

## ABOUT OUR NAME

The name "Thöpaga Foundation" was selected to honour Milarepa, one of the four great foundation pillars of the Kagyu Lineage. Thöpaga was Milarepa's childhood name. It is said that when his father was informed of his child's birth, he was overjoyed and so, named his newborn son Thöpaga. Thöpaga means "glad tidings" or, literally, "happy to hear about".

When Thöpaga was a young man he became a student of the great Master Marpa Lotsawa. Marpa traveled to India three times to receive teachings from the Holy Sage Naropa. On his third trip he asked Naropa for a transmission of the teachings of the formless Dakinis. Naropa was greatly surprised since no one knew he possessed this knowledge. He asked Marpa how he knew that he could give this teaching. Marpa replied that the Dakinis had appeared to his student Thöpaga in a vision and had instructed him to have Marpa request the teachings from Naropa. Naropa immediately began to praise Thöpaga with these words:

" In the darkness of the northern land  
Like the rising sun shining upon the snowy mountains.  
This is the one who is known as Thöpaga.  
I prostrate to this Holy Being."

He then bowed down in the direction of the north. It is said that as he did so all the trees, plants, hills and rocks also bowed down in reverence. This happened at a place called Pushpahari. Tradition holds that even to this day if you should travel to Pushpahari you would see that all things bend towards the north.



## ABOUT OUR LOGO

The Thöpagā Foundation logo features a vulture with feathers in array atop an Ionic pillar. The Three Jewels are depicted above the vulture. Our logo is derived from Marpa's Song of the Four Great Pillars. It is referenced specifically to the verse about the Pillar of the North. The significance of the images in our logo is described in the following verse:

" I dreamt that a great pillar was established in the North.  
I dreamt that on top of that pillar a vulture alighted.  
I dreamt that the vulture was displaying his feathers.  
I dreamt that the bird made her nest among the rocks.  
I dreamt that this vulture gave birth to one chick.  
I dreamt that from this one the sky was filled with a flock of birds.  
This dream of the North is not bad, but a good dream.  
The establishment of that great pillar in the North  
Is you, Milarepa of Kung Thang.  
That vulture alighting on top of the pillar  
Is your vulture-like character.  
That vulture displaying her feathers  
Means you understand the guru's oral instructions.  
That bird making a nest among the rocks  
Is the sign that your life force will be harder than a rock.  
That bird giving birth to one chick  
Is the sign that one without rival will come.  
That flock of birds filling the sky  
Is the sign that the Kagyu teachings will spread.  
This is why the dream of the north is good"\*

The Three Jewels above the vulture represent the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The fire blazing forth from them signifies the wisdom of the Buddha. It is interesting to note that we selected a western style pillar for our logo. This was done to indicate that the Thöpagā Foundation has been established in the west. It is hoped that our Foundation can be of benefit to all beings by helping to bring the teachings of the Buddha to the west.

*(\* from Rain of Wisdom – translated by the Nalanda Translation committee, under the direction of Chogyam Trungpa, Shambala Publications, 1980)*