

**YESHE MELONG**  
**'Mirror of Wisdom'**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**March 1997**

**“Thank You” from Gyatrul Rinpoche**

From the islands of Hawaii, I send *Tashi Deleg* to all my friends, students, and patrons. Here we are all very well, and I hope you are too. I don't have too much to say but would like to begin by thanking all of you for the hard work and effort that you have put into the continuation of the work on our projects at Tashi Chöling including the Vajrasattva statue park, the east-wing addition to the temple, the prayer wheel temple, the Amitabha park and the Vajrakilaya ceremonies that took place last autumn. Especially, I want to thank you all for your efforts directed towards long-life ceremonies for myself. This includes all the money you donated and the good intentions and efforts expressed through your body, speech and mind. Specifically, in the Bay Area Tulku Sang Ngag and Yeshe led the great effort made to perform and accomplish the various ceremonies that were required for my health, and I thank all of you who participated for making this so successful on my behalf. I also thank Alan Wallace for all the effort he has put into tirelessly teaching the students who gather at Orgyen Dorje Den.

In addition to all of this, in the fourth month of this lunar year—the holy month of Saga Dawa when we celebrate Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment and paranirvana—there will be a Vajrasattva *drup chöd* (practice intensive) at Tashi Chöling which will be very important for all of you to attend if you can. This will begin the continuation of an annual tradition of practicing H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's terma revelations for the practice of Vajrakilaya, Tröma Nagmo and Vajrasattva (*Dor Sem Lama Chodpa*). Sangye will be leading the Tröma Nagmo intensive retreat practice at the end of March, and I encourage all of you to be attentive during that time to develop the threefold wisdom of hearing, contemplating and meditating. Also, when Sangye comes to Tashi Chöling and the Tröma retreat begins, please maintain the discipline that will be required of you at that time.

During the time of the Vajrasattva intensive, I hope that I will be able to attend. It will be a good opportunity for each of you (including myself) to offer some of your hair to a fire puja ceremony. Following this, *tsa-tsa* (clay stupas) will be created out of the ashes with the traditional blessing ceremony. In the future these *tsa-tsa* with your hair will be placed in the small temple that will house the statue of Buddha Amitabha. The reason for all of this is that we have no idea when death will arrive in the future, where it will occur, or what the

circumstances will be. We do know that death has been inevitable from the moment of our birth. This is the basic nature of our existence. At death, the Three Jewels are our only hope or source of refuge. Therefore, now while we still have the opportunity, it is a good idea to offer something of our body to make tsa-tsa with and to do this together as a group is a way of acknowledging the *karma* we have together now and from past lifetimes as well. If we could be assured that, when we do die, we will be able to have a proper cremation with all the rites and circumstances that will help us through the *bardo*, then that would be great. Because we cannot be assured in this way, it is good to do something now. I plan to offer my hair, and Sangye and Mimi will also do the same.

Because we are here in America, then everything always costs money, so once again in order to do the fire ceremony there will be expenses, not to mention the building of the Amitabha statue as well. I would like you to consider all of this. I will offer \$1,000 although my own funds are quite low this year, and I encourage all of you to try to offer \$500 to this important purpose if that is at all possible. If that is not possible, then at least \$300. But don't drop to \$300 just because I gave you that option; it's not good to be stingy all the time. Now we have one opportunity, one chance.

Those of you who are working, please continue to do so to the best of your ability. Just receiving a name is not enough; work sincerely as your pure offering. If you have money to offer and are able to work as well, then that is especially excellent because you can purify negative karma and accumulate great merit doing these two together. But please know I am not forcing anyone to do anything. It is not on that level. If you have no desire to participate, then that is how it is. If you do, then please do your best. You always say that you are going to keep pure samaya, and you request me to remain and live long or stay here with you. If this opportunity doesn't benefit those needs and desires, then I can't imagine what will. Actually all the efforts that you put out already this year on my behalf have already rendered great benefit. In the future, it will continue to do so. You see, if your efforts are true and pure in the direction of Dharma, it is beneficial to me. Otherwise, idle talk with no results have not brought benefit in the past, and it is doubtful that it will in the future. So, "Thank you."

These days many people complain that they are losing their freedom around the Dharma. You are definitely not losing your freedom, because you really didn't have true freedom to begin with. Who among you has true freedom? Anyone? If you really wish for freedom, then practice the Dharma. Realize Buddhahood and you will have freedom. Aside from that, there is no freedom. From birth until now, there was no freedom. You could not reverse the course of your life or the fact that you fall ill and suffer in so many ways. You must die because you are in a body that is impermanent with no true freedom. So don't be too arrogant about this.

I myself am planning to return to Half Moon Bay in April when the weather is warmer. If it is still cold there, then I will stay here in Hawaii longer. Here I am feeling much better, although my health is still not back to normal. These days I am able to eat a lot of food once again. So, "Thank you, all of you, for everything." And remember the advice of the great Khadampa Masters who taught, "The solitary cavern of the intellect should be the Dharma. The solitary cavern of the Dharma should be simplicity. The solitary cavern of simplicity should be the thought of death, and the solitary cavern of death should be an empty remote cave." This indicates that, rather than always being so absorbed in worldly concern, our true concern should be to practice Dharma, then to practice Dharma without the constant distraction to earn money. That doesn't mean one has to just give up everything. It means to free oneself from fixation, the fixation of duality, the constant thought for personal gratification. Instead make it an expression of generosity. Then, to consider death is, of course, essential. How could there be a Dharma practitioner who ignores death? Considering that life is impermanent and then practicing with enthusiastic diligence is the point. Rather than planning where you will die and what will happen to your corpse with fixation even at death, it is important to be free enough to be able to die anywhere without concern, like a wild animal. If our Dharma practice is pure, then we are eliminating fixation to self and appearances of self. If that's the case, would there still be someone who is attached to the nonexistent corpse? You all like the practice of *dzogchen*, and you also like to practice chöd. This, then is what you really must accomplish: the elimination of fixation, grasping and clinging. Otherwise, I don't have too much else to say. *Tashi Deleg!*

*Gyatrul Rinpoche*

### ***Vajrakilaya Practice Intensive***

In November of 1996 the first annual Vajrakilaya Retreat and Practice Intensive was held at Tashi Chöling. The retreat was led by Tulku Sang Ngag and Yeshe Nyima and was well attended by ordained Sangha and lay practitioners. The primary focus of the retreat was to assist in eliminating obstacles for the long life and good health of Gyatrul Rinpoche.

This practice of *Pudri Reg Pung*—The Razor which Destroys at a Touch—was revealed as a terma by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and has become one of the foundational practices of Gyatrul Rinpoche's lineage, as well as many other Nyingma centers. This powerful practice has the potential to completely cut through and transform the practitioners' obstacles to enlightenment; and under Tulku Sang Ngag's superb guidance and expertise, the strength of the practice was deeply felt.

Though originally scheduled for ten days, the retreat was extended to include eight days of fire pujas: powerful, wrathful, peaceful and increasing. We were blessed to have the expert skills of Rigdzin Nyima, Tashi, and Jigmed enabling us to follow Tulku Sang Ngag's exacting instructions for all aspects of the pujas.

A different sand mandala was created for each different kind of fire puja, and abundant offerings were made each day. We thank the many people who helped ensure the success of this retreat – from making the three-foot high Kilaya tormas to gathering obscure items necessary for the fire pujas to running into town one more time for something – but we most wish to thank our generous patron who provided the financial base for the entire retreat in traditional Tibetan style.

Our deepest gratitude extends to Gyatrul Rinpoche for this wonderful opportunity and to Tulku Sang Ngag for helping to make practice such a powerful reality.

## **First Annual Vajrasattva Drup Chöd**

**May 17-26, 1997**

**with a Special Event Honoring Gyatrul Rinpoche**

Please join us at Tashi Chöling May 17-26 for the first annual Vajra-sattva practice intensive or drup chöd during the sacred month of Saga Dawa. We will come together as a group to practice the Vajrasattva guru yoga, *Dor Sem Lama Chodpa*, from the Tersar lineage of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

The practice sessions will begin on Guru Rinpoche Day (May 17) and will continue through the most sacred day of the year, the full moon anniversary of the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and paranirvana. The practice will conclude with a three-day Yeshe Tsogyal long-life practice for Rinpoche on May 23-25, and the final day's celebration on May 26 will be to honor Gyatrul Rinpoche and his work in bringing the gift of Dharma to this continent and to express our commitment to the future of all that has been established. This will include the traditional *ten shuk* ceremony requesting his "firm presence" for countless ages to come. It is our wish and prayer that students, friends, and sponsors from around the world will gather together in Rinpoche's presence at his seat – Tashi Chöling – for this special event.

If you are unable to join us for the entire ten days of practice, please consider coming for the final day's ceremony to honor the life of our precious teacher. On Memorial Day, we will begin at 10:00 a.m., and we are also planning a celebration banquet and fund-raising event for that afternoon.

For more information, contact 541-482-2399. While our facilities are limited, we will assist you in finding accommodations. Please call early. If you wish to obtain practice texts or study materials that relate to this event, contact Yeshe Melong Media & Archives (see insert).

This will mark the beginning of a busy summer at the temple. We invite you to stay on for a few weeks and join in one of the ongoing Dharma projects, including painting statues, gardening, or working on the East Wing. Everyone is welcome to participate, practice, and learn.

## Greetings from Sangye

Warmest greetings to all Dharma friends and family in this new year. It is wonderful to bring in the new year with Rinpoche and Mimi here in my old home, the big island of Hawaii. Rinpoche has always been nourished by the enchanting and soothing energy of these islands. For myself as well, it is a perfect spot to recover after the surgery I had in January in the Bay Area. By the blessings of the Guru, the Triple Gem and the Sangha, my operation was very successful, as well as turning out to be a very important experience for me at this time in my life. I want to thank all of you for your strong support expressed through love, prayers, friendship, and financial assistance during this time. The strength of the Sangha is that it is a living resource.

In recapping this past year, I have to say that it was exceptional. That must be because it began with the Tröma retreat last January at Tashi Chöling. In February, Rinpoche, Mimi and I went to Taiwan where we met with all of our dear students and friends once again. The Sangha in Taiwan was, as always, very generous towards our efforts to complete the projects at Tashi Chöling. We then journeyed on to south India to the monastery of H.H. Penor Rinpoche where Rinpoche and I had first visited some ten years ago. At my request, Khenpo Namdrol—with the blessings of His Holiness—had agreed to teach the most precious text on the subject of Secret Mantra, the *Guryagharbha*, by including our group of western student-practitioners into the ninth-year course in the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute for Higher Studies. This was an unprecedented event in that it was the first time in history that a mixed gender assembly had ever studied such advanced subject matter together within a monastic institution. This was truly an indication of Holiness' as well as the Khenpo's compassion and foresight into the needs of the future. In addition to this, His Holiness also gave many *ahbhishekas* and a special teaching requested by Gyatrul Rinpoche and myself. Despite extreme heat and other hardships, it was a time of great learning and inner reflection for us all.

Returning home, I thought I would be able to catch up on some rest at Tashi Chöling. Much to my surprise and delight, I was asked to translate for Dungsei Rinpoche, Trinley Norbu, who had spontaneously decided to teach Dudjom Lingpa's *Nang Jang* (Refining Apparent Phenomena) at Pema Odsal Ling, the center for Lama Tharchin Rinpoche's Vajrayana Foundation. The month that followed was one of the highlights of my entire life. Rinpoche taught almost every night for an entire month, sometimes until two or three in the morning. It was the answer to prayers that I had begun some 20 years earlier when I first met Trinley Norbu Rinpoche in Hawaii.

The moment that teaching cycle was completed, H.H. Penor Rinpoche with entourage arrived in Los Angeles at the request of Steven Seagal and myself. We were most fortunate to host His Holiness for the conferral of the "Net of Magical Emanations" which is the required *ahbhisheka* for receiving the *Guryagharbha*

tantric transmissions. There were many important and amazing moments with Holiness, including horseback riding in the beautiful mountains of Montana. After LA, I had the good fortune to travel with His Holiness as his interpreter for the rest of his tour in the U.S.

For the past two years, I have been engaged in a very important translation project of the classic epic of King Gesar of Ling. Robin Kornman, Khenpo Chonam and myself work together in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for several months each year to produce the first three volumes of this, the largest epic in world history. We are sponsored by Harper-Collins Publishing Company and are hopeful that the first book of this initial trilogy will be published by next year. Here is an excerpt from the beginning of the fourth and final chapter of the first book. The stage is being set for the birth of Gesar in the human realm, but not without the skillful assistance of. . .guess who?

*“Master Lotus Born was invited to the land of the Nagas to cure an epidemic. To repay his kindness the naga king Tsugna Rinchen sent Blossom Divine Beauty (Metog Lhadze) to the human realm.*

*The divine child Joyful to Hear, was destined to be reborn as Gesar in the middle realm of humans in the Land of Ling in the country of Tibet in Jambudvīpa. His father would be the Masang mountain god (nyen) Gedzo. His mother would be the nagini Lovely Branch (Yelkha Dzedden). His aim would be to tame the inhuman Maras in the four border countries that surround Tibet. There is a saying that:*

*Only poison will cure illness due to poison.*

*If you want to cut iron, only iron will do.*

*The guru Lotus Born realized that the divine child would have to take a form appropriate to the class of beings who would be his disciples. Thus it was important that Joyful to Hear be born as the son of a naga and a mountain god (nyen). Lotus Born would have to use skillful means to beg the hand of the naga maiden. In order to pollute the nagas, he cursed certain substances with incantations (dharanis) and stuffed them into the left horn of a black dzo (female yak). He covered the opening and threw it into the lake Manasarowar. When he did this, a tremendous sound was heard and serious illnesses caused by pollution spread throughout the subterranean kingdoms of the nagas. They had no idea as to who had caused this condition or how to effect a cure. All the nagas became fearful and terrified. Then the leaders of the nagas gathered before the dragon king Tsugna Rinchen and with one voice, through a single spokesman, they presented the words of request. . . .*

*Om Mani Padme Hum Kyema, kyema kyi hud (Alas, oh woe!)  
The beginning of this song is far from happy.  
How can we fashion lovely melodies when we are so miserable?  
Although neither a song of marvel, hope or happiness,  
Perhaps this song of misery can restore our health.  
Upon your unchanging jeweled throne,  
O, Naga King Tsugna Rinchen,  
With undivided attention please direct your mind to us.  
Listen and receive this single silken scarf of words.  
On the night before last  
Down the pathway of the sky to the land of the nagas,  
From a mass of fire came a spark of poison.  
It came with a terrible sound almost mixing the water and earth.  
That spark almost dried up the ocean.  
Descending into the center of the naga countries,  
From the moment this bad omen occurred,  
The kingdom of the nagas was filled with disease.  
What previous karma or sudden conditions  
Have caused this wrong and how can it be cured?  
Alas, the ignorance of samsara. How pitiful!  
A fit and healthy body will not be mindful until illness comes.  
A happy human life full of leisure will not be mindful until the moment  
of death.  
Unless we are crushed by circumstances,  
We will not be mindful of the kindness of the guru. . ."*

One of the most exciting aspects of this project is that these books will become part of the curriculum for world literature courses in several universities nationwide. What a great vehicle through which to introduce the wealth of the Tibetan culture and the precious Dharma.

Privately, I continue to translate texts and hope to spend less time traveling and more time translating. As the Buddha said, "My speech is inconceivable, so no one can see it, but my speech is everything, so everyone can understand it." I look forward to seeing many of you during the month of Saga Dawa when we honor Gyatrul Rinpoche for all that he has done for us and request his presence to "firmly remain." In the meantime, this meeting—as in a dream—continues and, as it does, may it be a source of goodness and virtuous habits that we share for the benefit of all beings.

*Sangye Khandro*

## ***When a loved one dies. . .***

In response to our many friends who have experienced the loss of a relative or loved one and who have looked to Rinpoche and the temple for ways to make a positive connection on their behalf, the following information is provided. It is our hope that it will bring confidence into our hearts that there are ways we can benefit those who have passed on.

Traditionally, in Tibet when a friend or relative passes away, it is a very important time to rely on the Lama and the Sangha to offer prayers on their behalf and conduct special ceremonies. It is customary to make offerings generously and joyfully at that time. As these practices are relatively new to us in the west, our spiritual qualities may be limited; but through the guidance and encouragement of Gyatrul Rinpoche, we can offer our pure intention to be of service to others and apply the methods he has taught us for the last 20 years. Following are suggestions of some of the most appropriate ways to make offerings on behalf of the deceased.

First, notify the temple as soon as you can after the person has passed away. Please give the name of the deceased, date of passing, and send a photograph of the deceased, if possible, to Tashi Chöling, P.O. Box 64, Ashland, OR 97520, 541-482-2399.

Second, you may sponsor a practice that is done regularly at the temple by donating money to the temple or ordained or offering clean pure food for *tsok* (food offerings for religious ceremonies called pujas) in any amount. You may choose one or more of the following pujas for your donations and offerings. Prayers can still be done even if one does not have the means to make an offering. You are also invited to join us in any of these activities. Practices are done for the benefit of all sentient beings and especially dedicated for those whose names have been submitted.

- Daily practice of Dor Sem Lama Chodpa (Vajrasattva)
- Monthly (on the four puja days), monks, nuns and lay practitioners gather to offer *tsok*:
- Tröma / Dakini Day
- Tso Kye Tuk Tig / Guru Rinpoche Day
- Yeshe Tsogyal or Tara / New Moon
- Amitabha / Full Moon (which includes the *phowa* transference of consciousness)

If you are able, you may wish to sponsor one of the yearly accomplishment ceremonies held at the temple which are presently Tröma in late winter or spring, Vajrasattva in late spring, and Vajrakilaya in the fall.

Butter lamps are offered on the main shrine daily. A donation of \$50 buys one large container of coconut oil for butter lamps; any amount towards that is accepted.

Recently, ten acres of land adjacent to temple land have been donated for the construction of the Amitabha Park. Donations are greatly needed to complete this area dedicated to honoring and assisting those who have died.

If one requests the Lama to perform the phowa practice, it is important to make an offering at that time. In order for the auspicious connection to be completed, some exchange is needed.

We are happy to be of service—to the best of our ability—during your time of grief.

All happiness arises from wishing happiness for others.  
All misery arises from wishing happiness for oneself alone.  
What more need be said?

*Shantideva*

## **Passage to India—American Style**

It has been almost a year since we left San Francisco—destiny, India. Of course, no matter how hard we tried to plan, there were last minute details. . .like our arrival at the airport. Since we flew to LA first, we got to the 8:00 a.m. departure at 7:00 in plenty of time. We stood in a very short line to check in some luggage and had time for our last “real” coffee. Then, it was time to go to the gate. Of course, since the world is what it is, we had to pass through security. No problem for peace-loving Buddhists? Think again.

They scanned one carry-on bag. Okay. Then, the next and the next. Okay still. With the next bag, the conveyer belt stopped, and X-ray eyes scrutinized the insides of our most carefully packed luggage. “What’s that? Take it out, please.” So, Les—in his best humor—started to unpack the bag, extracting the *phurba* he was asked to take to Tara Lama at H.H. Penor Rinpoche’s monastery. “This looks like a weapon,” said the airport employee. “No, it’s a ritual object,” replied Les. “You can’t carry it on the plane.” “I have to!” “You can’t. Please, go there,” pointing to a room. Five minutes pass and only 25 minutes until the plane flies without us! More time passes, and finally Les comes back. After much cajoling, the “dangerous weapon” was put in its own box and flown to LA in the baggage department. Needless to say, we put it back in the check-in baggage the minute we got to LA.

We arrived in Hong Kong 17 hours later. The plane had to stop in Taiwan because we were running out of gas. Just what we needed—an extra two or so hours on the plane. I never thought a YMCA hotel could be so comfortable. Now, time for some fun—shopping! Rinpoche, Sangye and Mimi arrived the next day with the same thought—shopping! We had to buy important items to take to India, like silk fabric and vegetable peelers (which may mean something to you if

you've ever been to India). After shopping, we visited the Nyingma center and Mr. and Mrs. Poon, the mainstay of H.H. Penor Rinpoche's Hong Kong Sangha. The Poon's love for Rinpoche and Sangye and their enthusiastic energy and complete knowledge about everything in Hong Kong made the five of us feel like longtime residents and veteran shoppers.

Off to India: Bombay or is it Mumbai? Not our favorite city!! We arrived at midnight. It was hot and smoky from bonfires, and we had not made hotel reservations because our Indian travel agent had suggested waiting until our arrival rather than booking a \$150/night hotel. Never, never, never listen to your Indian travel agent. We knew something was up when our hotel van finally arrived with dents and no glass in the windows. We won't elaborate about the stained sheets, the hole in the floor for a toilet, the loud partying all night and the D movie with Richard Burton as a wife murderer.

When the next morning arrived with only one thought—getting to the airport and on to Bangalore—the dented and windowless van looked like a sleek limousine. Our minds had finally arrived in India. Rinpoche, Sangye and Mimi arrived at the airport looking very rested; and we immediately made reservations at their hotel for the return trip. Diane Lewis from Milwaukee, who is a joy and now a valued friend, joined the Bangalore Bound, the computer capital of India. As soon as we landed in Bangalore, H.H. Penor Rinpoche's monks met us with a wonderful, spotless van and a car. We were now in the lap of Indian luxury, first stop a hotel with air conditioning, bathtubs, and American-style toilets. How civilized! How spoiled! Ani Rioh, Yeshe, and Keiki-lani had arrived a few days ahead; so after a restful night and delicious Hindi breakfast, we were ready for the Indian highways and Namdroling Monastery.

As we drove south, it became less and less populated and more and more beautiful. The roads were filled with carts pulled by decorated water buffalo, bicycles, motorcycles, buses, vans and cars—each going as fast as possible. What a ride! When you arrive at the monastery, the first sight you see are eight of the most beautiful stupas ever made, with Tibetan monks, nuns, and laypeople doing *khorwa*. We were finally where we wanted to be.

Sakyong Rinpoche had been at the monastery for several months, and more than 15 other North Americans arrived soon after we did. For the first several weeks, we had only a few Bhutanese monks in the class because the *shedra* or college had not yet begun, but when everyone returned from vacation, our class grew to about 30. As our class schedule began to take shape, each morning Khenpo Namdrol—the senior khenpo at the monastery—would teach the *Sangwa'i Nyingpo* with Sangye translating. For the first month, H.H. Penor Rinpoche bestowed empowerments each afternoon. After the empowerments, we either went to our rooms to study the morning's lecture or did *khorwa* around the stupas, depending upon the heat—95°-105° every day. When Gyatrul Rinpoche felt well enough, he would join us for *khorwa*. Unfortunately, the heat

finally took its toll on him, and Rinpoche and Mimi returned to the U.S. Though disappointed about their departure, of course, we knew it was best for Rinpoche.

Our group decided to transcribe the audio tapes of the teachings but only had three laptops among us. So we were graciously offered the use of the computer room at the monastery. Several years ago, Tulkus Ngedon and Ajam had bought two computers and some computer books written in English. They then proceeded to learn English and the computers and began to write computer programs. Pretty amazing! There we were in India with the newest computers and software. . .with one drawback – we had to SAVE literally every minute. At first we thought they were joking, but the electricity went on and off like a light switch. Sometimes we would wait for two hours for it to be on for fifteen minutes. His Holiness was in the process of having a separate electric line brought in for the monastery.

For entertainment, we went into Kushalnagar, the nearest town. Four rupees into town, three back in the autoshaw. To call the U.S. we would go to the hotel, enter the glass booth and dial forever, hearing, “Please kindly try again, the lines are all busy.” Once connected, we watched the seconds tick by at \$2 a minute. It wasn’t just expensive; it was hard to get rupees. The banks didn’t want our travelers checks or our cash! Thank you, black market. After phoning, shopping. . .bottled Biseleri water, fruit, pens, paper, a Citra (lemon-lime drink). We didn’t miss TV, Macys or Safeway. We did miss AT&T and MCI! The last three weeks, we discovered the ice cream, the best ice cream. . .on any afternoon, you could find two or three of us at the ice cream parlor.

Mainly, we went to class, transcribed, typed, studied, did khorwa, or practiced. It’s amazing how fast a couple of months go by and then it’s time to go home. In one way we were ready, in others, not. We are ready to return for more teachings, and hopefully we will all meet again next January in Nepal to continue studying the incredible *Sangwa'i Nyingpo* with Khenpo Namdrol teaching and Sangye Khandro translating. See you there! *Lindy Steele & Les Collins*

### **Tashi Chöling & Ashland**

The Year of the Fire Ox will bring strength and energy to Tashi Chöling, and with that we pray many of Rinpoche’s dreams will be fulfilled or at least they will be close. One project that is close to his heart is the Amitabha Park which will become a place of reflection and bring home the Noble Truth that everything is impermanent. Rinpoche has mentioned this vision over the years, and now it is appearing. The Amitabha Park will complete a circle of wishes starting with the statue of Vajrasattva, two exquisite Tara statues, a prayer-wheel building with a large prayer wheel and shrine, and beautiful canopies (now under construction) over our precious statues.

Our temple is moving into a new phase—an addition is proceeding which we call the East Wing. This addition will house archives and provide an assembly area, as well as facilities for guests and teachers. Obviously, its completion is looked forward to with great excitement.

What a wondrous creation our precious Lama has provided. I urge you all to come and participate in these extraordinary opportunities of both practice and guru devotion. We at Tashi Chöling will do what we can to make your stay pleasant. If you can't make it in person, please support Rinpoche's projects through prayers and contributions.

Philip Thomas, President, Tashi Chöling  
P.O. Box 64, Ashland, OR 97520, 541-482-2399

A new Ashland town center has been started by Charles and Tara Carreon and others who live in or near Ashland. A beautiful meditation space has been created on the second floor of the Old Ashland Armory at Oak and B Streets where one can attend monthly pujas or ngöndro classes, or simply meditate in a quiet, contemplative spot. Contact the Carreon's for more information, 541-482-8216.

## **Sangha Cookbook Update**

It's not too late to submit your recipes for the cookbook! In case you haven't heard—or you just forgot—we're putting together a cookbook made up of any and all of your favorite original recipes. We are asking all extended Sangha members to contribute. The recipes should be wholesome and interesting food of any ethnic style. The highlight will be a section on lama cooking, so don't forget all of those things you cooked for Rinpoche or learned from Tibetan friends. This will be particularly useful for us when new people are learning to cook for Rinpoche and other visiting lamas. A vegetarian section will also be included. If possible, please include a little about the origin of the recipe or something interesting that happened around cooking or serving it.

All proceeds will benefit Yeshe Nyingpo! Please send your recipes and ideas **SOON** to Mimi Hohenberg, 501 Irish Ridge Road, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019, FAX 415-712-8758.

***Your Donation Dollars at Work***  
***Note from the Treasurer***

The foundation and potential of our organization is based on your monthly Tashi Chöling Temple Support and/or paying dues to your local Yeshe Nyingpo center. This is the most vital financial support you can offer. We hope this will help you chose how you wish to direct your offerings. As always, all donations are tax-deductible.

ON-GOING FUNDS  
TASHI CHÖLING TEMPLE SUPPORT or  
DUES TO YOUR LOCAL CENTER

(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 FUND

(Pays medical insurance and expenses for Gyatrul Rinpoche and Sangye Khandro, household, food and other personal expenses.)

VINAYA FUND

(Provides basic room and board for monks, nuns and retreatants.)

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

EAST WING CONST.	AMITABHA PARK	STATUE GARDEN	YESHE MELONG ARCHIVES
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New Translations Project	Video Recovery Project
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As a new service, we can offer consultations with a professional estate planner to advise you on planned giving that can bring financial benefits to you as well as the Dharma. We can also advise you on how to donate stocks and other assets that will provide maximum savings yearly on income taxes. Please contact us if you are interested in these options.

*Mimi Hohenberg*

## Offering

*There is only heart.  
All that we have.  
All else is sand between fingers  
falling to our feet  
where we sink, thinking  
the world is solid, holding us up  
as it shifts with each step,  
changing.*

*The heart does not change  
but we hold it like sand  
forcing it into forms  
that fall to our feet  
where we walk on it  
thinking it is gone.*

*We open and close it  
saying, "it is mine,"  
believing we are masters  
of its' world, a place so far  
and close to us  
we fear to reach out or in.*

*I am freeing my heart  
from this religion of pain  
that worships itself and offers  
nothing. In silence,  
knowing this nakedness  
I give it to you.*

Julie Rogers

### ***Newport, Oregon***

Last fall was a busy one for the Newport Sangha. We hosted a visit by Namkha Drimed Rinpoche in late August, when he presented a Guru Yoga practice to a packed house at a Newport hotel ballroom. His visit was followed by that of a *ngagpa* lama from England visiting the U.S. for the first time, Lama Mingyur. His discussion of male and female energies gave his sizeable audience a humorous and culturally different perspective of the Tibetan philosophies.

In September, the local council for the arts presented performances and the making of a sand mandala by the monks of Drepung Loseling Monastery, a Gelugpa group from India whose tour was sponsored by the actor Richard Gere. Several Newport Sangha members served on the organizing committee and helped with the visit. The Medicine Buddha mandala was created in public at the Performing Arts Center at no cost to the public due to several sponsors'

generosity. The event gathered energies of many artists, visitors, and intellectuals who normally are not connected with the Dharma, and the positive publicity and participation was overwhelming. Thousands of people in this area now have a greater understanding of Tibetan Buddhism.

We have been meeting monthly in an interfaith council for the Newport area designed to help foster understanding and reduce frictions between the various religious faiths and traditions. We also hold weekly puja and discussion sessions on Sunday at 10 a.m.

This month we will be hosting a visit by Lama Yontan Gonpo of Spokane who will speak on *karma* and lead a puja – in the area where a friend's murdered body was found in December – to pacify negative forces. Prayer flags which someone hung at the spot were photographed and featured on the front page of the local newspaper with a generally positive caption. We slowly find our place in the community.

Call Ann at 541-563-5729 for more information.

### ***Orgyen Dorje Den/ Bay Area Yeshe Nyingpo***

While it seems that there is never enough time to do everything we want to do, in retrospect we had a busy and meaningful year. The highlight of the year was this past July. At Gyatrul Rinpoche's request, H.H. Penor Rinpoche bestowed the empowerment *Tretse Rang Drol*, Self-Liberation through Contact. We held the event in a beautiful hall in downtown San Francisco, and approximately 400 people attended.

During the year, we were graced by the presence of other lamas as well. Khenpo Tsewang Gyatso taught the Ninth Chapter of *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Rinpoche's cousin, Thubten Kalsang Rinpoche, gave a Dharma talk on the Vehicles of Buddhism. And most recently, Tulku Sang Ngag Rinpoche and Yeshe Nyima led two weeks of pujas dedicated to the long life of Gyatrul Rinpoche. In addition, over 20,000 fish were released on behalf of Gyatrul Rinpoche. We plan to perform the fish-releasing practice on a regular basis.

Some time ago, Rinpoche began teaching *The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and then asked Alan Wallace to continue. After more than a year of classes, we have just finished the teachings. All of Alan's classes have been lively and enriching. He will be leaving the Bay Area soon. Best wishes to him in his new endeavors.

We continue to do the tsok practices on the 10th and 25th days, and have begun practicing the bardo practices, with the hope to do another bardo retreat some time later this year. This year also marked the passing of some valued Sangha members: Rob Weatherston, Glen Margo, Steve Ellis, and John Brown (a/k/a Yamantaka). Let's remember to keep them in our prayers.

For activities and schedule information about Orgyen Dorje Den, please call the center message machine at 415-546-7915. Other questions can be directed to Scott Globus at 415-495-0915 or by e-mail to [sglobus@well.com](mailto:sglobus@well.com).

Portland Yeshe Nyingpo, Clark Hansen, 503-292-4004

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

### ***Los Angeles Yeshe Nyingpo***

This year, our activity was low key with a small Yeshe Nyingpo Sangha. We've been attending Dharma events at other centers in the area and doing tsok on the 10th and 25th days of the lunar month.

This year, when Steven Seagal sponsored H.H. Penor Rinpoche in Los Angeles, we provided some of the event's expertise and grunt work as part of the group that came together to make that program happen. I managed the financial part through Yeshe Nyingpo, interfacing with Steven's liaison. Sondra headed the kitchen duties, and Suzanne helped her manage things at the house where His Holiness, his entourage, and the monks stayed. Given our limited resources, we are very grateful to Steven for bringing His Holiness to LA and were happy to work with his people. It worked out very well.

Now that Valri Swift is back in LA, our Sangha has grown in the right direction. However, I will be moving to the Bay Area this summer, so the LA group will shrink once again. I pray that tendency will reverse itself and that the Los Angeles Yeshe Nyingpo will grow and thrive once again. David Johnston, 310-450-2559

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If you wish to be deleted from our mailing list or have a change of address, please notify us at P.O. Box 124, Ashland, OR 97520.

### ***Flags at a Tibetan Temple*** by Kathryn Dohrmann

Picture them as rivers of light.

A monk's work: contemplating cloth,  
cutting, sewing, the sacred script  
inscribed: the flags mounted,  
hung — almost as crucifixes —  
then giving up of themselves,  
rising, fall, breath.

Think of prayers.

When wind blows well, human wishes

lift from earth, seed the air  
make a weather of risen words;  
some days there is much waiting,  
yet softness of coastal sun,  
at dusk and dawn the fog.

What would I give to fly with them,  
these words with wings,  
on days when language feels like gravity,  
beloved earth, beloved  
body so heavy?

*Kathryn Dohrmann is a poet and a member of the faculty of Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois. She wrote this poem after visiting the Tibetan Buddhist Sanctuary, Tashi Chöling, located in the Colectin Valley in Northern California. (From ACCESS, September, 1996, Ashland, Oregon. . . .Tashi Chöling is in southern Oregon, very close to the California border.)*

### **Osal Nyingpo**                      *directed by Tulku Yeshe Nyima*

It was the great privilege of the Osal Nyingpo organization to host the visit of Tulku Sang Ngag to the United States. Rinpoche's primary residence for the four-month stay was the San Francisco Bay area, though he also traveled to Santa Fe and Tashi Chöling.

In the Bay Area, Tulku Sang Ngag offered a series of empowerments and teachings, along with almost two weeks of pujas in December for the benefit of Gyatrul Rinpoche. In October, Tulku Sang Ngag led a weekend retreat on the *Pudri Reg Pung Vajrakilaya* practice, and in December Rinpoche offered empowerment, teachings and practice on the *Yonten Kunjung*, a practice on Dzambhala that is a revelation of the tertön Trime Lingpa, of whom Tulku Sang Ngag is the present-day incarnation. The New Year began with Rinpoche bestowing the empowerment of the chöd practice "The Laughter of the Dakinis" or *Khandro Kedkyang*. His visit ended with the opening of the mandala of Mindroling Vajrasattva over the course of two weekend retreats.

It was a time of rare opportunity. Tulku Sang Ngag's teachings were profound, accessible, and inspiring. Tulku Sang Ngag is scheduled to return in the beginning of 1998, and one of the expected events is to be an intensive retreat on Mindroling Vajrasattva.

Tulku Sang Ngag also laid the groundwork for a project dear to his heart. Called "The Turquoise Leaf," the project is presently focused on supporting a women's retreat center and nunnery project in the Shugseb tradition located in Parping, Nepal, but the larger intention is to generate interest, support and equality for all women practitioners. Those interested in supporting this project or wanting more information should contact Christine Moen at 415-488-1110 or [ecm@igc.org](mailto:ecm@igc.org).

Throughout the visit, Chokyi Nyima was the main translator, and his masterful translations were a powerful contribution to the proceedings. Tulku Yeshe Nyima's overseeing of all the activities over the months, in addition to the translation and preparation of all the necessary texts, was an immense contribution. His efforts were greatly appreciated, as were the efforts of the many others who offered their homes, food, money, etc. to support these events. May all these efforts help spread the precious Dharma and generate benefit for all beings.

***WOMANMIND—a column by Phuntsok Chodron (Julie Rogers)***

“In Buddhist practice we speak of the mother as being the main figure visualized when remembering the kindness of all sentient beings. When we speak of mothers, we speak of women, and these mothers play a very valuable role within the family. . . .speaking from a religious point of view, if the mother happens to be a truly spiritual and knowledgeable person, she can become a crucial influence in her child's education as well. Therefore, both in the context of individual, personal development and in society at large, the mother is extremely precious. . . .So we have arrived at an important point: What is to be done in terms of women's rights from the women's side? As has been pointed out, it is correct to struggle for one's rights, not with pride or jealousy, but with a view to taking one's own share of responsibility in the critical task of improving the quality of human society. In broad terms, we are actually speaking of world peace. I personally have great conviction in world peace and strive to bring it about, explaining that the way to achieve peace in the world is through cultivating mental peace. In this regard, the mother is seen to play an extremely important role.”

*His Holiness the Dalai Lama from Daughters of The Buddha by Karma Lekshe Tsomo*

Though many of us have had the great fortune to familiarize ourselves with the Buddhist path for some time, it still remains young in our Western culture here in the United States. As new students enter the Sangha and our friends and relatives join us in exploration of the teachings, they may struggle—as we have—with understanding their place in pursuing a practice within the context of an ancient tradition so often influenced by the cultures into which it has been born. These cultures have been primarily male dominant, which has had an impact on the recording of teachings and some of the views held therein. In most cases throughout history, to be born male has provided circumstances of greater opportunity than those of being born female. At this point, Buddhism enters America in the present day.

Therefore, the question of gender—whether it is more desirable to be born male or female in order to achieve enlightenment—has arisen. It has been clearly documented that either sex is fully capable of reaching full spiritual potential. Our ideal as practitioners, and moreover as developed human beings, is to engender loving kindness to all, without discrimination. Indulging in attachment

or aversion by judging with the wrong belief that some of us are more qualified, intelligent, deserving, or capable than others is a product of our deluded ego, the very thing we are working to purify by our practice and study. Intense identification with oneself on any level—even that of gender—contradicts the understanding of our true nature from which springs the altruistic and selfless quality of bodhicitta, our inspiration to achieve liberation for the sake of others.

As mothers, and as fathers, we may become discouraged by our lack of free time and energy to engage in formal practice. The role of householder may be seen as undesirable and family life as a conflict which prevents us from spiritual development. We forget that our motivation and effort to embody the teachings in our thoughts, speech, and activities is of tremendous merit. To examine the mind, to search our hearts to discover our underlying motives, to acknowledge our faults and apply the antidotes by way of practicing the Six Perfections, and to replace our habit of selfishness with the attitude of putting the needs of others first are all valuable practices in themselves.

We have the opportunity to do these things every day, in every situation and especially in the context of family life. What may appear to be an obstacle to the path is then understood to be a great opportunity, as we bring the skills we develop within the family to our relationships with others, with the Sangha, and with the world. No matter how difficult it is, our responsibility is to serve all beings and to purify our body, speech and mind through cultivating the necessary qualities. In this light, all experience is the path, and our formal practice is the foundational support and technique to deepen and complete the process. Women and men, mothers and fathers, can all work together in this way to benefit others. *Tashi Deleg!*