

# THE WIND HORSE



## NEWSLETTER OF CHAGDUD GONPA

SPRING 2002

Dear Sangha,

Tashi Deleg! I write you from Nepal where we are supervising the final installations and preparing to consecrate Katok Ritro, the new retreat center dedicated to the lineages held at Katok Gonpa, Tibet. The center fulfills one of my greatest aspirations in this lifetime, and whatever arises next in the uncertain play of phenomena I have the happiness of knowing that the sublime teachings of the Katok lineage will be practiced and preserved in this place.

The land was purchased in my name by my son, Tulku Jigme Tromge. Initially I was rather displeased, because land in Nepal is quite expensive, but Tulku Jigme assured me that he would buy it himself if I couldn't use it. As soon as I saw it, I saw the wisdom of his choice. The land has a splendid view across the valley of Pharping, where two caves sacred to Guru Padmasambhava and many monasteries are located. For retreat purposes it is quieter than Pharping and more isolated. The retreat buildings, which were designed long-distance from Brazil with the help of architect Beatrice da Silva, are attractive and have been very well-constructed by Mandala House, a firm directed by Sonam Raptan, a distant relative of mine.

Statues, including Chenrezig, Tara, and Guru Rinpoche, have been purchased for the center, as well as books, including a set of the Kangyur, the Rinchen Terdzöd, and the Nyingma Gyöbum.

The retreat master will be Getze Tulku, the "Getze Chhogtrul, Lord of Refuge" mentioned in the colophon of the Dragshul Wangpo protector practice many of you perform nightly. In bygone centuries, sixteen great emanations appeared to propagate the dharma in India and Tibet. Of these, he was the sixteenth. In this lifetime, he was recognized by His Holiness the Karmapa and by several of the highest lamas of Katok Gonpa,

Tibet. He has received superb training. When I consulted H.H. Moktza Rinpoche, Katok's head lama, he recommended Getze Tulku, and on my behalf, made the request that he head the retreat center. I could not have rejoiced more when Getze Tulku agreed and showed genuine enthusiasm for the project.

All of this said, I want to add that I personally like Getze Tulku. He is straightforward, energetic, trustworthy, and shares my commitment to training excellent practitioners in the unsurpassed transmissions of the Katok lineages. He has the skill to carry this undertaking forward in what may be difficult times in Nepal, given recent political events.

I feel that everyone who has contributed to this center so far will receive tremendous blessings and fine interdependence for their own practices, especially retreat practices. I hope, for the same reasons, that some of you will choose to support the Katok Ritro in the future.

At this time of extreme turbulence in world events, the need for us to find inner peace through spiritual development is clear. I urge each of you to join in group prayer and meditation, and to make time each day to practice individually. Retreat to the refuge of your own buddha nature and aspire that all beings find such refuge. Dedicate your virtue to them.

Especially, I urge you to remember that all of these beings, even the most heartless of terrorists, have at some point been your own mother. Refrain from rejoicing at the apparent victories of your own side, because if you do, you will share in the delusion and anger that leads to terrorism and war, and their karmic results. In 1959, while fleeing Tibet, I was hiding in a cave with my root guru Khenpo Dorje, and I happened to read

*(Continued on page 7)*



# The Accumulation of Merit and Wisdom at Khadro Ling

The construction of the magical city of Khadro Ling continues to rise up before our very eyes as Chagdud Rinpoche's vision dissolves our limited conception of what is possible.

The cupola of the temple was beautifully renovated for Chagdud Khadro to enter retreat in June. Reports are that her health is good and practice strong.

In July, Lama Drimed and other western Chagdud Gonpa lamas arrived for a month-long training with Rinpoche and were immediately engaged in assembling the multiplicity of substances necessary to consecrate statues. Over 300 statues, including the nine-foot Akshobhya were meticulously prepared to receive central channels, sacred relic pills, saffron-painted rolls of mantra, deity chakras, and articles of worldly wealth as well. Consecration of the statues was completed during the Essence of Siddhi drubchen, when the blindfolds covering the statues' eyes were removed, signifying the infusion of the deities' wisdom. Sangha artists continued work on lama dancing masks, finishing twelve wrathful masks and some of the eight emanations of Padmasambhava.

Following the drubchen, Rinpoche was in good health and energetic, often speeding his way up the stairs to visit Khadro in retreat, or out the door and down the elevator to check on work on the stupas, before his attendants could catch up with him. The gathering of his lamas and their time together seemed to have brought a new glow to their teacher.

Muscovites Slava Romanov and his wife Ira graced Khadro Ling for several months. Slava, "The Russian Translator" (as he was known), translated two-thirds of the spiritual biography of Sherab Gyaltsen, the first Chagdud Tulku, before departing for graduate studies at the University of Virginia.

After the Western lamas departed at the beginning of August, the Khadro Ling sangha moved into high gear for the next great phase of accomplishment—preparing the eight stupas on the hillside. Lama Damtsig arrived from Nepal to oversee the construction, including the ritual aspects. Lama Damtsig has studied with Chatral Rinpoche since the age of six, under whose tutelage he became a master of arts, drawing, and the construction of the stupas of the Buddha according to the tradition of the omniscient Jigme Lingpa. After completing a three-year retreat, he dedicated his life to building stupas and has built nearly 100, now constructing many around the base of the famous Swayambunath Stupa in Nepal.

In order to be able to fill all the stupas with mantra and tsa tsas in one month, new techniques had to be developed. Suzanne Meister converted scaffolding that Palden—our resident artist from Sikkim—uses in painting the temple, into a device that can feed mantra through the saffron and drying processes, and finally, be rolled by people at three different stations. Further methods were introduced to saffron the thousand plus kilos of

mantra at the printer as well. After completion, the printer asked if he could use the remaining saffron water to pour over his presses, to infuse them with its blessings!

As Rinpoche departed for the weekend of 100,000 Red Tara Tsok offerings in Floranopolis, Lama Damtsig began filling the ascension chambers of the stupas with layers of tsa tsas, packed in dry sand. The twelve thousand clay tsa tsas that had been made and filled with Shakyamuni's mantra and adorned with five-colored umbrellas were not sufficient. A quicker method

was devised to turn out another eight thousand in a week, using rubber molds and plaster. Lama Damtsig commented that even though the use of computers and machinery creates a difference in construction methods from Nepal to Brazil, the merit generated is the same.

Chagdud Rinpoche had consecrated seven of the stupas by September 5 when Tulku Sang-ngag arrived to consecrate the eighth; this last one commemorates the Buddha's enlightenment according to the ritual of the *Two Stainless Ones*. For this, two hundred tsa tsas were specially made by Chagdud Rinpoche and filled

with Tsuktor and Odzer Drimed mantras. The entire Khadro Ling sangha participated in the final three days of the six days of consecration ceremonies. On the morning of the second day, Rinpoche interrupted the ceremony to announce news of the terrorist attacks in the United States. The contrast between the inconceivable blessings of constructing and consecrating the stupas, and the graphic suffering that reverberated throughout the world following the terrorist attacks, gave us even greater focus. The news strengthened our resolve to dedicate the profound stores of merit and wisdom embodied in the stupas to relieve the suffering of beings.

At almost the same time, Khadro Ling hosted a three-day conference—organized by Yvonne Viera—on death and dying for health professionals in the hospice field. Most of the several hundred people in attendance received the Amitabha empowerment and took bodhisattva vows.

Construction has begun on a hospice facility with several units and a common area for conferences, with completion expected in January 2002. Under construction as well are two more houses for sangha members and a third prayer-wheel house.

Palden, our skilled visiting artist, has completed paintings depicting Guru Rinpoche and his twenty-five disciples, and Hayagriva, covering almost half of the southern wall of the temple. His brushes are now revealing Tröma and her mandala, and the protector Rahula.

The number of visitors to Khadro Ling continues to grow, sometimes five hundred a week. Perhaps a measure of their faith was demonstrated in the five hundred butter lamps they offered this month. May the merit and wisdom of all beings increase!

By Susanne Fairclough



*Palden painting masks at Khadro Ling*

# Return to Iron Knot Ranch

We are the lama's children who work with concrete and steel—  
Everything is possible and nothing is real.

*Written in concrete during the early years at Rigdzin Ling*

The second pilgrimage to Iron Knot Ranch by Californians was a working experience that will not easily be forgotten. For eight days we collectively offered our bodies, speech, and minds toward the building of a lha khang on the site consecrated by Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche this past spring. At that time Rinpoche hinted that he would return to consecrate the structure when it is erected. So it was with very deliberate intention that we arrived at the ranch, by the truckload, to set some auspicious wheels of interdependence in motion.

Once again, Lama Shenpen and the Iron Knot sangha had miraculously prepared a feast of Portland cement, rebar, aggregate, and water—precious water. By the end of the week we had somehow managed to complete the concrete foundation and slab of the temple.

More than a few people noticed the tangible spirit of harmony amidst the flurry of constant, at times chaotic, activity. One ancient cement mixer nicknamed “the dinosaur,” always kept us on our toes. During the frequent breakdowns, when the momentum of pouring concrete was interrupted, we had to shift gears to accommodate the wet cement. We called this process “the animal getting out of its cage,” as no one individual could



*Bruce Von Alten and Tony Styskal at Iron Knot*

control what was going to happen next. One such occasion was when the floor of the gonla's room collapsed into the storage space below. We had to scramble with poles and braces to keep the rest of the forms in place, while trying to shore up the hole in the floor. At the same time we had to find safe places to put the new concrete, which had already been mixed. These kinds of unpredictable situations with their particular challenges and

resolutions have made us aware of the fact that we are continually working under the vast umbrella of Chagdud Rinpoche's blessings. The experience of interacting with the sangha at Iron Knot Ranch has truly been a wonderful and unique form of practice.

Rinpoche and Tony Styskal will draw this winter the final plans for the walls, windows, shrine, and roof of the structure in Brazil. We are already planning to return to the ranch in the spring of 2002 to complete the next phase of the temple, another magical manifestation of Chagdud

Rinpoche's activity that will benefit beings by providing a sacred space where we all can achieve the timeless state of buddhahood.

*By Michael McLaughlin*

*Note:* To view John Swearingen's photos of these most recent Iron Knot Ranch developments, log on at <http://www.skillful-means.com/ironknot/ironknot.html>

## The Akshobhya Statue

As it was my first visit to Khadro Ling I was completely awed by what has happened there, although I should not have been surprised, knowing the way that Chagdud Rinpoche is able to manifest his ideas. I can only liken the Khadro Ling phenomena to my idea of a pure land.

I had traveled to Khadro Ling to help Rinpoche construct a large Akshobhya statue: I had worked with Chagdud Rinpoche on other projects; this statue would definitely be the most elaborate. The Akshobhya statue—a seated figure atop a large throne with a nimbus—stands approximately thirty feet high, with the main figure being nine feet high. One of the most unusual features of this particular statue is the “Six Ornament” halo. The halo is composed of six different mythical figures: an elephant, a magical antelope, a dwarf, a water cannibal, a naga, and a garuda. The six figures represent the six perfections of enlightened mind. The halo rises approximately fifteen feet high and is twelve feet across. It is placed behind the main figure and rests on the throne.

We agreed that the best way to sculpt the halo would be from clay and then make the silicone molds from these. The fi-

nal product would then be cast in cement and placed on the throne behind the statue. One of the questions we had as we headed into the project was where we could possibly sculpt such a large clay halo. This dilemma was solved when Chagdud Khadro kindly offered us the use of her living room. As soon as the room was cleared we started to work. In the course of the project we used approximately 1400 kilos of clay and 800 kilos of silicone. It proved to be a time-consuming and expensive process, but it enabled us to get very good detail and now have the molds for creating more halos for future statues.

Rinpoche and the crew worked seven days a week, sometimes late into the evening, sculpting clay and cement. Many people helped when they could, coming on the weekends or spending weeks at a time. It took the team of artists approximately three months just to complete the halo.

When the Chagdud Gonpa lamas arrived for their month-long training, it felt like a family reunion. I look forward to returning to Brazil soon to help Rinpoche with his upcoming projects.

*By Glenn Sandvoss*



# Establishing the Lama Dances in the West

The first time I watched the lama dances, something inside of me shifted, as the purity of their form and sounds undermined the solidity of my ordinary perception, and I remember thinking to myself, "If only I could do that." I assumed that I would never be able to. What I didn't know was that within two years Chagdud Rinpoche would invite Lama Sonam to Rigdzin Ling to teach us ritual dance and that I would be one of several sangha members who would learn and hold the lineage.

That was ten years ago, and looking back, it is difficult to believe what was accomplished that spring of 1992. It was soon after H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's passing into nirvana. A very elaborate drubchen was being planned that would include the traditional tenth-day lama dances that are performed in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries throughout Tibet, Nepal, and India. After a long day of gonpa work, until it was too dark to see, about ten of us would spend our evenings in the parking lot by Tibetan Treasures learning and practicing the dances to the accompaniment of Lama Sonam's cymbals. Meanwhile, all day and late into the night, lamas, artists, and seamstresses worked to prepare the elaborate costumes and masks that would be worn by the dancers. Our learning the dances was just one small part of the vast display of merit being accumulated during the drubchen preparations of that spring.

When Lama Sonam taught us the dances, he did not teach on the detailed meaning of each step or any specific visualization for us to hold while we danced. Instead, he repeatedly stressed the importance of the dancer establishing and holding very pure motivation while engaging in the practice of ritual dance.

The reason motivation is so important is that lama dancing is not an ordinary form of entertainment. It is a spiritual practice that the dancer undertakes as meditation, relying on the blessings of the lineage in order to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and find lasting happiness. All the gestures and music of these dances are treasures of Guru Rinpoche that have been revealed by tertons for this purpose. Each element of the costumes worn—from the colors and patterns of the silk robes, to the number of beads of the bone ornaments and the particular implement carried by the dancer—has a symbolic meaning. When combined, the dance steps, costumes, music, and songs are said to have the power to free the mindstreams of anyone who sees and hears them. If one views these dances with great faith in Guru Rinpoche and the lineage lamas, then obstacles to one's spiritual path will dissolve naturally and the blessings of Guru Rinpoche will descend like rain.

For the dancer the point is not whether one's outward appearance is flashy or refined. A dancer may have all the correct moves, but if her mind is engaged in such ordinary thoughts as, "How do I look? Aren't I good?" and so on, then the impact for those watching the dance is not as powerful; in fact, it can actually turn someone away from the dharma rather than toward it. But if the motivation of the dancer is bodhicitta—the heartfelt wish that all beings be freed from suffering—then their ability

to benefit those who watch the dance will be far greater. As with any of the spiritual practices we undertake, it is really our motivation that determines the extent to which we will benefit others.

One of the dancers tells a story about her experience of this. She used to worry a lot about how she looked before she would dance the Jinbeb, trying to get her makeup and hair just right, and then worrying constantly about how her steps looked as she was dancing. But one drubchen her dog, to whom she was very close, got quite ill. When she was asked to dance that night, she didn't feel her usual attachment to dancing but only agreed to because no one else could. She dressed hastily, forgetting the makeup. When she danced, all she could think about was her dog. When the dance was over, Lama Sonam, who is not known for praising dancers, came up to her and told her that her dancing had been beautiful. And at that point she got it—she understood for the first time how important selfless motivation is in the dance.



*Tulku Apé dancing Jinbeb*

Although we usually only dance within the context of a formal practice such as the drubchen, on a few occasions we have demonstrated the dances in public. Once we danced as part of a world dance presentation in Oregon. There were all types of dances and people there, but I remember one woman in particular. She was a very serious jazz dancer who came up to us at the end and said, "There is something very different about what you are doing when you dance compared to what we are doing." She really wanted to figure it out because it had affected her in some way.

In Brazil, the national T.V. stations often ask to film the dances at Khadro Ling. Although it lends an almost theatrical element to the dance when you have to dodge reporters and watch for camera lenses, I believe there is some benefit to people seeing the images of the dancers flash across the screen during the evening news; it provides some connection. When the dances are performed in public situations, the impact may not be as strong, but they still have the power to affect people by turning their minds toward the dharma, touching people who would not otherwise connect with it.



In Tibet, even if lay people were unable to participate in Vajrayana practices, they would attend the day-long dance ceremonies. They believed in the power of the dances to remove obstacles and bestow blessings upon those witnessing them.

As in other aspects of spiritual practice, the blessings of the dance can manifest in surprising and often humorous ways. Most of the experienced dancers have horror stories of hats or masks falling off, robes and shoes coming undone, or hearing the audience laughing at them. Yet for those of us that this has happened to—at least for those who dared to dance again—the experience is an absolute blessing. You learn that whatever else happens, if you can keep your motivation pure and selfless, the impact of your dance can benefit beings. Rather than there being a sense of “me” or “my” when we dance, we ride the blessings of the lineage, freed of any sense of self. If we can do this much, these blessings are quite palpable.

One drubchen, which was attended by Namkha Drimed Rinpoche, I was dancing the Jinbeb with four other dancers in front of the mandala in the shrine room. This is a dance that I have done innumerable times, but as we finished the main steps and began the exit, I looked out at Namkha Rinpoche and my mind went totally blank. I stopped dancing—which we tell dancers never to do. I looked around at the other dancers; I could not think, but rather than feeling embarrassed, I felt a great wash of blessings in having had my concepts temporarily dissolve.

A few years ago, when I watched the video of us dancing that first year, I was surprised at how unpolished and awkward our movements looked, because that hadn't been my experience at the time. The costumes and masks were so splendid that outwardly there was a feeling of grandeur beyond ordinary reality. Inwardly, there were the blessings of the lama, who perceived our unrefined gestures so purely that he was able to convince us we could dance. I remember how as we dressed for the Black Hat dance that first time, Rinpoche came into the dressing room to tie on our hats: it was as if he were empowering us to do the dance as he did so.

Whenever I find myself criticizing a dancer's style or the way a costume looks, or trying to figure out who it is behind a mask, it reminds me that I have missed the point of the Vajrayana—that all of this is pure from the beginning—the display of Guru Rinpoche's pure land.

It isn't necessary to learn these ritual dances in order to practice the Vajrayana fully. They require a considerable amount of both effort and time, but the dances can enhance whatever other practice one does and are a powerful method for accumulating both merit and wisdom.

Through Chagdud Rinpoche's vision, ritual dances that originated in the high plateaus of Asia have now been established in the mountains of western North America and the hills of southern Brazil. This tradition has now become a part of Chagdud Gonpa drubchens and includes dances from the lineages of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, Padgyal Lingpa, and H.E. Namkha Drimed Rinpoche. A number of purely motivated and gifted dancers on both continents have taken on these lineages and are holding them. It now appears that the lineage of the dance will be carried well into the future.

*By Lama Trinley*

## Taksham

It is not until toward the end of a long day—  
our legs and backs stiff from sitting—  
that we tie on the boots and underskirts,  
the rippling silk robes, and finally, the large  
papier-maché masks.

From behind the mask  
each eye points in a different direction,  
disorienting us as dancers,  
shifting our ordinary perception.

We wait, silent in the stairwell,  
as burning gugul floats up around us.  
The Power of Truth is chanted and then echoes  
as a cacophony of cymbals, drums, and horns.

When we enter, it is as though we have stepped  
into Guru Rinpoche's mindstream,  
circling the mandala, dizzy and without any reference point,  
as the gestures of the dance begin to unfold.

The steps seem to go on and on,  
requiring more effort than I ever expected,  
taking more breath than I can hold.  
It is as though time has stood still.

As I twirl I forget the steps,  
and rest in a space between thoughts  
while the room spins ever faster,  
until finally, it is time to leave.

Afterward we sit exhausted,  
unable to move in the wake of the blessings.  
Perhaps it's true, maybe we are getting old for this,  
but until samsara is emptied, we need to dance.

Meanwhile, we return to our lives changed.  
It is not that we teach the dance  
but that the dance teaches us, dissolving any  
trace of obstacles  
as we aspire to enlightenment.



*Pema Tenzin  
dancing the  
Wisdom Invitation*

# The Importance of Tradition

*H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche gave the following teaching during the first drubchen in Brazil.*

My students often ask to record me chanting Vajrakilaya, as well as the other practices we do. This is certainly not necessary for the continuity of the Nyingma lineage—particularly this lineage of Vajrakilaya—because there are many great lamas and lineage masters, some His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche's students, who maintain this lineage. We have created these archives for the same reason that a family collects pictures of older generations—so that in the future family members can see what they looked like. The way I chant may not be so important to the rest of the world, but these tapes might help you, as my dharma family, to remember my style of doing things and maintain this tradition into the future.

I first learned this style of chanting Vajrakilaya from His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche in the 1960's. I also studied in Kalimpong with one of his best students, at which time Dudjom Rinpoche listened and approved of our way of chanting. Some time later, at His Holiness' suggestion, I studied with Mindroling Trichen, a great siddha and the throne holder of Mindroling Monastery at Dehra Dun.

Seven years later, I met with His Holiness and many of the vajra brothers with whom I had first learned the chanting. When we chanted together, I noticed there were subtle variations in our tunes, even though we had studied with the same teachers. Perhaps in having being away from them for so long I had forgotten or changed something. I have noticed that over time slight variations will often arise in tunes.

Later someone asked His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche's oldest son Dungsey Trinley Norbu Rinpoche, a great scholar and practitioner, about these variations, singing him two tunes and asking which one was correct. His reply was that you couldn't expect chanters with different voices to sound exactly alike. There are differences that occur according to the qualities of individual voices. So in the case of these subtle variations it is not as if you can say one is right and the other is wrong.

What is important is not to lose the essence and meaning of the practices you do by worrying about specific details, such as exactly which way the tormas should be made or exactly how the song should be sung. If in the future small changes occur in these tunes and not everyone chants exactly the same way as I do, it is not such a big deal. The reason we record these songs now is so that in the future it will be easier for you remember them.

When asked what kind of torma should be made for the Longchen Nyingtik practice, the great tertön and lineage holder Jigme Lingpa said, "Make something that looks very nice." When asked what kind of tunes should be sung he said, "Sing something that has the blessings of tradition, and whatever tradition you use, sing it well."

There are many stories about the great blessings that can arise from following tradition. In Eastern Tibet there was a monastery that had performed a drubchen for many generations, and although the yogis there were very good practitioners with

strong faith and meditation, they were not scholars. When the time came to construct the sand mandala, the text said to put a vajra fence around the outer edge of the mandala. But the Tibetan word for vajra fence, *dola*, also means rock fence, so they established a tradition of putting rocks on the edge of the mandala. For many years the mandala was constructed in this way.

One day a visiting scholar pointed out their mistake—that it shouldn't be a rock fence but a vajra fence. So they drew vajras and took the rocks away, making the mandala in the "correct" way. That night they set all the tormas on the shrine, thinking to start puja the next day, but in the morning not one torma was left—the mice had taken them all. Thinking that this was not such a good sign, they remade the tormas, but in the night they disappeared again.

At that point they went to a high lama with realization and told him about this unfortunate turn of events, asking whether this obstacle was a bad sign. The lama looked into the situation with wisdom and said, "Was there some tradition that you changed?" Forgetting about the rocks, they replied that nothing had been changed, but the lama insisted that something had been done differently. So they thought about it and realized "Oh yes, we changed the mandala, drawing vajras in the traditional way and taking the rocks out." Then the lama replied, "What you have done for many years, using the rocks in your practice and visualization, has become your tradition. It is not wise to change this now. Set up the rock fence the way it was before." So they returned the rocks to the mandala and set up the shrine, and that night the mice didn't eat the tormas.

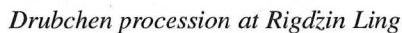
Likewise, we have done things in a certain way with great faith, and so there are great blessings in relying on and maintaining this tradition. It is wonderful to do so. This is our first drubchen in Brazil. I have done almost twenty in the United States, and although they may not have been perfect and we may have made some mistakes, a tradition has been established. We have our own rock fence and there is blessing in this.

There is another story I often tell about a Vajrakilaya practitioner named Dapsharwa, a yogi who lived in the woods by himself. One day the accomplished practitioner and scholar Sakya Pandita, who was known to speak directly with the deity Manjushri, was walking along the road and heard the Vajrakilaya mantra coming from the water of a nearby creek. The water was filled with the sound of the mantra; he thought to himself, "There must be a Vajrakilaya practitioner nearby." But when he asked the local residents if an accomplished practitioner lived nearby, their reply was that no such person lived there. So he asked them if anyone lived near the creek, and they said that there was an old man living up the creek in a cave who mumbled morning to night, but that he was not a lama. At that point Sakya Pandita realized that the villagers did not know what a great practitioner the yogi was.

Sakya Pandita decided to go and visit him. Usually a lama of Sakya Pandita's stature would have an entourage, and all of the horses would have bells on them so that everyone would

When the scholar returned to his quarters he spoke to Manjushri saying, “Where have you been? Why didn’t you help me today?” And Manjushri replied, “Your visualization is a little wrong. You are placing me above your opponent’s head and besides that you take a proud position by sitting with your back to the objects of refuge on the shrine. Tomorrow change places with Chogyi Gawa and visualize me over your own head. Then you will not lose.”

with this kind of faith that we maintain our traditions, and I believe there is some benefit in it.



Finally, I want to offer you the words of another lama, a friend of mine whose life and death were chaotic, but whose inner realization remained unwavering. He said, “Whether you practice dharma or you don’t practice dharma, difficulties will arise. But only by practicing dharma will you find lasting happiness.” Please practice deeply, for your own sake and for that of all beings.

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# Planting Seeds of Dharma in the Brazilian North

## *An Interview with Ani Zamba*

*Ani Zamba is a fully ordained nun within the Chinese tradition of Buddhism. She has studied and practiced Tibetan Buddhism under Chagdud Rinpoche and other lamas, and traveled and lived in Asia for over twenty-five years. Since the age of thirteen she has been in and out of hospitals with a debilitating and painful spinal condition, which she credits for having made her what she is. Until recently Ani Zamba led a practice group in Hong Kong. She has now focused her dharma activities in northern Brazil. She spoke with Lama Trinley last July at Khadro Ling.*

**LT:** After having lived in Asia for so many years, what was it that brought you to Brazil?

**AZ:** I first considered going to Brazil to start a project for street children in São Paulo. Chagdud Rinpoche seemed enthusiastic about the idea when I mentioned it to him, but then he told me to drop everything and go into an extended retreat. So I found a sponsor, a suitable house, and settled into retreat on an outlying island in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, my health began to deteriorate, and when the doctor suggested surgery, I called Rinpoche in Brazil and asked him how to proceed. At the time his health was fragile and I wanted to be with him, but as I was in retreat I thought I'd better not push that. Then he unexpectedly said, "Come to Brazil for two months."

My body was weak, but Rinpoche helped me get back on my feet again. Then I heard that Rinpoche wanted to visit the north of Brazil, and I felt a strong connection with one of the places he had planned to go. Whenever I asked Brazilians from the north where the most beautiful place in Brazil was, they would always say Chapada Diamantina: Diamond Highlands. They would talk of the hills, trails you can follow for days, wild orchids, dramatic waterfalls, caverns, and varied landscapes. I felt that I needed to go there. So I offered to visit a few places in the north and map out a route for Rinpoche.

After doing a mo, the first place he sent me was Maceio where two of his students lived, and within two weeks we were looking for a dharma center there. It was a difficult search until Marcus, one of the sangha members, mentioned an old house that he knew about. When I saw the old house in terrible condition, I immediately said, "Just wait until Rinpoche sees this! If we knock down that wall we will have a great shrine room." The sangha was enthusiastic about the project, although I don't think they could quite see my vision of the place. At that point I realized that Maceio would be my base in the north of Brazil.

Next I briefly visited Chapada and some of the towns within the national park. Wherever I went, there seemed to be someone who knew English, so I would give a teaching, which allowed me to connect with people there. Then I arrived in Mucage, where no one seemed to know English. We used a computer to translate until they found Eduardo, an agronomist who could speak some English and who would later become my main connection there.

I continued on to Salvador to join Rinpoche, and then Maceio, where almost 400 people turned up for his talk. When I took him to see the old house he immediately said, "Knock down those walls and make a large space for the shrine room." Marcus just smiled.

The trip to Chapada was difficult for Rinpoche. We rented a van and drove for ten hours over treacherous roads. But as we traveled from town to town, people offered him land and asked him to build in their locality. Then Rinpoche gave an informal talk in Mucage that several doctors and teachers, the mayor, and the local Catholic priest attended. Soon after Rinpoche had returned to Khadro Ling, Eduardo rang me in Maceio and said the town had agreed that Rinpoche could have any land he wanted as long as it was city-owned and not national park. So off I went into the Mucage hills on horseback and found a beautiful spot. But when we realized how difficult and expensive it was going to be to get water or put in a road, we decided on land that was more practical. That was my first trip north.

**LT:** Did you return to Hong Kong at that point?

**AZ:** My visa was up, and Rinpoche had decided that I should give up Hong Kong and be his representative for the north and northeast of Brazil. The move to Brazil was difficult because I had to get a religious visa and there was a massive amount of paperwork involved. But finally, six months later, I had a visa and was packed to go. When Rinpoche said, "Bring everything," I don't think he realized how much I had amassed in Asia. When I arrived in Brazil on December 31, 2000 with about 200 kilos of luggage, I was so ill that I couldn't even prostrate to Rinpoche. But I pulled my health together again, and my life has been absolutely nonstop ever since.

I went up to Maceio where the shrine room had been finished. I taught there, and more and more people became interested in the dharma. I also went to Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia, where we have since rented an apartment as a dharma center. Next I traveled to Brasilia where the Central Bank of Brasil invited me to teach and give a workshop for their staff. Their employees have a high incidence of depression, and alcohol and drug abuse, and the Bank thought that maybe meditation could help them. They have since formed a meditation group. Our Brasilia sangha continues to grow as I spend more time teaching there. I have also been requested to run future workshops for caregivers, prison workers, and prisoners.

In the far north I visited Fortealeza where one of our sangha members, Paola, is a doctor who initiated a program called the Wheel of Life. It started as a project for children with cancer, and introduces the kids to simple dharma stories and teachings during their hospital visits for chemotherapy. Some of the kids are very poor; they must undergo a long journey into town, wait many hours to endure an hour of treatment, and then travel home again—having had no food the entire time. So I collected donations from sangha members and have started a soup kitchen in

the hospital to provide meals for them. Rinpoche suggested that I mention it in the *Wind Horse* and ask for donations to help keep the program in operation. These would be much appreciated. We are also looking for advice and suggestions regarding starting a program to sponsor the medical expenses of patients in need of bone marrow transplants. Any help with this would be appreciated as well.

These kids are beautiful. I sat there with a few of them while they were having chemotherapy. Paola, their doctor, brings light into their lives and makes them laugh. In a TV interview about the project, the interviewer asked one of the children, "How does it feel to be sick?" And the child replied, "I'm not sick; my body is sick." Recognizing that is a big step forward. We really need to start with the children.

After Forteleza I visited Terresino, farther north, near the Amazon. People in the south warned me, "It's at the end of the earth. You don't want to go there. The heat is terrible; there are insects that urinate on you, and the urine leaves scars." But, as I am rarely swayed by people's opinions, I went anyway, and it was wonderful. The people were very receptive to the dharma, and I taught almost every day. One man had been to Khadro Ling and requested that a teacher visit, but no one else had received teachings. They did have Rinpoche's book, *Gates to Buddhist Practice*, and would get together as a study group every week. Many people there received refuge vows and seem inspired to practice.

LT: In the stories you tell about your life it seems that you never get discouraged.

AZ: I don't look at the negative side of things. I see challenges, but not obstacles. I think of challenges as a great opportunity and feel that if something is right, then somehow, with Rinpoche's blessings, it will manifest.

I always look at the potential of something. I'm not easily daunted by logistics. I never have money, so I just say, "If it works, it works; if it doesn't, it doesn't." I think that if your intention is pure then it really doesn't matter whether a project works or not. You just do your best. I try to put positive energy out and get people involved just to see what we can do. Because the motivation and activity of trying to benefit others is wonderful even if it doesn't go any further than that.

LT: Would you say something about how you have worked with suffering and pain in your life?

AZ: I remember lying in the hospital, unable to move. I couldn't sit up or turn a page, so I had to let go of everything in regard to formal practice. When I asked myself, "What is the most important thing at this moment?" I had to say "Refuge," because it is the essence of all practice. It helps you to work with anything that arises. My doctors had no idea what my practice involved, but they often said to me, "If you didn't have the faith you have, you would have been dead long ago." And it's true.

First of all, there is an element of trust. Because the more you practice, the more you come to appreciate impermanence. You know that however bad the condition seems, it is changing moment by moment, in the same way that so-called good experiences are changing. You can't hold on to anything. You also begin to appreciate that whenever you start to possess the suffering, it gets worse. But if you can just see it as a changing condition—not "my" pain, then it helps a lot.

The teachings on bodhicitta are also very helpful. When you can say, "Okay, if I have to go through this then let me take on the suffering of others as well, so they don't have to experience it," it gives you strength. You don't possess your suffering, but rather make use of whatever it is you are going through.

I also think that simple *shamata*, just watching your breath, helps you relax your muscles and mind when there is intense pain. Just becoming aware of your breath as it enters and leaves is a profound way of working with pain. One of my students from Hong Kong is doing a Ph.D. on how mindfulness can help with chronic pain. She did many case studies involving patients with cancer and other painful conditions, and observed how valuable this simple meditation can be in making the pain less solid, making it workable so that you can somehow get beyond it. You don't have to invest so much in it. You have the space to see it for what it is. Even when you can't move or do anything else, while you

are still alive, you do have your breath. You have refuge and that encompasses all the teachings. Nothing is left out.

I've asked Rinpoche for many teachings over the years, and he has always told me to just keep doing guru yoga. It is the essence of the path. With my health I have to keep my practice as simple as possible. One week I can be walking, and the next I can hardly move, so I have to keep bringing it down to the essence all the time. The only thing I can depend on is my refuge, because it gives me the confidence to work with whatever arises.

I could complain about how ill I am, but that's not how I look at my situation. I get up every morning and say "Thank you," because even though I may feel bad, I could feel a lot worse. What I make of each day that I have been given depends upon me. I can walk around saying, "Oh poor me," and be a victim to everything, or I can say, "Thank you, this made me what I am." It allows me insight into suffering, offering me an opportunity to see the nature of suffering, and working with it to make it as positive as possible—to somehow be of benefit to others.

Seldom in the past twenty-five years has Chagdud Rinpoche or any of my other teachers seen me well. There always seems to be some problem with my health. But as Rinpoche keeps reminding me, this is a wonderful opportunity to work through this karma now. Nothing like this just happens. My physical condition has manifested as a result of previous causes.

Rinpoche tells a story of a nun he knew who had done many millions of mantra and was a very respected practitioner. About



Ani Zamba

(Continued on page 11)

# Sangha News

## Dechhen Ling

A cozy group of practitioners visited the home of Dick and Amanda Wilcox from October 26 through 29 for a splendid four-day teaching and practice retreat with Lama Zangpo. He addressed the topic of Guru Yoga, using the text *Shower of Blessings* by Mipham Rinpoche as a context for practice and teachings. Daily practice sessions were divided up between ngondro practice, *Shower of Blessings* puja and tsok, and Lama Zangpo's teachings in the evenings. His approach proved to be inspiring and applicable for everyone in the group, from beginning students to the more experienced practitioners.

We were also honored to have Lama Gyaltzen, his wife Lama Tsering, and son Pema; Lama Jigme Lodo and his wife Kidzom; Jangchub Palmo, her husband Ngawang, and son Gyurmed and family attending the tsok sessions. Everyone agreed that the retreat should have been a full seven days.

On Monday evening, Lama Jigme offered his new Eugene store, Potala Gates, as a location for a public talk by Lama Zangpo. Thank you Lama Zangpo. We all rejoice in our connection and this opportunity for the dharma increase. May we nurture that connection by deepening our practice. We also thank Lama Jigme for his kindness in making his store available, and Dick and Amanda Wilcox for their efforts to ensure that we were able to hold our retreat in an inspiring atmosphere where we were comfortably housed and generously fed.

Our traditional Chenrezig potluck and three-day Tara Tsok were held in late November. It was well-attended by Lama Gyaltzen, Lama Sonam, Lama Inge Zangmo, Jangchub Palmo, Gatsal Lama, and many old and new dharma friends.

## T'hondup Ling

As part of the Tools for Peace program, T'hondup Ling sponsored three sand mandalas in Los Angeles this summer. At the invitation of Lama Gyatso, we were pleased to welcome Lama Thomge, Lama Rapjoer, and Lama Thrinley from Thubten Choeling, Trulshik Rinpoche's monastery in Nepal. They arrived in July, and not only was it their first visit to America, but their first time on an airplane as well!

The first sand mandala was offered at the Glendale Galleria. We were given a space for two weeks and transformed it into an ongoing mandala workshop for anyone who chose to step inside. As the three lamas made a traditional Shi-tro sand mandala, the public was invited to create a community sand mandala next to

the traditional Tibetan sand mandala. At the end of two weeks, paper mandalas made by the public lined the walls, and both sand mandalas were swept up in a dissolution ceremony and then carried to the Los Angeles River.

We are very grateful to Rigdzin Ling for the generous ongoing support they have offered toward the Mandala Project. We also extend our deep thanks to the Rigdzin Ling staff who tirelessly helped at the Galleria.

Next the lamas headed for Camp Scudder, a juvenile detention facility near Los Angeles. An intensive Tools for Peace workshop was held with the incarcerated youth as the lamas created another perfect sand mandala. The lamas' personal accounts of overcoming difficult circumstances in their own lives helped inspire the youth to look within and create their own personal paper mandalas. The inmates then worked in groups to reach consensus on their community symbols, which were then integrated into their community sand mandala. They were particularly excited to be able to create their own mandala out of sand, as many of them are skilled artists. At the end of the program it was heartbreaking to leave the youth to their ordinary lives in detention, as many of them bloomed quickly when offered kindness and support.

The final public sand mandala was created at the San Diego Museum of Art, where the lamas worked next to the three-dimensional Shi-tro Mandala on display in the Asian Galleries. Following the sand mandala's dissolution, the sand was carried to the beach and offered into the Pacific Ocean. The lamas followed Lama Gyatso into the water up to their waists.

We had the honor of hosting Dzatrul Rinpoche for one day in September, when he offered the sangha a longevity empowerment. Later that month Lama Gyatso left for pilgrimage in Asia. Several sangha members joined him for the last two weeks, and all met Chagdud Rinpoche in Kathmandu. Lama Gyatso returned in time to teach at the San Diego Museum of Art, to 300 people, many of them museum docents. For many it was their first Buddhist teaching.

Another Tools for Peace program was held at the UCLA Armand Hammer Museum in Los Angeles in October and November. In this pilot workshop, contemporary artists, Christie Fields and Mark Bradford, worked with youth over four weekends to create a three-dimensional peace mandala using modern materials and methods. We hope to expand this kind of workshop, as it was very well received by the museum and participants. We plan to publish teaching materials based on the last two years of testing.

T'hondup Ling's annual Tröma drubchod was held during the week following Thanksgiving and was led by the most Venerable Gelong Kalsang Rinpoche, the vajra master from H.H. Chatral Rinpoche's monastery.



*Lama Thomge beginning dissolution of Camp Scudder community sand mandala*



## Padma Ling

In 1984 H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche was invited to give a talk in Spokane. His teaching was very well received, and as a result, a practice group was formed that incorporated under the name, Padma Amrita. Rinpoche then connected Lama Tharchin with this new sangha, and they practiced under his direction for the next two years.

Then Lama Tharchin decided to move from Spokane to establish Padma Osal Ling in Corralitos, California, just south of Santa Cruz. A number of Spokane practitioners approached Chagdud Rinpoche in Cottage Grove and asked how they should proceed. At that time, I had recently completed a three-year retreat, so in one fell swoop Rinpoche ordained me as a lama and sent me to Spokane to guide the sangha there.

We found a very nice house on Sixth Avenue and established a practice schedule with two daily sessions, five tsok offerings a month, and Thursday evening teachings. That was in 1987, and after about three years the house on Sixth Avenue began to seem too small for us. Around that time our landlords offered us a bigger house exactly one block up the hill at 1014 West Seventh Avenue. So we moved and shortly thereafter became an official Chagdud Gonpa center with our new name, Padma Ling.

Over the years we have slowly been saving up a little money and now have enough to make a down payment on some property. Although our situation here has been wonderful and very stable, this stability is fleeting as we do not own the house, nor do we have a lease. Our landlords have plans to build condominiums on the property when their mother dies. So we are now looking for suitable property for our center. This may take some time because there needs to be the right interdependence to find a place where the dharma can flourish. We are being very careful to ensure that we make the right decision and secure a place that will enhance rather than hinder our ability to practice.

For this reason part of our annual winter retreat this year will be devoted to the practice of *Riwo Sang Cho*, the secret mountainside fire puja by Lhatsun Namkha Jigme. As usual this retreat will be held December 26 to 30. For these five days we will practice Lama Mipham's *Shower of Blessings* and the *Riwo Sang Cho*. Please keep us in your prayers, so that we may have success in finding a suitable new home where the Vajrayana tradition may continue for future generations.

By Lama Inge Zangmo

## Vajra North

Vajra North sangha has been blessed with enlightened energy in the past months, in the form of our Chagdud Gonpa lamas. Lama Padma visited in February to continue his teaching on bodhicitta and expand this into bodhisattva training by introducing Atisha's Mind Training and the first two chapters of the *Bodhicharyavatara*. Approximately eighteen full-time participants attended the weekend retreat. We appreciated Lama Padma's caring thoroughness in offering us these teachings.

In April, Roger, Dan, Al, and Garth traveled to Cottage Grove to be with Chagdud Rinpoche and participate in the Red Tara tsok.

In May, we were honored to have Tulku Jigme Rinpoche come to Whitehorse. With wonderful, flowing energy, he gave the sangha ngondro teachings, led ngondro practice, and then offered ten Chagdud Gonpa lineage empowerments—all in just four days. This was a new experience for some of us. We hope to welcome him back soon to the land of endless summer light!

In August, Lama Zangpo returned to lead a six-day *Shower of Blessings* retreat in a beautiful Yukon wilderness setting, which included a lake, cabin, and spacious open sky. At his encouragement, we stepped out of our tradition of holding weekend-long retreats in town, and discovered the benefit and value of a longer practice-oriented retreat in a more remote setting. We were fortunate to be able to use properties of two of our members, Roger Horner and Cheryl Buchan. Cheryl did much to make the retreat possible, donating her cabin and cooking incredible meals for the retreatants.

Many blessings were experienced during this time. They included appearances by a mysterious nocturnal visitor as well as a beautiful red fox. Some of us later remarked on how the retreat seemed to bring the sangha closer together. We thank Lama Zangpo for his generosity and for leading us in this direction.

A special thank-you to Roger Horner, whose skillfulness, generosity, dedication, and friendship to others have kept our sangha going throughout the ebb and flow of phenomena over the years. As host, president, and program coordinator, he continues to skillfully bring the precious teachings to the north.

## New Chagdud Gonpa Centers

Two new Chagdud Gonpa centers were recently established in northern California; Chhö Khor Ling, in Arcata, which began two years ago as a practice group, and Yeshe Ling in Napa Valley. Yeshe Ling, located on land that has hosted Chagdud Gonpa retreats for over a decade, is now considered Ati Ling's retreat land. Both centers hold weekly Tara practices and regularly host visiting Chagdud Gonpa lamas for teachings and retreats.

(Ani Zamba, continued from page 9)

a month before her death, she forewarned people that she was about to go through an experience of intense suffering and that there wasn't anything they could do to avert it. When this happened it was obviously a very hellish experience. Some of the people who saw her couldn't understand how such a strong practitioner could have these experiences. How does karma work if someone who practices all her life dies like this? But just before she died she admitted, "I have purified my karma. When I was younger I had a relationship with a man, got pregnant, and had an abortion; nobody else knew. Yet karma is infallible, and now I am free to go." When she died there were many positive signs.

We can't escape our karma. We need to work with it and have a positive attitude about whatever is happening in our lives, making it of benefit to others. I'm not saying that it is easy. But it's not necessary for everything to be easy. Other things may be easier, but they don't take you to the same level of practice.

If you wish to contribute to the soup kitchen project or have suggestions about the bone marrow project, contact Ani Zamba by email at <anizamba@hotmail.com>.

## 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.*

### January

- 5 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 7 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 13 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 21 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 23 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 28 Full Moon: P'howa

### February

- 4 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 6 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 11 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 12 Losar: Tibetan New Year (2129)
- 20 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 22 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 27 Full Moon: P'howa

### March

- 5 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 7 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 13 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 21 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 23 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 28 Full Moon: P'howa

### April

- 4 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 6 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 12 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 20 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 22 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 26 Full Moon: P'howa

### May

- 4 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 6 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 12 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 19 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 21 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 26 \*\*Full Moon: P'howa

### June

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

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Contact Khadro Ling  
for additional Brazilian  
center information.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT RIGDZIN LING

From January 6-13 Khenpo Choga will return to Rigdzin Ling and continue teaching on Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacaryavataara*, the classic mahayana text which outlines the path of a bodhisattva. Khenpo began these teachings in fall of 1999. Lama Chökyi Nyima will translate. Around the second week of May, Adzom Rinpoche is scheduled to give the transmission of Jigme Lingpa's treasures, which will include oral transmissions, empowerments, and teachings, for a week at Rigdzin Ling. Adzom Rinpoche has been recognized as an incarnation of Jigme Lingpa as well as other great lamas. He went into retreat at the age of eleven, began teaching at thirteen, and now, at thirty, has many students in Tibet and the United States. He has rebuilt several retreat centers in central Tibet and is responsible for several monastic communities there. Anne Klein will be translating for Adzom Rinpoche. Contact Ridgzin Ling for information on either of these events.

## WIND HORSE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The *Wind Horse* is the biannual newsletter of Chagdud Gonpa Foundation. If you are a current member of Chagdud Gonpa, you will receive it free. If this issue was complimentary and you would like to receive the newsletter regularly, you can subscribe at \$6.00 per year (\$10.00 for two years; \$15.00 for three years). Foreign subscriptions are \$10.00 per year (\$17.00 for two years). Send a check payable to Chagdud Gonpa Foundation to Rigdzin Ling, attention *Wind Horse*.