

Lhasang Practice

"When we do a lhasang to bring down the magic energy of enlightenment and drala, the smoke of the lhasang is said to purify those obstacles that are actually on us. It gets into our pores and allows us to have a fresh start. A lhasang is considered to be very important, because it immediately raises our windhorse. It connects us with the dralas, the enlightened beings. It is said that how we lead our life affects our personal drala. We can weaken our personal drala, or we can increase our personal drala, purely by how we lead our life"

The Sakyong Jampal Trinley Dradul, Shambhala Day 2004

Lhasang is a traditional Tibetan purification ceremony that is a key ritual in Shambhala culture. This ceremony is performed to dispel neuroses and confusion, and to invoke uplifted energy to a particular place or gathering of warriors.

The ceremony consists of burning juniper, offering the rising smoke as a connection between heaven and earth, and reciting particular chants. There are several versions of lhasang chants of varying lengths, with all of them concluding with the Warrior's Cry of "*KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYEL LO TAK SENG KHYUNG DRUK DYI YAR KYE!*"

For holiday occasions such as Shambhala New Year, you may wish to conduct a lhasang at your centre, outdoors with your community, or in your home. This is a good way to acknowledge the old karma and latent confusion of the past and aspire to a fresh start that is present and awake.

Instructions for conducting a group lhasang:

You will need:

- A lhasang burner, or beautiful bowl, with japanese charcoal placed on top of sand or ash
- A small dish with powdered or dried juniper (can be picked locally or purchased)
- A fresh juniper sprig
- A conch shell with salt water
- Copies of the lhasang chant for people to read aloud
- Lhasang flags, if you have them
- A nice table(round if possible) to place the implements on

(Light charcoal about 10 minutes before beginning.)

The person presiding at the lhasang should consecrate the juniper by sprinkling salt water from the conch on the powdered juniper using the juniper sprig. Then, they

can offer some juniper by sprinkling it on the lit charcoal to create smoke. *If indoors, it is ok to offer just a tiny, token amount of juniper if smoke or allergies are an issue.*

All participants should stand in a circle and recite the selected lhasang chant together, concluding with the Warrior's Cry: (*KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYEL LO TAK SENG KHYUNG DRUK DYI YAR KYE!*) chanted repeatedly together. Someone should act as a chopon to continue adding juniper to keep the smoke going throughout the ceremony.

Leaders (five are recommended) can circle the lhasang table first, carrying lhasang flags, as everyone continues to chant the Warrior's Cry. The leaders can circle clockwise three times, then peel off, as others then file through the lhasang smoke in a clockwise direction. Members of the Dorje Kasung often help with directing "traffic" during a lhasang ceremony.

People may bring valued or new practice objects with them to pass through the lhasang smoke to be purified. You may also wish to carry any new shrine objects, texts or important objects for your centre through the lhasang smoke as well.

After the final person has circled through the lhasang smoke, the person leading the chanting can lead everyone in one final Warrior's Cry.

Liturgies for performing a Lhasang in your home or centre:

- For a **very short lhasang** in your home or centre, you can use the short lhasang chant below.

HRIH

**-The virtuous mark, the great banner of inspiring windhorse,
And these clouds of offerings of all desirable things
We offer to you, great being Gesar with your retinue.
Fulfill all our wishes; be victorious in all directions.**

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- For a **simple lhasang**, it is appropriate to use the "*Invocation for Raising Windhorse*" chant. This is appropriate for special occasions, to begin Werma practice or to consecrate a new home.
- For an **elaborate lhasang**, you can recite the "*Warrior Song of Drala*." This chant is especially used for outdoor lhasangs with large lhasang fires and elaborate offerings. This long lhasang is often held to open large programs, celebrate holidays or to bless a new centre.

Caring for and storing lhasang flags

Your centre's set of lhasang flags can be displayed together, posted somewhere in your centre, if you would like to do so. They should be placed in a place that conveys respect, and should not be handled casually. It would be appropriate to display them in a Director's office, a meditation instruction room or library in your centre.

You may also just store your flags away between uses. The flags can be stored either on their poles standing in a shrine closet or other space with special objects, or they can be folded and just placed on the dowel poles when they will be used. The flags should be kept on a higher shelf, and should never be put on the floor, even for a moment. Continually treating these flags as sacred is a good awareness practice.