

July 17, 2023

Gyalwa Karmapa embarks on his 2023 European tour, part 1

After four years spent in Asia, Thaye Dorje, His Holiness the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, is finally visiting Europe again in 2023. This year's Dharma tour takes him to some of his principal centres in Germany, France, and Spain, where he will meet with thousands of students and give Dharma talks and empowerments.

All the European practitioners of the Karma Kagyu lineage are overjoyed to welcome Karmapa again after such a long time and have been preparing for his visit with great joy and enthusiasm.

Karmapa's first destination is Dhagpo Möhra, located in the midst of a lovely landscape in the heart of Germany, in Thuringia. Established almost 20 years ago in 2005, the centre has greatly evolved since Karmapa's last visit in 2008.

Karmapa arrived in Dhagpo Möhra on the morning of the 13th of July and was given a warm welcome by Jigme Rinpoche, his General Secretary and representative in Europe, who had arrived two days previously to oversee some last-minute preparations, Gendun Rinchen, the residents and volunteers of Dhagpo Möhra and the neighbouring Dharma village, and a gathering of monks and lay practitioners.

On the afternoon of the same day Karmapa met the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Bad Salzungen, Mr. Bohl and Mr. Knott, respectively, in the beautifully furnished library of Dhagpo Möhra for a tea and a lively exchange of views. Karmapa expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the warm welcome and the hospitality extended to Dhagpo Möhra by the non-Buddhist neighbours in the area, and the two mayors conveyed their appreciation for the valuable contributions the Buddhist centre had made to the local community. They particularly emphasised the importance of values such as serenity, awareness and compassion, more necessary than ever in view of the turbulent times we live in and the various challenges our society is faced with.

On Friday evening and throughout Saturday, Karmapa gave several Dharma talks on the topic of 'Love and Compassion – Approaching the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva', based on a text composed by the 14th-century Buddhist master Thogme Zangpo. Approximately 1,600 people attended these public teaching sessions, which were held at Werner-Seelenbinder-Halle in Bad Salzungen. The Mayor of Bad Salzungen and his wife were also present.

Karmapa spent the first part of his talks expressing his joy and gratitude at finally being able to meet so many of his students again in person, and confessed that there had been moments during the past few years when he doubted that such a gathering would ever be possible again. He also shared some of his personal experience over the last four years since his last visit to

Europe in 2019.

Once Karmapa started his explanations on the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva, he placed particular emphasis on the topic of renunciation (Tib. nges 'byung). He explained that true renunciation does not mean having to give up things that we are attached to, but arises naturally from an overwhelming certainty with regard to the fleeting nature of our existence, and the futility of the activities and endeavours we spend our lives on. He continued by saying that while we cannot force such renunciation to happen and have no way of knowing when it may occur, we can nevertheless create propitious conditions for it to arise, similar to setting sails on a boat, so that when the wind starts blowing the sails may catch it. Karmapa then explained that we create such favourable conditions through the practice of the Buddha Dharma, and emphasised that for any practice to bear fruit we need to give it time.

During the lunch break on Saturday, Karmapa and his entourage, as well as a large number of guests, were invited for a delicious vegetarian lunch to the Kurhaus Restaurant Bad Salzungen. This lunch provided an occasion for Karmapa to continue and deepen the exchange with Mr. Bohl, the Mayor of Bad Salzungen, and the latter's wife.

The day ended with Karmapa meeting a group of about 50 young practitioners, many of whom have been connected with Dhagpo Möhra for many years and have been brought up in Buddhist families from a very early age. This meeting took place in the temple of the centre, and the exchange between Karmapa and these young Buddhists was so rich and lively that by the time Karmapa finally concluded the question-and-answer session it was close to midnight. Karmapa expressed his joy at encountering such fresh young minds and stated that this new generation provided a great sense of hope for the future.

Quelle: www.karmapa.org