

■ Taking Care of OTHERS

This section highlights the incredible work being done in the FPMT organization aimed at taking care of others.

FEATURED PROJECT:

ANIMAL LIBERATION FUND

Liberating animals is one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's heart practices. Whenever possible, Rinpoche rescues as many animals as he can that would otherwise be killed for food, used as fishing bait or hunted. The rescued animals are circumambulated around holy objects and texts in order to plant the seeds of enlightenment in their minds and they receive blessings and prayers. Then they are released into safe environments to live out their natural

lives. FPMT's Animal Liberation Fund financially supports this kind of activity.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche continually reminds his students that "especially for beings born in the animal realm, [the practice of animal liberation] definitely helps." Rinpoche's reason for this is crystal clear: doing prayers, chanting powerful mantras and sprinkling them with blessed water purifies their karma so they can receive a higher rebirth

and liberation. This practice immediately purifies their oceans of samsaric suffering.

Rinpoche also often recommends animal liberation practice for people with serious illnesses or other heavy life obstacles. "For the person who liberates animals, or whoever wants to dedicate the merit to those with life obstacles," Rinpoche has taught, "this practice helps them to obtain long life. Even if you don't expect it, the karma will cause you to have a long life."

At Lama Zopa Rinpoche's home in California, extensive animal liberations are done three times a month by the Sangha members living there. Rinpoche requests that this practice be ongoing and dedicated especially for the long life of all Rinpoche's gurus and also for any student who is sick or has life obstacles, as well for all beings in general.



Yaks saved from being killed in Rowaling, Nepal, with blessing "strings"

Anyone can make offerings to the Animal Liberation Fund, and all donations will directly go to benefitting animals (including insects and worms!) that would otherwise be killed. Extensive dedications are made for all the donors. The Animal Liberation Fund is one amazing example of FPMT's collective efforts to help animals.

Recent News for Rejoicing from the Animal Liberation Fund!

- The Animal Liberation Fund recently donated US\$20,000 to liberate 2 million lives, dedicated especially for the health and long life of Lama Zopa Rinpoche. This animal liberation was organized by Amitabha Buddhist Centre in Singapore.
- Recently, Geshe Jinpa from Kopan Monastery arranged for 120 yaks that were going to be killed to be purchased and taken to families who pledged to care for the yaks for the rest of their lives. The trip took over a week on foot and there will soon be a documentary released about the liberation. The fund offered US\$7,715 to sponsor half of the 120 yaks. Students from Singapore sponsored the other half. Lama Zopa Rinpoche blessed 120 giant pieces of cloth for the yaks to wear as blessing "strings."
- When Rinpoche heard how hundreds of thousands of animals in Nepal would be sacrificed during Dashain (a yearly, 15-day Hindu religious festival), Rinpoche immediately started to check what prayers and pujas should be done to help all the animals have a good rebirth as well as to help those who perform the sacrifices. Rinpoche then requested over 10,000 Sangha members from the three great monasteries and many other monasteries and nunneries to do extensive Medicine Buddha puja as well as nyung näs with strong dedications for all animals that are killed, especially those being sacrificed during Dashain as well as for those who do the killing. The cost of all the pujas was over US\$15,000, which Lama Zopa Rinpoche and the Animal Liberation Fund helped to sponsor.

If you would like to contribute to incredibly beneficial activities like these through the Animal Liberation Fund, please write to Ven. Holly Ansett (holly@fpmt.org) or make a donation to the fund online: www.fpmt.org/projects/fpmt/alf.html.

You may see many of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's compassionate acts toward animals in action by typing "Lama Zopa Rinpoche animals" into the YouTube search feature. Additionally, subscribe to Ven. Roger Kunsang's blog, "Life on the Road with Lama Zopa Rinpoche" (on www.mandalamagazine.org) for regular updates about Rinpoche's continual work to benefit all beings, especially animals.

Beautiful Animal Liberation Tools from the FPMT Foundation Store

If you are looking for a way to benefit small animals and insects in your home and bring them to enlightenment, the Animal Liberation Tools can help. These updated liberation tools, now made from a more durable material, were designed by Lama Zopa



Sold in pairs (one for each hand!), Animal Liberation Tools are a perfect way to practice caring for all creatures

Rinpoche and are an example of Rinpoche's legendary love and care for animals. By using these Animal Liberation Tools, you can not only gently catch and remove insects from unsafe environments, but you can also expose them to the Dharma as you take them around holy objects and carry them to safety. This is not your ordinary firefly jar! The tools are covered with mantras and inspiring quotes to benefit insects and their human liberators alike.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has expressed many times that he really hopes that the Animal Liberation Tools will be widely used and available in FPMT as they are an incredibly easy way to liberate and benefit sentient beings. They also can be fun to use with children. Often people who are not Buddhist are very intrigued by the tools and in this way they also benefit by looking at the mantras.

The words on the Animal Liberation Tools are themselves a meditation on the kindness of sentient beings, especially the insect you are catching, reminding you that in fact it is this insect that is taking you to enlightenment by helping you go around holy objects and create merit.

Animal Liberation Tools are available from the FPMT Foundation Store (<http://shop.fpmt.org/>)

Mandala wishes to acknowledge and thank Fred Cheong for his generosity in producing the recently updated Animal Liberation Tools according to Lama Zopa Rinpoche's vision.

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Yaks, Live Long!

By Tania Duratovic

Recently my husband, Phil Hunt, and I had the opportunity to journey to Tibet. As always, we look out for animal welfare and environmental issues when we travel. One of the things we really wanted to do while in Tibet was to rescue some yaks from being slaughtered. We had organized for this to happen via a monk friend and were really keen to see it through.

Communication was difficult as our Tibetan is non-existent (other than prayers!) and few people in eastern Tibet speak English. Apparently we were to check out the yaks and choose which ones we wanted. This, of course, was not something we wanted to do. How can one choose which ones live and which ones are to be killed? So we left it to the kind Tibetan family who were to be their caretakers to choose.

The liberation of large animals poses a number of problems. You can't simply release them. They require ongoing care including food, shelter and medical support (even if this is basic). In some respects this is where the real effort begins. Fortunately the Tibetans have a long tradi-



Dechen is one of two yaks liberated in Tibet by Enlightenment for the Dear Animals

tion of liberating yaks, sheep and the like, and are often happy to look after these lucky individuals. ♦

Tania and Phil are the project coordinators and founders of Enlightenment for the Dear Animals (www.enlightenmentforanimals.org) and coordinators of the Animal Liberation Sanctuary, Nepal (www.fpmt.org/projects/other/alp.html).

Read more about Tania and Phil's trip to Tibet, including more on their encounters with Tibetans, yaks and dogs plus photos, as part of our exclusive online content at mandalamagazine.org.

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