



THE DALAI LAMA

MESSAGE

I have a strong personal connection with Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, and as its Patron I support the efforts being made to preserve its unique culture in exile.

In Tibet, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery was one of the four great centers of learning of the Gelugpa tradition. The monastery in Shigatse in U-tsang Province of Central Tibet was founded by His Holiness the 1st Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gedun Drupa, in 1447, and is the seat of the Panchen Lama, with whom successive Dalai Lamas have had a unique relationship. It is of great sadness to the Monastery that the 11th Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, is not able to follow his Buddhist studies in his monastery.

In 1972, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery was re-established in Bylakuppe, Karnataka State, South India by a few elderly monks who escaped from Tibet after the Tibetan National Uprising in 1959. As a result of new recruits joining over the years, the monastery today numbers more than 300 monks, and the membership is still increasing. The monastery is once again becoming one of the important centers of Buddhist learning.

Many of our major monasteries are now thriving in India. However, without the leadership of the Panchen Lama, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery faces exceptional difficulties, and needs special support. In particular, in order to accommodate the growing number of students, the monastery needs to construct a new Temple and Assembly Hall, and an all-weather Debate Courtyard (*choera*).

As Patron of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and all its affiliates, and because of my special relationship with the monastery, I wholeheartedly support the monks in this important project and in their appeal for financial assistance. I welcome any help which can be offered to the monastery to enable them to continue their Buddhist studies for the benefit of all, and I wish them every success.

February 6, 2007