

OUR PILGRIMAGE

Root Institute 30th Anniversary Celebration Pilgrimage 2018



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Delhi

We met in Delhi and set a strong positive motivation for our pilgrimage together. Here we met with Buddhas relics at the National museum, then paid our respects to the ancient traditions of India visiting Sikh and Hindu temples and received a blessing at the Mahabodhi society Buddhist temple.

Sarnath

After an afternoon taking in the culture of Varanasi and the evening ceremony at the Ghats we made our pilgrimage to Sarnath.

At Deer Park, Sarnath we offered prostrations, incense and Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha, circumambulated the Dhamekh Stupa and reflected on the Four Noble Truths at the site where Buddha gave this teaching as he turned the first wheel of Dharma.

Then we met with Buddhas relics at the Sri Lankan Temple.

Also in Sarnath our hearts were opened as we witnessed performances by local school children and generosity was extended both ways.

Sravasti

On this very cold and foggy morning we reflected on the story of Angulimala as we circumambulated his commemoration stupa, and reflected the generosity of Anathapindada at his commemoration stupa.

We offered Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha upon Miracle Hill.

Then at Jeta Grove, at the entrance of Buddhas main residence we offered prostrations, circumambulated three times, offered incense and recited the Vajra Cutter Sutra, here at the place this sutra was first taught, and made heartfelt dedications including for Lama Zopa Rinpoches long and stable life.

Kushinigar

We offered prostrations and circumambulations at the Rambhar Stupa, which marks Lord Buddhas cremation ground.

Then made a stop to see the progression at FPMTs Maitreya project site.

In the shrine room of the Reclining Buddha we offered prostrations and circumambulations, recited many prayers together including Praises to Shakyamuni Buddha, Seven limb prayer, Praise of Dependent Origination and the Foundation of All Good Qualities containing the entire lam rim. Later we returned to offer incense and robes and meditated at Buddhas side on death and impermanence, then chanted Buddhas mantra around a beautiful Buddha statue in a shrine room nearby.

Kesariya

On our way to Vaishali we stopped here to offer prostrations and circumambulations at this huge Stupa.

Vashali

We made prostrations and circumambulated the site where Buddhas relics were kept, then after a brief whizz around the museum made it to the main site in time. Here we offered prostrations then offered perfume as we circumambulated Anandas stupa, Buddhas residence and the first ever nunnery, we offered praises to Tara and made heartfelt prayers and in evening after meditating on rejoicing recited the King of Prayers.

Nalanda

We made prostrations and offered incense at Shariputras stupa and recited many prayers including Praises to Shakyamuni Buddha, and to the Seventeen Nalanda Pandits, the Seven Limb Prayer, Praise of Dependent Origination, Foundation of All Good Qualities lam rim prayer and completed our practice with Shantidevas beautiful dedication verses.

Vultures Peak

Here we made our way up by chairlift to visit the beautiful Peace Pagoda and were enchanted by the perpetual beating of the drum of truth as we prostrated and circumambulated the pagoda, then we reflected on emptiness and dependent arising as a walking meditation to Vultures Peak where we offered prostrations, circumambulations, incense and light and recited the Heart Sutra here in the place where Buddha first taught this essential sutra.

Bodhgaya

Having arrived at our final destination after saying our goodbyes and heartfelt thanks to our trusty driver we were met with a warm welcome at Root Institute, and that evening most of us participated in the Guru Puja offering Tsog. The next morning we arranged our passes for His Holiness Dalai Lamas coming teachings, then went together to the Mahabodhi Stupa where we offered prostrations, circumambulated the stupa then entered the main shrine room to offer robes to the Buddha, while inside we recited Praises to Shakyamuni

Buddha, then recited again at the inner kora, where we sat and meditated together for a while then dedicated with Shantidevas prayer.

Reaching the end of our pilgrimage together, meeting the Genla whose knowledge passed on, enhanced our appreciation and understanding of each site, meeting him at the conclusion of our time at the Mahabodhi Stupa and offering lunch and celebrating with him.

Returning to Root and receiving teachings on the entire path to enlightenment and establishing a connection with Ling Rinpoche.

Then on the morning of our final day together meeting with Lama Zopa Rinpoche on the path, each offering a white scarf with heartfelt gratitude and receiving many blessings. The magic of that wonderful moment with Rinpoche left us in deep joyful content.

From here we gradually go our separate ways... some attend the teachings given by His Holiness Dalai Lama together with the thousands at the Kalachakra teaching ground. Some attend the very sweet and successful celebration party at Root Institute where there was much rejoicing to be had.

Meditations

All along the way we met for morning and evening meditations, setting our motivation together each day with His Holiness Dalai Lamas motivation for life and visualisation of Shakyamuni Buddha, reflecting on the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha to inspire and increase our faith, reciting Praise to Shakyamuni Buddha, receiving blissful light and nectar purifying and receiving all realisations then making heartfelt dedications for many temporal and ultimate positive goals. In evenings we meditated on topics including refuge, loving kindness, natural purity of mind, death and impermanence, emptiness and dependent arising, bodhicitta and our potential to achieve enlightenment as well as rejoicing in the many virtues there are to rejoice in. At Sravasti we also had a meaningful discussion mainly about emptiness and dependent arising. Our heartfelt dedications of the merits of each day signed off with Shantidevas beautiful and meaningful dedication verses.

Conclusion

This has been our wonderful pilgrimage, a meeting of hearts of us nine women, brought together by our faith in Buddha and through the kindness of many, especially Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Root Institute, with all our practical matters expertly managed by our very capable and caring Sharon and carried along by our trusty driver, “all peoples” had “no tension” as we safely travelled from holy site to holy site, walking in the Buddhas footsteps, retracing the meaningful events gone by, including visiting three of the four sites Buddha himself said His follows must go - Bodhgaya where Buddha became enlightened, Sarnath where Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma, and Kushinigar where Buddha passed into paranirvana, also visiting the sites of Buddhas relics, all along the way planting seeds for future buddhas in our own mind streams making our contribution to a peaceful happier world.