

Schedule

The recitation of the prayers will take place in the courtyard of the Mahabodhi temple (the great stupa of Bodhgaya), near the Bodhi tree where the Buddha reached enlightenment 2500 years ago.

Usually all the monks and nuns are seated on the ground around the Karmapa and then lay people take their place on the ground or on chairs around them.

From morning to evening, prayers will be recited as follow:

06.00 - 07.00

07.00 - 09.00 16 Arhats Prayer & Manjushri Text Prayer

09.00 - 09.15 Break

09.15 - 11.30 Samantabhadra Wishing Prayer

11.30 - 13.00 Lunch Break

13.00 - 14.30 Samantabhadra Wishing Prayer

14.30 - 14.45 Break

14.45 - 17.00 Five different wishing Prayers:

a) Manjushri Prayer

b) Bodhisattva Way Prayer

c) Amithaba Prayer

d) Mahamudra Auspicious Prayer

e) Buddha Akshobiya Prayer

f) Short Mahakala Puja

During the Kagyu Monlam, many prayers are recited, but particularly the “King of Aspiration Prayers” or “Samantabhadra Wishing Prayer”. And it comes from a collection of sutras, which contains a great number of aspiration prayers (since sutras are the preserved teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni, these are prayers he himself would have spoken).

This particular aspiration prayer, the “Samantabhadra Wishing Prayer” is said to be the king of all aspiration prayers. Among the sixteen points it has, the first section is the seven-branch prayer.

The collected efforts of all the individuals gathered produce a hundred thousand or more recitations and contribute to the development of positive disposition and wisdom, necessary in order to reach enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

Background

“It is recorded in one of the Vinaya Sutras, that the historical Buddha Shakyamuni said that future Buddhists, who were not able to meet with him, should gather in one of the four great places of pilgrimage. These places are Lumbini, where the Buddha was born, Bodhgaya, where he attained enlightenment, Sarnath, where he taught for the first time, and Kushinagar, where he passed into Parinirvana. From among the four great places of pilgrimage, Bodhgaya seems to be the greatest, because here the historical Buddha Shakyamuni actualized the result of all efforts he had made throughout three countless aeons.

This is the place where all Buddhas of the past have attained enlightenment and where all Buddhas of the future will attain enlightenment. At the very top of the great stupa of Bodhgaya there is a smaller stupa, built by Nagarjuna. This stupa contains innumerable relics of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. The Buddha statue in the shrine-room at the bottom level of the stupa was crafted before the time of the Indian buddhist king Ashoka, that is, approximately a hundred years after Buddha Shakyamuni entered parinirvana.”

(Explanation from Khenpo Tschodrak Thenpel Rinpoche, at the occasion of the first Kagyu Monlam with the 17th Karmapa, in 1996. Source: <http://www.karmapa.org>)

See also: <http://www.rootinstitute.com/bodhgaya-stupa/bodhgaya-stupa-history.html>

Hotels recommended by the organisers:

- 1) Sujata Hotel
- 2) Hotel Mahayana
- 3) Kirti Hotel
- 4) Hotel Vishal
- 5) Shanti Buddha
- 6) Bhutan Guest House