

Tibetan Monk Compassion Tour 2014-2015

The Monks of Gaden Shartse Dokhang Monastery On Tour

With The Blessing of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Experience the culture, wisdom, and healing arts of the Monks of the Gaden Shartse Dokhang Monastery. The Monks have launched a year long US-based Compassion Tour to offer cultural performances (renowned for their chanting, and sand mandalas), teachings (on a variety of topics including peace, compassion, nonviolence), healings, blessings, individual consultations and more. They are here with the blessing of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. The community of Bend, Oregon will be hosting the Pacific Northwest portion of the monks' tour, June 18 – June 29. Over a dozen events are scheduled in Bend. Hosting partners include: Deschutes Public Library; Oregon Natural Desert Association; Big Brothers Big Sisters; Groove Yoga; Yoga Lab; Footzone, and many others. Don't miss the opportunity to connect with these joyful and inspiring souls!

Purpose Of The Tour

The purpose of the Gaden Shartse Dokhang Monastery tour is to share the monks' Tibetan culture, as well as practices and paths to inner peace and compassion. The monks are also excited to engage in a cultural exchange to learn more about the west. Funds raised on this tour will be properly used to fund a special project – the rebuilding of facilities, a prayer hall and dormitories. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has helped secure a parcel of land in India for the monks to rebuild their facilities, and he has provided some seed money for the monks to travel to the US to continue raising funds for this very big project.



Overview: Performances, Events, Offerings

The monks are available to share their culture, teachings, and healing arts in varied ways, through large and small venues, including lectures, stage performances and chanting concerts, creating of sand mandalas, group healing rituals and empowerments, blessings (home, land and business), and private house events and consultations. The monks have also brought Tibetan arts and crafts, including thangkas, available for sale.

Monastery Background

Historically, Dokhang Khangtsen has been referred to as the ‘right hand’ of Gaden Shartse monastery, on account of its sustained contribution over many centuries towards the preservation of Shartse’s traditions and monastic discipline. In the approximately 500 years since it was established, Dokhang Khangtsen has played a significant role in the dissemination and preservation of the Buddha Dharma, having trained several highly realized lamas and learned Geshe (most notably, Tri Jhangchub Chöphel [b. 1756], the 69th Successor; Tri Tsultrim Palden [b. 1839], the 85th Successor, and Tri Lungrig Namgyal [b. 1927] the 101st Successor to the Throne of Je Tsongkhapa).

Geshe Thupten Jinpa, Ph.D., the primary English interpreter for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is also from Dokhang Khangtsen. Geshe Jinpa is the principal liaison for this tour and several of his senior students are accompanying the tour.

GADEN MONASTERY

Gaden Monastery is one of the three most renowned monasteries of Tibet. Originally founded in Tibet in 1409 by Je Tsongkhapa (1357 – 1419), a preeminent Tibetan preacher, saint, and Buddhist scholar, Gaden is where the Gelugpa School or the Yellow Hat Sect of Tibetan Buddhism emerged. The monastery was built on a majestic mountain just outside of Lhasa.

Gaden quickly became well known for its moral discipline, academic strength, and spiritual values. Monks of all ages poured in from every part of Tibet, Mongolia, China, Japan and Northern India. By the 1950s the population of the monastery had grown to 5,000. The youngest monks started at age seven. All monks, irrespective of their specific focus of study, engaged in rigorous study at the monastery for many years. In addition to in-depth philosophical study, there were trainings in different vocations such as religious music, arts, sculpture, and administrative work.

REBUILDING GADEN MONASTERY IN INDIA

In the 1950s, the People’s Liberation Army of China invaded and occupied Tibet. In 1959, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the political and spiritual leader of Tibet, was forced to flee to India, where he established the Tibetan Government in Exile. Since then, India has provided a safe place for many Tibetans to live and keep their culture and religion intact. More than one hundred thousand Tibetans followed His Holiness the Dalai Lama into exile and are now living in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Although Tibetans in India quickly established schools for children, the schools were not primarily centers for comprehensive Tibetan education, and Tibetan youth were becoming assimilated into Indian culture. Meanwhile, the Cultural Revolution was systematically destroying all centers of Tibetan culture and education inside Tibet. These conditions led some senior monks who had been trained at Gaden Monastery in Tibet to pool their efforts together. Under the guidance of His Holiness Dalai Lama, and with support from the Indian government and contributions from fellow Tibetans, these monks reestablished Gaden Monastery in South India, for the sole purpose of reviving Tibetan education, culture, and pure Buddhist teachings.

Tibetan Monk Compassion Tour - Host Opportunities Bend, Oregon - June 2014

The community of Bend, Oregon is thrilled to host a portion of the monks' tour. The Bend tour dates are June 18-29, 2014. The following proposal outlines ways in which the Bend community can engage with the monks and support the tour, including opportunities to host events, coordinate cultural exchanges, lectures, healing arts events, sight seeing, offer meals, and volunteer to be a tour assistant for a day.



Host Opportunities

- 1. Host/Sponsor A Main Event:** Main events are larger venues for cultural performances (chanting concerts, sand mandala creation, lectures). Hosts might include: colleges, spiritual and religious groups, health and healing organizations, and local businesses. Performances are usually 1.5-2 hours; sand mandalas vary from a day to 4 days depending on size. Sponsors for the events offer venues, coordinating support, and financial donations. Joint fundraisers are also available.
- 2. Host/Sponsor A Smaller Event:** Smaller venues might include yoga studios, bookstores, a school classroom, arts and spiritual groups, a private home, or individual business booking. Groups may host a dharma talk, healing, 'butter sculpture' ritual, empowerment or an array of other events. A general commitment is 15-20 people minimum, fee or donation-based options available.
- 3. Host the monks for lunch or dinner:** Invite eight monks over for dinner! It's important for the monks to meet new people and try new things, and what better way than dining with them in your home? (They do eat meat, though not pork or fish.)
 - 3.b. Host the monks at a local restaurant:** Monks can offer a blessing for the restaurant, or sometimes it's just a nice change to have 8 monks eating in a local restaurant!
- 4. Host the monks for a day of seeing the sights:** Central Oregon has so much to offer – a great opportunity for local tourist businesses, or residents, to offer one (or more) days while the monks are here for taking them around to places of interest; basically, a fun day out on the town, or in the mountain, desert or unique geological lands. The monks also offer land blessings.

4.b. **Be the monks' assistant for a day or event:** The tour relies on volunteers who will make themselves available on a given day to assist the monks with various needs, like getting to the grocery store; managing private clients they are seeing on that day; driving them (in their van) to an event or venue; maybe helping out at a house blessing or event. Basically, hanging out with the monks and assisting as needed.

5. **Private Consultations:** The monks will offer one on one and private consultations. The schedule and sign up process will be announced through advance press efforts, and advertising at events. Private consultations are guided by a consulting monk who is a spiritual master, and who will work with individuals on emotional, spiritual and physical issues as requested. Also, as part of a private consultation, an empowerment, healing or blessing, like those offered for groups, are available.

6. **Accommodations:** The eight monks will be housed in a private home in the River West Bend neighborhood; with local communities housing them for side trips to Portland, Eugene, etc. Opportunities are available for individuals to assist with house management needs and daily meals.

7. **Press and Media Relations:** Local press is encouraged to interview the monks, and report on the monks' full Bend cultural experience.

8. **Donations** – Direct financial donations for the tour, and monastery, are welcome online. Or, contact: katy@sacredstream.org; 510-854-6586

For inquiries and to schedule events, please contact:

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Website: www.tibetanmonktour.org. Follow the tour on Facebook.

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Examples of Events and Offerings

LECTURE TOPICS

Each lecture is given by a Lama and can last between ninety minutes and two hours, including a question and answer session. One of the monks (or a tour organizer) will introduce the Lama and his interpreter, give the details of the Monastery, and offer a brief description of the beliefs of the Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism. It is asked that a couple of chairs and some water or tea be provided for the monks.

Topics might include:

- Meditations on Compassion
- Social Justice and Nonviolent Communication
- World Peace and the Unity of all Religions
- The Four Noble Truths
- Tantra Vehicle
- Death, Bardo, and Rebirth
- Lam Rim
- Other subjects (Refuge, Guru Devotion, etc.) are available by request.

STAGE PERFORMANCES (performances last between 1.5-2hrs)

Concert of Chanting -

The monks of Gaden Shartse Dokhang are renowned for their expertise in chanting. Not only are they expert at the more popular form of low toned chanting, they are specialists in higher less known form of higher toned chanting as well. Other instruments will be played and the concert will also consist of some explanation of the chants, history, tradition and so forth. The monks perform in full costume.

Culturally-specific Full Costume Prayer Performances -

Wisdom Purification Prayer

This prayer spreads the light of the truth so that it may flourish in every corner of the world. It is a prayer that negative actions, which result in environmental destruction, wars and disputes, terrorism and nuclear destruction, be ceased forever. It acknowledges that true peace comes from inner peace, not fame, nor lovely things, and it is a prayer that people find this inner peace above all. It is a prayer for the end of all poverty, which includes the poverty of wisdom as well as economic poverty, so that the inner strength of all beings may be restored.

Kangso (The Ritual of Fulfillment)

Kangso is one of the main rituals performed in the daily life of the Tibetan people. By offering the melodious sounds of various musical instruments, this ritual is performed as a means of worshipping and making offerings to gurus, meditational deities, and protector deities. Making such offerings helps one to clear obstacles and become more effective at benefiting other beings. The particular Kangso ritual performed on this tour is one that is practiced on very special occasions.

Oral Debates -

One of the striking features of Tibetan debates is that they are quite physical. They are marked by emphatic gestures, such as the clapping used by the questioner to punctuate each question. The gestures function primarily to stage debates, bringing them a clarity and a decisiveness that can help mobilize the intellectual capacities of the debaters and capture the attention of the audience.

EMPOWERMENTS (Group empowerments last up to 2hrs)

Empowerments are ceremonies designed to assist people so that they can embody more fully the virtuous qualities of a particular Tibetan Tantric deity. They are performed by a lama with the proper spiritual attainments and mastery of the rituals of his lineage.

Four-Armed Chenrezig (Buddha of Compassion)

Chenrezig (also known as Avalokiteshvara) has many aspects and embodies the Universal Compassion of all the Buddhas. Receiving the empowerment of this Buddha provides protection from an unfortunate lower rebirth, expands the heart of the participant to hold greater compassion for all beings, and initiates the participant into the mantra of Avalokiteshvara: OM MANI PADME HUM, which contains the essence of all 84,000 volumes of Buddha's teaching.

Buddha Maitreya (Buddha of Boundless Love)

Buddha Maitreya is the Buddha of Loving Kindness and the fifth Buddha out of 1,000, who will appear 2,500 years from now. This empowerment opens the participant's heart to boundless love and assists the practitioner in maintaining this happiness and the wish for the happiness of all beings.



Menla (Medicine Buddha)

Menla is the embodiment of the healing power of all the Buddhas. For millennia our ancestors have been aware of the effect of spiritual practice upon healing, and have used it as a necessary supplement to medication. The Medicine Buddha empowerment helps the participant become more open to receiving the benefits of the healing powers of all the Buddhas, which improves the health of the participant and the effectiveness of any medications or healing practices the participant is engaged in.

Manjushri (Buddha of Wisdom).

Manjushri is the embodiment of the wisdom of all the Buddhas. Wisdom is crucial for enlightenment, in that it is both the antidote of ignorance, and at the same time is itself the true meaning of selflessness/emptiness. Performing the practice of the deity Manjushri accelerates the attainment of the knowledge that eliminates suffering and opens the hearing to liberating wisdom. This empowerment will include the transmission of the mantra OM AH RA PA TSA NADHI.

White Tara (Buddha of Long Life)

White Tara is the goddess of long life, good fortune and wisdom. Performing the practice of White Tara brings protection for a long life and increases good fortune and wisdom. This empowerment will include the transmission of the mantra OM TARE TUTARE TURE SOHA.

Vajrasattva (Buddha of Purification)

Vajrasattva is the Buddhist deity of Purification. The practice of the Vajrasattva deity purifies all negative actions we have committed with our body, our speech, and in our minds. The Vajrasattva practice is also capable of uprooting and purifying the negative imprints that we have carried over from our previous lives. This empowerment will include the transmission of the One-Hundred-Syllable Mantra.

HEALING RITUALS (Can last up to 2hrs)

Vajravaidarana Healing Ritual

The Tantric ritual of Vajravaidarana is a ritual of purification and has three stages: purification and removing of negativities; removing subtle negative imprints; and offering protection. Vajravaidarana purifies sickness, mental disturbances, infectious diseases, disputes, enmities, defilements, misfortunes, bad omens, victimization by others, premature death, negative influences of the stars, harm from rulers and thieves, influence of demons, the agents of death, obstacles, misguidance, and factors against congenial life.

Singing Bowl Meditation

A teaching in self-healing using Tibetan bowls.

Black Tea Ceremony

SAND MANDALA CREATION

The monks are experts at building sacred sand mandalas. There are a variety of mandalas that can be built, in a variety of sizes. A small version is usually done over two days, with the largest taking 6 days. This is a rare and exceptional opportunity. Please note that the mandalas can be preserved for posterity.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

The monks are also available to adapt lectures, performances, and ceremonies for children and young adult audiences. The monk's offer various ritualistic arts and crafts events, including the ancient practice of butter sculpture. They perform the 'Deer Dance' for young children – the deer is an animal of compassion and do no harm. They enjoy engaging in Q&A on a range of topics with youth.

