

The Ewam USA center of Sang-nag Ling was initially registered in 1999 as a non-profit organization in the state of Montana in the United States. In 2000, Rinpoche's student Lama Tsomo offered me a parcel of sixty acres of land in Arlee, and his sponsor Toni offered a house which was converted into a shrine temple. Rinpoche began there with teaching the preliminary practices, mind training (*lojong*), and other topics to a small group of sangha members. In stages he presented the preliminary practices that reinforce positive qualities and purify negative ones, the meditations of calm abiding and profound insight, instructions on the stage of development, and so forth.

In 2001 Rinpoche began an annual course on *The Treasury of Enlightened Qualities (Yönten Dzöd)*, up to and including the tenth chapter. To those who had completed the preliminary practices, in 2006 he taught the tsalung practices and the associated physical exercises up to the refinement of the five branches, followed in 2007 by the complete transmission from the practice of *tummo* and the twenty-one physical exercises, as well as leading training in the practices to delineate the gap between samsara and nirvana (*kordey rushen*) from *Yeshe Lama*. The next year they completed the practices for refining the body and refining the speech and Rinpoche taught *trekchö* and *tögel*, thus finishing a five-year program of graduated training. During this time Rinpoche also explained many other texts, such as *Three Statements that Strike at the Key Points (Tsiksum Nedek)*, *Refining One's Perceptions (Nang-jang)*, and *Flight of the Garuda (Kading Shoklap)*.

In 2000 Rinpoche made plans for a new construction project—The Garden of One Thousand Buddhas. While discussions were going on and while Rinpoche was thinking about the layout and other aspects of the garden, he had a dream one night in which he saw the shape of an eight-spoked wheel. Rinpoche decided on this as the layout for the garden. The year 2001 brought the terrible 9/11 attack in the United States, and the entire world was undergoing evil times, with wars, social unrest, famines, and pestilences. Following the system of the Heart Sutra ceremony for turning back the maras, with the intention is that of pacifying such evils and helping to restore peace and happiness, Rinpoche chose the representations of Enlightened Form for the Garden: a central 25-foot-high statue of Yumchenmo (Prajñaparamita) at the hub of the eight-spoked wheel, with 1002 buddhas statues lining the eight spokes. The representations of Enlightened Speech are the text of the Heart Sutra engraved in eight languages—including Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, and English—around the wheel's inner rim. The representations of Enlightened Mind are one thousand stupas of enlightenment on the circular rim surrounding the spokes, each containing a statue of the venerable Tara, who exemplifies the Enlightened Activity of all buddhas.

In the four cardinal directions of this magnificent array, to the East is the peaceful mandala of Dredging the Pit of Samsara from its Depths, the aspect of Akshobhya liberating upon sight; to the South, the mandala of Orgyen Norlha called Sampel Norbu (Gem that Fulfills All Wishes), the form of Ratnasambhava causing longevity and prosperity to flourish; to the West, the prayer wheel mandala of the unity of sound and emptiness called Dönyöd Zhakpa (Lasso of Meaningful Activity), of the sublime lotus family of Amitabha bringing power over samsara and nirvana

according to one's wishes; and to the North, the mandala of the wrathful Mahabalasiddhi, the form of Amoghasiddhi of enlightened activity. Thus, the four kinds of activity are represented.

On the spokes in the four intercardinal directions, respectively, are the statues of the previous buddha, Dipamkara; the buddha of the present age, Shakyamuni; the future buddha Maitreyanatha; and Adhimukta, the last of the thousand buddhas to appear; and in addition to these four, Kuan-Yin (the Chinese form of Avalokiteshvara), all forming a mandala exemplifying the bodhisattva approach. Outside of these is a stone pillar with engraved with mantras of interdependence in various languages on the four sides, symbolizing our Teacher's<sup>1</sup> turning of the dharma wheel of the Four Truths; and five stone platforms to represent the first five students of the Buddha. These exemplify the shravaka approach.

By way of illustrating the mandala of the secret mantra approach of the Vajrayana, in the midst of the flower garden of medicinal plants is the pristine lake of Dhanakosha and a naturally occurring throne, atop which is a statue of Mahaguru Padmasambhava, with Princess Mandarava to his right and the dakini Yeshe Tsogyel to his left, for a total of three figures (primary and retinue). To his right is a statue of King Trisong Detsen, and to his left is Khenchen Bodhisattva, depicting the three main figures whose kindness established the tradition of the Buddhist teachings in Tibet. In front and to the right is a statue of Nupchen Sangye Yeshe, the one who established the tradition of the extensive *kama* lineage, and to the left one of the great tertön Tsasum Lingpa, to exemplify the direct transmission of terma teachings.

In back are statues of Tulku Sang-ngag's own lamas of incomparable kindness—to the right, a statue of Jigmed Khyentse Özer Rimed Tenpai Gyeltsen Palzangpo, the sovereign lord protector of Rinpoche's crown chakra and universal form in whom all lamas, masters of awareness, throughout the three times unite; and to the left, Orgyen Chemchok Düpatsel, the lord of Rinpoche's buddha family, who attained rainbow body in a single lifetime. In addition, to exemplify the unsurpassable mandala of the innermost secret of the Great Perfection approach, in Ödsel Dzogchen Ling on the top of the hill on the pinnacle are statues of Vimalamitra, the charioteer of the Great Perfection approach of definitive meaning, and the omniscient sovereign of dharma Longchen Rajampa, the ruler of the Heart Drop teachings. They and the two previously mentioned lords of Rinpoche's buddha family are all seated on naturally occurring vajra thrones.

Flanking the main gateway, to illustrate the complete deeds of our Teacher<sup>2</sup> are eight great stupas of the Sugata. Furthermore, around the outer perimeter of this site, to the East are the Peace Pavilion and the Sangha House. To the South are the Hall of Chandali, the Unity of Bliss and Emptiness and the Dakini House. To the West are the dark retreat house of the Yangti Gomde group, called Nang-mun Ödsel Chöling and Dharma House. To the North are Lama Ling and the associated monastic community, all encompassing about one hundred acres.

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<sup>1</sup>. That is, the Buddha.

<sup>2</sup>. That is, the Buddha Shakyamuni.

This site is known as Bodhgaya of Ewam USA, or Ewam Magadha which, in an ordinary sense, is also a spot visited by tourists and a peaceful and park that is attractive to everyone. To summarize, on the outer level it is the Garden of One Thousand Buddhas; on the inner level it is a pure realm of the victorious ones of the five families and the spontaneous accomplishment of the four kinds of enlightened activity; and on the secret level it is the sphere of the timeless awareness that is dharmakaya—the supremely secret heart essence of being endowed with sixfold freedom. Thus it stands as the support for people to gather spiritual merit.