



LAMA THUBTEN ZOPA RINPOCHE

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR
Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition

Curriculum Vitae of Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE, the spiritual director of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), was born in Thami, Nepal, in 1946. At the age of three he was recognized as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama, Lama Kunzang Yeshe, who was a Tibetan Nyingma yogi and one of the most revered lamas in the Lawudo region.

At the age of 10, Rinpoche went to Tibet and studied and meditated at Domo Geshe Rinpoche's monastery near Pagri. He studied there until the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 forced him to flee Tibet for the safety of Bhutan and then India. Rinpoche then studied at the Tibetan refugee camp at Buxa Duar, West Bengal, India, where he met Lama Yeshe, who became his closest teacher. Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche's contact with Westerners began in 1965 in Darjeeling, when they met "Princess" Zina Rachevsky of Russian descent. She became the Lamas' first Western student.

The Lamas went to Nepal in 1967, and over the next few years built Kopan and Lawudo Monasteries. In 1971 Rinpoche took full monastic ordination from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche in Bodhgaya. Also in 1971, Rinpoche gave the first of the famous annual lamrim retreat courses which continue at Kopan to this day.

In 1974, Lama Yeshe and Rinpoche began traveling the world to teach at the Dharma centers started by their Western students which numbered 12 by 1975. In 1976, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) was established as an official organization. When Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984, Lama Zopa Rinpoche took over as spiritual director of FPMT which has continued to flourish under his peerless guidance.





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FPMT is now a thriving and dynamic international, non-profit Buddhist organization encompassing over 160 centers, projects and social service initiatives around the world.

FPMT currently has eight standard Buddhist education programs that are taught in many centers. Two of these, the *Masters Program* and the *Basic Program* are committed courses of six and five years of study, respectively. Based on the great philosophical texts studied in the monasteries of Tibet, FPMT holds to rigid standards of translation to ensure the meaning of these profound texts is not forfeited in their transmission from East to West. FPMT has also published hundreds of translated prayers, practice manuals, and sutras under the advice of Rinpoche.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche's vision is vast and includes the proliferation of many charitable and beneficial activities. Rinpoche is utterly dedicated to fulfilling the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama wherever and whenever possible. Among many projects dear to Rinpoche's heart are the two Maitreya Projects that are being built in Bodhgaya and Kushinagar in India; the Sera Je Food Fund, which offers three vegetarian meals a day to all 2,500 monks studying at Sera Je Monastery in south India; animal liberation events around the world, at which creatures, big and small, are blessed and freed from untimely death.

Rinpoche's teachings have been widely published including many titles by Wisdom Publications and Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive. Popular titles from Rinpoche include *Door to Satisfaction*, *How to Be Happy*, *Transforming Problems*, *Ultimate Healing*, *Heart of the Path*, as well as a number of other books and commentaries that are utilized by students the world over.

More details of Rinpoche's life and work may be found on the websites of FPMT (fpmt.org/teachers/zopa/) and Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive (www.LamaYeshe.com).

