

2008 International Sangha Prayers for World Peace

By Ven. Losang Monlam

"I pray for a more friendly, more caring, and more understanding human family on this planet. To all who dislike suffering, who cherish lasting happiness, this is my heartfelt appeal." – HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

All together, the family of monks and nuns within the FPMT numbers about 1,000. These monks and nuns serve throughout the FPMT in many capacities: as teachers, retreat leaders, center directors, spiritual program coordinators, editors and counselors, with many engaged in study and retreat. Every year on Wheel Turning Day (this year, August 5), FPMT celebrates the presence of the Sangha community with International Sangha Day.

We find this a very special time to reflect on the value of having the monastic community among us, the service they give and the inspiration they provide. Centers throughout the world host various events developing the relationship between the lay and monastic community.

Traditionally, this relationship was integrated with various ritualized methods. The lay community provided for the basic requisites of the monastic community (food, clothing, accommodation, medicine, etc.) and the monastic community provided a basis for generating merit, a source of inspiration and a formalized system for continuing the lineage of Buddha's teaching. Times have changed, and now the ritualized daily point of contact between the monks and nuns and the lay people is not so well defined.

International Sangha Day provides an opportunity for the lay and monastic communities to recognize their interdependence. We rely on each other for our practice of Buddhism.

This year, in celebration of **FPMT International Sangha Day**, the monks and nuns of the International Mahayana Institute (IMI) are offering prayers for world peace. The monastic community is offering to recite the **Sutra of Golden Light**, as requested by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, to bring about the causes for peace on our planet.

Each day, we are overwhelmed with news of earthquakes and floods, war, environmental disaster, abuse and neglect. We see the pictures and hear the stories and feel helpless to bring about real change; but, there is a way to help. Reciting the Sutra of Golden Light effects real change to benefit real beings. Lama Zopa Rinpoche says:

"Acts of terrorism will be averted. Acts of violence will stop. China will return to Buddhism and will relax its hold on Tibet. Natural catastrophes will be avoided. Crops will be successful. The environment will be clean. People will be safe. If there is war, it will end and there will be peace."

This year recitations of the Sutra of Golden Light will take place around the world. And IMI is inviting everyone to participate in different ways:

- Everyone is encouraged to recite the Sutra of Golden Light with the Sangha during the period of Sakadawa, June 18 to International Sangha Day, August 5. To participate, simply go to http://www.fpmt.org/golden_light_sutra/ for all the information you need and to report your recitations. You can also make your pledge at www.joinprayersforpeace.org.

- Read Lama Zopa Rinpoche's advice on dedicating recitations of the Golden Light Sutra at http://www.fpmt.org/golden_light_sutra/ In addition to dedications for peace, individuals are welcome to request dedications for family, friends and loved ones. These dedications can be made online at www.joinprayersforpeace.org. The special dedications will be made on International Sangha Day, August 5 at the culmination of the sutra recitation.

The Sutra of Golden Light is available to download in various languages on the FPMT website, where you can find the benefits of reciting the Sutra and other information is also available. www.fpmt.org/golden_light_sutra/ 