

THE INSPIRATIONAL Dagri Rinpoche

A commitment from Lama Yeshe in the 1980s to support the reincarnation of one of his teachers has been carried on over the years by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Today, Dagri Rinpoche, the reincarnation of Pari Dorje Chang, one of the very great geshes of Lhasa, is one of FPMT's revered touring teachers.

Dagri Rinpoche, who was born in Tibet in 1958 and escaped to India in 1982, is a recognized tulku with a Geshe Lharampa degree.

Mandala featured Dagri Rinpoche in the August-September 2007 issue, when he talked to Katy Fradet about the importance of integrating *ngondro* (preliminary practices) into one's daily meditation practice.

His teaching schedule has been taking him mainly to parts of Europe and Asia, where he has been teaching lam-rim, lojong and philosophy as well as giving initiations, conducting fire pujas and teaching tantric commentaries.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has this to say about Dagri Rinpoche: "The very nice thing about him is that he always talks about Lama Yeshe, and he very much wants the FPMT to succeed. He is one of the lamas His Holiness has great trust in and he is a lineage holder."

Dagri Rinpoche does long life meditation every day for Lama Zopa Rinpoche, with whom he feels a very close connection. In his previous life he was a close disciple of Pabongka Rinpoche and Lama Yeshe was his disciple. In this life Lama Yeshe took some care of him. When Lama died, Lama Zopa Rinpoche took on the responsibility and brought him out of Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama hopes that in the future he will teach in Tibet and take care of the lineage.

Dagri Rinpoche also took on the responsibility of having an extremely special White Mahakala (and one other) house made of colored thread. A house is one storey high and costs 100,000 rupees. The white one is now finished. Traditionally, only very wealthy people and monasteries would have these made. Dagri Rinpoche had this made from his own side for the success of FPMT.

He is reputed to be one of the Sixteen Arhats. More importantly, according to Nalanda Monastery's Geshe Jamphel, the way to rely on a lama "is not dependent on whether he is a tulku and whether you are inspired by the stories from his past life. It is not taught in the texts that when investigating whether someone is a qualified lama, you investigate what he is said to have done in a previous life. Rather, you should investigate what he is doing in this life."

There is plenty of evidence that Dagri Rinpoche's present life is exemplary and inspirational. From the time Dagri Rinpoche was asked by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to teach at Nagarjuna C.E.T. Valencia in Spain at Saka Dawa in May 2002, he has established a strong connection with students there, reports Rafael Ferrer.

Ven. Kaye Miner, resident teacher at Maitreya Instituut Amsterdam and director of Maitreya Instituut Emst, had this to say about Dagri Rinpoche's 2006 "beautiful" visit: "It was a rare experience to have such a warm and heart-touching lama stay with us; he made everything so easy. He was continually warm and giving, praising Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, supporting FPMT. It really helped to inspire us all."

And during Lama Zopa Rinpoche's visit to Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa in Italy in June 2008, Rinpoche convinced Dagri Rinpoche to stay on, just so Rinpoche could organize a Long Life Puja especially for him (*Mandala* October-December 2008).

Jean-Paul Gloor, director of Gendun Drupa Centre in Switzerland, says that Dagri Rinpoche's five-day visit to the center in July 2008 was preceded by "a mixture of happiness, thankfulness, stress and impatience" as students prepared for his arrival.

"As soon as he arrived, his smile and his attention towards each of us deeply touched our hearts. He demonstrated true simplicity – strength and sweetness at the same time. He made a definite conquest of our souls with his glance, his words, and sense of humor, as well as his answers – often to questions which were not even formulated out loud! We were inspired by his various and numerous interventions!"



Clockwise from left: Dagri Rinpoche (right) with Geshe Tenphel, resident geshe at Istituto Lama Tsong Khapa and teacher of the Masters Program, inspecting the Maitreya Project Relics, Italy, in June 2008. Lama Zopa Rinpoche with Dagri Rinpoche at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Italy, in June 2008. Dagri Rinpoche did a Chenrezig jenang outside on the veranda of Astrid Awlad's home in Switzerland in July 2008.

Dagri Rinpoche also paid a visit to a local hospice where he gave a talk on the subject of death and compassion, and a day center for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease. He gave a public talk on the subject of compassion in our world, gave a commentary on the *Heart Sutra* and the *Perfection of Wisdom*, guided a Guru Puja with a tsog and concluded with a Medicine Buddha initiation, as well as having many private conversations providing advice to students for their practice.

"How precious and inspiring it is to be close to a teacher who is fully what he is teaching," Jean-Paul said.

Astrid Awlad believes that Dagri Rinpoche's blessing is making the impossible come true for her. She has a house and land in the Swiss mountains and credits Dagri Rinpoche's support with being able to get through bureaucratic and family requirements to turn it into a retreat house.

"In September 2007 when Dagri Rinpoche came to Switzerland and gave teachings and initiations in the FPMT's Longku Zopa Gyu Centre in Berne, he did various pujas to bless and purify the house and surroundings," she

said. "In July 2008 he came again and gave a Chenrezig jenang outside on the veranda. From the depth of my heart and with much devotion I thank Dagri Rinpoche for what he made possible. May he live long and may we all receive teachings from our Mahayana Gurus until enlightenment."

"It was a 'one-visit-three-centers' program for Dagri Rinpoche when he visited Malaysia in August 2008," reports Yeo Puay Huei, Director of Losang Dragpa Centre. "Rinpoche's program consisted of Dharma teachings, initiations and pujas at three out of the four Malaysian FPMT centers: namely, at Kasih Hospice Care Society, where Rinpoche presided over the opening ceremony of the center's new premises; at Rinchen Jangsem Ling, a retreat facility amidst a lush plantation, two hours out from the capital city to give further teachings and pujas to local townfolk; and, of course, at Losang Dragpa Centre, the oldest center in Malaysia for teachings and pujas. Rinpoche's simple and direct manner of engaging with students was deeply appreciated by all." ❀