

Petition in Support of Permanent Residency for The Very Reverend Lharampa Lobzang Samdup Lama

We urgently request that Congress pass a special humanitarian bill that would direct the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to **reopen the permanent residency application for Samdup Lama** on the grounds of his unique ability to serve the religious and spiritual needs of the congregation of Buddhists he has been ministering to since 2008. The following statements describe Samdup Lama's critical religious and humanitarian role within the Buddhist community throughout the Mid-Atlantic region:

1. Samdup Lama is a Buddhist monk-priest of the Gelugpa order of Tibetan Buddhism, with special training and experience that uniquely qualifies him to fulfill the duties of a Buddhist priest serving the greater Kalmyk-Mongol, Buryat, Tibetan, Tuvan and Mongolian community in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia.
2. Born in India, Samdup Lama completed his religious studies in monasteries headed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Samdup Lama first came to the United States in 2006 leading a delegation from his monastery, and has served the wide-spread congregation of the Nitsan Buddhist Temple in Howell, New Jersey, as a Buddhist priest since 2008.
3. Samdup Lama is of the highest character and has served the wider Buddhist community and the congregation of Nitsan Buddhist Temple with dedication, compassion and wisdom. His immigration status is not of his doing, but is the result of an administrative oversight by the Nitsan Buddhist Temple's volunteer staff.
4. In the past two years, the Nitsan Buddhist Temple has lost two elderly Mongolian and Tibetan monks due to old age. Samdup Lama had been their caregiver and had gradually assumed their religious responsibilities during their final years. Other than Samdup Lama, there are only two remaining monks at the Nitsan Buddhist Temple, one of whom is 94 years old.
5. Samdup Lama is a critical member of the clergy of the Nitsan Buddhist Temple and his day-to-day religious work has made it possible for the Nitsan Buddhist Temple to continue to carry out its core mission as a center of Buddhist religious services, study and practice.
6. The thousands of American citizens who benefit from the spiritual services provided by Samdup Lama would suffer **severe religious and humanitarian hardship** by having their access to traditional religious practices and traditions curtailed should Samdup Lama not be able to perform his religious functions for this community.
7. Because of Samdup Lama's special training and education in India at Drepung Gomang Monastery from 1979 to 2002 and at Gyumed College of Advanced Studies from 2003 to 2006, and the religious guidance he has received from the elderly abbot of Nitsan Buddhist Temple since 2008, as well as his multi-language skills, it would be impossible to replace him should he be forced to leave the United States due to his immigration status.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned, strongly support a special humanitarian congressional bill that would direct the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to **reopen the permanent residency application for Samdup Lama** on the grounds of his **unique ability** to serve the religious and spiritual needs of the congregation of Buddhists he has been ministering to since 2008.

Signature	Printed Name	Address	Email	Telephone
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Please mail hardcopy Petition and signatures to Nitsan Buddhist Temple, ATTN: Geshe Samdup Petition, 186 West 6th Street, Howell, NJ, 07731

