

## TASHI LHUNPO MONASTERY

Tashi Lhunpo monastery was founded in Tibet by His Holiness the 1st Dalai Lama in the 15th century, and became one of the Great Six centres of the Gelugpa tradition. In the 16th century its Abbot was recognised by the Fifth Dalai Lama as an incarnation of Amitabha, the spiritual teacher of Chenrezig and the patron saint of Tibet. He was given the title 'Panchen Lama', and became - together with the Dalai Lama - the most important religious leader in Tibet.

After the Chinese invasion of Tibet, and the destruction caused by the Cultural Revolution 300 monks from Shigatse made the journey to India with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In 1972, under His Holiness guidance, Tashi Lhunpo Monastery was established in Bylakuppe, Karnataka State, in South India. Here the monks continue to follow the same tradition and principles in exile as in their monastery in Tibet. It is now becoming one of the major centres of learning, best known for its artistic tradition and sacred music.

The 11th Panchen Lama, born in 1989, is still held in secret custody by the Chinese police.



## THE MANDALA

The making of a sand mandala is a Tantric spiritual practice for Tibetan monks. A mandala is a representation of the deities described in the Tantric texts. It represents their celestial mansion. The Buddhist practitioner uses the image of the mandala to identify the enlightened qualities of the particular meditational deity. They are created for rituals of initiation, serving as supports for meditation and visualisation, mandalas are ultimately the tools for the attainment of enlightenment.



Millions of grains of coloured sand are painstakingly laid in place over a period of days or weeks.

When the prayer is completed, the deities are respectfully requested to leave the Mandala. In the spirit of impermanence and non-attachment the mandala is ritualistically dismantled. The sand which is thought to be very blessed is usually poured into running waters to carry the healing energies throughout the world and spread blessings to as many sentient beings as possible. Small quantities of sand are often offered to people who have attended the ceremony. These, when scattered onto fields and gardens increase fertility and improve growth.



## THE MEDICINE BUDDHA MANDALA

In the heart of the mandala is a representation of a throne and on it is a sacred text. Seated within the petals of a lotus flower are the Eight Medicine Buddhas, including Gautama Buddha himself, who came into the world to save sentient beings from the five degenerations – (shortened life-span, delusions, degenerate persons, time, and wrong views). In the outer sections are represented the disciples of the Medicine Buddhas. Surrounding them is the square enclosure or wall, with 'gates' halfway along each side. Outside the gates of the mandala are decorations of flowers and other patterns, representing a heavenly place.

Healing Mandalas are constructed whenever a need for the healing of the environment and living beings is felt. Tibetan Buddhists believe that it is important to construct this mandala because this is a period of degeneration. Anybody with faith in the mandala's powers, and who has completed the meditation will be relieved of sickness in mind and body. Even people who just view the mandala will accumulate countless virtues – as many as the grains of sand used in the construction.

## THE RETREAT

### PRINCIPLES

Hazel Hill Wood is a spiritual retreat centre located near Salisbury. It is a mixed woodland of 70 acres with eco-friendly living facilities. The aim is to maintain the environment as naturally and sensitively as possible and protect the many aspects of its diversity.

The tradition of giving and receiving in balance and harmony is now well established as one of the main principles at Hazel Hill Wood, and the retreat will be a wonderful opportunity to receive the great blessings of Mela, Medicine Buddha during the making of the mandala, while supporting the monks in their tireless commitment to spread healing of environment and people.

You are most welcome to come for an hour, ½ day, a day, a night or more.

Although the retreat is not strictly silent, it will be a place and a time for prayer and meditation with mindfulness of speech.

### TIME TABLE

**Monday** 23rd November

2pm: Dedication Ceremony

followed by start building the mandala until 5pm approx.

**Tuesday to Friday:**

9.00 am: prayer (30 minutes)

9.30 to 1pm & 2.30 to 5pm (approx): Building of the mandala.

**Friday** 27th November:

9.00 am: prayer, then finishing the mandala until 1pm.

2pm to 3pm: opportunity to meditate with the completed mandala

3pm: ceremony of destruction of the mandala and release of the sand into the stream.

- We are hoping that one of the monks will be able to do a Tanka painting of Mela during the retreat.
- There will be opportunities for teachings throughout the week.

No pets, alcohol or recreational drugs.

See overleaf for cost, donations, practicalities and how to get there.

## PRACTICALITIES

There are sleeping opportunities on mattresses in a loft or in a few private rooms. The buildings are heated and equipped with showers and cooking facilities; Cost per night is £20, self catering; please bring your own food (to share) and bedding.

It is also possible to camp in certain allocated parts of the wood (£10 per night).

You will be asked to contribute a donation for the monks\*.

If you wish to come for the day or a short session, please bring your own food (to share); there will be no cost for the wood but you will be asked to contribute to donation for the monks\*.

Important: Let us know of your dates, numbers and requirements as soon as possible.

**Contact:** Agatha, phone 07973 280 943  
email: [agathamanoche@hotmail.com](mailto:agathamanoche@hotmail.com) (only until Sunday 21st November)

\* **DONATIONS:** We request that you make a donation of £10 minimum per session.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

The nearest train station is in Salisbury.

By car from Salisbury :

Take the A30 towards ANDOVER.

After 1.3 miles pass under a railway bridge.

Then at the roundabout go straight over, staying on the A30.

Continue for 1.5 miles and turn right towards PITTON.

In centre of PITTON at cross road, follow signpost to FARLEY.

In FARLEY turn right into Parsonage Hill direction EAST GRIMSTEAD.

From FARLEY, after 1.3 miles go across the cross road into East Grimstead Road towards EAST GRIMSTEAD.

After half a mile you will see a sign "Hazel Hill" on your right; follow down the track into the Wood.

Ignore the first path to your left and continue to the second path to your left where you will see a parking area. Then follow the sign "visitors" that leads to the buildings.

# TIBETAN MEDICINE BUDDHA (MELA) MANDALA



## RETREAT

HAZEL HILL Wood  
23-27 Nov 09