

March 12th 2006

Dear friends,

It has been a while since I last sent out any information about Kirti Tsenshap Rinpoche's relic stupa and the finances involved in this project.

But first I would like to take the opportunity to again thank everyone who has contributed while Rinpoche was still with us. The total of your donations came to some 2,400,000 Indian Rupees.

From these, 1,000,000 was spent on medical expenses, including hospital bills, private care at the farm, medicine and equipment, twice a day transport to and from the hospital for the nurses, doctor's fees and offerings, and finally transport of Rinpoche's holy body from Delhi to Dharamsala for the cremation.

Some 400,000 Indian Rupees were spent to cover our living expenses in the farm. Although Bonnie had very generously offered that magnificent and spacious house free of any rent, at any given time there were 9-11 monks residing in the house, plus Michael and myself. The remaining 1,400,000 rupees were spent as offerings towards prayers for Rinpoche. Of those, 220,000 rupees were offered for prayers performed prior to Rinpoche's passing way and the remaining 780,000 rupees were offered during the 49-days period.

A more detailed list of prayers and practices that were sponsored and performed for Rinpoche's sake is presented here in two parts. Part A includes practices offered while Rinpoche was still with us and Part B includes practices offered once Rinpoche passed away. These were the practices completed during the 7 week period of 49 days. Kirti Monastery organized and sponsored prayers during the first 3 weeks. Then from the 4th to the 7th week, all prayers were sponsored by Alak Rinpoche through your donations. Also Alak sponsored two "mang ja" pujas with money offerings in Kirti Monastery during the first week, again through your donations.

A. Long Life prayers and practices offered before Rinpoche passed away:

1) As Rinpoche's condition was becoming more serious, Rinpoche was approached and asked which practices would be beneficial to practice for his long life. Rinpoche suggested that the mantras of Yamantaka, Kalachakra and Mahakala, the dharani of Medicine Buddha, Samantabhadra's Prayer, the Prayer from Bodhicaryavatara and OM AH HUM should be recited. These were recited 900,000 times in the monasteries of Sera, Ganden and Drepung, in India, and 12,000,000 times in the monasteries of Sera, Ganden and Drepung and 500,000 times in Kirti Monastery, in Tibet.

2) When Rinpoche's condition worsened further, Kirti Monastery advised that the attendants in the house should recite the Grounds and Paths, the Threefold Praise, Gurupuja, Direction Protector practice, tormas offerings and entrustment practices and the three ceremonies daily. Also Lama Choepa Tsog was offered on the tenth and twenty-fifth without break until Rinpoche passed away.

Once Rinpoche passed away his holy body was taken to Dharamsala where a cremation was offered according to the Kalachakra rites. All relics were then placed in Rinpoche's residence while all powder ashes have been released in the Ganges.

B. Practices during the 49-days period:

During the first 3 weeks offerings for the deceased were completed by the entire Dratsang of Kirti Monastery, including the temporary abbot, and temporary representative, administrator, master of discipline and so on.

- 1) In the first week, two pujas with offerings of 100Rs to each monk were made in Kirti Monastery.
- 2) For the remaining 4 weeks Gyuto monastery was requested to continue with Heruka self initiation, the Kirti Monastery did Kunrig self initiation, and Nechung Monastery did Akshobya self initiation.
- 3) At the end of the 49-days period Gyuto monastery was again requested to perform Guhyasamaja self initiation.
- 4) According to the tradition offerings were made requesting dedication prayers to 46 lamas and abbots of the three main monasteries and so on through the auspices of His Holiness, and also to 72 renunciates who had an established connection with Rinpoche in Dharamsala.
- 5) Kirti Monastery and its thirty two branches in Tibet recited dedications and prayers.
- 6) Further offerings were made to both His Holiness and the great monastery. To HH we gave a statue of Amitayus and the Amitayus sutra, a Kadampa stupa, a precious silver mandala and precious stones, 100,000 Rs, a five colored silken pennant. To the main monastery we gave a statue of Manjushri, the Amitayus sutra, a stupa, a mandala base containing 14 tola or 300 gram of gold and one kilo and 14 tola of silver, one silver spoon, and 1,113Rs.
- 7) On the forty-ninth day, in front of the relics, we made one hundred waterbowl offerings and lit one hundred butter lamps. Then one lama and three monks performed Gurupuja, Yamantaka, purification prayers for the relics, ablution practices, mandala offerings, prayers for the quick return of the reincarnation, the five fold prayer and so on without break.
- 8) And for each of the seven weeks 1,000 butter lamps and 1,000 divine food offerings were offered in front of the relics through Gurupuja.
- 9) Then in the last week, in accordance with Rinpoche's wishes, from among his material possessions new robes that were offered by others during the long life prayers, items from the house such as the television, fan, kitchen utensils and so on were sold and the money used for a Dratsang puja with 100Rs offered to each monk. Old robes, bases of the body, speech and mind (of the Buddha), texts, offerings and so on that should be given to the next incarnation were collated and placed in Rinpoche's residence.
- 10) On the 49th day in Taksang Lhamo Kirti Monastery in Tibet, a "mang ja" puja was offered, with 130Rs for each monk, and to Kirti Monastery in India an extensive Gurupuja, "mang ja" puja, and 2,300Rs offered to each monk.
- 11) Then in both Bodhgaya and in Lhasa Jokhang, in both the stupas of Nepal, in the main temple in Dharamsala, and in front of the relics of Lhamo Tenpa Gyaltsen, for each of the seven weeks, 100 butter lamps were offered, and in front of the sandalwood statue of the Buddha during the forty-nine days butter lamps were offered.
- 12) In front of the great Golden Reliquary of Ganden, the great Maitreya of Tshang, the self arisen Hayagriva of Sera, and the Maitreya of Drepung, 100 butter lamps each were offered. And to the (statue of) Chenrezig at Trokyab 103 butter lamps were offered.

This completes the list of prayers and practices that were offered for Rinpoche and were sponsored by your generous and on-going donations. So, there are plenty of reasons for everyone involved to rejoice, many times over!!!

Soon after the period of 49 days was completed Alak had an interview with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. During this interview Alak discussed Rinpoche's extensive teaching and traveling activities and his recent travels to Canada and Antarctica with special emphasis on blessings that were aiming at harmonizing the environment and the weather patterns. These particular blessings that involved the emerging of a blessed Buddha statue in the waters were performed in South Africa, Antarctica, New Zealand and Israel.

Following that, Alak relayed to his Holiness the events that led to Rinpoche being diagnosed with cancer, his hospitalization and the last period of his life and the experiences he had during his stay in the farm in Delhi.

Alak requested His Holiness to pray for Rinpoche's quick return and that all remaining tasks, including the construction of the relic stupa and the recognition of Rinpoche's reincarnation, will be completed without any obstacles. His Holiness prayed to that effect and told Alak that these activities will be completed without delay or obstacles and that He will recognize the child in 1-2 years. During that interview Alak also asked for some direction about the type of practices he should be doing for the following couple of years. Alak is planning to travel to Nepal in order to supervise the commencement of the work on the stupa and will then retire for a while and spend some time in retreat.

A few students have been asking which practices should be done at this stage and the answer to that is that any practice you are doing can be dedicated towards the quick return of Rinpoche. Of course a special prayer has been composed for that purpose by Kirti Rinpoche and has been translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. The prayer has been released some time ago and is available through the FPMT and the International Kalachakra Network websites.

We will continue to update you with news on the progress of the relic stupa as the project evolves.

With best wishes and much gratitude for your amazing and on-going support, Voula