

# FPMT Mongolia:

## Fulfilling the Common Desire for Buddhism's Resurgence

By M.K. Sen, Ven. Tsenla Yanzo, Ven. Thubten Gyalmo and Ven. Tenzin Tsapel



*Lama Zopa Rinpoche with the water bowl team at Ganden Do Ngag Shedrup Ling, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, September 10, 2013. Photo by Ven. Roger Kunsang. The team offers 1,560 water bowls every day at the center. Rinpoche is so pleased with how they do it.*

Life in modern Mongolia is full of challenges and hardships. And as we're sometimes reminded, where there are difficulties, there is hope. The legacy of 70 years of communist rule still shapes people's everyday experiences. Haphazard development stemming from mining booms and capitalist expansion has transformed parts of the country at a frightening pace. Extreme air pollution, especially in Ulaanbaatar in the winter months, creates health and transportation problems with no solution in sight. And homelessness, poverty and alcoholism seem endemic. Yet Mongolians are very friendly people. Their rich Buddhist heritage inclines many Mongolians to have a strong interest in Dharma and a sincere respect for Sangha. These qualities form a firm base for the resurgence of the Buddhadharma in contemporary Mongolia.

To support a revival of Buddhism in Mongolia, Lama Zopa Rinpoche encouraged FPMT Mongolia (FPMTM) to start during his first visit to the country in 1999. Rinpoche has a very special love for Mongolia and its people. During every

visit he's made to the country, Rinpoche explains the importance of fostering the study and practice of Dharma throughout the historically Buddhist country. To this end, many high lamas are visiting Mongolia and helping to revive Buddhist teachings and practices as well as assisting to rebuild the necessary structures and institutions for Dharma to flourish. In this way, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, through FPMT Mongolia, is helping the people of Mongolia.

Registered as a religious organization in Mongolia, FPMTM has benefited from the tireless service of many FPMT volunteers. More than 40 people have given their time, effort and experience towards creating and developing FPMTM. Among them are some well-known FPMT students who have served the organization well as directors, teachers and staff. They include, but are not limited to: Ven. Thubten Gyatso, Ven. George Churinoff, Harvey Horrocks, Deborah Bloomer, Ven. Jinpa, Sean and Ariane Jones, Ueli Minder, Shyla Bauer, Roy Fraser, Jimi Neal, Valerie Neal, Ven. Sarah Thresher, Eamon Walsh, Carol Beirsto, Anil Sharma, Britta





From top: Golden Light Sutra Center, Darkhan, Mongolia, September 2013; The entrance to Drolma Ling Nunnery, which is situated in a very poor area of Ulaanbaatar; Lama Zopa Rinpoche visiting the soup kitchen at Lamp of the Path, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, September 3, 2013. Photos by Ven. Roger Kunsang.

Tiefenbacher, Ven. Chantal Carrerot and Massimo Corona. These kind individuals have been equally well supported by a team of Mongolians. FPMTM is what it is today because of the selfless efforts, commitment, hard work, motivation and loyalty of these many individuals. The present board members and senior management are indebted to them for the successes achieved to date.

Over the past two years the current board and executive committee members of FPMTM, along with their advisers, have worked hard in various ways to ensure the success of all centers, projects and long-term objectives of the organization, in order to best help manifest Rinpoche's wishes. We have no doubts that the present leadership and stewardship of the various centers and projects will continue to establish FPMTM as a model religious organization serving the people of Mongolia in fulfilling the common desire for the resurgence of Buddhism in the country.

Here's a brief summary of some of FPMTM's beneficial activities:

**Ganden Do Ngag Shedrup Ling** is an active Dharma center in the heart of Ulaanbaatar, offering regular Dharma teachings, including *Discovering Buddhism* classes, as well as meditation instruction, pujas and English classes to about 250 students. The center also houses FPMT Mongolia's office and the Stupa Café, serving vegetarian meals, tea and coffee, cakes and packed lunches.

**Golden Light Sutra Center** in Darkhan, the second largest city in Mongolia, also offers regular Dharma and meditation instruction and *Discovering Buddhism* classes as well as having regular pujas and sutra recitation. Both centers have teachers regularly visiting prisons, where they teach Dharma and lead simple meditation sessions for inmates.

**Drolma Ling Nunnery** in the Bayanzurkh District of Ulaanbaatar, about 8 kilometers (5 miles) from downtown, is located on the historic grounds of Dara Ekh Monastery. There is a small community of about 10 nuns living there currently. FPMTM has committed to building a larger, modern and well equipped nunnery that will dramatically improve the options for Mongolian nuns.

**Lamp of the Path** is the umbrella name for FPMT social services projects helping provide basic human requirements to homeless and vulnerable populations. Located on the grounds of Drolma Ling Nunnery, Lamp of the Path has run a soup kitchen since 2003, serving a hot nourishing meal and providing a warm space – a vital need during Mongolia's harsh winters of sub-zero temperatures. There is also a health clinic serving the local population of about 450 people, a children's development project, a sewing group project and a vegetable garden project.

**Enlightening Mind** translates and publishes Dharma texts and practice booklets in modern Mongolian, including teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche as well as important sutras and practice books. Rinpoche has emphasized the importance of translating Lama Tsongkhapa's *Middling Lam-rim* into Mongolian, which is currently being undertaken, as well as a translation of *Dear Lama Zopa*, a collection of Rinpoche's advice to students. ♦

For a more extensive description of FPMT centers, projects and services in Mongolia, please visit FPMT Mongolia online at [www.fpmtmongolia.org](http://www.fpmtmongolia.org).

M.K. Sen serves as CEO of FPMT Mongolia. Ven. Tsenla Yanzo is director of Drolma Ling Nunnery and Lamp of the Path. Ven. Thubten Gyalmo is director of Ganden Do Ngag Shedrup Ling. Ven. Tenzin Tsapel serves as resident teacher at Golden Light Sutra Center.

You can read more on FPMT's activities in Mongolia by visiting *Mandala's* online edition at [mandala.fpmt.org](http://mandala.fpmt.org).