



GATSAL



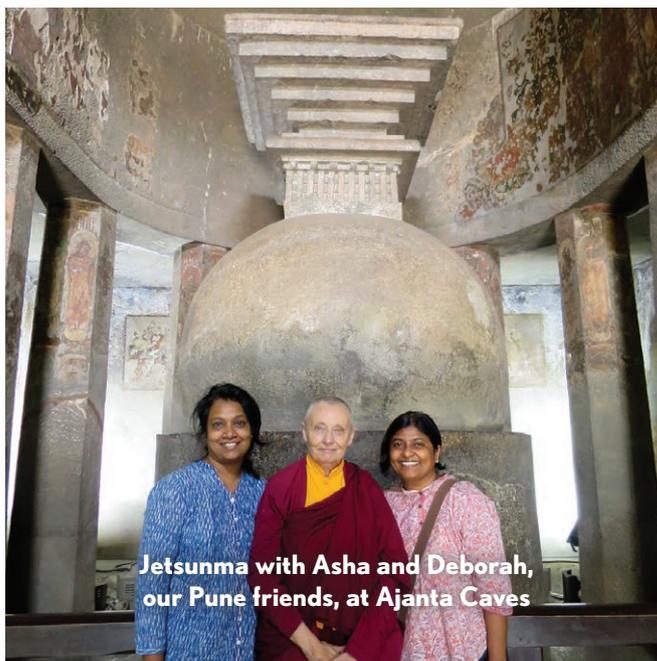
How quickly the year seems to speed by at DGL with so many visitors and so many events!

Personally the highlight of last year was the long anticipated 3 weeks' visit to Kinnaur in August 2015. Kinnaur is a fairly remote Himalayan region in Himachal Pradesh where many of our nuns come from. This district is traditionally Tibetan Buddhist with many temples and the people there are devout, intelligent and good natured. Nowadays they have also achieved some affluence from the cultivation of apples and apricots for the Indian market.

I was accompanied by Tsunma Aileen and 9 DGL nuns from Tibet, Bhutan and Ladakh who were also very keen to visit this region. In each village that we visited we were welcomed by the inhabitants usually wearing local costumes and jewellery and singing their traditional songs as they accompanied

us on the way. Our nuns performed rituals such as Tara and Chöd and I delivered dharma talks which were ably

families of our nuns and everyone was so joyful and devoted. A truly memorable experience.



Jetsunma with Asha and Deborah, our Pune friends, at Ajanta Caves

In November I gave teachings at Deerpark in Bir and in Mumbai and Pune. We therefore took this opportunity to revisit the extraordinary rock caves of Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra. I had visited these pilgrimage sites about 30 years ago and especially remember that the Ajanta caves were unlighted and very dark - the guides torch would illuminate a small section of murals while the rest remained obscured. Nowadays they have arranged subtle floor lighting which reveals the exquisite wall and ceiling paintings covering the inside of these cave temples. Truly amazing and a great inspiration!

translated by our dear friend, the scholar Roshan Lal Negi, who had organised our visit so beautifully. Everywhere we were hospitably housed and fed, often by the

In November the nuns celebrated Lhabab Duchen - when Lord Buddha descended from Heaven after teaching dharma for 3 months to his mother. This

is an important annual occasion at the Nunnery with puja and debating. The temple and chorten were illuminated with fairy lights and with candles.

Later in November the nuns (along with the monks) were blessed with the 2 day empowerment of Chakrasamvara by Kyabje Khamtrul Rinpoche at Tashi Jong. This is an important tantric initiation needed in our tradition so it was very auspicious that our nuns could receive this directly from their root Lama.

In December the Swedish artist Marianna Rydvald was here to finish her beautiful murals on the Life of Princess Mandarava for the Lamas' sitting room above the main temple. Marianna's fine work is much appreciated by all who see it and she has painted extensively for several Rinpoches.

In January nearly forty of our middle standard nuns again went to Bodhgaya to attend the annual Kagyu monlam where they have the opportunity to

debate with nuns from other nunneries from which they benefit a lot.

Everyone was back in time for Losar or Tibetan New Year in February. Straight after this the nuns performed a week of Nyungné, the fasting and prostration ritual introduced in the 11th century by the Kashmiri nun Gelongma Palmo. This was the first time that our nuns had undertaken this practice at DGL and several monks and laypeople from Tashi Jong also participated.

In March was the 300th anniversary of the Guru Padmasambhava dances performed by the Khampagar monastery now at Tashi Jong. These masked Lama dances are based on the visions of the 3rd Khamtrul Rinpoche Kunga Tenzin. About 20 of our senior nuns were invited to join the monks for the 10 days of prayer ritual. Tsoknyi Rinpoche also attended along with 30 of his nuns from Nepal.

Our small Menla Clinic is finally functioning with our medical nuns

Tsunma Jangsem and Tsunma Tenzin Chokyi in charge. We have arranged a rota of doctors from various disciplines to come on a regular basis - allopathic, ayurvedic, homoeopathic and Tibetan in order to cover all needs. We are planning that once the clinic is running smoothly we can extend the service for local villagers also. We are so grateful to our friends who have done so much to make this clinic possible.

Now Tsunma Aileen and I are preparing to leave for a tour lasting four months in Europe and also Ladakh and East Tibet.

So once again we sincerely thank all our friends and supporters without whom this nunnery could not flourish. From our hearts we thank you all.

With love and all good wishes,



Teaching in Kinnaur



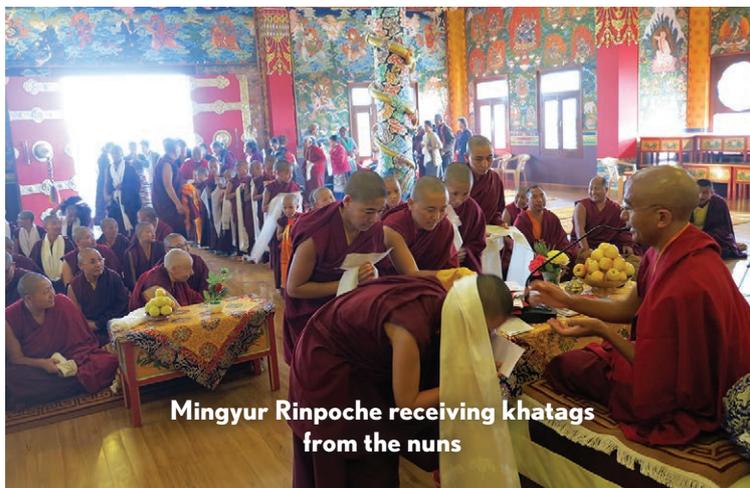
Some of the laypeople who attended the Nyungne Retreat

In November, Mingyur Rinpoche visited DGL and gave a sparkling talk on meditation to the nuns. Afterwards he went to the long-term retreat centre and gave more meditation instruction and then granted personal interviews to each of the eight nuns in retreat. Mingyur Rinpoche is now well known for having suddenly left behind everything and gone to stay for 4 years in remote caves in India and Nepal. We met him in Delhi, soon after he emerged from his retreat where he very graciously accepted our request to visit the nunnery and came very soon after. His warmth and humour was much appreciated by the nuns along with his clear instruction on practice. We

are very grateful for his kindness in taking time to visit us.

Some months later, we were honoured with a visit from Mingyur Rinpoche's brother, Tsoknyi Rinpoche who came to DGL and spent the afternoon speaking on meditation with our retreat nuns and gave them each personal advice and guidance (see photo in article on our Retreat nuns). Tsoknyi Rinpoche recently sent two of his nuns from Nepal to join our long-term retreat nuns and receive instruction here. Our nuns share a long association with Rinpoche's nuns in Nepal and they hold this connection very dear.

We look forward to future visits from them both.



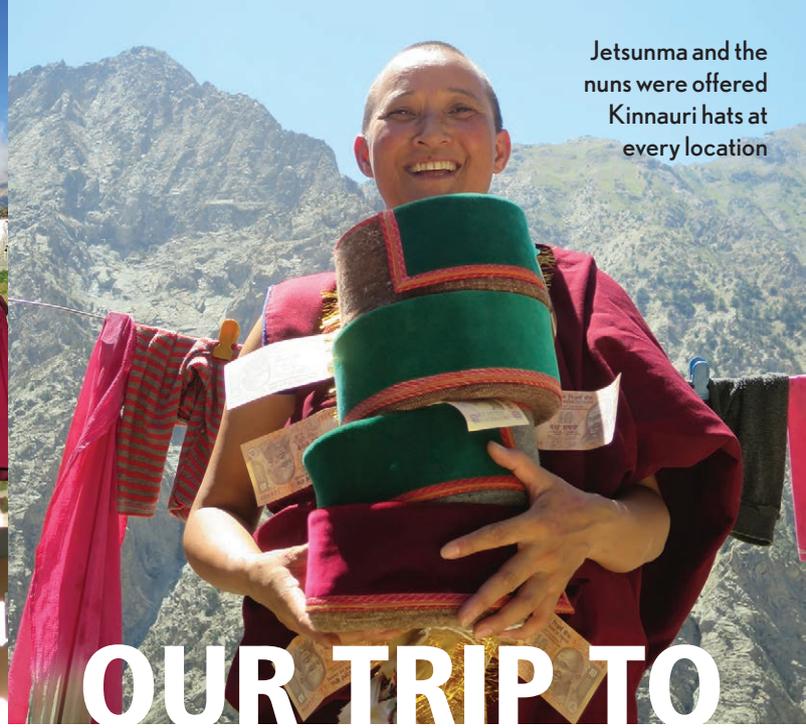
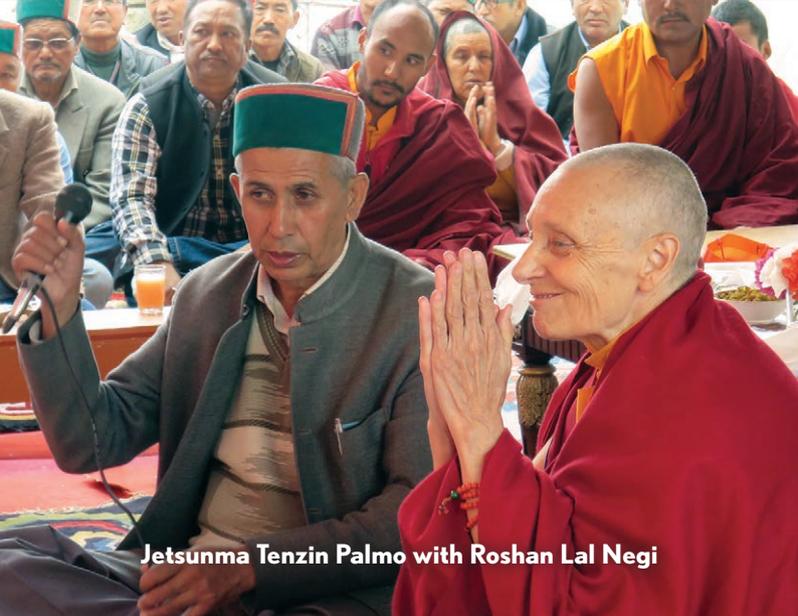
Mingyur Rinpoche receiving khatags from the nuns



Tsultrim Palmo, front row second from right with nuns and families in Kinnaur



Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo with Roshan Lal Negi



Jetsunma and the nuns were offered Kinnauri hats at every location

OUR TRIP TO KINNAUR

by Tsunma Tsultrim Palmo

What a wonderful opportunity I got to go to Kinnaur with Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo. On the 15th of August nine of us nuns left for Kinnaur by bus.

Jetsunma was invited by the Kinnauri people to give some talks on Dharma. We visited many villages there. Their people are very kind and devoted. They have many farmer's work to do but still they came to listen Jetsunma's teaching. At each place Jetsunma gave a Dharma talk and we nuns did Tara and Chod Puja.

While we were there, they offered us their best dishes and accommodations. We met many kind people. Jetsunma also visited schools and colleges, where she explained to the students how important the Dharma is in our day to day life and how to know what the Dharma is. I was very happy to visit there with Jetsunma. It was so blissful for them. It was my happiest time.





**Tsoknyi Rinpoche with retreat nuns,
March 2016**

TOGDENMAS IN EMBRYO

As many of you know, an important feature of the DGL Nunnery is our retreat centre or *drubda* where currently eight nuns are in long term retreat. Four nuns have already completed seven years of strict meditation practice under the guidance of Togden Achoe, the most senior yogi at Khampagar monastery in Tashi Jong.

Last year it was finally agreed by H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche and Togden Achoe to transmit to our retreat nuns the profound Six Yogas of Naropa in its entirety. There is a special tradition maintained by the togdens of Khampagar who were renowned throughout Tibet for their impeccable practice and realisation. Tsoknyi Rinpoche has sent two of his nuns who have completed a 3 year retreat in Nepal to join our retreat centre in order to receive this training.

High lamas such as HH Karmapa and others

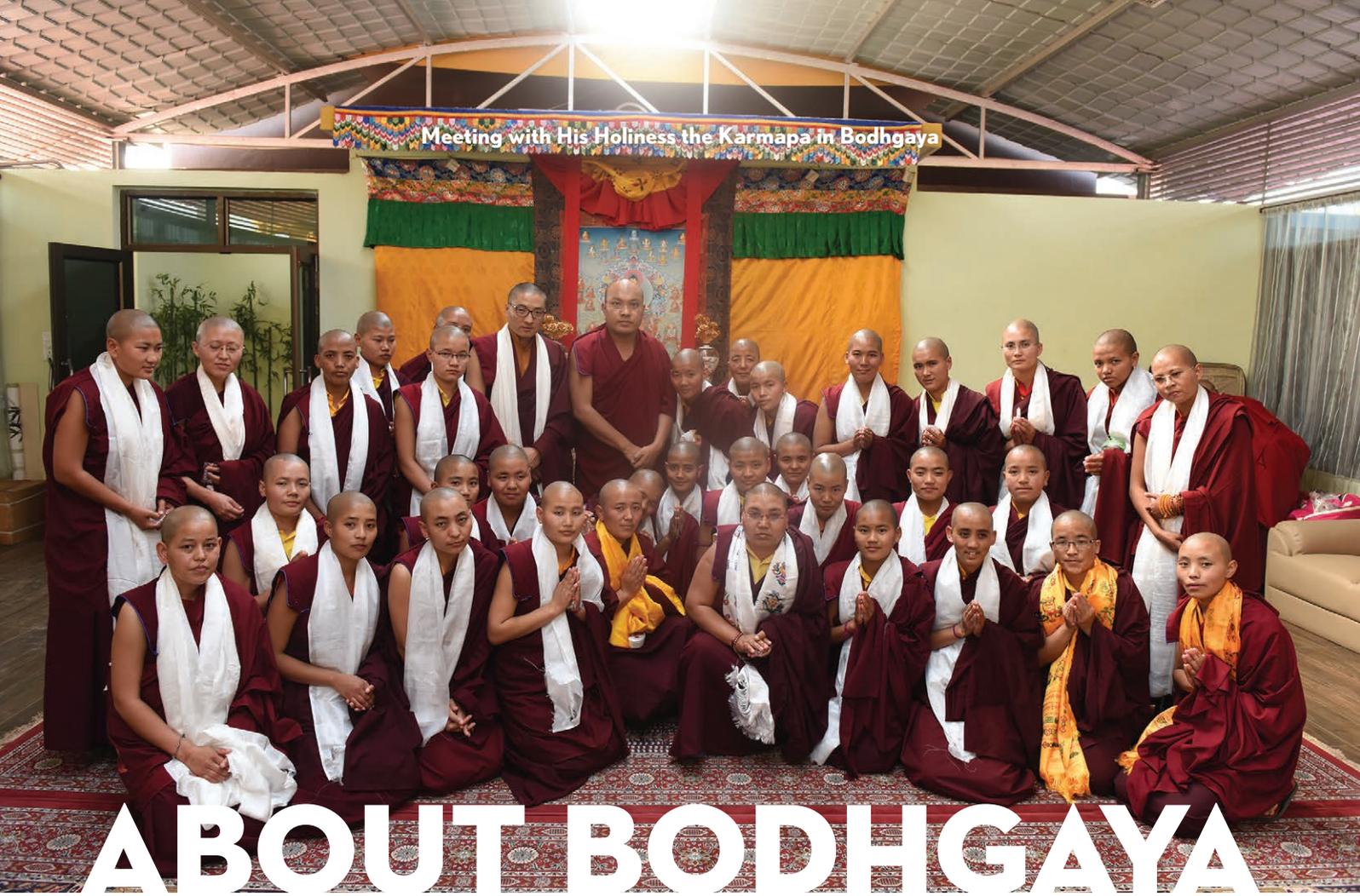
always make a point to visit the nuns in long term retreat and spend several hours with them, giving meditation instruction and personal counsel. They recognise the unique importance of what these dedicated nuns are striving to achieve.

The previous Khamtrul Rinpoche Dongyu Nyima had specifically requested me to help restart the precious Drukpa Kagyu yogini lineage which had died away due to the ongoing problems in Tibet. So it has always been the aspiration for this nunnery to nurture a group of togdenmas who in time can carry on this precious female yogic lineage.



**Jetsunma with the four Drubda nuns on
completion of their strict seven year retreat**

We offer our heartfelt devotion and gratitude to Khamtrul Shedrup Nyima and Togden Achoe for their continuous support and guidance and their role in transforming our dreams into reality.



ABOUT BODHGAYA

by Tsunma Dolma Lhamo

We went to Bodhgaya in the first month of this year. We stayed there for eighteen days. We had debating there, three times a day including classes too. Every day there was teaching by His Holiness the Karmapa. Some times we used to go on

circumambulation. We also went on some pilgrimage, including visiting Rajagriha where the Buddha gave teachings on the Heart Sutra. We met lots of new nuns. We all became very frank with each other within a few days. We got lots of new ideas for debate.

On Pilgrimage to Rajagriya



Practicing Debate; Dolma Lhamo in top right corner of group





Visiting Doctors, Shilpi Singh and Neha Thakur, from local Ayurvedic Medicine Hospital with Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and Clinic nuns Tenzin Chokyi and Jangsem Dolma

Being a Clinic Nun

by
Tsunma Jangsem Dolma

Let me introduce Tsunma Tenzin Chokyi and myself Jangsem Dolma as being clinic nuns at Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery. Every year in the election, the nuns vote for medical nuns [who assist the clinic nuns]. This year those two nuns were Kunga Chodron and Dechen Chotso. The nuns voted for two medical nuns who help take our sick nuns to outside hospitals for check-ups with doctors. We also work together as a team. I coordinate with them to call the doctors at the various hospitals to make appointments before they leave the nunnery with the sick nuns.

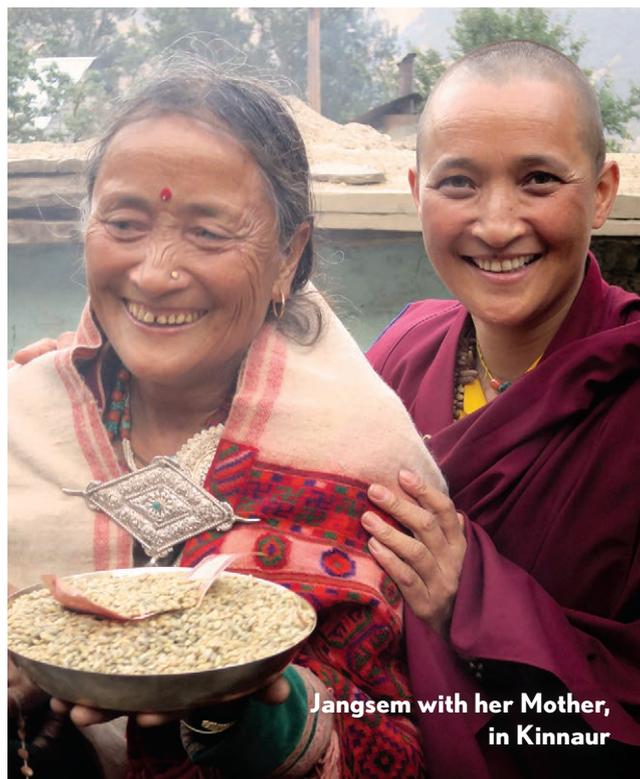
Tenzin Chokyi and myself are both from Kinnaur region which is in the north of Himachal Pradesh. We both volunteered to serve at the Menla clinic at DGL Nunnery as permanent clinic nuns. We try to run it nicely as much as we could do. So, we have decided that if the doctors will come to see the nuns in our own nunnery's clinic then we medical nuns have to call the patients who are sick and most of the time I used to stay with the doctor for translation or as a helper.

Actually nunnery Menla Clinic is built to serve the

doctor inside the nunnery premises. Our volunteer helpers are kind-hearted qualified nurses from Australia who have helped us to run the clinic properly. We both are very happy that they are helping us and giving their precious time. Now we organise that many kind of doctors are coming to the nunnery from Ayurvedic and Homeopathic and Allopathic sources. A Homeopathic doctor from Bir is coming to the Nunnery to see our nuns twice in a month. Others are coming once in a month.

Last year I went to Delek hospital in Dharamsala to attend a basic training for 45 days. That time I saw so many kinds of patients and I feel very sad and unhappy. Actually that time I have no confidence on giving an injection and dressing the wounds etc. but now I have got so much knowledge from the training that I know all the basic necessary things to help the sick patients. We also went to Dr Barbara's clinic in Sidhbari for the basic training for a week which is also very helpful for us.

So it is my passion to do this job. I will try my best to help our nuns and others as much as I could.



Jangsem with her Mother, in Kinnaur



EMPOWERMENT TRAINING IN THAILAND

Foremost I am very much thankful of Jetsunma to give me such an opportunity to visit Thailand and I felt very lucky to be there. By her kindness we attended the workshop and saw new places. On the first four days there I couldn't sleep because of the horrible sound of frogs and also because of new place. But later I felt very good and enjoyed a lot. Thailand is such a great place with peaceful environment and people are very kind and have faith in Buddhism.

I have got so many experiences such as how education is very important and also the need for us to have confidence. As myself I have a lack of education and confidence I couldn't participate in all the activities so I am a little bit regret of it, but I can continue learning.

Tsunma Thaye Chotso

We got an opportunity to attend a workshop in Thailand. From our nunnery Thaye Chotso, our two office staff Keithar and Lhakpa and myself went there. The workshop was about Buddhist Education for Social Transformation (BEST)

We had many participants from all around the world, including India, USA, China, Thailand, Canada, Armenia and so on There were 18 attendees in total.

There were five teachers and they taught us with very good examples. The main organisers, Ouyporn and Ginger we know from before. Also Maia from America who taught us mandala of social engagement, Jeyanthy from Sri Lanka taught us non violent communication. They all taught on

many other things, including power, gender, sexuality, introduction on Buddhism, meditation and mindfulness day. They took us to other places including Bhikkhuni Dhammananda's temple, Shanti Ashok & Mae Rim. Each place we learned and saw some new things.

Previously Ouyporn & Ginger have had a workshop in our nunnery. We learned similar concepts in Thailand but this time we got a special experience because there were different people from different cultures. So they had different thoughts.

It was my third time to see another country. Each country I saw many differences between each other but I like Thailand, it is clean and most people there are Buddhist.

Tsunma Ngawang Chozom

Last July 2015 was one of the most memorable times in my life as I was able to get the opportunity to attend the workshop for 3 weeks on Buddhist Education for Social Transformation (BEST) in Chiang Mai (Thailand). We really had a great journey there, meeting different students from USA, Canada, Australia, China, Armenia, India, Burma and of course from Thailand itself. Though it was a very challenging workshop as English is our second language.

BEST is the first workshop I attended in my life and I really gained a lot of new things from the teachers and as well as from the students. I am taking the things little by little to transform me as an individual and benefit my life so

that in future I can help others.

The teachers were excellent the way they teach the students and they tried each and every one to be understood. They listened very patiently and let them share their experiences.

I came to know many things about Southeast Asia countries like Burma, Thailand and Laos who face a lot of domestic violence against women and girls which I didn't have any clue about, though they are our neighbouring countries. Also Armenia is facing the same problem.

Meditation: it is not as easy as we say! From the beginning it's a bit hard with taming ones own mind and then with the sitting posture. But later it become a little easier by the way they

teach us in a simple way and we can do walking meditation if not comfortable with our sitting posture - which made it a bit easier for us.

Yes, I would say that every topic during the course is very important and precious in everyday life and I am trying to implement as much as I can. I am sure that the BEST will transform many individual lives and benefit the whole world.

Special thanks to Ouyporn and Ginger for making every individual have a happy and healthy life!

I am excited for the second part of the course coming up this year, so I can learn more.

Tenzin Lhakpa
(DGL Accountant)

Left to right:
Dolma Keither, Thaye Chotso,
Ngawang Chozom and Tenzin
Lhakpa in Thailand



Joining the BEST course (Buddhist Education for Social Transformation) in Thailand was one of the best experiences of my life. Sharing our thoughts and learning lots of different things from each participant was all a new experience for me personally.

10 minutes of deep listening and communication learning was good experience and we shared our story with each other. No matter what, the other person has to listen. In our day-to-day life, normally what we do is, we don't listen to each other well. Even living together under one roof especially with our family. If we give each other some time to listen then I am sure it will be a happy family in the end.

I listened to a lot on social movement done by one of the participants in Armenia especially for the women and I hear a lot of hardship from one of our Chinese participants being a gay in China, specially being with one child system in his family.

Our Workshop organiser teachers Ouyporn and Ginger were so warm and learned teachers. We were so grateful for them to organise such a great workshop for all of us. Most of the participants were women, so we got to hear a lot of other countries' hurdles for women. Especially countries like Thailand, Armenia and Laos.

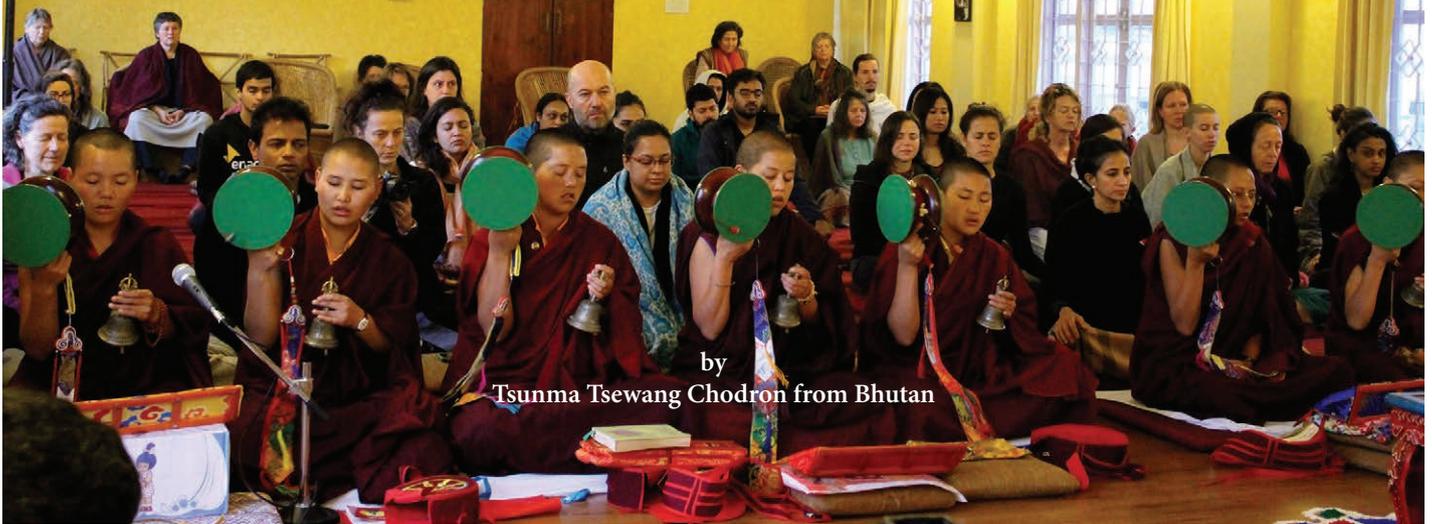
Since from my childhood I heard a lot about my country Tibet only: how

we have lost our country and how the Chinese have invaded our country, how our ancestors have gone through such hardship in their journey when they fled from our own country. It was kind of an empowering experience [to learn] that there were so many people in the world who have suffered way more than us.

It is a joyful movement and definitely a little transition for myself in my day-to-day life to get a positive perspective and way of seeing other people's behaviour in my life. Also Thailand was my first international trip and it was a special experience all in all.

Dolma Keither
(DGL Office Manager)

ATTENDING JETSUNMA'S TEACHINGS IN DEER PARK



by
Tsunma Tsewang Chodron from Bhutan

Some of us nuns went to attend Jetsunma's teaching at Deer Park Institute this year. Jetsunma talked mainly on the text on Mind Training, which was written by Geshe Chekawa. She read out the verses with high and sweet tone and explained so clearly and in a way people of this time could understand and put into action. She started from preliminary practice of meditation on rarity of human life endowed with eight freedoms and ten advantages, meditating on impermanence of life, cause and effect and defects of samsara. Once born

it is certain that we have to die, but the time of our death is not certain, so she emphasised how important it is to make use of every single minute and make effort towards the ultimate goal. Jetsunma also taught about the importance of developing a compassionate mind and meditation, so as to get enlightened. She explained ways to develop compassion and do meditation in a plain and simple language, so that we could take in more. Jetsunma is really a skilful teacher.

Though the teaching is a serious one, Jetsunma taught with a sense of humour

that sometimes all of us are laughing. After hearty laugh everyone seemed to be attentively listening to the teaching. I really had a wonderful time there. And I learned many new things which is very helpful to my little wild untamed mind.

We nuns were also able to offer Chod practice for one of the meditation sessions during the teachings there. There are many cause and conditions, because of which I was able to attend the teaching. With many people involved in it too.

Thank you all.

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.

Sponsorship of a nun here costs \$365 per year.

We welcome your contribution to support our nuns and accept credit card, check/cheque, direct deposit or electronic bank transfer.

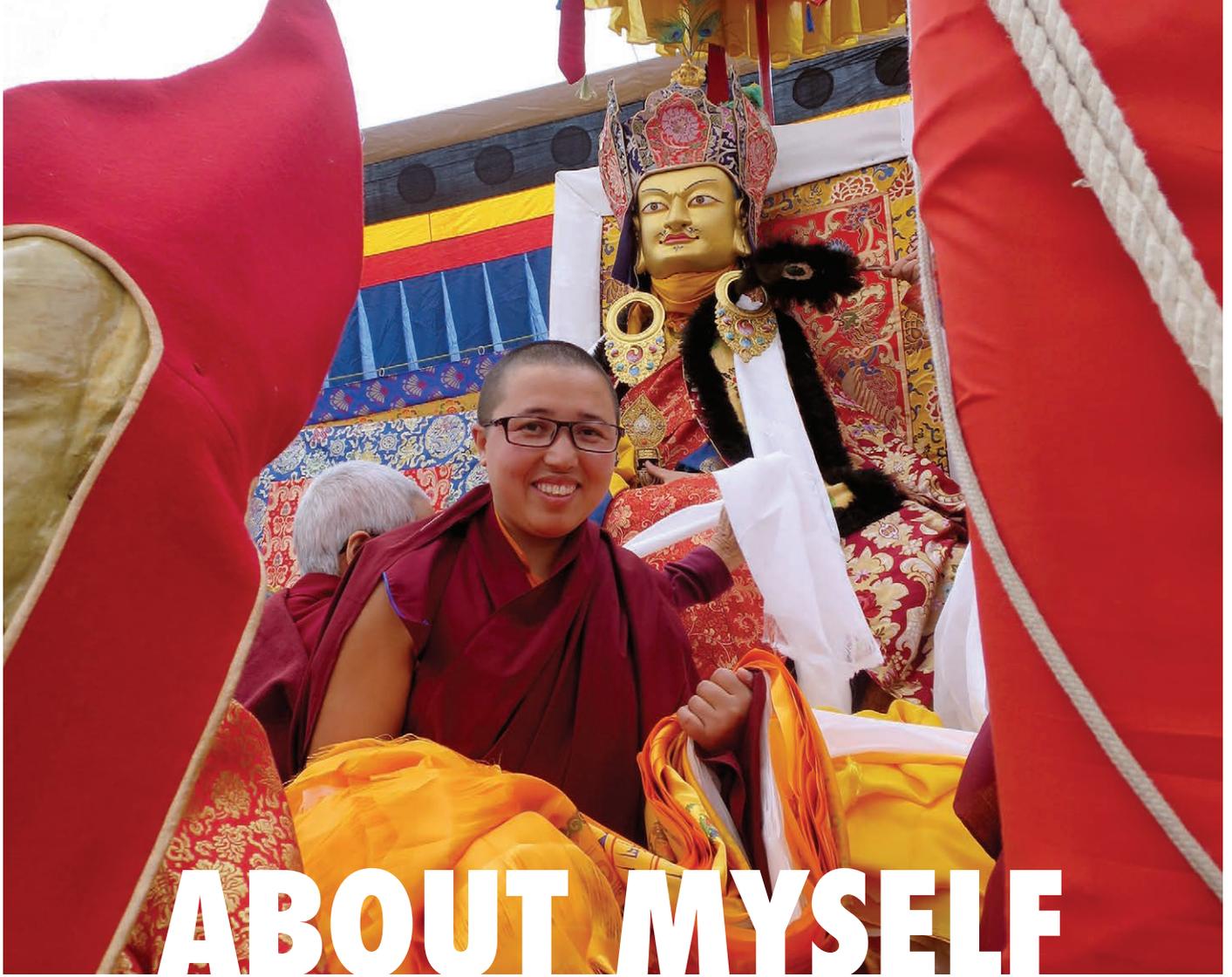
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Full details for all these methods of payments, including link for US donors wishing to make a tax deductible donation, can be found by visiting our website

www.tenzinpalmo.com

on **Sponsor a Nun** page

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust is registered in India as a Charitable organisation designated for the support of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery and its activities.



ABOUT MYSELF

I am **Tashi Chotso** and I came from Kinnaur. I became a nun in 2005. Since childhood I like the Buddhist nuns. At 17 years old I wanted to become a nun but at that time my family did not give me permission. My family told me to study more. When I passed metric level, again I requested my family to become a nun, at that time I was 20 years old. Also I knew about DGL Nunnery and then my family was happy with my wish to become a nun. In 2004, I met Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo in Tashi Jong. I had an interview with her and there were other lay girls for the interview with me. After that Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo said to come back after one year so I came back in August 2005. During that time, Jetsunma along with the nuns were staying at Tashi Jong and we stayed there too, because our DGL Nunnery was not built.

Two weeks after my arrival, all

the nuns were shifted to our new Nunnery. I felt very happy. Two months later I got ordained from H. E Khamtrul Rinpoche. At that time I did not know Tibetan language so I could not understand anything.



Last year in 2015, I was the Disciplinary nun at DGL Nunnery. Every year in the election, the nuns vote for new office bearers, so last year I was chosen for the role of Chotrim (Disciplinary). Let me share about my responsibility that was to look after all the nuns as to how they are doing etc. At first I was very scared of doing this job. After some months I got many experiences and actually I had a lack of confidence to talk in front of people.

I think this responsibility of being a Disciplinary nun helped me gain confidence as well and I am very much happy to have a chance to serve our Nunnery. I like to help others and it's my passion.

Front cover: Nuns offer traditional welcome.

Back cover: Offering Butter Lamps at the nunnery for the benefit of all beings.



BY AIRMAIL

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