

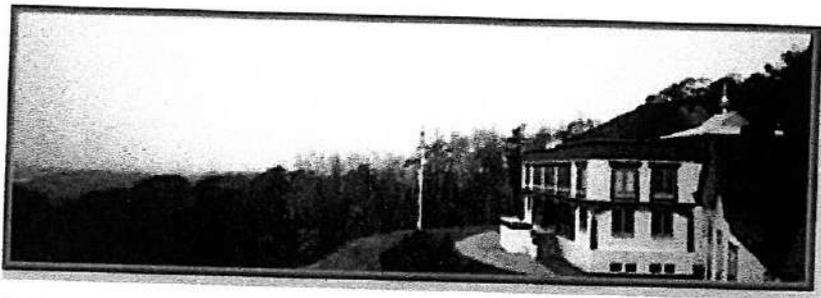
words of XVI Karmapa

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Inspiration for the Monastery

HH THE 16TH GYALWA KARMAPA



HIS HOLINESS FIRST OF ALL, would like to wish everybody *tashi delek*, which means goodness and happiness, and he would also like to mention that here in the great land of America, there is definitely a great revival of interest in the teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha and also in the practice of the teachings.

His Holiness believes that there are three main points as to why this interest has come about and why the Dharma, or the teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha, is becoming relevant in the Western mind. The first point is that, as he remembers, there have been specific prophesies made in the context of the flourishing of the Dharma and its spread from the Northern to the Southern hemisphere. His Holiness feels that eventually, through the power and blessings of the Three Jewels, the Dharma will spread to the Southern hemisphere, which he feels is the Western hemisphere today.

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Another point which has played a role in making the Dharma relevant here in the Western hemisphere is related to the changes that took place in the Land of Snow, in Tibet, where the Dharma was not only preserved, but studied, understood and realized. Due to these changes, the heads of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism eventually came out of Tibet to settle in India and the Himalayan region. This, coupled with the interest and the seeking of Westerners who came to their feet, is another reason that the teachings have now come to the Western hemisphere.



His Holiness believes, as he mentioned in the two points earlier, that it is through the blessings of the Three Jewels and through the power of the great bodhisattvas that today, the teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha are spreading in the Western hemisphere as the rays of the sun would direct its sunshine across [all of the world].

His Holiness mentioned that he remembers very distinctly his first visit to North America in 1974, and the interest in the teachings was as enthusiastic and as fruitful then as it is now. It is because of this spontaneous and great interest on the part of many people here in North America, as well as in the Philippines and Malaysia, that His Holiness has been both inspired and encouraged to make this second visit to the various Buddhist churches as well as to other groups of people who wish to receive the teachings. His Holiness has been visiting the various Dharma centers here in North America for almost seven months now, and during this visit he has been very much encouraged by the efforts made on the part of the people here to understand and practice the teachings.

And His Holiness remembers that in 1974, a great Dharma benefactor, a Mr. C.T. Chen, had mentioned to him often that he wished to make [his financial support available] to His Holiness so that there may be the opportunity for the essence of the Dharma to be implanted here in America.





In view of the fact that there is this great and spontaneous interest in the teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha, particularly as it was practiced in Tibet, His Holiness has decided to make his humble effort to build a monastery in which there will be a place for the immaculate Sangha members, that is the lamas and the monks, to perform the rites and ceremonies and the various Buddhist prayers; the monastery will also become a center where anyone who is interested can relate to and study the Dharma.

There will also be a center for translation, and His Holiness mentioned that he believes that this particular project is extremely important as the teachings of Buddha are preserved only in Tibetan and in Sanskrit. He feels that it is very important that in the future, the teachings must be translated into the English language so that it will be accessible to the English-speaking world. Also, His Holiness wishes to establish a unique library where all the manuscripts and teachings will be preserved and made available to anyone who is interested.

Finally, there will be an opportunity for people to receive teachings from the lamas and also to enter the retreat sector of the monastery, where they can practice what has been taught to them.



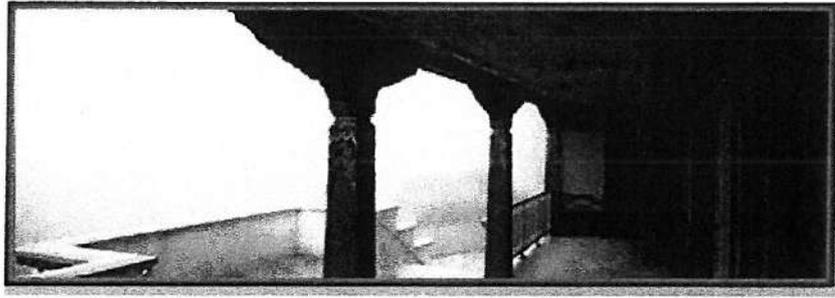
His Holiness mentioned that throughout his visits to the Western countries and North America, he has been very encouraged by the various spiritual leaders from the Christian, Judaic and other religious traditions. These leaders have met with His Holiness to express their mutual understanding and also to exchange ideas with the intent of making the teachings relevant to bring both inner and the outer peace. During his travels here in North America, His Holiness had the privilege of visiting different churches and Catholic monasteries where he observed that there was definitely a sense of coexistence, that there was a very good understanding among all people who live here in North America and practice their respective faiths.

His Holiness has noticed here in North America where there is this sense of many--where there are Christians and Jews, and many other practices besides Buddhism--that in spite of nominal terms such as Buddhism and Christianity, the basic aim of each tradition is to benefit others as much as possible and to make an effort to be separated from sorrow and the causes of sorrow. His Holiness says that in his experience, within the basic teachings of these various traditions there is definitely a link or common understanding between Buddhists and practitioners of other faiths.



It has always been His Holiness's aim to make the common goals shared by different faiths clearer so that there would be more understanding among the different traditions and among the people who practice their respective faiths. In no way has His Holiness ever felt that one particular practice was superior or that one tradition was not as good as another. He feels that it is important to have clarity in one's own practice, and follow this practice through to the end.

But at the same time, because of the great need here in North America, particularly in the United States, and at the request of many of the Buddhists here, His Holiness is making this effort to create a unique monastery. Its architecture will be Tibetan, and not only that, it will be a place where the immaculate Sangha, the Buddhist priests, can study, practice and present the teachings in all its stages, in all of the three yanas. His Holiness envisions that this monastery will become a heart center of the teachings, particularly those of the oral tradition, or the practice lineage, the Kagyupas. It is His Holiness's hope that this monastery will become an asset here in America, and that the teachings will become a way of life for future generations.



His Holiness mentioned the greatest of the bodhisattvas--Avalokiteshvara, or Chenrezig, the bodhisattva of compassion--whose compassion is directed towards all beings who are lost in cyclic existence; these beings are part and parcel of the suffering of samsara, and this suffering has come about due to the fact that sentient beings are blinded by the veil of ignorance. It is with this in mind that the effort is made to cut through and tear apart the veil of ignorance so that one may experience enlightenment. The immaculate teachings of Lord Shakyamuni Buddha in the form of the three great vehicles, the three yanas--from the Hinayana approach, from the Mahayana approach, and from the Vajrayana approach--lead towards a single goal. That is, one makes an effort on these paths to ultimately acquire the absolute realization of one's original nature and to be completely liberated from suffering. It is with this in mind that His Holiness hopes that this place where the monastery is going to be built will become a great center where there will be an opportunity for all peoples to make such an effort and ultimately obtain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.



His Holiness says that in closing, he would like to remind us that the teachings have been imparted first from the celestial aspect of the Buddha--from Vajradhara--right down through the golden chain of the Kagyupa lineage of teachers: from Vajradhara, to Tilopa, to Naropa, to Marpa, to Jetsun Milarepa, to Gampopa, and through the line of Karmapas, from the first up to now. His Holiness says that it is very fortunate that the practice lineage has been able to preserve the immaculate teachings, and it is still accessible--the experience of

enlightenment is still accessible to all peoples. And His Holiness says that he can guarantee, with full confidence, that if one truly makes an effort in the path as the great yogis and the great teachers did in the past, he or she too will acquire the same realization experienced by these great practitioners. This His Holiness says he can guarantee.

His Holiness says that his prayers and benediction will be with you always.



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