Dear Friends,

We apologise for the delay in bringing out this latest DGL Newsletter. So many things have happened since you received the last one.

In December 2006 I travelled to Xining in China to meet with His Eminence Adeu Rinpoche, the most senior Drukpa Kagyu lama in Tibet. His Eminence Choegon Rinpoche and Tsoknyi Rinpoche were also in attendance. We requested Adeu Rinpoche to bestow the transmission for the Six Doctrines of Naropa on a selected few of our DGL nuns. This he graciously agreed to do.

In February His Holiness the Karmapa Orgyen Trinley Dorje gave a 4 day teaching at the Tilokpur Nunnery on the 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva. All our DGL nuns attended together with some members of the staff. His Holiness gave inspiring teachings and was most supportive of the role of women in the Dharma. The month of March saw the completion of our Stupa which contains a beautiful image of the female deity Ushnisha Vijaya. This stupa is modelled on the one at Tashi Jong commemorating the 8th Khamtrul Rinpoche. Our spiritual director, the present Khamtrul Shedrup Nyima, consecrated our Stupa which was a great joy for the nuns.

In April I travelled to Vancouver for an Inter-faith conference and from there to New York for a series of retreats and fund-raising events set up by our wonderful support group known as Friends of DGL. From New York I went to Mexico for a month, travelling around to give talks and retreats to friendly and enthusiastic audiences.

Throughout the year the nuns continued their philosophy studies at various levels with Khenpo Tsering and the 2 Nun teachers from Namdroling Nunnery. In late May they took their exams and then most left to go home for their vacations. The nuns returned to start their annual two months silent retreat in early July.

In July I went to Hamburg to attend the 1st International Congress on Buddhist Women’s Role in the Sangha. Representatives and experts on Vinaya [monastic discipline] from around the world congregated to discuss the issue of higher ordination or bhikshuni for nuns of the Tibetan tradition. At present nuns can receive only the novice ordination. We are seeking to raise their monastic status in accordance with the Lord Buddha's intention. His Holiness the Dalai Lama attended on the last day but no resolution has so far been reached.

From there I flew to East Tibet or Kham with my long-time Dharma sister Ani Jinba who is fluent in the Khampa dialect. We visited various nunneries and monasteries in search of nuns accomplished in the yogic practices of the Drukpa tradition. Unfortunately in July Adeu Rinpoche had passed away quite suddenly and we were all very shocked. While we were in Nangchen we had the opportunity to visit his monastery of Tsechu Gon where we met with His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa - supreme head of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage. Other high Lamas had gathered along with hundreds of monks, nuns and lay people. So despite the grief of losing such an important Master, there was also great devotion and joy in the ceremonies conducted by the Rinpoches and mixed sangha.

In late September our new class term started. A few of our senior class will now commence their preparations for the traditional 3 year retreat while the others will continue with their philosophical studies. In October the nuns were happy to attend teachings from His Eminence Dorzong Rinpoche held at the Deer Park Institute in Bir.

Once again we extend our thanks and appreciation to all those of you who have helped us to make this Nunnery a vibrant reality.

May all beings be well and happy,

Tenzin Palmo
I have known Sarla Korla for many years. During the days of my 'cave-dwelling', I would usually return once a year to visit Khamtrul Rinpoche at Tashi Jong. But first I would stay overnight at Sarla’s beautiful home with its wide verandas and potted plants. What a dear and treasured friend she has always been!

When in 2000 we decided to form a Trust for the DGL Nunnery which comprised distinguished local people of Himachal Pradesh, it was natural to elect Sarla as our Chairperson. Henceforth our Trust Meetings would usually be held at her house in an atmosphere both gracious and welcoming. It was probably one of the main reasons why attendance has always been so prompt!

In 2007 Mrs. Korla’s distinguished but aging husband, Major General Shiri Korla, passed away peacefully and was cremated with full military honours. At this time Sarla requested to retire from her responsibilities as Chairwoman of our Trust.

We are deeply grateful to Mrs Sarla Korla for all these years of dedication and interest in the DGL Nunnery - meeting officials and signing papers on behalf of DGL - and for hosting our Trust Meetings with such charm and friendliness. We wish her every happiness and good health - and a long life to continue delighting all with whom she meets.

Venerable Tenzin Palmo

On the retirement of Sarla Korla from her position of DGL Chairperson, the Trust Members unanimously voted Mrs Kiran Sharma to undertake this role, which she most kindly agreed to do.

Kiran Sharma has been a member of the Board of Trustees since the founding of Dongyu Gatsal Ling. She is a school teacher by profession and has loyally attended all our meetings as the Secretary. She and her husband Vijay are highly respected members of our local community and are long term supporters and friends of the Nunnery. We are especially happy to welcome her as our new Chairwoman.

Ani Lobsang Wangmo is the new Trustee filling the vacancy left by the departure of Mrs Sarla Korla. She is a senior member of the DGL Nunnery and comes from the Indian Himalayan region of Kinnaur. Ani Lobsang is the third nun to become a Trustee and it is gratifying to raise up another nun to this responsible position.
News from Dongyu Gatsal Ling

Goodbye Genlas!

Two years ago, Gen Deyang and Gen Tsering came to Dongyu Gatsal Ling from Penor Rinpoche's Nunnery in South India. They have been teaching Tibetan language and philosophy to our nuns, who were sad to see them leave earlier this year. We are extremely grateful to Namdroling Nunnery for continuing to send us such qualified nuns to help with our study program.

Welcome Lopons!

DGL Nunnery is very happy to welcome two new nun teachers - Ngawang Peljung and Rigzin Chodron - from the Namdroling Nunnery of His Holiness Penor Rinpoche. These nuns have also completed their study program and will henceforth be addressed as Lopon. This might be compared to an MA degree. One of our new Lopons will teach *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche to the junior nuns and they will help our nuns in philosophical revision and Tibetan grammar studies.

Helping a Nunnery in Tibet

Venerable Tenzin Palmo has been asked to help 75 nuns in Tibet who are in dire need. These nuns have engaged in intense practice for many years up in the mountains with their spiritual master. On his death they returned to their Nunnery to find it taken over by villagers, and so they find themselves destitute.

Already DGL has supported their Dharma sisters over the last winter with money for temporary shelter, food and clothing. Now the nuns have been given some land near a Monastery and, with money left from the original DGL donation, have started building simple dwellings of rammed earth and wood.

Further information on this Nunnery can be obtained by writing a letter (not by email) to Ven. Tenzin Palmo. Any donations to help these Tibetan nuns in need will be gratefully received and acknowledged.
We always like to let our nuns tell you about the most significant events at the nunnery in their own words.

In order to let as many nuns as possible express their thoughts, we are publishing a cross-section of their writings relating these events.

On the 19th of April, 2007 H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche, Popa Rinpoche, Khenpo Losal and seven monks from Tashi Jong came to our nunnery. They came here because our middle nuns had to take Getsul ordination. When Rinpoche came, we make a smoke fire because I think it is Tibetan culture.

Before Rinpoche and the monks came, we had to prepare seats for them but for H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche we don’t have throne so we lend it from Tashi Jong Monastery. Also the middle nuns had to prepare their special cloths. They were very happy to be Getsulma. From our seniors side we helped them with what we could. We made the tormas for offering. We bought many kinds of fruits, candles and biscuits etc. We offered the hundred butter lamps too. At last H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche gave us a Dharma talk.

This past April His Eminence Dorzong Rinpoche came to bestow the Getsulma (novice) ordination to some of our nuns. Our nuns who are in their second year may elect, after learning about the commitments and responsibilities, to take this level of ordination. After much reflection, all of these nuns chose to make this life-long commitment to higher training.

On the 19th of April, we 13 middle nuns ordained Getsulma vows by H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche. The vows is given for the three nuns one time. So we make five groups of three nuns. A nun came from Tashi Jong for gain the getsul vows and one group had only two nuns.

H.E Dorzon Rinpoche, Khenpo Losal, Popa Rinpoche, Gen Lodro and some monks came from Tashi Jong. They did the puja for us and after that Gen Lodro called the first group. We did some prostrations, than we sat infront of the Dorzong Rinpoche and he gave us blessings of Getsul vows. It took about half an hour to each group.

Dorzong Rinpoche said us about Gelongma ordination, (Higher ordination) and said there is not the point that the nuns can’t gain Gelong ma ordination, He thinks that both the nuns and the monks could gain Gelong ordination.

All the nuns did their best for prepare that day. We were very happy Getsul vows is very important for us. If we can obey the rules of this vows then it will very helpful for us and all the sentient beings.

(By Tenzin Chokyi and Nawang Chozom)

(By Drimay Palmo)
In retreat, I felt so happy because we didn’t talk to each other and just did practice to benefit all beings.

EXAMS

‘I become nun two years ago, before I was study in school. This time I don’t know about Buddhist text so first time Buddhist philosophy exam. Before exam, our Anila and Khenpo did discussion for revision. We were very frighted. We thought we can’t answer any question. Handwriting is so bad and we can’t remember anything. Sometimes we did revision outside and we read in breeze air. We did hard study.

On exam day, we finished paper at 11 o’clock. We were very happy because our exam was very well and all the nuns getting very good result.’

(By Trinley Chozon)

NEW SEMESTER

‘Retreat finished, one day we celebrate picnic and one day we cleaned nunnery areas, rooms, kitchen, hall and washed cushions and cleaned puja room. Really we enjoyed that time.

And Monday started class. Now we are very busy.’

(By Ngawang Osal)

HOLIDAYS

‘Exam finished then all senior and middle nuns went to holiday only one month. News nuns not allowed to holiday for one year so stayed here. They did puja in the morning and in the evening. I am middle nun and went to home. I stayed with my family I enjoyed with my family.’

(By Thaye Chotso)

‘One June 2nd, I went to holiday for one month. Before we were gave exam. Then we got redy for go to holiday. We went shopping and bought some presents for our parents and sisters. I went to home. I enjoyed the holiday very much. We visited other place. There is a lake near my village with many fish we went to see. I went very happy I went to home.’

(By Kalsang Dolma)

RETREAT

‘We started retreat on 13th July. All the nuns silent retreat for two months. The junior nuns performed 110,000 prostrations and Vajrasattva mantras. All middle nuns, mandala offering and guru yoga. At the same time the senior nuns offering the Akshobya ritual.’

(By Ngawang Dolma)

‘In retreat, I felt so happy because we didn’t talk each other and just do practice for benefit all beings. During the retreat we get up at 4.30 am and start the first period at 5.00 am. Though we had to do practice in separate rooms, we decorated our own retreat rooms with tormas, butter lamps and flowers. Also sometimes we offered fruit, biscuit etc.’

(By Drimay Palmo)

‘We didn’t need to cook. We had cooks from outside. We think that we are so lucky. We also didn’t need to do any kitchen shopping. Our office staff had done shopping for us. We are grateful to Anila Tenzin Palmo and all our sponsors.’

(By Lobsang Wangmo and Jigme Chodron)

‘I felt that we are very lucky we shave such a good opportunity to do retreat. I am very sorry those people who want to do retreat but they cannot get time to do it. it is my prayer that how much we gained merits from the retreat it benefits all sentient being.’

(By Tsultrim Palmo)

‘We were very enjoy with our retreat. Last day, the senior nuns came to perform outdoor fire puja to mark the end of retreat. I pray in the future we will a longer time for retreat.’

(By Ngawang Dolma)

Venerable Tenzin Palmo presents a prize to DGL’s youngest nun Ani Trinley Paltsa who held 3rd position in this year’s first level Philosophy exams. Proud teacher Khenpo Tsering is in the background.
The nuns are excited as the Study and Retreat Centers are close to completion. A lengthy monsoon slowed progress. By the time you read this we’ll be putting furniture into the Study Center classrooms and the nuns will leave their temporary classrooms in the Dormitories. The Retreat Center will be the first building completed as some of the senior nuns will soon go into retreat. It will take time (and money!) to decorate the Study Center’s big, light-filled Puja Hall and the two smaller shrine rooms in the short and long-term wings of the Retreat Center. The statues, thangkas, altars, thrones, etc. will be made as funds allow. The same applies to the Library’s wooden book cases.

On the 10th of June, H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche and several monks from Tashi Jong came to conduct the puja for the new temple. This particular puja removes obstacles for the temple now under construction. The Temple will be the heart of the nunnery.

The footings of the Temple are now completed and their columns are being cast. With the long rainy season now over the pace of work will increase.

The gatehouse is ready and the small Clinic opposite the office entrance will soon be finished. There’s still a great deal of work to be done but the site is really beginning to feel like a living and working Nunnery.
We hope you enjoy the Gallery with Photos from Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery and Venerable Tenzin Palmo’s visit to Tibet and Hamburg, Germany.
Shop at DGL Website

Don’t forget to check our website for an interesting selection of Dharma gifts – DVDs and CDs of Ven. Tenzin Palmo’s teachings, books, photographs, cards, incense and T-shirts. New stock is now available such as the inspiring story of Ven. Tenzin Palmo’s Life, ‘Cave in the Snow’, on DVD.

Visit www.tenzinpalmo.com

A safe and secure on-line donation, or purchase, can be made by visiting our website www.tenzinpalmo.com and clicking on ‘How to Donate or Sponsor a Nun’, or ‘Shop at DGL’.

How to Support the Nuns at DGL

Tenzin Palmo and the nuns at DGL Nunnery thank our sponsors 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 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 Venerable 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.