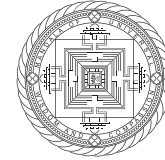


*How to Make Your
Possessions Most Beneficial
at the Time of Death*

A Teaching by Lama Zopa Rinpoche



Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition



The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) is a dynamic worldwide organization devoted to education and public service. Established by Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, FPMT touches the lives of beings all over the world. In the early 1970s, young Westerners inspired by the intelligence and practicality of the Buddhist approach made contact with these lamas in Nepal and the organization was born. Now encompassing over 150 Dharma centers, projects, social services and publishing houses in thirty-three countries, we continue to bring the enlightened message of compassion, wisdom, and peace to the world.

We invite you to join us in our work to develop compassion around the world! Visit our website at www.fpmt.org to find a center near you, a study program suited to your needs, practice materials, meditation supplies, sacred art, and online teachings. We offer a membership program with benefits such as Mandala magazine and discounts at the on-line Foundation Store. And check out some of the vast projects Lama Zopa Rinpoche has developed to preserve the Mahayana tradition and help end suffering in the world today. Lastly, never hesitate to contact us if we can be of service to you.

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These are the present FPMT projects but soon they will be much more extensive. The aim of the projects is to illuminate the world from darkness, ignorance and suffering. If things go well, if the Maitreya Project happens, projects will be doubled and tripled until they are like the stars in a night sky – social services as well as Dharma projects – like the sun rising on the world.

How to Make Your Possessions Most Beneficial

Even within our organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, there are numberless projects through which you can make your belongings most beneficial for sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha.

Statues, Stupas and Other Holy Objects

The 500-foot Maitreya Buddha statue

People will come from all over the world to see, circumambulate, prostrate, make offerings and so forth to this statue, which we are building in Kushingar, India. The statue will cause the sentient beings in this world to collect extensive merit, purify unimaginable obscurations and negative karma, and plant the seed of enlightenment, which includes planting seeds of the whole path to enlightenment.

Through purification and the collection of merit they can transform their mind into bodhicitta, everyone living their lives only benefiting each other, their actions becoming only causes of enlightenment, unbelievable purification, creating limitless skies of merit every second, thus bringing perfect enjoyment, peace and happiness in the world as well as inner prosperity: quick attainment of the realizations of the path to enlightenment.

This essential benefit was explained by Buddha to King Salgyäl:

However many atoms the stupa has, for that many lives you become a king in deva and human realms. However many atoms the stupa has, that many causes you create

of perfect concentration (shamatha, calm abiding) of the form and formless realms. However many atoms it has, that many causes you create to achieve the exalted path. However many atoms it has, that many causes of enlightenment.

In future lives, if you get born a king, with all that wealth and power there is the possibility to relieve so many other sentient beings from poverty and to preserve and spread the teachings of Buddha. You can bring so many sentient beings into temporal and ultimate happiness.

Without perfect meditation, calm abiding, you cannot have special concentration, great insight unified with shamatha, which drives the extremely refined ecstasy of body and mind. Without that you cannot achieve the exalted path, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. Without that you cannot directly cease the gross and subtle defilements. That means neither can you achieve liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering for yourself, nor can you achieve enlightenment for others.

By achieving the Hinayana exalted path, you achieve arhatship and are able to overcome the cycle of death and rebirth, the sufferings of samsara. By achieving the exalted Mahayana Paramitayana right-seeing path, you are able to completely abandon the suffering of rebirth, old age, sickness and death. By actualizing the exalted path of tantra, the clear light of meaning, you overcome the cycle of death and rebirth and all suffering is abandoned. Even by achieving the clear light of example, you can overcome death. By making holy objects, you create the cause of all these very important attainments, not only to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering but bring them to full enlightenment.

The last line is: "However many atoms it has, that many causes of enlightenment one creates." This applies not only to stupas; it is the same with statues. As I often say, even a statue or stupa the size of your nail has an unbelievable number of atoms, so you can imagine how many causes of all these attainments you create, how many causes of enlightenment – just unbelievable. It is something that makes you want to make holy objects non-stop, day and night continuously, something that makes it a

Osel Ling Retreat Center in Granada, Spain, near where Lama Yeshe's incarnation took birth, has been established for many years now. Many people have done retreat there and His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave Mahamudra teachings there. It is a great place for retreat.

Lawudo, in the Solu Khumbu region of Nepal, near Mount Everest, is the site of the previous Lawudo Lama's cave.

Kopan Monastery and Nunnery offer retreat facilities in Nepal, as does Ganden Yiga Chözin Centre, in Pokhara.

Mahamudra Centre in New Zealand has retreat facilities for groups and individuals, and special facilities for Dorje Khadro fire pujas.

Several European countries offer retreat facilities: Shen Phen Thubten Choeling and Jamyang Buddhist Centre in England; Institut Vajra Yogini and Nalanda Monastery, France; Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Italy; Kushi Ling Retreat Center on the Swiss/Italian border; Tushita Retreat Center, Spain; Maitreya Instituut, Holland; Yiga Chözin Retreat Centre, Latvia.

Tushita Meditation Centre in Dharamsala, is a very holy place where His Holiness the Dalai Lama's root Guru, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, who is actual Heruka, lived for seven years.

Root Institute, Bodhgaya is also very good for retreat. Whatever practice you do in Bodhgaya is increased eight times.

Mexico has Serlingpa Retreat Center. In the United States, Land of Medicine Buddha, Vajrapani Institute and Milarepa Center all offer retreat facilities.

In Washington we are drawing up plans for individual retreat houses. In the future, if we get more land, we can extend the facilities to old lay students to live out their lives when they can't function well. At the end of their lives younger students can help them practice so that they pass away peacefully, with many holy objects, stupas and prayer wheels. This is a dream to be actualized.

(For more information on FPMT Retreat Centers, see www.fpmt.org/retreat/default.asp)

which results from harmful actions motivated by negative attitudes.

So this practitioner inspires the world to practice these positive, virtuous thoughts, especially the good heart. Retreat places, therefore, are very important, as they are conducive to meditation and development of the mind in the path.

The purpose of revealing and studying all the hundreds of volumes of Buddha's teachings, Kangyur, and the commentaries, Tengyur, including all the commentaries by great Tibetan lamas, is to practice and actualize the path. As Lama Tsongkhapa stressed, the purpose of listening to the teachings is to get the practice done.

People who are meditating on the path, doing retreat, whether in a hermitage or in a city, are like scientists doing profoundly deep inner research, experimenting on the path to liberation and enlightenment, the most important thing in the world, to free numberless sentient beings, including themselves, from suffering and achieve happiness.

If you never do retreat, never practice meditation, you won't get any real satisfaction because you won't have any realizations of the path. You won't have achieved the real purpose.

FPMT Retreat Places

Land of Calm Abiding (Shiné Land) is particularly for achieving calm abiding. Most people have incredible experiences there, even though it is very isolated and quite hard. The upkeep of the land is quite costly, for instance the road gets washed away by the rain every year and has to be fixed. The caretakers do a wonderful job of looking after the retreatants' needs.

The cost to maintain the property is \$35,000 per year. This covers grading of the road after the annual rains; two full-time caretakers; satellite phone system – for emergency communication during the six-month rainy season, when the land is only accessible by helicopter; automobile expenses; ranch expenses.

Kangaroo Island in Australia also is very nice but totally different. It is flat and bushy, with mountains to one side, very spacious. People are doing retreat there. Chenrezig Institute and Atisha Centre in Australia also have retreat facilities.

great loss if you stop making holy objects even for a minute.

You can't imagine the atoms in a holy object the size of your nail, or the length of your nose, so of course you cannot imagine 500 feet! It means whatever contribution you make towards building the statue, either in time or donations, as many atoms as the 500 foot statue has, that many causes you create; that many benefits you receive, including enlightenment. That is unbelievably, unbelievably unbelievable!

Smaller Maitreya Buddha statues

The plan is to make 1000 one-story-plus Maitreya Buddha statues in the world, not only for the reason that if you don't become enlightened during Buddha's teachings, when Maitreya Buddha descends to this world you become the first disciple of Maitreya Buddha, and receive teachings and prediction of how you become enlightened. The specific benefit is that the more Maitreya Buddha statues you build, the shorter the duration of sentient beings' suffering after Buddha's teachings end in this world. At that time the whole world will experience unbelievable suffering of famine, sickness and war – the whole world, not just some countries. After that, Maitreya Buddha's teachings will arise. The benefit is that Maitreya Buddha will descend to this world earlier.

Already there are plans to build a Maitreya Buddha statue, the same size as the Mahabodhi Stupa, on the original Maitreya Project land in Bodhgaya, India.

In Tibet, in Tsipri, an unbelievably precious holy place of Heruka that combines Mount Kailash, Tsari and Labchi – Heruka's holy body, holy speech and holy mind – I was requested to build a two-story-plus Maitreya Buddha statue, to replace a Maitreya statue that existed there previously.

The Ladakhi temple in Delhi requested a 24-foot, computer-generated Maitreya Buddha statue like the one we already have in Bodhgaya. This could liberate and enlighten so many people who come there every day.

In Mongolia, a 13–15 story Maitreya Buddha statue is planned. Hopefully, we will build Maitreya Buddha statues in more countries too, some in nirmanakaya and some in samb-

hogakaya aspect. Then we will build a nine-storey Lama Tsongkhapa statue in Mongolia.

Prayer Wheels

One very good idea is to sponsor prayer wheels for others. There are extensive benefits in making and offering prayer wheels. The Limitless Light Buddha Amitabha said:

For the benefit of sentient beings of the degenerate age, I have explained the benefits of the Mani wheel. The one who practices while turning equals the fortune of the thousand buddhas.

The Founder Savior, the unequalled Shakya King, told the bodhisattva Dripa Namsil:

It is more beneficial to turn the Dharma wheel one time than [to be] a meditator of highest capacity who engages in one-year retreat on the essence meaning of mantra. It is more beneficial than a middle capacity meditator who does retreat for seven years or a lower capacity meditator who does a nine-year retreat.

Manjushri said:

This great Dharma wheel protects you from all the harm-givers, devas and spirit possessions, from the nagas down below, from steno in the middle, and from the multitude of yakshas.

The four protectors and the ten directional guardians will protect you from all obstacles, from all directions and corners. The negative karma of the lower realms, the five uninterrupted actions, and the ten non-virtuous actions are purified. You will travel to all the pure lands of the buddhas and in the Blissful Pure Land. You will be reborn on the lion's throne in the lotus heart of the Blissful Pure Land. You will perform the actions of all the buddhas in all directions.

views, totally believing the false appearance of truly existent I and all other phenomena to be true. Then all the rest of the delusions and wrong concepts build up, giving rise to negative karma and you experience all the suffering of the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, suras, asuras and intermediate state beings.

Even with some very basic realizations you can benefit other sentient beings limitlessly. With wisdom you can liberate others from the oceans of extreme suffering and the causes, delusions and karma, by showing them what is false and what is true. This way you can liberate them from all suffering forever and bring them to full enlightenment. With bodhicitta and the detached mind, renunciation, you become like medicine for all living beings' suffering and its causes; a source of peace and happiness to others; an incredible, most inspiring example to others, to tame their minds and bring peace and happiness in their hearts. Just seeing you, without many words, naturally pacifies all their harmful thoughts, and they generate a good heart and develop wisdom. They naturally get satisfaction and contentment. Wherever you are, even the land is blessed; wherever you step, the whole environment is blessed, so peaceful, very inspiring; wherever you are, all the people around, even the animals and the spirits, are blessed.

Even though there are great scholars who know by heart all Buddha's teachings and the commentaries by pandits and yogis, sometimes just seeing somebody who is living in a hermitage – the place is not so important, mainly living in the practice and especially having realizations – moves the mind, so that bad thoughts disappear and positive thoughts, such as renunciation, bodhicitta, right view, guru devotion and so forth, arise effortlessly. You can see the difference. There are no such inspiring examples of a great scholar having the same effect by speaking the words.

What really helps to transform the world, to bless the people and transform their thoughts, even to protect the environment, is the mind that has become Dharma: content and satisfied, detached and compassionate. Compassion is especially important to avoid war, famine, disease, torture, poverty and sickness; it even becomes an antidote to danger from the four elements,

very uncontrolled through desire, into contentment, satisfaction, peace and happiness; from anger to compassion and loving kindness; from egoistic mind to a good heart that cherishes others; from totally harming others to totally benefiting others. If this doesn't happen, even though you were born human, you become harmful to other sentient beings, to this world, to your country, your family and even yourself. You are not useful even to yourself.

If you change, you see immediately how you give so much less harm to yourself and others, and become truly beneficial. Otherwise, there is no purpose in having this human body, it is no different from animals, and sometimes even becomes more harmful than animals. Animals cannot plot such unbelievably destructive actions that kill millions of people and destroy countries. Animals cannot destroy a whole city or even a village but we can. You can see this very clearly in recent events, such as how the destruction of two towers in New York City affected the whole world, east and west, far and wide. Hotels had to close down, and people lost their jobs in banks and airports in many countries. This is how one human being's intelligence can be used to cause destruction in the lives of billions of people.

Therefore, retreating into detached inner peace and happiness, contentment and satisfaction, from the uncontrollable, painful mind of desire, the cause of samsara and the billions of problems of this life; retreating into loving compassionate bodhicitta, away from the egoistic, self-centered mind that doesn't care about others, the main obstacle to bringing happiness to numberless other sentient beings; retreating into wisdom, seeing things as empty of inherent existence and as existing dependently – in other words realizing the truth and falsity of I and phenomena, so that you are not deceived by yourself – you are able to cut the root of all the suffering and its causes, delusion and karma, and you are even able to cease the imprint, the seed of that ignorance, and achieve liberation, an everlasting blissful state of peace. Not only that, you cease the subtle defilements and achieve all the qualities, becoming able to bring numberless sentient beings into full enlightenment by liberating them from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes.

Otherwise you are drowning in a quagmire of hallucinated

From *The Peerless Wish-Granting Jewel Tantra*:

The person who turns this wheel, which possesses OM MANI PADME HUM, will be blessed by all the gurus; the deities will grant realizations; those gone to bliss will pay attention to him or her, and the Dharma protectors will eliminate all obstacles.

From *The Will of the Action of the Compassionate Eye Loving One*:

Each time you turn this OM MANI PADME HUM Dharma wheel equals the number (of mantra) of the approximation retreat.

The benefits of establishing the Dharma wheel in earth, water, fire and wind:

When you put this great wheel OM MANI PADME HUM up in the wind, all those sentient beings who are touched by the wind and all those migrators abiding in the direction of the wind will be liberated from the sufferings of the lower realms. When you place the Dharma wheel in the fire, any sentient being who smells the smoke and all those migrators who see the light of the fire will be liberated from the sufferings of the lower realms. If you place the Dharma wheel in the ground, all those migratory beings who receive the dust and the sentient beings abiding in that ground will be liberated from the sufferings of the lower realms. If you place the Dharma wheel in water, all those sentient beings abiding in and drinking the water will be liberated from the sufferings of the lower realms.

Therefore, the fortunate capable beings turn the great Dharma wheel upright. The highest intelligent person will achieve enlightenment and work for sentient beings; the middle capable being will achieve fortunate rebirth and join the holy Dharma; and the lowest capable being will achieve good rebirth and separate from the ten non-virtuous actions.

If you place the Dharma wheel at home and turn it, the migratory beings abiding in that house will be liberated, and the home will become similar to the Potala (Pure Land of Chenrezig). At the time of death, if you place the Dharma wheel with OM MANI PADME HUM next to your head and make requests with intense devotional mind, without need of practicing phowa your consciousness will be transferred in one instant to the heart of the Compassionate One.

The Savior Loving One Maitreya said:

If you offer good divine robes to the profound Dharma wheel, you will receive good clothing for 500 lifetimes. Due to the merits of having offered the hook to the profound Dharma wheel, you will be able to go through all the paths of liberation. By the merits of offering the hanging weight, you will become the savior of all migratory beings. You will accumulate more merits than having recited 100,000 times 10,000,000 mantras. The titans and the harm-givers will prostrate to you. You will control human beings, wealth and food. All your connections will become meaningful, and sentient beings touched by your shadow will be liberated from the lower realms.

Therefore, without a two-pointed mind or doubts in this profound supreme Dharma wheel, one should cherish it, build the Dharma wheel with perseverance, and turn it with an intense wish.

Holy objects offer social benefits

The other benefit of these large statues is that they also become social services. The projects give jobs to many people who don't have a means of living, as in Mongolia and India, helping them in many ways, providing medical facilities and taking care of their families, so they can send their children to school for education.

Here we are not talking about working in a factory, build-

izations of the path. So bequeathing your money and belongings to the center is a very practical and good way to help, especially if the center has difficulties in meeting the expenses of rent or running costs.

Already some students have made wills, bequeathing their houses to various centers. One person, who already passed away, willed his house to Vajrayana Institute in Sydney, giving the students courage to buy a new center.

You can also sponsor the projects and activities of a center, or practices and pujas. Of course, many people want to sponsor pujas in monasteries in India, etc., but from time to time I suggest people make offerings to the centers. Normally people don't think to sponsor pujas or make offerings in a center. Even if they don't have much money, they can sponsor food and drink, thinking they are offering to the pores of the same Guru. Giving one drink of water or juice to your Guru's disciples collects more merit than having made offerings to numberless buddhas, Dharma and Sangha, numberless statues, stupas and scriptures.

(For more information on FPMT centers, see www.fpmt.org/centers)

Retreat Centers

Retreat places are extremely important. Almost it can be said that doing retreat is your only opportunity to discover yourself. You see your mind like a mirror and recognize how your life has been so far, the mistakes and actions that harmed you and others. In other words, you see your negative side. That makes you change, abandoning those faults to live a happier life as a better, more sincere, good-hearted, loving, compassionate, tolerant and caring person; less self-centered and egoistic, all those things that normal people don't like. It makes you a useful person, beneficial for others; at least not harming others.

Generally speaking, life is filled with objects of anger and jealousy, but mostly life is driven by objects of desire. Life becomes like a garbage can. You are constantly distracted by jobs and family so you never get to see your real self, only the hallucinated one. You need to change your life and mind from being

of samsaric suffering and their causes, until the last sentient being has attained enlightenment. That is the final benefit of having offered one tiny flower, one small Christmas light or stick of incense to the Buddha, a statue, stupa or other holy object. The benefits are inconceivable, unfathomable, limitless and uncountable, because of Buddha's qualities.

If that is the benefit of one person offering one time, can you imagine from each offering how much benefit a person gets, whether they are in China, India, Tibet or wherever?

Centers

You can offer to an FPMT center in your country or another. This is important because FPMT is an organization working to spread and educate sentient beings in Dharma, by organizing teachers, translators and facilities for people to learn and practice, to liberate them from the lower realms where they would experience the most unbearable suffering, even for eons. Every year the organization liberates so many sentient beings from the lower realms by educating them in Dharma, leading them to purify negative karma and practice morality and charity, causing them to achieve higher rebirth.

Learning not just the extensive philosophy of the Buddhaharma, but the heart of the 84,000 teachings of Buddha – the lam-rim, stages of the path to enlightenment, and the essence, the three principle aspects of the path, particularly renunciation – causes them to achieve liberation from samsara. Teaching the three higher trainings; educating people in the right view to eliminate the root of their samsara; liberating them from delusions and karma, and the whole entire ocean of samsaric suffering; educating and leading them to practice bodhicitta, to engage in the bodhisattvas' deeds, the six paramitas, causes them to achieve enlightenment, peerless happiness. Revealing the tantric path causes them to achieve enlightenment in one lifetime; by practicing highest tantra they can achieve enlightenment even in a few years.

By renting facilities the center organizers make it very easy for other sentient beings to practice Dharma. With qualified teachers they can learn correct Dharma and attain correct real-

ing houses or other normal jobs. People are building holy objects, which means even if their motivation is only attachment clinging to this life's happiness, purely non-virtuous thoughts, by the power of the holy object their actions become virtue. All the time they are working for the statue, every single action becomes a cause for enlightenment, and by the way becomes a cause to achieve liberation from samsara, and by the way a cause of happiness in all the future lives – no question that the success and happiness of this life happens by the way. Even if they pray for it not to happen, success comes in this life. So there is incredible benefit for their lives.

Of course, by working in factories etc., they can get money, but the action doesn't become virtue, doesn't purify their negative karma and defilements of mind, and doesn't collect merit. It doesn't become good karma and cause for happiness.

There are many different holy objects to build in different parts of the world, to quickly purify sentient beings' defilements and negativities, to collect extensive merit and bring beings to enlightenment quickly. So you can contribute to these projects.

Prajnaparamita, written in pure gold and silver, to go inside the Maitreya Buddha Statue

I would like to increase the number of people, lay and Sangha, who have very good Tibetan handwriting, to write the text. We need to be able offer some salary to those people. The work would be done in monasteries or wherever people can do it.

There is unbelievable, unbelievable merit in making this text. The benefits are spoken of in the *Sutra Kuntseg Jampa Sengye Chenpo'i do*:

If all the great 3000 worlds were entirely filled with stupas the size of Mt. Meru, made of the seven types of jewels, compared to that, if one writes the Prajnaparamita, in the duration of a finger snap, at least one achieves the patience of the profound Dharma - inconceivable exalted merits.

To clarify, one universe of 1000 world systems is a great-thousand world; 1000 great thousand worlds is a great two-thousand universe or world, while 1000 of these is a great three-thousand world. One stupa directs the mind to enlightenment and creates inconceivable merit, and with that merit one can meditate on emptiness without fear.

From the *Sutra Containing Precious Qualities*, Yonten Rinpoche Dupa Le:

If one should build stupas of the One Gone to Bliss, who has completely passed into the sorrowless state, with seven types of jewels, and the number of those stupas completely fill worlds equaling the number of sand grains in the Pacific Ocean, multiplied 1000 million times; if that many worlds are completely filled up with stupas of the One Completely Gone to Bliss, and however many sentient beings exist in these infinite worlds do nothing other than offer divine flowers, incense and ornaments, three times a day for eons or even longer: compared to that, if anyone writes down this Mother (Prajnaparamita) Gone to Bliss One, from where the guide having ten powers arises, keeps it and offers flowers, ornaments and respect, the merit is incomparable.

To clarify, the sand grains in the Pacific Ocean, to which the world systems are equal, are subtle grains, like atoms of water, multiplied 1000 million times. All the sentient beings in all those worlds only make offerings, doing no other work; offering divine flowers, special incense and ornaments morning, afternoon and evening, and not just for a month but for eons. One can't believe the merit that is created. However, compared to writing the Prajnaparamita text - from where the buddhas of the three times come - keeping it and making offerings to it, the merit of making and offering to all those stupas is very small.

Just writing one syllable of Prajnaparamita with black ink is more meritorious than building the Maitreya Buddha statue, which involves all those physical things and organization. Not

It is good to sponsor nyung näs in the centers, done in groups, or an individual person who wants to do 100 or 1000 nyung näs. You can also sponsor a group Vajrasattva retreat.

Sponsoring people to do preliminary practices, such as many tsa-tsas, is very good. Even if you cannot make tsa-tsas yourself, you can sponsor the expenses of the tsa-tsas and the comfort of the person doing the practice. It helps the person to complete the practice and also helps the sponsor to purify and accumulate extensive merit.

Funds for Offerings in Centers

Students who are working find it difficult, through lack of time and space, to make offerings in their homes, so I suggested to Tara House, in Melbourne, to have a general fund for offerings to holy objects in the center. One person needs to be in charge of the altar, and the fund is used to support that person and buy the offerings. Everybody can donate to the fund because everybody needs to make merit. Then, even while driving to and from work, the students can make offerings by chanting the mantra of blessing the offerings and then offering at least to their gurus, which collects the most extensive merit. Just by thinking of all the gurus in Dharamsala, there are already limitless skies of merit within that second.

Recently, I have been telling people if they don't have a place or time to make offerings, whether they are FPMT or not, they are most welcome to offer all the offerings in the houses [Rinpoche's residences], the flowers, lights, etc., which bring oceans of benefit. It makes the work of the Sangha, who are arranging these offerings every day, very worthwhile. You don't need to physically see the offerings, you can visualize them and just label that you are offering all the offerings in those houses.

By offering to the Buddha, especially the Guru, you can enjoy the result for ever: all the happiness one has received in beginningless past lives until now and will receive in the future; actualizing the whole path to liberation; actualizing the whole Mahayana path and achieving enlightenment; and, after that, liberating numberless hell beings, numberless hungry ghosts, numberless animals, humans, suras and asuras from the oceans

Liberation Prison Project

This project provides visits by FPMT monks and nuns to various prisons around the world, giving teachings, advice and guidance. Books are offered by our publishing division, and individual monks and nuns also communicate by letter with inmates (www.liberationprisonproject.org).

Liberating animals

FPMT centers regularly liberate animals in Hong Kong and Singapore. Amitabha Buddha Centre in Singapore already has released several million animals in pursuit of their target of 100 million. The centers in Malaysia and Taiwan also liberate animals on certain occasions. [Worms are liberated three times monthly in Lama Zopa Rinpoche's residences.] (www.fpmt.org/projects/alf)

Kopan Monastery in Nepal has a large piece of land for an animal sanctuary, where people can liberate animals (www.fpmt.org/projects/alp).

*Dharma Social Projects**Various Dharma projects*

One project is to revive a very special holy place in Tibet, of about 100 hermitages, where many holy beings, meditators and yogis achieved the rainbow body and other high attainments, including enlightenment. Some of the hermitages are already built by individuals. The project is to restore the buildings and provide a place where those who have finished studying in the monasteries can actualize what they have studied – the complete path to enlightenment.

One can also sponsor retreats, *nyung nä* or 100 million OM MANI PADME HUM, such as is done in Tsum by the nuns, monks and villagers. Also, in Tibet, every year in the Kadampa geshe's holy place, Pembo, the nuns and others do at least 100 million OM MANI PADME HUM. That is also a very good thing to support. I would like to establish similar activities in Mongolia in the future.

just writing it but reading, keeping and making offerings to it, memorizing and studying it, is more meritorious.

As you can see, by offering to the writing of the Prajnaparamita you create a vast amount of merit and there is extensive purification.

A Special Fund for Holy Objects

Many years ago I started a fund in which I put a part of whatever money offerings I receive every year, to build stupas and prayer wheels in different parts of the world.

(For more information on the holy objects Rinpoche has mentioned, go to www.fpmt.org/projects)

*Supporting Sangha**The Sera Je Food Fund*

The Sera Je Food Fund enables us to offer food (three meals a day) to more than 2700 monks in Sera Je Monastery.

The Lama Tsongkhapa Teachers Fund

The Lama Tsongkhapa Teachers Fund was set up at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to help support all the main teachers of the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition. Unless lamas receive support from their students or benefactors, they have nothing; they receive no remuneration from their monasteries.

This fund is now supporting 120 teachers living in India who by and large do not travel often to the West and therefore do not have access to regular sponsorship. In many cases, these teachers will also be supporting many of their own students, and the fund frees them from pressure to go out fundraising. For that reason, the offerings become quite significant for the beneficiaries, although by Western standards the amounts are quite modest. The fund offers salaries to the Ganden Tripa,

ex-Ganden Tripas, abbots and ex-abbots of six monasteries: Sera Je, Sera Me, Ganden Shartse, Ganden Jangse, Drepung Gomang, Drepung Loseling, Tashi Lhunpo (the Panchen Lama's Monastery) and Gyume and Gyuto Tantric Monasteries. They include fifteen key teachers in the Gelugpa tradition who are responsible for educating young monks, and five or more main teachers in Tashi Lhunpo and the two tantric colleges.

These monasteries are our world's centers of learning of the most extensive Buddhist philosophy, based on five major treatises: Abhidharmakosha, Parmanavarttika, Abhisamayalamkara, Madhyamaka and Vinaya, the monastic discipline, as well as commentaries by Indian and Tibetan pandits and lamas, including Lama Tsongkhapa and the particular authors of each monastery. They have an incredible system of studying Buddhadharma in depth, not merely through explanations of the root texts or by memorizing the commentaries, but also through analysis and debate. The tantric colleges teach the pure tantric tradition and practices, including traditional art and rituals, preserving the lineages purely; uncorrupted and non-degenerated.

After studying the extensive tantric texts the monks become fully qualified Buddhist masters, holding the whole entire teachings of Buddha. These teachers are sent to different parts of the world, offering so many sentient beings an opportunity to learn and practice Dharma, to achieve liberation and enlightenment.

If these monasteries degenerated or stopped functioning, the extensive study of the deep and correct meanings of Buddhist philosophy would cease and no sentient beings would have this opportunity – so the monasteries are essential.

This is the Lama Tsongkhapa tradition. Of course, other traditions also have monasteries offering good education in Buddhism and moral discipline.

Building Monasteries

There are projects in different parts of the world to spread the Dharma to sentient beings, like building a monastery and nunnery in Russia and re-building a nunnery in Mongolia. There

The other well-established and very successful Essential Education school is Tara Redwood School in Soquel, California (www.tararedwoodschool.org).

(For more information on Essential Education, see www.essential-education.org)

Hospices

FPMT has hospices in various countries: Australia, New Zealand, U.S.A, Malaysia, Denmark, Singapore and Spain. The oldest and most successful is Karuna Hospice in Brisbane, Australia. People say if you are dying and cared for by Karuna you are lucky! So my plan is to follow the Karuna way of running, or even improve on it, in different cities in Australia and other countries.

Health Care and other Social Services

The Eye Clinic in Xining, Kham, in Tibet will be offering free eye operations (www.fpmt.org/projects/amdo).

In Bodhgaya, the Maitri Charitable Trust provides free treatment and care for pregnant and nursing women, as well as for TB and leprosy patients. The center also offers a home and treatment for starving, sick or ill-treated dogs. Maitri Trust also runs a village school program (www.fpmt.org/maitri)

The Shakyamuni Buddha Community Health Care Centre in Root Institute originally was a home for sick destitute people and now has a comprehensive program offering free health care on many levels. Many qualified people volunteer their skills there and need to be supported. We are also going to start an animal hospital in Bodhgaya.

Maya Daya clinic is Kopan Monastery's charitable project, offering medical help and health care to the local people.

FPMT Mongolia Dolma Ling Community Center provides one nutritious meal a day and offers a basic health service, as well as educational programs to underprivileged people in the Ulaan Baatar outlying districts.

Social Services

Essential Education

Essential Education is a very important social service and has to meet the considerable expenses of producing school materials, salaries of teachers and staff, regular meetings, etc. We are planning teacher training and many more schools, especially in countries where there is a lot of violence.

The aim of Essential Education is to bring up children as good human beings, practicing kindness and tolerance every day, feeling joy for other's fortune, practicing forgiveness towards those who harm them and asking forgiveness from those they have harmed. To grow up with these very precious basic human qualities brings peace and happiness to all sentient beings, particularly those in this world, in one's own country and family and of course, no question to oneself – this comes by the way. Here I am talking about the basic qualities but there are many more, to open the heart to others.

Such an education becomes antidote to war, famine, disease, torture, poverty, sickness and danger from fire, water, air and earth. The main aim is a good heart, the thought of cherishing others. So this is an extremely important service to society.

Already, the Essential Education school in Bodhgaya, a part of the Maitreya Project, seems very beneficial (www.maitreyaaproject.org/en/education/index.html). The children, after just a few years, are completely different from other school children, very peaceful, disciplined and well-behaved. Seeing this inspired me to start many more schools in remote villages in Bihar, as the only way to change the situation there, where there is a lot of poverty, sickness, killing, stealing and so forth; people continually creating negative karma so that, as a result, the same problems continue.

Starting schools in those very poor villages not only helps the means of living and education, but most importantly develops a good heart, loving kindness and compassion. If we can start more such schools they can really help to change the state for the better, as people become better human beings, create less negative karma and accumulate more prosperity, happiness and peace.

are many Mongolian women who want to become nuns, and much can be done to help them. There is a great need for many monasteries in Mongolia. (www.fpmt.org/mongolia)

The FPMT monastery and nunnery in Kopan, Nepal, provides a very good education to more than 380 nuns and almost as many monks (www.kopanmonastery.com).

We are also presently constructing a monastery and nunnery in Tsum, Nepal. (www.fpmt.org/projects/tsum)

Supporting non-Tibetan Sangha

Supporting Sangha in their practice, study and retreat, doing service for sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, is very important. There are western monasteries and nunneries that have great need. One can offer to the Lama Yeshe Sangha Fund for western as well as Chinese Sangha. This Sangha fund helps monks and nuns in need (<http://www.fpmt.org/imi/lysf.asp>).

The main monastery in the West is Nalanda Monastery in France. The biggest nunnery, where the majority of nuns live, is at Chenrezig Institute in Australia, but there are monks and nuns in various countries, including Italy, Spain and the USA.

There is a great need for places for old Sangha to live in and be cared for. My idea is to have several in different countries, including Spain.

(For more information on the non-Tibetan Sangha in FPMT, see www.imisangha.org)

Pujas and Offerings on Special Days

For many years, on the special days of Buddha when merit is multiplied 100 million times, tea, bread and money have been offered at breakfast pujas in the monasteries of Sera Je, Sera Me, Ganden Jangtse, Ganden Shartse, Drepung Loseling, Drepung Gomang, and Gyuto and Gyume Tantric Colleges.

In Ganden Monastery pujas are sponsored on each eclipse day, and bread and tea is offered at puja. The other monasteries mentioned are constantly offering pujas for the organization,

besides the special days. In Sera Me College a Medicine Buddha puja is sponsored on the Tibetan 8th of every month.

Lunch is offered on merit-multiplying days to each of Rinpoche's Gurus: His Holiness Dalai Lama, His Holiness Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, Trulshik Rinpoche, Denma Locho Rinpoche, Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, Geshe Sopa Rinpoche, Dhakpa Rinpoche and His Holiness Sakya Trizin.

The Sangha in Nalanda Monastery in France are offered special meals each month, including ice cream, which the monks enjoy very much. They say it's a happy day! Offerings are also made to the Sangha in Chenrezig Nunnery and Thubten Shedrup Ling in Australia. Sangha at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa in Italy receive money offerings on each wheel-turning day. Food is offered to monks and nuns at Kopan Monastery.

Sera Je Monastery has more than 2700 monks and the others each have 1000-3000 monks. All those monks, in the monasteries where I make offerings, are the same gurus' pores, the disciples of my gurus. Offering one cup of tea or one rupee even to one disciple collects more merit than having made tea offering to numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas. Even offering one candy, stick of chewing gum or Starbucks coffee to one disciple of the same Guru creates this much merit! So you can see how much merit you collect by offering to this many monks in one monastery.

The dedication we request is for the success of the FPMT projects and also for people who rely upon me, whose names are given to me, who died or are sick, and so forth.

These pujas are to continue forever. It is unbelievably fortunate to be able to make these offerings: one collects unbelievable merit, and even in the future, if you are reborn as an ant somewhere in the universe, the pujas are still happening.

Offering to Stupas and Statues

Also, on those auspicious days, offerings are made to the two very precious stupas in Nepal: Swayambunath and Boudhanath. We pay money and the communities paint the stupas white and then offer saffron water, a canopy to go around the stupa and an umbrella on top. This is extremely powerful

for success, purification and collecting merits. The offerings to the stupas are made every month as well as on the special holy days.

Also, we offer money for the Buddha statue in the Jokhang, in Lhasa, to be painted gold on those days, and offer robes. Robes are also offered to the Buddha statue in the Mahabodhi Stupa in Bodhgaya.

I started a fund, into which every year some part of the money offerings go, for the coming years.

Every year, during the time of the four auspicious holy days, Root Institute for Wisdom Culture organizes a Festival of Lights and Merit in Bodhgaya, offering lights at the Mahabodhi Stupa - a very powerful opportunity to purify and accumulate vast merit.

(For more information on how to support these pujas and offerings, see www.fpmt.org/projects/puja/default.asp)

Translating and printing Dharma texts

Much more money is needed for paying wages to translators and for the printing and publishing of texts. This is another very beneficial project for the many people who have no opportunity to attend courses or hear teachings directly and are very keen to receive Dharma books. Dharma books go to every corner of the world, inspiring people to meditate, transforming their lives, bringing them more happiness and peace.

Education Services of FPMT International Office is translating some extremely precious sutra texts into various languages, with a view to translating many more texts. It is arranging for more and more Dharma texts to become available in different languages (www.fpmt.org/projects/education/default.asp).

Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archives collects, transcribes, edits and makes available all Lama Yeshe [and Lama Zopa Rinpoche's] teachings (www.LamaYeshe.com)

Wisdom Publications is the publishing arm of the FPMT. It regularly publishes a wide array of Dharma and Dharma-related books (www.wisdompubs.org).