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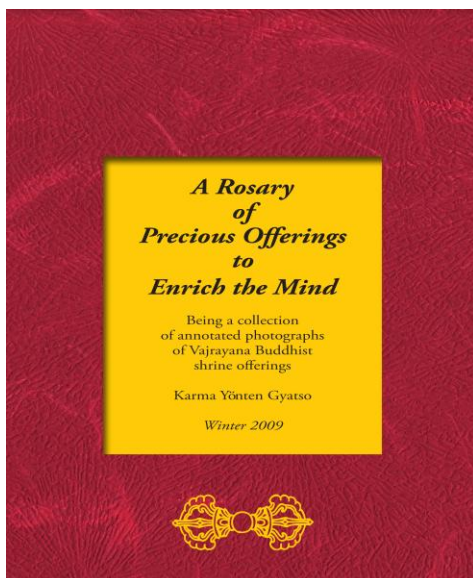
Richmond Hill, June 6, 2010

Sumeru announces publication of:

A ROSARY OF PRECIOUS OFFERINGS TO ENRICH THE MIND

Being a collection of annotated photographs of Vajrayana shrine offerings

By Karma Yönten Gyatso



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PDF e-book, 32 pages, 8½" x 7", 14 MB

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This small book is a collection of annotated photographs of ritual shrine offerings taken in 2009 at Karma Tekchen Zabsal Ling, a Karma Kargyu lineage Vajrayana Buddhist Temple under the auspices of Thrangu Rinpoche, located in Aurora, Ontario.

In any Buddhist temple, the central focus is on statues of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, or perhaps icons of a celestial Buddha, a Bodhisattva in peaceful or wrathful form, or a Dharma Protector. However, in addition to these, one will invariably find other, smaller objects of spiritual significance as well. The purpose of this book is to showcase and describe some of these smaller ritual objects.

Religion is as much about the supporting concepts as it is about a central belief or faith. Images of central figures (portrayed in two or three dimensions) cannot convey all of those, even though they are tightly packed with symbolic significance. The images are too circumscribed by iconographic constraints. On the other hand, shrine offerings afford an opportunity to creatively highlight ideas and values beyond the basics. They also provide a gateway to understanding for practitioners by delighting the senses and engaging them on a visceral level.

In the Vajrayana (tantric Buddhism) the spiritual power of things is manifest in their agency. Ritual objects are used as tools and vehicles of practice. As such, their activity may be directed to human participants in a ritual, or to beings in other realms who may affect or be affected by the event. They are serious business, not merely pretty accoutrements.

The significant contribution of “A Rosary...” is to reveal the key iconographic concepts embedded within the numerous objects common to Tibetan Buddhist shrines in an engaging manner, combining photographic representations and explanations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Negru (Karma Yönten Gyatso) began Buddhist practice in 1968. He was the coordinator of the Toronto Buddhist Federation and later a founder of, and Toronto coordinator for, the Buddhist Council of Canada for four years (1984-87). He has been involved with many ecumenical Canadian Buddhist initiatives since then. He is the author of two Buddhist books: “A Rosary of Precious Offerings to Enrich the Mind” and “Understanding the Chinese Buddhist Temple” in addition to his other writing. Many of his photographs of Buddhist art and architecture in India and Asia are held by in the permanent archival collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Mr. Negru is well-known as long-time designer and publishing professional, author of several award-winning technology books and more than 100 articles on the art and science of publishing, contributing editor and editor for many publishing magazines, instructor in the Ryerson University publishing program for six years, and currently teaching communications technology and technological design for the York Region DSB in Ontario.

ABOUT SUMERU

The Sumeru Press Inc. is a Canadian publisher of Buddhist books and art. Sumeru also maintains a blog on Canadian Buddhism and offers publishing consulting services to Buddhist organizations and initiatives.

Recent Sumeru projects include a redesign of the Buddhism in Canada website (www.buddhismcanada.com) last year. Earlier this year, Sumeru completed a year-long research and development project for the University of Toronto and the Buddhist Education Foundation for Canada, the goal of which was to lay the groundwork for an online scholarly journal dealing with Buddhism and Psychology.

For more information about Sumeru and Canadian Buddhism, please visit www.sumeru-books.com or www.sumeru.ca