THE HERMITAGES OF SERA

སེ་རའི་རི་ཁྲོད་སྐོར།

JOSÉ IGNACIO CABEZÓN

THE TIBETAN AND HIMALAYAN DIGITAL LIBRARY
WWW.THDL.ORG

The Hermitages of Sera is a peer-reviewed, electronic publication of THDL.
THDL ID #1270.

In this printable PDF version of the publication, some of the interactivity is lost. The web version is fully interactive. It is accessible at
http://www.thdl.org/collections/cultgeo/mons/sera/hermitages/ .

The web publication contains the following interactive components not available in this PDF/print version:
    1. The "Sera Hermitages Interactive Map":
       http://www.thdl.org/collections/cultgeo/mons/sera/hermitages/map/ .

Preface

A hermitage (*ri khrod*) is a small monastic residence found in an isolated mountain location. Hermitages begin as the mountain homes of monks or nuns who seek the peace and quiet of isolated sites so as to engage in intensive religious practice. Within a few generations of their founding, however, hermitages often transform, changing from the meditation retreats of individuals into communal ritual monasteries. They also usually grow, sometimes becoming large and important monasteries in their own right. In this portion of the Sera Project website, you will learn more about the hermitages related to Sera Monastery.

Among the three great seats of learning of the Dge lugs school of Tibetan Buddhism – Dga' ldan, 'Bras spungs, and Se ra – Se ra is the one renowned for its hermitages. At least nineteen such institutions are found in the mountains behind and around Se ra. Under the auspices of the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, José Cabezón and a group of his graduate students spent the summer of 2004 compiling information about the history, architecture, art, and religious life of the Se ra hermitages. The pages that follow are the result of this research.

The Interactive Map provides you with a visual interface for accessing different kinds of information – from the relative location of the hermitages to the topography of the landscape around them. The map also allows you to explore each of the hermitages through individual site maps that are linked to images, and it provides a database entry of important information about each institution.

The Introduction explains what hermits are, how the hermitage tradition of Se ra began, how it changed over time, and the challenges it faces today. It also gives you an idea of what the daily life of a hermitage monk was like in former times, and what it is like today.

List of Hermitages

Following the introduction, one can read detailed descriptions of the individual hermitages and learn about the history of each institution, described in the following order. In the list below, each hermitage is linked to its webpage:

- Chupzang Nunnery (Chu bzang dgon)
- Drakri Hermitage (Brag ri ri khrod)
- Garu Nunnery (Ga ru dgon pa)
- Jokpo Hermitage ('Jog po ri khrod)
- Keutsang Hermitage (Ke'u tshang ri khrod)
- Keutsang East Hermitage (Ke'u tshang shar ri khrod)
- Keutsang West Hermitage (Ke'u tshang nub ri khrod)
- Khardo Hermitage (Mkhar do ri khrod)
- Negodong Nunnery (Gnas sgo gdong dgon pa)
- Nenang Nunnery (Gnas nang ri khrod)
- Pabongkha Hermitage (Pha bong kha ri khrod)
- Panglung Hermitage (Spang lung ri khrod)
- Purbuchok Hermitage (Phur bu lcog ri khrod)
- Rakhadrak Hermitage (Ra kha brag ri khrod)
- Sera Chöding Hermitage (Se ra chos sdings ri khrod)
- Sera Gönpasar Hermitage (Se ra dgon pa gsar ri khrod)
- Sera Utsé Hermitage (Se ra dbu rtse ri khrod)
- Takten Hermitage (Rtags bstan ri khrod)
- Trashi Chöling Hermitage (Bkra shis chos gling ri khrod)

Acknowledgements