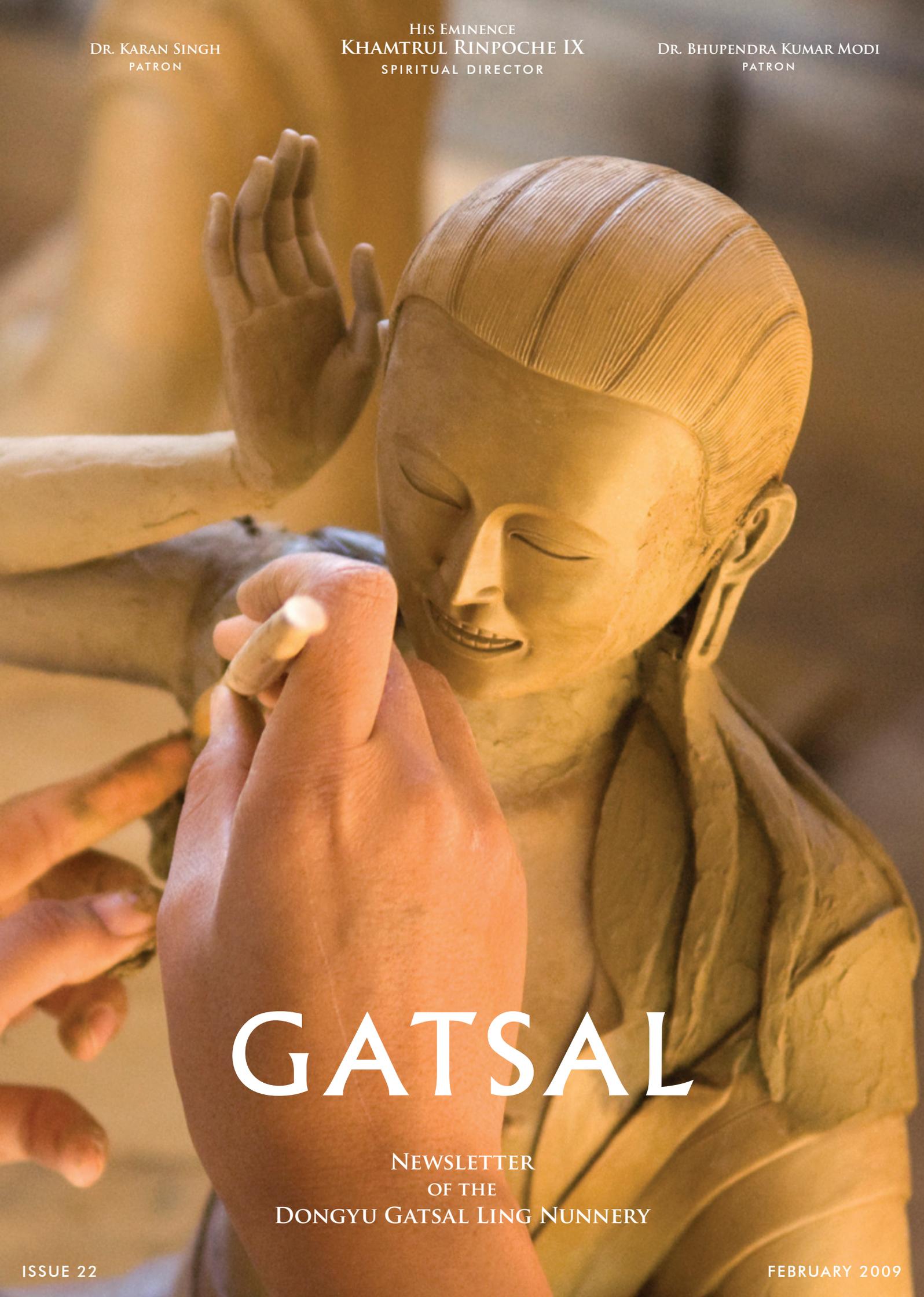


DR. KARAN SINGH
PATRON

HIS EMINENCE
KHAMTRUL RINPOCHE IX
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

DR. BHUPENDRA KUMAR MODI
PATRON



GATSAL

NEWSLETTER
OF THE
DONGYU GATSAL LING NUNNERY



Dear friends,

Once again another year is almost at an end and our New Term is well under way. In fact this year we have had many innovations: the nuns have a new philosophy teacher named Khenpo Ngawang Zangpo from the Khampagar Monastery and to assist him there is also a learned Bhutanese nun named Gen Yeshe Lhamo who has studied for 18 years at a Nunnery in South India. In addition we also have a new English teacher - Charanjit Singhotra - who is an old friend and also one of our DGL Trustees.

We are especially pleased that two of our own senior nuns have joined our teaching staff: Dolkar Palmo is teaching Tibetan reading and Tsultrim Palmo is teaching writing to the beginners class whilst Drimey Palmo is instructing the junior nuns in Buddhist logic. Every afternoon the sounds of the nuns' lively debating drifts in through my office window from the roofed open terrace of the study centre opposite.

In particular this new term was commemorated by the opening of our Study Centre which was consecrated by H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche. This Study Centre has not only several classrooms but comprises also a library, teachers' room, large puja hall, yoga room and a reception room for the nuns to receive their family or friends who come to visit. This term we received a further intake of 14 young girls from Tibet, Spiti, Kinnaur and Zanskar who have now received their first ordination from H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche.

In early December I returned from a 5 week tour in New Mexico, Oregon and California. Everywhere we were received with kindness and good will. Of course it is a difficult time due to the economic downturn, but many people remain hopeful of a gradual change for the better. In these times of great insecurity and stress the Dharma can be a genuine source of insight and inspiration.

In January 2009, accompanied by

four of our DGL nuns and a nun from Singapore, I shall be travelling to the Drikung Kagyu Nunnery near Dehradun for a 3 day workshop in promoting self esteem and leadership qualities in nuns. A lack of confidence is one of the main obstacles faced by nuns in the Tibetan tradition and seriously hinders both their intellectual and spiritual progress. This cultural viewpoint needs to be worked with skilfully to help the nuns gain the assurance and self-reliance necessary for their own development and their ability to reach out beneficially to others.

Once again we extend our sincerest thanks and gratitude to all those many friends and helpers around the world. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

May you all be very well and happy,

Tenzin Palmo

Jetsunma

a role model

by Drimay Palmo

Although, there are millions and millions of people living in the world, yet a very few are able to understand the real meaning of life. Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo is one such person who has realized for herself the true purpose of it. In my humble opinion, it is doing selfless service towards all sentient beings, rising above considerations of caste, color and community, rich and poor, high and low. She has struggled fearlessly to give hope, purpose and respect to practicing Buddhist nuns in this part of the world.

As she was determined to see the nuns attaining great spiritual heights and monastic status, she left no stone unturned to create ideal conditions for making it possible. Today, her dream has been



translated into reality in the form of 'DGL Nunnery' that has become a symbol of women's spiritual empowerment, refinement and dignity. Today Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo has provided us everything that we could ever hope for or dream of as nuns. She has created best conditions possible for our religious study and practice. I always look

upon her as my role model.

Her sacrificing nature, dedication and determination have always been a source of great inspirations to all of us at the Nunnery. All the nuns at DGL will never forget her magnanimity, diligence and sincerity of purpose. I pray to the three jewels for her long life and good health.

Trinley Wangmo, Jangsem Dolma & Sherab Lhamo



Teaching at Sherabling by Tai Situ Rinpoche

by
Drimay Palmo

In October 2008, we all the nuns of DGL went to Sherabling. It was a very important day in our life. We all went in a bus. Some of the nuns went in a smaller vehicle. This day was a special day for us as H.E Tai Situ Rinpoche was going to give a 'Kala Chakra' teachings. In order to listen to him, many monks, nuns and lay people had gathered there. Some people had come from as far as Kinnaur. A majority of them were from the near by areas. There was no space to park vehicles. Apart from Tai Situ Rinpoche, there were many other Rinpoche there. We had a good chance to have close 'Darshan' of all of them and it filled our minds with great happiness and peace. We were amazed to see

the size and magnificent beauty of the Sherabling temple. Many facilities were available in the temple. Before reaching Sherabling we got a chance to see the main 'Stupa'.

In fact, there are many stupas. In all their number is 108. Some people were going around the stupas. When in the evening, the teachings were over, we all went inside the temple to see the various statues kept there. We were wonderstruck to see the gigantic statue of Jampa Gonpo [Maitreya] and Kyilkhor [mandala]. It was indeed a great and memorable experience. It was a worth seeing sight. We returned to our Nunnery at 8pm. We always hope and pray that Tai Situ Rinpoche may live a long life.



Lhabab Duchen

by Sherab Lhamo

On the 19th of November 2008 was a very important day for all of us. The day is celebrated as a 'Lhabab Duchen'. It is said that on this day lord Buddha returned from heaven after having spent three months there. He had gone there to preach Dharma to his mother. We celebrated the incident of his arrival with lots of enthusiasm. We do a long puja in the evening.

On this day in the morning, we cleaned our nunnery thoroughly. All the nuns were busy doing many things. Our senior nuns decorated the Puja room. The

Puja room looked very beautiful. At 12 O' clock we had our lunch. Immediately after the lunch preparations for the big puja were started. At 6 O'clock, we lighted many candles, butter lamps and electric lights. The all-important Puja started at 7 O'clock. In the Puja, our Khenpo la, our Genlas from Tashi Jong , Ani Genla and all the office staff also joined us. We did puja for three hours. When we finished the Puja, The cook served us sweet tea, sweet rice, cake and sweets. Then three nuns delivered speeches on Dharma. They spoke very well. After that nuns participated in

a debate about Buddhist philosophy. The puja came to an end at 10 o'clock. All the nuns enjoyed themselves very much on that day. We all prayed together for the well being of all the sentient beings. This puja filled me with a great feeling of equanimity and elation and revived in me the zeal for spiritual enlightenment.

I wish we would all gather again next year and many many years after that to celebrate 'Lhabab Duchen' with the same spirit of enthusiasm and gaiety. I shall never forget this memorable event in my life.



Welcome H.E Khamtrul Rinpoche

by Ngawang Chozom

On October 21st, we all the nuns of DGL Nunnery went to Tashi Jong to accord a very warm welcome to H.E Khamtrul Rinpoche. He had gone to Taiwan for two months to give teachings. On the day of his return, all the temples, grounds, lawns and roads were thoroughly cleaned and finely decorated. All of them wore a festive look. There were beautiful pictures drawn and flowers were strewn all

over the road. At a couple of places, huge welcome gates had been created in his honor. Rinpoche arrived in the evening. All his followers had lined up on both sides of the road in their special dresses. Some monks had come with their musical instruments to welcome Rinpoche. They led the procession along with some small monks carrying Mandala offerings (see photo) followed by H.E Khamtrul Rinpoche. At that

time all the Rinpoches and Yogis of Tashi Jong were present. They performed a small 'Puja' then we went to have an audience with Rinpoche. He blessed us. There were so many people who had come to meet Rinpoche. All local people of Tashi Jong, Young and old, monks and nuns were so happy and full of enthusiasm since it was after more than two months we had got a chance to meet H.E Khamtrul Rinpoche.





Bhutanese Statue Makers at DGL

Since April 2008 there has been a team of Bhutanese artists at DGL making the clay statues for the various shrine rooms. Prior to working at DGL, they made statues for H.E. Choegon Rinpoche's Monastery in Bhuntar, about 6 hours' drive away. The team leader is 27 year old Ugyen Dorji from Trashiyangtse in eastern Bhutan, who has been making statues for 8 years following his 6 years of training. The others are 24 year old Jigme Wangchuk also from Trashiyangtse; and the 23 year old couple from Thimphu (Bhutan's capital) Rinchen Dema and Thubten Kuenkhen. All have completed 6 years of training at Bhutan's National Institute for Zorig Chusum, where thirteen traditional arts and crafts are taught. Ugyen Dorji's 22 year old brother Ugyen Thinley is the team's apprentice.

There has been a long tradition of clay statue making in Bhutan. It began many centuries ago in the village of Paro Hayphu where the first statue was made by Tekko Zeen for the 1st Shabdrung, Ngawang Namgyal, the religious head of Bhutan. Tekko Zeen also worked in Tibet. He had many students and slowly over the centuries Bhutanese statue makers have become famous for the quality of their work.

The statues are made from clay, Bhutanese or Tibetan handmade paper, copper wire and glue. A mix of clay and paper prevents cracking and the copper wire makes the statues strong and long-lasting.

Rinchen Dema is the first woman to have graduated from Bhutan's National Institute for Zorig Chusum. She grew up with many statue makers living nearby, and from an early age she would sit and watch them work. She became very interested in this special art and decided to apply to train after finishing 4 years of Government primary schooling. There are now other young women studying statue making in Bhutan, but Rinchen Dema was the first to complete her training. She, like the others in the team, loves to make the beautiful deities. They see the work as offerings, a form of practice. It is indeed sacred work and they say it is most important that statue makers lead good and clean lives, refraining from the use of cigarettes, alcohol and drugs of any kind.

This young group of talented artists will be at DGL for at least a year as, once the shrine room statues are finished, they will move on to make the larger statues for the traditional Tibetan style Temple.

Ugyen Thinley Jigme Wangchuk



Rinchen Dema Thubten Kuenkhen





What I want to be

by Tsultrim Palmo

My aim in life is to be a nun. I want to become a nun for different reason. There is so much hatred and strife in the world today. There is a sort of cut-throat competition going on everywhere. All this makes me very sad and unhappy.

We, human beings, seem to have forgotten our real and true nature. Our true nature is peace and love. Actually everyone of us wants to live in peace and harmony. But it appears that it has

been overshadowed by such emotions as hatred, anger, jealousy, inflated ego and arrogance. Such negativity has polluted the environment. It has resulted in various kinds of crime. The crime rate is increasing day by day. Relations are breaking up. Wars and conflicts are raising their heads everywhere.

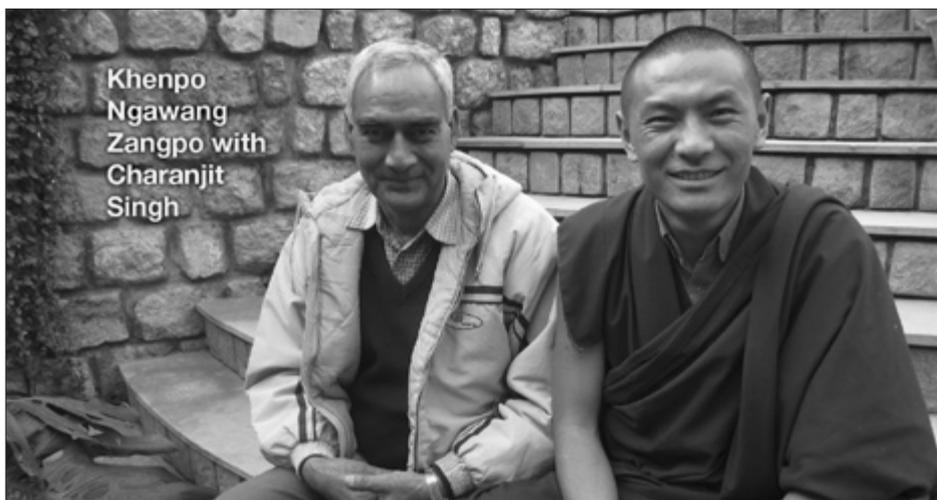
Today, there is a need for dedicated men and women who can teach the great message of non-violence and compassion given by Lord Buddha. For this reason,

I have decided to serve the suffering humanity. I felt I could do it by becoming a Buddhist nun. I would like to become an epitome of love and compassion. I shall live a life of sacrifice, simplicity and purity. I shall try to spread the message of Lord Buddha from different platforms. I shall teach the masses the real purpose of life.

I pray to Lord for giving me strength and inspiration to achieve my humble aim. I would like to leave this world as a place full of kindness, peace and harmony.

DGL Trustee becomes Nunnery English Teacher

Suman Sharma, the Nunnery's first locally employed English teacher, sadly left DGL before the beginning of the new academic year in September due to her husband's transfer to a town far away. An initial search for a replacement was not successful and Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo approached DGL founding Trustee, Charanjit Singh, a retired Headmaster and English teacher. Charanjit agreed to become the first male English teacher at DGL. He also speaks Tibetan and his Refuge Lama was Jetsunma's own guru, the former Khamtrul Rinpoche, H. E. Dongyu Nyima. The nuns are delighted to have such an experienced and kindly teacher.





The Nunnery Temple Progress

by Monica Joyce

It's heartening to see the Nunnery's traditional Tibetan Temple take shape. The main structure is almost completed with walls up and the roof on. The next job is to finish the internal and external plastering. Externally plastering will be done only up to lintel level, below which there will be stone cladding. This will be done in a final stage of the construction in keeping with stone work on the other

Nunnery buildings.

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo has decided on a young team of Nepali artists to decorate the entrance porch, internal columns and walls of the DGL Temple. They will begin work as soon as the plastering is finished and it will take quite some time to complete. These artists are very skilled and are part of a team which is working at Palpung Monastery in Sherab Ling

near to DGL Nunnery, and in Bodh Gaya at the new Temple of Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche.

Work on the retaining walls around the DGL Temple and the kora (circumambulation) path is also in progress. Leveling of the ground in front of the Temple has also been completed and in future this will be paved with areas for trees and plants.



EUROPEAN TOUR 2009

JETSUNMA TENZIN PALMO'S LAST TEACHING TOUR

Don't miss this opportunity to see and hear Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo in Europe. A renowned Buddhist teacher, she combines her long experience in the Dharma and western sensibilities to make her teachings particularly accessible.

England

London 6th & 10th May

Worcester 7th May

Norwich 9th May

Coordinator: Tessa Heron
Email: tessaheron@yahoo.co.uk
Phone: 07929128826

France

Paris 13th & 14th May

Plouray 16th & 17th May

Strasbourg 4th June

Coordinator: Gabriela Frey
Email: gabriela.frey@free.fr
Phone: 0033 609 77 29 85

Netherlands

Amsterdam 19th, 20th, 21st May

Coordinator: Ani Jinba
Email: Anijinpa@cs.com
Phone1: 0031-20-6841460
Phone2: 0031-6539-43486

Germany

Hamburg 22nd, 23rd, 24th May

Berlin 27th, 30th, 31st May

Kassel 1st June

Frankfurt 2nd June

Coordinator: Gabriele Rabkin
Email: Gabriele.Rabkin@li-hamburg.de
Phone: 040 451781
Mobile: 01794380034

Switzerland

Zurich 5th June

Unspunnen 6th & 7th June

Bern 9th June

Coordinator: Marlies Kornfeld
Email: mkornfeld@bluewin.ch
Phone: 0041 31 332 74 79
Mobile: 0041 79 344 64 22

Italy

Milan 10th June

Pomaia 11th & 13th June

Rome 20th & 21th June

Naples 23rd June

Contact: Brigitte Branche
Email: brigitte.branche@france-italia.it
or

Contact: Samantabhadra Institute
Phone: (0039) 06 65 31 777

or for Pomaia

Contact: Carla Freccero
Email: spc@iltk.it

Tour information will be updated regularly on the DGL Nunnery website. Our website shop also has many new teaching titles from Jetsunma's last two years of touring, available on CD, MP3 & DVD, as well as new photographs and packs of cards. Please visit www.tenzinpalmo.com for the latest information on Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery and Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo's activities.

How to Support the Nuns at DGL

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and the nuns at Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery thank our supporters in a most heartfelt manner. Your kindness helps our Nunnery to flourish and keep the Dharma alive. Sponsoring a nun costs the equivalent of US\$365 a year.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust' and posted to:

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery
Village Lower Mutt, P.O. Padhiarkhar, Via Taragarh
Distt. Kangra, H.P. 176081, India

Anyone wishing to make a donation to DGL Nunnery via Tenzin Palmo's account in their own country by Swift or Telegraphic Transfer, please email Eliz Dowling for details on eliz_palmo@hotmail.com

For further information or to contact Tenzin Palmo please email DGL on dgl.nunnery@yahoo.com
Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust is registered in India as a charitable organization designated for the support of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery and its activities.

Adventure into the Unknown

by
Jude Avery



I had no idea what I was getting into when, in April 2006 after repeating a ten day 'Introduction to Buddhism' course, I was told that Ven. Tenzin Palmo, now Jetsunma, was looking for a native English-speaking volunteer. I had furiously taken notes while watching Tenzin Palmo's compelling teaching 'The Nature of the Mind' on DVD, but had not yet met her. My self-image was the absolute opposite of a person whom I envisaged living in a nunnery, but my yearning to learn overshadowed my deep anxiety. I knew it was the biggest gift I could give myself.

Twelve months earlier in a bar in Saigon, perched over a map, beer in hand, I'd planned my route across the roof of the world, from China, through Tibet into Nepal. When I reached Kathmandu, feeling at a loose end, I spotted a flier pinned on the wall of a restaurant. Quite by chance I had unknowingly stumbled upon the Himalayan Buddhist Meditation Centre. I've always had a sense of adventure and been attracted to unconventional cultural alternatives. From Art College through my subsequent years overseas I'd been living as a free spirit. However, after a week of listening to Mark Smith, at HBMC, I was introduced to an entirely different way of thinking. I followed his advice and went to India to attend Ven. Ani Rita's powerful introduction to the Lam Rim. Her words exposed my weaknesses and went straight to my heart. Shaken and stimulated I immediately took refuge with Lama Zopa. I aspired to do voluntary work in

a Dharmic environment. But never in my wildest dreams had I ever seen myself as an assistant to a Jetsunma.

When I visited Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, Jetsunma explained that she just needed someone with proficient English who could type polite thank-you letters. We chatted for about half an hour and I described my background as an art teacher living in Kenya, Istanbul and Vietnam. Her only concern was that I wouldn't find life at the Nunnery exotic, but, if I wanted it, I'd got the job! The possibility of working for such an accomplished and revered meditator left me terrified but wanting to jump for joy!

And so during the monsoon of 2006 after a fleeting visit back to the UK, I arrived at DGL, still somewhat perplexed as to how I had gotten here. To say that the job has been challenging would be an understatement. Discussions peppered with Dharmic vocabulary and the names of spiritual people I had never heard of, seemed beyond the scope of my conversational abilities. Despite the chaos of India and enduring long days in front of a computer with unbelievably frequent power cuts, I tried to preserve my western standards and work ethic. These challenges helped to nourish a sense of humor and resolve. Jetsunma fiercely believes that the spiritual accomplishments of women can be in every way equal to, and often deeper than, those of her predominantly male peers. This draws a formidable group of empowered women from all corners of the world. Living and working in this intense

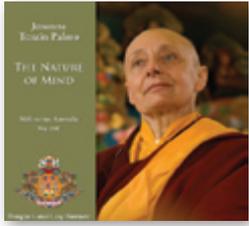
environment was at first alarming. But I soon grew to appreciate the company of these extraordinary women as a rewarding character-building opportunity.

It was a joy to cultivate familiar competence with Brian Sebastian on the fabulous Nunnery website, the newsletter Gatsal and the production of a new series of Jetsunma's teachings on CD and DVD! I have been inspired by the unwavering calm and self-assurance of my Tibetan colleagues Yeshi, our accountant and Keither, the receptionist. Corresponding with and meeting people from all over the world who support and encourage the Nunnery has opened my heart. It has often felt like being on the receiving end of a hotline to basic human goodness.

It has been a privilege to live and work in this Monastic Mandala and to have the opportunity to help Jetsunma and Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, even if only in a small way. Jetsunma is an incredible model of kindness, whose conduct is consistently in accordance with her teachings. She 'walks the talk' and that, for me, has been the greatest teaching of all. My heart has been touched by the magical purity and serenity the nuns radiate. I feel this when I join in the pujas where the nuns' harmonious voices resonate through the Gompa. May the nuns of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery continue to persevere and blossom into confident, enthusiastic practitioners and spiritual leaders. May Jetsunma's Dharmic wishes come true and the voice of the Feminine emerge in powerful new ways.

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo Teachings on DVD, MP3 and Audio CD

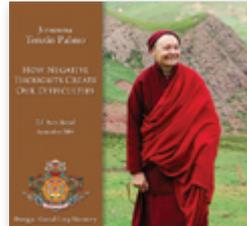
The Nature of Mind



Melbourne, Australia - May 2008 - 2 DVD Set

The nature of mind is clear and knowing, the root of all our problems is the creation of the 'I' or ego through wrong identification with our thoughts and feelings. Meditation is the means to peel away these layers of false identification and bring us back to who we really are. This DVD set includes some clear and simple instructions on meditation which is the foundation of the spiritual path.

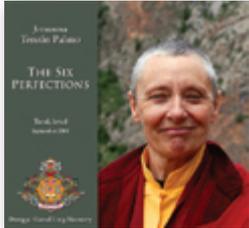
How Negative Thoughts Create Our Difficulties



Tel Aviv, Israel - September 2006 - Audio CD

We project our version of the world through the distortions of our consciousness polluted with delusion, greed and aversion - and so we suffer. Usually we blame the outside situation and other people for our problems, rather than accept our responsibility. However the good news is we can develop a peaceful and happy mind. In reality the nature of mind is our most precious discovery.

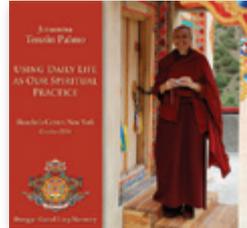
The Six Perfections



Tuval, Israel - September 2006 - MP3 CD

This teaching explores how far from being an obstacle to our practice, everything that we do when performed with the right attitude can be used in daily life as our means for transformation. Applying the Six Perfections - generosity, ethics, patience, effort, meditation and wisdom - throughout the day, is a way to give meaning to our life and until we use our daily life as our spiritual practice we are never ever going to change.

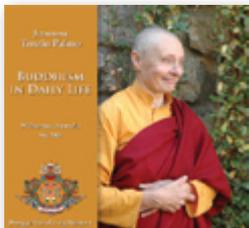
Using Daily Life as Our Spiritual Practice



Shambala, New York - October 2004 - DVD Video

There is always a temptation to regard our Dharma practice as separate from ordinary life: attending talks, meditation courses or sitting for meditation - and the rest of the time spent with our family, friends and job is just worldly activity. In this DVD Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo makes practical observations and suggestions on how to use our everyday life to enhance our practice no matter who we are with or what we are doing.

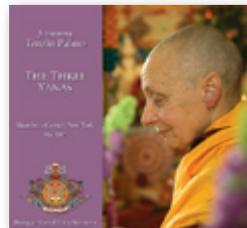
Buddhism in Daily Life



Melbourne, Australia - May 2008 - DVD Video

Due to the tendency to separate what we think of as our Dharma practice and our everyday life we greatly misapprehend what being a Dharma practitioner is all about. In this teaching Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo makes practical observations and suggestions on how to bring the two together and use our everyday life to enhance our practice no matter who we are with or what we are doing.

The Three Yanas



Shambala, New York - May 2008 - MP3 CD

The Three Yanas or Three Vehicles are the Buddhist schools: Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana, which deal with our motivation for practice. These talks cover the main topics in each of these schools: The Four Noble Truths, Bodhisattva motivation, Yogacharya School and an introduction to Vajrayana.

These titles and more are available at <http://www.tenzinpalmo.com/shop>

BY AIRMAIL

To:

From:

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery
VILLAGE LOWER MUTT
P.O. PADHIARKHAR, VIA TARAGARH
DISTRICT KANGRA (HP) 176081 - INDIA

