

# Understanding the Buddhist Shrine

Your shrine at home should reflect your heart-felt and deepest devotion to the Buddha. It should enhance your faith and cause you to reflect upon the Buddha's teachings.

A beautifully arranged, clean shrine will enhance your meditative concentration and absorption and will bring a sense of spiritual centeredness. It will become your own mirror-image.

An image of the Buddha will radiate warmth, compassion and loving-kindness. This will help reinforce these positive traits into your own being. It will help you to purify negativities and distractions and bring a true sense of peace and contentment.

Seven offering bowls are traditionally placed on the shrine in front of your statue of Buddha. You can also put photographs of His Holiness Dalai Lama and His Holiness Sakya Trizin.



Empty the water offering bowls in the evening, dispose the old water offering outside onto the clean outdoor spots. Offer clean water in the morning before the meditation/prayer and add safron; starting from the left to the right. Remove old flowers and other offerings. Set your lamp by putting in a new wick (never leave flame unattended) and refilling it with oil. Share leftover fruit/food offering to the animals (birds, etc.) outside.

## “Tho pa Gya Ts’o Ma”

Think of this prayer while you are tending to your shrine.

I offer to you my body, transformed into a celestial mansion—adorned by an ocean of understanding, wreathed about by the flowers of virtue, and an incense cloud of moral habits. In it shines the lamp of wisdom, and there lies too, a lake of faith's perfume; the food of meditative bliss I offer you, with sweet music of songs of praise; a canopy fashioned from my compassion for others; and banner that consists of discernment and an ensign of courage held high. These I offer to you, King of Dharma, who dwells always in the lotus of my heart. From the deep certitude of my mind I pray you will always be pleased with me, oh teacher of all living beings, may you always be pleased. May Sakya Panchen always be pleased.

## Thanka of Buddha

(on the wall if you have one)

