

YESHE MELONG
“Mirror of Wisdom”
NEWSLETTER
April 1998

News and Advice from Gyatrul Rinpoche

A Brief Prayer that Spontaneously Fulfills All Wishes

EMAHO! KON CHOG TSA SUM DE SHEK KUN DÜ PAL
NYIK DÜ DRO WA GON MED KYAB CHIG PU
TÜK JE LÖG TAR NYUR WA'I TÖD TRENG TSAL
MAHA GURU PEDMA HERUKAR
MÖ GÜ DÜNG SHÜK DRAG PÖ SOL WA DEB
DRA DON GEK DANG BAR CHED JAD PUR LOK
MA RÜNG GYAL SEN JÜNG PO DAM LA TOK
SAM PA LHÜN GYI DRÜB PAR CHIN GYI LOB
EMAHO!

*O Guru Rinpoche, in your glory you embody Buddha, Dharma and Sangha;
Lama, Yidam and Khandro; and all the Sugatas,
the sole refuge of beings, who are without protection in this dark age.
Your compassion is as swift as lightning, Töd Treng Tsal.
Maha Guru, wrathful Pedma Heruka,
with fervent longing and devotion, we pray to you.
Avert enemies, obstructing forces, obstacle-makers, curses and spells.
Bring all negative forces—gyalpo, senmo and jungpo demons—under your
subjugation.
Grant your blessings so that all our wishes be spontaneously fulfilled!*

Tashi Delek! The old Fire Ox has gone away. He's wagging his tail at us, therefore we are getting lots of stormy weather from East to West. Hopefully we'll make it out okay because now the golden Earth Tiger is here. So, I'd like to say to everyone, "Happy New Year!"

I am in Hawaii now, everything is fine. My feet are getting better, but I still have a slight problem with my shoulder. Everyday I swim with the fish, and I have lots of friends—mostly around three-years-old—that I play with in the water. But the problem is, Mimi is spoiling me; that's her fault, not my fault.

I would like to say "thank you so much" to everyone for your help in building the Dharma up and benefiting sentient beings. Since 1978 until the present, so many people have helped in many ways, and many types of skill and wisdom have joined together. It's sure that you will continue this in the future and from generation to generation. In

particular I would like to thank the Pacific Region Yeshe Nyingpo Board of Directors and Officers and those of the other centers as well. You have worked hard to build the statues and the entire facility, outside and inside, at Tashi Chöling. You did not work for yourself but for others. Many of you have postponed building homes even for your own families, because you always put the Dharma first and made offerings with all of your body, speech and mind. Even now you are working in the snow and rain. I heard that our funds have been spent, but you're still trying hard to make things continue on schedule. Also, I wish to thank all of the sponsors since the very beginning, big and small. Stage by stage, everyone helped. We have invited lots of lamas, high and low. Sometimes they stay with us for months, year after year. So, everybody has gotten teachings and blessings; hopefully this is of benefit in this life and the next and for all sentient beings. By working hard, you made what was impossible, possible and what was hopeless, hopeful.

I've heard recently that you have started working with the Buddha Families again at Tashi Chöling. I am so happy that these have been reformed and are in use again. You didn't give up on the idea, and you didn't just say, "Oh, it's the officers' job." Finally you're waking up. So each family, you need to help, one by one. Everybody has a responsibility, not only the officers. Of course, they can show you, tell you, what needs doing. But we have to work, not only them. We used to have a habit of saying, "Oh, that's the president, secretary or treasurer's problem." Whether this is our good luck or our bad luck, we have to do something to help. If we are asked to do something and we ignore it, how are we to establish anything positive? From today, we must maintain a helpful attitude, old or young, man or woman. Everyone, please try hard.

We now have more branch centers associated with us and some of them are also standing on their own. Given this, I would like to tell you not to be too self-centered and to always remember you are part of a larger group and organization. In all of your activities and plans, you should not forget this, and your work should all fit together for the same goal. You all should stay in touch with one another as much as possible and report to your leaders. This will help you.

I don't want to repeat myself too much, but every year we have these three retreats: Vajrasattva, Vajrakilaya and Tröma. Everyone try to come, learn and practice. We don't need to practice slander, gossip, politics and jealousy. How can we learn Dharma while we practice these negative things? Instead, support what we do have that is positive: the practice, the temple and the statue gardens. The builders are doing their part; now it's our job to take care of them and maintain their purpose which is a benefit to us. Yeshe Melong Archives has also worked very hard to provide us with everything we need to study and practice. So we must appreciate this, take advantage of it and try to help them too.

Then I'd like to thank you for the efforts you put towards the long-life ceremonies at the temple last year on my behalf. I think it was all very successful. I noticed that people came from as far away as Mexico, Hong Kong, Australia and Canada. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche sent a delegate from the Shambhala Centers. Jetsunma Akhon Lhamo and her family came, and her center Kunzang Payul Choling in Maryland sent offerings and composed a special prayer. Steven Seagal and Chagdud Tulku's son, Tulku Jigme Rinpoche, and Lama Sonam also came, as well as representatives from all of the Yeshe

Nyingpo centers, Osal Nyingpo and from a new center in Montana—Namdroling. Also many of Chagdud Rinpoche's students were present. The whole event was mainly energized by Sangye Khandro and Yeshe Nyima, and I wish to thank them again.

At our center in San Francisco, Orgyen Dorje Den, everyone has also worked hard, especially Yeshe. Last fall they hosted H.H. Penor Rinpoche and he did more ceremonies to benefit my life, specifically a Kilaya reversal ceremony. *Thuk je che*, I hope in the future I can pay back your kindness. Then everyone helped with Yangthang Rinpoche's visit. For many years, we have hoped to receive the lineage of Tertön Dorje Dechen Lingpa. Those of you who attended the empowerments will know how rare this lineage has become. It does not exist in India, Nepal or Bhutan and is almost gone in Tibet, so it is truly amazing that we have received it. In Lhasa the lineage was held by H.H. Reprung Tri Rinpoche, H.H. Dalai Lama's teacher. When the old Dalai Lama passed away, this lama stood in as regent. Then the lineage was passed on to Taklung Mar Rinpoche who was the highest lama of the Kagyu tradition. He then passed it on to the King of Bhutan and the King of Sikkim as well as other lamas in those regions. Even though this lineage was held by such high level teachers, the Communists still destroyed everything, and we thought saving it was hopeless. While Yangthang Rinpoche was here, he was able to fill in from his mindstream most of what was actually lost from the original written volumes. So now not only do we have the written works, we have the *lungs*, *wangs* and oral instructions of this lineage. Yangthang Rinpoche told me that he was very happy that everything had gone so well and he felt that the Dharma was strong here, particularly in Oregon and California.

So again, thank you. I am coming back in April. My practice is quite good; there are no obstacles this time.

Prayer to Guru Rinpoche to Clear Obstacles on the Path

DÜ SUM SANGYE GURU RINPOCHE

NGÖ DRUB KÜN DAG DE WA CHEN PO'I SHAB

BAR CHED KÜN SEL DÜD DÜL DRAG PO TSAL

SOL WA DEB SO CHIN GYI LAB TU SOL

CHI NANG SANG WA'I BAR CHED SHI WA DANG

SAM PA LHÜN GYI DRUB PAR CHIN GYI LOB

Precious teacher, the embodiment of all Buddhas of the three times;

great bliss, the lord of all accomplishments;

wrathful power, the one who dispels all hindrances and subdues demons—

I pray, bestow your blessings.

Please remove the outer, inner, and secret obstacles

and grant the blessings to accomplish wishes spontaneously.

Gyatrul Rinpoche

Prayer to Gyatrul Rinpoche

Dearest Ven. Rinpoche, Most Kind Master and Jetsun Lama,
We prostrate to you out of deference and adoration.
We make offerings to you both real and imagined out of desire to love you and please you.
We confess our wrongdoings, failures and obscurations in the hopes of eradicating them.
We rejoice in all noble activity in the hope that we will know what noble activity is and reject all else.
We ask that you teach again and again because we need to be with you and hear the Dharma endlessly, because we have not truly even begun to understand its meanings.
We pray that you live for an ocean of kalpas when we cannot even imagine what that means.
And we dedicate all merit for the benefit of others because we have begun to dimly perceive the endless suffering we pretend is not there.
Bless us that we may become humble, shedding all pride, and prostrating honestly from the depths of our hearts.
Bless us that we may become generous, shedding all stinginess and attachment, making offerings with joy and abandon.
Bless us that we may inflict upon ourselves radical honesty and shed all our obscurations.
Bless us that we may praise and rejoice in all noble activity forgetting to be jealous, and like chaff from the wheat discerning and rejecting the ignoble.
Bless us that we may study without fail, understanding truly the Dharma, turning away from wrong views.
Bless us that we may begin to understand the inconceivable nature of the guru, excel in our devotion to you and truly open our hearts to their depths to the Dharma.
Bless us that we may truly begin to work for the benefit of others.
Most Precious Guru, bless us that we may say the Seven-Line Prayer with vast devotion, with true understanding of the pure meaning, with the kind of open heart that pushes from the chest with yearning.
Most Kind Master, we supplicate to you. Please grant your blessings that attachment, confusion and taking things as real may be severed at their root.
Bless us that we may do well the best thing we truly can do for you, practice!
In this New Year of the Tiger, we pray for all good things to come to you now and forever!
May clouds of desirable qualities arise to meet your needs at each moment!
May you continue to grant blessings through miraculous activity for the benefit of all beings!
May your life be long and firm and may your health be excellent!

Anonymous

*Picture This
for Ani Baba*

The picture of peace
is drawn with a finger
of bone, pointing
away from this body,
how we leave it behind, first
the beauty droops, muscle slack
as cut rope, the slide of skin,
wilting sex, the mind
closing down.

In the face of death I see myself
alone, the way I have tried
to abandon pain
believing it was someone
to be rid of: wife/husband
daughter/son enemy/friend,
calling it by name, wanting
to believe that if it is yours
it is not mine.

Holding this body
like a shadow, the brief slap
of a hand or a fist
unfolding, the way we squirm
when feeling,
nervous with compassion, so much
stranger than desire, so unfamiliar
to want for others,
to live for them.

Julie Rogers

Sonam Tsering at Tashi Chöling

Since August 1997 we've had the great good fortune to have Sonam Tsering Lama live and work at Tashi Chöling. Sonam is an excellent artist from Nepal who began studying Buddhist art at the age of nine. As a teenager he studied sculpture with one of the most renowned Buddhist sculptors in Asia. Since then, Sonam has worked for over 30 monasteries in India, Nepal and Tibet.

Sonam has completely repainted the Vajrasattva statue and refurbished the two Tara statues that he helped build several years ago. He built a beautiful Amitabha statue that will be housed at the Amitabha garden and is currently working on two more statues which will be on either side of Amitabha. Not only is his artistic ability a great service to us in creating the supports of the doctrine, his humility and devotion to practice is an inspiration for us all. Thank you, Sonam!

WomanMind: A-Yu Khandro—The Story of a Saint

Like many students of Vajrayana Buddhism, I would like to think of myself as a practitioner. I'm familiar with the preliminary practices and have done some retreats. I try to arrange my life to accommodate my activities with the Dharma center, often an effort. In an attempt to satisfy my longing for practice, I view my daily life as the arena for practical application, with varying degrees of success. What with the on-going squeeze of the world and my added little twist, just to stay afloat in the ocean of samsara seems daunting. Sometimes to distract myself, I imagine the life of a hermit, dream of a future radically different from what I now experience, and this time I take refuge in the story of a saint from Tibet.

A-Yu Khandro was born in 1839 on Dakini Day and was named Dechen Khandro, Dakini of Great Bliss, by a local yogi who was present at her birth. When she related her biography to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 1951, she had spent almost one-hundred years practicing the *chöd* of Machig Lapdron, a tradition that remains intact and is in practice to this day. From the ages of 7-18, A-Yu Khandro lived in a cave assisting her aunt's meditation practice. Although she was forced to marry by her family, within five years she was suffering from an illness and was close to death, the result of her blocked longing to dedicate her life to sincere practice. Released from the marriage, she began to practice. Throughout her youth and mid-life, she received instruction and initiations from many enlightened teachers such as Dzongsar Jam-yang Khyentse Rinpoche and Jamyang Kongtrul. In 1869 she received the *Nyingtig Yab Shi*, a very powerful cycle of *dzogchen* empowerments. At the age of 32, she and her companion set off as beggars, their only possessions being *chöd* drums and two sticks. In addition to many pilgrimages and retreats, she spent over three years practicing in caves and sacred places on Mount Kailash. At age 40 she spent three months in a cemetery that had been the home of Machig Lapdron herself.

I can view A-Yu Khandro's life either in comparison with mine or as an inspiration, and I seem to alternate between the two, depending upon my current degree of discouragement with worldly affairs. Like myself, this great yogini lived her life in relative obscurity. As well, through her good fortune, she spent many years living as an independent woman, although her freedoms far exceeded any that a member of ordinary society could enjoy. Like myself, she received the most profound teachings from the great masters of her day and found her spiritual path in the practice of *chöd*. This is where the similarities end.

Now, on the edge of the turn of the century in America, her life roaming the cemeteries and caves of Tibet and practicing in extensive retreats seems a fantastic legend, until one understands that she was liberated at death four years before I was born in 1957. Her lifelong friend and traveling companion, Pema Yangkyi, achieved rainbow body. These women were contemporary yoginis and left this world as the Chinese Communists invaded Tibet. For me, these facts and dates bring the wild stories of the great practitioners much closer; they become real. I then think, "If only I had such opportunities! Without the support of a Buddhist culture and entrapped by my many responsibilities, I may never find the right circumstances to truly apply myself to

practice.” And with this defeated view, I am more easily distracted, and my determination wavers.

However, while reading A-Yu Khandro’s biography, I came across a passage wherein she described receiving an empowerment as a teen. One of her statements jumped out into me, “Although I had no understanding of the teaching really, I had much faith.” This I believe I may have, this seed from which a great lotus flower can bloom. This is the ground of my practice, the field. As we sit together in the mud, it is this faith that supports us, helps us to support each other and inspires us to persistence, that leads us to the cushion and encourages us to examine our motivation and conduct. The question is, “Will I turn my mind from ordinary thinking to the view of Dharma?” Will I offer myself, purify my attachment and self-centeredness and instead protect and support the peace and well-being of others? How can I be in this world while renouncing the causes of suffering? I must take the greatly endowed life of a pure yogini and translate it into the small life of a single mother with two jobs and a rented apartment. In our various lives, the challenge before us is the same: to practice for the benefit of others in activities that take place in our homes, our Dharma centers, our communities and on the cushion.

What a blessing that we have each other and our precious teachers to encourage and inspire us to this great path, as we see the fruition of our efforts, all begun in the seed of faith.

Julie Rogers

(Resource material: *Women of Wisdom* by Tsultrim Allione)

Personal Note from Mimi

I have served Pacific Region Yeshe Nyingpo as Corporate Treasurer for almost four years now and, after having this experience and seeing some very healthy changes take place, I thought it a good time to share some of what I have learned and observed. As most of you know, I have also served as Rinpoche’s attendant for some years, traveling with him and serving him in retreat. Last year I was asked to join the Board of Directors. Much has been learned of “living the Dharma” by the continual blessing of being in Rinpoche’s presence. This is an experience we all have in some degree, but also I have had to learn some useful worldly skills that I never might have taken on if it weren’t for this opportunity. I hope that I have done well enough to deserve the respect and support that all the students have given me over these past years.

Traveling with Rinpoche and witnessing first-hand the beautiful free flow of generosity of the Asian Sangha, mostly from Hong Kong and Taiwan, I became very interested to learn more about what was behind their cultural process of giving. In fact, it is funds from those countries—along with the physical strength and dedication of local students—that have built the facilities we have today. In Asia there is never a fee to attend a Dharma event, as everything is sponsored by those with strong faith and means, some of whom are able to take on that role very purely. The system seems to work for everyone. There is an age-old connection that transcends doubt between the perfection of spiritual wisdom merit and the practice of giving that exists in the Far East. I wonder how it is that we can achieve that type of balance in such a dignified way, and I ask all of you to consider this well.

There is much pressure and energy spent worrying about ways to cultivate financial support. Hopefully, we are approaching a natural incorporation of giving as part of our practice in our culture as well. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and seeing your participation in the development of this aspect of Dharma life.

Last year, as many of you probably are aware, Rinpoche's health was very weak and unstable. It was often difficult for me as his caretaker to know the appropriate means to assist him. He's a very complicated patient. One morning last winter during his prolonged period of illness at Half Moon Bay, I noticed a change in his usual weary state and then he told me that he felt something had "lifted." Later that day I received a phone call from the temple at Tashi Chöling with the news that the roof had been raised over the Vajrasattva statue. When I relayed the message to Rinpoche, he immediately said he had wondered what it was that had caused the shift in his physical condition and he was sure that the completion of the roof had removed some of the obstacles which had been plaguing him. I was struck by this obvious event and sought to get the message out that we must never forget how important these projects are. They are his life work, and he must fulfill his commitment to prepare the ground for the Dharma in this land. We all have the chance to participate in this merit and fulfillment with him as one mandala. Please do not forget that this chance is slipping away with each day.

Since all of the prayers and ceremonies were done for Rinpoche's long life and the *Ten Shuk* (Stabilizing the Presence) that was offered last May which was especially well-attended, Rinpoche has steadily improved. I am happy to report that he seems stronger than I've seen him in years. Students are clearly taking on more active roles in leadership, and the financial responsibilities are coming into a mature focus. Due to this, the results are manifesting quickly.

Without getting too excited, I just want to offer my thanks and encouragement in the same way as so many have to me. Whenever we are getting low on funds as we are now, Rinpoche starts talking of traveling again and trying to raise funds as he always has. I try to tell him, "Please go if you are going to teach Dharma, but we will raise the money; it is our responsibility now." I hope I am correct when I speak for all of us in this way and not too bold in saying so. Rinpoche always smiles appreciatively and says, "Thank you."

Mimi Hohenberg

TREASURER'S REPORT

To all of you, financial supporters on every level, thank you for making this our most successful fundraising year ever! Most of the support was generated during the celebration banquet last May at Tashi Chöling and in response to Rinpoche's request in last year's newsletter. Other fundraising efforts have assisted. We encourage your participation on whatever level is appropriate to your circumstances. Much work has been done, and much more needs to be done!

The roof is on the East Wing; the rest is up to you. The goal of getting the roof on was miraculously attained! By the time the metal roof is completed this spring, the East Wing Building Fund will be *completely emptied* in the process. Every donated dollar is under protection but we can't rest yet. At this stage the building is only an empty shell

with no windows. The builders are ready and committed to start up again when the weather clears. Will there be funds to purchase materials? Please consider joining our pledge program and reserve a place for your future retreat and study!

Special thanks to The Tides Foundation of San Francisco for their \$10,000 grant—that's enough to sponsor the Yeshe Melong Archives Library to be housed on the second floor—and to the sponsor who donated \$45,000 in emergency funds to complete the roof!

How your donations work. The following are support funds that have monthly pledges or yearly commitments on any level. All three of the following funds are operating at a deficit although expenses have been minimized again and again.

Tashi Chöling temple support or support to your local center. This is the most vital support you can offer and is the foundation of all of our activities, high and low. This fund pays for maintenance of the temple shrine room and residence, utilities, ritual supplies, offerings for the shrine, administrative expenses, and places you on the mailing list.

Lama Support. Becoming a lama support patron, you support the health care and basic daily needs of Gyatrul Rinpoche and Sangye Khandro, who do not receive a salary of any kind from Yeshe Nyingpo.

Vinaya Fund. This fund provides basic room and board for ordained Sangha and long-term retreatants. People who take the robes of the Buddha and humbly commit their lives to service within the Dharma deserve more of our support in order to have the opportunity to learn the necessary skills in ritual and leadership that we expect of them.

Current Development Funds. We have some savings in the Statue Garden/Amitabha fund that will keep that project moving until next fall. The other funds are awaiting donations to recommence work ASAP.

East Wing. Phase I will be completed with the installation of the metal roof; \$200,000 needed for the next phase of work in 1998.

Temple Road/Fire Protection. \$3,500 a year needed to maintain roads and support local fire protection.

Temple Restoration. \$100,000 needed to restore roof and correct structural damage to the building.

Statue Garden/Amitabha. \$25,000 needed for next stage of entrance gate painting and reconstruction, gardens and additional prayer wheels.

Yeshe Melong. Video Recovery and *Ney Luk Rang Jung* translation.

Excel Telecommunications. For low business and residential tele-phone rates which helps Yeshe Nyingpo, sign up with Excel long- distance service. Each call you make not only saves you money, but makes money for Yeshe Nyingpo; the international rates are excellent! We received \$1,500 last year, mostly in bonuses for signing up new sales representatives. For information about how to sign up under Yeshe Nyingpo's account or to become a sales rep in your area, send your name, address and telephone number to Box 124, Ashland, OR 97520 and an Excel/Yeshe Nyingpo representative will contact you.

Planned giving. In recent years a few sponsors have donated stocks to Yeshe Nyingpo. For us it provides security and income potential for the future as the beginning of a permanent endowment. For the donors it provided tax relief from appreciated stocks and the opportunity to express generosity with spirit. Thank you.

Other ways to activate this type of giving are to include Yeshe Nyingpo in your will or in a living trust or to donate property or other assets. For further explanations of these methods of estate planning, realizing tax benefits or legal wording for your will, we can refer you to a professional consultant in our Sangha who will extend these services to you free of cost.

Mimi Hohenberg

Dhomang Monastery

Since this is the first time that the revelations of Dhomang Tertön have been given in the West, in the United States, it's been very auspicious. These revelations were, of course, widespread in Tibet before the Communist Chinese takeover and were practiced and were also available in India. However, after the takeover, then everything was destroyed and the monastery was destroyed. Actually, there used to be thirteen volumes, but two of them seem to be completely lost. Then for many, many years after the Communist invasion, no one was allowed to practice Dharma on any level at all. You couldn't even hold a *mala* in your hand. You couldn't even hold a prayer wheel. None of the lamas could wear robes. Everything had to be concealed, and so precious treasures such as these were buried by the students in caves and in other places. Everything that wasn't hidden was completely devastated and destroyed. All images, all scriptures, all relics and all monasteries were completely destroyed. In eastern Kham there were some 600 monasteries in that region alone that were destroyed. Dhomang Monastery was just one of them. It's not as though Dhomang monastery by any means was just the only one. Why would that happen? On the other hand, it wouldn't be that everything else was destroyed and Dhomang Monastery would be left standing. They were all destroyed, and all the Dharma materials within them were also destroyed.

After Mao Tse Tung died, then we were allowed to build monasteries again. Of course, many years had gone by, but we were given permission. So from the time of his death until now, there has been an active effort to rebuild monasteries by those who have the means to do so. But the new, contemporary monasteries are not at all like the old ones. They are very different because we never had the same resources like we did before. It's very difficult no matter what, and so naturally they don't turn out at all like they used to be. But if you look and see, you can identify the structure as a monastery. It's like that. It's sufficient to be called a monastery.

I went back and helped too. First of all, I came out from there and I came to America and I went to Taiwan, and I received donations on a tour. I went back to the monastery, and I rebuilt it. I built a scholastic college, and I built an accomplishment practice center, a retreat center, and established the Three Supports of the doctrine once again. At a certain point, when we were still building, there was too much rain and so everything flooded, and the monastery was destroyed again in the process of rebuilding it. So I panicked and called Gyatrul Rinpoche on the telephone and asked him to help and send

more money again right away, because I knew I didn't have enough to finish. I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to accomplish the goal. Gyatrul Rinpoche asked his students to help, and I know that many of you offered lots of money, some \$2,000, some \$1,000. Thousands of dollars were collected and sent to me to be able to finish building Dhomang Monastery in Tibet.

I want to thank you all for this effort. I did receive it and I did follow through and accomplished the goal of building the monastery which stands today with the college and the retreat center. It's been of great benefit, and it's also because of everyone's kindness. So thank you very much. I forgot to mention earlier on, because the scriptures of this revelation were buried, later they were taken out so we have them available too, except for the two volumes that were completely lost.

So, anyway, I want to express my gratitude at this time and thank everyone for their generosity and kindness.

*Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche
Orgyen Dorje Den, 1997*

Incarnation

(for Gyatrul Rinpoche)

I dream your heart
full, heavy with oceans
intimate with compassion
for the trembling confusion of the drowning.
I echo your words
rafts of light
bouyant, boundaryless
rain of truth amid chaos.
I imitate your intent,
beyond description, homeless
brighter than first love,
more immediate than sky and earth
more welcome
more alive
more open than all hopes,
than gardens
kissed by the bright
scarlet moon of July

Diane Taudvin

Greetings from Tashi Chöling!

Since the last newsletter, we've seen a few changes. The pace here has sped up over the last year, and those who have visited have felt the congenial atmosphere pervading this sacred place. In March 1997 we gathered with students from various spots on the map for our annual Tröma Nagmo retreat led by Sangye Khandro. Lama Sonam from Cottage Grove joined us along with his mother and children. It was a wonderful, harmonious event. It was great to have Sangye home and to receive teachings on the Tröma ritual from Lama Sonam.

In May 1997 Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche arrived for the annual *Dor Sem Lama Chodpa* practice intensive, a Vajrasattva retreat led by Tulku Yeshe Nyima. This event was very well attended by students from Mexico, Hong Kong and all over the U.S. We were also visited by H.E. Ngagwang Pedma Namgyal of the Jonang tradition and direct disciple of Dudjom Lingpa's son. His Eminence gave the Tröma Nagmo empowerment and other transmissions corresponding to the Tröma cycle of practices. The highlight of the retreat was the *Ten Shuk* and long-life practice to honor Gyatrul Rinpoche attended by several lamas and many of Rinpoche's long-time students, followed by a fabulous dinner and fundraiser. It was a happy reunion, with Rinpoche in rare form.

Throughout the year, construction on the East Wing continued, rain or shine. The framing of the second floor and roof are finished, and hopefully the metal roof will be seen this spring. The crew has taken time off only to do retreats and is now waiting for the next infusion of funds to continue the next phase of work. A lot of work also went into the Vajrasattva garden area with the completion of protective canopies over the statues, the professional (and stunning!) repainting of Vajrasattva and both Tara statues, and preparation for the completion of the prayer wheel house. The ongoing work and support of many people—including Alan Coghlan from Australia, Pat Sitton from Corvallis, and our own resident Jigmed Lama—is greatly appreciated.

Last fall Rinpoche appointed new officers at Tashi Chöling: Matthew Small, President; Ron Fidler, Vice-President; Nick O'Connor, Treasurer; Tara Thomas, Assistant Treasurer; Kathleen McLeary, Secretary; and Julie Rogers, Assistant Secretary. We graciously thank Philip and Teri Thomas and the past administration for their dedication during the last three years.

We recently revived the Buddha Families, a Sangha community-based organization of five committees who—with the help of the officers—manage many responsibilities and projects at Tashi Chöling. This concept proved largely successful in the past so, seeing the vast amount of work ahead, we are reorganizing to create a firm foundation for the future. Our goal is to achieve a functional and thriving center with at least four retreats completed each year, all independently organized by the students with the ever-present guidance of our precious teacher, Gyatrul Rinpoche. There are many ways to participate; for instance, the lawn and garden committee is planning an upcoming gardening extravaganza. At this stage we are slowly ironing out the wrinkles of organization and are enjoying ourselves!

Last October the Venerables Yangthang Rinpoche and Gyatrul Rinpoche arrived for the annual Vajrakilaya retreat. It was amazing to be in the presence of these two masters, long-time friends and spiritual companions. We first got a series of inspiring teachings on the *Pudri Reg Pung* Vajrakilaya by Tulku Yeshe Nyima, followed by his guidance in that powerful practice. Upon completion of the retreat, a number of sacred ceremonies were conducted by Yangthang Rinpoche, including consecration of the statues in the Vajrasattva mandala garden and a Tröma Nagmo practice session at the Amitabha garden site, as well as the concise Dorje Dechen Lingpa *chöd* empowerment and a blessing of the site. Next Yangthang Tulku gave the full transmission of the Dorje Dechen Lingpa *lungs*. He also gave an outstanding weekend teaching for the community of Ashland, pith oral instructions on “The Nature of the Mind.” Finally, an auspicious fire puja was held before our teachers departed for Oakland, California where Yangthang Tulku gave the *wangs* for the Dorje Dechen Lingpa cycle. Once again our great fortune became obvious to us as we felt the immense compassion of the lamas and began to realize how blessed we are to serve them and the Dharma.

In November and December, a small group of students gathered in the temple for several weeks to hear Yangthang Rinpoche teach via phone hook-up from California (“Dialing for Dharma”) with the help of Scott Globus. We heard teachings on the Dorje Dechen Lingpa *chöd* practices and the *dzogchen* teaching called “Striking the Essential Point.” We are so grateful for the opportunity to participate in this way and look forward whole-heartedly to Yangthang Tulku’s return. He is very enthusiastic about Tashi Chöling and wishes to come back in the years to come.

Last winter, we saw the closure of the beautiful Yeshe Nyingpo Town Center in the Old Ashland Armory which had been sponsored by the Carreon’s. We really appreciate Charles and Tara’s efforts and were sorry to lose that wonderful shrine room. However, we still offer ongoing classes in Ashland; Bruce Newman’s meditation classes and Matthew Small’s *ngöndro* (preliminary practices) classes are now being held at a new Dharma practice center sponsored by Marina Rezek. Please see our monthly calendar for details.

In February we gathered at Tashi Chöling to celebrate Losar with several days of Vajrakilaya practice, the traditional “cleaning” day, and one morning of Vajrasattva practice on the first day of the new year. We recently completed the annual Tröma retreat led by Sangye Khandro and appreciate her guidance and gracious presence more than ever. Not only did we do lots of Tröma *ngöndro*, we practiced the concise sadhana compiled by Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and engaged in a some inspiring Dharma question-and-answer discussions where Sangye’s growing compassion and skillful means were quite apparent. We were blessed on the last day by Tulku Sang-ngag’s giving the Tröma empowerment as well as dedication and celebration. Thinking of Rinpoche often, we realize the priceless value of having him physically near to us for so long and look forward to his return in May for the Vajrasattva retreat.

One last note—walk down memory lane with us. We’re continuing our photo albums of events and happenings at Tashi Chöling, including all of last year. If you have any notable photographs taken at Tashi Chöling that you wish to share, please send copies to Nick O’Connor, P.O. Box 64, Ashland, OR 97520.

For detailed information about events and retreats at Tashi Chöling, you can write Box 64, Ashland or call our Dharma hot line at 541-482-2399. Come see us! We're always glad to be with our Dharma family.

Best wishes to all of you,
Julie Rogers
Asst. Secretary

Portland Yeshe Nyingpo

Our little group has been invigorated this past year by focus on the Dudjom Tersar Tröma Nagmo practice. Sangye Khandro has come to Portland several times to give teachings on how to practice Tröma correctly and to lead us in the sadhana. We have gotten together with a few of the Chagdud Gonpa people on a regular basis, and this has made the sessions more dynamic. In March five of us from Portland joined others at Tashi Chöling for the annual Tröma retreat led by Sangye. It was wonderful for us to reconnect with everyone there and view the continuing progress on the projects at Tashi Chöling.

Immediately following that retreat, Tulku Sang-ngag, Yeshe Nyima and others came to Portland for immigration matters. On a wonderful afternoon hike to waterfalls in the Columbia Gorge, Tulku Sang-ngag described medicinal uses for plants growing along the trails which he recognized from studying Tibetan medicine. Even though it was a brief encounter, it gave us an opportunity to connect with him and look forward to the Guru Rinpoche/*Tso Kye Tük Tig* teachings he will give in Portland in September.

Clark Hansen
503-292-4004

News from Namdroling (Montana, that is. . .)

directed by Naomi Mattis

Namdroling has been established in Bozeman, Montana and named with the blessings of the Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche in the fall of 1996 after more than 50 people turned out to hear Naomi Mattis speak for three days about the basics of Tibetan Buddhism. In June 1997, Naomi returned to lead a three-day residential practice retreat for 22 people focusing on cultivating compassion through the contemplation of the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind toward the Dharma and meditation on Chenrezig. In late February 1998 Naomi returned to lead a three-day retreat on "The Profound Dharma of Natural Liberation through Contemplating the Peaceful and the Wrathful." Fifty-five people attended, and again a large number of people took refuge in the Three Jewels.

Namdroling is a very active Sangha, with 18 to 30 people attending Chenrezig practice every Monday night in Will and Cache Hartzell's acupuncture office and 12 or more in the Hartzell living room one Saturday a month for Dudjom Tersar *ngöndro* practice. As soon as we find the time and the space, we're developing a study group focused on studying the *bardo* teachings given this last February.

We feel very grateful to Gyatrul Rinpoche for his support and his teachings so generously shared with us by Naomi. May their lives be long and may their generosity continue to benefit all sentient beings.

Will & Cache Hartzell
406-582-0169
or 406-582-8844

*News from Orgyen Dorje Den
San Francisco/Bay Area Yeshe Nyingpo*

Throughout the past year, we had many wonderful teachings and blessings, as well as some positive changes. Until he left for Santa Barbara in May, Alan Wallace taught twice a week at Orgyen Dorje Den. Alan's classes were lively and enriching and were well-attended, mostly by people new to the Yeshe Nyingpo Sangha.

Once again we hosted H.H. Penor Rinpoche in the Bay Area. In September 1997, His Holiness—accompanied by monks from Namdroling Monastery in India—performed a full day of the Vajrakilaya Reversal Ceremony dedicated to the long life and good health of Gyatrul Rinpoche. This event was attended by 350 people who were completely absorbed into the practice. The next night Holiness offered the Bodhisatta Vow to 150 people in a beautiful ceremony.

In November, we were honored to host Yangthang Tulku Rinpoche. Yangthang Rinpoche bestowed the complete transmission of *wangs* of the new termas of Terton Dorje Dechen Lingpa, his immediate previous incarnation. The two weeks of empowerments were magically smooth, well-attended and greatly appreciated by the students. In December, Yangthang Rinpoche accepted our request to teach on the practice of Vajrakilaya. Again, we were graced with his wisdom, expert guidance and a sublime example of the results of Dharma practice.

For Losar 1998 we completed three days of practice with the Ven. Lingtrul Rinpoche and other lamas and monks. The evening practices were very enjoyable and well-attended, with everyone experiencing a strong feeling of community.

In June of 1997 the five-year lease for Orgyen Dorje Den's center ended. After looking for months, we found our new location just before Yangthang Rinpoche's arrival. Our new center is located in Oakland's Chinatown and has a shrine room capable of accommodating 80 people comfortably. It also has rooms for a private business office, a lama's room, bookstore and kitchen. It has everything we had hope for with plenty of good food nearby.

We continue to do *tsok* practice on the 10th and 25th days of the lunar calendar and have begun a Dharma study group where we will review the many teachings we've received over the years. For activities and schedule information about Orgyen Dorje Den, please call the center message machine at 510-839-3136. Other questions can be directed to Scott Globus by email to sglobus@well.com.

Orgyen Dorje Den
322 7th Street, Oakland, CA 94607

Los Angeles Yeshe Nyingpo

Greetings from Santa Monica! There have been a lot of changes over the past year in our little Sangha. Both David Johnston and Sondra Bennett have moved away, temporarily leaving me to hold the fort as the sole Yeshe Nyingpo Sangha member. However, I have had the great good fortune to have had two old students of H.E. Shenphen Rinpoche, Ed and Simone Heckerman, move back to Santa Monica after a long stay in Switzerland. They both are strong practitioners of the Tersar lineage, and we get together twice a month for our *tsok* pujas. It is truly a joy to be able to practice with them and to have them in my life. Valri Swift is also back from Alaska and will be joining us for pujas, as well.

So I just wanted to let the rest of my West Coast Dharma brothers and sisters know that the flame of the Dudjom Tersar is still burning brightly here and that we are all still connected with each other despite our distance. Wishing each one of you health, happiness and awakening in this Earth Tiger Year.

Suzanne Soehner
310-829-5189

Pausing to Take in The View for R.& M.

*Nothing can truly be said
until our worried tongues
shed their protection, until taste
has evened out, weightless as light
and form opens its hand, beyond the skin,
beyond the bone, no longer clinging
to anything
we finally let loose
into the breath given,
for you and I have embraced
the truth that releases this grip
we hang on, like clothespins
rusted to the wire
and out beyond the fence
is a field where a windmill
slips through the air.
The wind sends it into itself
so easily. Within the perfect
drift of its spokes
I hear our lives silently offer
to give up resistance
as we spill forward
and empty into the sky.*

Julie Rogers

Newport Yeshe Nyingpo

Our small Sangha on the Oregon coast has been blessed by visits by a number of lamas this past year. Lama Yontan from Spokane came last February and conducted puja to help purify negativity of a murder or a friend in our neighborhood. Later in the year, Lama Karma Lhondrup came for a brief visit from Nepal. In December we entertained guests from Cottage Grove: Lama Sonam and his extended family, Lama Jigme's mother, Ani Rigdzin Drolma, and Ngawang and his recently immigrated wife and five of their children. We had a joyful company, and they make one heck of a basketball team! In January we hosted two teaching visits of Lama Gyaltzen and his wife and baby, who have been living at Pema Osal Ling in Santa Cruz since coming from Nepal two years ago.

We continue to meet for practice on Sunday mornings. Beginning in April, we will be starting a study group in Newport on Wednesday evenings. The focus will be on the videotapes from Sogyal Rinpoche covering basic meditation and view which are included in his book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*.

Ann Goddard
541-563-5729

Mexico Yeshe Nyingpo, Ignacio Beamonte, 526-176-7848

Osal Nyingpo

Directed by Tulku Yeshe Nyima

Osal Nyingpo's main focus this year has been in assisting Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche in obtaining his permanent resident status and in planning Tulku Sang-ngag's upcoming tour of teachings, empowerments and Dharma practice in the United States. Tulku Sang-ngag is a vibrant young lama from Nepal who studied directly under H.H. Dilgo Khyentse for 13 years.

Following is an outline of the 1998 tour:

- Teachings on the Seven-Line Prayer, San Francisco, April 24-26
- Teachings and retreat on Pema Benzra, Taos, New Mexico, May 2-12
- Vajrasattva (*Dor Sem Lama Chodpa*) practice intensive, Tashi Chöling/Ashland, Oregon, May 18-28;
- Teachings on *Chöd*, San Francisco, May 29-31
- Guru Trakshe *wang, lung* and *tri*, San Francisco, June 5-7
- Cultivating Meditative Quiescence and Contemplative Insight, Esalen Institute, California, June 14-19
- Medicine Buddha teachings, San Francisco, July 17-20
- *Khandro Ked Kyang* and Nature of Mind teachings, Tara Mandala, Pagosa Springs, Colorado, August 4-17
- Mindroling Vajrasattva teachings and retreat, San Francisco, August 21-30;

- Red Vajrasattva and *Pudri Reg Pung* Vajrakilaya empowerments and teachings, Seattle, Washington, September 2-9
- Dudjom Tersar *Tso Kye Tük Tig* teachings, Portland, Oregon, September 11-13
- *Chetsun Nyingtig* teachings and practice retreat, San Francisco, September 16-23
- Teachings on Lama Mipham's Shakyamuni Buddha and Guru Rinpoche's Seven-Line Prayer, White Tara empowerment, Memphis, Tennessee, September 25-October 5
- Teachings on H.H. Dilgo Khyentse's Seven-Point Mind Training, Boulder, Colorado, October 18-19
- Mindroling Vajrasattva practice intensive, San Francisco, October 24-31

For more details and information, please contact Christine Moen at 415-488-1120 or email her at ecm@igc.org.

Homage to Gyatrul Rinpoche

written by Sangye Khandro for the Ten Shuk in May 1997

Homage to the Guru who is the Buddha!

Homage to the Guru who reveals to us who the Buddha is!

Homage to the Guru who is our own inseparable, indwelling, naturally-occurring pure-awareness Buddha nature!

Homage to Gyatrul Rinpoche who is such a Guru of unequalled kindness!

It is no coincidence today that we find ourselves sitting in your presence in the northwest country of Oregon at the time of Lord Buddha Shakyamuni's enlightenment, practicing the Dharma of the Great Perfection Atiyoga with you, the teacher known as All Sublime Transcendental Knowledge, Kunzang Sherab, with your retinue of male and female Bodhisattvas whose lives are dedicated to benefit all others. In your presence today, we take a few moments to reflect upon the past, the present, the future and our eternal connection with you.

It has been 25 years since His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness the Karmapa, and His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche sent you to the West. It has been 18 years since you came to Ashland, Oregon and this piece of land was offered to you for your own personal retreat. Rather than keeping something for yourself, you knew your purpose in this place. Because of you, it was 17 years ago that His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche placed his lotus feet on this land. He prayed for over an hour as he consecrated the land and proclaimed that anyone who practiced here with sincere heartfelt devotion would achieve the rainbow body. Over the many years that followed, a steady stream of great realized teachers came here to give empowerments, transmissions and teachings. Secret retreats were held way before any construction ever began. For the first time on the North American continent, the most profound practices from the Land of Snow were taught and practiced here to mark the very beginning of the propagation of Secret Mantra Vajrayana in America.

Land is not rendered sacred until the feet of realized beings have blessed it. The power of their blessings is thereafter invoked with every prayer, every mantra, every prostration, every circumambulation and meditation that occurs. Due to you and your kindness, profound blessings abound in this place that has become a true power spot in the western hemisphere. Now in the present, because of you and your kindness, we have the fully-endowed opportunity to gather to pray and practice during this Sagadawa month of 100,000 virtues increasing.

In particular, our prayer at this moment carries the words of this text written by Guru Rinpoche's representative in this world, His Holiness presence in this world. When we know that our human eyes can still see you and we can hear your voice, pray and laugh with you, there is hope that we will be continually inspired and uplifted to eternalize and become all that you exemplify. Yet at the same time, we believe in the continuity of mind which means that our connection is automatically enduring because it is not dependent upon circumstances. Yet, even though the moon shines in the sky with clear light, unclear water cannot reflect it. Even though you have introduced us again and again to our wisdom mind, the qualities of which are spontaneously inconceivable, without you to remind us, we still have difficulty recognizing this. We cannot reflect the vast qualities of wisdom without your example.

We pray to your body of the four kayas to receive the unceasing flow of your blessings. Together we gather as one Sangha today, as one mandala of vajra brothers and sisters to offer the mandala, the universe of all appearances, including our bodies, our speech, our minds and all of our virtue amassed together at once to your enlightened body, speech and mind. In accepting these representations of the Buddha's body—the statue of Buddha Amitabha, the Buddha's speech—the precious scripture, the enlightened mind—the stupa, it is our prayer that you will remain firm for one hundred ages of time, turning the wheel of the precious Buddhadharma unceasingly for the welfare and liberation of all parent sentient beings.