

OBSERVANCE OF SAGA DAWA AT TSUKLAKHANG MONASTARY ON 21ST MAY 2016.

The auspicious occasion of Saga Dawa was observed at Tsuklakhang Monastery on 21st May 1026. Unlike previous years, the “Bumkor” procession this year was a combined event comprising Bumkor procession of Tsuklakhang monastery and that of Tharpa Manilakhang, Tathangchen. A brief note on the events leading to this convergence is as under;

It was learnt that, the Chogyal, in a meeting of a group of elders and representatives of Yargay Association of Tathangchen (YAT) last year, observed that the major Buddhist festivals and important pujas should ideally be conducted/held at Tsuklakhang monastery as it is the appropriate venue where such events used to take place in the past. Chogyal was, therefore, pleased to advise the group that the Saga Dawa Bumkor taken out from Tharpa Manilakhang at Tathangchen could henceforth be combined with that of Bumkor emanating from Tsuklakhang monastery.

Along that line of advice, the executive body of the Yargay Association Tathangchen, which organizes the event every year at Tharpa Manilakhang, sought the views and responses of The Tsuklakhang Trust (TTT) on this matter. The matter was discussed in a meeting of TTT on 11th May 2016.

The Trust assigned the member trustee, Mr Lhendup Dorjee Lepcha, to confer this matter with Tulku Loday, the Chief trustee for all monastic and religious affairs of Tsuklakhnag and to proceed further with discussion with concerned organizations of the surrounding areas for their active participation in the event. Meanwhile, TTT would write to HRDD department for permission for participation of the children of surrounding schools in the Bumkor procession.



Accordingly, a meeting was convened on 18th May 2016 at Tharpa Manilakhang under the aegis of Yargay Association Tathangchen (YAT), which was attended by executive members of YAT; Executive members of Gonpoten Yargay Kidoo; General Secretary, Tratsang Kothi

Area Association (TKAA); President, Arithang Gyaltsen Tsokpa and Representative of Sirik Busty Association, Bojogari. The meeting was informed that TTT was open to Saga Dawa being observed at Tsuklakhang premises on the condition that public participation should be forthcoming unconditionally and that funding of the event should also be shared by them as well.



The meeting unanimously agreed to participate in the observance of Saga Dawa at Tsuklakhang and to mobilize public participation from their respective areas. They also took charge to monitor and provide refreshment for children of schools falling under their jurisdiction on the day. Since there is no school in their locality, TKAA was assigned the responsibility of providing refreshment for general public coming to offer donation for the puja,

To finalize the arrangement and proceeding for the Bumkor, the executive members of these associations had a joint inspection of the premises and discussions with Tulku Loday on 19th May 2016 wherein the manner of distribution of Pechas (Holy scriptures), the route to be followed and required logistic support were finalized.

On 21st May 2016, at 6.50 AM a simple inaugural ceremony was held for the naming of the monastic school which was conducted by Tulku Loday and the senior monks of the Tsuklakhang monastery. The Trust was represented by one of its member trustees, Mr. Lhendup D. Lepcha and Mr Thupden Bhutia, an official of TTT.

The main event commenced with a presentation of colorful Rolcham (a monastic dance with playing of cymbals) by the monks of all ages at 8.30 AM. This was then followed by Bumkor procession that started from Tsuklakhang Monastery. The route followed was: Tsuklakhang Monastery – Palace Main Gate – Circular Road through Tashiling Gate – Dukhit Pandokan – Kazi Road junction – Tibet Road Junction – Old Police Station – Titanic Park – along NH10 – Zero Point Directorate of Handloom & Handicraft Center – TNA gate- White Hall – Palace Main Gate – Back to Tsuklakhang Monastery.

As expected, this year the event saw a significant participation by devotees from all walks of life. The school children from Enchey Senior Secondary School, West Point Senior Secondary School, Modern Senior Secondary School, Deorali Girls' Senior Secondary School, Tathangchen Secondary School, Rongney Secondary School and Pema Yoedzer School were present in full force.

Reportedly, the procession was well received on the way by devotees seeking blessings of Holy Scriptures. Different organizations and groups had also arranged water, soft drinks and eatables at different points for the children and devotees carrying Holy Scriptures all along.

The function concluded with the hosting of refreshment for the school children by the members of participating organizations and for the lay devotees by the Tsuklakhang Monastic School, assisted by the members of Rehab Center and Yargay Association, Tathangchen.

The major take-away from this year's Saga Dawa Celebration was that, in spite of there being no formal organizing committee for the event, the successful conduct of the event was perhaps on account of **our Coming Together** – the proactive voluntary initiative of social organizations, unwavering public participation and mostly because of our effort in trying to restore our dwindling faith in our otherwise rich spiritual heritage.