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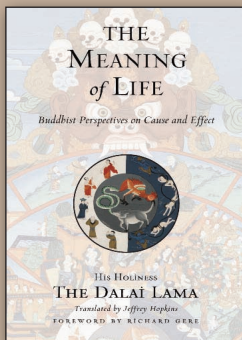
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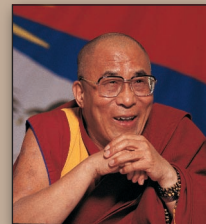
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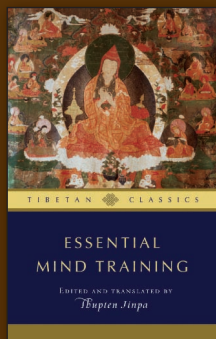


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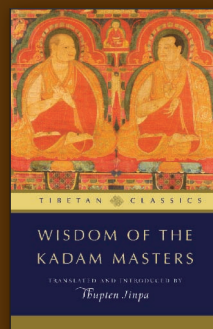
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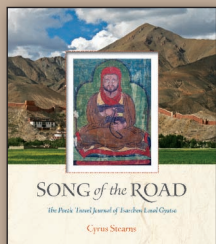
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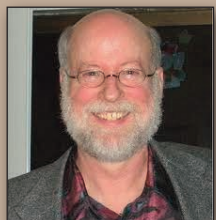
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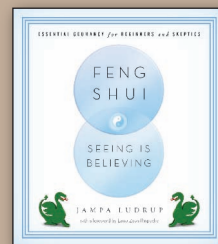


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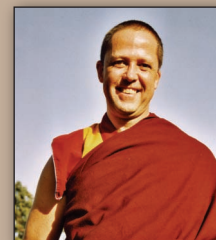
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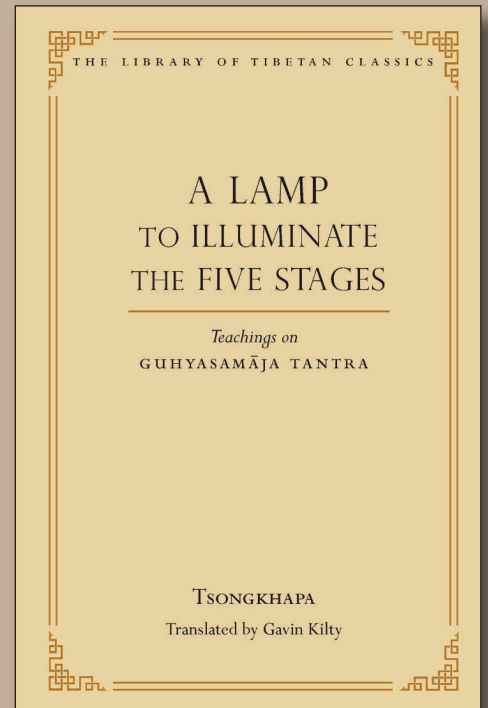
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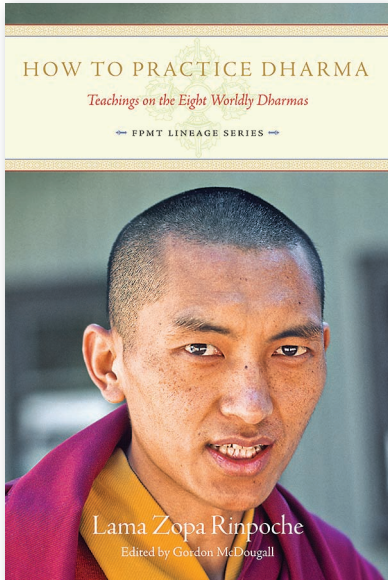
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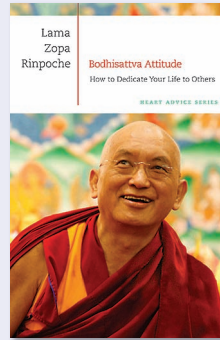
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COVER: Pabongka Hermitage on the outskirts of Lhasa, Tibet, July 2012. In the 7th century C.E., the first Dharma King Songsten Gampo founded the site. It is said that Tönmi Sambhota created the Tibetan script at Pabongka. A monastery was built there, perhaps during the reign of the second Dharma King Trisong Detsen (8th century). Later, Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) lived as a hermit at the site. Monks from Sera Monastery began restoration at Pabongka in the mid-1980s and manage the hermitage today. Photo by Matt Lindén.



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Dear Reader,

“We are doing pilgrimage, but we have to understand the benefits. We have to understand what skies of benefit we get each time we see a statue of Buddha, a picture of Buddha. Like that, [we have to understand] what happens to this mental continuum,” Lama Zopa Rinpoche instructed the group of students traveling with him on a 2002 pilgrimage to Tibet. “Pilgrimage is to subdue one’s own mind; to use every opportunity to do the most extensive purification and to accumulate the most extensive merit so that we can have the realizations of the path.”

This once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage with Rinpoche was documented in Christina Lundberg’s 2007 film *Mystic Tibet*, which I recently viewed for a second time. The documentary presents a deeply moving and instructive portrait of the meaning and purpose of pilgrimage. I recommend that any and all Dharma students watch the film whether or not you are preparing for pilgrimage. (If your center or study group doesn’t already have a copy, the FPMT Foundation Store has DVDs in stock and is offering them at a special 40%-off discount for this issue. You can also read Ven. Sarah

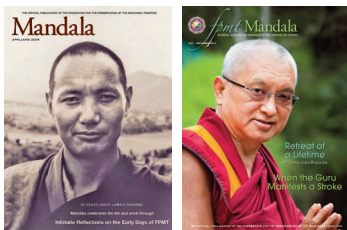
Thresher’s 2002 piece for *Mandala* on the pilgrimage with this issue’s online content at mandalamagazine.org.)

After watching *Mystic Tibet*, I had the thought that the incredible devotion and tireless beneficial activity that Rinpoche demonstrated in Tibet on pilgrimage is essentially no different than what Rinpoche does every day. And then I wondered how I could integrate the activities of pilgrimage into my daily life. Perhaps it’s not practical to stop at every single holy object and image in the FPMT International Office (there are a lot after all!) and pause to put my hands together in the mudra of prostration. But as a start, I can make internal prostrations to them as a group every morning when I arrive, instead of rushing for my desk.

As we’ve prepared this issue’s print and online content, I’ve developed a strong wish to do extensive pilgrimage. But until that opportunity manifests, I am inspired to adopt the path of pilgrimage into my daily life. I hope as you read these pieces you find similar inspiration.

Love,
Laura

About Mandala



Mandala is the official publication of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international charitable organization founded more than thirty years ago by two Tibetan Buddhist masters: Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935-1984) and Lama Thubten

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Recurring topics include: Buddhist philosophy; Education; Ordination and the Sangha; Buddhism and Modern Life; Youth Issues; FPMT Activities Worldwide; Lama Yeshe and his teachings; Lama Zopa Rinpoche and his teachings; His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his teachings, among many other topics.

Writers, photographers and artists, both amateur and professional, are encouraged to submit material for consideration. *Mandala* currently does not pay for publishable content; we credit all photos and other work as requested.

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Lama Yeshe's Wisdom

Contacting the Bodhgaya Within

By Lama Yeshe

*Lama Yeshe, Chenrezig Institute, Australia, 1981.
Photo by Gregg Moscott.*



Once, a long time ago, a Tibetan lama wanted to go to India to see his guru there. One of his disciples said to him, “For what reason are you going to India? There is no reason to go. The inner guru is within your nervous system, and if you want to see the deities and create good karma, make offerings to the body mandala within your nervous system, to the dakas and dakinis in your nervous system.” The disciple said many things like that, and his guru could not answer.

We can also make the similar observation that our Western minds are often bored within one place, and we desire to go to another. “Oh, I’ve heard that the beaches in Greece are so nice. So are those in Bali and Hawaii.” People consider these good places to go to, but actually the good places of Greece, Bali and Hawaii are inside our nervous systems, which interpret these places as good. Similarly, we always look outside to see physically beautiful sense objects, although there is beauty also within us. Where outside is that quality we consider beautiful? Show me where outside that quality is. In Greece? Not possible. It’s not possible that you can find the Vajrayogini quality on Greek beaches.

We think about Bodhgaya, where Shakyamuni became enlightened. So, we go there, look around and feel something too. Enlightenment? We feel something, but we never feel that we have the potential of enlightenment. Perhaps enlightenment exists within us right now. That, we ignore. But we go on pilgrimages, hassling with airplanes, hotels and all our heavy luggage. Well, perhaps it is good for some people, but my lazy mind is completely

convinced that instead of going on pilgrimage, it is better for me to do just one hour of OM MANI PADME HUM mantras. No, not even one hour, perhaps for only ten minutes. By comparison, I think the energy I would expend in going from here all the way to the East, going round stupas and seeing such things, is rubbish. That’s what my lazy mind thinks. I’m not saying this is so for everyone.

For example, we stay in Kathmandu. In Nepal there are incredible holy places, such as the place where Lord Buddha gave his body to the tigers or stupas like the one in Swayambhunath, where relics from the bodies of Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu are stored. I’m lucky if my lazy mind sees those things once a year. Inside I feel no encouragement to go to those places. Nor do I feel guilty. Maybe I’m sick, but I’m convinced. I also don’t do the mantras, but I feel that if I did just ten minutes of mantra with contemplation, it would be much more powerful than going around looking. Of course, I believe that such pilgrimages can have some good karma, but there’s no shaking inside, nothing is stirred up enough.

So actually, Bodhgaya, the real essential place where Lord Buddha gave the paramita, is inside you. In tantra we have the 24 holy places on earth, where many dakas and dakinis live. So also, we have 24 holy places within us. Whatever place in the external world we think is holy is, in reality, within this precious human body.

Excerpted from an October 1981 teaching in Lavaur, France.
Edited by Hermes Brandt for Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive
(www.lamayeshe.com).

Pilgrimage Needs Faith

By Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Pilgrimage needs faith. The more faith, the more happiness. Otherwise, you are just like a tourist looking at ruins. Pilgrimage is not just going to holy places and taking pictures. You go to holy places for blessing, so it's good to do practices at the different holy places. Of course, it is good to recite Buddha's mantra and meditate on the *Heart Sutra*, even something short like this. Then one can also recite a lam-rim prayer and different praises to Buddha.

There are three different praises to Buddha. The best one is Lama Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination*. Then there is the *Praise of the Buddha, Unrivaled Lion of the Shakyas* by Lama Tsongkhapa and *Praise of the Exalted One*. It is good to do different praises to Buddha. Use Lama Tsongkhapa's *In Praise of Dependent Origination* most of the time because it talks about emptiness.

Pilgrimage is good if you know how to do pilgrimage. Otherwise, it's just traveling like a tourist. When you go to these holy places it reminds you of impermanence. Once these places were great cities, but now there are just stones. A thousand years ago these places were quite different. But even though there are just stones now, these stones are so precious. Amazing. Can you imagine how blessed these places are? They are places where the Buddha was.

Many Tibetan people take away earth from holy places. One time, I went to the place where a monkey made offerings to Buddha and the guide took some of the earth to give to me. Then an Indian doctor who was with me got angry at the guide for giving the earth to me! That earth is now at Kopan Monastery with many other holy things from different places. Many people give me holy objects, like blessed stones or fish from Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar in Tibet.

Do different lam-rim prayers at these holy places and make prayers to have realizations. At the beginning, do prostrations. You can recite the preliminary prayers¹ that we do traditionally at Kopan Monastery, which include prostrations by reciting Buddha's name. Then do the seven limb practice. Then recite the different praises to Buddha and lam-rim prayers.

If you have time, you can carry the story of the holy places with you and read that story to the people who are doing pilgrimage in those different places. If you are going on pilgrimage, read a book describing those holy places. Read about what the Buddha did in those places. You can also read the stories of the great pandits.



Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, Nepal, May 2012. Photo by Ven. Roger Kunsang.

This advice was given to a student who was attending the introductory course at Tushita Meditation Centre. Rinpoche heard she was doing pilgrimage after the course and gave this advice.

Colophon: Dictated to Ven. Sarah Thresher, Tushita Meditation Centre, Dharamsala, India, March 30, 2012. Lightly edited by Claire Isift.

¹ These prayers can be found in *FPMT Retreat Prayer Book*, pp. 13-17, available through the Foundation Store at shop.fpmt.org.

Practicing Dharma in Daily Life

How to Collect the Most Extensive Merit While Doing Prostrations

By Lama Zopa Rinpoche



Prostrations in front of Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya, India, February 2009. Photo by Tetsuro Yoshida via Flickr. Creative Commons Attribution.

When Lama Tsongkhapa explained how to collect the most extensive merit while doing mandala offerings, he said to visualize as many as possible and to visualize as clearly as possible. When Lama Tsongkhapa explained how to make prostrations the means of collecting extensive merit, he said to visualize many bodies. So as you start to bow down, think, “I am prostrating towards all the ten direction Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and all the holy objects which is the essence of the Guru.” Then think you have numberless bodies. If you visualize yourself as Thousand-Arm Chenrezig, it is much easier and also you create much more merit. If you haven’t received a great initiation, just visualize your ordinary body. In that case, it is good to visualize it as being as tall as possible, like a mountain. Whether you visualize your ordinary body or the deity, visualize numberless bodies covering the whole earth from every direction, all prostrating towards the holy object or altar you are prostrating towards.

Even though we do not have the necessary level of realization to actually transform ourselves into many bodies with many limbs

and many mouths accumulating merits as can high bodhisattvas, we can still visualize. It is explained in the teachings that you should visualize around you all the numberless bodies you have previously taken, in either deity or human form. You are all prostrating together with all sentient beings who are around you in human form or deity form, as during the tsog offering. Think that in nature they are suffering, but they have a pure appearance. In Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo’s lam-rim notes from when he was receiving teachings from Dakpo Lama Rinpoche, it says that rather than prostrating with just one body, if you visualize many bodies, you accumulate much more merit. You may find that strange, but it is similar to accumulating merit by mentally transforming offerings, which in itself is offering respect to the merit field. If doubts arise, it may be easier to understand if you use that example.

... As the Buddha explained in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, if your body covers one atom of the ground when you do prostration, you create the cause to be born as a wheel-turning king for one thousand lifetimes. The reason Buddha uses a wheel-turning king

as an example is because to be born as a wheel-turning king once, you need to collect inconceivable merit, so Buddha gives us an idea of the unbelievable amount of merit we collect by doing prostrations. If your body covers one atom of the ground, you collect the merit to be reborn as a wheel-turning king one thousand times. If you are prostrating from here down to the bottom of the earth, there are so many atoms. It is unbelievable. Your body covers unimaginable numbers of atoms. All your fingers and limbs cover unimaginable numbers of atoms. However many atoms your body covers, you create that many causes to be born as a wheel-turning king in one thousand lifetimes. This gives an idea of how much merit is created by doing prostrations.

Usually I emphasize that when you prostrate, you should keep your feet flat. Even one toe covers unbelievable numbers of atoms! You collect unbelievable merit when you prostrate with even just one toe or one finger, because you cover unimaginable numbers of atoms. So it is a great loss if you don't keep your feet flat. You lose unbelievable merit. All actions done with bodhi-chitta become the cause of enlightenment, so at the end of your practice, if you dedicate your merit to achieve enlightenment but you didn't keep your feet flat, you lost so much.

Of course, it also depends on how big your body is, how tall and how fat. More fat means more merit. More width means more merit when you do prostrations. The same thing if you are tall. For example, if I do 100,000 prostrations, a person who is twice as tall as me doing 100,000 prostrations receives twice the merit! That is unbelievable! If you have a tall body and you don't use it for prostration, you lose so much. Using your body to prostrate makes it so easy to achieve enlightenment and to enlighten other sentient beings, but if you don't do it, you lose so much. It's an unbelievable loss. Sometimes I tell people who are very tall, "You are so lucky, because you do one prostration, but I have to do two prostrations!"

So why did Lama Tsongkhapa say to visualize many bodies? How does that become the means to collect the most extensive

merit? Because when you visualize one body doing prostrations, you receive exactly the same amount of merit as this actual body doing prostrations. If you visualize one more body, you get twice the merit. That is unbelievably profitable. Therefore, Lama Tsongkhapa explained to visualize numberless bodies doing prostrations. If you visualize 100,000 bodies doing prostrations, then with each one, you collect the same amount of merit as your single body. As far as merit is concerned, the merit you receive by doing 100,000 prostrations with your actual body and the merit you receive by visualizing 100,000 bodies doing one prostration is the same.

... Whenever there is space, always take the opportunity to do long prostrations, full-length prostrations. Pabongkha Dechen Nyingpo explained this, and it is also Naropa's tradition to do full-length prostrations. When you prostrate, you must be mindful of all those shortcomings and mistakes mentioned in the texts, those mistakes that show disrespect and create negative karma. Not everyone makes these mistakes, but many have these habits, and when you see other people doing prostrations like this, you also do them in a similar way. Many people prostrate without standing up all the way. They keep the body down and do them quickly like that. It is mentioned in the teachings that if you don't stand up straight, you create the cause to be born as a pig or something like that, an animal that has a round body, or maybe as a worm. Then there is the mistake of spreading out the fingers. Due to that disrespect, you create the cause to be born as a duck, as an animal with webs. Or some people put their hands like this [going down on the knuckles] and that creates the cause to be born as animals with hooves. The main thing is to be respectful in the presence of the holy objects, so you create good karma. ♦

Excerpted from *The Preliminary Practice of Prostrations to the Thirty-Five Confession Buddhas*, published by FPMT Education Services and available through the Foundation Store at shop.fpmt.org.

Visit mandalamagazine.org for more **Teachings and Advice** including Lama Zopa Rinpoche's advice on circumambulating holy objects.

Buddha Days and full and new moons are auspicious days and good for practice. On these days Lama Zopa Rinpoche recommends taking the Eight Mahayana Precepts in addition to any prayers and practices we engage in.

Buddha Days

May 17 – Lord Buddha's conception (or birth)

May 25 – Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana (or latter two)

Full and New Moons

(Tibetan 15th and 30th days)

April 10, 25

May 9, 25

June 8, 23

The FPMT Foundation Store offers for sale the LIBERATION calendar, a traditional Tibetan lunar calendar including auspicious days and more, produced by Liberation Prison Project: shop.fpmt.org

According to Choden Rinpoche, one of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's teachers, observation of auspicious days should be according to the date in India, not the date in one's home country. Therefore, when Lama Zopa Rinpoche is not in India, Rinpoche celebrates Buddha Days and other auspicious dates according to the time in India.

Skies of Benefit: The Path of Pilgrimage

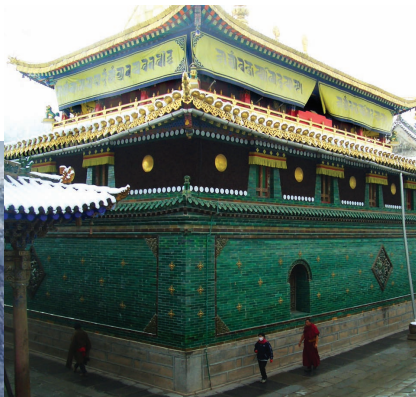
“Across the world and throughout the ages, religious people have made pilgrimages,” Jeremy Russell writes in the introduction to *The Eight Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage*. “The Buddha himself exhorted his followers to visit what are now known as the four great places of pilgrimage: Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar. Many great teachers of the Buddhist tradition maintained the practice of pilgrimage and paying respect to the holy sites. Nagarjuna, father of the Mahayana, restored the temple in Bodhgaya and protected the Bodhi Tree, while the great Indian master Atisha, later on as important as Nagarjuna to the Tibetan tradition, also often visited Bodhgaya and indeed attained many realizations there.”

Within the FPMT mandala, teachers and practitioners embrace the practice and tradition of pilgrimage, regularly journeying to the holy places associated with Buddha Shakyamuni and other great Buddhist masters. In this issue of *Mandala*, we offer a collection of pieces focused on different aspects of pilgrimage and on a variety of pilgrimage sites.

FPMT translation coordinator Joono Repo describes the pilgrimage sites of Je Tsongkhapa in Tibet. FPMT Education Services shares an early look at their soon-to-be-published pilgrimage guide on Wutai Shan, the Five-Peaked Mountain of Manjushri, located in China. Jon Landaw, a long-time student of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, recounts his recent pilgrimage to Nepal and India. Gilad Yakir, spiritual program coordinator at Root Institute in Bodhgaya, outlines the pilgrimage opportunities available to visitors to the center. And finally, Effie Fletcher, coordinator of Dharma Journeys Pilgrimages, offers her thoughts on some of the practical aspects of preparing for pilgrimage.

Inset: Ming-Tibetan style temple marking the place where Je Tsongkhapa was born, Kumbum Monastery, Amdo (Qinghai province, China), October 2007

Below: Building a stupa at Reting Monastery, Tibet, April 2012



We hope you become inspired by the following pieces and that you may be able to experience the blessings of pilgrimage.

You can read *The Eight Places of Buddhist Pilgrimage* by Jeremy Russell on Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive's website (www.lamayeshe.com).



On the Tracks of Manjushri: Sacred Sites of Tsongkhapa

By Joona Repo; Photos by Matt Lindén

As a scholar of Tibetan culture and language, FPMT translation coordinator Joona Repo has had the opportunity to live and study in Tibet. While there, Joona traveled to many of Tibetan Buddhism's sacred places. He offers Mandala readers a look at the important sites in the life of Je Tsongkhapa, founder of the Gelug tradition.

Je Tsongkhapa, on whose teachings the Gelug tradition is based, is one of the most inspiring figures in Tibetan history. His numerous lam-rim texts and clear explanations about emptiness made a big impact on me when I first learned about Buddhism in my mid-teens and so even on my first journey to Tibet, the sacred sites associated with him were at the top of my list of places to visit. I have managed to travel to Tibet for extensive periods and always spend a large portion of my time going to sacred sites, often seeing my favorite ones a number of times and trying to take advantage of the situations as much as possible by finding time to do practice, trying to accumulate merit and make offerings, remembering the kindness and teachings of Je Tsongkhapa and all previous lineage gurus.

The first place I ever visited in Tibet was Lhasa; however, to get a better picture and understanding of the sacred sites that I will mention here, it would be better to start off in the outer regions of the Tibetan world. Tsongkhapa was born in the northeastern section of Amdo in 1357, now a part of modern-day Qinghai province. Although many great Tibetan masters were born here, for several hundred years this area has also been inhabited by a patchwork of various ethnic groups.

Tsongkhapa's birthplace is only a 45-minute drive away from the provincial capital of Xining, a bustling Chinese city of over 2 million people. The exact site of Tsongkhapa's birth is located within the walls of Kumbum Monastery, founded in the 16th century, which over time grew to become one of the largest monasteries in Tibet. Built in a Ming Dynasty style, the monastery houses a number of colleges and assembly halls, with the centerpiece being the Serkhang Chenmo, or Great Golden Temple, which marks the spot of Tsongkhapa's





birth. Varying accounts describe how Tsongkhapa's placenta or umbilical cord fell or was buried here, following which a sandalwood tree began to grow, bearing on its bark the mantra of Manjushri, and on its leaves the images of Manjushri Simhanada, Manjushri's seed-syllable DHI or Tsongkhapa. The original tree no longer exists, and Kumbum itself has a strong touristic and museum-like feeling to it.

Doing a circumambulation, or *korwa*, of this and other monasteries is often a great way to soak up the atmosphere and an opportunity to do some recitation and practice, especially since in most cases you will be in the company of other Buddhists. Few ordinary tourists have the energy to walk for an hour around a large monastery. Although it is usually fine to make offerings and perform a few prostrations, one needs to be aware of the surroundings and situation in each case and be skillful in order to not attract too much attention to yourself or any guides who are responsible for you.

The next site on the Tsongkhapa-circuit is off the beaten track and chances are you will be the only non-local visiting. Shyachung, as it is known in the local dialect, means "garuda" and is so-called due to the fact that the mountain the monastery is located on resembles a bird. I have visited this monastery several times, and it is one of my absolute favorite places. The road to the monastery is not good and the journey from Xining takes several bumpy hours, including a hair-raising drive over a ridge with a very steep drop on either side of the road. The destination is, however, well worth it. The quiet and peaceful monastery is a sprawling conglomeration of

buildings on the top of a mountain, surrounded by cliffs from where one can enjoy a spectacular and sometimes harrowingly breathtaking view of the surrounding valley. The monastery was founded as a Kadam institution in the tradition of Atisha and Dromtönpa by Chöje Dondrub Rinchen, in the 14th century. Tsongkhapa began his studies here and spent much of his youth with his teacher Dondrub Rinchen, who gave him his name, Lobsang Dragpa.

Although the monastery is home to a number of temples, including stunning Vajrayogini and Kalachakra temples, the most important ones to visit in relation to Tsongkhapa overlook the rest of the monastery. One of these is a temple dedicated to Dondrub Rinchen and contains a large gilded stupa built to house his relics. The other is Tsongkhapa Lhakhang, also known as the "A RA PA TSA Hut," named after Manjushri's mantra. When in his mid-teens Tsongkhapa departed for Central Tibet to further his studies, the other students of Dondrub Rinchen became infuriated as Tsongkhapa had not looked back when he was leaving. They had read this as a sign of disrespect, and thus attempted to destroy Tsongkhapa's old dwelling. What happened instead was that the small house began to levitate as it was protected through Tsongkhapa's practice of reciting Manjushri's mantra. Today the location of Tsongkhapa's former dwelling is marked by this small temple which houses images of Tsongkhapa and his two main students, Khedrub Je and Gyaltsab Je.

After arriving in Central Tibet, Tsongkhapa spent the rest of his life studying, doing retreat, teaching and writing. Some of Tsongkhapa's important retreat sites are located on a mountainside



Panorama at Shyachung Monastery, Amdo (Qinghai province, China), October 2010

north of Lhasa, behind Sera Monastery. Famous sites include Sera Ütse, located high above Sera Monastery; Rakadrak Ritro, which has three meditation caves used by Je Tsongkhapa, Khedrub Je and Gyaltsab Je; and finally Sera Chöding, again above Sera, yet requiring a far less strenuous walk. Sera Chöding is certainly the easiest to get to for a visitor who is not yet acclimatized to the thin Tibetan air and contains a small house which was home to Tsongkhapa as well as a throne on a small hill, now enshrined in a small temple, which is where he gave the teachings on his *Ocean of Reasoning*.

By the turn of the century Tsongkhapa had begun composing texts based on his realizations. His most famous composition is undoubtedly the *Lamrim Chenmo*, which he wrote in Reting Monastery in 1402. Reting was originally a Kadampa monastery founded by Dromtönpa, Atisha's main student. Set against a stunningly beautiful cypress forest in an otherwise moon-like landscape, Reting also has fewer foreign visitors in comparison to sites located near Lhasa and Shigatse. The monastery has a wealth of holy sites and objects associated with a number of great Kadampa and Gelug masters, including Atisha's personal Tara thangka and a statue of Guhyasamaja-Manjuvajra, which is the monastery's principal sacred object. The two most important locations for Tsongkhapa's activity at Reting are, however, the site of the building where he first taught the *Foundation of All Good Qualities* to a gathering of his students and the temple where he composed the *Lamrim Chenmo* with the help of Manjushri, who appeared to him in a vision. Both temples have recently been

rebuilt and the latter temple now houses a large statue of Maitreya flanked by those of Tsongkhapa and Manjushri.

In 1409, Tsongkhapa began the tradition of the Great Prayer Festival in Lhasa and at the same time he offered a set of jeweled ornaments and a crown to the most sacred statue in Tibet, the Jokhang Temple's Jowo Shakyamuni. Although some people may find it slightly claustrophobic, I most enjoy visiting the temple in the early morning, when all the chapels are open, as this is the time

Maitreya on the spot where Tsongkhapa wrote Lamrim Chenmo, Reting Monastery, Tibet, April 2012



Tibetan pilgrims visit. Meeting the Jowo feels to me like meeting the Buddha himself and every great Tibetan teacher who has been in contact with this holy object. While circumambulating the inside of the Jokhang in a clockwise fashion, following the long queue of Tibetan devotees, you will also come across several important holy objects directly related to Tsongkhapa. These include a statue which Tsongkhapa exclaimed looks like him, hence its name Ngadrama or “Looks Like Me,” as well as the Lamrim Lhakang chapel which includes statues of all the main lineage gurus of the *Lamrim*, all the way from Lhodrak Namkha Gyaltsen, a teacher of Tsongkhapa, up to Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, the author of *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*. Apart from this, images of Tsongkhapa are found throughout the Jokhang and its chapels, as well as in the courtyard directly in front of the main temple building which has a small painting of Tsongkhapa that is known to have spoken. The opportunity to accumulate merit here is inconceivable. An excellent way to make sure that the money you offer goes to the actual monastery is to offer it to the *rungkhang*, the monastic kitchen, where the money will go to feed the monks.

Following requests from his students, in 1410, Tsongkhapa established Ganden Monastery, which became his principal seat as well as that of the Gelug tradition. The location of the monastery on the top of a mountain immediately reminds you of Shyachung. Today one can visit the small room where Tsongkhapa lived and passed away, decorated by a large mural painting of Guhyasamaja, Tsongkhapa’s principal practice. Today Tsongkhapa’s passing in 1419 is commemorated through Ganden Ngamchoe, commonly known throughout the FPMT as Lama Tsongkhapa Day.

After his death his relics were enshrined in a large golden stupa inside a temple known as the Serkhang, flanked by stupas of his main two disciples. None of these stupas, or even the room where Tsongkhapa passed into parinirvana, are original. Ganden, like most monasteries in Tibet, was almost completely destroyed.

However, much has been rebuilt, and the golden stupa which used to house the mummified body of Tsongkhapa now contains only salvaged remains of his skull and ashes as the rest of the body was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Despite the awe-inspiring views, monasteries and amazing people, the loss that has been experienced on many levels in this land is often very much palpable to me on my trips.

The korwa route around Ganden Monastery with its views of the Kyichu Valley is without doubt the most amazing korwa I have ever done, giving ample time to meditate and contemplate. Just before the end of the korwa you will come across a small building that also functioned as one of Tsongkhapa’s retreat places. The mountain sides here are covered in bushes from which is produced a special type of incense called Ganden Khenpa, which can also be brewed into a tea. The bushes are said to have grown from tufts of Tsongkhapa’s hair and the incense is said to have healing properties. The same is true for Reting where the cypress forest around the monastery are said to have arisen from Dromtönpa’s hair.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has often said that when we go on pilgrimage we shouldn’t just go as a tourist. All of these sites are truly amazing places to sit down, contemplate and take a chance to at least do a brief recitation of *Lama Tsongkhapa Guru Yoga*. This is useful spiritual advice when visiting any holy site anywhere, but especially so in Tibet where the Tibetans are always uplifted and happy to see foreigners joining them in helping to preserve and practice their culture and religion.

Joona Repo has been studying and practicing Buddhism for the last 15 years and is currently the FPMT translation coordinator. He completed a Ph.D. at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and is currently a postdoctoral curatorial fellow at the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s Indian and Himalayan department. Joona has traveled widely in Tibet and most recently lived in Lhasa for a year.

View more photos by Matt Lindén at www.mattlinden.co.uk.

New Pilgrimage Series from Wisdom Publications and FPMT Education Services! Wutai Shan: Five-Peaked Mountain of Manjushri

By FPMT Education Services

The first major publication in Wisdom Publications’ and FPMT Education Services’ series of pilgrimage guides produced in collaboration is nearing completion. *Lotus of Faith: A Pilgrim’s Guide to Wutai Shan* is the English translation of a pilgrimage guide to Five-Peaked Mountain (also known as Manjushri Mountain) located in Shanxi province, China. Changkya Rolpai Dorje, the eminent 18th-century Tibetan Buddhist scholar from Mongolia, composed the guide. Once published, *Lotus of Faith* will expose Western students to the holy sites of one of the most significant places of Buddhist pilgrimage in China.

Changkya Rolpai Dorje’s lengthy guide is considered by many to be the most renowned and historically important work on Wutai Shan’s holy sites and their lore. Although the guide has long been held in high regard and used by Chinese pilgrims, the work has never been translated into English. Wen-Shing Chou, a leading scholar of Wutai Shan, edited and wrote the introduction to *Lotus of Faith*, which was translated by Tenzin Gesar. Wisdom Publications plans to release the book next year.



Stupa near Wutai Shan, Shanxi province, China. Photo by Chu Nan Lai.

The idea for the series came in May 2006 when Lama Zopa Rinpoche gave Merry Colony, then director of FPMT Education Services, some guidance about a pilgrimage series he wanted her to develop. “You’ll need instructions on how to do pilgrimage, and put them all together in a book,” Rinpoche advised. “You can have a book of Tibetan pilgrimage sites and a book of Indian pilgrimage sites.” Rinpoche also wanted a guide to Wutai Shan, about which he said, “The Five-Peaked Mountain in China is very interesting, [because of] the visions people have there.

“Include the eight benefits of offering lights, incense, prostrations and circumambulation, also include which prayers to do in each place,” Rinpoche instructed for the guides. “For example, at Rajgir recite the *Heart Sutra* and meditate on emptiness. At Sarnath do this....” As the idea of a pilgrimage series developed, Rinpoche added to the list more pilgrimage sites to include, specifically mentioning several places in Nepal.

Without clear guidance on the purpose for and practices one should do on pilgrimage, Dharma students miss out on achieving the most benefit. During a 2002 pilgrimage to Tibet, Rinpoche took several opportunities to offer participants advice for their

journey. Ven. Sarah Thresher shared Rinpoche’s instructions at Tsurphu, Tibet, in an article for *Mandala* [“Pilgrimage to Tibet” *Mandala* December 2002-February 2003]:

Rinpoche gave another teaching on how to make the most of the pilgrimage, explaining different prayers we could make to each of the different statues, what to think when we offered money and khatas, and especially advising us to do guru yoga practice thinking that every single holy object is the guru – the manifestation of the dharmakaya mind bound by great compassion. “This way,” Rinpoche explained, “you feel a connection with all the holy objects you see, that they are manifested to bring you to enlightenment. It is very effective.” He also reminded us that, “We are doing pilgrimage. We have to understand the skies of benefit, what happens to this mental continuum. It’s not just sightseeing or for pleasure. It is to purify the mental continuum of defilements, accumulate extensive merit and make the mind change into the realizations of the path to enlightenment.”

What has happened on pilgrimage sites and who has blessed them makes these sacred sites naturally powerful places. It is commonly said that any action done in relation to them, even an action done with a non-virtuous mind, creates merit. So it is easy to see why the practice of pilgrimage is vital on the path to enlightenment and why Rinpoche initiated the pilgrimage series.

“By doing pilgrimage, we receive blessing from the holy places where enlightened beings, great yogis, and bodhisattvas, have practiced,” Rinpoche explained during the 2002 Tibet pilgrimage. “With the blessing entering our hearts, they are able to soften; our mental continuum becomes subdued; and we are able to decrease the delusions. We are then able to develop bodhichitta, strong compassion, towards other sentient beings, and our guru devotion, renunciation, right view, our meditation on emptiness, become stronger. That means that one’s mental continuum becomes Dharma, which is the result of pilgrimage.”

FPMT Education Services very gratefully thanks translator Tenzin Gesar and editor Wen-shing Chou for their perseverance over many long hours of work in order to make *Lotus of Faith* a reality.

The Divine Youth on Five-Peaked Mountain

From Lotus of Faith: A Pilgrim’s Guide to Wutai Shan

Long before the time of Emperor Mingdi of the Han Dynasty, those who lived at the foot of Five-Peaked Mountain talked about how, when viewed from afar, amazing light rays would appear over the five mountains; and how, again and again, at night, miraculous lamps would be seen floating in the sky, leading everyone to remark what a divine place it was. From a distance, they would also sometimes see a divine youth with five knotted locks of hair on his head, wearing three garments. Sometimes he would be seen walking alone, and at others, playing in the company of other young people. These visions would disappear if approached. Such incidents happened many times.

Specifically, once a minister named Wuxu, chasing a deer, ended up at this place. At that time he beheld within a cloud as clear as water a youth, serene, handsome, and golden in color, wearing loose garments. Wuxu performed a divination that revealed that it would be good to offer green vegetables to the youth. He immediately ended his pursuit of the deer and returned home. Later, the teachings of the Buddha flourished in that place. From that time on it has been understood that the youth with five knotted locks of hair was an emanation of Venerable Manjushri.

Excerpted from *Lotus of Faith: A Pilgrim’s Guide to Wutai Shan*. Scheduled for release in 2014. Used with permission from Wisdom Publications (www.wisdompubs.org).



Pilgrimage: A Personal Journey

By Jon Landaw

FPMT students have regular opportunities to travel to many of the Buddhist holy sites in India and Nepal on guided pilgrimages, organized by Dharma Journeys Pilgrimages. Students are led by experienced FPMT practitioners and teachers in practices and prayers at the sacred locations. Recent pilgrimage leaders have included Ven. Tenzin Chogyi, Ven. Amy Miller and Jon Landaw, who shared his experience with Mandala.

The stupa at Sarnath, India, October 2012. Photo by Jon Landaw.

For three weeks in autumn 2012, I went on a pilgrimage to many of the Buddhist holy sites in Nepal and India. I made this trip together with a group of 12 other Westerners and one extraordinary guide from Kathmandu named Amber Tamang. Some of these sites I had been to before, while others were new to me. It might be more accurate to say that *all* of these sites were new to me because the last time I had been to any of them was 18 years ago, and some I hadn’t seen in over 40 years. The changes that had taken place in both Nepal and India in the meantime were so astounding that places I had known well, such as the Kathmandu Valley and the village surrounding the Mahabodhi Stupa in Bodhgaya, were now virtually unrecognizable to me.

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From left: Jon Landau, center in red shirt, with pilgrimage group, Kopan Monastery, Nepal, October 2012. Photo by Gwen McEwen. Entering the grounds of Nalanda, India, October 2012. Photo by Jon Landau.



In order to avoid unintentionally irritating my fellow pilgrims, I had to keep in mind that none of them, with the exception of one former student of mine who had been on a similar pilgrimage two years previously, had ever been to any of these sites before. Everything was new to them and therefore fresh in their eyes. If I forgot that simple fact, I could have easily strained their patience by constantly comparing the degenerate present with a more pleasant past that only I could recall. Repeated announcements that “There never used to be anything but empty fields over there!” or “When I was here last this village was so much smaller and more attractive!” would have quickly grown very annoying to my companions, so I had to check myself. And out of similar consideration for you, dear readers, I shall limit myself to just one more remark about the extraordinary changes I noticed on this visit, using Kathmandu, which used to be one of my favorite places in Asia, as my example. The capital city of Nepal has become so ridiculously overgrown, so polluted, and so snarled with traffic that I have lost almost all the affection I once had for it. Fortunately, perched on a hill above the Kathmandu Valley is the pure land of Kopan Monastery, offering a welcome break from the madness of the city below. And I am happy to report that although unchecked growth seems to have infected nearly every place we passed through in India, the actual holy sites themselves remain wonderful, managing to retain their magical and inspiring allure in spite of the chaos and squalor that often surrounds them.

I remember something Lama Yeshe once said many years after I had first met him: “When you visit Bodhgaya, you don’t have to *try* to meditate. Simply by being there and being open your mind naturally enters into meditation.” This described something I experienced there in 1970, at the beginning of my very first trip to India and before I had received any Buddhist teachings or had even met any lamas. As I was circumambulating

the magnificent Mahabodhi Stupa and the Bodhi Tree next to which it stands, I found myself feeling, in ways I could never have experienced merely by reading about Buddha’s life, that I was treading on ground where one of the most significant events in the history of the world had taken place. A human like the rest of us had experienced full awakening! And what was most amazing to me was the overwhelming impression I received that the event that had taken place over 2,500 years ago at that site was still alive, still there to be contacted.

Later, looking for an image that could communicate something of this totally unexpected experience (to myself if not to others), I found myself thinking that it was as if Buddha had come to this very place and had struck it so powerfully that over two millennia later it was still vibrating. And this for me encapsulates the great value of going on pilgrimage, not only to Bodhgaya, but to all of the places that Buddha and other great spiritual masters have blessed with their presence. By visiting these sacred places and being open, we can receive, almost without effort, the inspiration of their accomplishments.

There are many things that travelers enjoy doing while visiting Buddhist sites in Nepal and India, and some of them have little or nothing to do with what can make the experience of being at these sites so moving and even transformative. Kathmandu, for example, is a great place to buy paintings and statues, or to head off on visits to the game preserves of southern Nepal or on treks to view the grand spectacle of the high Himalayas. And the ancient city of Varanasi, near where Buddha first turned the Wheel of Dharma by teaching the four noble truths, is a great place to buy beautiful brocade, saris and other fine fabrics. And everywhere we go there are exotic and unusual people and things we feel compelled to photograph so we can bring their images back home with us. It is possible to get so caught up in these pleasurable activities, however, that we fail to

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Teachings on the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva	June 12 & 13
Introduction to Tantra	June 14
Solitary Hero Yamantaka Initiation	June 15 & 16
Commentary on the Yamantaka Practice	June 17 - 20



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The Bodhi Tree at Bodhgaya, India, October 2012. Photo by Jon Landaw.

give ourselves enough time and space to immerse ourselves in the spiritual atmosphere that can be discovered at each site. I was pleased to see that, despite their enthusiastic indulgence in the typical tourist activities, the participants in our pilgrimage were still able to discover something of deep and lasting value in these holy places.

Of course, the best way to receive maximum benefit from such sites is by following advice on pilgrimage given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche [see pages 9-11 and mandalamagazine.org]. I myself have always found it particularly inspiring when visiting a particular destination to read selections from the teachings originally given there. Many years ago, for example, when visiting the ruins of Nalanda Monastery for the first time, I had a very powerful experience while reading aloud from the dedication chapter of a work I am particularly fond of: Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*. Shantideva, of course, was just one of the great Mahayana masters who studied, taught and meditated at Nalanda, so I could have chosen to read from a vast number of other texts. But reciting the words of that beloved teaching at the very site where Shantideva himself first uttered them did something special for me; it put me in touch with Shantideva's inspiring message in a way I could never have imagined. In a similar fashion, the distance that separates us from the historical Buddha can evaporate in a single moment as we read Shakyamuni's discourse on the four noble truths while we visit Sarnath, or the *Heart Sutra* while at Vulture's Peak, or the *Vajra Cutter Sutra* at Shravasti.

I also found it very inspiring to read accounts of the visits paid to these holy sites by past pilgrims; they enabled me to feel that I was not only following in their footsteps, but walking along side of them. The first and in many ways the most important of these early pilgrims was King Ashoka, who ruled much of India

a little more than two hundred years after the time of Buddha. In fact, were it not for the pillars he erected at Lumbini, Sarnath and many other places, these previously forgotten sites may have been lost forever. Their rediscovery in the 19th century by a few intrepid and rather eccentric individuals brought to India by British rule is masterfully described in Charles Allen's *The Buddha and the Sabibs*. Another book I found very helpful is *Meeting the Buddha: On Pilgrimage in Buddhist India*, which contains accounts written by visitors as diverse as Rabindranath Tagore, John Blofeld, Allen Ginsberg and the two Chinese monks who traveled extensively in India in the 5th and 7th centuries and wrote descriptions that are still valuable today.

Lastly, I would like to mention just a few of Buddha's contemporaries I knew little or nothing about before researching these holy sites, research that the internet made quite quick and painless. For example, I found out about Kaundinya, one of the five ascetics who shared Buddha's six-year fast prior to his attainment of enlightenment, and learned he was the first one to gain insight when Buddha began teaching at Sarnath. I also became acquainted with the following three extraordinary women: Buddha's foster mother, Mahaprajapati, who became the first Buddhist nun; Ambapali, a wealthy courtesan widely renowned for her beauty, who donated the mango grove in which Buddha sometimes taught; and Khema, King Bimbisara's wife, who had the unusual distinction of achieving arhatship (nirvana) before she formally entered the Sangha. Learning about all these real people made the events of Buddha's life that much more real to me.

But it was while sitting silently under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya, or in the gardens of Sarnath and Shravasti, or among the ruins of Nalanda, that I most strongly felt the reality of Buddha's life and enduring presence. How wonderful if everyone attracted to the teachings of the compassionate Buddha could share in the inspiring silence of such blessed places.

Jon Landaw has been a student of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche since the mid-1970s and has served as editor on several Wisdom Publication books, including *Wisdom Energy* and *Introduction to Tantra*. He is also the author of *Prince Siddhartha*, a biography of Buddha for children. Jon wrote a regular column for *Mandala*, has offered instruction at numerous Dharma centers throughout the world and regularly teaches at Land of Medicine Buddha in California.

To learn more about Dharma Journeys Pilgrimages, see *Mandala's* interview with Effie Fletcher on page 27.

Read Gwen McEwen's account of the pilgrimage lead by Jon Landaw online at mandalamagazine.org.

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Buddhist Pilgrimages

from Root Institute By Gilad Yakir, spiritual program coordinator

FPMT is fortunate to have a center located very close to one of the four pilgrimage sites associated with the life of Buddha Shakyamuni: the Mahabodhi Temple, the site of Buddha Shakyamuni's enlightenment, in Bodhgaya, India. Root Institute is just a 15-minute walk away.

Students staying at Root Institute for Wisdom Culture have an incredible opportunity to visit and practice at the Mahabodhi Temple, the most sacred site for Buddhists around the world. Apart from this most holy place of Buddha's enlightenment, there are many other sacred locations in and around Bodhgaya. A 45-minute drive from Bodhgaya, for example, takes one to the Mahakala Cave, the site where the ascetic Siddhartha Gautama practiced and endured many hardships for six years prior to his enlightenment. Across the Niranjana River (present-day Lilajan River) that runs past the Mahabodhi Temple is the Sujata Temple, the place where the girl Sujata offered Gautama a bowl of milk rice to nourish him after his ascetic practice. Next to it, there is a stupa built by King Ashoka (3rd century B.C.E.) to commemorate Sujata.

Recognizing the many opportunities for pilgrimage in the area, our ten-day lam-rim course "Experience Buddhism at the Root" combines pilgrimage and teachings in these powerful places. In addition to the sites mentioned above, the course includes a full-day pilgrimage to Rajgir and Nalanda. Just past Rajgir is the walk up to Vulture's Peak, where the Buddha taught the Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom) sutras. Students have the opportunity to meditate and recite the *Heart Sutra* there. From Rajgir, we proceed

to the Nalanda ruins, once a great Buddhist university. These days it's an archaeological site, but one can still feel the presence of all the great pandits who taught there, such as Shantideva and Chandrakirti, who had an important influence on Tibetan Buddhism. At this site, we recite the "Illuminating the Threefold Faith" (a prayer about the 17 Nalanda scholars), composed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

We also arrange group and individual pilgrimages to lesser-known holy sites such as the Saptapani Caves, about an hour-and-a-half walk up from Rajgir, where the First Buddhist Council was held after Lord Buddha's parinirvana. Another unique and distant place of great interest is the Indasala Cave, located on the other side of Vulture's Peak mountain range, about a half-hour drive on dirt roads and then a short, steep climb on foot. The Buddha himself used to go to this huge and deserted cave for solitude from the then bustling kingdom of Rajgir.

To learn more about the programs and pilgrimage opportunities offered by Root Institute, visit www.rootinstitute.com.

Vulture's Peak, where Buddha revealed the Prajnaparamita sutras, among others. Photo courtesy of Root Institute.



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PILGRIMAGE



Going Home to Buddhism: An Interview with Pilgrimage Organizer Effie Fletcher

Effie Fletcher coordinates Dharma Journeys Pilgrimages (formerly known as Chasing Buddha Pilgrimages), which provides guided pilgrimages to many Buddhist sites in Asia. Effie has organized more than two dozen of these trips, which are led by FPMT teachers. She also is the director of Himalayan High Treks, a small San Francisco-based business that organizes environmentally and socially conscious Himalayan treks as well as trips to Southeast Asia. Mandala spoke with Effie in January 2013.



Mandala: How did you get into organizing pilgrimages?

Effie Fletcher: I started Himalayan High Treks in 1988. Then in 2001, Ven. Robina Courtin asked me if I would organize pilgrimages for her. She said to me, “I don’t want one of these hippie treks. I want a real *pukka* ...” – *pukka* is a word they use in India for “nice” or “first class” – “... I want a good quality tour with good hotels and everything just so.” Unfortunately, I can’t remember her exact words, but I thought, “Well, that is going to be easy because if I can organize treks, I can organize pilgrimages.” I had been to some of the pilgrimage places myself already. I also had been a student of Ven. Robina’s and had been on retreat with her. Organizing a pilgrimage seemed like organizing a moving retreat – that is how I visualized it – a retreat that was on the road.

We used to call them Chasing Buddha Pilgrimages and would raise money for the Liberation Prison Project. Then a few years ago we changed to Dharma Journeys because Chasing Buddha was very specific to Ven. Robina. We have been doing pilgrimages with other leaders for some time now and are starting to raise money for other organizations like Dharamsala Animal Rescue and more recently for Milarepa Center in Vermont, United States.

Mandala: What are the sites that a pilgrim might visit on a Dharma Journeys Pilgrimage?

Effie Fletcher: The most standard pilgrimage that we do, the one that the most people have been on with us, is going to visit the traditional pilgrimage sites of Lord Buddha’s life in Nepal and India. The wonderful thing about the pilgrimage places in general is that they have been pretty well preserved. After seeing these parks and areas, it’s easy to imagine, even 2,000 years later, that Lord Buddha actually lived and was in these places. It hasn’t changed all that much, so that is pretty exciting.

We also do pilgrimages to other places. We have done pilgrimages to Tibet, for example. And we are planning pilgrimages to Sri Lanka and to Myanmar (known more commonly as Burma).

Mandala: From your point of view, what are the differences between tourism and pilgrimage?

Effie Fletcher: There is a wonderful, wonderful quote that I love from Lama Zopa Rinpoche: “Normally, when people go on pilgrimage, they are just like tourists. Maybe they take some pictures and that is it. They don’t use the places to collect merit or to meditate or to get some benefit for their minds. If it is just like sightseeing, then it won’t be that much benefit.”

That is the big thing about these pilgrimages: for people who are Buddhist, they are going home to Buddhism. They are not tourists in a traditional sense because they are going *and* practicing.

Some of the people that do the pilgrimages are not Buddhist when they go or they may just be interested in Buddhism. They may belong to another faith or they may not be Tibetan Buddhist. They may have other practices that they are used to doing, but they still come on the



*Left page: Mahabodhi Temple,
Bodhgaya, India.*

*Above from top: Buddha
at Mahabodhi Temple,
Bodhgaya, India.*

*Statue of Je Tsongkhapa,
Kopan Monastery, Nepal.
Photos: Dreamstime*

pilgrimages. So we don't have a requirement that somebody has to be an experienced traveler or a certain level of practitioner or anything like that.

Mandala: As an organizer, how do you support people on pilgrimage? And how are the trips structured?

Effie Fletcher: We try to take people from wherever they are to a point where they feel competent for travel and ready to participate in the trip. We do that by helping them with the nuts and bolts of the travel: figuring out how to get visas if they are needed; helping with immunizations and understanding what the choices are in terms of taking certain medicines with them on the trip; explaining what they need to pack and carry – all of those simple things that add up to being a competent traveler.

The next step is to help everyone be on the same page in terms of doing practice and the purpose of pilgrimage. We provide them with a prayer book, which is basically a collection of FPMT prayers and practices that were recommended to Ven. Robina by Lama Zopa Rinpoche when she did the very first Chasing Buddha Pilgrimage. Rinpoche did many of these prayers and practices when he went on pilgrimage in Tibet in 2002. We distribute the prayer book to people at a group meeting at the start of their pilgrimage.

If they start in Nepal, they go immediately to Kopan Monastery [on the outskirts of Kathmandu] and have a three- or four-day retreat there. If they start in India, they may go immediately to Root Institute in Bodhgaya or may take a couple days elsewhere and then do the retreat, depending on the itinerary. But usually they get together and have a short retreat close to the beginning of the trip. Then, that way, everybody pretty quickly gets to be on the same page about the prayers, practices and what makes for a meaningful trip.

Mandala: Tell me more about the nuts and bolts of this kind of travel. Where do inexperienced travelers encounter problems as they prepare for a trip like this?

Effie Fletcher: I think that one thing people do is they wait until it is almost too late to go on a trip. They see the dates and think that they can just call you a few weeks before and manage to get ready. But it is a big, big trip; it takes a lot of planning. We really like people to come on board about six months in advance. We give a small discount to people who do that just to encourage people to sign up early. It is for our benefit and their benefit, because if they come in at the last minute, they are going to be really hectic. It is going to be hard to do any of the pre-trip reading, so they are not going to have as nice of an experience. Chances are if they come in less than six weeks to two months before the trip, we are not even going to be able to accommodate

them because of all the bookings that need to be made. So that is number one – sign up early!

Then the second thing is that I think people sometimes have a fear that holds them back from doing things that are new. If they haven't done this type of travel before, the first trip is always the hardest. It seems that once people have gone on the pilgrimage, they will do trip after trip, often on their own. For example, they will go to a Kalachakra initiation with His Holiness and so on. I've seen that many times. The pilgrimage is their first trip, and people are nervous about it, but then once they get started, they get more into it.

The third thing is that a pilgrimage is a big investment. It is something that not everybody can afford to do, but again, if you break it down, if you plan early, there are ways to save money. You can spread out payments over time. You can sign up for your trip and pay your deposit, and then you buy your airfare, then you pay your balance. You can break it up over a number of months so that the whole expense of the trip isn't hitting you all at the same time. There are strategies for making it more affordable. It is not an inexpensive thing to do, but it *is* possible.

Mandala: Money and budgeting seem really important to planning a pilgrimage as well as how one thinks about the trip. Because it really isn't tourism that we are talking about, it's a spiritual practice, right?

Effie Fletcher: Pilgrimage is a huge benefit in many ways. For the individual, he or she learns and does the practices and creates merit. Then on Dharma Journeys Pilgrimages, there is also the organization or project that we are raising money for. It is also a way for people to connect with the project or nonprofit organization and then they might go on and volunteer with them. For example, a lot of people became involved in the Liberation Prison Project after going on a Chasing Buddha Pilgrimage.

People tell me that it is life-changing to spend time with a pilgrimage leader who is a dedicated practitioner, people like Ven. Robina and Jon Landaw [see page 18]. People really enjoy the chance to have a good amount of quality time with a teacher in a place that is so special.

People also tell me that going on pilgrimage really helps them to get used to or get very serious and committed to a daily practice. A lot of people say they have had trouble with that before going on pilgrimage, and then during the pilgrimage it just became part of their routine, and when they came home, they were able to keep that up. ♦

Visit mandalamagazine.org, where you can read more of *Mandala's* interview with Effie Fletcher, in which she shares her thoughts on bottled water, traveling in Tibet and the upcoming pilgrimage to Burma.

You can learn more about Dharma Journeys Pilgrimages at www.dharma-journeys.org.

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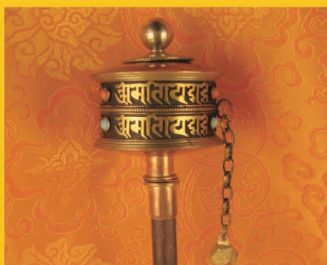
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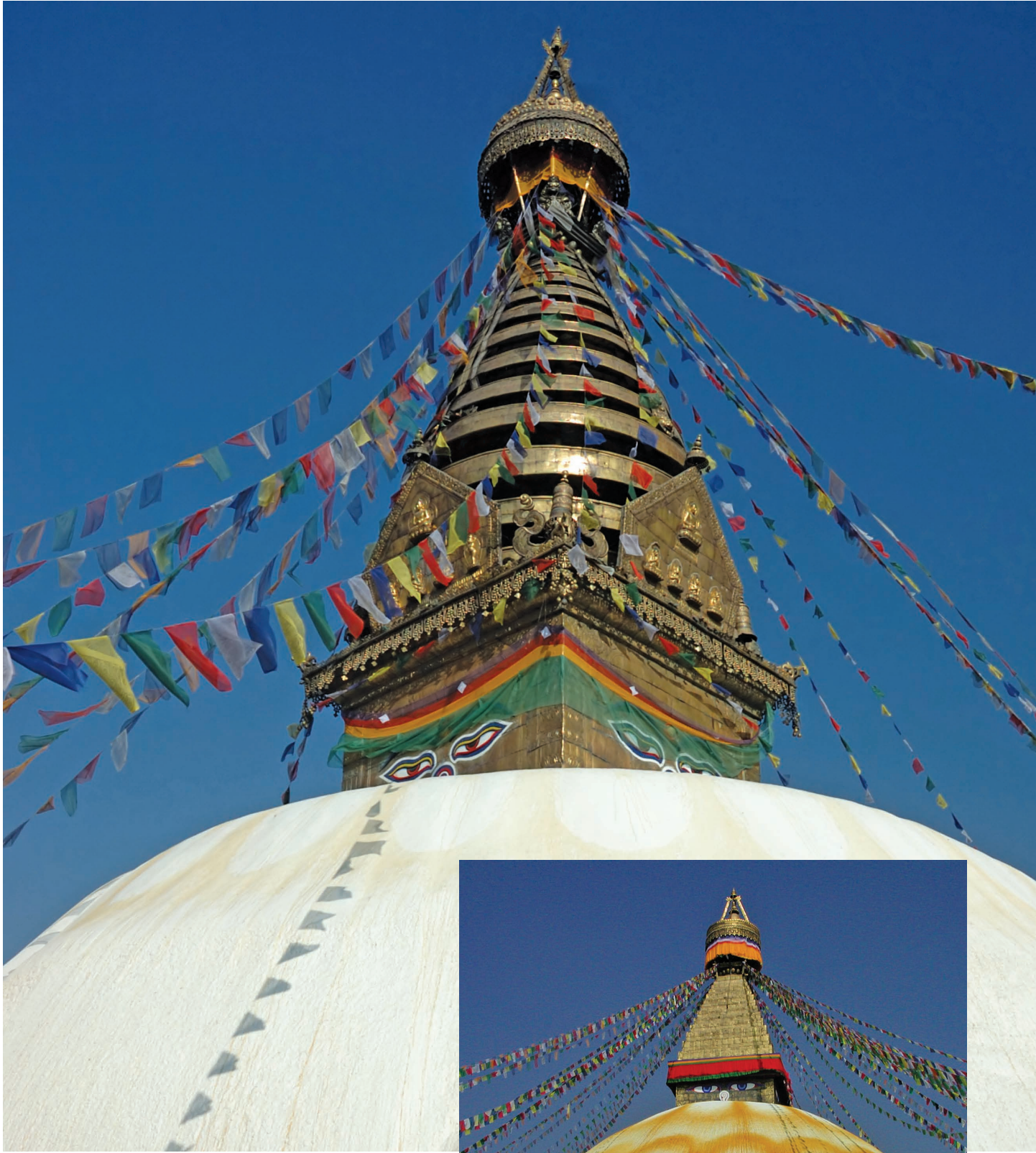
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*Above: Swayambhunath Stupa, Kathmandu, Nepal
Right: Saffron petals on Boudhanath Stupa, Kathmandu, Nepal*



FPMT Puja Fund:

Creating Merit on a Global Scale

Imagine a world where our teachers live long, healthy lives; where we have the resources needed to accomplish all of our virtuous goals; where we are able to support thousands of Sangha engaging in beneficial activity on auspicious days throughout the year. The FPMT Puja Fund gives practitioners around the world an opportunity to help make this vision a reality. By sponsoring and coordinating monthly and annual pujas, offerings, prayers and practices under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the fund lets students create merit on a global scale. And because these spiritual activities are dedicated to the success of all FPMT centers, projects, services, students, benefactors and those serving the organization in any way, in addition to the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, one can make a huge impact on the spiritual health of fellow Dharma sisters and brothers as well as support one's precious spiritual guides.

"If someone offers a small flower or rice to a Buddha statue, a stupa or scripture, then the benefit extends from then up to enlightenment. Amazing, amazing," Lama Zopa Rinpoche said at Kopan Monastery in December 2012. "It is said in the sutra *Piled Flowers*, that on top of that benefit, you achieve ultimate happiness – liberation from the causes of delusion and karma, and on top of that, full enlightenment – all the realizations and omniscient mind. After this, then you liberate numberless hell beings, pretas, animals, humans, suras and asuras from the ocean of samsaric sufferings and bring them to full enlightenment. When all beings are brought to enlightenment, only then are all the results of offering achieved."

Annual events such as 100,000 Tsog Offerings to Padmasambhava, the recitation of the Kangyur – the words of the Buddha – and 100,000 repetitions of *Praises to the 21 Taras* and monthly extensive Medicine Buddha and Hayagriva pujas are performed by as many as 9,000 Sangha, making them an extremely powerful means to create merit and overcome obstacles for everyone.

The FPMT Puja Fund also coordinates an impressive number of prayers and practices on Buddha Days, the special astrological dates when merit is multiplied 100 million times. For example, for the 2012 celebration of Lha Bab Duchon, a holiday commemorating Buddha's descent from Tushita, the FPMT Puja Fund sponsored a special puja at Ganden Lachi Monastery in India and made offerings to the 3,400 monks there; made offerings to all of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's gurus and to all Sangha living in FPMT's international Sangha communities; offered white wash, four giant saffron petals and new pinnacle umbrellas to Boudhanath and Swayambunath stupas in Kathmandu; provided a new set of robes to the Buddha statue inside the Bodhgaya Mahabodhi Temple as well as to the Jowo Buddha in Lhasa's Jokhang; and offered gold to the Jowo Buddha's holy face.

While making personal offerings at the holy sites in Nepal, Tibet and India may not be possible, offering to the FPMT Puja Fund affords Dharma students the opportunity to participate in continual offerings to holy objects and other auspicious activities organized around the world. ♦



*Offering gold to
Jowo Buddha,
Lhasa, Tibet*

To learn more about the FPMT Puja Fund and all the beneficial global activities it sponsors, please visit: www.fpmt.org/projects/fpmt/puja.



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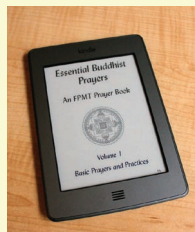
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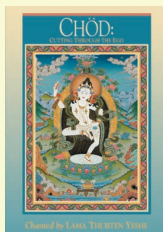
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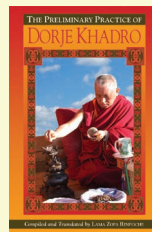
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The Need for Qualified Teachers

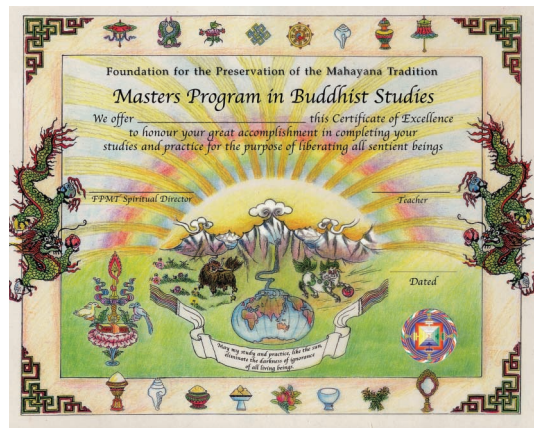
By FPMT Education Services and Center Services



Lama Zopa Rinpoche holding a text, Amitabha Buddhist Centre, Singapore, February 2010. Photo by Miss Seow.

There is an ever-expanding need for qualified teachers as interest in Buddhist study grows and the number of FPMT centers, projects, services and study groups increases. The personal benefit of completing a full course of study in any FPMT standard education program is incalculable. An enormous additional benefit comes to the graduate and their local center when he or she receives the completion certification for the program – because this fulfills one of the key prerequisites for becoming an FPMT registered teacher, itself a requirement to teach in a center or study group.

FPMT Education Services makes three certificate study programs available to students – *Discovering Buddhism*, *Basic Program* and *Masters Program* – **each designed in accordance with the guidance, wishes and advice of Lama Zopa Rinpoche**. By completing a program in full, students are directly fulfilling Rinpoche's wishes for education within FPMT. Acknowledging the need for registered teachers and understanding the rewards and benefits of teaching itself, we encourage all FPMT students to consider taking one of the standard FPMT education programs through to certification.



Clockwise from left: Basic Program graduates with Geshe Tashi Tsering, Chenrezig Institute, Australia, December 2007. Photo courtesy Chenrezig Institute.
Masters Program certificate, designed by Lama Zopa Rinpoche.
Masters Program students with Geshe Jampa Gyatso, Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Italy, June 2007. Photo courtesy Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa.

Discovering Buddhism

Designed as a two-year course, *Discovering Buddhism* (DB) offers students an experiential taste of and solid foundation in Buddha's teachings, retreat and practice methods and the skills needed to make life most meaningful. *Discovering Buddhism* is offered in many FPMT centers worldwide and is also available as a homestudy program (paper based) or as an online course (strictly electronic).

A handful of students have completed the DB program and received certificates, and many qualified teachers have received honorary certificates in recognition of their years of study.

Currently, there are 136 FPMT registered teachers who can teach *Discovering Buddhism*, providing students around the world with foundational instruction in Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism in the unique lineage of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

Basic Program

The *Basic Program* (BP) is now a five-year comprehensive, practice-oriented program for students wishing to progress beyond introductory and foundational study and practice. The course covers 12 subject areas including: lam-rim, *Heart Sutra*, the six perfections, *lojong*, buddha-nature, mind and cognition,

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"Double Dorje" by Robert Page, an LPP student who passed away in 2011

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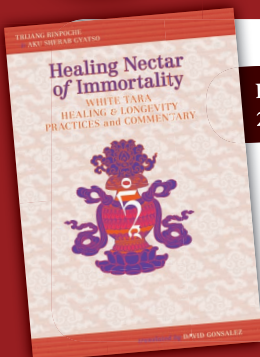
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Translated by David Gonzalez

Dechen Ling Press Will Be Publishing a Number of Previously Unavailable Commentaries

Forthcoming releases will include **Secret Revelations of Chittamani Tara** as well as commentaries such as the **Six Yogas of Naropa**, **Lama Chopra**, **Chakrasamvara Body Mandala**, and many others.



philosophical tenets, *Ornament of Clear Realization* and *Seventy Topics*, and the four classes of tantra. In addition, the course requires observance of ethical conduct, a service or “karma yoga” commitment, and the successful completion of three months of lam-rim retreat in order to receive a completion certificate.

The *Basic Program* is currently hosted at 20 centers and is also available as a homestudy program and as an online program through Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa in Italy. To date, almost 80 students have graduated from the *Basic Program* and received certificates. Additionally, seven BP completion certificates for homestudy have been issued. There are 63 registered teachers who can teach *Basic Program*.

Masters Program

The *Masters Program* (MP) is FPMT’s most advanced study program. The seven-year, residential course is based on the traditional geshe studies at the great Gelug monastic universities. The program offers in-depth study of “the five great texts” and extensive retreat experience, providing a thorough grounding in sutra and tantra.

The second FPMT *Masters Program* is in its final year at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa in Italy. The review and final exam will take place by the end of 2013. Students are already preparing for their one-year retreat, which will complete their studies and qualify them for graduation by the end of 2014. Nineteen students graduated from the first *Masters Program* held at the center.

Nalanda Monastery in France is preparing for their first *Masters Program* (the third such program in FPMT), due to start in September 2013.

At Chenrezig Institute in Australia, more than 20 Sangha and seven lay students started the MP-accredited course on *Madhyamakavatara* in June 2012.

Teaching Dharma: Preserving a Tradition

Students who complete *Discovering Buddhism*, *Basic Program* and *Masters Program* can contribute to the sustainability of these programs, the entire FPMT organization and the preservation of Dharma by becoming teachers themselves. Through integrating what they have learned, they are able to give others the tools to do the same.

Within FPMT, the label “teacher” indicates a person possessing several indispensable qualifications: academic success, solid meditation practice, an attitude of service, ethical behavior and loving kindness. Additionally, FPMT teachers have an appreciation of the organization’s history and unique teaching lineage, which helps build a sense of family and cohesion amongst their students.

Stories of Success, Struggle and Perseverance

The idea of beginning and completing an intensive study program can seem quite daunting, especially given the pressures and responsibilities of modern life. We asked a few students who have engaged with these programs to share why, despite obstacles and challenges, they felt persevering was the only option for them:

Stephanie Smith of Kadampa Center, North Carolina, United States, is in the final stages of completing *Discovering Buddhism* with the hope of teaching at her center. Due to the kindness of Geshe Gelek, Kadampa Center’s resident geshe, Stephanie had many of the *Discovering Buddhism* requirements completed prior to beginning the program. In 1999, she offered the top floor of her home to Geshe Gelek, who encouraged her to complete 111,111 Vajrasattva mantras, mandala offerings and prostrations. By the time *Discovering Buddhism* was established and the certification process in place, she was already well on her way to completing the requirements.

“I think I was only able to collect all the requirements because I didn’t know more were coming,” Stephanie reflected. “I just wanted to finish what Geshe-la had asked me to do at the time. I stayed totally focused on the 111,111 prostrations, for example. I may have been overwhelmed if I knew I had to do something else after that. But students now will have something I didn’t have: a group of other DB students to cheer and encourage each other in this process. And a finish line of sorts.

“I had no real expectations, just curiosity. But the results spurred me on, and by the time I completed each collection [of practices], I found myself wanting more. Being open to the surprises means one will see the surprises. I had the proof that what I was doing was changing my mind and my life, so I just kept putting one foot in front of the other. People seem to enjoy many of the stories I have of bombarding Geshe-la with my questions and my resistance. And these stories have made it possible for me to help others make sense of something they are struggling with. Our struggles can help others.”

Margo van Greta, coordinator of Togme Sangpo Study Group, Scotland, is close to completing the *Discovering Buddhism* certificate and looking forward to being able to teach. She shared that she knows something about juggling the many responsibilities that can often lead one off course, and yet she doesn’t give up.

“I do the study and assignments besides working a full-time job, serving as coordinator for Togme Sangpo Study Group and leading weekly meditation sessions,” Margo said. “In addition to that, I have my daily practice, including more study, following the advice that Lama Zopa Rinpoche has given me. Sometimes it feels like a lot! I persevere because I feel Rinpoche’s blessing. I also

see the enthusiasm of the small group who joins the meditation sessions. They seem sincerely interested, so I would love to provide more in-depth material.”

Steff Hill from Jamyang Buddhist Centre, London, had previously completed *Foundation of Buddhist Thought* with Geshe Tashi. She then decided to complete the *Discovering Buddhism* exams for certification as well, since she had already completed the other requirements. However, answering the questions required more reflection than she anticipated, and it took her a year to complete.

“Be realistic about your expectations of this type of program,” Steff suggested as a way to handle the challenges. “It takes time and commitment. These programs do not seem to be like others a person may engage with in life. The very nature of the process itself involves the potential for transformation. If someone is trying to do one alongside the commitments and responsibilities of daily life, then it seems almost inevitable that at some point or other, the act of studying the Buddhadharmā is going to bring a direct confrontation with why, and how, that person is doing it. This is what the teachings are about, and this is in itself a way of learning what the Buddha really taught. So yes, I would recommend aiming to complete a program like this. It’s a bit like a way to strengthen and deepen one’s refuge in the Three Jewels.”

Vens. Kerry Prest and Losang Gendun recently completed the *Basic Program* at Nalanda Monastery, France, and are now registered as In-Depth Buddhism teachers.

“There were a number of things that kept me going,” Ven. Kerry shared. “Being around others who were also struggling and available to talk about things helped and having time to relax and not stress because I didn’t know everything was crucial. But mostly it was due to the skillful guidance of Gen-la [Geshe Losang Jamphel] and his knowing when it was time to laugh, time to debate and time to go into so much complexity it made my head spin! But he was always pushing us away from ignorance.”

“In itself, living in Nalanda Monastery as a monk is a rather comfortable and enjoyable position, conducive to contentment in study and practice,” Ven. Gendun added. “So in that sense, obstacles mainly come from the mind. The subject that I found difficult to connect with was the fourth chapter of the *Ornament of Clear Realization* and to even remotely be able to relate it to anything practical. Interestingly enough, now that I’m teaching, I use the text rather often to exemplify how various practices and insights interconnect. So looking back at it, the fact that I made an effort to investigate the historical context of the text and its main points, next to an orthodox exposition of it, helped me integrate it in a personal way; it made it work for me. That is the value of perseverance, that whether or not it works out in the end as you might hope, it always rewards you with insight.”



Ven. Losang Gendun completed the Basic Program in 2012 at Nalanda Monastery, France

Swee Kim Ng receiving the Basic Program certificate from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Amitabha Buddhist Centre, Singapore, February 2011. Photo by Ven. Thubten Kunsang.



Teachers for the Future

Lama Zopa Rinpoche consistently emphasizes that the motivation behind all of our actions should be our personal commitment to the path of the bodhisattva. “The best answer is to learn Dharma – and to meditate – especially how to develop wisdom and compassion towards other sentient beings,” Lama Zopa Rinpoche advised in November 2011. “We each have full responsibility to free all sentient beings from suffering and bring them to full enlightenment. Therefore, we need to achieve full enlightenment and so we need to practice Dharma. Therefore, we need a place where there is a teacher and facilities to practice. Now we can see how important the Dharma center is. We should know how fortunate and lucky we are having different Dharma centers with teachers.”

The preservation of the Dharma depends on qualified teachers, and FPMT is committed to providing study programs that keep the Mahayana teachings authentic and comprehensive. Our hope is that you too will be inspired to commit to completing an FPMT education program for your own benefit and because future students are relying on you!

You can learn more about the FPMT Education Services study programs available to you at www.fpmt.org/education/programs. Homestudy programs are available through the FPMT Foundation Store (shop.fpmt.org). The *Discovering Buddhism* online program can be found on the FPMT Online Learning Center (onlinelearning.fpmt.org).

You can see which FPMT centers have resident teachers at www.fpmt.org/teachers/resident.html.

Visit mandalamagazine.org to read Ven. George Churinoff’s reflection on the benefit of in-depth Buddhist study.

Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom

The Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom is an international project of the FPMT, established in 2005, to help all beings lead a happier, more peaceful and meaningful life. It achieves this through providing educational programs and projects rooted in Buddhist philosophy and psychology yet suitable for people of all cultures and traditions. This collection of programs and projects comprises Universal Education for Compassion and Wisdom.

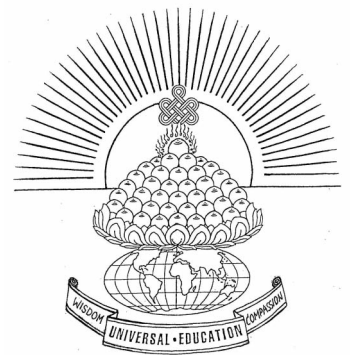
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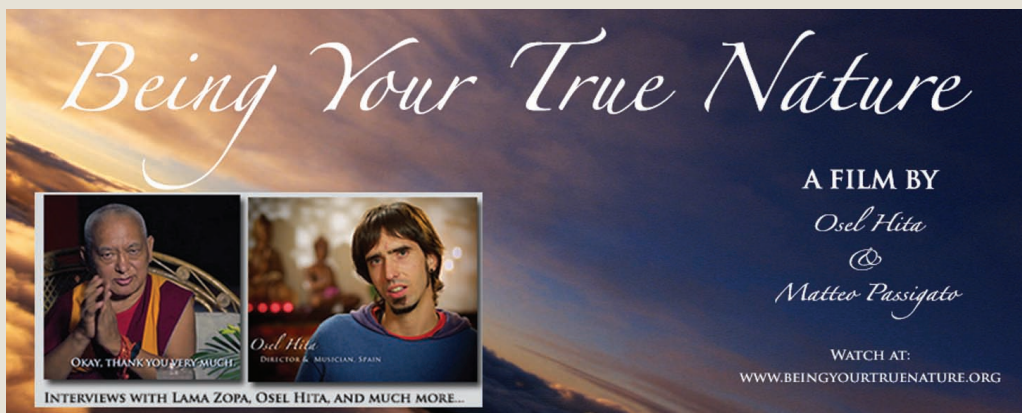
By Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom team

“So far, of the 21st century, just over a decade has gone: the major part of it is yet to come. It is my hope that this will be a century of peace, a century of dialogue – a century when a more caring, responsible, and compassionate humanity will emerge,” His Holiness the Dalai Lama, patron of Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom (FDCW), shared in the conclusion to his book *Beyond Religion*, published in 2011 as the follow-up to *Ethics for the New Millennium*. Both books are seminal sources of inspiration for anyone involved with Universal Education for Compassion and Wisdom, which itself is a response to Lama Yeshe’s call to go “beyond Buddhism” and find new ways of sharing its message of compassion and wisdom with a wider audience of people from all traditions and cultures.

In taking forward this vision, the role that FDCW plays is largely a backroom one, providing resources, training and support for the community educators who are directly taking these teachings into everyday situations such as schools and colleges, hospices and prisons, the workplace and the home. We’re happy to announce that, under the direction of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, we are now working in partnership with senior students of FPMT on a new set of long-term training programs. These new programs will present the three topics of ethical behavior, how to develop a good heart, and the science of the mind. They will be offered alongside and in support of our inaugural program *16 Guidelines for a Happy Life* and the wonderful work of our associate projects: Creating Compassionate Cultures, Loving Kindness Peaceful Youth, Transformative Mindfulness and The Potential Project.

If you’d like regular updates on progress on these new training programs, please join our mailing list. You can sign up at www.compassionandwisdom.org. And we hope that everyone will join us in making prayers that these activities will help us fulfill all our teachers’ wishes to create a more caring, responsible and compassionate world.





Being Your True Nature Interviews Now Online

“Uplifting...” “Warm...” “Welcoming...” “Real...” “Lots of smiling faces...” “We want to do it at our center!” were some of the comments that flowed into the FDCW office following the December 8, 2012, launch of Tenzin Ösel Hita’s and Matteo Passigato’s new movie, *Being Your True Nature*. In addition to at least 20 screenings in FPMT centers, we were delighted by over 6,000 views online in the first eight weeks. The country with most views was Spain (1,645 views) followed by the United States (600), Italy (568) and France (540).

We are very grateful to the translators and to Matteo Passigato and Ivano Colombo who made it possible to provide three subtitled versions of the film. It has also been viewed in countries where we’ve not yet run any activities such as Qatar (55 views), South Korea (39), Palestine (17) and Hong Kong (8), proving the power of audiovisual media to quickly reach and inspire new audiences.

We were also happy to receive some constructive criticism of the film such as: “Inspiring,

but more of a declaration than an explanation...” “It didn’t really show you examples, so people liked the general idea but were hungry for more.” In response, you can now find a series of short film interviews with the community educators who attended our 2011 Gathering at Institut Vajra Yogini in France, where most of the film was shot. The interviews are posted on the film website www.beingyourtruenature.com under “Cast.” Long-time FPMT students Pam Cayton and Dekyi-Lee Oldershaw, who have been developing Universal Education programs for over 20 years, are featured as well as many newer people who have just started setting up family camps, developing prison programs, and bringing compassion and wisdom into the workplace.

More real-life stories can be found in our past newsletters at www.compassionandwisdom.org, and in the “16 Guidelines in Action” section at www.16guidelines.org. Please keep your comments coming – it’s great to have your input and support!

Education Universelle: Leading the Growth of Universal Education in France



Education Universelle meeting, January 2013. Photo by Christophe Bertraneu.

In December 2012, we received the good news that Education Universelle France (EUF) is now legally established as the formal representative of the Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom in France. In January 2013, the association launched its own website (www.educationuniversellefrance.fr) and finalized a packed calendar of events for the year, which includes two *16 Guidelines* workshops, a second hosting of the successful family camp “123 Bonheur,” a public conference in Toulouse, Transformative Mindfulness training sessions with Dekyi-Lee Oldershaw, and an invitation for Pam Cayton to lead a Creating Compassionate Cultures workshop.

“The process of coming together to form an association has been very positive and joyful,” shared EUF coordinator Nicolas Brun. “When we meet we try to be an example of what we say, listening to everyone, respecting believers and non-believers alike, being open to new ideas that fit with the FDCW spirit, slowly growing the membership by including people with skills and a positive motivation and being very careful with organizational and legal issues to ensure we maintain good quality in our work.”

After holding regular meetings throughout 2011 and 2012, including a visit from FDCW training manager Marian O’Dwyer, the group developed a shared understanding of their local needs and cultural specificities and decided they would strongly benefit from having a unified association that could coordinate activities in France and nourish their vision for Universal Education work in the region. After

harmonizing their key principles and objectives with the FDCW office in London, work commenced in autumn 2012 to complete the legal requirements to register as an association in France and name a president, coordinator, secretary and communications person to carry each specific responsibility.

All the members of the association are volunteers and have been involved in various Universal Education activities over the years, some – like EUF president and primary school teacher Françoise Normand – since Lama Yeshe first introduced his vision, and others more recently through workshops at Institut Vajra Yogini. The Institut has played a crucial role in supporting the association by serving as a hub and meeting space for the group as well as being the venue for the majority of activities. Education Universelle France is now looking to provide services in other locations to reach a wider audience such as the city of Toulouse, where it will hold its first public conference in May.

FDCW is very happy to support the development of national representatives, who can provide the local support needed to ensure that Universal Education programs and activities are linguistically and culturally relevant to the local community, and make them more viable and sustainable over the long term. In addition to France, the FDCW team is currently working with national representatives in Canada, Italy and Mexico. If you would like to find out more please contact Esther Garibay at info@compassionandwisdom.org. ♦



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REJOICE!

“I Lasted Eight Days”

The nyung nä is an intensive two-day fasting retreat connected with Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of Compassion, known in Tibetan as Chenrezig. The combination of fasting (at times, even from water), numerous rounds of prostrations, chanting and elaborate altar set-up means that the practice is physically and mentally demanding. Below we hear from Ven. Jangchup Phelgye, an American monk living in California who has committed himself to 1,000 nyung näs on the advice of Lama Zopa Rinpoche and has already completed 284.

By Ven. Jangchup Phelgye

In 2007, I requested spiritual direction from Lama Zopa Rinpoche and he advised me to do 1,000 nyung näs. Vajrapani Institute in California later approved construction of a single 8-foot-by-10-foot (2.5-meter-by-3-meter) room in which to do the practice. And in May 2009, after addressing details like the hauling and carving of an already-felled 500-year-old redwood tree for the altar, I stepped inside the Lotus Shrine for my first sessions. I lasted eight days.

The fasting, rounds of prostrations, etc., had been tough. Which is why, I think, in a moment of mental doodling, I chose to reckon my eight hard-won days against the 2,000 required to complete my assigned quota. The original millennial figure had always had quixotic allure, like me climbing Mt. Everest one day. But subtracting my eight *actual* days offered only the harsh reality of 1,992 hard days *still ahead!* That's when I quit.

Months passed. On a whim, I joined a 12-week Vajrasattva purification retreat given by Ven. Antonio Satta in New Zealand in September. Later back home, I offered to Padmasambhava 100,000 mantras and prayed for help in returning to my nyung nä practice. Then one chilly afternoon in December, I was sitting in the shrine, staring up at the thangka of 1000-Arm Avalokiteshvara, when I felt my heart touched by a tenderness so profound that, suddenly weeping, I knew some simple thing deep inside me had just surrendered. I started my ninth day of nyung näs early the next morning.

When I last spoke with Lama Zopa Rinpoche in autumn 2012, I shared that despite taking my time and not rushing the practice, I'd still completed 284 nyung näs and that I expected to meet the designated thousand and hoped to be allowed to continue the practice for the rest of my life.

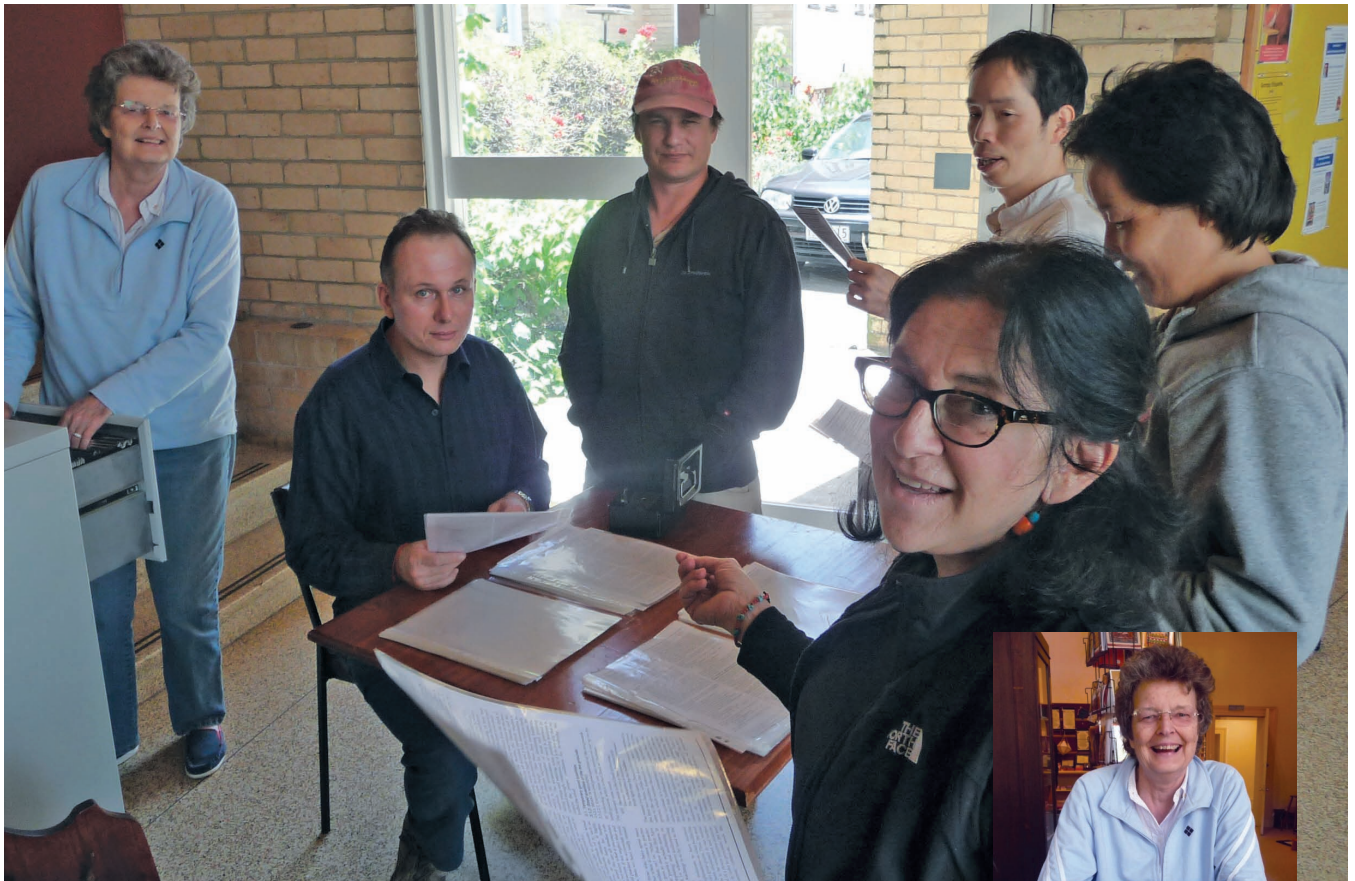
My beloved teacher smiled.

Visit Vajrapani Institute online at www.vajrapani.org.

*Ven. Jangchup Phelgye outside the Lotus Shrine, Vajrapani Institute, California, U.S., February 2013.
Photo by Dan MacLaurin.*



Tara Institute's Publishing Group: Commitment and Reliability for 20 Years



Above: Adair Bunnett (left), co-founder of Tara Institute's volunteer-run publishing group, and the Tuesday night distribution people, Andrew Jack (seated) and Alex Davis (standing with hat), handing out copies of transcribed, edited and checked teachings to Tara Institute students. Right: Adair Bunnett with a digital version of edited transcripts of Geshe Doga's teachings, Australia, January 2013. Photos courtesy of Tara Institute.

In addition to the inspiration, blessings and tireless activities of many great Buddhist masters, the development and spread of Dharma in the West can be credited in part to the work of dedicated students offering freely their skills and labor. Within FPMT's international community, countless examples exist of students generously giving their time, energy and expertise – from literally building centers from the ground up to organizing transformative teaching events and retreats to developing and teaching FPMT education programs to handling the day-to-day tasks that keep a center going.

Tara Institute (TI), in Australia, has a long history of student commitment and service. Begun as Tara House in 1976, the center has thrived over the years. In 1984, the center's current resident teacher, Geshe Lobsang Doga, arrived. Today, Tara Institute

occupies a complex of buildings in the Melbourne suburb of Brighton East, which includes a gompa that seats 300, office space, accommodations for about 25 residential students, a dining room with a commercial kitchen and a private apartment for Geshe Doga.

Like most FPMT centers, Tara Institute relies on an active base of volunteers to function. But unique to the center is its volunteer-run publishing group, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The group transcribes, edits and distributes to students Ven. Michael Yeshe's translations of Geshe Doga's teachings.

"It is a tightly orchestrated operation," Cynthia Karena, a publishing group member since 1995, told *Mandala*. Geshe Doga teaches twice a week: on Tuesdays, an in-depth study group, which meets in six-week blocks with regular exams and last year

YOUR COMMUNITY



From left: Peter Boothby, Tara Institute publishing group transcriber, working at home; Ai Chin Khor, Tara Institute publishing group transcriber, at her work table at home. Photos courtesy of Tara Institute.

completed study of *Nagarjuna's Precious Garland*; and on Wednesdays, a weekly lam-rim class, which is less intensive and open to all. Students can count on transcripts of each week's teachings being available the following week.

The publishing group traces its origins back 20 years. Adair Bunnett is one of the co-founders of the group and currently edits the Tuesday night teachings and serves as group coordinator. As the retired historian and school teacher tells it, she was recovering from brain surgery and found her handwritten notes from teachings difficult to read and understand, so she started typing them out. "Typing the notes was useful for me to retrain my fingers, and my brain," she recalled in an interview in early 2013.

At about the same time, Mark Emerson, who was a resident and student at Tara Institute, "was looking for material to transcribe to improve his typing. He was attending a Vajrayogini commentary given by Geshe Doga, and asked [fellow resident and student] Alan Molloy if he could transcribe Alan's notes," Adair explained. "Then Mark began to transcribe Wednesday night teachings and put it up on the residents' noticeboard at TI.

"We discovered we were doing the same thing so we decided to join forces, and at the beginning of 1994, we started distributing edited transcripts to study group students every week," Adair continued. "Alan and I focused on Tuesday nights, and because I was so new to the Dharma, Alan checked what I did to make sure it was correct. Mark took on the task of preparing the Wednesday transcripts.

"In those days there was no email, so Sue Spiers [another TI student] typed Alan's notes and delivered the floppy disk to Tara Institute. I'd drive down to pick up the disc from TI to edit the notes, and bring it back for Alan to do the final check. Mark would do the layout and printing on Alan's printer," Adair said.

From floppy disks to digital downloads, the technology has evolved, but what the group does hasn't changed much. Over the

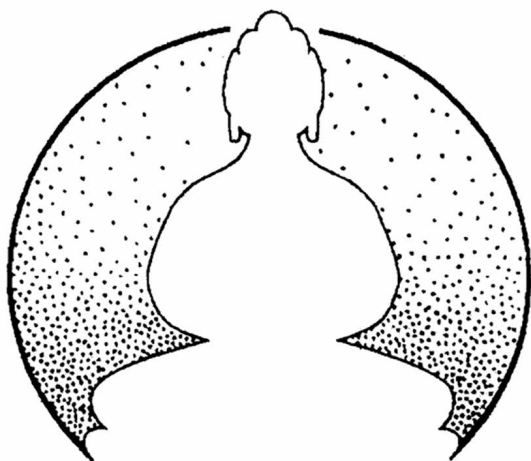
years, more people became involved. Now the group has about 20 members, including four transcribers and four editors for Wednesday transcripts as well as people responsible for recording and uploading the teachings and for layout, printing and distribution. "Being a part of the publishing team requires commitment and reliability," Adair said. "Volunteers have to understand the word 'deadline,' and be hard-wired for commitment."

Bernii Wright has been a Tuesday night transcriber for 10 years. "Transcribing is a way of practicing the Dharma; it's a kind of meditation. I also enjoy the intellectual stimulation," Bernii explained. "I set aside a day and transcribe in two-hour blocks. I know others do it all at once in a shorter amount of time, but I like to spread it out during the day so I can think about the teachings and contemplate the message and how to apply it in my everyday life. Transcribing consolidates the teachings for me.

"For example, if I'm feeling depressed, it puts my problems in perspective – the depression is temporary, what I'm thinking about is small," Bernii continued. "It's the samsaric side that is causing me upset, and I should be thinking about what Geshe Doga is talking about. The transcripts allow me to do that."

Mary-Lou Considine was an editor with the publishing group for almost 20 years. She believes the transcripts have benefited students doing in-depth study. "When I first attended teachings, our Tuesday student discussion nights were a bit rambling, and people would read out what they thought Geshe-la had said from their scribbled notes," Mary-Lou explained. "After we had the edited and checked transcripts in hand, however, the Tuesday teaching was there in black and white – discussion nights became more focused, students were able to start doing assessable homework questions and prepare more solidly for the monthly tests."

Ven. Michael Yeshe, who translates for Geshe Doga, checks all of the edited transcripts before they are printed and distributed.



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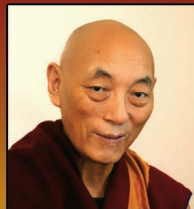
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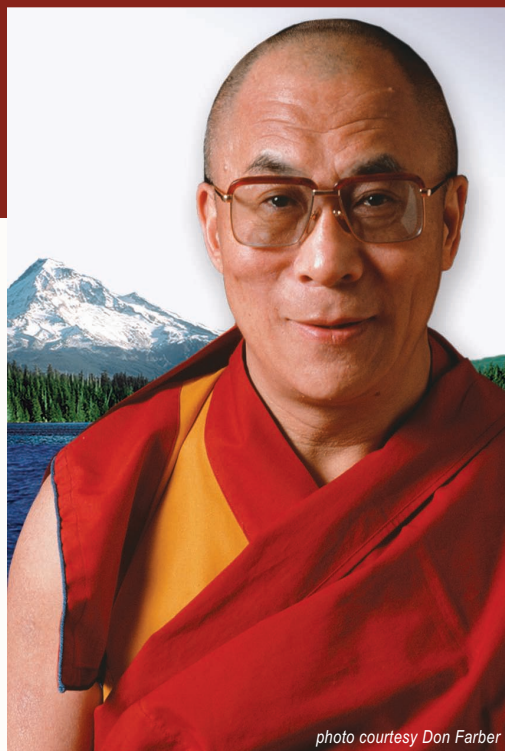


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“For me, I see this being an important part of Geshe-la’s teaching process, [because] it’s a written record that people will refer to in the future,” Ven. Michael said. “In the written form, there is no opportunity, as there is in the teaching, to clarify, so it’s important for it to be accurate. Under the pressure during teachings, I may not get all the correct words, or understand some points fully on the teaching night. And, as agreed with Geshe-la, I’m to check that the transcriptions are as accurate as possible.

“Once in awhile this involves listening to the recording of the teaching again. If I’m in doubt, I listen, and I might catch something I missed on the night. Sometimes, if certain points are still not clear when I listen to them, I go to Geshe-la seeking further clarification,” Ven. Michael continued. “This doesn’t mean that it’s entirely free from errors from my side, but at least we have made the attempt to get it right.”

Geshe Doga recognizes the worth of the publishing group’s work. “I know that sometimes it’s not easy, but I appreciate it,”

Geshe Doga told Adair when she presented him with a bound copy of the year’s transcripts, as she does every year.

Tara Institute’s director, Judy Mayne, is a Tuesday night study group stalwart and worked as a transcriber and editor with the publishing group for three years. “The 20th anniversary of the TI publishing group is definitely worth rejoicing in. All this has only been possible through consistency and the commitment of the recorders, the transcribers, the editors and the distributors – especially Adair Bunnett, there from the beginning, who coordinates and nurtures the team. What a team!” Judy said. “This is doing what makes our teachers happy: practicing and helping people develop their understanding of the Dharma.”

Thanks to Cynthia Karna and members of the Tara Institute publishing group for conducting the interviews and producing the transcripts that resulted in this article.

You can learn more about Tara Institute at www.tarainstitute.org.au.

For information on FPMT education programs, visit FPMT Education Services online at www.fpmt.org/education.

Why I Work a Day for Rinpoche



Laurent and Vairea Decouze, Bhutan, 2010

When it comes to working for others, Lama Zopa Rinpoche is unparalleled. Whether it’s teaching students for hours on end; meeting and advising disciples; performing prayers, practices and pujas; or shaping the spiritual direction of FPMT, among other countless beneficial activities, Rinpoche strives to extract the essence from each day.

Inspired by Rinpoche’s efforts and grateful for his example, FPMT International Office created Work a Day for Rinpoche, a campaign and fund to help make our day-to-day efforts at work and home more meaningful and beneficial. Celebrated on Saka Dawa – the day commemorating Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and parinirvana, this year on May 25 – students participate by dedicating their virtuous activities and offering part of their salary. Donations made to this fund go to FPMT International Office, which works to support Rinpoche’s vast vision.

“I like to work a day for Rinpoche because I feel his motivation is pure and I want his wishes to be fulfilled as soon as possible,” shared Laurent Decouze, a student living in France. “I used to be a physiotherapist in Tahiti, but now I’m in France. I stopped working to focus more on my wife and my studies in the Mahayana.

“For Work a Day for Rinpoche, I read the *Golden Light Sutra* and other texts, tried to keep my vows and realize renunciation, which is a bit challenging for me! I feel awed, in a way, by the activities of Rinpoche, and try, like a monkey, to imitate him. I feel great joy to have met him and his entourage at this present time, which is so challenging for so many sentient beings.”

Learn more about how you can support the Work a Day for Rinpoche campaign and fund at www.fpmt.org/fpmt/work-a-day.

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FEATURED CENTER

Big Moves for Maitreya Instituut

By Paula de Wijs



Above: Maitreya Instituut students with Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Bruchem, Netherlands, 1981. Photo by Jan-Paul Kool.

When did Maitreya Instituut (MI) really begin? Was it in 1976, when the first Dutch lam-rim course was given by Marcel Bertels in a tent at the International Theosophical Center? Or was it a few years later, when Lama Yeshe conferred the name “Maitreya Instituut” on the small group of students that had started to come together? One could also choose 1979, when we became a legal entity, or even some time after that when we began to organize courses, or the moment that we first rented our own space. Whatever moment in time one chooses, it is clear that the situation has constantly been changing and adapting to the times, and even now – especially now – with major moves of our two locations, change continues in full force!

In the 1970s, we organized courses in rented halls when Lamas Yeshe and Zopa Rinpoche, masters like Tsenshab Serkong Rinpoche, or Western teachers came to visit the Netherlands. But after of few years of this, we felt the need for our own space.

There is a great photo taken in 1981 on the steps of our first rented property with Lama Yeshe and a large group of students (look well and you might recognize some familiar faces). That large building was not very convenient and residents, including babies, had to move out of their rooms during weekend courses to accommodate other students! The next place we rented was a large house in Maasbommel, where the gompa was in the living room and the barn was turned into sleeping and dining areas. In 1986, a Council for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (CPMT) meeting was held there, the highlight of which was the visit of 18-month-old Tenzin Ösel Hita – a treat for all present.

Geshe Konchog Lhundrup came to live in Maasbommel, and soon we felt as if we were bursting at the seams, so we started to



look for a place to buy. In 1987, we found a youth hostel for sale in Emst, and it seemed perfect: 7 hectares (17 acres) in the woods, quiet, with dormitories and some single rooms, a large space for a gompa, and a separate house for the office, shop and geshe quarters. Jan-Paul Kool and his late wife Margot were instrumental there for decades. It’s hard to recollect all the great teachers who visited and taught in Emst, but Jampa Rinpoche, Geshe Sopa, Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, Choden Rinpoche, Dagpo Rinpoche, Dagri Rinpoche and Geshe Sherab immediately come to mind.

When our first resident geshe decided to retire in 1991, Geshe Sonam Gyaltzen, a respected scholar and teacher, came to live and teach in Emst. Luckily, Hans van den Bogaert was still there to interpret for him from Tibetan directly into Dutch. Ten years later Geshe Sonam Gyaltzen helped to host a memorable Geshe Conference, to which we welcomed geshees from FPMT centers all over the world.

That group of geshees also came to bless our second center in Amsterdam, which had opened in 1998 after a generous student was inspired by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to start a center in the city. He was able to buy and refurbish a building on a beautiful canal for us, and Australian Ven. Kaye Miner came to be the resident teacher at what was named Maitreya Instituut Amsterdam. Although she started only teaching in English, she has since learned to teach in Dutch as well.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche came to Emst again in 2004 for our 25th-anniversary celebrations, together with friends from all over the world who had attended the second CPMT meeting held at the center. By that time, however, the buildings had become quite old and students were not as enthusiastic about sleeping on bunk beds in dorms as they had been 25 years earlier! For many years we looked at different possibilities – renovation, tearing down the

“Bosoord,” the hotel, was being sold because new national fire regulations necessitated major replacement of doors, ceilings and walls and the old owner could not manage to finance all that. But could we?

Maarten came up with a very creative scheme whereby students and friends could contribute by becoming mortgage holders for five years. Although the notary had never seen anything like it, the plan was completely legal, and we were able to buy the hotel in Loenen without having to resort to expensive bank loans. Of course, the property in Emst needed to be sold to be able to finance the new place in Loenen, and, with the help of a friendly project developer, Maarten devised another unusual and creative solution. There were many exciting and uncertain moments right until the day the official documents were signed, and it is quite an accomplishment that it was possible to obtain this great building and property, along with its great potential.

As all this was taking place, things were changing in Amsterdam as well. Our building was to be sold, and we had to look for a new location, which is not easy in a crowded and expensive city. After a long search, we found a much smaller space in an up-and-coming area. It is easy to reach by bicycle or public transportation, easy to manage and much less expensive than the



old structures and building new ones, using sea containers, giving up a permanent center, etc. – but everything was either too expensive or not practical or both.

A change was definitely in the making, but it was a still a surprise when MI Emst director Maarten de Vries announced that he had found a hotel for sale that seemed to meet all our needs. It was large, with 37 double rooms, all with attached shower and toilet, lots of large spaces both for our own use and to rent out, and a big, well-equipped kitchen. The biggest problem, of course, was money.

From left: Tenzin Ösel Hita, Maasbommel, Netherlands, 1986. Photo by Wendy Ridley; Maarten de Vries, director of Maitreya Instituut Loenen, while casting tsa-tsas; The shrine being moved into the new Maitreya Instituut Amsterdam, August 2012; Geshe Sonam Ngodrup and translator Ven. Khedrup in the new space, Maitreya Instituut Amsterdam, September 2012. Photo by Heidi Boecker.

old one. We began there in September 2012, and students and teachers find it cozier (which is important in the Netherlands!) and seem happy there. It took quite some refurbishing, but it looks really good now.

YOUR COMMUNITY



"Bosoord," Maitreya Instituut Loenen. Photo by Sarah Sugatt.

run both MI and guest courses simultaneously. With these aims in mind, it is important that the new location in Loenen look good and function well, and this is the challenge faced by Maarten and his small team of volunteers and professionals today. We are confident that they will succeed, and it is truly inspiring to see the place taking shape. Andy Weber and his students will be painting large murals in the new gompa, and we hope to have the official opening during the visit of the Maitreya Heart Shrine Relic Tour in June.

We continue to be very fortunate with our teachers and the range of programs that we can offer at both locations. Geshe Sonam Gyaltzen and Ven. Kaye Miner are still resident teachers, and we hope that we can add the popular Geshe Sonam Ngodrup as a new resident geshe next year. Along with courses by Andy Weber, Ven. Sangye Khadro, Ven. Losang Gendun and Rob Preece, this first year in our new locations will be packed with excellent Dharma opportunities. Since many of the courses are given or translated into English, please check out our program and we hope to welcome you to Maitreya Instituut in the future. ♦

www.maitreya.nl


There is more from Your Community online at mandalamagazine.org, including a video from Geshe Thubten Soepa and Massimo Corona's "Road to Kopan" story.

Support the continuing activities of **LAMA YESHE** and **LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE** over many lifetimes to come by requesting your legal advisor to include a bequest to FPMT in your will or trust.

SAMPLE BEQUEST LANGUAGE:
I give, devise, and bequeath to the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, Inc., a California Non Profit Corporation, with offices at 1632 SE 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon, 97214, USA _____ percent (____%) of my residuary estate; and/or the sum of _____ dollars (\$_____).

Gifts of stocks, bonds, life insurance proceeds, real estate and other assets may also be donated in your will or trust.

For more information, contact Chuck Latimer at FPMT International Office: Tel. +1 (503) 808-1586; Email: chuck@fpmt.org. Or visit: www.fpmt.org/projects/office/planned-giving.html



"Within our organization, the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, there are numberless projects through which you can make your belongings most beneficial for sentient beings and the teachings of the Buddha. . . . The aim of the projects is to illuminate the world from darkness, ignorance and suffering." – LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE

FPMT, INC. 1632 SE 11TH AVE. PORTLAND OR 97214 WWW.FPMT.ORG

Obituaries

Lama Zopa Rinpoche requests that “students who read *Mandala* pray that the students whose obituaries follow find a perfect human body, meet a Mahayana guru and become enlightened quickly, or be born in a pure land where the teachings exist and they can become enlightened.” While reading these obituaries, we can also reflect upon our own death and rebirth, prompting us to live our lives in the most meaningful way.

Advice and practices for death and dying from Lama Zopa Rinpoche are available in the Foundation Store (shop.fpmt.org).

Tony Polkinghorne, 70, died in Sydney, Australia, November 14, 2012, of respiratory illness

By Ven. Thubten Chokyi and Christine Beveridge

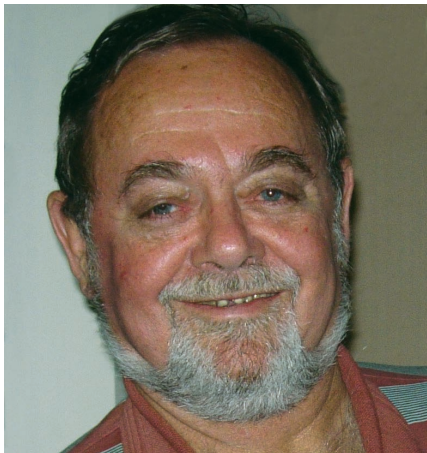


Photo by Marjatta Kaukoma

Tony Polkinghorne was a man of many names: “Anthony,” “Green Ant,” “Gobby,” “Malcolm Polkinghorne.” To family and friends, he was affectionately known as “Bammy.” At Vajrayana Institute, we knew him simply as “Tony.”

Tony and his wife, Marjatta Kaukoma, were students at Vajrayana Institute for a number of years, when Geshe Dawa was still resident teacher. Tony attended Geshe-la’s teachings regularly, and Buddhism was obviously very important to him.

Tony was a happy man, and both he and Marjatta were always willing to help out at the center. Memorably, when the center was in Linthorpe St., Newtown, Tony painted the back wall white to control the heat. Tony and Marjatta generously organized a garage sale for Vajrayana

Institute before they moved out of the area, after which they came less frequently. In the past year, Tony’s health deteriorated considerably and, bed-ridden, he had struggled to breathe for some time.

Marjatta requested prayers for his funeral, which took place with a few close family members surrounding Tony, who was resting in his coffin, wearing his favorite woolly hat. At his funeral, Marjatta reflected on his special connection with Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

Tony will be remembered as a very happy and joyous guy, never short of a word of advice for anyone who would listen.

Graeme Goh, 40, died in Singapore, November 16, 2012, of cancer

By Ven. Tenzin Tsultrim

Graeme, a member of Amitabha Buddhist Centre (ABC), passed away quietly at



home, after a four-year battle with cancer.

His friends will always remember him for the laughter that he brought with his unique brand of jovial and goofy good humor.

Graeme found Amitabha Buddhist Centre more than 10 years ago. He and some friends signed up as ABC members so that they could join a trip that the center was organizing to Bodhgaya, India. It was an act that brought him to the Dharma. He went on to attend several teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India, and also became a student of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Khensur Rinpoche Lama Lhundrup and Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi.

With the encouragement of Geshe Chonyi, Graeme served in the CARE Group. The CARE Group was established upon the advice of Lama Lhundrup to assist ABC members who were seriously ill or debilitated and had no family or relatives to take care of them.

Graeme was enthusiastic about doing ngöndro practices. In his strong and able days, he did many prostrations, made tsa-tsas and especially enjoyed the nyung nä practice, including attending the annual nyung nä retreat held in Kopan Nunnery in Nepal. Together with two friends, Graeme successfully trekked up to Lawudo in the Himalayas to the small temple and meditation cave of Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s previous incarnation.

About seven years ago, Graeme left behind an office job to strike out on his own. He trained to become a professional hair stylist, where his creativity and talent shone through. Many Dharma

OBITUARIES

friends, women and men, became loyal clients. Having a hair appointment with Graeme was more than just about cutting or coloring hair (and he sure knew how to color hair!), it was more like catching up with an old pal. One would emerge, not just with hair beautifully styled, but feeling good and happy about the world.

When Graeme was diagnosed with nasal cancer, he was devastated at first. It was difficult for him as his condition deteriorated. In a 2011 interview with *Tashi Delek*, ABC's newsletter, he said:

"Learning Dharma in ABC has helped me a lot because I understand about the concept of karma in accepting the fact that I have cancer. Dharma really helps. I learned from my teachers, especially from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, that Dharma is to transform your mind. The most important is to put it into action."

Despite suffering severe side effects from radiation and chemotherapy treatment and the continuing spread of cancer, Graeme never gave up his determination to practice. He managed to travel not just once, but twice, to Kopan Monastery at the end of 2011, the second time to attend Khen Rinpoche's enthronement ceremony. Even though he could only have a liquid diet by that time, Graeme found the strength to do what he enjoyed so much: circumambulating Boudhanath Stupa.

By the second half of 2012, Graeme could no longer speak and had a tracheotomy tube inserted at his throat. He endured unimaginable pain and sleepless nights. In the midst of extreme physical suffering, he would still occasionally receive visits from his ABC support group and send text messages to his friends, signed off with smiley faces, love and big hugs.

The main practice that Lama Zopa Rinpoche had advised Graeme to do was *tong-len*, exchanging self for others. Graeme once explained how doing *tong-len* helped him face his illness. "If you think less of yourself and more of others," he said, "then you feel less of your own suffering."

Erdene-Ochir, 70, died in Darkhan, Mongolia, December 27, 2012, of liver cancer

By Ven. Sarah Thresher
with translation by Badamsuren Sandag



Erdene-Ochir (Rinchen Dorje in Tibetan, or, "Precious Vajra") was born into the Loosan family in Sharga in the Gobi-Altai province of Mongolia in 1942. His ancestors hailed from Tibet and were geshe, monks and doctors. His grandfather Tseveg was a very popular doctor and healer in the area. His father became a monk at a young age at Hasagt Mogoi Monastery in Bayan-Uul and studied well there and at Nuur Mogoi Monastery. He was considered a geshe, but disrobed in 1936 in the wake of the communist purges, hiding in mountains and caves to survive, and then marrying.

Erdene-Ochir was the first of four children and from a young age he was secretly trained in Buddhism, Tibetan and traditional Mongolian script by his father. He later studied at the University of Education in Ulaanbaatar and worked for the Department of Education in his hometown until retiring and moving to Darkhan-Uul. After 1990, when religious freedom was restored, Erdene-Ochir became a monk, performing pujas at one of the local temples in Darkhan. His longing to study the Dharma brought him to the Golden Light Sutra Center, where he regularly attended classes and participated in the lam-rim study group. It was an unusual step for a senior monk

to take and not without repercussions, but it was also a sign of his great courage and resolve.

In a way, Erdene-Ochir was typical of the lost generations of Mongolian Buddhists. Had he not been born under communism, he would most likely have been an exemplary monk, scholar and geshe, but for 70 years that path was closed. Still, he lived and died with an unwavering commitment to and joy in the Dharma that was evident through his final days when, even though he could barely move, he would crawl to his altar to make prostrations. News of his death greatly saddened me; I felt that we had all lost a kind, dear and steady friend.

Lidia Biasini, 52, died in Cesenatico, Italy, January 4, 2013, by suicide

By Marco Castaldi



Born in 1960 in Bologna, Lidia was a Centro Studi Cenresig student. She had a strong devotion to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and went on several occasions to India to attend His Holiness' teachings. She also many times offered service as a volunteer at Cenresig.

Lidia was a very strong woman, full of kindness and enthusiasm. She was very generous and when she was in the gompas, she used to joke with people, before and after teachings. We are praying for her new rebirth and we hope she can continue to benefit others as she did in this life. ♦

Lama Zopa Rinpoche News



Lama Zopa Rinpoche during long life puja, Kopan Monastery, December 2012. Photo by Ven. Roger Kunsang.



Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Tenzin Ösel Hita, Kopan Monastery, December 2012. Photo by Ven. Roger Kunsang.

In December 2012, FPMT spiritual director Lama Zopa Rinpoche returned to Kopan Monastery in Nepal, after a very busy six weeks in South India spent giving transmission and teachings at Sera Je Monastic University and attending the Jangchub Lamrim teachings with His Holiness the Dalai Lama (which FPMT helped sponsor). Rinpoche gave a Vajrasattva initiation at Kopan and a Great Chenrezig initiation to the Tamang community at Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu. While at Kopan, Rinpoche was visited by Tenzin Ösel Hita. In addition, Rinpoche accepted a request from Dagri Rinpoche, Rangjung Neljorma Khadro Namsel Drolma (Khadro-la) and Nita Ing (director of the Maitreya Project) to look after his health properly, including extensive medical check-ups. At the end of the month, Rinpoche received the official annual long life puja sponsored by FPMT.

In early 2013, Rinpoche did personal retreat before beginning an extensive teaching tour in Asia. Rinpoche spent February 16 through March 3 visiting all three FPMT centers in Taiwan: Shakyamuni Center, Jinsiu Farlin and Heruka Center. He spends the rest of March teaching and giving initiations at Amitabha Buddhist Centre, Singapore (March 9-10); Losang Dragpa Centre, Malaysia (March 16-17); and Cham Tse Ling, Hong Kong (March 23-24).

In February, Ven. Roger Kunsang, CEO of FPMT and assistant to Rinpoche, wrote about Rinpoche's health:

Rinpoche's blood pressure and sugar levels are OK. The doctors seem to be happy considering Rinpoche's situation. And although Rinpoche has no interest in the conventional types of exercise, very gradually there seems to be improvement in his right leg and arm, the arm being the slowest to improve (but it does seem to be improving). Most days here [at Shakyamuni Center] Rinpoche does long prostrations and then walks up the stairs to the top floor where he stays – six stories. It leaves most of us puffing, and Rinpoche manages OK.

While in Taiwan, Rinpoche also spent time with Choden Rinpoche. *Mandala* will offer a full report on Rinpoche's tour in the July-September 2013 issue.

For more information on Rinpoche's schedule, visit www.fpmt.org/teachers/zopa/schedule. You can find news updates on Rinpoche at www.fpmt.org/enews and at mandalamagazine.org/posts.

International

The **Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive** continues to increase the offerings of freely available Dharma teachings on the Archive's website. In addition to the teachings of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, recent new posts include teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Geshe Lama Konchog, Geshe Rabten and other high lamas. More than 30,000 pages of teachings and 430 hours of audio – categorized and tagged to facilitate Dharma research and study on a wide range of topics – have been made

available online.

Search the Archive database to see if a teaching you attended has been transcribed and published. Check out the lam-rim teachings from the iconic Kopan Courses. Browse "Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Online Advice Book," which contains more than 1,000 advices. View the image gallery, a collection of rare, archival images of Lama Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and their early students. Access links to a growing selection of teachings and books translated into

languages other than English. Sign up to receive alerts about new teachings on your favorite topics. You can do all this and more online at the Archive website.

– *From Jen Barlow*

www.lamayeshe.com

On a sunny winter morning in Dharamsala, India, current **Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo Translator Programme 6** (LRZTP6) students listened to Zangmo (Angie Overy) – a LRZTP5 graduate

from Australia who is currently doing her apprenticeship at Chokyi Gyaltzen Center in Malaysia – talk about her experiences as a student in the program and as an interpreter. Zangmo expressed her gratitude for LRZTP instructor Gen Sherab Dhargye, whom she credits for skillfully presenting her with all the tools she needs to interpret at Dharma centers. She also emphasized that despite how busy one might be in the program, students have countless opportunities to practice Dharma constantly.

LRZTP6 is accepting applications for second-year students. For more information, visit our website. Application deadline is June 30, 2013.

– From Claire Yeshe Barde

www.lrztp.org



The Maitreya Heart Shrine Relic Tour spent a month in Mongolia, traveling 930 miles [1,500 kilometers] and blessing an estimated 6,500 people. Often the tour would stop in the middle of nowhere and nomads would “magically appear” and request blessings. Here, a nomad horse is blessed on the Mongolian steppe, July 2012. Photo by Andy Melnic.

The Maitreya Heart Shrine Relic Tour, a touring collection of sacred relics of the Buddha and other Buddhist masters, brought blessings to 69 cities throughout the world during 2012. We also launched a new website. The tour is dedicated to bringing the blessings of the relics and the message of loving kindness to as many people around the world as possible. We would like to thank all the hundreds of hosts, volunteers, sponsors and visitors for making these events possible and delightful. – From Victoria Coleman

www.maitreyarelictour.com



College students from Gorakhpur, India, visit the Jade Buddha. Photo courtesy of the Jade Buddha for Universal Peace.

Australia

In late 2012, the **Jade Buddha for Universal Peace** toured Kushinagar, India, drawing crowds. The Jade Buddha is a project of the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion in Myers Flat, Victoria. His Holiness the Sakya Trizin visited the Jade Buddha and seemed extremely pleased with the worldwide success of the tour. The next stop is Malaysia, where the Jade Buddha will visit Kuala Lumpur in March. Chokyi Gyaltzen Center in Penang will host the tour in April.

– From Ian Green

www.jadebuddha.org.au

Austria

At the end of 2012, Ven. Birgit Schweiberer began teaching two new courses at **Panchen Losang Chogyen Gelugzentrum**. The courses, held as weekend seminars, will end with a week-long retreat in the summer. In addition, *Discovering Buddhism* started anew with the first module and weekly classes. Stephan (Pende) Wormland is a regular visiting teacher at our center. Ven. Rita Riniker joined us for a seminar on tantra in November and a few weeks later led a Tara retreat. – From Erich Leopold

www.fpmt-plc.at

Denmark

In November 2012, **Dharma Visdom Publishing** published *Meditations for Children* with a CD translated into Danish by Geske Glahn. The nicely made book has been very popular.

– From Lise Lotte Brooks

www.dharmavisdom.dk

France

Thakpa Kachoe Retreat Land began building its first chalet on October 22, 2012, after a group of monks from Sera Monastery visited the land on their European Harmony and Compassion Tour. The monks offered a puja and blessing on the land. An older monk commented, “It looks like Tibet here!” The 66 square-foot [20 square-meter] chalet, constructed of wood, is situated in the forest on the upper part of the land and has a nice view of the mountains and



Meditation chalet at Thakpa Kachoe Retreat Land. Photo courtesy of Thakpa Kachoe Retreat Land.

valley. The finishing work should be done in spring 2013 with the hope of making the chalet available to host its first individual retreatant next autumn.

– From *Sylvaine Litaud*

www.thakpakachoe.com

India

Choe Khor Sum Ling had the wonderful opportunity to visit with Lama Zopa Rinpoche while he was in South India in November and also to host a teaching session by Ven. Thubten Chodron. We benefited immensely from Ven.

Chodron's warm, humorous, and lucid teachings. Ven. Chodron talked about how to deal with anger by practicing patience, or, as she preferred to call it, fortitude, as explained in Chapter 6 of Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*. In February, Tenzin Ösel Hita gave a talk to the group on "How to Understand Our Reality from the Universal Point of View." [You can read more about Osel's visit and watch the video of it at mandalamagazine.org.]

– From *Shanti Gopinath*

www.cksl.in

After the beginning of an unusually long winter, **MAITRI Charitable Trust** began distribution of 700 blankets to extremely poor people including leprosy, tuberculosis and mother care patients. For World Leprosy Day on January 27, two teams of MAITRI field workers toured the district by jeep, addressing the population by loudspeaker and later joined



Ellie with Nina, January 2013. Photo courtesy of MAITRI Charitable Trust.

the workers at the MAITRI exhibition stall to continue the awareness drive and distribution of leaflets. Two volunteers, Sara and Daniela, joined tours, which included 189 villages with a population of 600,722.

A young dog, Ellie, who was rescued two years ago by an English couple and raised at MAITRI, was overwhelmed by her maternal instinct at the sight of a wounded rescued puppy, Mila, and adopted her. Although sterilized, Ellie started producing milk and nursed Mila for two months. When another rescued puppy, Nina, was brought in, Ellie adopted her too! – From *Sandeep Kumar*

www.maitri-bodhgaya.org

Recent months have been enjoyably busy here at **Sera IMI House** (also known as Shedrub Zungdrel Ling). Two new

debate session, sponsored by Lama Tsongkhapa Teachers Fund, a charitable project of FPMT. Those of us at Sera are in the middle of a week-long prayer festival, unique to Sera Je, commemorating the death anniversary of Jetsün Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen. Shortly after the conclusion of the festival, we have the final written exams for the year, a monastery-wide Hayagriva approximation retreat, and then the Mönlam Chenmo prayer festival. We have a short respite after Losar when we can do some private study and retreat. Or, for some of us, lead the Pre-Ordination Course and offer teachings at Tushita Meditation Centre in Dharamsala. Then, less than a month after Losar, the new "school year" starts up and we're back to work.

– From *Ven. Gyalten Lekden*

seraimihouse@yahoo.com



Members of Gruppo di Studio Shakyamuni, February 2013. Photo courtesy of Guglielmo Margio.

monks joined the house and are diving headfirst into Tibetan language studies, while another resident will be newly entering the monastery's debate program this year. There has been a wellspring of precious teaching opportunities recently, and IMI monks have been fortunate to help organize, host and translate for teachings, transmissions and empowerments from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Choden Rinpoche and Jangtse Chöje Rinpoche at Sera Je. At the time of writing, some monks are still at Ganden Monastery, participating in the winter

Italy

Gruppo di Studio Shakyamuni formed in early 2012 and had our first meetings in a small library in the city of Messina. Currently, our group has about 20 students, who gather to meditate and study lam-rim with the teachers who visit us. Centro Muni Gyana in Palermo offers us support. We are very happy to be part of the FPMT family and we look forward to continue on the path with you. – From *Guglielmo "Tenzin Ciampa" Margio*

<http://shakyamuni-study-group.webnode.it>

Malaysia



Losang Dragpa Centre members doing Dorje Khadro practice, Malaysia, December 2012. Photo courtesy of Losang Dragpa Centre.

Losang Dragpa Centre did an innovative group Dorje Khadro practice in December 2012. We had a motivation session in our gompa with a Dorje Khadro statue and then did the actual practice outside using small stoves and little “woks.” We’ve found these implements to be simple to set up and convenient to use. – *From Pik Pin Goh*

www.fpmt-ldc.org

Slovenia

Chagna Pemo Study Group is very happy that two of our study group members were able to attend the November 2012 Jangchub Lamrim teachings and transmission given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in India. Also in November, we organized our first Great Global Shift Transformative Meditation in the Slovenian language. The event, which was developed by Dekyi-Lee Oldershaw, was aimed at shifting our response to the current difficult situations we face in Slovenia and the world. Many people joined in. In February 2013, we hosted the Maitreya Heart Shrine Relic Tour in Slovenia’s second biggest city, Maribor. – *From Mirjana Dechen*

<http://chagnapemo.weebly.com>

United Kingdom

Togme Sangpo Study Group, in Findhorn, Scotland, had a busy first year as a new study group. Activities included

setting up a weekly class, which attracted a group of dedicated people interested in studying and practicing Dharma. We held the FPMT programs *Meditation 101* and *Buddhism in a Nutshell* twice. Ven. Mary Reavey led an inspiring day of shamatha meditation, and we are continuing the practice in our weekly sessions.

In March 2013, Ven. Angie Muir guides us in a weekend retreat called “Making Friends with Death.” Ven. Angie lived for three years in this area, and it is touching to see her reconnecting with many friends and students.

We are in a very basic and humble situation, meeting in people’s homes and maintaining a simple website and mailing list. This year we aim to invite more teachers, start *Discovering Buddhism* and expand our mailing list and group of volunteers. – *From Margo van Greta*

www.togmesangpo.org.uk

United States California

At **Land of Calm Abiding**, winter’s glorious mix of storms and warm days’ glittering sunlight set the stage for Ven. Roger Munro and his undaunted crew to build a deck and stone wall for feng shui enhancement of our newly completed stupa. We will host the consecration celebration sometime in May 2013. For our project to create a permaculture garden, we are looking for volunteers to combine garden building with meditation and practice at any period of time in the spring and summer.

We send our sincere thanks to all the contributors and volunteers in 2012, especially to Rob Neill for his incredible, generous support.

Land of Calm Abiding offers a very conducive environment for meditation. One very nice cabin is waiting for its next fortunate occupant. – *From Ven. Nyngjie*

<http://landofcalmabiding.org>

Land of Medicine Buddha (LMB) ended 2012 with a well-attended Medicine Buddha retreat led by Ven. Drimay Gudmundsson. We are happy Ven. Drimay is now able to give more time to our Dharma program as well as assist in a myriad of other ways.

For the fourth year, we invited the local community to join us in bringing in the New Year with compassion and setting a virtuous motivation for 2013. Ven. Steve Carlier gave an aptly timed talk on renunciation and its true meaning, and Ven. Drimay led us in meditation and Chenrezig practice. At the stroke of midnight on New Year’s Eve, the sounds of OM MANI PADME HUM completely filled our hall!

In January 2013, Ven. Robina Courtin led a week-long retreat on the *Heart Sutra*. Andy Weber leads a Chenrezig retreat in March and Ven. René Feusi will be return to LMB for a one-day tong-len retreat. – *From Denice Macy*

www.landofmedicinebuddha.org

Massachusetts

In October, **Wisdom Publications** staff was honored to attend His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s visit to the Kurukulla Center in Medford, Massachusetts. Before and after His Holiness’ talk, staff members visited with attendees at our vendor booth. Publisher Tim McNeill accompanied Lama Zopa Rinpoche to this historic event.

In November, senior editor David Kittelstrom, who is approaching his 20th anniversary with Wisdom, attended the FPMT North America regional meeting in Sante Fe, New Mexico. Then David and Wisdom’s new editor, Andy Francis, traveled to Chicago for the American Academy of Religion’s annual conference, where many Wisdom authors were also in attendance. Andy is a long-time student of Geshe Lhundub Sopa and a recent graduate from Harvard Divinity School.

Also in November, Wisdom published the long-awaited autobiography of



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David was named a Lama in 1992 and an *Acharya* in 2005.

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Geshe Lhundub Sopa, *Like a Waking Dream*. In the book, Geshe Sopa tells his dramatic life story, including his upbringing and early adulthood in Tibet, his harrowing flight into exile, and his extraordinary career in the United States. [See *Mandala* January-March 2013 for more on Geshe Sopa.]

January brought Digital Book World, a conference focusing on new technologies in publishing. Tim attended the conference and returned with many new ideas on how to spread the Dharma in the digital age.

In February, Wisdom released the latest volume in the *Library of Tibetan Classics* series, *A Lamp to Illuminate the Five Stages*, Tsongkhapa's final word on the king of tantras, Guhyasamaja, in a peerless translation by Gavin Kilty. – *From Lydia Anderson*

www.wisdompubs.org

Vermont

Milarepa Center in Barnet, Vermont, had the good fortune to host Nepali artist Jampel Lama to complete the final work needed on our precious stupa. Jampel straightened the *gau* (front piece) and then added the most beautiful ornaments to the outside. We all got to help with the painting, and it was a wonderful complement to our new altar as well as a tremendous blessing for the center and its community.

We are excited about this auspicious event as it seemed to pave the way for Milarepa Center to begin hosting again an annual three-month Vajrasattva retreat. There are so few centers in North America that have the quiet and tranquility of Milarepa Center to host practitioners to



New ornaments on Milarepa Center's stupa, November 2012. Photo by Ven. Amy Miller.

do this special practice. For those interested in completing this level of purification, please join us January 4-March 30, 2014, for this fantastic opportunity. Details can be found on our website. – *From Ven. Amy Miller* ♦

www.milarepacenter.org

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	<p>Ven. Fedor Stracke Basic Program - Middle Lam Rim of Lama Tsong Khapa July 31 - September 21</p>	
	<p>Ven. Chonyi Taylor Overcoming Disturbing Emotions June 25 - 30 Mind Training - Cutting The Root of Negative Emotions July 3 - 12</p>	
<p>November course 2013 November 9 - December 9</p>		
<p>Check our detailed program on www.kopanmonastery.com</p>		

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Please contact centerservices@fpmt.org with any updates to your listing.

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Jamyang Bath Study Group
Bath
www.jamyangbath.org.uk

Jamyang Buddhist Centre
London
www.jamyang.co.uk
Tel: (02078) 208 787
Resident Geshe:
Geshe Tashi Tsering

Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds
Leeds
www.jamyangleeds.co.uk
Tel: (07866) 760 460

Jamyang Coventry Study Group
Coventry
www.coventrybuddhists.com

Khedrup Je Study Group
Liverpool
khedrupjestudygroup@hotmail.co.uk
Tel: (07789) 327054

Land of Joy
www.landofjoy.co.uk
Tel: (07949) 595691

Saraswati Study Group
Drayton
www.saraswati.org.uk
Tel: (01458) 252463

Togme Sangpo Study Group
Findhorn
www.togmesangpo.org.uk
Tel: (01309) 690926

Yeshe Study Group
Cumbria
yeshebuddhistgroup@live.co.uk
Tel: (01229) 885 329

UNITED STATES
(Tel Code 1)

CALIFORNIA

Gyalwa Gyatso (Ocean of Compassion) Buddhist Center
Campbell
www.gyalwagyatso.org
Tel: (408) 866 5056
Resident Teacher:
Emily Hsu

Land of Calm Abiding
San Simeon
<http://landofcalmabiding.org>
Tel: (831) 475 6018

Land of Medicine Buddha
Soquel
www.landofmedicinebuddha.org
Tel: (831) 462 8383

Tara Home
Soquel
www.tarahome.org
Tel: (831) 477 7750

Tara Redwood School
Soquel
www.tararedwoodschool.org

Tsa Tsa Studio / Center for Tibetan Sacred Art
Richmond
www.tsastudio.org
Tel: (415) 503 0409

Tse Chen Ling
San Francisco
www.tsechenling.org

Tel: (415) 621 4215
Resident Geshe:
Geshe Ngawang Dakpa

Vajrapani Institute
Boulder Creek
www.vajrapani.org
Tel: (831) 338 6654

COLORADO

Lama Yeshe House Study Group
Boulder
lamayeshouse@gmail.com
Tel: (831) 234 7963

FLORIDA

Land for Nagarjuna's Sutra and Tantra Dharma Study Group
Sarasota
gedun@mindspring.com
Tel: (941) 745 1147

Tse Pag Me Study Group
Zephyrhills
tropical_moments@verizon.net
Tel: (813) 783 1888

Tubten Kunga Center
Deerfield Beach
www.tubtenkunga.org
Tel: (954) 421 6224
Resident Geshe:
Geshe Konchog Kyab

MASSACHUSETTS

Kurukulla Center
Medford
www.kurukulla.org
Tel: (617) 624 0177
Resident Geshe:
Geshe Tenley

Wisdom Publications Inc.
Somerville
www.wisdompubs.org
Tel: (617) 776 7416

MONTANA

Osel Shen Phen Ling
Missoula
www.fpmt-osel.org
Tel: (406) 543-2207

NEVADA

Dharmakaya Study Group
Reno
http://dharmakayacenter.com/Home_Page.html
Tel: (775) 232 8067

NEW MEXICO

Thubten Norbu Ling
Santa Fe
www.tnlsf.org
Tel: (505) 660 7056
Resident Teacher:
Don Handrick

Ksitigarbha Tibetan Buddhist Center
Ranchos de Taos
www.ktbctaos.org

NEW YORK

Shantideva Meditation Center
New York
www.shantidevameditation.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Kadampa Center
Raleigh
www.kadampa-center.org
Tel: (919) 859 3433
Resident Geshe:
Geshe Gelek Chodha

OHIO

Manjushri Study Group
Youngstown
<http://manjushristudygroup.org>

OREGON

Maitripa College
Portland
www.maitripa.org
Tel: (503) 235 2477
Resident Geshe:
Yangsi Rinpoche

TEXAS

Land of Compassion and Wisdom
Austin
www.austinfpmt.org
Tel: (512) 280 8687

VERMONT

Milarepa Center
Barnet
www.milarepacenter.org
Tel: (802) 633 4136

VIRGINIA

Guhyasamaja Center
Centreville
www.guhyasamaja.org
Tel: (703) 774 9692
Resident Geshe:
Khensur Lobsang Jampa Rinpoche

WASHINGTON

Buddha Amitabha Pure Land
Riverside
www.buddha-amitabha-pure-land.org

Pamtingpa Center
Tonasket
www.tonasketbuddhist.org
Tel: (509) 223 3003

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LESSONS FROM THE DALAI LAMA

THE SYDNEY TEACHINGS

Jewel Lamp: A Praise of Bodhichitta

Friday 14th - Sunday 16th June 2013

In Australia this year, a very special Teaching will take place over two and a half days in Sydney.

"The Jewel Lamp: A Praise of Bodhichitta" is the original text written by Khunu Rinpoche and is one of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's own favourite teachings.

Revered by many as the very embodiment of altruism, the late Khunu Rinpoche Tenzin Gyaltzen devoted his life to the development of Bodhichitta, the aspiration to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

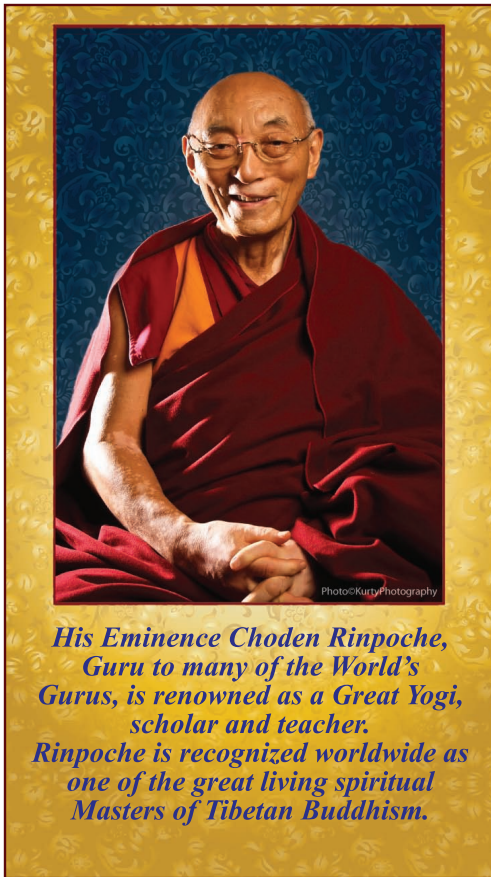
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H.E.CHODEN RINPOCHE



SUMMER 2013

GREAT AMITABHA FESTIVAL

June 8, 10 AM - 12 PM
EVENT HALL, CUPERTINO, CA
OPEN TO ALL
Lunch will be provided

ESSENCE OF THE HEART SUTRA

June 9, 10 AM - 12 PM
EVENT HALL, CUPERTINO, CA
OPEN TO ALL
Lunch will be provided

ORAL TRANSMISSION AND BLESSING OF THE FIVE GREAT TREATISES

June 15 - June 16, 10 AM - 12 PM
EVENT HALL, CUPERTINO, CA
Rinpoche will give transmission and teaching on The Five Great treatises
Please visit our website for specific details
OPEN TO ALL

MAHAMUDRA SERIES

June 22 - June 23, 10 AM - 12 PM
EVENT HALL, CUPERTINO, CA
June 24 - June 26, 7 PM-9 PM
EVENT HALL, CUPERTINO, CA

MAHAMUDRA RETREAT LED BY GESHE GYALTEN

June 27 - June 28, 7 PM - 9 PM
ANANDA DHARMA CENTER

LONG LIFE PUJA FOR RINPOCHE

Date to be announced, check website for updates

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