

# THE WIND HORSE



NEWSLETTER OF CHAGDUD GONPA

SUMMER 2001

Dear Sangha,

Tashi Delek! During my recent travels around North America, I was extremely happy to see so many friends and students, some of whom appeared after a ten- or fifteen-year absence. Old memories were stirred, as was my appreciation for all of your support through your offerings, work, and practice over the years. These have created the Chagdud Gonpa sangha. One of the aspirations in the Orgyen Prayer is that the sangha be "enriched with fellowship." It seems that we have accomplished this rather well.

I would like to express my gratitude to those of you who made contributions to Rigdzin Palden, the abbot of Chagdud Gonpa, Tibet, who sustained a serious back injury during an accident involving a truck. He had surgery in late May, recovered for some time in Chengdu, China, and is now back at Chagdud Gonpa. He is able to walk and doctors are waiting to see whether more surgery will be necessary. Though young, Rigdzin Palden is well-respected and integral to the running of the monastery.

I may see him in Chengdu, on my next trip to Nepal. The monasteries I am associated with in Tibet have invited me to come, and of course my sister never relinquishes her hopes of seeing me. With my heart condition, I can no longer travel in the high altitudes of eastern Tibet, so I have asked them to meet me in Chengdu.



*Rigdzin Palden*

When I leave China, I will travel to Nepal to consecrate Katok Ritrod, our new retreat center near Parping, and to establish practitioners in retreat there. I have powerful aspirations that the highest practices of the Katok Dzogchen lineage can be accomplished at this retreat center. In the past, it has been somewhat difficult to find the circumstances and seclusion necessary to practice certain aspects



of the path. I have complete confidence that the retreat master, Getze Tulku, a very stern and accomplished Katok lama, will instill an excellent standard of practice in the retreatants.

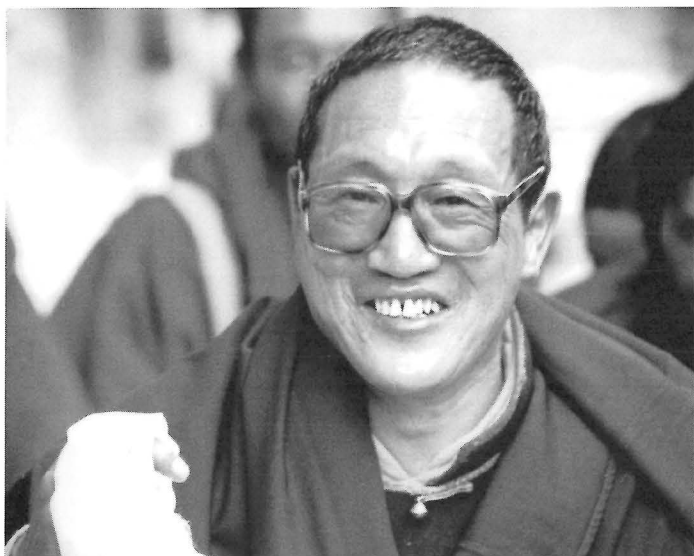
On the way home, I would like to stop in Thailand to see a fine doctor who helped Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche and who has been strongly recommended to me.

If you would like to join me on the Nepal leg of this pilgrimage, contact Kim at Rigdzin Ling (North America) or Andrea at Khadro Ling (South America) for dates and plans as they evolve. I hope to see some of you then.

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In the dharma,  
Chagdud Tulku

# Khenpo Ngagchung and His Drupdra Project



*Khenpo Ngagchung*

Chagdud Rinpoche met Khenpo Ngaga, one of his root lamas, only once. Yet Rinpoche has said that the experience was so powerful, he can remember every detail as if it had just happened this morning. And although Chagdud Rinpoche's time with him was brief, he did have the opportunity to study extensively with Khenpo Ngaga's heart student, Khenpo Dorje.

After Khenpo Ngaga's death in 1941, Khenpo Dorje set out to find his teacher's new incarnation, following the instructions he had left before his death. These included the father's name and that of a temple near what would be his birthplace. But when Khenpo Dorje met the young son of the man named in the letter, he felt that the child did not have the qualities befitting an incarnation of Khenpo Ngaga. As it turned out, his impression was correct. Khenpo Dorje soon discovered that this man had fathered a different child with another woman.

When Khenpo Dorje saw this mother enter the local temple with a child on her back, he moved toward her to offer a katak to the child. But she stepped away from him—perhaps out of shyness—before he could make the offering. As she turned her back, the child looked directly at Khenpo Dorje and said, “AH, AH, AH,” extending his hand with each recitation of the syllable. Khenpo Dorje was filled with joy, knowing that the child was the reincarnation of Khenpo Ngaga. Khenpo Dorje also realized, as the child was carried away, that he would not meet him again in his lifetime.

Rinpoche tells a more recent story of this incarnation, known as Khenpo Ngagchung, that further demonstrates the power of this great lama's mind. When a band of horse thieves stole several of Khenpo Ngagchung's horses, many of his monks were enraged. They passionately vowed to hunt down the thieves and punish them. But Khenpo Ngagchung stopped them

and, despite their protests, went off to retrieve the horses by himself. He rode his horse directly to the thieves' hideout and demanded the return of the other horses. When the thieves swore they hadn't stolen them, Khenpo Ngagchung proceeded to recount in precise detail exactly what each of the thieves had said and done since the horses were stolen, down to the moment when one of them smoked a cigarette. It finally occurred to the thieves whom they were dealing with, and they immediately gave the horses back. As if Khenpo Ngagchung's clairvoyance hadn't been enough, his own horse left an impression of its hooves in the rock as he rode it away.

The next day, the thieves appeared at Khenpo Ngagchung's monastery to beg his forgiveness. He severely chastised them for their wrong livelihood and the fact that they hadn't repented until they'd been caught. Then he gave each of them some money and sent them on their way.

While he was at Rigdzin Ling this spring, Chagdud Rinpoche said that Khenpo Ngagchung had requested our help in building a drubdra, or retreat facility, at his monastery in eastern Tibet, where he has already established a thriving monastic college. Rinpoche told us that this would be a wonderful way of repaying, if only in a very small way, Khenpo Ngagchung's kindness as the incarnation of Khenpo Ngaga, for it is from Khenpo Ngaga that our Dzogchen lineage has been passed down, first to Khenpo Dorje, then to Chagdud Rinpoche, and now to us.

The cost of building a temple and cabins for the drubdra would be \$35,000; several thousand dollars have already been raised. Tulku Jigme Rinpoche will carry the funds to Khenpo Ngagchung when he travels to Tibet in early August. Contact Kim at Rigdzin Ling if you wish to contribute.

*By Kim McLaughlin*

## Schedule for Lama Tsering's U.S. Tour 2001

- Aug. 3-5** Red Tara teachings: The Wish-fulfilling Essence; Rigdzin Ling, Junction City, CA; (530) 623-2714
- Aug. 8** Wisdom of Equanimity; Congregational Church, 717 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR; (541) 552-1759
- Aug. 9** Life in Relation to Death; Pacifica Community Center, Williams, OR; (541) 846-7814
- Aug. 10-12** Dream Yoga Retreat; Williams, OR; (541) 846-7814
- Aug. 14** Transforming the Poisons of the Mind into Wisdom; Arcata, CA; (707) 822-8230
- Aug. 16** Cultivating the Heart of Compassion; RIGPA, 449 Powell St. (entrance next to 521 Sutter St.), San Francisco, CA; (415) 282-6030
- Aug. 17-19** The Six Perfections; Oakville, CA (weekend retreat); (707) 963-8340
- Aug. 22** Taking Happiness and Suffering onto the Path; Minneapolis, MN; (612) 724-4899
- Aug. 23** Red Tara teachings and practice (all day); Minneapolis, MN; (612) 724-4899
- Aug. 24** Transforming the Poisons of the Mind into Wisdom; Philadelphia, PA; (215) 546-8860
- Aug. 25-26** The Healing Qualities of Red Tara; Philadelphia, PA; (215) 546-8860
- Aug. 29** Taking Happiness and Suffering onto the Path; Austin, TX; (512) 388-6394

# A Place of Refuge

Since H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche established Odsal Ling in 1993, the São Paulo sangha has evolved from a small number of Tara practitioners into a flourishing group with several hundred participants. At our center, Lama Tsering maintains an ongoing schedule of weeknight teachings and events. Over the years, she has noticed how the stress of living in a big city affects her students. Bringing the sangha together to participate in weekend retreats has always been difficult because most members generally leave town and recuperate on weekends. For this reason, Lama Tsering has always felt the need for a rural retreat center in a location conducive to both individual and group practice.

For months, Lama Tsering and her students researched the possibilities, but what they found was either too expensive or too far away. Then last February, a man attending Rinpoche's chöd retreat at Odsal Ling said he knew of a place that might be of interest. His neighbor, a man named Saburu, along with his two brothers, owned about four acres of beautiful land on the outskirts of São Paulo. Having lived there most of his life, he was now interested in selling the land, but not to just any buyer. In his youth, his family had lovingly planted many flowering trees, eucalyptus, and pines on the property, and he did not want it cleared for condominiums.

When Lama Tsering went to see the land for the first time, she had to suppress the urge to jump up and down with joy. The property was very appealing, with an old, colonial-style house, sloping woodlands, and open meadows—ideal for a retreat center. As Lama Tsering walked the land with Saburu, he spoke about his Korean mother. She had been a devout Buddhist, with an unflagging faith in the power of prayer to remove obstacles and bring about blessings. Though she had been dead for many years, he felt that our plans for the land made her very happy. Saburu had hosted weddings and large events for children there, and hoped that such beneficial use of the land would continue.

When the sangha attended a picnic there a few weeks later, they fell in love with it. They appreciated the fact that it was accessible, only twelve miles outside the city limits, but still had a rural feel. When Rinpoche came to see the property, he sat on the front porch of the old house and simply commented, "This land is good."

At a fund-raising meeting, Lama Tsering described the property as a place of refuge for the sangha, and thus it was provisionally named Refugio. At that meeting, more than a third of the purchase cost was raised, and pledges continue to come in.

However, even after Saburu and his brothers accepted the final offer, there was still a major obstacle—the paperwork—which ended up requiring months of effort. As plans advanced, decisions to be made and tasks arose at such a rate that Lama Tsering asked Rinpoche for help. At the time, I was still in re-

treat, hoping to complete the traditional three years, but I knew from the beginning that there remained the possibility of being called out to help if necessary.

During the Losar Vajrakilaya ceremonies, Rinpoche and several of the Chagdud Gonpa lamas joined me in my retreat for a few days. At that time Rinpoche mentioned Lama Tsering's request for help. He told me that I could either stay in retreat or leave in order to help with the project, but that the decision was mine alone to make. I have always felt that one of the purposes of my life is to help create practice environments for others. So, with some re-

gret, some anticipation, and Rinpoche's blessings, I left retreat for the time being, to help with Refugio.

Shortly after arriving in São Paulo, I discovered that many sangha members had professional skills and were eager to help. Several architecture students helped design the temple and facilities, those with technical skills offered their assistance in designing the infrastructure, and others helped with the estimates and material purchases.

The plan is to remodel the house first in order to quickly provide a functioning shrine room, kitchen, and dining facilities, which will later serve as the lama residence. Later, as funds become available, a moderately sized Tibetan-style temple, kitchen and dining facilities, and guest quarters will be added.

When I asked sangha members about their aspirations for Refugio, many of their answers were similar—they envisioned a peaceful environment for extended meditation practice, a place they could call their own and where the dharma could be experienced, a safe place for children, and finally, a source of teachings and inspiration to be taken to heart and integrated into daily life. Lama Tsering added her own aspiration that Refugio be a rest stop for all those of pure heart, a place where the enlightened intent of all masters of the Great Perfection can be realized.

*By Lama Norbu*



*Chagdud Rinpoche, Lama Tsering, and Lama Norbu at Refugio*



# Interview with Yangzam and Luis Nenung: Os The Dharma Lóvers

*This issue of the Wind Horse introduces two Brazilian sangha members who live and work at Khadro Ling when they are not on the road performing in their band, Os The Dharma Lóvers. Yangzam cooks for the lamas and works in the office, and Luis Nenung leads temple tours for the many tourists who visit the Gonpa on the weekends. Lama Trinley spoke with them in Brazil last February.*

**LT:** Would you tell us a little about your dharma activities, beginning with how you met Chagdud Rinpoche?

**Yangzam:** Nenung and I had been looking for the right spiritual path and teacher for a long time. We had met masters but none we felt a connection with, and tried many different things—macrobiotic food, astrology . . .

**Nenung:** Magic. (They both laugh) But nothing really worked.

**Yangzam:** We had heard of H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche and often thought to visit him in Três Coroas, but it wasn't until I had a miscarriage that we came here. Rinpoche talked to us about karma and suggested we do a specific practice. At first I was quite upset by what he said but, in a couple of days, I really appreciated what he had offered us.

**Nenung:** When we asked him about the baby, we were looking for sympathy. So when he talked about karma as the cause of suffering, it wasn't exactly what we expected to hear. But it was a blessing, because he placed the tools for working with suffering and karma directly in our own hands.

**Yangzam:** We were both impressed with Rinpoche, the teachings, and the path. The first event we attended was a Vajrakilaya retreat. It was very powerful for us. Afterwards, I wanted to stay and work in the kitchen. Six months later, when work on the temple really started, I moved here to cook.

**LT:** Were you playing music together at the time?

**Yangzam:** No, the music didn't happen until we had known Rinpoche for a while. Years ago, I had worked in the music business as a manager, but never sang professionally. It is interesting that

when I took refuge with Rinpoche, he gave me the dharma name Yangzam, which means "melodious." I have always sung Brazilian songs at parties, and Nenung used to sing in a rock band. But it was only after we had been together for seven years that we began to sing together. Nenung has always written lyrics, but it wasn't until he began his ngondro that he started to write songs about the dharma.



*Yangzam and Nenung*

**Nenung:** I was living in Novo Hamburgo at the time and doing a lot of practice. I had reams of poetry but no accompanying music. So I bought a guitar and taught myself to play it. At first it was just something to do with the poetry but, when I played the songs for Yangzam and we sang them together, we were surprised at how complementary our voices were.

**Yangzam:** I cooked while Nenung attended Dzogchen retreat. It was after that retreat that we began to talk seriously about our music. We needed a name and thought of Os The Dharma Lóvers. We got Rinpoche's approval to use the word "dharma," and I decided to use the name Yangzam.

Then a good friend, who sings in a famous punk rock band, asked us to open his show in Novo Hamburgo. After that, everyone said we should record, so we made a demo tape—without any expectations. A Porto Alegre radio station played our tape and many people liked our music. It's simple blues—just guitar and two voices.

**Yangzam:** When I was a child, I used to listen to Brazilian and other Latin American music with my father. But as teenagers, my friends and I listened to rock-and-roll. When people ask me about my formal education, I often joke that it was sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll. But now I realize how fortunate I am—that I must truly have had some merit and blessings—to have survived those times. I am "cured" but many of my friends from those times have since died.

**Nenung:** We know many people in the music business who have good intentions but don't know how to break out of their patterns. In his heart, our punk-rock friend is looking for a path but



never takes the time to do it. He is too busy building his career and making money.

*LT:* If you become famous, will you have less time for work and practice here at Khadro Ling?

*Nenung:* We are our own managers and always tell people that dharma comes first, our music second. They know this. We were invited to Floranopolis this month, but the Dzogchen retreat was too important to miss.

*Yangzam:* Our priorities are very clear. The only reason Os The Dharma Lóvers exists is because of the lama's blessings. The dharma has been very healing for both of us because, when we first met Rinpoche, I was quite confused and Nanung was very sick.

*Nenung:* You could say that my body was confused.

*LT:* How is your health now?

*Nenung:* All my life, I have dealt with severe breathing problems, but when I began the ngondro, they got a lot worse. My lung capacity was at only twenty percent, and I needed oxygen to sleep at night. The best doctor in Porto Alegre told me that I would need a lung transplant and progressively more medicine. I began intensive Vajrasattva practice and, in three months, I was very close to death. But then something shifted, my health started to improve, and in the last two years, I haven't needed medicine at all. Once I stopped taking the medicines, I never went back for treatment.

*Yangzam:* Now both Nenung's health and my mind are better. With Rinpoche I have found a much bigger reference point. If you don't have any reference point, then it's not easy to recognize your potential. Looking inward is very difficult if you don't have a spiritual practice. In my family, I was always viewed as the crazy one. My four brothers and sisters are all successful—they went to university and have good jobs; one sister is a doctor, and one brother is very wealthy. My parents always wondered when I would be successful.

*Nenung:* Now she is the sanest person in her family. The others may be successful in a worldly sense, but they are very confused.

*Yangzam:* Trying to balance their work, houses, and children makes them crazy, so they take their problems to my parents. On the other hand, I'm the one who offers sanity and support to my mother and father. They know that whenever they need me, I will help them because that is the way of dharma.

Nenung does more formal practice, while I engage in activity. Rinpoche has always told me that my dharma activity will tame my mind. Cooking for him is very good for me because I have too much pride. He can be very strong and gruff with me, and he always mirrors my emotions. At first this was very difficult for me. But now when I work with him, he smiles and jokes. I don't have so much hope and fear about what he thinks of me, so maybe my mind is a little better. For thirty-six years, I didn't know what I wanted. Now I know, in my heart, that I want to sing about the dharma and help Rinpoche.

*LT:* Your music alludes to Chagdud Rinpoche and the dharma, so people must ask you questions about them.

*Nenung:* We have found that whenever people hear about the dharma, they want to know more. In Brazil the younger generation tends to think of most traditions as square. But because Buddhism is new here, many teenagers are drawn to it. People are finding out that you don't need to be a monk or a nun to be Buddhist. We are normal people. We have families and problems. Someday I may even have green hair.

*Yangzam:* I have noticed that children have a very special connection with our music. I believe that it's important for people of all ages to see and hear Os The Dharma Lóvers. Whenever we perform and I look out into the audience, I can see how much people need and want a spiritual path.

We try to use all our concerts as practice. Backstage we establish our motivation and Nenung sings the Seven-Line Prayer. Onstage we visualize Tara and we use red lights. It's a challenge to sing, play and maintain the visualization. At the end of every show, we dedicate the merit to all beings.

Whenever we are interviewed, we try to share our happiness at having found this path and encourage people to visit Khadro Ling. We don't expect material gain through our music. We don't worry about it. If money comes, we can give it away.

*LT:* What is the story behind the song "Sweet Lama"?

*Yangzam:* It was actually inspired by Lama Shenpen. We first recorded the song as "Sweet Lama Shenpen," but later decided that "Sweet Lama" was

better because dharma is not a personal thing. It's much bigger than that. "Lama" pertains to all lamas. All lamas are sweet because they dedicate their lives to the dharma. And this is wonderful because there can never be too many people in the world doing this.

### Peixes (Fish)

Fish are like the birds,  
Only their songs are silent,  
Sounds which can't be heard,  
They fly like eagles through the  
water.  
With fins for wings,  
They slide beneath the clouds.  
We live like the fish,  
With a voice we keep quiet within,  
Which is the peace we cannot find.  
Fish, birds, people,  
In aquariums and cages,  
Passing through rooms and  
balconies,  
Drowning in their fate,  
To die as some domestic decoration,  
We die like the fish,  
More or less content to live a life  
without love.  
We always take the bait,  
And as the hook passes through,  
The scream is silent.

By Nenung

Translated by Lama Norbu

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# Advice on Practice from the Lama

*During the Red Vajrasattva drubchen this spring at Rigdzin Ling, H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche gave the participating sangha some specific advice on practice. In particular, Rinpoche emphasized the value of intensive group practices like drubchens. The following is an edited transcript of his teaching.*

We are very fortunate to have this opportunity to come together and put the teachings that we have received into practice. In general, we hear teachings, then contemplate and meditate upon them. There is an appropriate time for listening, for contemplation, and for meditation. Now is the time for meditation, for putting into practice what we already understand. Ideally, when you come into a situation like a drubchen, you work with what you know. Whatever you might not know isn't the issue; the point is to put what you do know into practice.

Since I moved to the Southern Hemisphere, I've encountered obstacles to my health and wondered whether I would be able to return to the United States in this lifetime. So I am very glad to meet with all of you again. Wherever I go, my main concern is that the activities of the dharma flourish—that's what inspires me. When I see the dharma flourishing, my heart rejoices.

In returning, I find that Lama Drimed, my son Tulku Jigme Rinpoche, and the other lamas are helping my other students maintain the centers and carry on the work of the dharma. I am inspired when I see that all that I sought to establish in this country has not fallen away but continues to be held. We instituted the annual drubchens, not only here at Rigdzin Ling but at other centers as well, for a number of important reasons. Now people have many opportunities to practice together.

Lamas and students coming together and practicing in this concentrated way lends power to each individual's practice; we derive far more benefit than we would by practicing on our own. So it's important that we understand the uniqueness of this opportunity. If you cannot fulfill your personal aspiration to undertake a long retreat, don't feel that you will never get anywhere

with your practice. If each year you take the time to come to a drubchen or a similar group retreat in which everyone can reinforce each other's practice, then you can derive enormous benefit. This is an opportunity to make real progress in a very short time. My hope is that in the future these opportunities will continue—both here and wherever there are teachers able to guide motivated students, wherever people wish to gather to help dharma activities flourish.

We are here because we want all that is positive to flourish. As practitioners, we can develop our positive qualities, accumulate merit, and deepen our experience of timeless awareness. There are many ways to do this. Some pertain more to one's own

individual liberation, others to the bodhisattva path, and some to the Vajrayana path.

In drubchen, we apply the methods of the skillful, profound, and very direct path of the Vajrayana. In the Vajrayana, there are extensive, historical lineages; more direct lineages of the terma teachings; and the profound *dag nyam*, or pure vision, transmissions. This cycle of Red Vajrasattva is from the terma tradition—a tradition of profound treasures revealed specifically for these times.

The drubchen practices we do here incorporate terma teachings of three great masters of recent times: H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (Jigdral Yeshe Dorje), H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and the great tertön Padgyal Lingpa. Because of the enormously powerful blessings and the benefit of these teachings, and because they have been revealed in our generation, it is imperative that we uphold these lineages through diligent practice.

This Vajrasattva practice is useful for us because, from beginningless time, we have all wandered in samsara, experiencing relentless suffering. This is not because our sources of refuge lack the power to purify us, but because our minds are bound by karma.

The blessings of Vajrasattva are particularly powerful for purifying our minds of the effects of harmful actions and obscurations. Your motivation for undertaking this practice is very important. You shouldn't practice to benefit only yourself. Nor should your concern for others be based upon your attachment or aversion. If you are practicing with proper motivation, those

who are your enemies or who hinder you are the most worthy objects of your compassion. Your motivation should be altruistic and compassionate—not just that of benefiting beings in the short term, but of bringing about the lasting benefit and happiness of enlightenment. That is why you request and receive empowerments that ripen you, teachings that liberate you, and oral transmissions that support your practice. Having received all of this, it is important

that you not waste it. Don't let one minute go by without putting what you have received into practice.

This practice environment, this center, is quite special. Since we acquired this property, there have been many positive signs and indications that it would be a place where the enlightened activity of the buddhas could flourish and benefit beings. Many lamas and masters with insight have affirmed this. Practitioners have had meditation experiences, dreams, and other signs of the very special nature of this place. And since its inception, Rigdzin Ling has been blessed with the presence of many holy masters who have come here and given teachings.



Why do we practice, and what are we doing when we practice? We need to understand that our true nature is buddha nature—what the tantras refer to as the timelessly pure state of awakened buddhahood. But because of superficial obscurations, we fail to recognize our true nature and continue to wander in samsara. Those who have attained the total freedom of buddhahood and embody the timeless awareness of enlightened mind have completely realized their buddha nature. All positive qualities of enlightened form, speech, and mind are fully evident in those who are awakened.

As pure embodiments of enlightenment, deities manifest in various ways and under different circumstances to meet the needs of individual beings. All deities, fully imbued with such qualities as wisdom, loving kindness, compassion, spiritual power, and the ability to grant refuge, are worthy objects of our prayers. Vajrasattva, more than any other, is the embodiment of all deities. We pray with faith and devotion to Vajrasattva as the union of all sources of refuge, and meditate upon and recite Vajrasattva's mantra in order to purify superficial but obscuring distortions that prevent us from realizing our own true nature.

When we practice in this way, any physical activity we engage in becomes part of our practice. The best way to practice is with your body on your seat and your mind in your body, focused on what is virtuous and positive. Always pay attention to your posture. There is a saying that when the body is straight, so are the subtle channels and the subtle energy moves smoothly, allowing the mind to focus. There is a direct connection between your state of mind and whether your subtle energy is agitated or smooth. Good sitting posture can support and benefit your practice. The more you calm the disturbed, agitated energy in the channels and release blockages, the more your mind settles, reducing afflictive emotions and concepts.

When you recite mantra, you are giving voice to the vajra speech of all buddhas. The compassion and blessings inherent in mantra are identical to those inherent in the deity. When you recite mantra with this understanding, you purify your mindstream of the effects of eons of harmful actions, obscurations, faults, and failings. All negativity is refined away and purified. All buddhas and great masters attest to this. The effort you make physically purifies you on the level of body; the effort you make with your voice purifies you on the level of speech; and the effort that you make mentally purifies you on the level of mind.

Because of the complex details in visualization, development stage practice may seem rather difficult. But don't think that you are not practicing correctly if you can't visualize every detail. The key to development stage practice is to understand that all visual appearances are the form of the deity—vajra body, the unity of appearance and emptiness. All that is audible is by its very nature the unity of sound and emptiness, vajra speech. All thought, memory, and awareness—all that arises in the mind—is the display of timeless awareness, vajra mind. If you have that certainty, then you are truly practicing, even if not all the details are there. By focusing in this way, you will invoke and receive blessings, your obscurations will be removed, and your abilities to benefit others will increase.

No matter what other connections we may have with each other, we are all here because we love the dharma. Therefore, we try to receive as many teachings and study as much as we can, and then contemplate what we have heard in order to come to a clear understanding of what those teachings mean. Don't waste that effort. Put into practice whatever you feel you have understood. That is the training. The more we learn, the more we will have to put into practice.

Don't fool yourselves by pretending to be better practitioners than you are—that won't get you anywhere. Use the teachings as they are meant to be used, as a taming process. Tame your afflictive emotions and negative karma, the root of samsara. Do this by hearing, by contemplating, and, especially, by putting the teachings into practice. Only you can decide whether you are a practitioner or not. Be honest with yourself; if your negative emotions are diminishing, then you are practicing.

I also would like to reiterate that life is impermanent. It's important that we understand what is really worthwhile and not waste the opportunity we have. The nature of our mind is buddha nature just waiting to be discovered, like a jewel that we already hold in our hands. Yet we repeatedly put it down and go running after something else. Wouldn't it be better to appreciate the value of that jewel?

None of the wealth, power, and success that we may acquire in this life will be of ultimate benefit, because we cannot take any of it with us. When we die, our mind will slip out of this life like a hair out of butter, leaving behind everything we thought was so important. Remember what is important. You have the opportunity to bring about extraordinary benefit for



both yourself and others. Use it wisely. I want all of you to be mindful of this.

The blessing of a sangha lies in its undivided and harmonious focus on what is virtuous and positive. That is how the sangha should function. If you have reached a level of practice where you can see through the ordinary bonds of ignorance or the afflictive emotions, this is all the more reason to help others who may still need help or guidance. That is what lamas are for, to help others work out their confusion and negativity. I ask you all to do your best. Don't waste any time.

Always be witness to your own mind. Be mindful, alert, and heedful. There is a Tibetan saying that sangha members maintain their own discipline the way a cow uses her tail to ward off flies. Nobody keeps your rules for you or imposes anything on you. Vow to uphold your own discipline and live up to your own expectations. A powerful, focused occasion such as this has the great potential to magnify everything that you do—the good and the bad; so do what you can to behave in a positive and virtuous way and avoid harmful activities.



*Mural in Iha khang at Khadro Ling*

During a drubchen, there are formal practice sessions and there are breaks. The breaks aren't a time to waste or to forget about the practice; use them to practice and create merit in other ways. We need to apply the threefold bond to our practice. The first bond is the preparation—establishing the motivation with which we undertake anything. The second is focusing without distraction upon the practice. The third bond is the conclusion, in which we dedicate the merit of what we have undertaken for the benefit of all beings.

Ideally, you dedicate the merit of your practice from the point of view of threefold purity: understanding the essential nature of the one who is dedicating, the beings to whom the merit is dedicated, and the merit itself. If you don't feel you can do that, then dedicate by emulating all of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Say to yourself, "Just as all buddhas and bodhisattvas have given rise to pure motivation, undertaken something virtuous, and dedicated the merit for the benefit of all beings, so do I." That is an entirely sufficient dedication.

## Rinpoche Back at the Ranch

We came from all over to be with our lama, many of us on a road trip through desert country that we had never seen before. We had been forewarned of the rustic conditions that awaited us: wilderness campsites, no shower facilities, electricity by generator only, and water provided by an ancient windmill pump yielding two to three tablespoons per revolution. What we discovered instead was a luscious spring desert in full bloom.

One of the residents of Iron Knot Ranch noted that, while H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche's U.S. schedule was filled with auspicious ceremonies, profound teachings, and empowerments, his week at the ranch was simply described as "Work on the statue." Lama Shenpen and her students had prepared myriad meritorious opportunities for those of us who had come to work with Rinpoche. A cabin that had been recently built as Rinpoche's quarters next to the Guru Rinpoche statue quickly became his art studio. A spacious kitchen was up and functioning for the growing sangha and visitors. And sand, gravel, and Portland cement were gathered and set up for the pending concrete work.

As soon as Rinpoche arrived, he hiked up the construction ramp to the statue and assessed the scope of the job. By week's

end, the statue had been completely resculpted in many places, and new ornaments were cast and cemented to the throne. In the same week, a second crew raised from scratch a new shop/interim dormitory and a showerhouse, creating the interdependence for future pilgrimages to the ranch.

One of the last things Rinpoche did at Iron Knot was to mark the corners and consecrate the site of a Iha khang (meditation temple) right next to the Guru Rinpoche statue. Rinpoche was very specific about the dimensions of the temple, surprisingly large given the remoteness of Iron Knot, but not so surprising when one considers how Rinpoche has developed his centers up to now. A phrase from the movie *Field of Dreams* comes to mind: "If you build it, they will come."

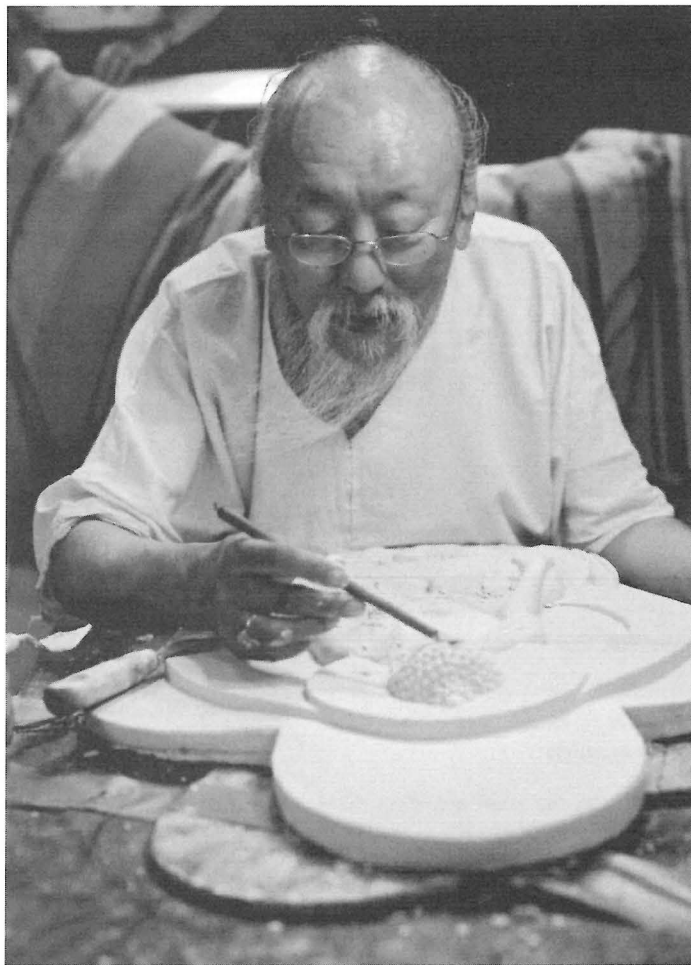
Next year Rinpoche may return to consecrate the building if it is finished, and a number of us already plan to make another trek to the ranch. Rinpoche's enlightened intention to benefit beings, coupled with the devotion and energy of his students makes anything and everything possible. May Iron Knot Ranch and all Buddhist retreat centers experience the fruition of the authentic practice of guru yoga.

*By Michael McLaughlin*

# Sangha News

## Khadro Ling

Time here in recent months has been marked by two deadlines. The first coincided with Rinpoche's return from the United States, when we wanted to show that we had made some progress on our main projects, which included the new prayer wheel installation, the Akshobhya statue, and the stupas. The second involved preparations for H.E. Dzongzar Khyentse Rinpoche's visit at the end of May, at which time we hoped to present a tidy, well-ordered appearance.



*Chagdud Rinpoche sculpting for the Khadro Ling stupas*



*Chagdud Khadro at Khadro Ling*

## Untitled

In the hospital charnel ground  
Suffering is so tangible.  
No hiding, no pretending,  
I can hear the eerie call  
of our human condition  
echo down the empty hallways.  
Beyond the borders we've built  
Cutting through our beliefs  
No pretense no choice  
Living exposed in the rawness of experience.  
Flayed open in the immediacy of suffering,  
They ride on the last rays of their hope.  
Through the power of the blessings of the lineage  
and my teachers,  
I find myself here roaming the corridors, praying for  
all my old mothers.  
Masquerading as a patient, I am free to move about  
and repay all my mothers' kindness—assuaging  
their suffering in whatever way I can.

*By Jennifer Gordon*

These two goals contradicted each other, because Rinpoche's projects always generate dust and debris. And, true to form, he almost immediately began to send up great mushroom clouds of dust in the snack bar/store area of the lha khang and had the furniture in his living quarters shoved aside to make way for the sculpting of a fifteen-foot-high nimbus for Akshobhya. Later, Khyentse Rinpoche, surveying the large slabs of clay and the disorderly signs of artwork-in-progress outside the door to his room, laughed, saying, "Chagdud Rinpoche always enjoys this kind of thing!"

Khyentse Rinpoche's teaching of the first three chapters of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* brought that classic text alive. His offering of the Bodhisattva vows penetrated to the very essence of mind, to absolute bodhichitta. It would seem impossible to regress from the momentum of the enlightened intention instilled in the 360 people present.

We are looking forward to having the Chagdud Gonpa lamas here for the ritual training in July and to the honor of their joining us for the Essence of Siddhi drubchen, July 22–30.

## Rigdzin Ling

Chagdud Rinpoche was at Rigdzin Ling this spring for more than two weeks to lead the Red Vajrasattva drubchen, consecrate the stupas, and teach the Three Words of Garab Dorje. The

stupa consecration was a particularly moving experience for the many people who contributed time and resources to this vast, meritorious effort, and Rinpoche thanked each of them for their offering.

We were pleased to welcome back former residents Chagdud Khadro, Lama Tsering, and Lama Norbu. Over the years, all three have inspired the sangha with their examples of unwavering support for Rinpoche's dharma activities. They were integral to the development of this center, and are now helping to establish and hold centers in Brazil.

Two new sangha babies have brightened life here at Rigdzin Ling—Majachenmo Rose Kirsten and Julia Padma Wangmo Kane. Both regularly attend our daily pujas and tsoks.

Padma Publishing has been in full gear recently with the production of Longchenpa's *Chöying Dzod*, which will be available in mid-July, as well as the revised edition of *Gates to Buddhist Practice*, which will be available in early August.

Upcoming events include teachings on the extensive Red Tara practice to be given by Lama Tsering, August 3–5.

The Essence of Siddhi drubchen with Tulku Jigme Rinpoche, originally scheduled for July, will take place on October 17–25. The day-long lama dancing will be held on October 25. The Orgyen Dzambhala wealth ceremony will take place on October 26.

Lama Drimed's ngondro retreat has been rescheduled for December 1–7.

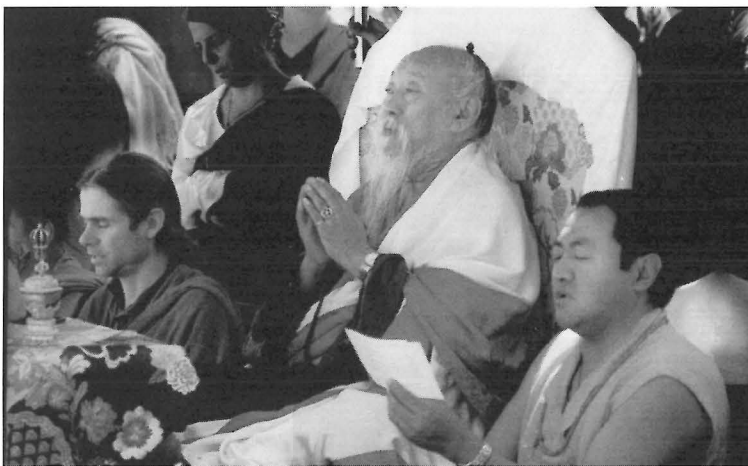
## Dechhen Ling

A special celebration, the 21st annual Red Tara puja and tsok, took place during the weekend of April 20. The presence of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, Tulku Jigme, and Lama Sonam Tsering, surrounded by a majority of the lamas of Chagdud Gonpa, was both thrilling and inspiring. Two hundred people attended, including some from as far away as the Yukon. Beginning with the empowerment on Friday morning, three days of sadhana practice were fortified by Rinpoche's direct instructions for actualizing the dharma in our lives in a profound way.

For several months before the event, sangha members came to Dechhen Ling to help prepare for the event with their tools, funds, talents, and unstinting energy. They worked their way through the gonpa, inside and out, and completed a wonderful renovation. By the time the guests arrived, every room was fresh, functional, and comfortably furnished.

Of the people who make our gonpa an active dharma center, one of the most essential is Dick Wilcox. From major building maintenance to helping to hold the practices, his contribu-

tions are vital. We would like to thank Dick and his wife, Amanda, particularly for their generous donation of \$10,000 in sponsorship of this year's Tara tsok. Because of their support, we were able to manifest a celebration truly appropriate to the significance of the occasion.



*Chagdud Rinpoche, Lama Drimed, and Jigme Rinpoche at Rigdzin Ling stupa consecration*

## Ati Ling

In the past several months, Tulku Jigme Rinpoche and the Ati Ling sangha have been busy and very blessed. The highlight was the April visit of H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche to our little jewel in the red-woods. Rinpoche gave teachings on the nature of mind in Marin County and, at Ati Ling, offered the Thousand-Armed Chenrezig empowerment and nyungnay teachings. Both events were attended by more than four hundred

people. On the final morning of his visit, he gave his heart advice to a full shrine room.

During Rinpoche's visit, it was apparent to many of us how a realized being can benefit others just by his presence. As soon as he arrived, our minds became peaceful and we noticed a clarity that remained even when we were no longer sitting on our meditation cushions. Jigme Rinpoche cautioned us not to take this as a sign of our own practice but as the direct blessings of a realized master.

As an auspicious sign of these blessings, the night Chagdud Rinpoche arrived, a flock of peacocks that lives two miles down the road was heard calling across the driveway. And the day Rinpoche left, so did the peacocks.

Jigme Rinpoche led a nyungnay retreat on June 2 and 3 at Ati Ling. More than twenty-five people attended this event which took place during Saga Dawa, when the merit of practice is multiplied a hundred thousand times. Rinpoche also led a Medicine Buddha retreat here on July 6. He visited the Chicago, Colorado, and Alaska sanghas during June and July, and in August he plans to travel to Tibet for two months.

Our fourth annual Vajrakilaya retreat will be held during Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, January 11–14, 2002. For more information, visit our website at [www.atiling.org](http://www.atiling.org).

## T'hondup Ling

In December T'hondup Ling welcomed Ven. Gongjang Rinpoche and Khenpo Chowang Dorje for a series of empowerments and teachings before they returned home to Sikkim. Rinpoche also led our monthly Shi-tro practice and participated in a fish release with Lama Gyatso and the sangha.

Beginning in early February, the Shi-tro mandala was the centerpiece of the exhibition "Constructing the Cosmos," dis-



## Minjur Ling and Rigdzin Gatsal

played at the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena for three months. Lama Gyatso gave two public talks at the museum. Several mandala-making workshops were also offered to the community as part of the Tools for Peace program created to help spread the benefits of the Shi-tro mandala into the larger community. This summer, Tools for Peace will host a sand mandala project, where monks from His Holiness Trulshik Rinpoche's monastery will create Shi-tro sand mandalas and lead mandala-making workshops.

H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche arrived like a wish-fulfilling jewel in late March and led a three-day Shi-tro mandala consecration ceremony. Several newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, covered the event. We had the great fortune to host Rinpoche for two more days of public teachings and empowerments.

In the past few months, we were also honored by visits from H.H. Kusum Lingpa and Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, both of whom consecrated the mandala.

The Shi-tro mandala will be exhibited at the San Diego Museum of Art for three months, starting on August 26. On opening day, Lama Gyatso will offer a blessing, and visiting lamas will begin to create a Shi-tro sand mandala at the museum. They will work on the mandala in public until September 8, when the sand mandala will be scattered. Lama Gyatso will give a lecture at the museum on November 9; the Shi-tro mandala exhibit will close on November 10. A family mandala day, which will include a Tools for Peace mandala workshop will be held on September 2.

During Chagdud Rinpoche's visit, Lama Gyatso publicly announced his intention to create Zangdok Palri, Guru Rinpoche's Copper-Colored Mountain mandala. The project would include a multilevel temple with large statues, elaborate artwork, and a separate shrine room; these would be part of a healing and retreat center to be built near Los Angeles. There is such a mandala in Thimpu, Bhutan, which Chagdud Rinpoche visited with some of his students in 1991. Rinpoche has offered to lend his assistance with ceremonies, sculpting, and construction of the celestial mansion.

Lama Gyatso led the annual Orgyen Zambhala retreat over Memorial Day weekend; we are planning the annual T'hröma drubchöd for Thanksgiving weekend.

For information about our events and projects, contact T'hondup Ling or visit our website at [www.thondupling.org](http://www.thondupling.org).



*Completed Shi-tro mandala during consecration*

We had expected that Chagdud Rinpoche's visit to Rigdzin Gatsal would be a rest stop on his way to the Tara tsok at Cottage Grove, but after settling in and true to his limitless compassion, Rinpoche announced that he would answer questions from the sangha. With only an hour's notice, the entire sangha showed up!

It was amazing and inspiring to have Rinpoche back, to be able once again to follow him around the Guru Rinpoche statue. He was enthusiastic about plans to build a roof to protect the statue and gave practical advice on how to go about it. We are grateful to John Young for his repairs to Guru Rinpoche's face and especially for the creation of the individual figures of Eight Emanations of Padmasambhava that now grace the statue above Guru Rinpoche's head. The statue repairs were completed last winter when Lama Padma Dorje painted the eyes with the gaze of pure samaya.

On his return from Cottage Grove, Rinpoche stopped at Minjur Ling's new center at the home of

Cece and Fenyx Sloan in Medford. The sangha had prepared the spacious, red-walled shrine room in a resplendent manner: one hundred butter lamps blazed, dedicated to Rinpoche's long life, and vases filled with pink roses surrounded the four-foot-tall Red Tara statue.

Rinpoche graciously spent several hours with sangha members, answering questions and embracing us all with his compassion. To everyone's amazement, he asked if the already sizable shrine room could be expanded. We all appreciate and are inspired by the Sloans' warm-hearted hospitality.

That evening, Rinpoche spoke to a full house at the Unitarian Church in Ashland on healing the emotions. Following the teaching, Rinpoche spent the night at the beautiful home of Scott and Mimi Rogers. The next morning, when Rinpoche's car pulled away all too soon, we were left with an unforgettable experience, our hearts overflowing with the presence of our precious lama.

*This article is lovingly dedicated to the memory of the late Terry Pontaleo and to her family, who are part of the Williams community. Terry heroically dealt with cancer for five years and was able to fulfill her heartfelt aspiration to meet Chagdud Rinpoche before she died.*

## 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

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

### August

- 3 Full Moon: P'howa
- 12 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 14 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 18 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 25 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 27 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day

### September

- 2 Full Moon: P'howa
- 10 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 12 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 17 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 24 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 26 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day

### October

- 2 Full Moon: P'howa
- 9 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 11 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 16 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 23 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 25 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 31 Full Moon: P'howa

### November

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

### December

- 7 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 9 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 14\* New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 22 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 24 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 30\*\* Full Moon: P'howa

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## CONTACT POINTS

At H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche's request, several Padma Publishing texts have been reprinted using earlier translations. If you have the following editions of these practices, you may trade them in and receive the correct edition, free of charge.

*Pearls of Great Perfection*, 1997 ed.; *Red Vajrasattva Fulfillment Rituals*, 1998 ed.; *Shower of Blessings*, 1998 ed.

For specific information about trading in these texts, contact Tibetan Treasures at (877) 479-6129.