

THE INTERNATIONAL BUDDHISM SANGHA ASSOCIATION CONDUCTS ITS FIRST CEREMONY TO CONFER THE TITLE OF MASTER OF DHARMA- LISTENING SESSIONS

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(Dateline: San Francisco)



Examinees who passed the exam pose for a group photo wearing the Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions robes

On April 11 and 12, 2009, the International Buddhism Sangha Association held a Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions exam in the Sakyamuni Buddha worshipping hall at Hua Zang Si in San Francisco. There were more than three hundred examinees from all over the world. A ceremony to confer the title of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions was held on the morning of the 13th. Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions certificates and robes were awarded to more than two hundred eighty examinees who passed the exam. Those certificates and robes are proof that such people have the qualifications to be Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions.

The Chief Rinpoche at Hua Zang Si, Akou Lamo Rinpoche, is a famous female Rinpoche from Tibet who has remarkable realization. At the Ceremony to Confer the Title of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions, she and other Examination Committee members presented to each of the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions a document that allows them to receive the holy form of inner-tantric initiation. All Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions who possess it will definitely receive great dharma that only those on the level of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions and above are able to receive.

The initiation they will receive will be an inner-tantric initiation in the holy form, which is vastly different from regular initiations. After receiving and reading that document, many of the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions could not help but become teary-eyed, since they felt that they will receive a supreme blessing.



Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions sitting with their robes on during the very solemn assembly

The Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions Certificate issued by the International Buddhism Sangha Association, which is a Buddhist organization, serves only the purpose of validating the qualifications of a master to benefit living beings. It cannot be used for government work of any nature. Those qualified to be Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions lead others in listening to dharma discourses expounded by H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III. They study the sutras together with living beings. They have vowed to uphold and practice the ten good characteristics and the four limitless states of mind, to abide by the five precepts, and to practice dharma and experience beneficial

effects from such practice. They guide others toward learning Buddhism, engaging in self-cultivation, practicing goodness, and learning how to selflessly benefit others. They abide by the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha and have resolved to cultivate themselves diligently in order to enlighten themselves and others.



During the exam, the examinees answered the questions very conscientiously

Members of the Examination Committee closely supervised the examinees when the exam was being administered on April 11th and 12th. The atmosphere of the test site was very serious and tense. After the exam results were posted, a Ceremony to Confer the Title of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions was held on the morning of the 13th for those who passed the exam.

The Ceremony to Confer the title of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions began after the solemn chanting of the names of Buddhas. The Sakyamuni Buddha worshipping hall was packed with those who passed the Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions exam, their families, and the ten

Examination Committee members. That committee is composed of people with high positions, including a dharma king, rinpoches, and great dharma masters. The eminent monastics and greatly virtuous ones attending the ceremony were H.E. Gar Tongstan IV Rinpoche (the dharma king of Hua Zang Si, the second one to hold that position), Akou Lamo Rinpoche (the renowned female rinpoche who is chief rinpoche at Hua Zang Si), Master Long Hui Lajian Rinpoche (the chairperson of the International Buddhism Sangha Association), Venerable Xiangge Qiongwā IV Duozha Xinxiong Rinpoche (dean of the Los Angeles Buddhist Academy), Venerable Dorje

Jueba II Longzhou Rinpoche (the founder of True Buddha-Dharma Center), Dharma Teacher Jue Hui (abbess of Sanger Mission and Bodhi Monastery), Venerable Zhaxi Zhouma Rinpoche (president of Xuanfa Institute), Bodi Wentu Rinpoche (one of the highest virtuous leaders of Hua Zang Si), Dharma Teacher Ruo Hui (one of the highest virtuous leaders of Hua Zang Si and its vice-abbess), Dharma Teacher Miao Kong (one of the highest virtuous leaders of Hua Zang Si), and Zen Master Jerome Peterson.

The ceremony of presenting the robes and certificates was solemn and grand. Although the hall was packed with people, everything proceeded in a very orderly manner. One after another and in proper sequence, the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions received their robes and certificates. Not one of them was left out.

On behalf of the Rinpoches and Dharma Masters, H.E. Dharma King Gar Tongstan IV extended congratulations to the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions who passed the qualification exam on the five precepts, the ten good characteristics, and the four limitless states of mind. (As stated in the book *H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III*, Venerable Gar Tongstan IV applied his holy realization when drawing lots at the Drawing Lots From a Golden Vase Ceremony to affirm the identities of world-class dharma kings and rinpoches. He received from H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III the initiation called “Great Mudra of Liberation” Xian Liang Great Perfection Dharma.) He also encouraged them to follow the teachings of the Buddha to lead others, including their own disciples, in listening to the dharma. He said that Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions must wear their robes while leading a dharma-listening session or when visiting a person of holy virtue. Otherwise, they would be insulting the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. That is because their robes are a symbol of the Buddha-dharma, are holy and solemn, and are an expression of respect toward the holiness and purity of the Triple Gem.

The dharma king also said to the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions that wearing the robes can cause them to cultivate themselves strictly. If any of them should treat the robes disrespectfully, then he/she cannot even be called a Buddhist. In such case, he/she would be a Master who breaks the precepts. Additionally, the document he/she received allowing him/her to receive an inner-tantric initiation in the holy form will become void. A Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions is one level of a Master. Such Masters must be a model for others to emulate in all respects. Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions should lead the way for ordinary practitioners by cultivating themselves well and by observing the precepts well. They should treat living beings with a heart of humility and meet the future with a holy and pure moral character. Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions cultivate their moral character. They do not cultivate pride and arrogance and the mentality that they are above others. Of course, their status is truly higher than that of an ordinary practitioner. However, being modest and cautious is virtuous, whereas being arrogant simply creates obstacles.

The Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions Examination administered by the International Buddhism Sangha Association received huge attention around the world from various sects of Buddhism and from various large Buddhist organizations.

All of the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions who were conferred that title along with a certificate and robes also received a document allowing them to receive an inner-tantric initiation in the holy form. It is their passport to receive a holy realization initiation.

Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions who possess that document will have great privileges when it comes to learning the dharma. Most importantly, they will be able to receive an inner-tantric Buddha-dharma initiation in the holy form. In order to explain the differences between the holy form of inner-tantric initiations and ordinary initiations, an eminent monastic attending the event referred to two articles from Lazhen's website, i.e., "The Dual Character of Buddhist Theories" and "Those in the Sect of True Realization and Holy Power Easily Control Their Own Birth and Death." The power that results from the practice of a holy form of inner-tantric initiation as compared to the power that results from an ordinary initiation is as different as an ocean and a drop of water.

When practicing esoteric dharma, one must manifest true states in progressive stages, such as the generation stage, the completion stage, and the unattached application stage. An ordinary initiation is an explanation of theories during the performance of rituals. If those who receive ordinary initiations are to achieve true manifestation of the generation stage and experience beneficial effects, they need to chant, visualize, dedicate merit, and diligently practice year round. Take, for example, ordinary refuge taking. After the refuge rituals are performed and the refuge precepts are transmitted, the disciple will be told that he/she has taken refuge. However, this is not acceptable when taking refuge through the holy form of inner-tantric initiation. In such case, the disciple must enter the generation-stage state right then and there after the refuge rituals are performed and the refuge precepts are transmitted. It can be said that the disciple truly took refuge only when such an extraordinary state appears in accordance with the refuge booklet. There are devout Buddhists who practice diligently after receiving an ordinary initiation. They practice until the end of their lives yet do not even succeed in having the true generation-stage state manifest before them, not to mention the true completion stage state or beyond. It is totally different for those who receive inner-tantric initiations in the holy form. Such initiations make use of the empowerment of Buddhas and yidams. Several years or even several decades of practice can be shortened to no more than that one initiation day. The person receiving the initiation will right then and there experience the holy empowerment of the yidam and personally see the generation-stage state. His/her beginning-less karmic obstacles born of ignorance will be overcome. If he/she practices according to what was taught, he/she will attain complete good fortune and wisdom and will quickly become accomplished in the dharma.

Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions who possess the document allowing them to receive a holy form of inner-tantric initiation will be able to listen to and receive great dharma that only those on the level of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions and above are able to listen to and receive. They will be able to learn absolutely authentic Buddha-dharma. Moreover, such people will be able to receive dharma transmissions based on their level and stage of cultivation, including a complete and untainted yidam dharma. Other whole dharmas to be transmitted include dharma to invoke gods of wealth, dharma to increase wisdom, dharma to avoid disasters, dharma to eliminate illness, dharma to increase longevity, dharma to become accomplished in the bardo state, dharma to empower, dharma to make offerings to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and to give charity to living beings, dharma to consecrate a Buddhist image, great perfection dharma, mind-wind inner-power dharma, etc. In addition, each holder of that document will also be able to transmit his/her own dharma to make offerings to a dharma protecting deity through a specially established altar.

Not only will he/she be able to attain deeper stages of realization, he/she will also be able to benefit and empower others with blessings.

Each category of dharma has many different yidams. For example, there are twenty-nine gods of wealth connected with the dharma to invoke gods of wealth. Such gods include the White God of Wealth, the Yellow God of Wealth, the Black God of Wealth, the Green God of Wealth, the Virudhaka God of Wealth, the Multicolored God of Wealth, the Guru Padmasambhava God of Wealth, the Five Road God of Wealth, the Karma God of Wealth, the Gubaila God of Wealth, the Wealth God, the Beima Sangpa Wa Great God of Wealth, and the Vajra Division Gods of Wealth.

Different levels of initiations can be used for each of these gods of wealth dharmas, including a holy form of inner-tantric initiation, which is the highest-level gods of wealth initiation. Only the holy form of inner-tantric initiation can enable the disciple receiving it to see the manifestation of the yidam and the generation-stage state, all within that very day. The disciple will right then and there receive a dharma seed of wealth. Whoever has this dharma seed will definitely succeed in his/her practice of wealth-god dharma unless he/she violates the precepts.

Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions watched a video that recorded what happened during The Highest Form of Bathing the Buddha Dharma Assembly held in 2004. Fourteen strong men together could not lift the lotus tub filled with water to bathe the Buddha. That tub and its water weighed more than four thousand pounds. However, H.E. Dharma King Gar Tongstan and Akou Lamo Rinpoche lifted up the tub together in an instant and poured some of its water into the lower tub used for bathing celestial beings. In so doing, they completed a critical ritual of the Highest Form of Bathing the Buddha Dharma Assembly. Additionally, in the clear and sunny sky above the mandala, rolling thunder could be heard, for the celestial dragons were laughing happily. After viewing the video, the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions felt great respect toward H.E. Dharma King Gar Tongstan for his level of realization.



H.E. Gar Tongstan IV Rinpoche, the Dharma King of Hua Zang Si, speaks to Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions who passed the exam. He is the second person to hold the position of Dharma King of Hua Zang Si.

During the Ceremony to Confer the Title of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions, H.E. Dharma King Gar Tongstan expounded, “I give this speech to all of you as a representative of the holy Buddha-dharma. Perhaps there are those who think that Sakyamuni Buddha never established the title of Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions. Do not be confused... Only those who have the true Buddha-dharma have the true right to speak. Those who only speak empty theories have no right to speak of issues relating to Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions and the robes such Masters wear... No matter who they may quote, they speak incorrectly. To solve this problem, they should show their abilities and thereby prove that they are holy ones.”

H.E. Dharma King Gar Tongstan explained that venerable ones and dharma kings are not able to perform the holy form of inner-tantric initiations. Only true Buddhas or Bodhisattvas are able to perform them. He told the Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions: “You must clearly understand something. Initiations are not like stir-frying vegetables for a meal. Initiations are not casually served to people, like a meal. This is especially true with respect to inner-tantric initiations in the holy form. The one performing such initiations must show his/her true realization. Such initiations have nothing to do with simply chanting empty theories contained in books. Your karmic affinity is already set in motion. This is the system of theories, true realization, and holy powers. After your karmic affinity is set in motion, the performer of such an initiation must chant many sutras and must practice and chant many dharmas. Moreover, the numerous karmic conditions of each of you must be observed. Your receipt of the document allowing you to receive an inner-tantric initiation in the holy form guarantees that as soon as the karmic conditions mature, you will be notified.”

He announced, “As Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions, you must work hard at your dharma centers. If ten people at your dharma center become Masters of Dharma-Listening Sessions, then you can rise to the level of an acarya based upon your merit of benefiting others. Additionally, those with deep roots of goodness can even be conferred the title of rinpoche.” The deep roots of goodness and merit refer to the realization of both doctrines and true cultivation.

The International Buddhism Sangha Association stated that the examination to be qualified as a Master of Dharma-Listening Sessions is one of various types of Master qualification tests the Association administers. The Association also administers a test on the sutras, vinaya, and abhidharma; separate tests on the first, second, and third realization stages of vajra power; a test on the dharma to eliminate karmic hindrances; a test to uncover hidden mani stones; a test pertaining to bodhi holy water empowerment and making bodhi holy water penetrate through a bowl; and other different level tests of realization to determine Master qualifications. Great



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virtuous practitioners have, to varying degrees, already passed the aforementioned different levels of Master qualification tests and become rinpoches or acaryas.

The Association has announced that it plans to administer a test for those who are truly highest-level Mahasattvas. Seven masters and ten witnesses will all attend that test of realization in which the person tested will attempt to form a sand mandala through a stone. The Association will respectfully present to the person who passed that test a certificate signed by all seventeen attendees indicating the person is a H.H. Master of great holiness and virtue who has formed a sand mandala through a stone.

The Association is non-sectarian and welcomes eminent monastics and greatly virtuous people from all of the major sects around the world to come and take that test to form a sand mandala through a stone, thereby demonstrating their true realization. All of the above are done out of selfless kindness, compassion, and benevolence toward living beings.

Hua Zang Si plans to hold a Dharma Assembly to Worship Holy Objects during a Supernatural Transformation Festival. In the afternoon of that day, Hua Zang Si will display the treasures it has respectfully collected, which include the following: the holy tree, which H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III sat under, that rained nectar continuously for forty-eight hours; the lotus tub for bathing the Buddha that was used at the Highest Form of Bathing the Buddha Dharma Assembly; the statue of prince Siddhartha that emitted bright light after that dharma assembly; the vine dharma tent on which H.H. Dorje Chang Buddha III placed His hand before a group of people and thereby manifested the states of impermanence and permanence; the Yun sculpture sarira relics stupa on a circular mandala; and the sarira relics of Sakyamuni Buddha.