

THE WIND HORSE



NEWSLETTER OF CHAGDUD GONPA

SUMMER 2000

Dear Sangha,

Tashi delek! In late March I traveled to Boudhanath, Nepal, to receive the empowerments of the Nyingma Kama—the long, historical transmission—from His Holiness Moktza Rinpoche, the high lama of Katok Gonpa. Katok is the oldest Nyingma monastery in Eastern Tibet and the mother monastery of Chagdud Gonpa. I had not planned to attend, having already received all but two of the Kama empowerments. However, Moktza Rinpoche sent word urging me to attend, and I considered the auspicious interdependence for this and my next life and the responsibility of maintaining the Nyingma tradition. I put aside concern about my health and the difficulty of extended air travel and decided to go.

I arrived in Nepal feeling quite unwell, and I found it very hard to walk. Moktza Rinpoche concluded the empowerments with Duddul Dorje's treasure of Vajrakilaya, complete with wealth and long-life transmissions. My energy improved from that moment on.

Another source of energy and joy for me was seeing the new maturity and dharma progress of my grandson, Orgyen Tromge. He attended the empowerments accompanied by my son, Tulku Jigme Tromge. Any doubts that remained about the wisdom of sending him for training at Mindroling Gonpa have vanished, and I have great hopes for his future.



During this visit to Nepal, I moved ahead on the construction of Katok Ritrod, a retreat facility near Parping. Katok will select about eight excellent practitioners to enter retreat for three or five years. Other rooms for shorter retreats will be available for Western as well as Tibetan practitioners.

I spent time discussing the plans and estimates with the people who carry out my activities in Nepal, and they are looking for a knowledgeable, honest builder. Good-quality construction there is quite expensive—nevertheless, the project has its initial momentum. Ten thousand dollars have been offered by the Roy, Lindley, and Rogers families in the name of their late mother, Jo Ann Oxley Roy; and ten thousand more by Lama Dorje in the name of his late father, William D. Miller. Also, my wife has offered much of the income of her recent U.S. tour. I feel that the retreat component of monastic stud-

ies is essential, and that this Katok retreat center will prove to be a very important star in the Katok constellation.

I look forward to seeing you again. Unbelievably to me, I really am an old man now and have limitations I never expected. But this old man's happiness grows powerful and pervasive when he sees the children of his heart.

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In the dharma,
Chagdud Rinpoche

Pilgrimage in Nepal

By John Swearingen

One morning at Rigdzin Ling Rinpoche said he thought it would be a good idea to go on pilgrimage again. When he was asked how soon, he replied, "I think now going!" This began a mad rush of plans to visit many of the holiest Buddhist sites in India and Nepal—tracing significant events in the Buddha's life in India and Guru Rinpoche's holy sites in Nepal. About a week later Rinpoche and a dozen students landed in India.

To Rinpoche, "pilgrimage" is a verb, a manifestation of his ceaseless activity and intention to create merit and benefit for others. I had little understanding of pilgrimage, but I knew that it has always been very important to Rinpoche, and so I wanted to join him and see what it was all about. I was unable to go to India but met him and his entourage later in Kathmandu.

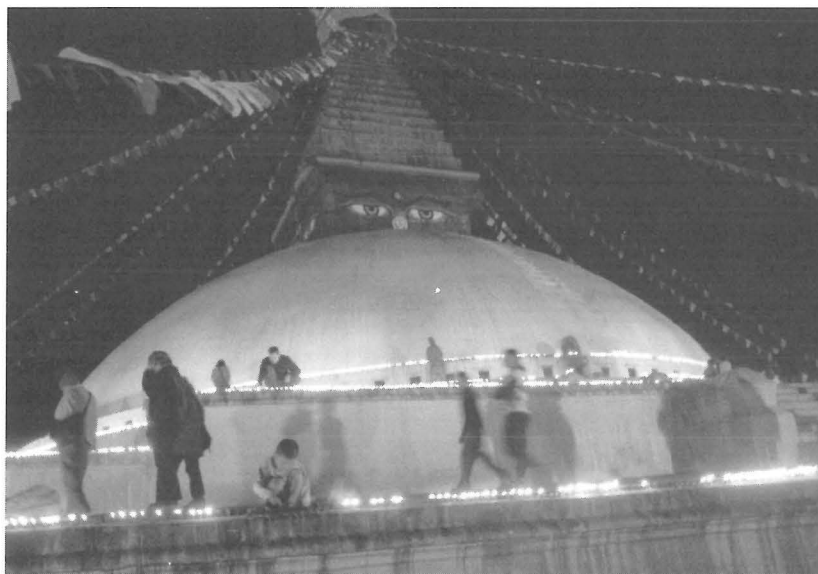
I had been to India and could easily imagine the hardships of the pilgrimage—day after day of travel on hot and rugged roads, poor food, and everywhere the din and chaos of a billion people sharing a small "subcontinent." When I met his flight from Delhi at the Kathmandu airport, I expected to find Rinpoche worn and in poor health. I should have known better—Rinpoche was glowing, vibrant, and energized.

Rinpoche stayed at a hotel across the street from the Great Stupa. The stupa, about a block square and surrounded by shops, is a kind of Times Square—but much, much older, with very different mantras and a greater presence—although sometimes equally distracting. Each morning before dawn we climbed to the roof of the hotel to greet the morning with Rinpoche, doing puja as the pink dawn caressed the Stupa and the Himalayas behind him. Word swiftly spread of Rinpoche's presence and our small group grew larger. The hotel quickly became "Chagdud Gonpa—Boudha" as Rinpoche settled in with a swirl of activity.

Pilgrimage is a continuous offering, and our main activity in Boudha was to offer butter lamps each evening. Every day a dozen vendors prepared and laid out about ten thousand small lamps. As darkness fell, pilgrims, tourists, kids, and the Tibetan community of Boudha came up onto the Stupa to light them. We continuously recited a butter lamp prayer, offering a total of over 110,000 butterlamps at the Great Stupa (as many as had been offered earlier by Rinpoche at Bodhgaya in India).

One day Rinpoche asked if any of us had done prostrations around the Stupa. Nobody had. He announced that if *we* didn't then *he* would (as he had done in Bodhgaya). The next morning found us up early and on the ground. The strong presence of the Stupa and the warm and friendly mass of folks doing circumambulations, the constant hum of mantras, the clicking prayer wheels, and the shuffling of feet made prostrations easy. As I worked my way slowly around, my attitude shifted from caution and reluctance to enthusiastic offering and joy.

Sacred to Guru Rinpoche, the Kathmandu Valley is dotted with gonpas, and for two days we visited monasteries around Boudha, offering butter lamps at each. Some of the older monasteries have a profound presence, but I have to say I was most excited by the new and very beautiful Katok Gonpa, still under construction, and by our visit with Moktza Rinpoche. Katok Monastery is very closely linked with Chagdud Gonpa in Tibet, so it was a great treat to meet Moktza



Butterlamp offerings on the Great Stupa

Rinpoche, who joined us in offering tsok at the Stupa on Guru Rinpoche Day.

We also visited Nagi Gonpa, Chökyi Nyima's monastery, where we were warmly greeted with tea and cookies. As he and Rinpoche talked, we could sense Chökyi Nyima's great respect and appreciation for Rinpoche, who was a friend of Chökyi Nyima's father, Tulku Orgyen Rinpoche. We felt very honored when he brought out some relics of Tulku Orgyen. As we received their blessings, Chökyi Nyima reminded us what a treasure our Rinpoche is, one of the few remaining lamas trained in Tibet. He and Rinpoche parted at the gates of Nagi Gonpa with a strong embrace.

Shechen Monastery, known locally as Khyentse Gonpa, was built by H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche before he died. Khyentse Rinpoche was one of Chagdud Rinpoche's main teachers. We were invited up many flights of stairs to Khyentse Rinpoche's private chambers at the top of the temple. His oceanic presence was still overwhelming, and to be there with Rinpoche was tender and profound beyond words.

At Parping we performed tsok outside the Asura Cave, where Guru Rinpoche took monastic ordination and left his

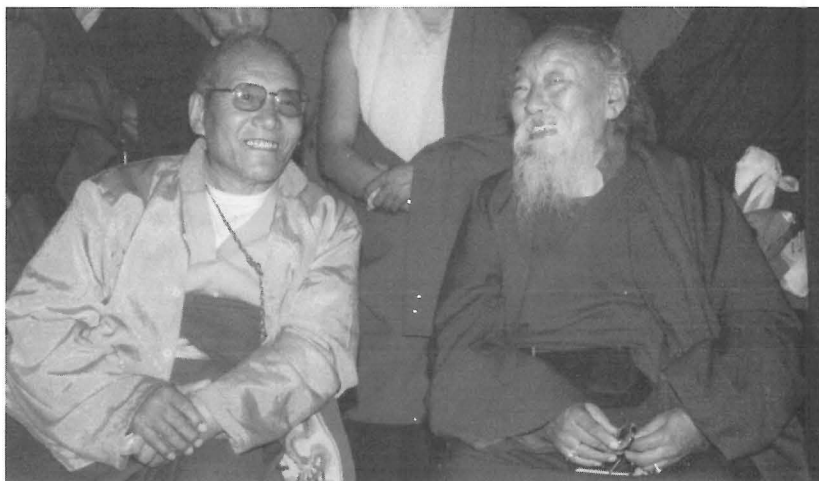
handprint in stone outside the door. In response to their requests, Rinpoche gave refuge vows to the kids on the pilgrimage. We also visited Chatral Rinpoche's gonpa and Yangleshod Cave, where Guru Rinpoche bound the Vajrakilaya protectors to an oath of allegiance and requested that they protect the dharma.

In some remote mountains far from Kathmandu are the Maratika Caves, where Guru Rinpoche and Mandarava attained the siddhis of longevity and deathlessness. The trip is arduous—either a six-day hike or a long ride on a helicopter. We chose the 'copters, and I thought that somehow I was getting off easy with a ride through the air and then a day in a cave with Rinpoche. What a surprise when our 'copter circled above a huge crowd of people and landed in their midst! We were suddenly plunged, Indiana Jones style, into a cauldron of humanity.

The local Hindus, who also hold the caves as a power spot, were in the midst of two days of fervent prayers and offerings. Although many of the people there were friendly, or at least curious, some gave us hostile stares.

Within the caves are a series of very narrow tunnels, which pilgrims attempt to crawl through in order to purify their karma for rebirth in lower realms. As we inched our way through the tunnels—frightening in themselves—surrounded by the din of the Hindu pilgrims, we were scarcely able to hear one another, and were often confused and isolated from our group. I felt that this was how one might experience death—alone and plunged into fear and confusion.

Although Rinpoche stayed behind at a monastery near the caves, his presence never left us. I felt tremendous gratitude for this, and compassion for the thousands of other pilgrims who might not have such a teacher to guide them. When I got back to the monastery, Rinpoche was turned, looking peacefully out the



H.H. Moktza Rinpoche and H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche in Nepal

window, waiting for each one of us to return. I performed grateful prostrations, as we all did, naturally, upon seeing him again.

We spent our final days in that other dharma activity—shopping! While an endless stream of Tibetan students and friends kept Rinpoche busy at his hotel, we all dispersed to the markets to buy dharma items for our centers, friends, and shrine rooms. Then one day it was over. From the airport, we fanned out again to far corners of the globe, but without separation, to continue our offerings and to share the blessings of our journey with Rinpoche.

John Swearingen is a longtime student of Chagdud Rinpoche who has lent his construction skills to a number Chagdud Gonpa building projects. He is also a talented photographer whose work has appeared, unacknowledged, in the Windhorse for many years. As an extension of his dharma activity he builds custom straw-bale homes throughout California.

The following prayer, written last year, has not been widely distributed. You may wish to photocopy it to include in your collected longevity prayers.

A Prayer for the Longevity of All Lamas

DON GYUD GONG PAI JIN LAB P'HA P'HOG T'HOG

You have received your inheritance—the blessings of enlightened intent from the ultimate lineage.

DAG SOG NYIG DRO TZE WAY JEY ZUNG WAI

You lovingly care for me and other beings in these degenerating times.

DRIN CHHEN LA MAI KU TSE TAG TAN NAY

Lama of great kindness, may you enjoy long life

MAG JUNG T'HUG KYI ZHED DON YONG DRUB SHOD

and may all the superb aspirations you hold in your mind be accomplished!

Over the years, I have received repeated requests to write longevity prayers from many people who have a spiritual connection with any one of a number of lamas. I was concerned that if I had written each of these as requested there would be too many to recite, so I, Chagdud Padma Gargyi Wangkhyug, have written these words of aspiration to serve in all these cases.

Lineage Holders of Inherent Truth

This article continues our series by Lama Padma Drimed Norbu on the lineage holders of the profound path of the Great Perfection, particularly the Longchen Nyingtik lineage revealed by the great rigdzin Jigme Lingpa.

It is said that of all Patrul Rinpoche's students, Nyoshul Lungtok Tenpai Nyima had the greatest realization of the true essence that is spoken of in the Great Perfection teachings. At an early age, he was recognized as a reincarnation of Shantarakshita, the great abbot of Tibet at the time of King Trisong Detsun's reign. Lungtok was ordained as a monk at an early age and had the good fortune to spend more than twenty years with his root teacher, Patrul Rinpoche, who bestowed on him the complete Longchen Nyingtik empowerments and teachings.

While Patrul Rinpoche was living as an ascetic in the Ari forest, several young practitioners were inspired to join him, and Lungtok was among them. Each day Patrul Rinpoche would teach from Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacaryavatara*. Teacher and students spent many months meditating in the solitude of the forest, living off of local roots and plants and food left behind by nomads.

One day Patrul asked Lungtok if he thought much about his mother. When Lungtok said he didn't, Patrul suggested he meditate for seven days solely on "remembering a mother's kindness." With that meditation, Lungtok's compassion and bodhichitta increased naturally. Inspired by Patrul Rinpoche, he studied and meditated deeply on the *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* for many years. He also did a three-year retreat in the region of Golok near Dzogchen Monastery, meditating on Longchenpa's writings.

There is a famous story of how Patrul once showed Lungtok the nature of mind. Patrul had been meditating in a grassy field near Dzogchen Monastery. It was dusk and he said to Lungtok, "You say you don't know your mind's nature. Come here and lie down." Lungtok lay down near his guru and Patrul asked, "Do you feel the grass and the earth?" "Yes." "Do you see the stars in the sky?" "Yes." "Do you hear the dogs barking at the monastery?" "Yes." "This is natural meditation, without effort or contrivance." The fixations of Lungtok's ordinary mind dissolved and he recognized awareness inseparable from all experience—the true nature of mind. Patrul Rinpoche told him to continue to meditate and study, but not to teach the Great Perfection until he was fifty years old.

Lungtok would often say, "If students understand the teachings on meditation correctly and possess skill in meditation, those of the highest acumen will progress daily, those of lesser acumen will progress monthly, and those of the least acumen

will progress yearly. If there is no progress, it is a sign that the key points have not been understood."

Lungtok wrote on the practice of trekchö, distilling the essence of all the advice and instructions he had received from Patrul Rinpoche. Later, Lungtok's foremost disciple, Khenpo Ngaga, wrote extensively on the Great Perfection path, thus preserving all of Lungtok's meditation instructions.

Lungtok Tenpai Nyima passed away in the summer of 1925, amid arching rainbows and a rain of flowers. When he was cremated, many relics (*ring-sel*) were found in the ashes, showing signs of his attainment.

Lungtok's lineage holder, Khenpo Ngawang Palzang, also known as Khenpo Ngaga, was born in 1879. He was a reincarnation of the great Vimalamitra, who attained rainbow body and prophesied that he would reincarnate every hundred years to ensure the purity of the Dzogchen lineage. Khenpo Ngaga was also known as the "Second Longchenpa."

As a baby, he sat in meditation posture and recited the mantra of Vajrakilaya. Dur-

ing his first winter, which was extremely cold, Khenpo Ngaga generated the inner heat of tummo while sleeping with his mother to keep her warm. She was shocked, fearing that her child was a demon, but he eased her mind by singing a song of his realization.

When he was a young boy, the local river flooded, causing his family great hardship. He formed a branch into the shape of a purba and said, "When I was Vimalamitra I changed the course of the Ganges in India. There is no difficulty with this creek. Look at this miracle, Mother." As he pointed the purba at the river and chanted the mantra of Vajrakilaya, the river changed course.

When he was seven, his uncle began to teach him to read. At first, he would jump ahead, but because this upset his uncle, he would read slowly when they were together. Left alone, though, he would swiftly finish the entire text. Much to his uncle's surprise, he was able to read texts without ever really having learned how to read.

When he was only five, he met his teacher, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. At the age of twelve, Khenpo Ngaga began to take formal teachings and empowerments from Lungtok, beginning with the ngondro of the Longchen Nyingtik cycle, and was ordained as a novice monk at the age of fifteen. While doing his ngondro he had a vision of Longchenpa, who blessed him by touching a crystal to his head and singing to him about the inseparability of awareness and emptiness. Small relics emerged from a statue of Longchenpa on Khenpo Ngaga's shrine. Dur-



Khenpo Ngaga

ing his ngondro he recited the Vajra Guru mantra thirteen million times.

Khenpo became a fully ordained monk at the age of twenty-five, and observed all of the 253 vows. He accomplished the practice of longevity and the anuyoga practices of harnessing the subtle energies within the channels and chakras, which leads to the experience of inner heat and bliss-emptiness.

When Khenpo Ngaga had accomplished the development and completion stage practices, Lungtok began to give him the profound instructions of the Great Perfection. He meditated on each point for many days, clarifying his understanding through practice and discussions with his guru. After Khenpo's realization of trekchö was stable, Lungtok gave him the awareness display empowerment and taught him the key points of the path of tögal.

Having bestowed on him all the empowerments and teachings of the Longchen Nyingtik, Lungtok told Khenpo Ngaga he should study with the great Mipam Rinpoche at Dzogchen Monastery. There he studied all the major texts of the Nyingma school.

When he received word that his dear teacher Lungtok had passed away, Khenpo Ngaga went into a three-month

Vajrakilaya retreat and, following that, a retreat on the hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, and then a tögal retreat. He experienced the sambhogakaya visions of buddhas, tiglés, and rainbow light filling space all around him. The experience increased, dissolving all grasping at subject and object, and he remained in a state of luminous clarity. As a sign of his great realization, his bell fell onto a rock and left an impression there and the rock left an impression on the bell.

Although Khenpo Ngaga was asked to be a khenpo at Dzogchen Monastery, Lungtok had advised him not to teach there, but rather to wait and go to Katok Monastery when the time for that ripened. When he was thirty, he was invited to Katok, where he gradually assumed more and more responsibilities, ordaining thousands of monks and giving teachings and empowerments extensively.

In his late forties, having had many visions and signs of accomplishment as a result of completing some of the central Nyingma practices, he had another vision of Longchenpa and was inspired to write on the key points of trekchö and tögal. Khenpo Ngaga passed away in 1941 at the age of sixty-two. At his passing, the earth quaked and the air was filled with melodious sounds and rainbow light.

The Harmony Project

One of Rinpoche's projects here in Brazil, the Harmony Project, continues to benefit our local community. When Rinpoche first saw the hardships endured by the residents of neighboring Aguas Brancas, he conceived the idea of starting a foundation to help that community in any way possible. Located along the road between Três Coroas and Khadro Ling, the community is made up of about fifty families, the majority of whom live in abject poverty, many without sewage facilities or potable water. Most of them survive by subsistence agriculture and are unable to produce a surplus to sell. Many of the youth seek work in town at the shoe factories, but unemployment is high and it is difficult to find work. When they can, wages usually begin at thirty-five cents an hour.

Rinpoche approached the mayor of Três Coroas and proposed a partnership between Khadro Ling, the Town of Três Coroas, and the Institute for the Development of Agriculture of Rio Grande Do Sul (EMATER). That was the birth of the Harmony Project, the objective of which was to find ways to improve the social and economic situations of the residents of Aguas Brancas. Rinpoche designated Monica and Trajano Arantes de Oliveira, residents of Khadro Ling, as coordinators of the project.

An unused schoolhouse along the road was renovated and equipment was purchased with funding from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. In response to research that identified the most urgent needs, a course was organized for illiterate adults to learn to read and write. Artisan courses were also given to help families learn skills to improve their incomes.

EMATER is currently implementing an organic agriculture project for small farmers. Courses have been given by doctors and psychologists concerning health, nutrition, and the proper

care of children. Breast cancer exams and information have also been made available.

A food and clothing drive provided much-needed support to the community during the difficult winter months, and sangha members made small repairs to some of the houses using materials left over from the temple construction. Research is currently being done on the possibility of creating cottage industries in the area to produce components needed in the shoe industry. A book drive is also under way to create a library for the community. And at Khadro Ling a dental clinic is being organized to treat the sangha and the local community, because the facilities in Três Coroas are overloaded and people have trouble getting to town.

Thanks to Rinpoche's immeasurable compassion, these people's lives will improve on both a relative and ultimate level. Through such a fortunate connection with him, they will receive his great blessings.



Offering goddesses gracing the walls of the Khadro Ling lhakang

Chagdud Khadro on Guru Yoga: An Interview

Chagdud Khadro met H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche in 1977. According to Khadro, "I first saw Rinpoche in Nepal at a ceremony held at a very large monastery. There were maybe 1,000 people there and almost 150 Tibetan Buddhist lamas. He was passing by in a procession with the other Tibetan lamas, and he turned and smiled at someone he knew in the crowd. For me, that was like the sun breaking through the clouds—the warmth and the humor of that smile—and I just had to meet him."

Since that time Khadro has devoted her life to assisting Rinpoche in his dharma activities, taking on such varied roles as writer, translator, administrator, construction planner, and housekeeper. Over the years, her example of guru yoga has served as an inspiration to many of Rinpoche's students. Now a teacher in her own right, she took time from a very busy retreat schedule at Rigdzin Ling to speak to Lama Trinley for the Windhorse.

LT: What advice would you give new practitioners regarding their relationship with a teacher?

CK: First I would say that you need to observe someone for a while before you decide that this is your teacher. You can appreciate a lama and their teachings for some time before you make a full commitment to them as your main teacher. When that lama's teachings cause your faith to grow, then at a certain point there is just no turning back. You feel you want to follow the lama because you can see the great blessing of the relationship.

When I met Rinpoche I was very new to the dharma, so there was a lot for me to learn. I am not a very easy person and Rinpoche has his own style, which is not always easy either. He had to witness all of my stuff. At first he was very peaceful with me, but when he realized that I was there for the duration he started changing what needed to be changed.

I would also suggest that you check your motivation. Are you connecting with this teacher because all your friends are? Are you connecting because the teacher is famous and it seems glamorous? Or is your motivation for doing so to transform your mind? Lamas have different ways of pointing out what needs to be transformed. Some are wrathful and others can be very peaceful. But even with a peaceful lama, at a certain point you will arrive at a place where you are really shocked by what you see in yourself. At that point you will need to apply the methods you have received because it is then that your faith will begin to evolve.

There are so many different ways to talk about guru yoga. There are a number of wonderful stories about great lamas like those in Tulku Thondup's book *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*. But I like having simple structures to hang things on, and for about a year the way I've been thinking about guru yoga

is in terms of the Red Tara prayer in which we aspire that people will develop the four kinds of devotion.

We can have different degrees of devotion for a teacher. At first we may regard the teacher as a friend. But what does it mean to be a friend? A friend is someone who is trustworthy and has our best interest at heart. But deeper than that, when we discover the incomparable kindness of our teacher, we regard the teacher with the devotion one has for one's own compassionate mother. Your mother has your interest even more at heart than a good friend does because she is related to you. In the same way, the lama is related to you by fortunate past-life karma. That is why the relationship feels so familiar. Another kind of devotion for the teacher is like that for a benevolent sovereign. A very great lama has the capacity to protect and is able to influence circumstances in a powerful way.

But ultimately we need to cultivate our devotion to the teacher as a lama, somebody who not only knows the dharma in an intellectual way but has genuine meditative realization. That simplifies things a lot, because what we are really trying to do—as we say in the Seven Line Prayer—is follow in the guru's footsteps. In doing so we need to adapt to the lama's style, really practicing according to the lama's instructions.

Although people can take teachings from many lamas, I don't think they can experience profound, ongoing guru yoga with many. Following in the guru's footsteps takes a lot of mindfulness, and most of us can't maintain that with many lamas of different styles and lineages. There is too much to assimilate. If we rely deeply on a guru, we can allow them to orchestrate what other teachers we go to and what practices we do. A great lama like Chagdud Rinpoche may bring many other lamas to his centers so that his students can enhance their practice according to those lamas' traditions, but they are still within his style and lineage. There is a certain consistency there. And there is a great deal of trust, because we are offering our body, speech, and mind to the lama and trusting that lama with our transformation.

When you practice really deeply, in the same moment that you accomplish the practice you see that your realization is due to the lama's kindness. And that is very moving.

The boundaries fall away between yourself as the practitioner, the deity, and the guru, and these three are one essence. It can be overwhelming. Who could turn back from that? It really doesn't matter if the lama is irritable on a given day because that is just the lama's outer display.

LT: I was thinking about what you were saying in terms of my own experience—the times that Rinpoche gave me advice and I didn't follow it because I couldn't see the value of what he was offering. In retrospect I can see where I resisted and backed

It takes years to really tune in, and then gradually you reach the point where the lama doesn't have to say much. You just know.

off. If I had just pushed forward, there would have been much more benefit for everybody, but I didn't trust that he knew—that he could see my path and what I needed to do. I didn't have that kind of faith.

CK: I think that as your guru yoga deepens, your ability to follow more subtle levels of direction increases. Great gurus have trained their minds for many lifetimes. Even if their style seems wild, their minds are very refined. As beginning dharma practitioners we tend to be quite crass and rough. It takes years to really tune in, and then gradually you reach the point where the lama doesn't have to say much. You just know. Eventually the lama doesn't even have to be there; if you simply pray, then you know. At that point it all becomes very spacious.

There is no fixed position in guru yoga. Our relationship with the guru is close and far, close and far, until our mind and the guru's are inseparable. Everybody wants to fix that relationship so that it is an area of certainty, but the lama doesn't allow it. We have all lived so many lives in this single lifetime that when we meet the guru we want to develop something stable, but they always demolish it. They don't let you take a fixed position. The reason they can't allow it is because it is just another source of ordinary attachment that will get in the way of attaining ultimate truth. Do you know what I mean?

I still can't get over how Rinpoche can push my buttons. He is a master at it. I know what he sees in me and (I think) I know how to sidestep it because I have had twenty years of experience doing so. I can't believe that we still haven't been through all the scenarios and I still stumble, crash, and fall.

We need to remember that the guru's primary responsibility is not to make us happy but to enable us to become enlightened, and that the guru is not just responding to us alone but to many beings with various needs. In being married to Rinpoche I've learned that you need to give people in the sangha a lot of space. At first I gave that space rather grudgingly knowing that otherwise I would become a lightning rod for Rinpoche's wrath. But gradually I gave them space because we share the same intention: that all beings might find enlightenment. It may seem that we are sacrificing something, some self-interest, but actually everything goes faster, more joyously. Really, as our self-centered perspective diminishes and our intention melds with our lama's, the very heartbeats of lama and disciple begin to syn-

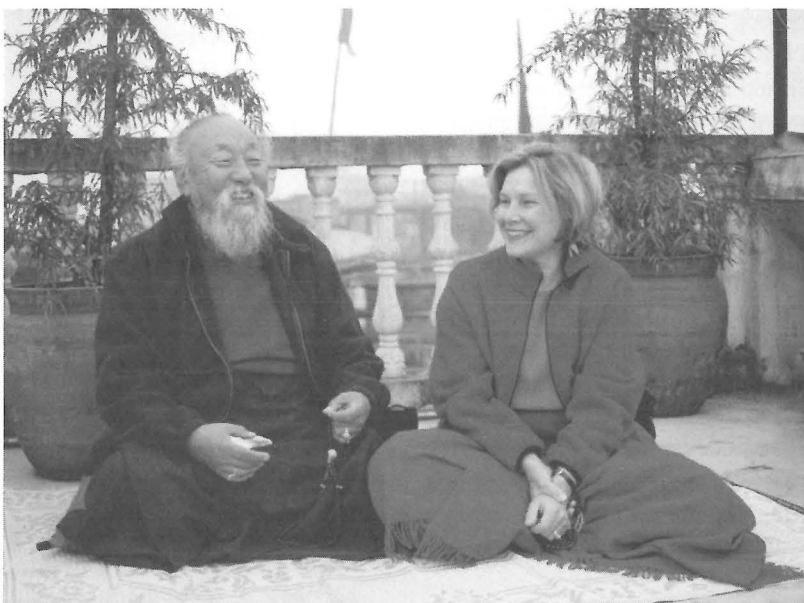
chronize. Accomplishment increases beyond anything we could have imagined previously.

LT: And now you are a teacher.

CK: I'm a teacher of practices but I'm not a guru to people. I give empowerments but I don't have my own students. There is only one person I allow to call my student and that's just because Rinpoche encouraged me to do it. But even one person saying, "You are my teacher" is an enormous responsibility.

Why would people rely on me when they can rely on Rinpoche? I am his emissary; I am not him. They say that you can be only as great as your teacher, because the teacher is a mold. Right now I am too small a mold. At a certain point hopefully that mold will expand. I have received a lot of blessings from Rinpoche. He has invested me with authority and shown me a very clear path. So despite my limitations, at some point I may be able to step into bigger responsibilities. But for now,

while Rinpoche is here, I don't see why anyone would call themselves my student. I might be their p'howa teacher or their Red Tara teacher or their Vajrakilaya teacher, but I'm not their main lama. I feel more like a very good dharma friend.



H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche and Chagdud Khadro

Offering a Gift of Life

By Candy Palmo

Years ago I, like many others, made the decision to be an organ donor when I died. However, the possibility of offering some part of my body to benefit others while I was still alive had never crossed my mind, despite the many inspiring stories of the Buddha and the great bodhisattvas who have done so.

However, this past year a few incidents occurred that showed my friend Pat Von Alten and I how we could contribute in this way. First, a Buddhist couple in Taiwan sent an e-mail to Rigdzin Ling asking Buddhist practitioners to volunteer for bone marrow testing because their son would die without a bone marrow transplant. Then an article appeared in a local newspaper about a young child who was dying and in urgent need of a bone marrow transplant. A few months later I saw a film about St. Jude's Hospital that documented how bone marrow trans-

plants have saved the lives of many children who suffer from life-threatening diseases.

As a result, Pat and I were inspired to join the National Marrow Donor Registry Program, which turned out to be a very simple process. We located a blood center in our area that participates in this program. After it was determined that we met the eligibility requirements, we made an appointment to give a blood sample to be tissue-typed in a special laboratory. We paid \$90 for this complex, expensive test at our local center, but for certain ethnic groups this expense is waived because of the critical need for more minority donors.

Our research shows that only thirty percent of people who need a marrow transplant will find a matched donor within their families. When there are no compatible family donors, a search (often worldwide) is initiated. More than sixty potentially fatal diseases—including several types of leukemia—are treated with marrow from non-family donors. The greater the number of people who participate in the program, the greater the chance of finding a suitable donor.

National Registry statistics reveal that since 1988 formal searches have been initiated for 30,486 patients, and as of March this year only 9,545 people have received transplants. In most cases, patients who don't get transplants will die. I have found that just going through this process of registering has helped to lessen my attachment to the part of me that is so temporary. If you are interested in participating in the program, you can get more information at the following websites: www.marrow.org and www.donor-link.org/bone.

As an alternative to bone marrow donation, you can donate your blood on a regular basis; this is a relatively simple procedure that can be done locally and can help keep people alive while they are waiting for bone marrow or organ transplants. Finally, you can designate your organs for donation at the time of your death.

Candy Palmo and Pat Von Alten serve the dharma through their activities at Rigdzin Ling, and both have backgrounds in the health care profession.



Candy Palmo and Pat Von Alten

Being Tara: An Interview with Mayche Cech

In this Windhorse, Lama Trinley continues to interview sangha members about their experience of integrating dharma into daily life.

LT: When and how did you first encounter the buddha-dharma?

M: It was the summer we were living at the Horizon School in Williams, Oregon, acting as gatekeepers for the Rigdzin Gatsal land that I met Rinpoche, and my first impression of him was "Grandfather." I didn't know anything about Eastern religions, but my relationship with my maternal grandfather had been incredible. He was a kind, wonderful man who never said a cross word. When I met Rinpoche I immediately recognized the same love and kindness in him.

A seed was planted during my first Red Tara empowerment in 1989, but not much came of it for a while. It was all so foreign to me. I attended my first drubchen in 1990 and returned with my three kids the following year, when Sena was eight, Jeb eleven, and Nadja twelve.

Before we moved to Williams we were very isolated, living on a twenty-three-mile gravel road that ended in the middle of nowhere. I taught at a preschool once a week, but I had to drive for an hour and a half either around or over a mountain to get there. Around the time that I gave birth to Sena, I realized I needed a community because I didn't have the support of a spiritual practice back then.

I think that growing up so close to nature was the greatest gift the kids had. Nadja and Jeb had each other as friends. We didn't have a TV, but we did let them watch a few movies now and then when VCRs first came out. We always had reading. We would go to the library and bring back a whole box of books every week. That was very special.

LT: Speaking from your own experience, what can parents do to encourage their kids' receptivity to the dharma?

M: Children can't be taught values, especially when they are very small. Values have to be modeled. Kids pick up what is around them. So I was very grateful that I met Rinpoche when my kids were at just the right age to learn the dharma from him. It wasn't something they could learn from me, because I was learning it along with them.

Modeling respect for nature is a wonderful way to teach kids about compassion. You can say, "Here is a little ant that you want to be careful with. Imagine if you were a tiny ant and a giant came along; wouldn't you be afraid?" It's the same with plants. You may harvest things out of the garden or cut flowers, but you wouldn't go through the woods just tearing out ferns or small trees. I had the kids imagine being a fern that was pulled up for no reason. So even though I didn't have a dharma vocabulary then, I still tried to arouse compassion in them.

When I first started practicing Red Tara, my friend Drusilla gave me invaluable advice, which was to truly embody Tara when I sat in meditation. Who is Tara? Tara is loving kindness

and compassion. So whenever my three young kids interrupted my practice, I always tried to respond with kindness and compassion, without irritation.

Imagine if you were Tara sitting on a cushion and a kid came along and said, "Mom, where is the peanut butter?" You wouldn't say, "Quit bothering me, I'm trying to meditate." You would just take a breath, accept the interruption, say, "The peanut butter is in the fridge," and then go back to your practice. If you have to leave your seat, you do so as Tara and then sit back down again. You just do your best in the moment.

I find that scheduling is really important. In the morning I try to do a little practice before it's time for Sena to get ready for school. Then I help her with breakfast and whatever else she might need. When she's gone I sit down and resume my practice. I try to make being a loving and helpful parent part of my practice. Finding the right time to meditate is part of it.

Another thing you can do is involve your kids. If you're doing Tara practice, hand them a mandala pan and let them make a mess. The first time we went to Tara practice in Cottage Grove, Lama Inge handed Jeb a conch shell and Nadja a bell. There is such purity in a child's involvement that it doesn't matter if some rice spills on the floor or they ring the bell at the wrong time.

The kids and I practiced together from the beginning, which was a wonderful way for our family to bond. We'd spread out a sheet in the bedroom and offer mandalas. We would do Red Tara practice together whenever someone we knew was having a health crisis. At those times it gave us something to hold on to because it was the only thing we knew to do to help.

LT: Which aspects of dharma practice do you find that kids respond most positively to?

M: I think Tara is really wonderful for kids. Tara is like Mom. She is the ideal Mom—loving, compassionate, and all the things that go along with that. I think Tara is easy for kids to understand. At home we would often do very short practice sessions because I never wanted to stretch their attention span too far. We would close quickly and let them build on that. If you stretch kids too far, they can't wait for the closing prayer. Of course, I can't say how a tulku should be trained, but in the shrine room I always had stuff for the kids—crayons, paper, and things like dried fruit to help keep them alert and happy.

When you are raising kids, it is very powerful to do something together, to work toward a goal. We made robes and text covers to help pay our way to the drubchen and that was a wonderful experience—a high point for us. Eventually the kids got tired of the sewing projects. But that's how everything is with kids. You may get excited about finding some new creative way

to motivate them, but two weeks later it doesn't work anymore. So you have to think up something else.

I avoided reward and punishment with my kids. I wanted the motivation for certain things to come from within—for them to see the natural reward. Sewing robes to go to drubchen was a natural reward, not an artificial thing like paying them to wash dishes or giving them a dollar if they sat quietly for an hour.

Ba and Josette Luvmour's ideas on raising children have been really helpful for us. We have attended their workshops and read their book *Natural Learning Rhythms*. The Luvmours' basic idea is that each child has wisdom at every stage. It's not as though childhood is something you just go through to become an adult. It helped us to understand what was appropriate for our kids at different ages.

When Jeb was having a hard time as a teenager, Lama Drimed let him stay at Rigdzin Ling for a few months. Rather than having to get up at a certain time and act a certain way, Jeb worked on stupas until 3 am. I will be forever grateful to Lama Drimed for making the time and space for Jeb to get out of the nest and yet still be in a supportive environment. It was invaluable for him.

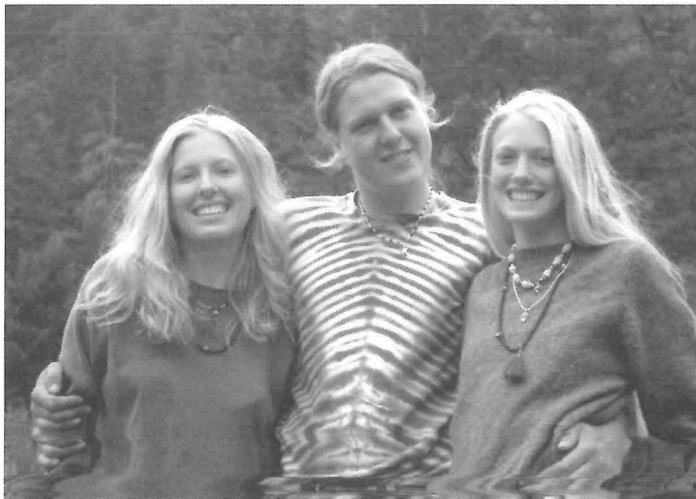
LT: How do you think a parent can best help the natural qualities of kindness and compassion unfold in their children?

M: When kids are young, teaching them to respect the land and little creatures really helps. Also it's good for them to have animals to care for and love. And as they get older there are other ways they can help. We used to sing and play music at a nursing home or work with younger children. As a parent, you can make time to help your child take care of someone else. All my kids did this, and Sena is still doing it. I try to make it a positive experience. I get the juice, change the diapers, and help with the ideas. I try to support her in giving to another child.

It's good for teenagers to do service of some kind, because it's really easy for them to be self-centered. They can help out in a nursing home, with a handicapped child, or in a preschool. Jeb sometimes helped people out with firewood. It's important for kids to see that some people are not as fortunate as they are or are having a difficult time and that they can make a difference in someone's life.

LT: What would you say is the most important thing you have learned from your children?

M: It's what my children taught me about heart, about love. This was something I was trying to teach them, but because kids are so pure they are even better at it. The most wonderful thing



Nadja, Jeb, and Sena Cech

(Continued on page 11)

Sangha News

Khadro Ling

The sangha at Khadro Ling kept very busy during the recent absences of both Khadro and Rinpoche, who left us fortunate students many merit-gathering projects so that we could continue to receive blessings through activity, study, and practice.

As we head into winter and our fifth year in Três Coroas, many amazing things have been accomplished. Under Rinpoche's supervision, many sacred practices and books have been translated into Portuguese. Recently translated *Feasts of Chod* texts were shipped to São Paulo, where a "mini-drubchod" was performed at Lama Tsering's center. So many people wished to attend the empowerment that it had to be given at two different times. Also, seventy chod drums were made at Khadro Ling and sent to São Paulo for the event.

The construction projects currently under way are numerous. Among these is a second retreat complex, with twelve individual apartments and one large room for group practice. An addition to Lama Norbu and Lama Tsering's house is being built to accommodate the many retreatants who do practice there.



The Guru Rinpoche statue at Khadro Ling

The construction of nine stupas has also begun. The stupas will be roughly twenty feet tall and stand in a line between the Guru Rinpoche statue and the road approaching the temple. Nearly completed is a prayer wheel house, two stories high, which will hold ten large prayer wheels. Plans for two more are being drawn up as well.

The land for the hospice has been cleared and the surveyors are laying out the new buildings.

Rigdzin Ling

As Rigdzin Ling settles into a hot summer, retreatants, residents, and the Gonpa children have discovered Nyingpo Pond as an ideal place to cool off. Some of the pond's leaks have been sealed with local red clay and water inflow increased so it is now deeper and larger than before. In the fall, more leaks will be filled and the bottom covered with sand.

Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche served as vajra master for the *Red Vajrasattva* drubchen in May. Before that he taught for three days on the sadhana. These were the first in-depth teachings that he has given on *Red Vajrasattva* since he first gave the empowerment here in 1993.

A large crew is at work on the six stupas, molding and applying plaques, painting and gilding.

Funds have recently been acquired to continue work on Lotus House, so we are in need of skilled construction workers. (See Contact Points for more details.) The road around Tara House received a much-needed grading, and ditches were dug and drains installed in appropriate areas.

In mid-December Lama Trinley and Lama Dorje's son, Ian, was born at home with Rigdzin Ling's three midwives, Kim, Marilyn, and Candy, attending the birth.

Dechhen Ling

Our spring calender contained some very special activities. In March, Lama Zangpo gave a weekend ngondro teaching at Cottage Grove. It was truly a blessing for all of us. In mid-April, Lama Zangmo (Inge) taught for three days on Tara. In the afternoons she gave instructions on various aspects of the shrine keeper's responsibilities, as well as the use of peaceful cymbals and other elements of ritual. In the evenings she talked about visualization and discussed how to proceed through the text. We extend our gratitude to both Lama Zangpo and Lama Zangmo and hope they will return in the future.

As the *Windhorse* was going to press, we were looking forward to hosting Lama Tsering, who was scheduled to visit Corvallis, Eugene, and Cottage Grove in June to give public talks as well as private consultations.

T'hondup Ling

Lama Gyatso and the T'hondup Ling sangha have been focused on creating the Shi-tro Mandala for Universal Peace here in Los Angeles. Construction began in January, following the arrival of master Tibetan artist Pema Namdol Thaye, together with his wife, Gaye, and brother, Kunzang. Working six days a week, the artists have demonstrated an inspiring combination of

pure motivation, diligence, expertise, and good humor in all aspects of their work. As of May, the mandala stands about four feet high. When completed, its height will be ten feet.

Around noon on most days, Lama Gyatso can be found on the esplanade just outside the mandala workroom, performing ceremonies to create auspicious conditions for creating a mandala. Once each month, Lama Gyatso leads the sangha in the daylong Shi-tro practice with tsok.

The Mandala Committee hosted a number of fund-raising events, which again drew many in the community and increased awareness of the project. A number of mandala workshops were held, which many children and youth attended. The children created a mandala representing their own sacred self which they were able to take home. These workshops are part of an ongoing community outreach and peace education program that is an integral part of the Mandala Project.

In January, Lama Gyatso led us in celebrating Longchenpa Day with practice, a tsok, and a fish release. As Losar approached, Lama Gyatso led several days of extensive Vajrakilaya practice. On January 4, the sangha celebrated Tibetan New Year with traditional Tibetan dumpling soup, expertly prepared by Kunzang in a giant pot. Losar practice began before dawn with a *Shower of Blessings* tsok and was followed by a sunny afternoon of prayer flag raising, both at the sangha house and at the mandala construction site.

In April, Lama Gyatso offered a ngondro retreat one windy weekend at the High Desert home of Bob Rosson. All who attended experienced a renewed sense of strength, dedication, and devotion toward the precious dharma, the precious lama, and one another.

On June 29, T'hondup Ling will be honored to have H.H. the Dalai Lama visit the mandala construction site in Glendale. His Holiness will bless the mandala and offer a teaching.

Our annual T'hröma retreat will be held in late October.

Amrita

In January, Amrita welcomed Joe Everest and Sequoia Petersen and their son, Skylar, to Seattle. We are also pleased to have Kris and Dan Gilfoil and their newborn son living next door. Their participation in sangha life is most welcome.

In December, Lama Padma Gyatso accompanied H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche on pilgrimage to India and Nepal, serving as Rinpoche's interpreter. He brought back a copy of the *Mingyur Sunghum*, the collected treasures of Terdak Lingpa, the founder of Mindroling Monastery, and the commentaries by his brother Dharmashri, for the Amrita center. The texts had just been printed when Rinpoche arrived at Mindroling on pilgrimage. Lama Padma also brought back 700 brass butter lamps. Assisted by a number of sangha members, he put up a 10' x 12' metal building to serve as a butter lamp house, and butter lamp offerings have become an important practice for many members of the Amrita sangha.

In March, Lama Padma presented a Monday-night lecture series, "Introduction to Buddhism," which was well-attended and included a number of faces new to Amrita. Also in March, Ven. Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche gave a ngondro initiation at

Amrita to about thirty people. Rinpoche stayed at Amrita for several weeks and made himself available to the sangha on an informal basis.

In early April, Amrita held a three-day Yeshe Tsogyal retreat. Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche graciously attended part of the retreat, and Gatsal Lama and Drusilla traveled from Williams to attend the entire session.

From mid-April to May, Lama Padma and his wife, Susan, were in Colorado building a retreat cabin on their land with the help of several Amrita sangha members. On their way home they attended the Red Vajrasattva drubchen at Rigdzin Ling.

Practice Groups

The North Coast (Arcata-Eureka) practice group continues to grow, thanks to Lama Zangpo's regular teachings. We recognize our extraordinary good fortune, and a number of people in the area have been inspired to make serious practice commitments. We also meet twice monthly to do the *Concise Red Tara* practice together.

As the *Windhorse* goes to press, we are anticipating a visit from Lama Tsering. Last year, her precious teachings were attended by 150 people and made a lasting impression on many of us.

NPR Interview with Lama Tsering to Air

Lama Tsering is scheduled to be interviewed by Michael Toms for the *New Dimensions* program on National Public Radio. When the taped interview is aired, it is expected to reach over one million listeners throughout the United States and Canada. Rigdzin Ling will notify CGF centers of the date the program, or call us directly for details.

Contact Points

Rigdzin Ling is in need of skilled construction workers to help build the Lotus House retreat facility, on either a long- or short-term basis. Contact Linda Rose at Rigdzin Ling.

Chagdud Gonpa Foundation has begun to receive donations from sangha members who shop on the internet through www.igive.com. Through selected vendors on the web, five to thirty percent of the value of purchases can be donated to CGF. If you are interested, contact Rigdzin Ling.

(Continued from page 9)

about kids is that they can become better at all of it than you. They reminded me to be kinder through their example of kindness to others. They would often help me soften my heart to a situation. Probably the greatest reward of parenting has been seeing their love going out and coming back. That's Tara, the light and the love.

Mayche Cech and her husband Richo have three children: Nadja, Jeb, and Sena, who grew up on a small family farm amid gardening, music, art, dharma, and love. Mayche and Richo grow medicinal plants for seed and market them through their seed company, Horizon Herbs, in Williams, Oregon.

PRACTICE BY THE DAYS OF THE MOON

*Eclipse of the sun; practice is multiplied 10,000 times.

**Eclipse of the moon; practice is multiplied 1,000 times.

The phases of the moon correspond to the subtle male and female energies of the body and increase the benefit of practice on certain days of the lunar month. Specific practices shown are done at Chagdud Gonpa centers, but other practices are appropriate as well. Even keeping a mantra commitment on these days generates powerful virtue.

July

1* New Moon: Vajrasattva
8 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
10 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
16** Full Moon: P'howa
24 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
26 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
30* New Moon: Vajrasattva

September

5 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
7 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
13 Full Moon: P'howa
20 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
22 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
27 New Moon: Vajrasattva

November

3 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
5 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
11 Full Moon: P'howa
18 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
20 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
25 New Moon: Vajrasattva

August

6 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
8 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
14 Full Moon: P'howa
22 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
24 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
29 New Moon: Vajrasattva

October

5 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
7 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
13 Full Moon: P'howa
20 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
22 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
27 New Moon: Vajrasattva

December

3 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
5 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
11 Full Moon: P'howa
17 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
19 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
25* New Moon: Vajrasattva

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