



500ft High Worlds Tallest Buddhist Statue
(On the holy ground of Bodhgaya in India)

The **MAITREYA PROJECT**

THE MAITREYA PROJECT **A symbol of loving kindness for the new millennium.**

On the holy ground of Bodhgaya in India, the place where Shakyamuni Buddha attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree 2540 years ago, an international Buddhist organisation is leading the design and construction of the largest Buddhist statue in the world. The Maitreya Project was the heart wish on an extraordinary Buddhist Lama. Its inspiration is the unbelievable benefit it will bring to present and future generations. **The Project will add significantly to the development of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage place on earth, and will also provide inspiration for Buddhists of every tradition. The Project will comprise monasteries, guest houses, meditation pavilions, stupas, teaching centres and charitable activities, set in landscaped parks filled with deity statues and sacred objects.**

A magnificent bronze statue of the future Buddha Maitreya will tower over the complex. When completed, the statue will stand 152.4 metres tall (500 feet) making it the largest in the world. Surrounding Maitreya, and strategically positioned within beautiful gardens, ponds and fountains, will be statues of other Buddhist deities. There will be children's playgrounds and animal sanctuaries. The

entire development will reflect the spiritual ambience of Bodhgaya adding to its significance as the premier place of pilgrimage for Buddhists around the world. The site was blessed at a Bhumi Puja ceremony in March 1996. A preliminary master plan has been completed. Detailed architectural drawings are being developed and the prototype of the Maitreya statue is being designed and built.

When completed, the Maitreya statue will be a unique feat of timeless beauty and modern engineering. It will have been designed to the highest international specifications and built to stand for at least a thousand years. High tech modern features will be incorporated into exhibition halls and presentation rooms inside the statue, making it a showcase of the modern age.

Yet it will also house some of the oldest and most sacred of Buddhist relics. The decorations in and around the statue will reflect the use of fine yet practical materials and be fashioned by the most skillful of craftsmen in the tradition of creating holy objects.

The inspiration and the vision...

There is much benefit to be accumulated in the building of large Buddha statues. This was the inspiration that was to become the great vision of the extraordinary Tibetan Buddhist master, **Lama Thubten Yeshe**, who, with wisdom, warmth, kindness and

joy, touched the hearts of thousands of his students.

Lama Yeshe often described Bodhgaya as "the root" of all Buddhist teachings and he particularly wished to repay the kindness of India for being the root of these teachings. It was his compassionate heart with that a statue of the future Buddha be built in Bodhgaya.

"And it should be huge, as big as possible" said Lama Yeshe.

Lama Yeshe passed away in 1984 and has taken rebirth in a Spanish family. Lama Osel the boy Lama recognised, as Lama Yeshe's reincarnation is 13 years old. He entered Sera Monastery in South India to pursue an integrated modern and traditional monastic education.



Under the guidance of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Osel is expected to continue his role as a Buddhist Master when he comes of age.

The spiritual benefits of building the statue

Building the Maitreya Project is a challenge and therein lies its great promise. When built this magnificent statue will inspire countless beings through the thousands of years of the coming millennium. As they gaze at the image of the giant compassionate Maitreya in Bodhgaya, beings will gain the imprint of the Buddha in their minds. This imprint will act as a lamp guiding them to the path that leads to liberation from the cycle of birth and death. This is the motivation behind the Maitreya Project - to make a mental imprint on the minds of all who journey in pilgrimage to Bodhgaya in search of the Dharma.

Benefits to BODHGAYA

Bodhgaya is where the Shakyamuni Buddha attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree 2540 years ago.

Bodhgaya is the most sacred place of pilgrimage for all Buddhists. Every year thousands visit the great Mahabodhi stupa in pilgrimage. The siting of the Maitreya Project in Bodhgaya highlights India's great contribution to the world's civilization, philosophy, religion, culture and art. It will focus visitor's appreciation on the fact that India was the fountainhead of several of the world's greatest religions. Bodhgaya is also the place where Maitreya, the future Buddha will appear as the fifth universal Buddha to turn the wheel of Dharma for the benefit of all.

The journey to Bodhgaya brings one into the State of Bihar, one of the poorer states of India. One passes mud roads, fields of sorghum, rivers that flood in the summer months and dry up in the winter, villages that seem to have been bypassed by the twentieth century. One can travel by air to Patna, a four hours drive away, or by train to Gaya, which is approx. 16km from Bodhgaya.

The Maitreya Project is the single largest development ever undertaken in Bodhgaya. It will generate significant economic impetus for the town and its people. The construction phase of the Project will provide employment to thousands of local people, skilled and semi-skilled, directly and indirectly. When completed, the project will give Bodhgaya a powerful new attraction of interest to international visitors.

Finance and Time line

In financial terms, the total project cost of the Maitreya Project, at completion is expected to approach US\$100 million. Significant commitments have been made and fund raising activity is ongoing internationally and to date, income from such activities has covered expenses. Detailed design will gather momentum during 1998 and significant expenditure on consultancy, materials and construction will be incurred during 1999.

Fund-raising activity will be intensified throughout 1998 in order to meet these needs and keep the project on target.

The Maitreya Project is an undertaking which fires the imagination, and such is the immense appeal of this project that, individuals and companies have already started to enthusiastically offer help in the form of facilities, professional time, services and materials. The project has already benefited from such generous donors and benefactors. We are confident this process will continue. Consequently the final cash outlay could well be significantly less than the currently estimated project cost.

Work is moving steadily ahead and on schedule. The ambitious plan to build this magnificent statue in Bodhgaya is expected to take six years and the target date for completion of the statue shell is Spring 2003.

A further two years will be required to complete the interior fit out, the landscape and the religious art throughout the complex. The construction of the monastery, guest houses and other facilities will be simultaneously on going.

To meet the time line, the detailed design of the statue and the surrounding complex will be complete by the end of 1998. Site

preparation will be undertaken, and construction of the seventeen story throne building will start by the summer of 1999.

Those of us fortunate enough to be working with the Maitreya Project have realised from the start, the enormity of the task facing us. Often, the sheer size and scope of what we are involved in have overwhelmed us. But it has been an increasingly uplifting and inspiring experience.

We have tried to capture and share our excitement and joy, and we hope we have succeeded in communicating the challenge implicit

in bringing this vision to reality, with you, the reader.

To manage the project to successful completion will require much help, support and active involvement from everyone - individuals, groups and even corporations of the world. We need help. We need expertise. We need people with time and most of all we need money.

If you would like to become involved, or to make a donation; if you would like to participate in one of the most significant religious projects of this coming new century and millennium, please contact us at any of our Project offices listed below.

MAITREYA PROJECT

Bodhgaya, District Gaya
Bihar, 824231, India

**Tel (91) (0631) 400620/621/727
Fax (91) (0631) 400774**

God Conscious Meditation... is to be received as a personal gift from God to the World... to be used as a resource to reunite Humanity with God once again... & to prepare Humanity for the return of the Kingdom of God to Earth & Judgement Day... 21/04/2052...

