

INTERVIEW -
HIS HOLINESS the 101th GANDEN TRIPA
Supreme Head of the Gelugpa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism

The following is an interview with His Holiness the 101th Ganden Tripa - Supreme Head of the Gelug Tradition.

The interview is conducted on the occasion of His Holiness the 101th Ganden Tripa's first official visit to Singapore.

The interview is conducted by Kunga Nyima and is translated by Associate Professor Huang Yi Yan of Taiwan. It is conducted on 18 June 2003 at His Holiness's residence in Singapore.

His Holiness the 101th Ganden Tripa is hosted on His first Official Visit to Singapore from 25 May 2003 to 23 June 2003 by the Charitable Assistance Society.

About the Ganden Tripas:

The Ganden Tripas, the Sakya Trizins and the Karmapas are official heads of their respective traditions: the Gelug, the Sakya and the Karma Kagyu.

Je Tzongkhapa is the founder of the Gelug tradition. The line of the Ganden Tripas are Tzongkhapa's spiritual successors and are therefore the official supreme head of the Gelug Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The line of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas both hailed from the Gelug Tradition.

The 101th Ganden Tripa, together with Mindroling Trichen, have been enthroned in 2002 as the heads of respectively the Nyingma and Gelug traditions.

Those beings who so rarely are fortunate enough to have contact with His Holiness, there is hardly any who will fail to realize that His Holiness is a GEM..... a sign of the fruition and flowering of seamless cultivation of the Buddha's holy Teachings. It is a genuine blessing to personally witness His Holiness's absolute sincerity, warmth, wisdom, innocent humour, unending patience and honesty.

"May it be of benefit !!"

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Buddhism

What is the most essentially fundamental thing for a Buddhist?

Buddhists should know that samsara is suffering. We need to realize that samsara is suffering first before we will try to obtain liberation from it. The only way to liberation from samsara is through following the Teachings of the Buddha. According to the Texts, only by following the Buddhist Teachings can there be ultimate liberation from samsara.

What is the most important thing a Buddhist should remember?

A Buddhist should always remember the 3 Jewels: the Buddha, His Teachings [The Dharma] and His Assembly of Noble Disciples [The Sangha].

A Buddhist should clear internalize the supreme qualities of the 3 Jewels.

In general, the Buddha is like a doctor, the Dharma is like medicine and the Sangha is like nurses and assistants to the doctor. We, sentient beings, in samsara, are like the patients. We need to take the doctor's prescription to get well. Moreover, we also need to rely on the doctor and his assistants too.

A Buddhist needs to always take refuge in the 3 Jewels as well as to remember the qualities of the 3 Jewels.

How do we sustain "Bodhicitta": the attitude of completely dedicating ourselves for the welfare of others; of wanting to attain the state of Complete Enlightenment or Buddhahood solely for the good of others?

To put the Teachings into practice is difficult. If we can put the Teachings into practice, this is real Bodhicitta. If we cannot, this cannot be Bodhicitta.

To give rise to Bodhicitta, we must first cultivate Loving-kindness [Wishing all beings to have happiness and the causes of happiness] and Compassion [Wishing all beings to be free from suffering and the causes of suffering]. Next, we must think of the kindness of our mother. Then, we need to remember the kindness of all beings as they have acted as our mothers in countless past lives. Following, we need to cultivate the wish to repay the kindnesses of all these uncountable mother sentient beings.

To put Bodhicitta into practice is difficult. If we can put Bodhicitta into practice, this is real Bodhicitta. If we cannot put Bodhicitta into practice, this cannot be genuine Bodhicitta.

Always try to sustain a good-heart. Do not be bothered about what others do. Just try to sustain a good-heart. This is the way of the true Buddhists.

Is vegetarianism compulsory? It has been suggested that cultivating crops kill untold numbers of insects whilst the slaughtering of only one yak in old Tibet can feed the whole family for a week. Therefore, from the numerical point of view, this group of people suggests that we should consume meat of big-size animals rather than eating vegetables which inevitably entail the death of countless creatures. Moreover, some masters have insisted on

vegetarianism as compulsory for a Buddhist whilst others quoted Buddhist texts to the contrary. What is Your Holiness point of view?

In general, Lord Buddha has taught 3 differing points with regard to vegetarianism. In the first one, in the Theravada tradition, it is taught that we cannot take the so-called three categories of "Impure Meat": a) we perceive through our eyes or ears the killing of the meat; b) we suspect that the meat is killed for ourselves; c) we know that the meat has been killed for us. Besides these 3 categories of meat, we are permitted to partake of the rest. In the second one, in the Mahayana tradition, it is taught explicitly that the taking meat is necessarily unskillful and wrong. So vegetarianism is compulsory here. In the third, in the Vajrayana tradition, it is taught that practitioners of this path should take meat. The reason for this is given in the texts and requires extensive explanations. It is not appropriate for me to elaborate here. Students of Buddhism can choose to follow any of these 3 points. It is not possible for me to dictate which points students should follow.

There have been some Buddhist centres concentrating mainly on doing social work whilst some concentrating mainly on spiritual practices. What is Your Holiness's opinion on what a Buddhist centre should concentrate on?

Doing both social work and spiritual practices are not contradictory but are in fact complementary. Both have their own reasons for doing their respective work. Shantideva said in "Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life" that the perfection of generosity does not mean that one can only perfect the practice of generosity after one has alleviated the poverty of all sentient beings. Lord Buddha has already perfected the practice of generosity. However, there is still poverty in the world. Therefore, this proves the point as elucidated in "Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life" that to perfect the practice of generosity means to be able to perfect the activity of generosity from the point of view of one's spiritual practice rather than from already physical completion of the alleviating of poverty of all other beings. Following this point of argument, cultivation of generosity through various spiritual practices is important.

Even if I can help, I can only but help but a minute proportion of beings through doing social work. Even if I can help 1000 beings, this is still a small proportion relative to the population of Singapore and the number of beings in the whole universe.

There are 3 sets of vows: the Self-Liberation Vows; the Bodhisattva Vows and the Vajrayana Vows. All these 3 sets of vows contain the Practices of the 6 Perfections including of course the practice of generosity. Some examples of how we can exercise the vows include one assisting if any beings fall sick or have other difficulties, one helping to guard banks as they contain the wealth of many beings! From this point of view therefore, social work is therefore an essential part of dharma practice.

In addition, however, we must also remember Shantideva's teaching that the accomplishment of the perfections lies in one's mind through spiritual practices also. Therefore, there are valid and good reasons for social work as well as spiritual practices. There is no need to split them into two different groups.

There have been comments that Buddhists from almost all traditions, be it Tibetan, Thai or even the west, have been building too much big statues, stupas, centres and even monasteries and that Buddhists should instead expend more of their resources on social welfare projects such as hospitals, animal-shelter-homes, orphanages and others that directly benefit beings in more tangible ways. What is Your Holiness's opinion about this?

All are good. All can accumulate merit. Building hospitals or monasteries are good. Both activities are not wasteful.

Some Buddhist centres will only support or circulate news of activities organized by their own centres. Some will even through either implicit or even explicit means, discourage their members from attending programmes organized by other centres even if these programmes are conducted by acknowledged great masters and are beneficial. It has been suggested that these centres are trying to maintain the number of students or followers in their centres as they are worried that their resources will be "lost" to other organizations. On the other hand, these centres claim that they are only trying to "protect" their students from even some of these important teachers, some of whom are even teachers of their centres' own spiritual advisers. What does Your Holiness think about this?

I have no comments. If I say something, some people may get angry with me! [laughing]

Will there be an end to samsara?

It is difficult to say if there will be an end to samsara. It is mentioned in the texts that all beings will eventually become Buddhas. But before that, samsara is there. It is also mentioned in the texts that there does not exist a time where all beings will be free from samsara.

There have been allegations of conversions of Buddhists to other religions through deliberate and aggressive inaccurate depiction of Buddhism, conditional provisions of material aid, educational opportunities and such. What does Your Holiness think of this?

We have to try our best to propagate the Buddhist Teachings. We have no ability to stop these alleged practices. It is also no good for us to stop conversions through "fair" means. The main thing is to develop and improve ourselves. We need to establish more Buddhist centres. We need to improve the management of existing centres. Just like how other religions spread their teachings, Buddhists should also follow likewise. We should not think of going against other religions however!

Conducting certain religious ceremonies or "pujas" for welfare of the Buddhist teachings is also another method.

According to the Buddhist Teachings, it is considered negative karma to desecrate the Buddhist teachings. Similarly, we should not desecrate teachings of other religions.

We simply need to improve ourselves with diligence. In the context of Tibetan Buddhism, the Sakyapas will need to preserve and propagate teachings of the Sakya Tradition. The Kagyupas, the Nyingmapas and the Gelugpas will similarly need to do likewise.

What does Your Holiness feel about the state of Buddhism in the west?

Buddhism has been taught and transmitted in the west but it is difficult to ensure that every Teaching has been taught and learnt well. There is definite room for improvements in terms of the way the Buddhist centers are being managed, the way the western students are learning the teachings, the way these students are practicing the teachings, the way in which the teachings have been taught and others. Another matter of concern is that many Tibetan teachers in the west have no place of their own.

Tibetan Buddhism

Does Your Holiness feel that it is timely and appropriate to introduce the Bhikshuni or Fully-ordained Nun's Order into Tibetan Buddhism?

I have not much comment about this matter.

Does Your Holiness feel that the "tulku" system or the system of finding reincarnated teachers is still relevant today?

There are still many masters getting recognized today. I do not know whether it is still relevant today.

What is Your Holiness opinion of astrology and divination?

Some people believe in them and some people do not. I personally have not much opinion about this matter.

There have been great concerns and fear almost amongst Vajrayana students in both the east and west, on their need to, at all cost, at least read through the meditation text of their yidam daily as they have been told to do so by their teachers during initiation ceremonies of which they participated. These students considered missing doing the meditation of their Yidam or missing reading through the relevant text even for a day a serious transgression of their vow or commitment. What is Your Holiness's opinion about this matter?

The main point is not to simply and blindly read through the Yidam's meditational text or "sadhana" daily without understanding.

The main point is to keep strictly to our best ability all the commitments we have taken: the Self-liberation, the Bodhisattva and the Tantric commitments.

It is good and important to do the meditational text of your yidam daily especially if you have promised to do so daily but this is not the main point. The main and most important point is to keep the above 3 sets of vows to our best ability.

If you have promised your Teachers to do certain "sadhana" or "Practice Texts" daily, you should definitely try to do them daily. If you really cannot do it due to sickness, it is perfectly fine. But you should continue after you have recovered from your sickness.

If you miss your "sadhana" due to that you have forgotten to do it, you should still continue to do it the very next day. You should also do at least 21 times the long Vajrasattva 100-Syllable Mantra or to do the "Confession to the 35 Buddhas" the very next day.

If for whatever reason you miss your "sadhana" such as not having the time due to work, you should let your Teacher know about it and then re-take the particular initiation again. In the meantime, before say you can re-take the initiation again, continue with the practice. You should also do at least 21 times the long Vajrasattva 100-Syllable Mantra or do the "Confession to the 35 Buddhas".

If owing to work commitments you cannot continue with your daily practice of the promised "sadhana" anymore, you should let your Teacher know about this. If you are not able to let your Teacher know about this or your Teacher has already passed away and you still cannot continue to do your practice daily, you should then do at least 21 times the long Vajrasattva 100-Syllable Mantra or do the "Confession to the 35 Buddhas" daily.

It is important to check if there is any commitment that comes with any particular initiation. If you are not able to keep the commitments, you should not take the initiation.

If a student has promised to do say 5 "sadhana" a day, the student should not decide for himself or herself without consulting their Teachers first whether he or she can simply do only one "sadhana" in place of all the rests daily.

However, it is also important that students should not feel unreasonably or overly upset or fearful of missing daily practice for whatever reasons.

How will Your Holiness describe Your relationship with HH the Dalai Lama?

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has taken care of me in my past lives. His Holiness has taken care of me when I was just a newly-ordained monk, when I was the Abbot of the Tantric College of Upper Lhasa, Abbot of Ganden Shartse Monastery, when I was the Lord of Dharma of the Eastern End or the "Sharpa Choje" and even when I am now the Ganden Tripa or the Supreme Head of the Gelugpa Tradition. His Holiness is one of my precious Root Teachers. I have taken a photograph with HH the Dalai Lama this year [May 2003]. There is nothing in the world that I cherish more.

Then, not forgetting also, that His Holiness is, in some ways, my "boss". [giggles]

Does Your Holiness practise the controversial protector Shugden banned by HH the Dalai Lama?

Did you not hear of the announcement made by HH the Dalai Lama in front of nearly 300,000 people in Bodhigaya in December 2002 about this? I did not do the practice of this protector. [laughing]

What is Your Holiness's opinion on a student being non-sectarian and doing practices or receiving teachings and initiations from all the 4 Tibetan Buddhist lineages?

I feel that it is best if a practitioner can do the practices of all these four lineages without discrimination. However, it may be difficult for some unless they have the capacity.

On the other hand, it is also possible for a practitioner to concentrate only on one lineage. However, this latter practitioner even concentrating only on one lineage, needs to have sincere and genuine respect and appreciation for all the other lineages he or she is not practicing.

As we are Buddhists, we all said the Refuge Prayer in which it is mentioned that we take refuge in the Community of Noble Ones. This means the beings who have gained Enlightenment. These beings can be found in all the different lineages. Therefore, when we take refuge, we take refuge in these Enlightened Beings in all the lineages. If we accept only those Enlightened Beings found in our lineage and reject those Enlightened Beings of other lineages, what we do and say are different. I consider such sectarian attitude or behaviour a very serious breach of Buddhist commitment.

In summary, if we have the ability, it is best if we can follow teachings from all the lineages. Otherwise, we can concentrate on learning from any one of the lineages that we have affinity towards but at the same time maintaining sincere and genuine respect and appreciation of the other lineages.

The Gelugpa Tradition

Can Your Holiness tell us the distinguishing characteristics of the Gelugpa Tradition of which You are the Official Head?

Both in the west and the east, people recognize the Gelugpa monks by the yellow pointed hat they wear. This is the special characteristic! [laughing]

The uncommon feature of the Gelugpa is that outwardly, the Gelugpa monks adopt a subdued and gentle form of the Shravaka practitioner who live according to the Vinaya rules of the Sutra Vehicle whilst inwardly possessing the full realization of the Generation and Completion Stages of the Tantra Vehicle.

The Gelugpa Tradition perceives the Sutra and Tantra Vehicle as complementary and not contradictory.

Does Your Holiness feel that Tibetan Buddhism, in particular, the Gelugpa Tradition, has been upheld well in exile?

I feel that in general, Tibetan Buddhism has been relatively well preserved. In India, the number of monks in the great monasteries has increased due to diligent efforts. However, efforts to make further progress beyond the current situation may be difficult as most efforts have already been expended towards preservation itself. One of the difficulties faced by the monks is that as they are now in exile, they have to take care of their livelihood themselves such as growing crops in the fields. In Tibet in the past, monks only need to study and practise without having the need to work for their own living.

Does Your Holiness feel that there could be some changes introduced into the Geshe study programme followed by the great monasteries of the Gelugpa Tradition?

There have been some suggestions about this. The five great texts that form the curriculum of the Geshe study programme is not for the purpose of winning debates. The debates are not to be only done in mouth but are to be followed by actions throughout the 20 to 30 years of study. The debates are not mere games.

Before we can start practising, we need first to know what and how to practise and this we can achieve through studying.

Both Lord Buddha and Je Tzongkhapa have said that before we accept any of Their teachings, we need first to behave like a goldsmith examining the purity of his goods. A goldsmith will first need to smelt the material under investigation. Next, he will need to dissect the gold into appropriate sizes. Finally, he will need to shape the material. Similarly, too, before we accept or commence any practices, we need first to investigate carefully the sources of these practices through correspondingly adopting the above three processes, whether they originate from the Buddha or any of the Indian or Tibetan lineal Teachers. Study will assist in this task.

There have been suggestions too to introduce scientific study into the Geshe study programme. In general, I feel that studying science is good. However, the study and practise of the Buddha's teachings is the only ultimate way to the liberation of all beings from samsara and for us to become a Buddha so that we can liberate all beings from samsara. Towards this objective, studying the Buddha's teachings is sufficient. All the 500 Arahants of the past have achieved this without requiring study of science. Studying the Teachings is not to just acquire knowledge or to acquire official paper certificates. Studying the Teachings is to free oneself from samsara and also that oneself can become a Buddha to liberate all beings from their sufferings. Again, towards this aim, studying of the Teachings is sufficient. There is no further need to include the study of science. However, to be a famous scholar recognized by the world, we will then need to study both the Teachings and science! [laughing]

The study of the Teachings is so that we can gain wisdom to realize Emptiness which is the ultimate nature of phenomena. The study of the teachings entails the following three stages: Listening to the teachings; contemplating what we have heard; putting into practice what we have learnt. We need to listen to the teachings first before we can contemplate on them. Before we can contemplate, we first need to listen to what has been taught. If we do not

listen, we cannot contemplate and subsequently, there is nothing for us to practise! Therefore, first, we need to seek for knowledge through listening and studying the teachings. I personally started to study the great texts when I was 25 years old. I am now 77 years old and still I feel that I have not learnt enough.

In addition to the Gelugpa tradition, the other 3 traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, the Sakya, the Nyingma and the Kagyu all contain examples of great realised masters who studied the Teachings extensively. In the Sakya tradition, we have Sakya Pandita. In the Nyingma tradition, we have Longchen Rabjampa. In the Kagyu tradition, the lineal Karmapas and Dhakpo Lhaje or Gampopa are such great beings. All these masters learnt and studied extensively the great texts and do not rely simply on merely one text alone.

In recent years, some teachers have taught that it is sufficient to rely only on the tantric practices of the Vajrayogini [Naro Kachodma] and the Solitary Yamantaka. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the current strong emphasis on the tantric practices of the Vajrayogini [Naro Kachodma] and the Solitary Yamantaka instead of the combined tantric practices of the 32 Deity Guhyasamaja, the 62 Deity Heruka Chakrasamvara and the 13 Deity Yamantaka recommended by Je Tzongkhapa are signs of the degeneration of the tantric practices in the Gelugpa tradition. What is Your Holiness's opinion on this matter?

The Vajrayogini or Naro Kachodma practices is not introduced into the Gelugpa Tradition by Trijang Rinpoche but popularized earlier by masters such as Pabongka Rinpoche as Pabongka Rinpoche is considered to be an emanation of Naropa who is Himself the first Lineage Master of this tantric cycle. Trijang Rinpoche is Himself strongly affiliated to the Vajrayogini cycle as even HH the Dalai Lama pronounced that Trijang Rinpoche is a great practitioner of both the Heruka and Vajrayogini cycles.

In general, Je Tzongkhapa's three meditational deities or yidams are the 32 Deity Guhyasamaja, the 62 Deity Heruka Chakrasamvara and the 13 Deity Yamantaka. Amongst these 3 yidams, Tzongkhapa especially meditates on Guhyasamaja and wrote most extensively and deeply on this practice. Guhyasamaja is in fact Tzongkhapa's main practice. Both Guhyasamaja's and Heruka's meditation texts are long whilst Yamantaka's text is relatively shorter. The genuine good practitioner of the Gelugpa tradition must do all these three practices inseparably.

I have personally heard HH the Dalai Lama taught before that doing the practices of these 3 yidams inseparably is not exactly to mean to read the meditation texts of these 3 yidams separately. The point is to extract the essential and critical features of each of these 3 respective yidams and to subsequently integrate them into any one of these 3 yidams which one has adopted as one's main yidam.

For example, if your main yidam is Yamantaka, you integrate the essential features of each of these 3 yidams into Yamantaka and you then concentrate on the practice of Yamantaka. Similarly, if your yidam is Guhyasamaja, you then integrate the essential features of each of these 3 yidams into Guhyasamaja and you then concentrate on the practice of Guhyasamaja. This applies also if your yidam is Heruka.

The past great lineage Gelugpa Masters similarly do practices of these 3 yidams inseparably. The recent great lineage Gelugpa Masters such as Ling Rinpoche [who is the 97th Ganden Tripa and the Senior Root Teacher of the present Dalai Lama], Trijang Rinpoche [who is the

Junior Root Teacher of the present Dalai Lama] and Zong Rinpoche all practise these 3 yidams inseparably. These great masters have definitely mastered practices of these 3 yidams.

Some teachers may have taught their students only to concentrate on Vajrayogini and Solitary Yamantaka because their students may not have the ability or time to do the practices of these 3 great Yidams.

However, in general, genuine Gelugpa practitioners who have the ability should do the practices of these 3 great Yidams as His Holiness the Dalai Lama advised.

GENERAL

What is Your Holiness's opinion on mercy-killing or euthanasia?

To kill another being before his or her natural death involves the negative karma of killing even if he or she themselves request to end their lives or if they are already unconscious on life-support and their next-of-kin decides to end their life on their behalf.

Does Your Holiness think that it is permissible to abort babies if they are conceived through rape or if giving birth to the baby endangers the mother's life or if the baby is so chronically handicapped that it will die within a few seconds or minutes of its birth?

Any form of abortion will involve the negative karma of killing a being.

What is Your Holiness's opinion on experiments being done on animals for the alleged benefit of human beings?

According to the Buddhist Teachings, giving suffering to another being is wrong.

What is Your Holiness's view on homosexuality?

Homosexuality seems to be getting more common in the world these days. Homosexuality, like heterosexuality, are both activities of samsara. Neither seems to be particularly better or worse than the other. Whether a man or woman is straight or gay does not make him or her any particularly better or worse than the other. In general, both are activities of lay people. Not that, however, that there is no karma involved in homosexuality, only that it is just like heterosexuality, another activity of samsara.

What is Your Holiness's opinion of genetic engineering?

I do not know whether it is correct or wrong.

Does Your Holiness think it is permissible to eradicate “pests”: animals or insects which are harmful to human beings such as mosquitoes, cockroaches, rats and such?

All beings are the same. It is considered negative karma to kill any being. Even if these animals infect human beings with diseases, according to the Buddhist Teachings, it is still considered an unskillful action to harm or eradicate them. However, to say not to stop diseases getting spread to human beings as a result of infections from these animals also does not seem to be totally correct. It is very difficult to decide. No matter which stand you take, it is still very difficult.

What is Your Holiness’s opinion of the so-called “pre-emptive strikes”? There is one viewpoint that claims that crippling your enemy’s military resources first before they initiates a brutal onslaught on civilians is actually a skilful means to protect lives. The other viewpoint is that “pre-emptive strikes” initiates aggression first from one’s side without provocation from the other and is therefore wrong.

It is difficult to decide.

What is Your Holiness’s wish for the world?

I wish all beings in the world happiness, health and also that they will live even better.

A short introduction to Buddhism -

Presentation from the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism:

[As informal accompanying notes to the above interview with HH the 101th Gaden Tripa for friends unfamiliar with the Buddhist teachings]

GENERAL

The cause of samsara

Buddha, the Enlightened One, taught that all beings suffer as a result of their not recognizing the inherent Emptiness of nature.

- From their Non-recognition of Emptiness or Ignorance arises a sense of Self.
- From this sense of Self arises Self-cherishing Attitude which places oneself above all others.
- From Self-cherishing Attitude arises all the other Defilements: Anger, Attachment and such.
- As a result of creation of actions motivated by these Defilements, beings suffer from "Karma" or the Resultant Effects of their Actions.
- From their endless creation of "Karma", beings are forced to take birth, experienced inevitable death, take birth again, experience death again and so on, again and again in unending cycles of suffering.

The way to end samsara

- To realize Emptiness so that they can be free from samsara, beings will need to practise the Noble Eight-fold Path: Right View / Right Intention / Right Speech / Right Action / Right Livelihood / Right Effort / Right Mindfulness / Right Concentration.
- When beings realize Emptiness, they are then liberated from samsara.

MAHAYANA

Bodhisattvas

Beings who do not only want to liberate themselves from samsara but in addition, wanting to attain Buddhahood, as this is the best manner that they can liberate all other countless beings from samsara, are known as "Bodhisattvas".

Common Bodhicitta

The wish to want to attain Buddhahood regardless of how long it will take or how difficult it will be solely for the liberation from samsara of all other beings is known as the "Common Bodhicitta".

Way of practice of the Bodhisattvas – Sutra Tradition

Bodhisattvas practise the Six Perfections for countless aeons so that they can attain the state of Buddhahood. The Six Perfections are Generosity / Morality / Patience / Perseverance / Meditation / Wisdom. This group of Bodhisattvas is practicing according to the Sutra Mahayana Tradition.

Uncommon Bodhicitta

Another group of Bodhisattvas practices according to the Tantra Mahayana Tradition. This latter group of Bodhisattvas are motivated by the “Uncommon Bodhicitta” which is the wish to attain Buddhahood for the liberation from samsara of all other beings through any means whatsoever because they cannot stand, due to their great compassion, the suffering of any beings whilst they are progressing towards Buddhahood.

Way of practice of the Bodhisattvas – Tantra Tradition

This group of Bodhisattvas practices Deity Yoga and other tantric practices which will yield the state of Buddhahood in the shortest time possible including even this very life. In general, these Bodhisattvas practise viewing the inherent ultimate potential or purity of all beings. They do this through viewing their Spiritual Teachers as Buddhas, themselves and all other beings as Buddhas.

Detailed presentations are available from the
Charitable Assistance Society at
http://www.geocities.com/cas_sg/

A short biography of His Holiness the 101th Ganden Tripa

Born in Tibet in 1927, Rinpoche acquired after forty years of study the title and degrees of Geshe Lharampa (Doctor in Buddhist Philosophy, of the Highest Rank) and of Geshe Ngarampa (specialist of Tantras).

The achievement of this double curriculum, which allies erudition and intense meditative practice, have made of him, one of the best qualified living Buddhist teachers. On these grounds, Rinpoche was sent by His Holiness The Dalai-Lama as envoy representing Buddhism at the oecumenical Assisi meetings convened on the initiative of HH the Pope John-Paul II in 1986 in Italy.

In 1983, His Holiness The Dalai Lama chose him as Abbot of the Tantric University of Gyütö, and then nine years later as Abbot of Ganden Shartsé monastery, one of the major gelugpa monasteries.

In 1995, Rinpoche was also elevated at the honorary rank of Shartse Chöje, and became therefore the second dignitary in rank of the Gelugpa school. In early 2003 His Holiness the Dalai Lama elevated him at the highest position in the Gelugpa school, that of Ganden Tripa (litteraly the Holder of the Throne of Tushita). That position makes its owner the supreme spiritual head of the Gelug lineage founded by Dje Tsong Khapa, the great saint-yogi-pandit. The Gelug lineage is the most widespread in Tibet; the major monasteries of Ganden, Drepung and Sera as well as the famed Tantric Colleges of Gyütö and Gyumed all belong to that school. (Note that contrary to widespread belief, HH The Dalai-lama *does not* head the Gelugpa school, although he is the spiritual head of *all* Tibetan Buddhists.)

Rinpoche lives now in Paris, France, where he teaches Buddhist practice and philosophy, at the center he founded in 1980, Thar Deu Ling.

*His Holiness's biography above is as quoted from Thar Deu Ling –
HH the 101th Ganden Tripa's Buddhist center in France:*
<http://www.geocities.com/thardeuling/bio-us.html>