol Dorje; all the Thekchen Choeling members, students and friends; Mr President Wong and family; Nita and family; Klaus Liu and all the FPMT Taiwan staff; the FPMT Taiwan centers' members, students and friends; Su Su Chin and family; Ven Ani Kadro and family; Mrs Lin and family; Ven Ani Aumze; Geshe Jamyang; Geshe Gyurmey; Ven. Samphel; Ven. Phuntsok; Migyur Dorje and family; Mei Chuan and family; Chin Mien Roo and family; Jessica and family; Ven Abbess of Shilung Temple and all students and friends; Tainan Drukpa Kargyud Centre members, students and friends; Ven. Dechen; Ven. Osel; Ven. M. Yeshe; Lillian Too; Serina Yap and all the Kuala Lumpur FPMT centre members, students and friends; Ven. Pemba; Esther and all the Hong Kong centre members, students and friends.



For helping produce this book, I offer heartfelt thanks to many people: To the Tibetan teacher Lobsang Tenzin for transcribing, editing, translating, collecting information about historical stupas for this book and the Tibetan edition and for giving many suggestions; to Ven. Fran Mohaupt for all her suggestion and help in so many ways; to Shyla for her transcribing and help; to Nick for his incredible photos of Geshe Lama Konchog's relics; to Kopan librarian Nyawang Trinley for kindly giving permission to include Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche's practices; to Tove Beatty and Jon Landaw for their proofreading and editing; and numberless thanks to most Venerable Robina Courtin for editing this book and for giving so much wonderful advice and guidance.

I thank Shenphen, Khedup and all the monks in the Kopan office for always being so kind to me; and Ven. Thubten Lhundrup, Lobsang Choku and all my brothers and sisters for supporting and helping me in everything. I also thank the many people who provided photographs for his book, especially Nick Dawson.

Finally, a million thanks to Geshe Lama Konchog's students and friends and whoever contributed even a single cent or helped for even a single moment to make this project come true. All the merits and dedication prayers go to all of you.

*Geshe Tenzin Zopa  
Kopan, January 2003*



# *Prologue*

## *Prayer for the Swift Return of Geshe Lama Konchog*

*By Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*



## *Prayer for the Swift Return of the Unmistaken Reincarnation of the True Geshe, Lama Konchog*

*By Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

You who have completed the compassionate mind which vowed to benefit migratory beings,  
Whose kindness is more extraordinary than all the conquerors.  
You the matchlessly kind spiritual master,  
May we see the true, unmistakable reincarnation of yours very soon.

From the play of the aspect of all-pervading great bliss,  
Showing various aspects to whomever it subdues.  
O Holy Guru, matchless in leading migratory beings,  
May we see the true, unmistakable reincarnation of yours very soon.

Because you have extinguished the two obscurations, therefore you have completed  
the power,  
And destroy the negative karmas, obscurations and suffering of us migratory beings.  
The incomparably kind holy spiritual masters,  
May we see the true, unmistakable reincarnation of yours very soon.



For us disciples who are born from your holy teachings, there is no other refuge than you.  
How could it be possible to give up on us,  
Return your true unmistakable reincarnation,  
Return as a guide for the sake of us.

You whose holy activities are clear, luminous wide path (sky),  
Same as the great Lama Tsong Khapa,  
Guideless migratory beings at the time of five degenerations,  
Return your true unmistakable reincarnation as a guide for us.

By the power of the blessings of the marvelous conquerors and their spiritual children,  
By the power of the non-deceptive truth of dependent arising,  
And by the power of pure, special intention,  
May all our wishes and aims be accomplished quickly and easily.



# *Part One*

## *The Stupa Dedicated to Geshe Lama Konchog*

*By Geshe Tenzin Zopa*



# *1. The Great Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa and the Vajra Yogini Pure Land Park*

*We venerate this excellent and great relic stupa. This is the embodiment of holy symbols of the three secrets, qualities and enlightened activities of the victorious ones. Whosoever may see, hear, remember or touch it will be liberated.*

The late mahasiddhas, the great master, the most venerable Geshe Lama Konchog is a holy being and indeed lives in Vajrayogini Pureland. The most kind and compassionate Geshe Lama Konchog (Geshe Lobsang Phuntsog, 1927-2001) excelled in upholding the Kadampa teachings in his extensive practices, just like the greatest masters in the past.

In commemoration of our most venerable Guru, we have constructed at Kopan;

- The Great Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa;
- The Vajrayogini Pure Land Park with
- A six-and-a-half-foot gold-plated statue of Thousand-armed Chenrezig with fountain,
- A four-foot statue of Maitreya Buddha surrounded by depictions of eight of the major
- deeds of Shakyamuni Buddha, and
- The Dzambhala Statue and Pond
- The Special Shrines of the Seventeen Indian Pandits in front of the main gumpa at Kopan,
- The Great Retreat House and
- The Tantric College





The great yogi spent his entire life only for the sake of Buddhadharma and for the welfare of sentient beings. Even with his death, he convinced and inspired people of the world by showing the magnificent signs of full enlightenment in this very lifetime. Like all holy beings, he has illuminated the darkness of this degenerated period of Buddhadharma.

In order to fulfill all his holy wishes and to please all the Holy Gurus, this precious 40-foot stupa, an Auspicious Stupa of Many Gates or Wheel Turning Stupa, one of the eight kinds of stupa, which has housed within it the five kinds of genuine relic, has been carefully constructed according to the texts of sutra and tantra. After adhering to the various procedures, the interior of the stupa and the statues were properly filled according to the authentic tradition. This stupa and the park have been consecrated with the most extensive consecration rituals known as *rebne gelek choephel*.

Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche advised us to build a Wheel Turning Stupa, because it is considered very important for Geshe Lama Konchog's quick return. Once this was decided, Kopan manager Ven. Tenpa Choden and I sat down together and did some research. I traveled in Nepal and India to see as many stupas as possible. I wanted to take the best ideas from all of them, with the motivation to make each part of the stupa the best.

Everyday, Ven Tenpa Choden, Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche, Khenrinpoche Lama Lhundrup, my brother Thubten Lhundrup and many other kind people made good suggestions and had new ideas for the stupa. We tried our best to make it as beautiful as possible. Happily, Ven Tenpa Choden has experience and knowledge about how to build stupas, education gained from Geshe Lama Konchog. Everything went very, very smoothly.

The stupa is a traditional Wheel Turning Stupa but has many differences: the three-dimensional Guhyasamaya Mandala placed inside, for example. Also, the four doorways of the main stupa and the statues of the Five Dhyani Buddhas surrounding the stupa are both taken from the design of Guhyasamaja's three-dimensional Mandala; the Guhyasamaja



doorways are by far the most beautiful. These additions make the stupa more powerful and more beneficial for all the beings, because *The Guhyasamaja Tantra* is the “king of tantra.”

The building of the body of the stupa took about seven months to complete. The carving took about seven months also, and the painting four months. The various statues were made over a period of 14 months and to collect the hundreds of relics took nine months.

We made huge effort to collect the most precious relics and other items from more than 30 high lamas of the four Tibetan traditions, as well as many other people. I visited most of the holy places in India and Nepal in order to collect holy water, soil, trees, stones and many other blessed objects.

From countries such as China, Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Tibet and other holy places I received many precious items, offered by Geshe Lama Konchog’s and Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s students and other kind people from around the world.

Many of the relics we have collected are extremely rare. Very few people in the world have them. We needed to make much effort and many, many requests to obtain them. We needed to beg these kind people to offer such precious relics, which is even more difficult than asking for \$100,000, because these relics are like wish-fulfilling jewels.

All the relics were placed in then thirteenth ring of the stupa on the auspicious full moon day of the tenth Tibetan month, December 19, 2002.

We are all fully satisfied and Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche is most pleased and rejoices very much in this precious stupa.



## 2. *The Power of Relics*

*By Lama Zopa Rinpoche*



Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche  
(Boudha Stupa in the background)

*Relics are considered very holy and precious. Relics are manifested and remains are left behind due to the kindness of holy gurus for the sake of us sentient beings to collect merit and purify obscurations,*

Generally speaking, it is not that easy to produce relics and to achieve progressive experiential realizations on the grounds and path in a succession of many noble rebirths in happy migratory realms. One has to make very strong and extensive prayers and preserve pure morality for many life times in order to create the causes that produce relics. Relics will only be produced by practicing.

The tantric teachings are expounded in four classes. Within these four classes of tantra, it is only highest yoga tantra that enables one to achieve enlightenment in one brief lifetime of this degenerate time with this one body; the others do not. Highest yoga tantra has two divisions: generation stage is classified into five stages. It is said in the scripture teachings that those who have achieved the realization of



mind isolation [in the completion stage of the highest tantra] will produce relics. One who has achieved the realization will definitely be able to attain enlightenment in that very lifetime.

Like wise, we can also see the relics of arya Buddhas such as our own teacher Guru Shakyamuni Buddha and Buddha Kasyapa, who achieved the two unmistakable paths of method and wisdom within their mental continuum and thereby extinguished the two obscurations and attained Buddhahood. In order to produce these relics, they first practice the Bodhisattva's conduct of the six perfections, five paths, ten grounds and so forth for three countless great aeons and accumulated the two collections of merit and wisdom that led to the actualization of the *rupakaya* and *dharmakaya* of a Buddha. Relics emerged as a result of all this.

Generally, although a Buddha's body is unlike our gross body that is composed of flesh and blood, the Buddha emanated many kinds of relics out of compassion for us, in order to help us sentient beings generate faith in our mind streams as a cause to receive blessings, purify negativities and accumulate merits.

In the past, when Buddha was residing in India, many people saw the actual body. Nowadays due to impure karma and lack of merit, we cannot see the actual body of Buddha nor hear his speech. We only have the fortune to see Buddha's relics. Therefore, the kind and compassionate Guru Shakyamuni Buddha emanated thousands of relics as object of devotion for very many sentient beings. It is said in the sutras, such as Dode Kalsang, that King Ashoka regarded the relics as the most sacred objects and housed all of them in many stupas that he built for sentient beings. Many of the relics can also be found in Sri Lanka. The emanated relics were spread throughout many countries in the world, inspiring numberless beings and leading to the attainment of liberation and enlightenment – this is the sole purpose of producing relics.



Buddhas appear to arya Bodhisattvas in the aspect of the *sambhogakaya*, to ordinary Bodhisattvas in the aspect of emanation bodhies and those with karmic impurities in the aspect of ordinary beings possessing a body of flesh and blood. Similarly, in the case of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whom we are able to see directly and who is in fact actual Chenrezig most ordinary beings can only see him in the aspect of a fully ordained monk who is still subject to sickness, who grows old and so forth.

In the same way, those who have reached very high levels of tantric realization – for example, like Geshe Lama Konchog – leave behind relics for the sake of sentient beings who are tortured by suffering. This happens because they have developed high realizations within their mental continuum originating from the root of great compassion. Geshe Lama Konchog inspired and introduced Dharma to many Tibetan and foreigners from all over the world and planted the seeds of good imprints in their minds.

**When you see holy beings’ relics, think in the following way;**

At this time, these holy beings are benefiting us by emanating relics that enable us to accumulate merit and purify negativities, thereby leading us to liberation and enlightenment. We should rejoice at the deeds and realizations of the great tantric practitioners such as Geshe Lama Konchog and others. We should pray by thinking, “May we too achieve realizations of the grounds and paths as you holy beings have done. May we be able to benefit migratory beings as extensively as you holy beings have benefited them.”

We should also rejoice at the virtue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, at all qualities of their holy body, speech and mind, as well as all their great activities for the teachings for migratory beings. As it says in the sutras, “All phenomena are like conditions and abide at the tip of the wish. Whoever makes even a single prayer, the result will arise in exactly the same way.” As it says here, good and bad always depends upon the intention, so one should strive to generate good intentions.



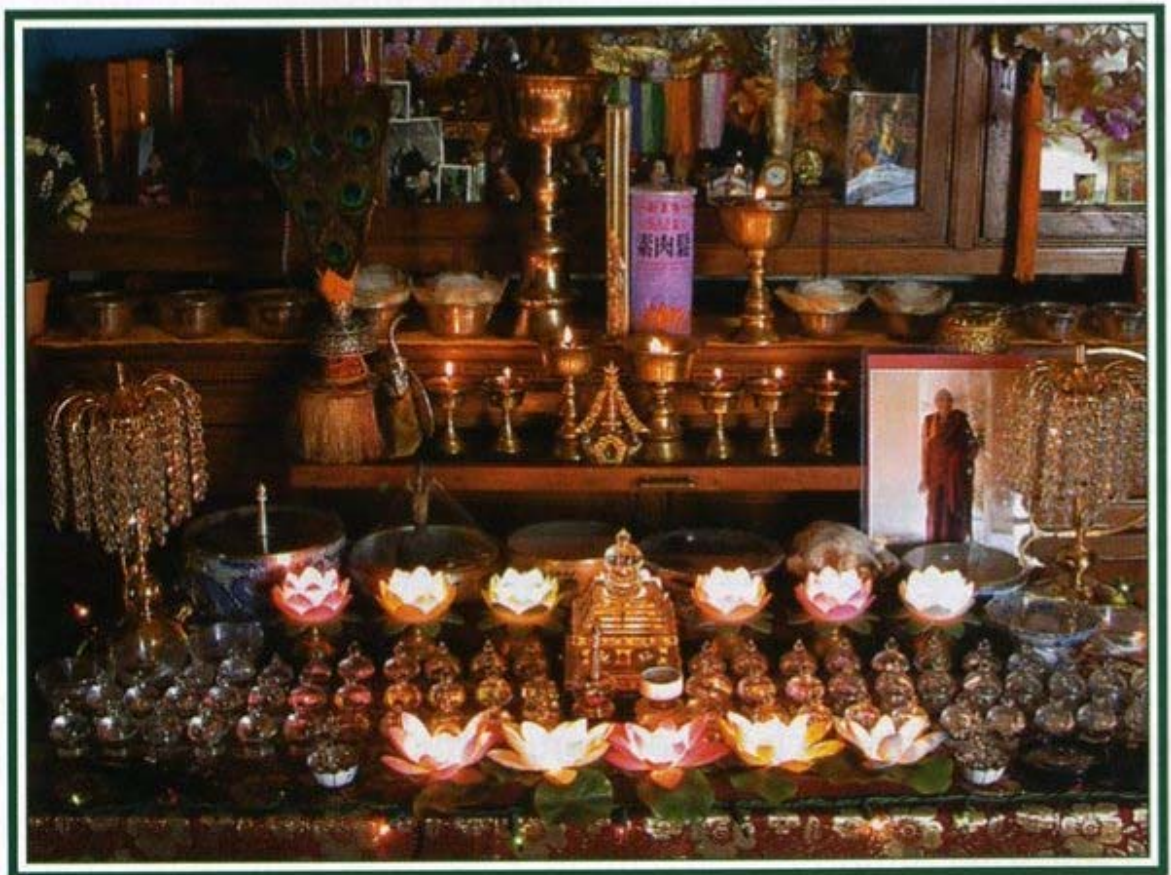
As Lama Tsong Khapa said, “If one’s practice is not conjoined with any of the three principles of the path, apart from a few exceptional cases, whatever one does will only become the cause of samsara. “However, it is said that due to the power of holy objects, even if one makes offerings, prostrations and circumambulations to them with an impure motivation such as anger, it all becomes the cause of omniscience.

In order to generate realizations such as isolation of the mind in the complete stage of the highest yoga tantra, one must first realize the view of the Madhyamika Prasangika, which is unlike the views of the other philosophical schools. One must train in the stages of the common path by generating the pure mind of bodhicitta, by renouncing self and cherishing others. This is preceded by generating pure renunciation. The root of all of these is generating the faith that sees guru as the actual Buddha. This depends on the manner of correctly devoting to the guru with thought and action. It is through such a practice of developing the mind in the path that these relics will come about.

This is the reason why relics are considered very holy and precious. Relics are manifested and remains are left behind due to the kindness of holy beings for the sake of us sentient beings to collect merit and purify obscurations.



### *3. The Precious Relics and Other Blessed Objects Housed in the Great Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa*



Relics displayed in Geshe la's room at Kopan



## **This Great Stupa Contains Genuine Relics of the Five Kinds**

- 1. The Buddha Dharma Relic** One thousand and twenty-six sets of the 108 volumes of *The Kangyur*; 1,004 complete sets of the 218 volume of *The Tengyur*; 1013 complete sets of the 43 volumes of the entire teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa and his two disciples; 1,000 complete sets of *The Diamond Cutter Sutra*; 1156 set of *The Medicine Buddha Sutra*; full sets of philosophical root texts of the three great monastic universities, Ganden, Drepung and Sera; and the entire root texts based on the Lower Tantric College; all lam-rim teachings of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism; all major teachings of Geshe Lama Konchog, of Lama Tsong Khapa; and so forth.
- 2. The Pill Relic** Genuine relics of two of the four previous founding Buddhas, Buddha Krakuccada and Buddha Kasyapa; a genuine relic of Buddha Shakyamuni; as well as many other symbols of the body, speech and mind of the enlightened ones; and so forth.
- 3. The Body Relic** More than 29 relics of mahasiddhas and great master of Indian and Tibet especially the relics of the late Mahasiddha, the Great Master, the most venerable Geshe Lama Konchog; and so forth
- 4. Holy Remains and Bodily Parts Relic** Over 100 blessed pills made from the holy remains of Geshe Lama Konchog and the holy possessions of the Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and of many other high lamas from all four traditions, such as Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche; and so forth.
- 5. The Dharmakaya, Truth Body Relic** The fine gold-plated three dimensional Mandala of Guhyasamaja; the gold plated statues of Guhyasamaja, Heruka, Yamantaka, Medicine Buddha and 100,000 tsa-tsas of Lama Tsong Khapa; soil, water and trees from all the holy places of India, Tibet, China, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Indonesia; over 500 medicinal herbs from Tibet and the Himalayas; and so forth.

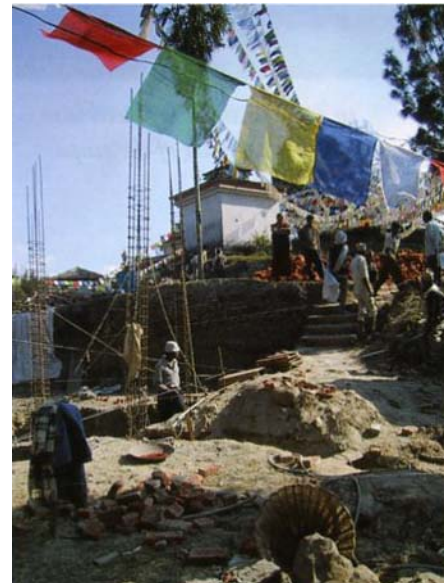




All these precious objects housed in The Great Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa have been received by the grace of many people; Lama Geshe Konchog, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, the Great Kagyurwa Jetsun Lama Pangnang Chogtul Rinpoche, many high lamas, aristocrats, royal families and geshe, as well as Fred Cheong, Lillian Too, Lama Gyupa Gen. T. Dorje. Objects have also come from the treasuries of the monasteries and the treasuries of rich families.

### **Precious Relics Housed in the Stupa**

1. *Tso Thal* Pill.
2. *Keydun* Pills.
3. Cloth of Kyabje Dorje Chang.
4. Three pill relics of Mount Kailash.
5. *Pheldung* relic.
6. *Nete Habu Rei* sindura.
7. Five kinds of sand from Mansorawa Lake.
8. *Tsa-tsa* of Padmasambhava made of the earth of Maruthi's cave.
9. Flesh from the cloth that covers Panchen Lama Choekyi Nyima.
10. Lama Tsong Khapa's *dongka*.
11. *Konri Chudane* blessed pill.
12. *Kungsa* blessed pill.
13. *Sungri Lhatsen*.
14. Three Pabongka Rinpoche *phabdung* pills.
15. Flesh of Mount Kailash.
16. Two *tsa-tsas* of Panglung's.
17. Sindura of Nyatre Tabu Hill.
18. *Pheldung*.
19. Robe of the Great Buton Lobsang Choegor.
20. Treasure of Nam Thoe, wealth protector of the Potala Palace from an old man from Tibet.
21. Salt and sand collected from Mansorawa Lake.
22. Precious robe of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and his tutor.
23. *Tsa-tsa* of Miktupa Buddha.
24. Holy robe of Jo Shakyamuni Buddha at Lhasa and offered grains from the temple.



The beginning – first breaking of the ground for the building of the stupa



25. Lama Tsong Khapa tooth stamp.
26. Jangsem pills : white and red bodhicitta of Reting Rinpoche while his consciousness was leaving his body.
27. Substances collected from Jo Mikyu Dorje; Ramoche.
28. Dramse Keydun pills.
29. Holy soil, leaves, trees, water and rocks from the following sacred places:
  - Lama Atisha Cave.
  - Padmasambhava Cave.
  - Sand from Mansorawa Lake.
  - Soil from hot spring found near the Great Mt. Kailash.
  - Dak Yenba Holy place where cave of 88 Mahasiddhas was found.
  - Soil from Mt. Kailash, believed to cure sickness of humans and animals.
  - Ellora: 12 caves.
  - Ajanta Cave.
  - 84 Mahasiddhas' cave near Ajanta.
  - Sand and nectar from Ahrunga Cave.
  - Nagarjuna Kondha.
  - Amarawati Maha Stupa.
  - Sera Thegchen Ling.
  - All Ganden Monastery.
  - All Drepung Monastery.
  - Trijang Rinpoche Golden Stupa in Ganden.
  - Ling Rinpoche Golden Stupa in Drepung.
  - Tho Ling Monastery.
  - Namdrol Ling Goden Temple.
  - Dzongkar Choede Monastery.
  - Mysore Palace.
  - Place where Shakyamuni Buddha spent 6 years in ascetic retreat.
  - Place where Sujata offered milk to Shakyamuni Buddha.
  - Place where Kivo Tashi offered kusha grass to Buddha.
  - Cave of direct vision of Six Armed Mahakala.
  - Place where the monkey offered honey to Lord Buddha.
  - Place where Shakyamuni Buddha practiced renunciation by first cutting his hair.



10 wealthvases are placed into the throne part of the stupa



- Nalanda Monastery.  
Vulture Peak where Buddha taught *The Heart Sutra*.  
Mahabodhi Stupa at Bodhgaya.  
All the holy places in India, Tibet, Nepal, China, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand and so on.
30. Crystal found at Mt. Kailash.
  31. Ashes pills of Gen Lam Rim Rinpoche.
  32. Flesh of Tenth Panchen Choekyi Nyima.
  33. Six Armed Mahakala stone from Mt. Kailash.
  34. Sandalwood leaves from Lama Tsong Khapa's birth place.
  35. Bone relics of Mt. Kailash.
  36. Various *tsa-tsas* : Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, Shakyamuni Buddha, Amitayus, White Umbrella, Amitabha and his disciples, Manjushri, Lama Atisha, Kurukulla.
  37. Blessed pills of high Tibetan Lamas near Lhasa and other great ancient Indian pandits.
  38. Collection of Ling Rinpoche relics that were used as the filling of stupa and statues.
  39. Part of the *choegu* of Lama Tsong Khapa, which was wrapped around his holy body in a stupa for 550 years.
  40. Ashes of Lama Tsong Khapa's body after it was burnt.
  41. Flesh of Yamantaka statue; the mud of the statue blessed by 10,000 root of mantras of Yamantaka.
  42. A relic that came out of a Shakyamuni Buddha statue (that contained Buddha relics) during His Holiness the Dalai Lama's geshe examination in 1959. The relic has multiplied itself ever since.
  43. Crushed jewel, which was found inside the Shakyamuni Buddha statue in Lhasa.
  44. *Tendue* pill.
  45. Pabongka Rinpoche's nectar pill.
  46. Ashes of Dechen Nyingpo, Pabongka Rinpoche.
  47. Nectar pill made at Dharamsala.
  48. *Tendue* pills offered by Zong Rinpoche.
  49. Cloth used for making nectar pills.
  50. Parts of the Dharma robe, cushion, belt, shoe, hat and stamp that



Filling the throne part with incense and ghee



- belonged to Lama Tsong Khapa.
51. Nectar pills made in 1981 in the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; and a collection of nectar pills contributed from various Lhabrang.
  52. Nectar pills blessed directly by Vajra Yogini.
  53. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche's hair (received on March 15, 1978)
  54. Geshe Lama Konchog's nectar pills, made by himself.
  55. Golden Gyalthongpa.
  56. Precious iron pill.
  57. Kalachakra blessed pill from protection.
  58. Inner offering pill.
  59. *Logyun* pill.
  60. Substances for performing tantric pujas.
  61. Precious blessed nectar pill of Potala Palace.
  62. Iron stick and skull of Upper Tantric College
  63. Blue lotus and yellow lotus.
  64. Special blessed pills from Ling Tsang.
  65. Precious pills given by Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche to Geshe Lama Konchog.
  66. *Jangsen pills*: precious pills made from the white and red liquid substances produced when Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche's consciousness was leaving his holy body.
  67. Nectar pills of Kyabe Trijang Rinpoche.
  68. Things used by Kyabe Trijang Rinpoche for inner offerings
  69. *Yangchen* pill.
  70. Yellow cloth used when Lama Tsong Khapa's body was wrapped.
  71. Treasure of monasteries from before 1959, blessed by Yamantaka practice.
  72. Nectar pills made by Panchen Lobsang Choekyi Nyima.
  73. Precious pills made from Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche's remains.
  74. Tooth stamp of Panchen Rinpoche
  75. Secret pill of Shakya.
  76. Cloth of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama.
  77. *Tendue* pills of Upper Tantric College.
  78. A pair of shoes used for protection purpose.
  79. Precious pills made of thousands of great beings from India and



Some of the texts placed in the vase part



Tibet.

80. Crystal of Mount Kailash.
81. *Bhari kyidun* pill.
82. Bone of Lama Tsong Khapa.
83. *Jangsem pill*: precious pills made from the white and red light substances produced when the Great Fifth Dalai Lama's consciousness was leaving his holy body.
84. The nectar pill of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.
85. Soil from 24 places of Vajra Yogini.
86. Holy water collected from holy places: Mt Kailash, Mansorawa Lake, Riber Ganga, Lhasa Kyichu, etc.
87. Combination of soil and stone collected from 5 different peaks of Manjushri Wu Tai Shan in China.
88. *Jangsem pills*: precious pills made from the white and red liquid substances produced when Geshe Senge Rinpoche's consciousness was leaving his holy body.
89. *Logyun* pills during the time of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama.
90. *Logyun* pills from great lamas.
91. Pieces of trees from holy places of Tibet, Nepal, China, etc.
92. Holy substances such as the sand used for making the mandalas of Guhyasamaja. Heruka Chakrasamvara, Yamantaka, etc.
93. A piece of silk used for making ancient *tangkas* at Potala Palace.
94. Yamantaka *tsa-tsa* made by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.
95. Bone of Kyung, an extinct bird similar to a vulture.
96. Nectar pill of Potala Palace.
97. Precious Kalachakra pill of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.
98. Nectar pill of Tibetan government before 1959.
99. Nectar pill of holy lamas from all the four Tibetan traditions.
100. The ashes of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.
101. Cloth and salt of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.
102. The diary and pen used by Geshe Lama Konchog.
103. Substances collected from the remains of Geshe Lama Konchog.
104. Precious pills of Tibetan medicine.
105. Genuine relic of Buddha Karakuchanda.
106. Relics of seven Buddhas.
107. Precious skull pill of Majig Labdron.



Texts are placed into the vase part



108. The prince Tagdu *tzeda*.
109. A piece of finest sandalwood, Snake's Heart sandalwood.
110. Flesh of Joshag Namsum.
111. Tric *tsar longma*, a blessed precious pill.
112. Clothes of Milarepa.
113. Clothes of Dromtonpa.
114. The *pheldung* of Kasyapa Buddha.
115. Pills made of the brain of Prince Darma Dode.
116. Leg bone relic of King Trisong Detsen (extremely rare and difficult to find).
117. The cloth used for wrapping Duptob Tangtong Gyalpo, a great saint of Tibet.
118. Clothes and hair of Lha Lama Yeshe O.
119. Precious *tsa-tsa* of Jo Je.
120. Piece of the robe of Jangsem Chd kha wa.
121. Flesh of Yamantaka who used to speak in the stupa that was built by Duptob Tangtong Gyalpo in Tsang Riwo Che.
122. Blood of Dakini Sangwa Yeshe.
123. Hair of Tsarchen and Longchen.
124. Bone of Je Podo Wa.
125. Precious blessed long life pills made by Lhachan Bechoe.
126. Clothes of Gyalwa Dodul Pema Kara's attendant Kunga Tenzin.
127. Piece of robe and the hair by Lha Lama Yeshe O.
128. The flesh of Karma Rolpai Dorje.
129. Treasure of Nyannang Jangchup Ling, the monk's robe of Jowo Je.
130. A piece of Danika's robe.
131. Pieces of hat, shoe and the robe of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama.
132. Special blessed pills made by dakinis from the treasure box of Jamyang Wangpo.
133. A piece of a hat of Lama Menkhangpa.
134. Piece of the robe of the Eighth Dalai Lama.
135. Precious *yantze* pill.
136. Cloth used for wrapping Panchen Choekyi Wangchuk.
137. Relics and the tendue pills of Tradun Tsuk-lak-khang.
138. Secret mantras, flesh and sale of some of the shrines of Panchen



Golden mantras are written on the life tree, to be put into the centre of the stupa



Palden Yeshe.

139. A piece of the heart wood, *sok-shing*, of the great Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal.
140. Five pieces of hair, robe and the hat of Lama Tsong Khapa.
141. Soil of the Great Ganden Golden Stupa.
142. Piece of robe of Khedup-je.
143. Hair of Baso Choe-je.
144. Piece of robe of Saint Karma Gyalwang.
145. Piece of robe of Longdol Lama.
146. Piece of robe of great Ra Lotzawa.
147. Piece of robe of Guru Bero Zana.
148. *Jangsem pills*: the white and red liquid substances produced by Lama Tsong Khapa and his two disciples when their consciousnesses were leaving their bodies.
149. Collection of the flesh of Nyak-ter Dam-se Dung-na-chan, Augyan Lingpa and so on.
150. Piece of robe of Lochen Bero-za-na received from the holy place of Parping, Nepal.
151. Relic of Swayambunath in Kathmandu.
152. Precious soil of Ramoche Jo-wo Rinpoche in Lhasa.
153. Clothes of Tri Jangchup Choephel.
154. Clothes of Khadro Rigzin Choedo.
155. Fish, sand and water of Mansorawa Lake.
156. Soil and water of holy caves of Agenda and Ellora in India.
157. Flesh of Panchen Palden Yeshe.
158. Some clothes of Kachen Yeshe Gyaltzen.
159. *Taylda paldung*.
160. Piece of robe of the Sixth Dalai Lama.
161. Five precious items.
162. Magic wood of Lhasa Tsoklak Khang.
163. Clothes of Panchen Lobsang Choegyen.
164. Nectar from the self-emanated Tara image at Parphing.
165. Nectar pills showered from the Golden Stupa of Choeje Dhundup Rinchen in Ja-kying Monastery.
166. Thousands of precious pills made from the four kinds of relics of seven Buddhas.



Pieces of cloths, robes, ashes, relic pills from various high lamas and holy beings



167. Golden mantra for filling the head of the Ganden Thupa Tsultrim.
168. Seven precious items bestowed by the office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
169. Soil, water and leaves of the Great Stupa in Bodhgaya.
170. Flesh of the three Great Stupas of Nepal.
171. Self-emanated words of Yamaraza of Lama Tsong Khapa's Rang-thal.
172. Flesh and offered water of Shakyamuni Buddha in Lhasa.
173. A piece of wood, earth, a finger and the offered water of the five precious self-emanated images of Thukje Chenpo (an epithet of Avalokiteshvara).
174. Precious blessed pills of the holy objects of Nepal.
175. Offered water of Je-Nga Drama.
176. Salt used for preserving the remains of the previous Panchen Rinpoche.
177. The robe of Third Panchen Rinpoche.
178. The great collected pills of Kunde Ling.
179. A piece of an umbrella used for the Golden Stupa of Ganden Monastery in Tibet.
180. The 12 different robes of the successive lineages of the Dalai Lama.
181. Robe and salt of the shrine of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.
182. Bone relic and the robe of Je Pabongka.
183. Tooth of Je Pagmo Dup-pa.
184. Bone relic of the regent, Tadak Rinpoche.
185. Precious pills made of the soil of Tsepak Me in Ramoche Temple.
186. Statue of Yamantaka bestowed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
187. Various kinds of sand collected during the Ganden Taktze Drupchoe.
188. Five kinds of sand collected during a Kalachakra initiation.
189. The hair of Je Lhatsun Rinpoche.
190. Relic of Drupchen Karma Gyalwang, one of the great saints.
191. Relics of an ex-abbot of Drepung Loseling.
192. A piece of flesh and the hair of Purchok Rinpoche.
193. Blessed barley by Panchen Rinpoche.
194. Pills made from the collected clothes of ancient Tibetan and



Relic tsa tsas



The golden Guhyasamaja mandala





Indian scholars.

195. Piece of robe of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
196. Water and soil of holy places of India.
197. Six kinds of water and sands from the holy Ganga.
198. Water and soil of the holy places of Nepal.
199. Salt used for preserving the remains of Panchen Choekyi Nyima.
200. The ornament made from bone for the Protector of the Gelugpas, Damchan Choegyal.
201. Leaves of the Bodhi Tree at Je-ku-bom.
202. Piece of oak tree of North Rating in Tibet.
203. Snow drops of Mt. Kailash.
204. Water from the naga pond behind the Potala Palace.
205. Precious blessed substances from the main treasure of Karze Monastery.
206. Hair and robe of the previous Hre-hor Lam-dak.
207. Bone relic, hair and robe of Hre-hor Kyor-pon Rinpoche.
208. Tooth stamp of Lama Tsong Khapa.
209. Salt used for preserving the remains of Kyabje Ling Rinpoche.
210. Salt used for preserving the remains of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.
211. The relic and robe of Khangsar Dorje Chang.
212. Collection of the precious pills of great Tibetan and Indian scholars used for filling the stupa and statues received from Ling Labrang.
213. Pills made from the collection of hundred of blessed substances; received from Trijang Labrang.
214. Salt used for preserving the remains of Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche.
215. Pills made from the collection of many precious blessed substances (received from Rado Labrang).
216. Long-life precious pills and the blessed barley bestowed by Panchen Rinpoche.
217. Precious pills made from the relics of Zong Rinpoche.
218. Flesh of Panchen Rinpoche.
219. *Dulze choeman* nectar pills and *mani pills* of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
220. The mani pills of Lower Tantric College.



Stupa before painting, in November 2002



221. The salt and the water of Lotus Lake in Tibet.
222. A piece of a shoelace of Panchen Sonam Drakpa.
223. The tsa-tsa made from a piece of Yamantaka of Ganden Monastery.
224. The relics and the robes of the lineage of the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, Trijang Rinpoche, Kyabje Sangbom Dorje Chang, Kyabje Dechen Nyingpo, great saint Hrehor Rinpoche and many Indian and Tibetan great saints, scholars and high lamas.

### **Scriptures Housed in the Stupa**

225. 1,026 complete sets of the 108 volumes of *The Kangyur*, the sutras of Buddha.
226. 1,004 complete sets of the 218 volumes of *The Tengyur*, the commentaries by the great masters on Buddha's sutra teachings.
227. 1,013 complete sets of the 43 volumes of the entire teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa and his two disciples, Khedup Je and Gyaltsab Je.
228. The 1,000 complete sets of *The Diamond Cutter Sutra*.
229. 1,156 sets of *The Medicine Buddha Sutra*.
230. *The Great Tantra of Guhyasamaja* by Lama Tsong Khapa.
231. *Golden Gyaltonpa Sutra*.
232. *The Wisdom of Ocean: Commentary on Valid Cognition: Dignaga*, commentary by Khedup Je.
233. *Commentary by Valid Cognition: Dignaga*.
234. *Commentary by Valid Cognition: Gyaltsab Dharma Rinchen*.
235. *Commentary on Madhyamika: The Clarity of Root : Dharmakirti*.
236. *The Treatises on the Great Path to the Enlightenment* by Lama Tsong Khapa.
237. *The Five Root Texts or Discourses of Maitreyanath: Maitreya. The Ornament of Clear Realization. The Ornament of Mahayana Sutra. Mahayana Sublime Continuum. Clear Distinction Between Phenomena and their Realization. Clear Distinction Between the Middle Way and Extremes.*
238. *The Root Texts of Thirty-four Accounts of Buddha's Deeds and its Commentary.*



One of the Dyani Buddhas placed around the vase part of the stupa



239. *The Six Middle Way* by Nagarjuna.
240. All the Ritual Texts of the Lower Tantric College on Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara and Yamantaka.
241. The collection of all the works of Jetsun Choekyi Gyaltzen and others.
242. The text of Madhyamika by Tou-thon Kalsang.
243. The long-life prayers of 17 Great Pandits of Nalanda, India by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
244. *The Rosary of Golden Lekshe* by Lama Tsong Khapa.
245. *Three sets of The Precious Glass Rosary: The 108 Praises for the Great Compassionate.*
246. Many sets of all the long-life prayers and the praises of His Holiness the Dalai Lama composed by various high lamas.
247. *Compendium of Precepts* by Shantideva.
248. The Commentaries of Guhyasamaja, Chakrasamvara and Yamantaka by Lama Tsong Khapa.
249. *Two Stages of How to do Naro Dakini's Practice.*
250. Almost all the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
251. The brief biography of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.
252. Two sets of *The Praise for White and Green Tara.*
253. *The Essence of the Precious Rosary: Buddha's Teachings of all the Vinaya* by the First Dalai Lama Gendun Drub.
254. 28 sets of Sutra Kalsang.
255. 46 complete sets of Dar Tok Ser Sum.
256. The collection of all the lam-rim texts of the four traditions.
257. *The Preliminary Commentary on Kunsang Lamai Shallung: Zokpa Chenpa Longchen Nying Thik.*
258. *The Heart Sutra.*
259. *The Commentary on Guru Puja: The Treasure for the Conceptual of the Secret Transmission of Melody.*
260. *The Dedication Prayer of Mount Tala* by King Songtsen Gampo.
261. 10 sets of *Bodhisattva's Confession of Moral Downfalls.*
262. *In Praise of Buddha Shakyamuni* by Lama Tsong Khapa.
263. 10 sets of *The King of Prayers.*
264. *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path* by Lama Tsong Khapa.
265. Dedication Prayer of Jowo Je Themke-Ma by Atisha.



The 13<sup>th</sup> wheel of the stupa, containing the relics



266. Seven Point Mind Training, the Kadampas' mind training precepts.
267. *The Middle Way of Meditation* by Kamalashila.
268. Almost all the devotional and dedication prayers recited in religious services in all Gelug monasteries including the three main universities of Drepung, Sera and Ganden.
269. *The Essence of Nectar: The Secret Transmission of Eight Branches*, the root text of Tibetan Medical science.
270. The root texts of Tibetan language, literature and poetry.
271. Almost all the teachings of Geshe Lama Konchog.

#### **Statues and Pictures Housed in the Stupa**

272. The fine gold-plated Mandala of Guhyasamaja.
273. The gilded statues of Guhyasamaja, Heruka, Yamantaka and Medicine Buddha.
274. 100,000 tsa-tsas of Lama Tsong Khapa.
275. 100,000 pictures of Lama Tsong Khapa.
276. 100,000 pictures of the Lama Choepa merit field.
277. 100,000 pictures of the Seven Medicine Buddhas.
278. 100,000 pictures of the Refuge merit field.
279. 100,000 pictures of the Vajra Yogini Mandala.
280. 100,000 pictures of Vajra Yogini.
281. 100,000 pictures of Heruka Chakrasamvara.
282. 100,000 pictures of Guhyasamaja.
283. 100,000 pictures of Yamantaka.
284. 100,000 pictures of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his two tutors, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.
285. 100,000 pictures of the three Long life Buddhas.
286. 100,000 pictures of Buddha Shakyamuni.
287. 100,000 pictures of Sixteen Arhats.
288. 100,000 pictures of Avalokiteshvara.
289. 100,000 pictures of Manjushri.
290. 100,000 pictures of Green Tara.
291. 100,000 pictures of the Bodhi Stupa.



Three of the thousand buddhas placed on the steps of the stupa



## *Part Two*

*The Life of Geshe Lama Konchog*



Geshe Lama Konchog



## 4. *Living in Vajra Yogini's Pure Land*

*This brief biography of Geshe Lama Konchog, by Ven. Robina Courtin, was first published in Mandala, the Magazine of FPMT, in March 2002.*



Tsum landscape

Since he was a small child, Tenzin Zopa would prefer to be with Geshe Lama Konchog in his cave than at his home in the nearby village of Tsum in the northeastern reaches of Nepal where it borders Tibet. “Even from the time I could crawl, I would follow Geshe-la when he returned from the village to his cave. Often from early morning I would sit under his cloak as he meditated, playing or sleeping, sometimes all day. I was completely content there.” So close were they that Tenzin Zopa assumed that his meditating monk was his grandfather.

Then, when the boy was seven, “Grandfather’ moved down the mountain, eventually to settle at Kopan Monastery near Kathmandu.

Now himself a monk of 26, having become ordained at the age of nine and spend his life serving Geshe Lama Konchog, Tenzin Zopa was charged with overseeing the ceremonies and rituals at the funeral of his precious guru, who passed away at Kopan on October 15.



Only now is becoming known to the hundreds of monks, nuns and laypeople devoted to Geshe Lama Konchog the extraordinary qualities of this modern-day Milarepa. His students have known that he meditated in caves for 25 years, for example, but few have been aware of the details. Over the years Tenzin Zopa has meticulously noted down the accomplishments of this great yogi, and is compiling information for a biography.

Losang Phuntsog, as he was known as a boy, was born in the Year of the Fire Rabbit, 1927, in the village of Shangbu, near Lhasa. He was extremely weak and sick as a baby; an oracle consulted by the parents instructed them to take special care of him and only to dress him in yellow or red, the Tibetan monastic colors. “And you must send him to a monastery, otherwise he will not survive.”

When he was six, his parents decided to send him to a nearby Drepung, one of the three great Gelug monasteries in Lhasa. But already the young boy was displaying a quality that would be central to his life: he knew exactly what he wanted and would pursue it with single-minded determination. He declared that he wanted to attend Sera Monastery instead. As he had an uncle there, his parents relented.



Geshe la with incarnation of Trijang Rinpoche, his root guru.

His uncle, however, was a *dob-dob* – one of a group of monks found at most the Gelug monasteries who were basically self-appointed policemen – who actively discouraged the young boy’s wish to study and practice and would beat him regularly.

But nothing could deter Losang Phuntsog. In the monasteries, it was forbidden to take tantric initiations until one had completed the study of the five major treatises. However, at the age of nine he joined a group of

lamas and monks to take the Vajra Yogini initiation from his root guru Trijang Rinpoche, the junior tutor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.





“He was so excited, like a young child anticipating New Year,” says Geshe Jampa Tseten, the abbot of Samten Ling in Boudhanath, not far from Kopan, who lived in the room next to Losang Phuntsog during their many years at the Je college of Sera.

“But when we arrived for the initiation, seven of us discovered we were not yet qualified to receive it and had to leave. The rest of us didn’t mind, but Losang Phuntsog was distraught. He cried all the way back to his room. ‘How unfortunate we are,’ he lamented. ‘How unlucky! What a terrible loss! What kind of negative karma must we have created in the past?’ “He cried the whole night and was moody and sad and didn’t eat for three days. We thought he was crazy.”

Now, the abbot is full of admiration for his schoolmate. “To have such wisdom at the age of nine and to have such a strong emotional feeling for receiving an initiation, is extraordinary. Even now, at the age of 73, I do not have such such strong feelings,” he told Tenzin Zopa.

By the age of 10, Losang Phuntsog was displaying other extraordinary qualities. “During the night he would regularly perform *Chod*. He would perform it for hours and hours, using the most amazing tunes. We had no idea where he learned these things,” says Jampa Tseten.

He remembers an occasion where they were doing retreat together. Losang Phuntsog would go off to join the nuns in various practices. “He had the most beautiful voice, the best female voice. And in between sessions he would also perform dakinis dances. For twenty-four hours he would be practicing; doing the *cham* dancing, especially dakini dancing and then going off at midnight and practicing *Chod* for hours. The other monks would laugh at him but he would dismiss them: “I am blissful! Don’t bother me, leave me alone!”



Practicing Chod



Sometimes to divert the attention of the monks he would perform *Lhamo* dancing, making them laugh hugely and then he would just disappear again to secretly perform dakini dancing and *Chod*.

“Often we would hear loud noises from his room, keeping us all awake. Now I am sure he was practicing the Six Yogas of Napora,” says the abbot.

Between the ages of 11 and 15, Losang Phuntsog – known by now to his classmates as “Lama Konchog”, the Lama Refuge, because of his straightforwardness and single-minded devotion to study and practice – attended all the major initiations offered by the high lamas such as Pabongka Rinpoche, Ling Rinpoche, Trijang Rinpoche and Bari Rinpoche. “And not only that,” says Jampa Tseten. “He would request permission to stay on at the lama’s house and complete the commitments and retreat of each initiation, even if it took months. Then he would return to his studies. He put everything into practice immediately.”

For years, since he was a young boy, the above remembers, Lama Konchog could be heard in his room talking animatedly about the Dharma. “During the day, at night, any time, we could hear him talking deeply about various topics. He’d be quoting such logical reasons, talking about such profound things, especially impermanence and emptiness. We would listen at his door.”

“Sometimes, we would go into his room and there he would be, sitting on cushions piled high, giving teachings, his hands in the teaching mudra and his eyes closed. We thought he was crazy! But now I am convinced that he was teaching to non-human disciples whom only he could see.”

Throughout his years at Sera, beginning when he was a child, Lama Konchog would disappear for months at a time, traveling to various places around Tibet to take into astonishing mind a whole range of skills, rarely found all in one person. “He was expert in so many fields” says Tenzin Zopa. “Apart from the sutra and tantra teachings of all the four



traditions of Tibet, he also accomplishes *Cham* dancing, rituals, sand mandalas, astrology, making divinations, architecture according to the Vinaya – his knowledge was astonishing.”

During his 25 years of study at Sera Je, Geshe Lama Konchog mastered all these texts required. “He was so humble,” says Jampa Tseten, “yet when he debated he was fierce! No one could defeat him!” He was qualified to go for his Lharmapa degree, but the uprising against the Chinese Communist invaders intervened.

In fact, two months before the evens of March 1959, the 32 year old Lama Konchog had a dream that predicted the uprising and its violent aftermath. He told his friends and said he was leaving. As usual, they thought he was crazy and stayed put. He left Tibet carrying “a leaky pot”, - as he told Tenzin Zopa later – “a bowl, a set of robes, a small sheepskin and essential Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Gelug Texts.”

According to Lama Lhundrup, the abbot of Kopan Monastery, the route that Geshe Lama Konchog followed out of Tibet was revealed in his earlier dream. The route took him to the village of Tsum, just over the border into Nepal and to the cave of Tibet’s beloved yogi and saint, Milarepa. The cave is known as Cave of the Doves. It is said that dakas and dakinis transformed into doves here to listen to Milarepa’s teaching. It was here also that Milarepa was offered robes by his sister.



Escape route from Tibet

Lama Konchog left his belongings with a family in Tsum and headed down the mountain to India, to

hear teachings in Bodhgaya from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who by now had also escaped from Tibet. He then planned to join his friends and fellow monks at Buxaduar in the north.



The cave of the doves, Milarepa cave meditation cave

Fortuitously he met his guru Trijang Rinpoche in Kathmandu who said that “his studies were finished” and that he should “return to the mountains from where he’d just come and meditate.”

He hesitated about going but later an admonishing from his lama, during a second chance meeting on a train bound for Varanasi in India, he returned to Tsum. Collecting his texts – and his leaky pot – he effectively disappeared.

He made his way to the Cave of the Doves, high in the mountains jungle, where only tigers and other wild animals, as well as deer, lived. According to his own account to Tenzin Zopa, Geshe Lama Konchog trained himself during the first few months “to have an empty stomach. I lived on nettles and gradually was able to practice ‘wind chulen’ “-a method whereby the meditator can “take the essence” (*chulen*) from nature. The usual method practiced by yogis is to take the essences from rocks and flowers, then mixing them into pills. But Lama Konchog decided to do without all sustenance. He literally took the essence from the air and was able to survive.

And he didn’t sleep either, according to Rinchen Wangchuk, another meditator from that area. From 2 in the morning until 8 in the evening he would meditate on the various deities, mainly on Vajra Yogini and from 8 in the evening until 2 the following morning he would prostrate. And he took the Eight Mahayana Precepts everyday, in the context of the Nyung-ne fasting practice.

Wanting very much to make water bowl offerings to the Guru Buddha, he told Tenzin Zopa that he dug out holes in the rock face and then chipped away at the rock leading from the



nearby waterfall, digging a channel, which allowed the water to flow into the “bowls.” For Mandala offerings, he used rocks from the stream.

“I can’t imagine how hard he worked,” says Tenzin Zopa. “One night at Kopan, when I was about 15, I came back home after my evening debate and because I was tired I went straight to bed. Normally we were supposed to review our memorization from the morning. Geshe-la came into my room and scolded me.”



Geshe la’s cave near the cave of the doves

“You will never achieve what you are supposed to achieve acting like this! Everything is so luxurious for you people these days! When I was in the cave, I had no food, one set of robes and one sheep skin. In the winter the snow was higher than you. The whole day I did sessions and at night I prostrated. I had no sleep for years and years. You people cannot go without sleep for even one day!”

“I felt so sad and I cried. I went outside and chanted and chanted, trying to stay up all night. Hours later Geshe-la came out in this undershirt with some butter tea for me. ‘Go and sleep,’ he said. It had a deep effect on me.”

Geshe Lama Konchog lived like this for at least seven years: full of utter determination to achieve realizations, compelled by great compassion and delighting in his solitude, with only the tigers and deer for friends. Asked later how he felt about conditions in the West, he said, “It is all contaminated! The best food I ever had was in the cave. The best place I’ve ever lived in was the cave. The best friends I ever had were in the cave.” The cave needed to be climbed into, and the deer “would support each other in order to get in. Sometimes they would sit all day and night. We’d stay peacefully together with no fear. For me, that was a pure land!”



It can only be imagined how, after years of this unbelievable rigor, the blissful meditator appeared to some shepherds who ventured up into the mountains, wanting to set up a village. “They thought he was a demon or even a yet!” says Tenzin Zopa. “There he was this wild skinny person with long hair and beard, and rags to cover only his secret parts. At first they ran away!” The following day, more people came and tried to chase him away, but they realized he was human and attempted to encourage him to come down the mountains. “If you want to eat human food, come and work for us,” they offered. “I got the best food here,” Lama Konchog said. “Just try not to bother me!”

But chase him away they did. Unable to find another cave, the determined yogi found a heavily overhanging juniper tree near Tsurak Mountain. Reinforcing it with branches and sticks, astonishingly he made this his new home. With complete control over his own elements he was able to effortlessly withstand the external elements, living through the fierce winter snows, with no food, no clothing and no sleep. All he had were the bliss of his meditation and the blessings of the holy beings.



Geshe la's third cave

Some 18 months later he was again forced to find another home. This time, says Tenzin Zopa, he walked up the mountain and then down towards the middle part of Tsum, the village he'd first encountered after leaving Tibet. About an hour away he found another, partial cave known as Galdung Gompa, which he built up and enclosed rocks. Here he lived for another 15 years.



Rachen Nunnery in Tsum  
where Geshe la was abbot

From his cave he gradually become known and revered, by the villagers. He worked on their behalf, in the beginning especially using his powers to remove the harmful spirits from the village. “He was able to communicate with spirits,” Tenzin Zopa says. “He could subdue them with ease, even the powerful ones who, apparently, had been practitioners in previous lives but had died with strong attachment, anger and pride and reincarnated as spirits. Also, he was able to control the weather, and with the power of mantra he would heal people.”

Tenzin Zopa was the first of six children, born in 1975 not long after Geshe Lama Konchog moved closed to Tsum. “My father was chosen by Geshe-la to marry my mother,” he says. “Our family became very close to him.”

In 1969, now out of his strict retreat and visiting Boudhanath near Kathmandu, Geshe Lama Konchog met Lama Thubten Yeshe again for the first time since their days together at Sera Je. The meeting was a surprise: “Suddenly someone hugged him tightly from behind and wouldn’t let go,” Tenzin Zopa says. “He wondered who this crazy person was!” It was Lama Yeshe, so happy to see his old friend again, after 10 years apart. “They had great affection and respect for each other,” Tenzin Zopa says. “Both were very similar: great practitioners living simple, unassuming lives.”

“We were not just ordinary friends, who share food with each other,” Geshe Lama Konchog said later. “We were Dharma friends,” Lama Yeshe asked him to join him at Kopan, but he said no, he had his own things to do.

He did, however visited Kopan. Thubten Remba remembers: “We all wondered who this rough looking monk was.”

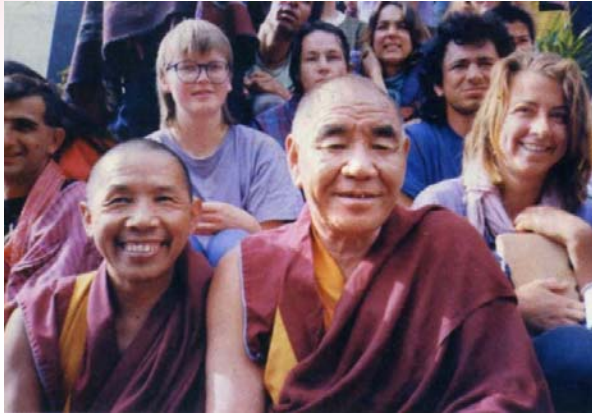


Geshe la's first ever photo with the Tsum family, included Rinchen Wangchen a fellow meditator

Like all holy beings, he was a hidden yogi: his unassuming “rough” appearance showed nothing of his marvelous and astonishing inner qualities. In reality “Geshe Lama Konchog lived in Vajra Yogini’s Pure Land,” Lama Zopa Rinpoche declared later.

In 1984, after Lama Yeshe passed away, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche wrote to Geshe Lama Konchog and again requested him to come. This time he accepted.





Geshe la and Lama Lhundrup at Kopan

“When Lama Yeshe passed away,” said Rinpoche, “the smiles at Kopan went away. But when Geshe Lama Konchog came, the smile came back.” For 18 years, he lived at Kopan, devoting himself to the monks and nuns and giving them the gift of his unbelievable qualities and knowledge. “He was our father” says Tenzin Zopa.

The holy body of Geshe Lama Konchog was offered to the fire at Kopan on October 22, seven days after this beloved father passed away. Kopan’s lamas and 300 monks and

nearby Khachoe Chakyil’s 300 nuns, as well as many devoted students from abroad, attended the Yamantaka fire puja, held at a site chosen by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

According to Tenzin Zopa all the details of his own passing away were under Geshe-la’s control, including the date, the type of rituals, the practices to be performed by various monasteries.

“On the day after Geshe-la passed away, Geshe Jampa Tseten came to visit Kopan. He advised me to be very careful with the arrangements from the cremation, because Geshe Lama Konchog was definitely and extraordinary being. Suddenly I remembered that Geshe-la had left on his table, open at the appropriate pages, various texts that explained exactly what to do: the various substances to use for the fire, the rituals and so on. He knew it was far too complicated for me, so he prepared everything.

Tenzin Zopa was with him before he passed away. “Geshe-la said to me, ‘It seems there is nothing I haven’t done in my life. I feel completely satisfied and I have no regrets.’ I was holding his hand so tightly and I was crying.



“Then he gave me instructions about what to do after he stopped breathing – after he had started his meditation, in another words. ‘Don’t touch the body; no one should touch it. Don’t put any new objects in front of my eyes because it might distract the concentration. Don’t move or shake the bed. Don’t ask the doctor to do anything either. And do not light more than one butter lamp because it disturbs the clear light meditation. And don’t cry.’ He also gave instructions about what practices and pujas to do. The main one was to be Medicine Buddha.”

Around 8.15 on the evening of October 15, Tenzin Zopa and others were with Geshe Lama Konchog. Remembers Tenzin Zopa, “Geshe-la said to us, ‘Now the vision of the mirage has appeared’ – the first of the eight internal signs of death – ‘so please go and start the prayers.’ We recited Geshe-la’s daily prayers for him. At 8.50 his breathing stopped.”

Prayers were performed in Geshe-la’s house throughout the day and night during the seven days that he remained in meditation. On October 22, his holy body was carried in solemn procession to the site of the fire puja, which lasted for several hours amid auspicious signs of five types of rainbows and a drizzle of flowers from the sky. At the end, the specially constructed stupa contained the fire was sealed.

At 4.30 a.m. on the third day after the fire puja, under the supervision of the young Cherok Lama, Lama Lhundrup, Thubten Lhundrup, Geshe Losang Jamyang, Amtso, Drakpa and Tenzin Zopa, the stupa was broken open and the search for relics begun.

An astonishing number of relics were found – signs of the greatness of this holy being. “So many relics were found that what was supposed to be a two-hour job turned into eight,” Tenzin



Cremation



Searching for relics

Zopa said. Hundreds of pearl-like relics, some black hair, the heart, tongue and an eye – commonly, such organs of high tantric practitioners don't burn – and many other relics were found.

“Lama Lhundrup said it is as if Geshe-la's whole body was a precious jewel.”

At 2.30 p.m. Geshe-la's relics were invited to the gompa, with music and auspicious banners and flowers. The request for Geshe-la's reincarnation to

come quickly was recited, and then the relics were taken in procession to Geshe-la's house.

In the entrance of the house there was a table with tree types of food prepared: a bowl of milk, *tsampa* mixed with the “three whites” and the “three sweets” and six medical substances, as well as sweet rice. This was offered to all monks, nuns and lay people who came to visit the precious relics.



Bringing the relics to the gompa



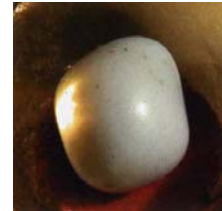
Ritual implements of Geshe Lama Konchog

With the speed of Vajra Yogini, may this precious yogi return to us as quickly as possible!



The relics, many of which have been multiplying throughout the past year, are kept in Geshe-la's room, together with a large picture of Geshe-la and many of his holy objects and are accessible to anyone wishes to receive blessings.

1. Large white *pheldung* relic, 1 piece.
2. Egg-shape white relics, multiplied from 1 to 192 pieces.
3. *Pheldung* white relics, multiplied from 2 to 37 pieces.
4. Pill-type relics, two different kinds, 21 pieces.
5. Red relics, 16 pieces.
6. Pearl-type relics, over 58 pieces.
7. Right-turning conch shape tooth relics, 2 pieces.
8. Turquoise (green) relics, 3 pieces.
9. Black relics, over 20 pieces.
10. Gray relics, over 60 pieces.
11. Golden relics, 7 pieces.
12. Copper colored relics, 9 pieces.
13. Crystallized relic, still growing from bone, 1 piece.
14. White non-yet-formed relics, over 200 pieces.
15. Conch-shaped bone relic, still growing from bone, 1 piece.
16. Red blood relic.
17. Ribs, which are still producing golden and pearl-like relics.



Big white relic



Green relic



Red relic



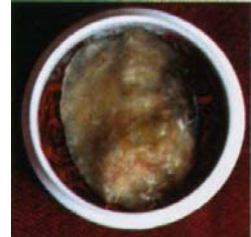
Eye relic



18. Tooth relic, 12 pieces.
19. Jawbone, with pearl-like relics growing on it.
20. Black shiny Vajra Yogini hair.
21. Silver hair.
22. Copper colored hair, changing into silver, gold, gray and black.
23. Crystallized heart.
24. Geshe-la's tongue relic with self-emanation of Tara on it.  
Geshe-la's eye relic.
25. The skull.
26. One part of the skull, on the top left of which is a jelly-like substance suspected to be Geshe-la's brain.
27. A two-inch deep imprint of a lotus, above it the crown of the Dhyani Buddhas, as well as two foot prints found under the cremation stupa.
28. Geshe-la's bell and vajra, which remain intact after cremation.
29. Small vajra held at Geshe-la's heart, which remains intact after cremation.
30. Geshe-la's Five Dhyani Buddha crown, which remains intact after cremation.



Black relic



Tongue relic



White multiplying relic



Tooth relic



Opening of relic exhibition in Taipei by Masters of the Chinese Sangha



Relics benefiting sick people in a hospital in Taipei



# *Part Three*

## *The Meaning and Benefit of Stupa*



## 5. *Creating Merit in Relation to Stupas*

*By Kyabje Lama Rinpoche*

The stupa represents Buddha's holy mind, *dharmakaya*; each part of the stupa shows the path to enlightenment. Building a stupa is a powerful way to purify negative karma and obscurations, and to accumulate extensive merit. In this way you can have realizations of the path to enlightenment and be able to do perfect work to liberate suffering beings, who are equal to the sky, leading them to the peerless happiness of enlightenment, which is the ultimate goal of our life.

1. If you make 1,000 stupas you will become a great Wheel Turning Holder of the Wisdom Teaching (Mahayana Secret Mantra) and have clairvoyance knowing all the Buddhadhama.
2. After death, without being born in the lower realms, you will be born a kind.
3. You will become like a sun, rising in the world, with perfect senses and a beautiful body.
4. You will be able to remember past lives and see future lives.
5. You will be able to extensively listen to the Dharma without forgetfulness.
6. *The Stainless Beam Sutra* states that all negative karma and obscurations, including the five uninterrupted negative karma are purified even by dreaming of a stupa, seeing a stupa, hearing the sound of a stupa and even for birds and flies etc., by being touched by the shadow of a stupa.





7. The sentient being will always be protected by the Buddha, who always pays attention to guiding them to achieve the pure enlightenment. They abide in the irreversible stage.
8. It is said by Shakyamuni Buddha in the sutras that it is extremely powerful to build a stupa for those who have passed away. It immediately changes a suffering rebirth into a fortunate rebirth with the opportunity to meet the Dharma.
9. It can also heal those with serious diseases.
10. There is no question that it accumulates extensive merit and brings success and happiness.

### **Circumambulating Stupas**

Stupas are the main holy objects in relation to which sentient being accumulate merit. The sutras teach that by circumambulating stupas one avoids being born in the *naraks*, as a *preta*, an animal, a barbarian, a long-life god, a heretic, a fool or in a place where Buddha has not descended, one receives a deva or human body and one has a long life. One is not harmed by *pretas*, cannibals or other creatures, for hundreds of aeons one is it born blind or crippled with arthritis.

By circumambulating stupas one receives perfect, power and perseverance. Because there is no laziness one is able to develop the mind quickly. One receives the six clairvoyances. One also becomes an *Arhat*, having abandoned all delusions and possessing great psychic power. Finally one achieves the golden holy body of Buddha adorned with holy signs.

Many other benefits are mentioned in *The Sutra of the Compassionate-Eyed One and Sutra of Sang Gyal*, which says; if a person circumambulates with devotion to a stupa or statue of Buddha, in their future lives their enemies will respect and surrender to them.



Circumambulation is the supreme method to purify obscurations and close the door to the lower realms.

A stupa filled with the four powerful mantras called the Relics of Dharmakaya and many other relics is very powerful. The wind that touches such a stupa and then touches beings, it purifies them. Circumambulating holy objects purifies broken pratimoksha vows, the five uninterrupted negative karmas and all the karmas to be born in the hell realms. Not only that, circumambulating is a very powerful practice and the very root of the practices is to circumambulate with strong devotion and with an undistracted mind. Since we need to accumulate extensive merit in order to generate realizations and achieve enlightenment quickly, we should attempt to circumambulate as perfectly as possible. Circumambulation should be done with body, speech and mind. There is no great benefit if your mind is distracted and you are gossiping while you are circumambulating.

Mental circumambulating involves generating devotion by thinking again and again of the qualities of the object of the Guru-Buddha. Speech circumambulation involves reciting mantras and praises over and over again. Of the three types of circumambulation the most important is the mental circumambulation, having devotion in the mind, I think it would be very beneficial for anyone with a disease that is difficult to cure or incurable such as AIDS or cancer to circumambulate a stupa several hundred times a day. This is my personal suggestion. Since depending on holy objects purifies the cause of the disease it has to have an effect on the disease. Before starting, generate a strong motivation of bodhicitta, remembering the suffering of the beings in the lower realms and feel that you are responsible for freeing them from their suffering.

To multiply the effect of the circumambulation 1000 times say once the mantra: CHOM DEN DE DE ZHIN SHEG PA DRA CHOM PA RIN CHEN GYAL TSEN LA CHOG TSAL LO.



Then recite seven times: OM NAMO BHAGAWATE RATNA KITU RATZAYA TATHAGATAYA ARHATE SAMYAK SAM BUDDHAYA TAYATA OM RATNE TATNE MAHA RATNE RATNE VIZAYA SOHA.

And also you can recite the Mantra of Oser Drime: OM SAR WA TA THA GA TA, MA LA BI SHO DHA NI, RU DHA BA LE PRA TI SAM SKA RA, TA THA GA TA DHA TU DHA RE, DHA RA DHA RA, SAR WA TA THA YA, A DHK TAM NA A DHIK THA TE SWA HA.

Mantra of Tsultor: OM NA MA SA TREE YA DHI LA NAM, SAR WA TA THA GA TA HRI DA YA GAR BHE JA LA JA LA, DHAR MA DHA TU GAR BHE SAM BHA RA MA MA A YU, SAM SHO DHA YA, SAM SHO DHA YA, MA MA SAR WA PA PAM, SAR WA TO THA GA TA SAMAN TOK NIK BI MA LI SHUD DHE, HUNG HUNG HUNG HUNG, OM BAM SAM DIA SO HA.

Mantra of Shakyamuni Buddha: OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNA YE SO HA.

Think of the stupa in emptiness and remember that all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas abide in the holy object. You can visualize the stupa as the deity and absorb all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions into it. As you circumambulate, meditate that the guru encompass all the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. When circumambulating think you are leading all sentient beings in the circumambulations. As you circumambulate recite the mantras of a deity visualizing nectar beings illuminating yourself and all sentient beings. At the completion of each circumambulation, think you have purified all your negative karma and that of all sentient beings. At the end of the meditation dedicate the merit.

While circumambulating you can also practice rejoicing in your own three times merits and those of all other sentient beings, Bodhisattvas and Buddhas.



In short, the main purpose of building this excellent Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa of the late great Mahasiddha Geshe Lama Konchog is to repay his infinite kindness and to help all the sentient beings purify their negative imprint and accumulate extensive positive imprints in order to gain extensive merit and wisdom, both of which are prerequisites for reaching enlightenment.

Building a stupa, regardless of its size, while maintaining a pure view, will clear away evils obscuring the mind and the good impressions experienced even during the construction process may result in intelligence, wisdom and all other high qualities.



Swoyambhunath Stupa, Nepal



## 6. *The Benefit of Building and Paying Homage to Stupas*

By Geshe Tenzin Zopa

Even after Buddhism ceased to prevail in the country of its birth, the ancient tradition of constructing stupas continued to flourish outside India, particularly in Tibet and its neighbours. One reason for this was the great merit attachment to the construction of Stupas. As an offering to propagate the Buddhadharma, stupas contribute to the spiritual well being of the patron, since by doing so he creates a positive influence in the minds of others. Traditionally, one who through his actions realizes the welfare both of himself and others is known as a spiritual friend.

Buddha himself said in his *Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra* that children paying here and there have made mounds of sand as stupa in devotion to the Buddha. All of them have become partakers of enlightenment.

Many stupas were filled with *tsa-tsas*, which were the most common form of relics used to fill a stupa. The following story about them illustrates the wealth of merit to be gained through this practice. It tells of a man who once made a single *tsa-tsa* with a pure motivation. He becomes enlightenment within one life time. A second man found this *tsa-tsa* in the rain and with the same motivation attempted to protect it by making a shelter for it out of the soles of his shoes. He too becomes enlightened within the same lifetime. A third man found the *tsa-tsa* and with pure motivation removed it from the dirty shoes and he also reached enlightenment within that lifetime. If making and taking care of one small *tsa-tsa* an enlighten three people, the merit gained from the construction of a stupa will be vast and glorious by comparison, leading oneself and others to, as it says in *The Analokana Sutra*, “Speedily come to good fortune by venerating the shrine.”



Outside the symbolic enclosure of Samye in Tibet with its ordered cluster of buildings, a group of small white monuments stand on the ridge of the hill. These five stupas were built by King Trisong Detsen. They indicate the spot where the king came to meet Padmasambhava. It is said that, dominated by royal pride, the king originally failed to pay respect to Padmasambhava and instead waited for his guest to pay homage to him. It was not until he became aware of his entire entourage prostrating themselves upon the ground before Padmasambhava's resplendent form that the king prostrated. Later, aware of his mistake, the king sought to restore his merit by building the five stupas. They were carved out of the rock and stand as white landmarks visible from afar across the open landscape.

The desire to create merit, the inspiration for the construction of many stupas, find expression in another ancient tradition strongly associated with the stupas; the piling up of the stones into cairn. Dotted circumambulation routes, whose focus was often a single or collection of stupas they were regularly whitewashed. In addition to these heaps of pebbles, each stone of which represents someone's circumambulation, are long walls of slabs of stone or slate inscribed with mantra, usually *om mani padme hum*. In the Himalaya region, cairn and often stupas can also be seen on top of every mountain pass. They serve as a tribute to the deity of the pass or the mountain. Each passing traveler adds their own contribution.

### **More merits**

It is said in the sutras and tantras that any wholesome and unwholesome deeds performed in the presence of holy objects, such as this stupa are more powerful if they are performed either regularly in the first month of the Tibetan calendar, the month of miracles, the fourth month Saka Dawa or on the anniversary of great deeds of Buddha and former holy masters or on the full moon, new moon, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of any lunar month and on the day of solar and lunar eclipses.

Anyone who prostrates, circumambulates and makes offering of clean water, flowers, lamps, bells or sponsor a fresh coat of paint on the stupa will acquire immeasurable amounts of benefit. This is emphasized in sutras and tantras.



It is said in Shantideva's *Compendium of Precepts* that even by merely holding the stupa with devotion and folding hands at the heart and reciting "I go for refuge" will purify one's karmic obscurations accumulated in many aeons and one will attain the stage of omniscience. This is incontrovertible. Therefore the holy symbol of body, speech and mind are universally revered as the bestower of four liberations because whoever sees, hears, remembers and touches them will be released from all sufferings.

In the *Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra* it is also said that whoever builds with joy a stupa of the Victorious Ones either from stones, aloe-wood, sandalwood, pinewood, mud, brick or any material will again attain enlightenment. Even those who pile up soil and stones in their effort to build hermitages or monasteries, or even if children make sand stupas of the Victorious Ones while playing, will obtain the great benefit. And again, when he addressed Brahim Nestoson in *The Sutra Je Nampa Jelpe Do* the Buddha enumerates eighteen benefits resulting from building a stupa:

1. One will be reborn in a royal family
2. One will get a beautiful body
3. One's speech will be entrancing
4. One's mere sight will be a great joy for the others
5. One's will have a charming and attractive personality
6. One will be erudite in the five sciences
7. One will become a supporter (an example for all)
8. One will be praised from all directions
9. One will be inclined to sounds and words of Dharma
10. One will live only with happiness



11. One will be venerated both by humans and gods
12. One will be obtain great riches
13. One will be granted a long life
14. All one's wishes will be fulfilled
15. One's beneficial activity and wisdom will only grow
16. One's body will become an indestructible as a dorje
17. One will be reborn in the higher realms or existence
18. One will reach quickly perfect awakening

Apart from these mentioned benefits, there are many others in the sutras and tantras.

The practice of walking around the monument, following the path of the sun, keeping the right shoulder towards the object of reverence, was a traditional way in which the Buddha's disciples show him respect. Circumambulating a stupa is an act that can acquire great deal of merit, which is well illustrated by the story, related by the Buddha, of a Brahman called Viradutra.

This Brahman lived an unhappy life because his family would no longer support or feed him, but he could see the Buddhist monks receive alms. He dearly wanted to become a Buddhist monk and asked Shariputra and Maugalyayana, the two principles disciples of Buddha, to give him the supreme vow of ordination. When they looked into his mental continuum in search of a single seed of merit, they found none and sent him away concluding that this Brahman could not achieve the liberation of Arhatship for another 100,000 lives. Viradutra wandered down to a nearby river, prayed that in his life he would be born a disciples of Buddha and resolved to throw himself in.





Suddenly, the Buddha himself appeared, grabbed the Brahman by the collar and asked him what the matter was. When he had told his whole story, the Buddha replied, “I will give you vow of ordination,” and the Brahman was escorted to the monastery to be robed and his head shaved.

The disciples were amazed and asked the Buddha what merit he could find in the man. The Buddha replied, “You here may not be as powerful as the Buddha, but I can see that more than 100,000 lives ago this man acquire a seed of merit. The many lives ago he was born as a pig around the stupa and all the mud that covered his body fell off and filled the cracks at the base of the monument. This was how he acquired his merit.” In the same lifetime Viradutra achieved Arhatship and was not born again into this world.

It is stated in *The Amshavimala-Sutra*: whatever son or daughter either circumambulates the stupa, or pay homage or makes offering will be blessed by the Tathagatas and will not be turned away from attaining the unsurpassable state of enlightenment. The obscuration of their karmic deeds from previous lives will be purified, it is also stated in the verses on stupa circumambulation, “by circumambulating stupas one will be honoured by the Devas, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharva, Asuras, Garudas, Amanushas and Mahrugas.”

Even by doing a little circumambulation of a stupa one will be blessed with a precious human rebirth possessing the freedoms and endowments and will avoid the eight woeful forms of rebirths. Doing the circumambulation of stupa will bless one mindfulness, intelligence, a beautiful body and graciousness and one will be honoured by all others. By circumambulating stupas one will also obtain the longevity of devas and humans and enjoy a good reputation.

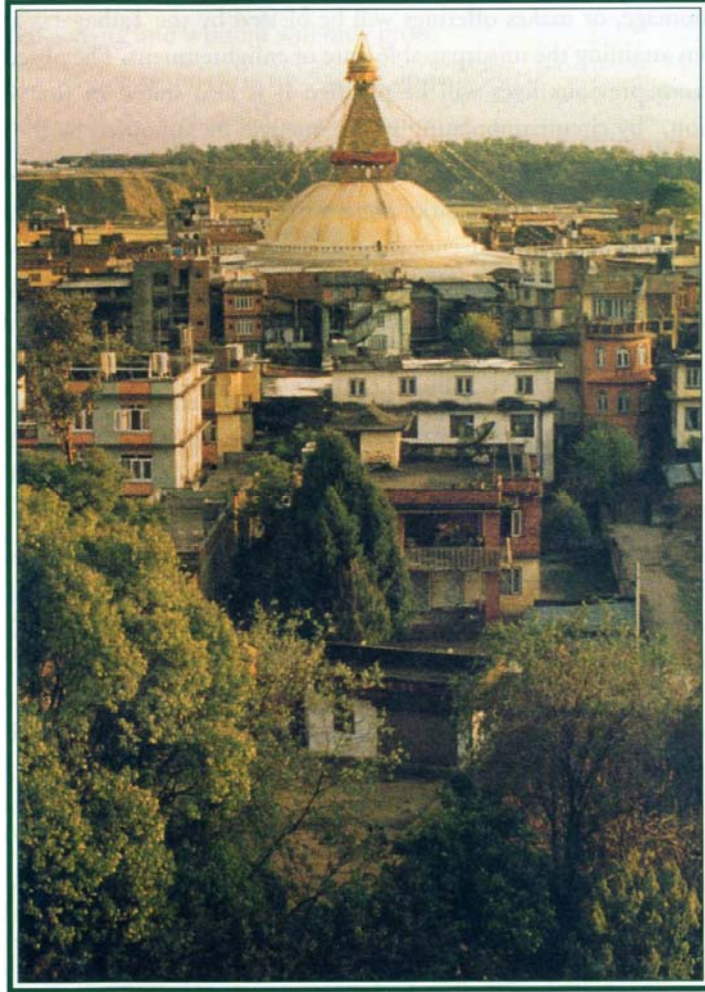
It is also stated in *The Guhya-Saria Sutra*: whosoever sentient beings pay homage and revere the stupa will not be reversed but certainly attain the unsurpassable state of perfect enlightenment. Offering one prostration and one circumambulation will rescue oneself from falling in the *avicci* hell and other awful states and attain the irreversible stage.



Whatsoever places possesses a stupa or similar monument will receive the blessing of all the Tathagatas, as the merit of honoring stupas is said to be vast. Those who cherish virtue for themselves and others are urged to accumulate merit and transcendental wisdom on the basis of wondrous and great stupa.



## *7. In Praise of Worship and Rejoicing*



Boudhanath Stupa, Nepal



*In his Compendium of Trainings, the great bodhisattva Shantideva has written the following concerning the merit to be gained by making offerings to a stupa.*

How do we know that worshipping a stupa of the Buddha increases one's merit? From the *Avalokana Sutra*, in which it is said:

In truth, he or she who cultivates the heart of wisdom and venerates a stupa of the Teacher will not become blind or lame even after countless ages have passed. Firm in resolution, firm in strength, a ruler firm in might, and such a person speedily experiences good fortune through having venerated a stupa. Though one might honour thousands of millions of Buddhas for a like number of ages, he who in this present degenerate time worships a stupa of the Buddha creates even greater merit. Pre-eminent is Buddha, unequalled, to be venerated, one who has walked in the pre-eminent way and has attained excellence; in consequence, he who performs worship to this chief of men becomes supreme and incomparably beautiful.

Departing from this world he or she will go the Heaven of the Thirty-three and abide there in a magnificent palace made of jewels, surrounded by a divine lake full of the purest water and beautified by golden sand sprinkled with jewels and crystals. After enjoying the bliss of this celestial realm and fulfilling his time there, the wise men will descent from the world of gods and take rebirth as a prosperous human.

After presenting a garland of flowers to a stupa, one will be honoured for thousands and millions of births. If one offers just one leaf to a sainted Lord of the World, for him all blessings will increase, both divine and human. If he creates a beautifully decorated receptacle for the Lord of the World's relics, he will become a powerful kind enjoying uninterrupted pomp and splendor. He or she will be dear and cherished, honoured and praised by gods and nagas alike, and by all the wise men in this world.



Here the praises sung for one who burns a speck of incense smaller than a grain of mustard seed and offers just that at a stupa of the Blessed One! His heart will be serene and all his sins will be left behind. Wherever he goes he will walk in virtue, full of health, firm in mind, vigilant and beloved by all. As the ruler of a vast realm he will be a wise emperor, great in power, having a golden complexion and anointed by the most precious perfumes in all the world. The best of clothes will be bestowed upon him as soon as he is born and one will receive garments of celestial silk, pre-eminent and well made.

### **Offering Robes**

Having offered robes to the stupa of the Blessed One, he himself will be blessed with a beautiful body, unequalled in all the world and adorned by the thirty-two marks of a universal monarch. By placing a banner on the Blessed One's stupa and offering the prayer: 'May I become a Buddha in the world,' one will walk nobly in the Conqueror's path and become worthy of honour by all people. One's body will be golden and he will receive brilliant robes, well made coverings and fine silk fabrics. By offering a flag to the Mighty One without Stain, one will soon receive great wealth; a plentiful treasure will be his and he will be endowed with endless wisdom. His conversation will be magnanimous and if he does not plant a thorn in the mind of others, he himself will remain serene in mind and vigilant. Fire will have no power over such a person; neither will poison or knives and all the people will look up to him or her.

### **Offering Light**

If one places but one light on a stupa of the Buddha, from now until the destruction of the world one's Buddha field will be golden and it will not be possible for one's life or glory to weaken. He who sets a light upon a stupa will have a body faultless in its proportions; he or she will be healthy, iron-armed, undismayed and will walk in splendor throughout the world. As if a hundred thousand million Buddha fields were filled with mustard seeds piled into mountains, so the vast amount of merit created by offering just one light to the Tathagatas cannot be counted, weighed or even expressed.



### **Offering a sunshade**

He who gives one sunshade, adorned with brilliant to see, to the Blessed One's stupa, will gain a body incomparable in this world, covered with the thirty-two marks that glorify the holy body of the Conqueror. Such a person will be endowed with supernatural knowledge and glory and will be honoured and worshipped by the gods. He will never delight in sensuality, but will be heroic, pure in morality, and excellent in virtuous conduct. He will take vows and dwell in the pure air of the forest where he shall devote himself to meditation and attain excellence. For one who has given a sunshade to the Blessed One's stupa, there will be no diminution of benevolence, happy at heart.

### **Offering music**

One who does worship to the Mighty One with a musical instrument will not, in truth, be overpowered by pangs of sorrow. In the world of humans, he or she will be pleasant-voiced, with tones calm and pure. He who has placed upon an instrument of music at a stupa of the Blessed One will be clear-eyed, acute of hearing, lofty in thought and endowed with an extremely keen sense of smell. His tongue will be very fine and excellent: full, subtle and delicate and as crimson as the tongues of the gods, able to produce an infinite variety of sounds. He will surely not become a serpent or a tongueless creature, nor will he be lame, crook-backed or have bent limbs. Instead, his body will be excellent and resplendent and he will be perfect in every limb, amiable and covered with signs of good fortune.

### **Offering perfume**

From offering perfume at a stupa of the Conqueror, one will come to dwell within a noble palace made of bright sandalwood and having a delightful scent, divine and excellent. One will have no craving at any time and after the Noble Conqueror's teachings have disappeared from Jambudvīpa, he or she will no longer take birth on this barren continent. One will escape all lust and everything disgusting, unclean and contemptible. Having established a mass of virtue, the person who has anointed with perfume a stupa of the Conqueror will walk along in holiness and when he leaves this earth he will become a lord in heaven. If he has anointed with perfume a stupa of the Conqueror, his wealth will soon increase a thousand-



fold; he will be excellent in speech, delightful in voice, dearly beloved and revered by many people, always enjoying peace and happiness. He or she will avoid all spheres of ruin, be ever near the Tathagatas and will always receive favor, happiness and love.

### **Offering a net covering**

One who has given a net covering to a stupa of the Blessed One will avoid being born in any age of misfortune. One will become a hero, firm a spirit, vigilant; he or she will take no delight in sensual pleasure, but will attain renunciation and will not be cast down. He who brings such a net to a stupa of the Blessed One will not lose the thought of enlightenment; his virtue will not be unbroken and well-protected. He will avoid harsh speech at all times, shun all foolishness, have a wide-ranging wisdom and will abide in virtue. He or she will receive pure food as well as excellent and well-colored garments that are soft and fine to look at.

### **Beautifying a stupa**

One who removes withered flowers from a stupa of the Blessed One will have a pure body, be looked up to and revered by many and even powerful kings will not become angry with him. One who takes down from a stupa of the Conqueror those withered flowers formerly placed there by others will avoid all bad roads and regions of misfortune. He will become a Bodhisattva possessing a mass of virtue. He or she will avoid all grief, faults and diseases. One who removes withered flowers from a stupa will become a Buddha, notable beyond all others, without peer, worshipped by men and gods. And he that offers a beautiful celestial flower, mystic flower, or trumpet-flower, or removes from a stupa one that has become stained, will reap choice and unequalled rewards.

### **Paying obeisance**

One who reverently does obeisance to a stupa of the Blessed One, will become respected and honoured in this world. All beings will flock to his kingdom: gods and anti-gods, nagas and humans. He will rule all the thousands of worlds and hold sway over other rulers. He will establish in the Buddha's pure wisdom all the beings that swell in his kingdom. Causing them to avoid misfortune, he will work to bring about the best and choicest good for them.



As a result of doing obeisance to a stupa his conversation will be pleasing. He will walk the world full of confidence and virtue. His voice will be beautiful and clear, renowned for its sweet and gentle qualities. No one will have lordship over him; he will be one that others long to gaze at. One who reverently does obeisance at a stupa of the Buddha will produce joyous generosity, benevolence and equanimity in the hearts of the multitude. Even if he is reviled, he will not become angry. When he enters heaven he will become a ruler of the gods and when he is a human he will be a king. Whoever does obeisance at a stupa will never experience decay. He or she will never fall into misfortune and will avoid all the base desires of the world. He will be rich, possessing great treasure. He will never resort to magical charms, will never become enraged and people will always be pleased and delighted with him.

Furthermore, it is said in the holy *Mahakaruna-pundarika Sutra*:

Without mentioning the merit created by those who offer reverence to me in person or worship my body with offerings no bigger than mustard seed, or dedicate stupas to me – whosoever, Ananda, shall throw into the air just one flower while thinking of Buddha, the ripening of their merit will be so vast that its limit cannot be reached even after countless ages. Even if they were to make such a flower offering in their dreams, they would create virtue that will lead them to Nirvana.

And in other holy scriptures it is said:

By influencing others to look upon the image of the Tathagata, by offering him service, by constantly speaking his praise, by creating his likeness – these are the ways Bodhisattvas will gain uninterrupted association with the Buddhas.

**And furthermore:**

For the good of all the beings the Tathagatas appear in this world, filled with great compassion mighty, turning the Wheel of Dharma. All pain is overcome when one beholds the Conqueror, monarch of the world. Seeing the Buddha, the noblest of men, destroys all hindrances and increases the merit by which enlightenment is attained.





So this is the opportunity for increasing merit by associating with Buddha. Even to see the likeness of the Tathagatas bears infinite fruit; how much more merit is gained by beholding his very self? As it is said in the holy Sraddhabaladhanavataramudra Sutra:

If any young man or woman, Manjushri, should give food of a hundred flavors to as many Pretyekka Buddhas or there are particles of dust in all the universe, and should do so everyday for as many as ages as there are grains of sand in the banks of the Ganges – if another young man or woman should merely see the painted image of the Buddha, this would produce infinitely greater merit than that. How much more merit, then, would be produced by pressing one's hands together in reverence before such a Buddha image, or offering it a flower, incense, perfume or lights? The merit produced by these acts of worship would be infinitely greater still.

Again, the holy Bodhisattva-pitaka describes the following way to increase one's merit: He that cleans a stupa of the Tathagata attains four purities. And what are these? The perfect purify of form, of steadfast undertaking, of beholding the Tathagatas and of a multitude of fortunate signs.

Again in the same place it is said:

One who lays a flower on a stupa of the Tathagatas, or anoints it, attains eight attributes without deficiency. And what are these? No deficiency in form, in enjoyment, in surroundings, in virtue, in tranquility, in knowledge, in wisdom and in aspiration.

It is also in the holy Ratnarati Sutra:

Those numberless beings that dwell throughout the three realms of existence: let them all make stupas for each of the Tathagatas, each stupa being as tall as Sumeru, King of Mountains and let them pay worship to each of these for as many ages as there are sands in the banks of the Ganges. But let a Bodhisattvas with a pure mind, place just one flower on one of these stupas, and he or she would produce infinitely greater merit than that.



In the same place it is said:

Let a countless number of universal monarchs each offer a lamp as large as the great ocean, producing a light as tall as Sumeru, to the stupas of all the Tathagatas. This offering of light would not be worth one hundredth part of the offering made by a single Bodhisattva who has left the householder's life and has lit a simple oil lamp and placed it on the stupa of just one Tathagata. There is no comparison between the merits of each offering. And again, if such monarchs were to honour the members of Buddha's Sangha by offering them all soft cushions upon which to rest and if a Bodhisattva who has left the household life should share with his companions what is placed in his bowl when he goes to receive alms, this would be greater and more precious offering than the former. And if those monarchs should pile up a heap of robes as high as Sumeru and give them to all the members of Buddha's Sangha, and if a Bodhisattva who has left the household life should give what little he has to the Sangha or to a Tathagata's stupa, this single offering would far surpass that of the heap of robes. And if those monarchs should cover the entire Southern Continent with flowers, offering them to all the stupas of the Tathagatas, and if a single Bodhisattva who has left the household life should place even one flower on a stupa of a Tathagata, the former offering would not equal one hundredth part of his. There would be comparison between them.

There is nothing superior to worshipping the Tathagata. As explained in the holy Sagaramatipariprccha Sutra:

The three ways of worshipping the Tathagata are unrivalled, Sagaramati. What three? When one develops the thought of enlightenment, when one comprehends the Dharma, and when one develops great compassion towards all.

It is also stated in the holy Ratnamegha:

Bodhisattvas who have performed such activities as creating a likeness of the Tathagata, reconstructing an old stupa, offering perfume and ointment to a stupa of the Tathagata, washing the Tathagata's likeness with scented water, and sweeping a stupa of the Tathagata, and have dedicated the root of virtue of these activities with the thought. "May all being be



reborn untouched by the impurities of the womb,” will themselves be reborn untouched by the womb.

*Shantideva’s Compendium also contains the following quotations concerning the practice of rejoicing.*

The advantages of rejoicing are described in the holy Prajnaparamita:

The root of virtue created by those who rejoice in the intentions of the Bodhisattvas will cause them, whoever they may appear, to be honoured revered respected, worshipped, praised, and held in reverence. They shall not see disagreeable shapes or hear disagreeable sounds, nor shall they experience disagreeable smells, tastes or tactile sensations. They need not fear birth in a state of misfortune, but may look forward to birth in a heavenly realm. And why so? Because they have rejoiced in the deeds of those who bring happiness to all, and who, upon attaining supreme enlightenment, shall completely liberate countless beings.

Again in the same place it says:

If a Bodhisattva who possesses transcendental wisdom and skill in applying the means of salvation shall rejoice over the mass of virtue of the Buddhas past, present and future, and shall dedicate the merit of this rejoicing to the attainment of supreme enlightenment, the merit he or she creates will far surpass the enjoyment of remaining in the Four Absorptions for as many ages as there are grains of sand on the bank of the Ganges. There is no comparison between them.



Stupas in numerous forms encircle the Buddha in this mandala



# *Part Four*

## *The History of Stupas*

*By Geshe Tenzin Zopa*



## 8. *The First Stupas*

Stupa, choeten, tope, chaitya, pagoda, dagaba are some of the words from various countries used to refer to the thousands of freestanding monuments that were built throughout Buddhist Asia in order to house sacred relics, mark holy places or commemorate events. The birthplace of stupas was India, where eight were constructed to protect Buddha's remains, at the same time honoring the events of his life. These eight simple monuments were the first in a great tradition that was to grow and flourish around the world along with Buddhism itself.

It is told in The *Maha Prinibbana-Sutra* that when the disciple Ananda asked Lord Buddha how he wished to be commemorated after his death, he replied that a stupa should be erected at crossroads so that whoever places garlands or perfumes or lamps there, or who even rejoices in speech or thought in the stupas, will have lasting benefits and joy.

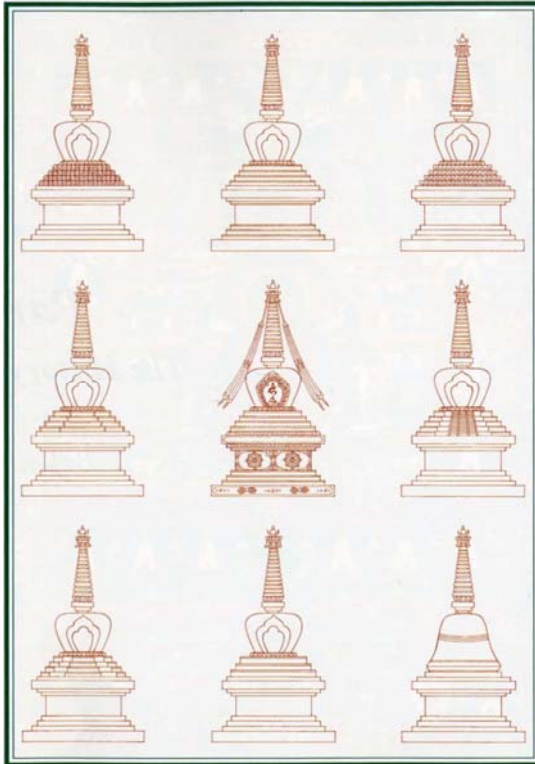
It was not until around 100 CE that the first images of the Buddha were created and accepted. Until then Buddhist art confined itself to iconic symbols of his holy person, relics, footprints and the sacred Bodhi Tree. In the absence of a Buddha image, or any representational figure, the stupa itself was an object of veneration.

It is likely that the monument was looked upon not just as reliquary or commemorative monument but as embodying the idea or essence of the Buddha. It stood as a symbol of the liberating presence, the enlightened mind, so that prayers were offered and rites or worship performed before the stupa itself. By the time of the great Indian King Ashoka (273-243 BCE), veneration of the stupa was an orthodox practice. Within two centuries of the Buddha's demise the stupa had become a natural object of homage in every Buddhist community.

After Buddha's passing away, there was a conflict among the followers about his holy relics. The *mallas* of Kushinagar first thought themselves the most fortunate to have received all the



relics of Buddha's body. However, representatives of the other seven countries that constituted ancient India also came forth to claim them. To avert a conflict, Brahmin Drona suggested an equal division of the relics between them. Some accounts state that in fact Shakyamuni Buddha's remains were first divided into three portions – one each for the gods, *nagas* and humans – and that the portion for the humans was then subdivided into eight. The eight people each took their share to their countries and eight great stupas were built over them.



The eight great stupas

In time these relics were again subdivided after the Indian King Ashoka decided to build 84,000 stupas. Today, we can find magnificent examples of various stupas scattered across Asia as well as, these days, in the rest of the world.

### **The First Eight Stupas**

The earliest shrines were constructed at the time of Lord Buddha. (See below for Nagarjuna's explanation of each.)

1. The Stupa of Heaped Lotuses.
2. The Stupa of the Conquest of Mara.
3. The Stupa of Many Gates.
4. The Stupa of Miracles.
5. The Stupa of Descent from Tushita.
6. The Stupa of Reconciliation.
7. The Stupa of Complete Victory.
8. The Stupa of Nirvana.

Although it is likely that the ancient original cores remain under substantial additions, no existing stupa can be positively identified as one of these eight originals.



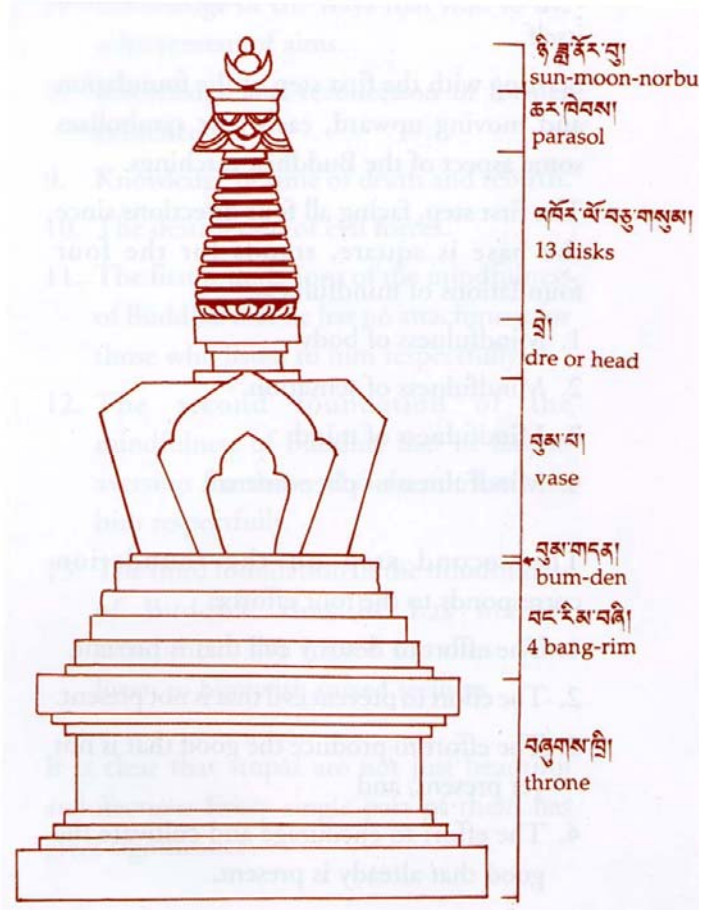
## 9. The Significance of Stupas

Stupas have great architectural significance. In general, the eight kinds of stupas represent the eight-fold path:

1. Right view.
2. Right thinking.
3. Right speech.
4. Right action.
5. Right livelihood.
6. Right mindfulness.
7. Right concentration.

The five geometric shapes of stupas correspond to the five elements:

1. A square base or foundation corresponds to earth.
2. A dome corresponds to water.
3. The harmika or spire in the shape of a stone fence corresponds to fire.
4. The pole of the umbrella or parasol correspondence to air or wind.
5. The umbrella itself corresponds to the void or space.







There are, however, more than five parts to the stupa. The base has four steps, there is a gate and fence, and even the path around the stupa is considered part of the monument itself.

Starting with the first step of the foundation and moving upwards, each part symbolizes some aspect of the Buddhist teachings.

The first step, facing all four directions since the base is square, stand for the four foundations of mindfulness:

1. Mindfulness of body.
2. Mindfulness of sensation.
3. Mindfulness of mind.
4. Mindfulness of phenomena.

The second step on the foundation corresponds to the four efforts:

1. The effort to destroy evil that is present.
2. The effort to prevent evil that is not present.
3. The effort to produce the good that is not yet present, and
4. The effort to encourage and cultivate the good that already is present.

The third step represents the four psychic powers that enlightened ones are said in possess:

1. The desire to act.
2. Energy.
3. Thought.
4. Investigation.

The top or fourth step on the base of the stupa stands for the five faculties; the circular base of the dome also represents these forces:

1. Faith.
2. Energy.
3. Mindfulness.
4. Concentration.
5. Reason.

The anda or dome, stands for the seven factors of enlightenment:

1. Mindfulness.
2. Discerning the truth.
3. Energy.
4. Rapture.
5. Serenity.
6. Concentration.
7. Equanimity.



The *harmika* on top the dome represents once again the eightfold path to enlightenment. This *harmika* is what holds the pole of the umbrella, or stem of the tree of life. This stem represents the tenfold knowledge. These are:

1. Knowledge of Dharma.
2. Knowledge of other person's thoughts.
3. Knowledge of relations.
4. Knowledge of empirical knowledge.
5. Knowledge of suffering.
6. Knowledge of the cause of suffering.
7. Knowledge of the annihilation of suffering.
8. Knowledge of the way that leads to the annihilation of suffering.
9. Knowledge of the things connected with despair.
10. Knowledge of the non-production of things.

The top most part of the stupa, or the tree of life, corresponds to 13 mystical powers of the Buddha. According to the *Tengyur* these are:

1. Knowledge of places suitable to preaching.
2. Knowledge of the ripening of different kinds of karma.

3. Knowledge of all of the states of meditations with higher spheres.
4. Knowledge of the superior and inferior faculties.
5. Knowledge of the different inclinations of other beings.
6. Knowledge of the different spheres of existence.
7. Knowledge of the ways that lead to the achievement of aims.
8. Knowledge and recollection of former existence.
9. Knowledge of time of death and rebirth.
10. The destruction of evil forces.
11. The first foundations of the mindfulness of Buddha: that he has no attachment for those who listen to him respectfully.
12. The second foundation of the mindfulness of Buddha: that he has no aversion for those who do not listen to him respectfully.
13. The third foundation of the mindfulness of Buddha: that he has neither attachment nor hatred for those who listen to him with mixed feelings.



It is clear that stupas are not just beautiful architecture. Even single part of them has great significance.

### **The Ten Traditional Purposes of Stupas**

1. Reminder of teacher.
2. A reliquary, containing the relics of the teacher and embodying enlightenment mind, and the focal point for the continuation of the Buddha activity of the teacher.
3. To magnetize enlightened energy.
4. To speed the teacher's rebirth.
5. To promote longevity.
6. To create peace and harmony in society.
7. To magnetize wealth.
8. To turn back invading armies.
9. To pacify physical and mental illness, pestilence and disease.
10. To actualize enlightenment.

Simply to build such a stupa in an act to inconceivable merit and conducive to innumerable blessings.



## 10. The Indian Stupa

The impulse to circumambulate stupas must have had some bearing on their circular shape, although that may simply be a development of the natural roundness of burial mounds. The stupa's remarkably constant evolution can be attributed to that custom. As an architectural type of stupa remained immune to the considerable changes in design that so transformed temples and monasteries. It retained its shape even when incorporated within other structures so that the practice of circumambulation remained possible.

The features of the original Indian stupa, such as the first eight structures, can be seen most clearly in the eight stupa that still stand at Sanchi. Each of these early shines was distinguished by a solid and hemispherical dome, called *anda*, which was raised on a circular terrace, or *medhi*. This medhi functioned as a professional path, a *pradaksinapatha*, for circumambulation and was reached by one or several stairways called *sopana*. At the summit of the dome was a square table-like structure or *harmika*, which was again crowned by a fixed pole called *yasti*. The yasti supported a series of crowned honorific umbrellas known as *chtravali*. It was the square-shaped *harmika* that housed the sacred relics.

Later, stupas were surrounded by a wooden or stone protective fence called *vedika*, which was breached at each cardinal point by a tall, beautifully carved *torana*, an open gateway. Tradition tells of the erection of a fence around the Mahabodhi Stupa in Bodhgaya to protect it against damage by elephants and other animals. The example of Sanchi suggests that the eight original stupas would have served not only to protect the sacred relics but to display a certain natural dignity as well.

It was King Ashoka who popularized the stupa and inspired its spread throughout Asia. After his conversion to Buddhism by the great Arhat, Upagupta, he publicly proclaimed his desire to honor the bequeathed remains of the Buddha by building 84,000 stupas to house them.



Thus, with Upagupta's unique help, not only were the stupas erected but the relics were deposited in each at exactly the same moment.

As the custom of building stupas spread to different countries and cultures, its shape naturally varied. In some countries, Thailand, for example, the dome diminished and became a tall slender spire. In others such as China, the dome vanished altogether and the pagoda grew out of the spire and in Nepal, the great hemispherical dome was retained.



Bodhgaya stupa

### **The Names and the Shapes of the Eight Kinds of Stupa, by Nagarjuna**

#### **1. The Stupa of Heaped Lotuses or Tathagata Stupa or**

**Source of Auspiciousness,** was erected by King Suddhodana, the father of Lord Buddha, at the sacred place of Lumbini Grove where Buddha was born on an auspicious full moon day of 565 BCE. It has a cylindrical shape with four to seven stages of lotuses.

**2. The Stupa of the Conquest of Mara** was erected by the king Bimbisara at Bodhgaya, after Buddha overcame the hosts of maras who tested him under the Bodhi Tree. This is square with four stages.

**3. The Stupa of Many Gates** is also known as **The Stupa of Turning of Wheel of Dharma.** It was built by the five first disciples, the Lord Buddha at Deer Park, in Saranath, where Buddha gave his first teachings, to them on the four noble truths. This has a square base with four stages with 108, twelve and sixteen doors symbolizing the 108 biographies or histories of Lord Buddha, twelve links of



dependent origination and sixteen emptinesses respectively.

**4. The Stupa of the Great Miracles** was created by Lozebi and the devotees of Buddha at Sravasti, where Buddha, at the age 50, defeated the six non-Buddhist teachers by performing great miracles. Buddha spent twenty-five of his rainy season retreats at Sravasti. This stupa is square with four stages, with protection in each four directions.

**5. Stupa of Descent from Tushita** was built at Vaishali, where Buddha turned the wheel of Dharma for the third time, by the local devotees when Buddha was 41. He returned from the pure land of Tushita after going there to repay the kindness of his mother by teaching her the Dharma. It has square base and a dome.

**6. Stupa of Reconciliation** was built at Rajgir by Mangada and others where Devadatta, the cousin of Buddha, caused problems among the sangha at the bamboo grove in Rajgir, and where there was also later quarrelling. Buddha reconciled the factions. This stupa is also called Stupa of Light and Stupa of Real Maitreya. It has a square base, with four stages with equal portions in all directions of the stages.

**7. Stupa of Complete Victory** is also called Blessed Stupa and was built by the people of

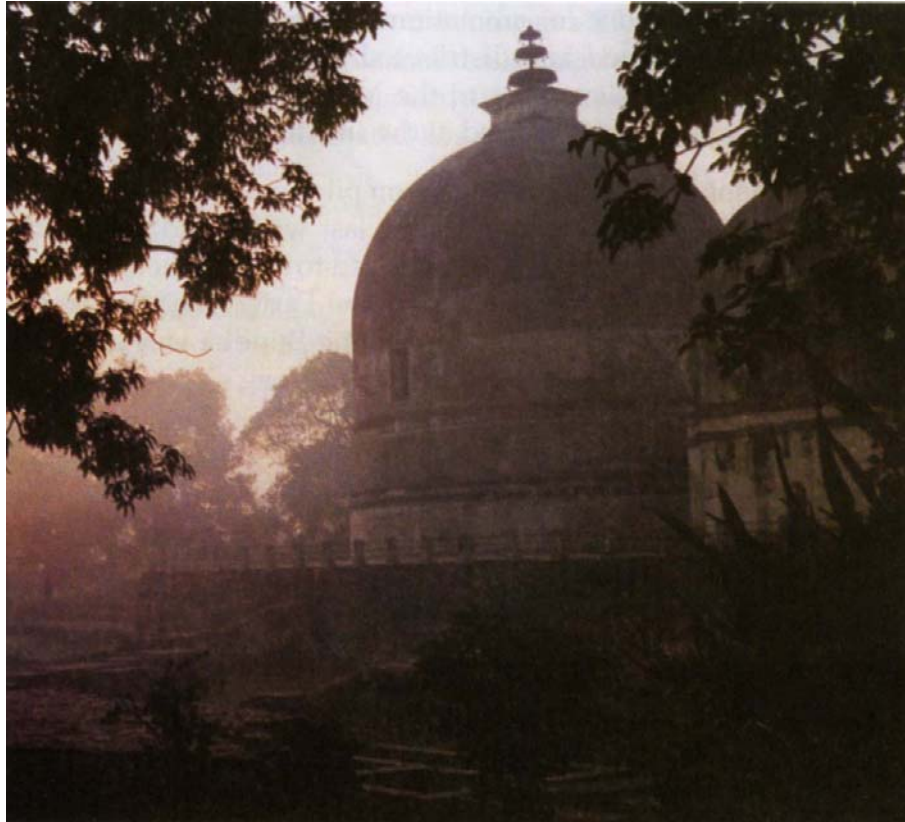


Stupa of Sarnath



Vaishali to commemorate Buddha's lengthening of his lifespan. It is cylindrical with three stages.

**8. Stupa of Nirvana** was built at Kushinagar where Buddha passed away, achieved his parinirvana. The relics were further divided and put into other relic stupas, most of which have a similar shape to the Stupa of Heaped Lotuses, and has no particular stages.



Stupa of Kushinagar



## 11. The Tibetan Stupa

How the Indian stupa, the original inspiration for the *choeten*, first found its way to Tibet, was not recorded. King Songten Gampo, who initiated the building of Buddhist edifices in Tibet, may have played some part in the introduction of stupas in the early seventh century. However, it is recounted that some 800 years earlier, in 173 BCE, a Nepalese translator called Lithesi offered a golden stupa and a text called *The Strict Secret* to Tibet's King Lha Thothori Nyentsen. King Songten Gampa sent ministers to India to seek the Buddha's teachings and one of his cultural emissaries, Akaramatishala, is reputed to have reached Bodhgaya where he would certainly have become aware of the wealth and variety of stupas.

King Songtsen Gampo's awareness of Buddhism in India aroused in him a desire to build temples and shrines. A mural in the Chapel of the Dharma Kings in the Jokhang in Lhasa, depict the story of King Songtsen Gampo's founding of this very temple. In the centre of the painting is a lake with magnificent white stupa in the middle. Legend has it that the king threw his ring into the air, proclaiming that wherever it fell, he would begin to build. When the ring fell into the lake, a stupa was miraculously produced. A sacred goat then appeared to fill the lake with earth and upon this foundation the Jokhang was erected. King Songtsen Gampo was also responsible for the original structure of the core of what is now the Potala Palace. At the centre lies a white stupa, one of the oldest relics on the Red Hill.

During the time of Lama Atisha (982-1054), many Indians translators brought the small, portable stupas to Tibet. The great Tibetan translation, Rinchen Zangpo (958-1051), who Bodhgaya and assimilated much of the culture of Buddhist India, played a particularly important part in the resurgence of Buddhism in Western Tibet.

Here, in the vicinity of temples and monasteries, long lines of stupas were erected, uniform in dimension often numbering the auspicious 108 in total. This number laid down the standard proportions to which the structure must comply. Over hundreds of holy stupas enshrined with





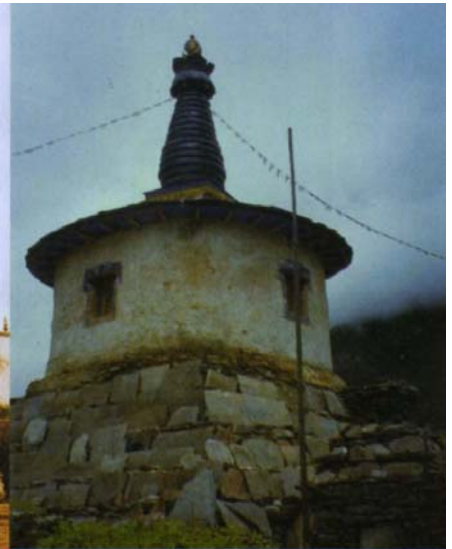
*Clockwise from top left*

Enlightenment stupa at  
Khumbum Monastery in  
Tibet

Tibetan Chorten in Tsum

Gyantse Stupa

The relic stupa of the  
Panchen Lama





relics of Buddhas and other great beings of the ancient Indian and Tibetan pundits and lamas were erected throughout Tibet. Some of the great stupas in Tibet are:

1. The Golden Stupa of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama in the Potala Palace.
2. The Great Stupa of Atisha at Nyethang near Lhasa; relics of Atisha were enshrined here.
3. The Great Gyantse Kumbum Stupa at Gyantse.
4. The Great Golden Kumbum Stupa at Kumbum Jampa Ling where the great Lama Tsong Khapa was born.
5. Great White stupa of Potala Palace that was built by King Songtsen Gampo.
6. The Great Golden Stupa of Lama Tsong Khapa at Ganden Monastery.

### **The Tibetan Stupa's Design**

Initially, the Tibetan stupa was very similar to the Indian. But over time the various lamas in their wish to make the stupas more and more meaningful developed their own style. The ancient style was lost in an upward-growth that eclipsed the dome at the dominant feature and favored those parts that had previously been secondary. The platform was raised and elaborated, the dome narrowed to a modest width, and the *harmika* enlarged. The spire was made of block discs, stacked in decreasing size, the number of which gradually increased over time and eventually settled at 13. This tall thin cone was now the focal point of the Tibetan stupa.

As the shape became standardized it was codified in a number of written works. For example, Buton Rinchen Drub (1320-1364), a great scholar, wrote an instructive text on the construction of stupas after researching the topic in *The Kangyur*, the collected translations of



Buddha's teachings. Soon these teachings were mixed with ideas from various Indian treatises, the result of which was an Indian-Tibetan style.

Many scholars wrote similar texts consolidating the measures of the stupa. During the reign of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Desi Sangye Gyatso contributed a crucial commentary taken from various sutras and tantras on laying down the measurements that were to become norm.

Whatever size is planned for the stupa, the total height from the foundation to pinnacle is divided into equal parts. One of these parts constitutes a larger unit and one equal quarter of a large unit constitutes a small unit. The total height is 64 small units is common to all the designs.

In designing a stupa, a basic square is divided vertically and horizontally into four parts. Diagonals are drawn and another square, at an angle of 45 degrees to the first one, is placed inside. All the axis lines meet at the centre, which is the middle of the dome portion, known as the *bumpa* (vessel). Once these basic proportions are established, an artist sketches the selected stupa type onto the grid.

Similarly of style and construction was frequently the keynote. Unless they were encrusted with gemstones and constructed of precious metals (a practice suitable for reliquary stupas housed inside a building), stupas were most often painted white. The measurement and eight styles set down by the scholars continued to be adopted, as well as the three-dimensional mandala form, magnificently represented by the Gyantse Kumbum.

### **The Tibetan Stupa's Functions**

The original function of the stupa was to house relics, for example those of the Buddha. Although it is true that the Tibetan word for stupa, *choeten*, can be translated as "support" or "receptacle of offerings" and the reliquary stupas are indeed used to house the bodies of deceased lamas, it is advisable to interpret the term "relics" and "offerings" as broadly possible. Not only do relics encompass bone fragments and other remains of holy beings



collected after cremation, as well as *tsa-tsa*, stamped clay votive images, but also holy objects such as tangkas, sacred texts, statue, mantras or anything consecrated.

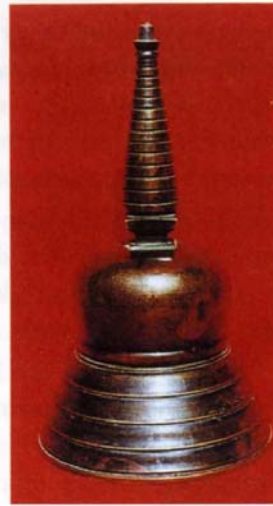
The preserved remains of holy beings are often housed in stupa erected inside a temple or place, such as those indicated to the previous Dalai Lamas. A reliquary stupa typical of this variety is that of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama inside the Potala Palace. It is called Sole Ornament of the Universe.

It is 14.8m high, gilded with 3.7kg of gold and studded with diamonds, sapphires and over 1500 pearls. The size of such stupas may vary, but they are usually made of metal, sometimes encrusted with jewels.

In miniature form stupas also serve as votive objects and reliquaries for private devotion. A small stupa usually sits on household altars alongside a statue and a scripture. These three represent respectively the Buddha's mind, body and speech. These small stupas often contain sacred substances and rolls of fine paper on which are inscribed mantras of other essential scriptures.

Long lines of stupas flank popular routes through Tibet, Ladhak, Zanskar and other parts of the Tibetan cultural area and were often erected at the approaches to a valley or village to protect against negative influence and keep hostile forces at bay. The Indian master Padmasambhava, Guru Rinpoche, is credited with having set up trails of stupas from east to west throughout Bhutan.

Stupas are also considered to be protection against the natural calamities such as earthquake, flood, volcanoes, etc. A stupa was erected next to the main temple at Thekchen Choeling, the main temple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala in India, as a protection against earthquakes.

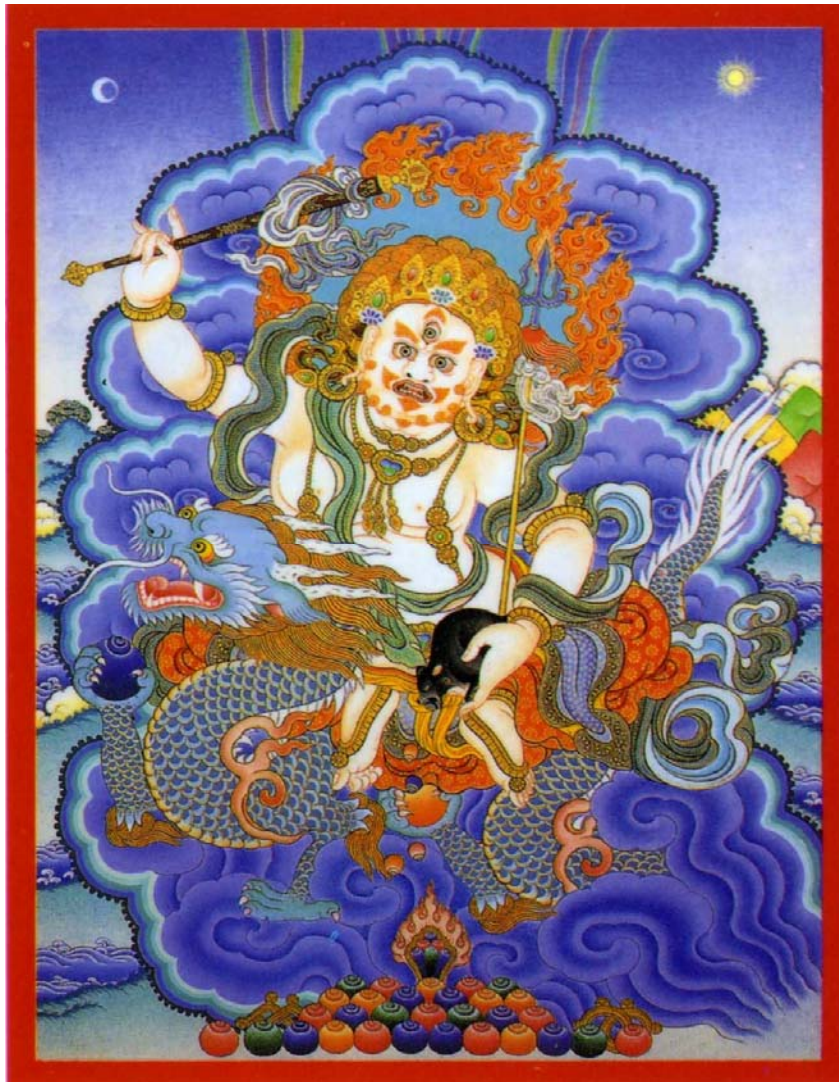


Various Tibetan style stupas



# *Part Five*

## *Practices*



White Dzambhala



## 12. Water Offerings to Dzambhala

### 1. The Wealth Giving Practice of White Dzambhala Riding on Turquoise Dragon

*Translated by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

#### **About this Practice**

When, for the purpose of keeping pure morality one practices, for example, the wealth-giving protector of morality called *Nam-to-se Who Rides on a snow Lion*, one pledges to make charity towards other sentient beings. Why? Because the cause of success of obtaining wealth, enjoyments and so forth, is making offerings to the Triple Gem and making charity to sentient beings. If from your own side you have not accumulated the cause – the merit – success [cannot come].

#### **The Visualization**

*The arrangement of deities as follow: Dzambhala in the centre; the dakini holding a vajra in her upraised hand in front of Dzambhala; the dakini jewel on his right side; the dakini holding a double vajra on his left side; and the dakini holding a lotus behind him. (This is with regards to the object in the raised hand.) They all face the central Dzambhala. All five of the deities should be placed in a large, clean basin, big enough to hold all the water to be offered. Also you must pour the water correctly, very slowly and continuously in a gentle stream over the dragon-riding Dzambhala and the four goddesses, as you recite the mantras. Recite the mantra 100 times or 1,000 times in the event of great crisis.*

*To collect more merit when you do this practice, the most important thing is to visualize Dzambhala as your own guru. Also visualize unceasing wish-fulfilling jewels or billions and of dollars pouring out of the mouth of the dragon and the mongoose like a beautiful waterfall tumbling down a mountainside. The water you offer generates great bliss on Guru Dzambhala's head; he experiences endless bliss like the sky. After you have offered the*





*water, from this state of bliss Dzambhala's mind is extremely inspired and he promises to help you completely, to provide everything you need for your projects to succeed and for you to realize all attainments.*

### **The Practice**

*For those who wish to do an extremely abbreviated water offering to the Dzambhala deities (Dzambhala and the four dakinis), who are embodiments of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of compassion, in order to offer service to the teachings of the Buddha and to suffering sentient beings, do the following practice.*

### **Motivation**

*Begin each practice with a strong motivation, first taking refuge and generating bodhicitta and contemplating the four immeasurable. Think:*

The purpose of my life is to liberate all the sentient beings from their suffering and cause them to become enlightenment.

For this I must achieve perfect Buddhahood.

*To strengthen your practice, contemplate the suffering of each of the six samsaric realms. Then think:*

In order to achieve enlightenment, I am going to make water offering to Dzambhala and water charity to the pretas.

*First take heartfelt refuge in the Triple Gem and generate the Bodhichitta, the mind of enlightenment, in your heart.*



## **Refuge and Bodhichitta**

I go for refuge until I am enlightened

To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly.

By my merit from giving and the other perfections,

May I become a Buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings.

## **Self-generation**

*Generate yourself in the form of Chenrezig, and think:*

In order to achieve enlightenment, I am going to make water offering to Dzambhala.

## **Seven-limb Prayer**

Reverently I prostrate with my body, speech and mind;

I present clouds of every type of offering, actual and imagined.

I declare all my negative actions accumulated since beginningless times

And rejoice in the merit of all holy and ordinary beings.

Please, Buddha, remain until the end of cyclic existence.

And turn the wheel of Dharma for living beings.

I dedicate my own merits and those of all the others to great enlightenment.



## **Request**

To White Dzambhala riding a turquoise dragon,  
Seated on a lotus and moon disc and carrying a white *khatvanga*,  
Trident and banner staff,  
Surrounded by four types of dakinis in the four directions,  
I am offering flowing water to the holy body.  
Please grant me your sublime realizations.

## **Mantra Recitation**

*As you recite the mantra, you should offer water by pouring gently on the heads of Dzambhala and the four goddesses.*

*Also visualize as much as you can that from the holy mount of Dzambhala and the dragon numberless hundreds of millions of dollars, wish-fulfilling jewels and so forth are unceasingly granted to you like a huge waterfall coming from the Rocky Mountains. They completely fill your whole family's house, your monastery or your Dharma centre.*

*As you pour the water with your right hand, snap the fingers of your left hand at your heart (to remind yourself of emptiness) and recite the mantras. Recite the principal mantra 108 times or as many as you can. Recite the mantras of the four dakinis at least 21 times.*

## **The Mantra of White Dzambhala**

OM PADMA KRODHA ARYA JAMBHLA HIRDAYA HUM PHAT (108X)



### **Mantras of the Four Dakinis**

OM VAJRA DAKINI HUM PHAT (21X)

OM RATNA DAKINI HUM PHAT (21X)

OM PADMA DAKINI HUM PHAT (21X)

OM KARMA DAKINI HUM PHAT SARA SIDDHI HUM(21X)

### **Requesting Forgiveness**

Please have patience with any mistake I have made, such as not having completely understood being unable to do at all, and so forth.

### **Purify With the Hundred-syllable Vajrasattva Mantra**

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPALAYA / VAJRASATTVA

TVENOPATISHTHA / DRIDHO ME BHAVA / SUTOSHYO ME

BHAVA / SUPOSHYO ME BHAYA / ANURAKTO ME BHAVA /

SARFVA SIDDIM ME PRAYACCHA / SARVA KARMA SUCHAME;

CHITTAM SHRIYAM KURU HUM / HA HA HA HA HO /

BHAGAVAN / VAJRA MANE MUNCHA / VAJRA BHAVA MAHA

SAMAYA SATTVA AH HUM PHAT (3X)



## **Offerings**

*Make the eight offerings with this mantra:*

OM PADMA KRAODHA ARAYA JAMBHALA SAPARIVARA ARGAM / PADYAM  
/ PUSHPE / DHUPE / ALOKE / GHANDE / NAVIDYA / SHAPTA  
PRATICHHA HUM SVAHA

*The eight offerings are the set of water bowls on the altar : 1) Drinking water, 2) water for bathing the feet, 3) flower, 4) incense for the holy nose, 5) light offering for the holy eye, 6) scented water to sprinkle on heart and holy body, 7) food offering for the holy mouth, 8) music offering for the holy ear.*

## **Praise**

The one who cannot controls harm-gives,

Whose holy body is elegant in nine ways of acting,

Who is well tied with rainbow aggregates made of melted white crystal,

Who grants wish-giving realizations like rainfalls,

I prostrate to you, glorious Dzambhala.

*Praise in this way and then dedicate the merits.*

## **Dedication**

Due to the merits of the three times accumulated by me, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and all sentient beings,

May Bodhichitta, what is the source of all happiness and success of myself and others,

Be generated in my mind and the minds of others without a delay of even a second,



And where that Bodhichitta is always generated, may it increase.

*Then dedicate the merit that the wealth that is received may be highly beneficial for Dharma centers, to complete the extensive works for the teachings of the Buddha and for migratory beings or for any person, yourself or your family or any other person, to have success without obstacles. Dedicate the merits that the wealth that is received never becomes a cause of samsara (suffering) nor, especially, the lower realms, but that it become only a cause of enlightenment.*

Due to all the past, present and future merits accumulated by me and all Buddhas,  
Bodhisattvas and sentient beings, which are empty from their own side,  
May I, who is empty from my own side,  
Achieve the Compassion Buddha's enlightenment, which is empty from its own side,  
And lead all sentient being, who are empty from their own side, to that enlightenment state as  
quickly as possible by myself alone.

*Dedicate the merit for enlightenment so the merit become unceasing, sealed by the three circles of emptiness and so they can never be destroyed by heresy or anger.*

Due to the merits of the three times accumulated by myself and by all the Buddhas and  
Bodhisattvas,  
May the father-mother sentient beings have happiness,  
May the three lower realms be empty forever,  
May all the Bodhisattvas' prayers succeed immediately,



And may I be able to cause all of this by myself alone.

May the Naga King (Joy and Nearly Joy)

The devas who have devotion for holy objects,

And also benefactors and other sentient being who are in poverty,

May they all have long lives without sickness and achieve everlasting happiness.

*Colophon : Lama Zopa Rinpoche translated and dedicated this to Ven. Paul Le May and dedicated the merit that anyone who does this practice have miraculous success, even more than what the person can visualize and that even become highly beneficial for our kind mother sentient being and for our kind compassionate Shakyamuni Buddha.*

**Mantras to increase the merit 100,000 times**

CHOM DEN DAY / DE ZHIN SHEKPA / DRA CHOMPA / YANG DAK PAR /  
DZOG PAY SANGYE / NANG PA NANG DZE / O KYI GYALPO LA / CHAG  
TSEL LO (3X)

JANGCHUB SEMPA / SEMPA CHENPO / KUNTU ZANGPO LA / CHAG  
TSEL LO (3X)

OM PENTSA DRIWA AWA BODHI NE SOHA (7X)

OM DURU DURU ZAYA MUHKE SOHA (7X)



## **2. The Daily Practice of Water Offering to Dzambhala**

*Instructed by Kyabje Lama Rinpoche*

### **The Purpose of this Practice**

The purpose of practicing Dzambhala is to receiving anything required to practice Dharma; to be of benefit for all other sentient beings extensively by relieving their poverty, liberating them from suffering, giving them whatever they need to practice Dharma; supporting temples for the sake of all sentient beings, maintaining monasteries for monks and nuns to study and practice Dharma; and helping sentient beings collect merit and practice Dharma in general; and to spread the teachings of the Buddha for the benefit of all the sentient beings. These are some of the many reasons for practicing Dzambhala.

There are three basic Dzambhala practices: the Dzambhala wealth vase; tormas offering to Dzambhala; and the daily practice of water offering Dzambhala, including recitation of mantras.

The third of these is given [above and] here.

### **Motivation**

*Begin such practice with a strong motivation, first taking refuge and generating bodhicitta and contemplating the four immeasurable.*

The purpose of my life is to liberate all the sentient beings from their suffering and cause them to become enlightenment.

For this I must achieve perfect Buddhahood.

*To strengthen your practice, contemplate the suffering of each of the six samsaric realms. Then think:*





In order to achieve enlightenment, I am going to make water offerings to Dzambhala and water charity to the pretas.

*When offering water to White Dzambhala, recite White Dzambhala's mantra. When offering water to Yellow Dzambhala, recite Yellow Dzambhala's mantra. When offering water to Black Dzambhala, recite Black Dzambhala's mantra, And when offering water to only one of the three, don't recite the mantras of the other two. You can also recite the mantra without offering water, in which case, visualize making the offering.*

### **Water Offering to White Dzambhala**

*First, offer water to White Dzambhala with practice (beginning of chapter 12). Then continue by offering water to Yellow Dzambhala and Black Dzambhala as follows:*

### **Water Offering to Yellow Dzambhala**

*On a lotus and moon disc, the seed syllable JAM transforms into Yellow Dzambhala. His right hand holds a pitsapura fruit and his left a treasure-producing mongoose spewing a stream of wish-granting jewels.*

*Again, clarify yourself as Chenrezig.*

### **Request**

By offering to your holy body that which cleans [Tib.: tang-che: "that which cleans" : that is, water, which cleans as it pours], all pains are pacified and I am fully satisfied by experiencing great bliss.

Please grant all attainments and needs.

### **Mantra Recitation**

OM JAMBHALA JALANDRAYE SVAHA



Yellow Dzambhala



## **Water Offering to Black Dzambhala**

### **Mantra Recitation**

OM JLUM SVAHA / OM INDRAYANI MUKHAM BHRAMARI SVAHA

*Recite the mantra seven or twenty-one times, pouring water on water on Dzambhala's stomach and snapping your finger as before. To collect and generate merits, again think that Dzambhala is your guru.*

*Your offering of water generates bliss like the sky in Dzambhala's holy body mind and he is fully inspired to grant you all realizations and every kind of assistance.*

### **Requesting Prayer**

Saviour Dzambhala, guardian of the north, enriched with wealth, treasure of jewels, Lord of all the harm-givers who have wealth,  
To you who grant supreme attainments, I prostrate

We who are tortured by the fire of miserly karma  
Go to you for refuge from life to life.  
With the flowing nectar rain of jewel treasure,  
Please pacify the suffering of those sentient beings who live in poverty.

*Think that the poverty of all sentient beings in the ten directions has been eliminated. Then take a little water with your fingers and touch it to your tongue to receive the attainments, while saying*

JAMBHAL SIDDHI PHALA HO



## Dedication

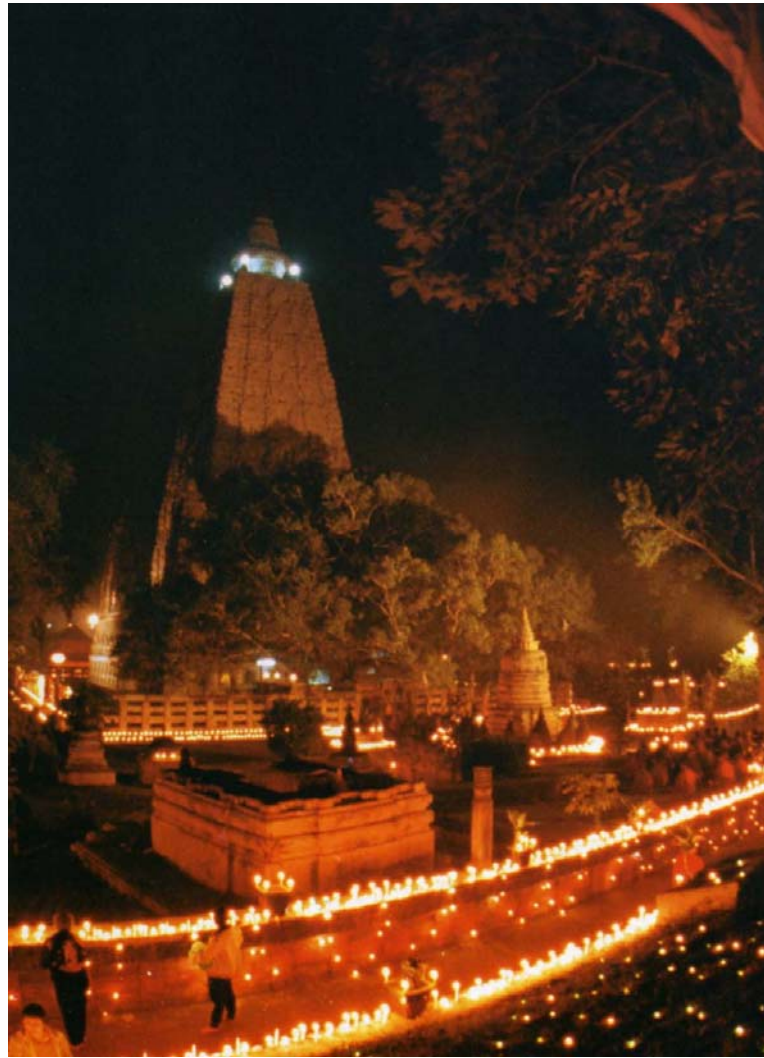
As above (White Dzambhala practice)



Black Dzambhala

*After offering water to Dzambhala, it is very good to make charity of that same water to the pretas: to combine these two practices.*

*Colophon : This practice has been extracted from a teaching given by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Madison, Wisconsin on 26 July 1998. The original transcript was translated and edited by Vens. Sherab Chen and Diana Finnegan and revised by Nicholas Ribush. This extract has been edited by Ven. Constance Miller, FPMT Education Department, March 2002.*



Light offerings at Bodhgaya stupa



## ***13. How to Make Light Offerings In Order to Accumulate the Most Extensive Merit***

*By Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

It is said in *The Sutra of the Essence of Earth, Tenth Wheel*; In the world, comfort, happiness, peace, all those are received from making offerings to the Rare Sublime Ones (Triple Gem). Therefore, those who wish to have comfort, happiness and peace should always try to make offerings to the Rare Sublime Ones.

Generally, all the collections of goodness of samsara and nirvana is the result of having made offerings to the Triple Gem. One receives different individual benefits especially by being of service with the various particular offerings. Buddha, the fourth guide, whose holy mind is enriched with the ten powers, announced in *The Tune of Brahma Sutra Clarifying Karma* that there are ten benefits of making light offerings;

1. One Becomes like the world
2. One achieves the pure flesh eyes
3. One achieves the deva's eye
4. One receives the wisdom of knowing what is virtue and what is non-virtue
5. One receives the wisdom eliminating darkness of ignorance, the concept of inherent existence
6. Receiving the illumination of wisdom, one never experiences darkness even while one is still in samsara
7. One receives great enjoyment and wealth



8. One is reborn in the deva or human realms
9. One quickly becomes liberated
10. One quickly attains enlightenment

Those devas or humans, by making just one light offering or offering just a handful of flowers have accumulated this merit to see the fully enlightened Maitreya Buddha.

It is said in *The Sutra of the Arya Maitreya*; Those beings who offer 1,000 lights or 1,000 blue utpali flowers, or make the pinnacle of the stupa, make the holy form, when Maitreya Buddha shows the deed of gaining enlightenment, will reincarnate there and receive his first Dharma teachings. It is also said that even to offer one flower or to rejoice in the merit of others' offering will cause this Buddhahood. That means that even if one does not get enlightened during Shakyamuni's time of teaching, then during the time of Maitreya to offer light is a special door to dependant arising to compete merit and receive blessings quickly.

It is said in the second chapter of the root tantra of Chakrasamvara (the manifestation of Shakyamuni Buddha), "If you wish sublime realization, offer hundreds of lights." If one wishes to know the detailed results of making offerings to the holy objects or doing service to Buddha or the holy objects one should study *The Sutra of the Compassionate-Eyed One* or *The Sutra of Sang Gyal* (the sutra in which Buddha gave instructions to King Sang Gyal).

From the text Immortal Drum Sound Mantra: "If one is devoted to the Inconceivable One, the result is also inconceivable. Similarly, it is said in the Sutra of the Compassionate-Eyed One as the qualities of the Buddha, the Thus Gone (Tathagata), are limitless, making offerings to the One Thus Gone has limitless, infinite, inconceivable, incomparable, unimaginable and numberless benefits.



From *The Sutra of the Small Quotation*: “It [could be] possible for the moon and stars to fall down to the earth, the mountains and forests to go in the sky, and the great ocean water to completely dry up. But for the great sage to tell a lie is impossible.” Keep this in mind.

Generate strong devotion or faith in the root of all happiness and goodness, action and result and the blessing of Three Precious Rare Sublime Ones. One should attempt day and night all the time to take the essence, to plant seeds as much as possible in these special merit fields while one is able, during this period of life of short duration like a lighting flash, having this body and possessions which are as if borrowed for a year, a month, a few day.

### **Generate Bodhicitta**

*Before lightning the candles generate bodhicitta. Think:*

The purpose of my life is not only to obtain happiness and solve problems for myself, it is to free each being from problems and lead them to happiness and especially to full enlightenment.

So I must achieve complete enlightenment; therefore, I must complete the two accumulations, the merit of fortune (method) and the merit of wisdom.

Therefore, I am going to make charity of light offering to the merit field.

*Then also remember to think of your specific purpose, such as success for particular projects, or somebody who passed away, or somebody who is sick. This is also for that.*

*As soon as one lights the candle or turns on the electricity, bless the offering with OM AH HUM. If you don't bless them immediately, then the spirits called Tsu Peu Chikpa enter into and possess the offerings. To then offer those lights will create obstacles and cause mental*





*damage. Here the particular spirit causes you to fall asleep without control when engaged in listening, reflecting and meditation practices of holy Dharma. One should understand that the same thing occurs with all rest of the offerings, that there are different spirits that enter the offering objects; then if you offer that substance without blessing it first, it can be damaged the mind and cause obstacles.*

*Think that offerings have been received because of the kindness of sentient beings. Think these are not mine. Make charity to all the hell beings, preta beings, animals, humans, suras and asuras. Visualize giving the offering to each sentient being to oppose the thought of the offering being mind. Then together with the sentient beings, make offerings to each Buddha. Generate happiness at having accumulated infinite merit in doing this.*

*Now bless the offerings with mantra. This allows each Buddha to receive inconceivable offerings.*

### **Offering Mantra**

I actually perform and mentally transform the offering substances of human beings and devas. May the whole sky be pervaded by Samatabhadra clouds of offerings.

OM NAMO BHAGAWATE VAJRA / SARVA PARMA DANA TATHAGATAYA /  
ARHATE SAMYAKSAM BUDDHAYA / TAYATHA / OM VAJRA VAJRA /  
MAHA VAJRA / MAHA TEZRA VAJRA / MAHA VIDYA VAJRE /  
MAHABODHICITTA VAJRA / MAHA BODHI MENDRO / PA SAM KARMANA  
VAJRA / SARVA KARMA AWARANA / BISHO DANA VAJRA / SOHA (3X)

### **The Power of Truth**

By the power of the truth of the Three Rare Sublime Ones,

Of the blessings of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,

Of the great might of the completed two collections,



And of the intrinsically pure and inconceivable sphere of reality,  
May all these offerings become suchness.

*By expressing the power of truth in this way, bless the offering substances.*

We offer to all the holy objects in our own guru who is one with all other virtuous friends.

*As the virtuous friend is the most powerful objects in the merit field, one accumulates the most extensive merit. It is said by the saviour Nagarjuna in the text The Five Stages, “By pleasing the guru, one will achieve the sublime wisdom omniscient mind.” It is said in the root tantric text Buddhaya by Guru Vajradhara that the merit of making one offering to one pore of the spiritual master is more sublime than all the merits accumulated by offering to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions.*

We make offerings to all the holy objects in (...your country...), and think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.

We make offerings to all the holy objects in India, principally to the Bodhgaya Stupa where the Buddha showed the holy deed of enlightenment, then to all the rest of the holy objects, and think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.

We make offerings to all the holy objects in Tibet, in particular the holy statue that Buddha blessed himself, then to all the rest of the holy objects and think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.

Then we offer to all the holy objects in Nepal, principally to the most holy precious object, the great holy stupa at Boudhanath, then to all the rest of the holy objects and think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.



We offer to all the holy objects in all remaining Buddhist countries, then think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.

We offer to all the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of the ten directions, then think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.

We offer to all the holy objects of the ten directions statue, stupas, scriptures, etc.. then think of them as manifestation of our own virtuous friend.

*This is a special way of making light offering according to highest secret mantra, in this way generating great bliss in the mind of all the holy beings and in our own mind.*

*Then recite this offering prayer*

### **The Actual Prayer of the Light Offerings**

*This prayer can be recited five times, ten times, one thousand times, depending on how many times one wishes to make the light offerings.*

These light offerings, actually performed and mentally performed,

Which are the manifestations of my own innate awareness, dharmakaya,

These clouds of offering, equally the infinite sky,

I am offering to all the Gurus and the Three Sublime Ones, and the statues, stupas and scriptures,

All of which are the Guru.



*We have accumulated infinite merits created by generating bodhicitta, making charity to sentient beings and making actual light offerings to the Gurus, Triple Gem and holy objects of the ten directions.*

## **Dedication**

Due to this merit, may whomever I promise to pray for and whoever prays for me,  
Whomsoever I have received the names to pray for, principally servants, benefactors and disciples,

Then all the remaining migratory being living and dead,

May the rays of light of the five wisdoms completely purify all their degenerated samaya vows right now,

May all the suffering of the evil-gone realm cease right now,

May all the impure minds and their obscurations be purified right now,

May all impure appearances be purified,

May the five holy bodies and wisdom spontaneously arise.

Due to these infinite merits many whatever sufferings sentient beings have ripen on me now,

May whatever happiness and virtue accumulated by the highest goal of enlightenment, be received by each hell being, preta being, animal, human being, sura and asura.

Whatever sufferings migratory beings have,



May they ripen on me now,  
Whatever happiness and merits I have accumulated,  
May it ripen on others right now.

Jang chub sem chog rinpoche  
Ma kye pa nam kye gyur chig  
Kye pa nyam pa me par yang,  
Gong ne gong du pel war shog

May the precious sublime thought of enlightenment,  
The source of all success and happiness for oneself and all sentient beings,  
Be generated without a delay of even a second,  
May what has been generated be increased forever without degeneration.

Ge wa di yi nyur du dag  
Lama sang gye drub gyur ne  
Dro wa chig kyang ma lu pa  
De yi sa la go par shog



Due to the merits of the three times that have been accumulated by me and all the Buddhas,  
Bodhisattvas and sentient beings, which are empty from their own side,  
May I who is empty from my own side,  
Achieve enlightenment, which is empty from its own side,  
And lead sentient beings, who are empty from their own side, to that enlightenment by  
myself alone.

Whatever white virtue we have thus created,  
We dedicate as causes enabling us to uphold the holy Dharma of scriptures and insights,  
And to fulfill without exception the prayers and deeds,  
Of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times.

By the force of this merit in our lives,  
May we never be parted from Mahayana's four spheres,  
And may we reach the end of our journey along the paths,  
Of renunciation, bodhicitta, the pure view and the two stages.

Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra too,  
Realized things as they are,  
Also I dedicate all these merits in the best way,



That I may follow their perfect example.

I dedicate all these roots of virtue,

With the dedication praised as the best,

By the victorious thus-gone-ones of the three times,

So that I might perform the noble Bodhisattvas deeds.

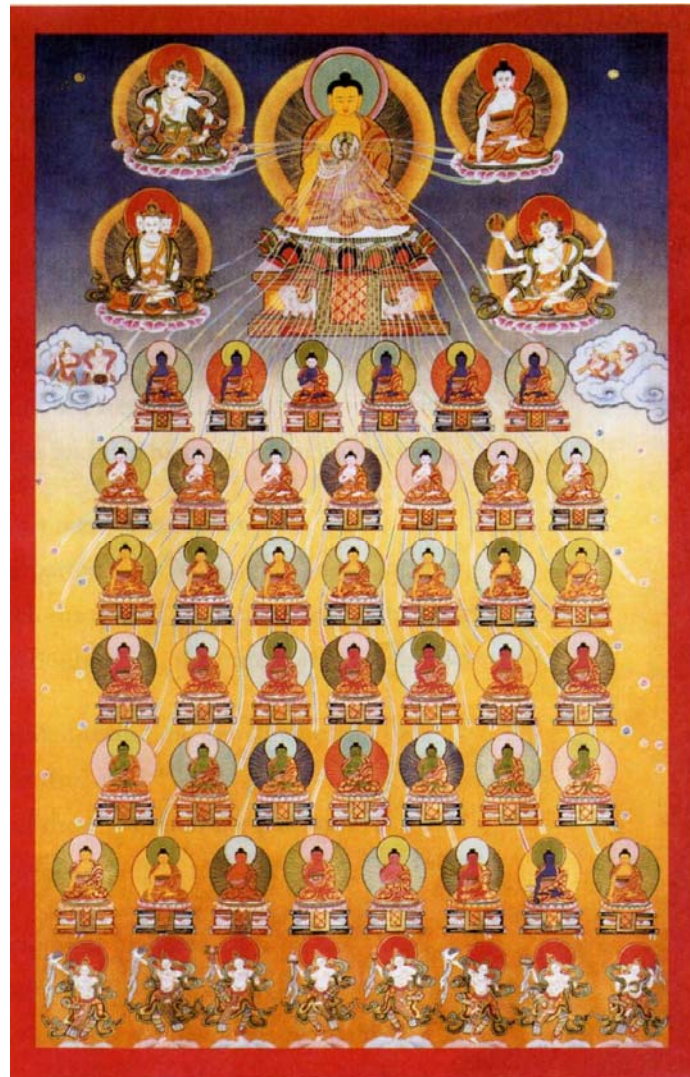
**Mantra to increase the merit 100,000 times**

CHOM DEN DAY / DE ZHIN SHEKPA / DRA CHOMPA / YANG DAK PAR /  
DZOG PAY SANGYE / NANG PA NANG DZE / O KYI GYALPO LA / CHAG  
TSEL LO (3X)

JANGCHUB SEMPA / SEMPA CHENPO / KUNTU ZANGPO LA / CHAG  
TSEL LO (3X)

OM PENTSA DRIWA AWA BODHI NE SOHA (7X)

OM DURU DURU ZAYA MUHKE SOHZ (7X)



Tangka of the 35 confessional buddhas (tangkas by Peter Iseli)





## ***14. The Bodhisattva's Confession of Moral Downfalls***

*From The Exalted Mahayana Three Heaps Sutra  
With Commentary by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

### **The Practice**

*Begin by visualizing the thirty-five confession Buddhas in space in front of you. Think of all the negative karma you have created in this and in all previous lives and generate the four opponent powers in your mind. To increase the benefit of each prostration, first prostrate three times while reciting with each prostration*

OM MANO MANJUSHRIYE / NAMO SUSHRIYE / NAMO UTTAMA SHRIYE  
SOHA / (3X)

(Homage to the Glorious Lovely One, Homage to the Very Glorious, Homage to the Most Glorious, Soha)

### **The First of the Four Opponent Powers: The Power of Reliance**

I, (say your name) throughout all times, go for refuge to the Guru;

I go for refuge to the Buddha;

I go for refuge to the Dharma;

I go for refuge to the Sangha (3x)

### **The Second of the Four Opponent Powers: The power of Remedy**

To Tathagata Thoroughly Destroying with Vajra Essence, I prostrate

To Tathagata Radiant Jewel, I prostrate



To Tathagata King, Lord of the Nagas, I prostrate

To Tathagata Army of Heroes, I prostrate

To Tathagata Delighted Heroes, I prostrate

To Tathagata Jewel Fire, I prostrate

To Tathagata Jewel Moonlight, I prostrate

To Tathagata Meaningful to See, I prostrate

To Tathagata Jewel Moon, I prostrate

To Tathagata Stainless One, I prostrate

To Tathagata Bestowed with Courage, I prostrate

To Tathagata Pure One, I prostrate

To Tathagata Bestowed with Purity, I prostrate

To Tathagata Water God, I prostrate

To Tathagata Deity of the Water God, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Goodness, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Sandalwood, I prostrate

To Tathagata Infinite Splendor, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Light, I prostrate

To Tathagata Sorrowless Glory, I prostrate



To Tathagata Son of Non-craving, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Flower, I prostrate

To Tathagata Pure Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play, I prostrate

To Tathagata Lotus Light Rays Clearly Knowing by Play, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Wealth, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Mindfulness, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Name Widely Renowned, I prostrate

To Tathagata King Holding the Victory Banner of Foremost Power, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious One Totally subduing, I prostrate

To Tathagata Utterly Victorious in Battle, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Transcendence Through Subduing, I prostrate

To Tathagata Glorious Manifestations Illuminating All, I prostrate

To Tathagata All Subduing Jewel Lotus, I prostrate

To Tathagata, Arhat, perfectly completely Buddha, King of the Lord of Mountains, Firmly Seated on Jewel and Lotus, I prostrate

**Prostrations to the Seven Medicine Buddhas,**

To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, Renowned Glory of Excellent Signs, I prostrate.



To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, King of Melodious Sound, Brilliant Radiance of Ability, I prostrate.

To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, King of Immaculate Excellent Gold, Radiant Jewel Who Fulfills all His Vows, I prostrate.

To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, Glorious Supreme One Free from Sorrow, I prostrate.

To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, Melodious Ocean of Proclaimed Dharma, I prostrate.

To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, King of Clear Light, He Who totally Delights in Supreme Wisdom of the Ocean of Dharma, I prostrate.

To the Bhagavan, The Tathagata, the Arhat, Fully Enlightened One, Medicine Guru, King of Lapis Light, I prostrate.

### **The Bodhisattva's Confession of Moral Downfalls**

#### **The Third of the Four Opponent Powers: The Power of Regret**

All those {you thirty-five Buddhas} and others, as many Tathagatas, Arhats, Perfectly Completed Buddhas as there are existing, sustaining and residing in all the world systems of the ten directions; all you Buddhas-Bhagavans, please pay attention to me.

In this life and in all the states of rebirth in which I have circled in samsara throughout beginningless lives, whichever negative actions I have created, made others create or rejoiced in the creation of; whatever possessions of stupas, possessions of the sangha, or possessions of the sangha of the ten directions that I have appropriated, made others appropriate, or



rejoiced in the doing of; whichever paths of the ten non-virtuous actions I have engaged in, caused others to engage in, or rejoiced in the engaging in: whatever I have created, being obscured by these karmas causes me and sentient beings to be born in the hell realms, in the animal realms, and in the *preta* realms: in irreligious countries, as barbarians, or as long-life gods; with imperfect faculties, holding wrong views, or not being pleased with Buddha's descent.

### **The Fourth of the Four Opponent Powers: The Power of Resolution**

In the presence of the Buddha-Bhagavan, who are transcendental wisdom, who are eyes, who are witnesses, who are valid, and who see with omniscient consciousness, I am admitting and confessing all these negativities, I will not conceal them nor hide them and from now on in the future I will abstain and refrain from committing them again.

All the Buddha-Bhagavans, please pay attention to me. In this life and in all other states of rebirth in which I have circled in samsara throughout beginningless lives, whatever roots of virtue I have created by generosity, even as little as giving just one mouthful of food to a being born in the animal realm; whatever roots of virtue I have created by guarding morality; whatever roots of virtue I have created by following pure conduct, whatever roots of virtue I have created by fully ripening sentient beings; whatever roots of virtue I have created by generating bodhicitta; and whatever roots of virtue I have created by my unsurpassed transcendental wisdom: all these assembled and gathered, combined together, I fully dedicate to the unsurpassed, the unexcelled, that higher than the high, the highest, perfect complete enlightenment.

Just as the previous Buddha –Bhagavans have fully dedicated, just as the future Buddha-Bhagavans will fully dedicate, and just as the presently abiding Buddha-Bhagavans are fully dedicating, like that I too dedicate fully.



I confess all negativities individually. I rejoice in all the merits.

I urge and implore all Buddhas to grant my request: may I receive the highest, most sublime transcendental wisdom.

To the Conqueror, the best of human – those who are living in the present time, those who have lived in the past and those who have will likewise come – to all those who have qualities as vast as an infinite ocean, with hands folded in the mudra of prostration, I go for refuge.

### **Dedication**

Due to this merit, may whomever I promise to pray for and whoever prays to me,

Whomever I have received the names of to pray for, principally servants, benefactors, and disciples,

Then all the remaining migratory beings living and dead,

May the rays of light of the five wisdoms completely purify all their degenerated *samaya* vows right now,

May all the suffering of the evil-gone realms cease right now,

May all the three realms of samsara be emptied right now,

May all impure minds and their obscurations be purified right now,

May all impure appearances be purified,

May the five holy bodies and wisdom spontaneously arise.

Due to these infinite merits may whatever suffering sentient beings have ripen on me now.



May whatever happiness and virtue accumulated by the highest goal of enlightenment, be received by each hell being, preta being, animal, human being, sura and asura.

*By this dedication one accumulates infinite merit, so we rejoice.*

Whatever sufferings migratory beings have,  
May they ripen on me now,  
Whatever happiness and merits I have accumulated,  
May they ripen on others right now.

Jang chub sem chog rinpoche  
Ma kye pa nam kye gyur chig  
Kye pa nyam pa me par yang,  
Gong ne gong du pel war shog

May the precious sublime thought of enlightenment.  
The source of all success and happiness for oneself and all sentient beings,  
Be generated without a delay of even a second,  
May what has been generated be increased forever without degeneration.



Ge wa di yi nyur du dag  
Lama sang gye drub gyur ne  
Dro wa chig kyang ma lu pa  
De yi sa la go par shog

Due to the merits of the three times that have been accumulated by me and all the Buddhas,  
Bodhisattvas and sentient beings, which are empty from their own side,  
May I who is empty from my own side,  
Achieve enlightenment, which is empty from its own side,  
And lead sentient beings, who are empty from their own side, to that enlightenment by  
myself alone.

Whatever white virtue we have thus created,  
We dedicate as causes enabling us to uphold the holy Dharma of scriptures and insights,  
And to fulfill without exception the prayers and deeds,  
Of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times.

By the force of this merit in our lives,  
May we never be parted from Mahayana's four spheres,  
And may we reach the end of our journey along the paths,





Of renunciation, bodhicitta, the pure view and the two stages.

Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra too,  
Realized things as they are,  
Also I dedicate all these merits in the best way,  
That I may follow their perfect example.

I dedicate all these roots of virtue,  
With the dedication praised as the best,  
By the victorious thus-gone-ones of the three times,  
So that I might perform the noble Bodhisattvas deeds.

**Mantra to increase the merit 100,000 times**

CHOM DEN DAY / DE ZHIN SHEKPA / DRA CHOMPA / YANG DAK PAR /  
DZOG PAY SANGYE / NANG PA NANG DZE / O KYI GYALPO LA / CHAG  
TSEL LO (3X)

JANGCHUB SEMPA / SEMPA CHENPO / KUNTU ZANGPO LA / CHAG  
TSEL LO (3X)

OM PENTSA DRIWA AWA BODHI NE SOHA (7X)

OM DURU DURU ZAYA MUHKE SOHZ (7X)



## **Benefits of Reciting the Names of the Thirty-five Confessional Buddhas**

“I whose name is (such and such) throughout all times, go for refuge to the Guru ...”  
Mentioning your own name causes some effect in the mind. In one way you could feel kind of sad because you have created negative karma and are obscured. In another way you could feel happy because of having met a reliable object of refuge.

Reciting the various names of the Buddhas purifies aeons of negative karma:

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha’s name purifies 40,000 aeons of negative karma. Sometimes it is said that 80,000 aeons is purified.

Buddha Thoroughly Destroying with Vajra Essence’s name: 10,000 aeons of negative karma is purified.

Radiant Jewel: 10,000 aeons

King, Lord of Nagas, 10,000 aeons

Army of Heroes: 1,000 aeons

Delighted Heroes: 2,000. It’s like inflation! Like the stock market! I’m joking.

Jewel Fire: 2,000 aeons.

Jewel Moonlight: 8,000 aeons

Meaningful to See: It purifies heresy

Jewel Moon: Purifies the five uninterrupted negative karmas (1).

Stainless One: Purifies negative karmas near to the uninterrupted ones (2), for example, stepping over monks robes, stepping over the shoulder of, or animal belonging to, the Guru: also the shadows of stupas.

Bestowed with Courage: The negative karmas accumulated with anger, and killing an Arhat.

Pure One: The negative karmas accumulated with attachment and causing disunity among the sangha.

Bestowed with Purity: 10,000 aeons and drawing blood from the Buddha.

Water God: 10,000 and speaking of mistakes of Arhats.

Deity of the Water Gods: 5,000 aeons.

Glorious Goddess: 5,000 aeons.

Glorious Sandalwood: 7,000 aeons.

Infinite Splendor: 7,000 aeons.



Glorious Light: immeasurable benefits.

Sorrowless Glory: all negative karmas accumulated with ignorance.

Son of Non-craving: the imprints of negative karma.

Glorious Flower: the negative karmas accumulated with body.

Pure Light Rays Clearing Knowing by Play: the negative karmas accumulated with speech.

Lotus Light Rays Clearing Knowing by Play: the negative karmas accumulated with mind.

Glorious Wealth: the negative karmas accumulated with respect to the sangha by the sangha, and possibly by lay persons.

Glorious Mindfulness: the negative karmas accumulated by criticizing holy beings.

Glorious Name Widely Renowned: the negative karmas accumulated with jealousy.

King Holding the Victory Banner of Foremost Power: the negative karmas accumulated with pride.

Glorious One Totally Subduing: it says subtle vices

Utterly Victorious in Battle: the negative karmas accumulated with all the delusions.

Glorious Transcendence Through Subduing: the negative karmas accumulated by rejoicing in the negative karma created by oneself and others.

All Subduing Jewel Lotus: the negative karmas of avoiding Dharma.

King of the Lord of Mountains, Firmly Seated on Jewel and Lotus: purifies the negative karma from degenerating *samaya* by criticizing the guru.

### **Commentary on the Confession Prayer**

At the beginning, you make prostrations with the refuge formula, Lama La Kyab su chio...

When you prostrate to the thirty-five Buddhas the visualizations to use is that from the *Ganden Lha Gyema* practice, in the *Guru Puja* merit field there are the sutra aspect Buddhas visualized below the deities of the four classes of tantra. These include the thousand Buddhas of this fortunate era, the seven medicine Buddhas and the thirty-five Buddhas.

Due to his unbearable compassion, Lama Tsong Khapa sends from his heart beams of light, which emit downwards, not straight ahead. On the tip of each beam is a throne decorated



with pearls raised up by an elephant. Pearls are white and according to Lama's advice, due to a dependent arising, purification is more powerful if white is visualized. On the thrones are the remaining thirty-four Buddhas, in five rows.

Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is at the heart of Lama Losang, so you do not have to visualize Guru Shakyamuni Buddha again.

In the first row there are six Buddhas, [making the first seven, including Buddha in the heart of Lama Losang]. There are in the aspect of Akshobhya: in the same position as Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, the right hand controlling the earth and the left in the mudra of concentration. They are blue except Luwang Gyalpo, whose face and neck are white, while the rest of his holy body in blue.

The Buddhas in the second row are in the aspect of Vairochana and are white. According to His Holiness Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche, Vairochana's mudra is two fists, right above the left, with index finger of the lower. Sometimes you can see old paintings in which the mudra is like this.

The third seven are in the aspect of Ratnasambhava and are yellow, with both hands in the mudra of concentration.

The fourth row are in the aspect of Amithabha and are red.

The fifth row of Buddhas are in the aspect of Amogasiddhi and is green, with their hands in the mudra of giving protection, or refuge, or guidance.

Since reciting the name of each Buddha has incredible benefits such as many thousands of aeons of negative karma being purified, as you prostrate to each one it is very good if you can recite his name as many times as possible. Doing that is an incredibly skillful way of purifying quickly.



A replica of the first Buddha is absorbed and then as you get up starting reciting the name of the second one. If you prostrate to each one three times, it adds up to more than one hundred prostrations. That way it is easy to count without having to concentrate on counting beads of something.

Visualizing the thirty-five Buddhas in this way is the simplest method. Another visualization is that which appeared to Lama Tsong Khapa while he was doing his preliminary practices for accumulation merit and purifying obscurations by prostrating to the thirty-five Buddhas. I think he did twenty times 100,000 prostrations (I do not remember exactly) in a cave called Walka Choeling in Tibet. In those aspects they are holding different implements and so on. If you can remember how the thirty-five Buddhas manifested to Lama Tsong Khapa, you can do in this way. If you cannot comprehend that then you can do in the simple way, the thirty-five divided into Five Dhyani Buddha's aspects.

After you have finished reciting the names of the thirty-five Buddhas you can also recite the prayer to the seven Medicine Buddhas. In these degenerate times praying to the Medicine Buddha's causes one's prayers to quickly succeed due to the pledge they made in the past when they were training in the Bodhisattva's path. They made many prayers, therefore they grant blessings very quickly.

During the session do however many prostrations you intend doing and at the end of each session recite the last part of the prayers. So in that way the Four Opponent Powers is done perfectly.”

I think three points on preliminary practices that Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo explained in lam-rim are particularly effective for the mind. Our minds are like rock or iron and so are difficult to purify and difficult to subdue, difficult to fertilize. Therefore it is difficult for the crops of realization of the graduated path to enlightenment to grow. Therefore it is very useful for mind to hear advice based on some of the points from Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo's lam-rim.



He said: “In order to accumulate merit you should do each prostration correctly, not just very quickly in order to complete the high numbers of them.” According to Lama Tsong Khapa’s tradition when doing the preliminary practices the totals such as 100,000 and so on are not regarded as the main thing. “Even if one doesn’t do many, the few that are done should be done correctly,” is what Pabongkha Dechen Nyinpo is advising.

He goes on to say: “Some people say, ‘have done the preliminary practices,’ after having done 100,000 prostrations but taken it very easy!” There are two ways of interpreting, “taken it easy,” but what he means is that they have not been aware of the *correct manner* of doing them, have not concentrated on the object of prostration, the *merit field*, and have not been aware of

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*Notes*

*1. The five uninterrupted negative karmas are:*

- a) Killing ones father*
- b) Killing ones mother*
- c) Killing an Arhat*
- d) Drawing blood from Buddha*
- e) Causing disunity among the sangha*

*2. This section refers to the merit created from the practice of the six perfections: Generosity, Morality, Patience, Enthusiasm, Concentration and Wisdom*

*3. Negative karmas near to the uninterrupted ones is: Killing a disciples, which is close to killing one’s father; raping a fully ordained nun who is an Arhat, which is close to killing one’s mother; killing a Bodhisattva who is living in the realization of any of the ten stages, which is close to killing an Arhat; taking materials away from the sangha, which is close to creating disunity amongst the sanghas; and taking the blessed clay and other statues and relics – the essence of a stupa – with selfish reason, which is close to wounding and causing blood to flow from a Tathagata.*

*Colophon: The Thirty-five Buddhas Confession was published by the FPMT education department in 2001. The Benefits of the Practice was taught by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Kopan in 1999.*



## *Dedication*

These holy projects have been successfully completed on the second and twelfth lunar months of the Water Horse Year of 2129 of the Tibetan Calendar.

The merit accumulated by constructing such a holy project is dedicated to ensure the prosperity and long lives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Tenzin Osel Rinpoche, Khen Rinpoche, Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lhundup Rigsal, Venerable Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche, Nyawang Rinzin Gyatso Rinpoche and the reincarnation of the late Geshe Lama Konchog, as well as those who have directly and indirectly put in their great effort, practically and financially to make this holy project successful.

Due to this merit may peace, prosperity and happiness prevail in this decadent period of our world and may all beings be freed from all their sufferings, diseases, spirit harms, negative karma and obscurations and abide in the peerless happiness of full enlightenment forever!

One accumulates infinite merit by merely seeing, hearing, remembering, touching and making homage to this holy stupa.

By the merit of this, may the excellent emanation of the great Mahasiddha Geshe Lama Konchog manifest swiftly to benefit all sentient beings!

Geshe Tenzin Zopa, 3/2/2003



Just as the brave Manjushri and Samantabhadra too  
Realized things as they are,  
Also I dedicate all these merits in the best way,  
That I many follow their perfect example.

I dedicate all these roots of virtue  
With the dedication praised as the best  
By the victorious thus-gone-ones of the three times,  
So that I might perform the noble bodhisattvas deeds.

You are the precious wish-fulfilling source of  
Happiness and goodness in the Land of the Snow (Tibet)  
Lord Chenrezig Tenzin Gyatso  
May you remain forever and your deeds be glorified.

*Compiled and written by Geshe Tenzin Zopa*

*Edited by Ven Robina Courtin*





Geshe Lama Konchog surrounded by the lamas, geshe and monks of Kopan Monastery

“The main purpose of building this excellent Thousand Buddha Relic Stupa of the late great Mahasiddha Geshe Lama Konchog is to repay his infinite kindness and to help all the sentient beings purify their negative imprints and accumulate extensive positive imprints in order to gain extensive merit and wisdom, both of which are prerequisites for reaching enlightenment.”

*Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche*