
THE WIND HORSE



NEWSLETTER OF CHAGDUD GONPA

SPRING 2007

A Letter from Jigme Tromge Rinpoche

Greetings to all of our sangha around the world! As you will discover in this issue of the *Wind Horse*, the activity of our precious teacher H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche is still growing throughout North and South America; we can truly rejoice in the richness of the communities and projects that he inspired. And it is with great happiness that I can tell you how Rinpoche's legacy continues to flourish in Tibet and Nepal.

Chagdud Gonpa in eastern Tibet is currently home to 125 active monks. The senior master, Lama Anjang, has been remodeling the Guru Rinpoche shrine since the old lhakhang (temple) housing the precious Guru Rinpoche statue started leaking. Some ways away, at the birthplace of Sherab Gyaltsen, the first Chagdud incarnation, the stupa commemorating him has been completed under the direction of Tulku Doga, one of Chagdud Rinpoche's closest disciples. The central channel and mantras to be placed in the stupa were consecrated during a six-month retreat undertaken by Tulku Doga. Soaring 40 feet high, the stupa also holds relics of our own Chagdud Rinpoche.

At Tromge Gonpa, the shedra (philosophy school) is up and running with about 25 students, and year-round studies are directed by the capable young khenpo-in-residence. Tulku Trinlé Özer built a new lhakhang for the monks, as well as secluded cabins for retreatants. The drupdra (retreat facility) still includes 21 committed practitioners in full-time retreat.

At Tenpel Gonpa, where Chagdud Rinpoche received much of his early training, the head lama, Tenpel Kyangmo Rinpoche, is overseeing the construction of a large stupa modeled on the Great Stupa in Boudha, Nepal. Khandro Trinlé Wangmo, Chagdud Rinpoche's sister, is in good health and remains active in her role as a senior lama at the monastery.

Despite a number of difficulties, the five-year retreat at Katok Ritro in Pharping, Nepal, continued uninterrupted, and in December of 2006, it came to a conclusion. By all accounts,

the retreat was a success, and after the retreat quarters have been remodeled to give each practitioner greater seclusion, a new group will begin a three-year retreat.



What is it that enables so many dharma projects around the world to manifest? How do we as human beings with our confusion and limitations inspire or carry out such work? One of the most important factors is faith. We speak of four kinds of faith: three are based, respectively, on awe, on the desire to emulate the object of faith, and on conviction; the fourth, irreversible faith, is what I would like to write about in this letter.

Irreversible faith is both the key to and fruit of genuine practice, an infallible foundation for deity yoga practice and the Great Perfection. The other three kinds of faith are based on outside factors: what we see, aspire to, have confidence in. They can be influenced by many conditions, such as our health, our mental state, or our actions, and so are somewhat erratic. But irreversible faith is immutable: once it is established, then whether you are happy or sad, crazy or stable, your mind remains with the dharma, unconditionally. Irreversible faith arises when you have diligently applied and practiced the teachings; you come to a point where you truly taste the meaning of the teachings, the enlightened qualities they embody. It is no longer simply an intellectual exercise, but a direct experiential understanding. You are not relying on hearsay; you are experiencing for yourself what you have been taught. This powerful proof gives rise to irreversible faith, which is crucial for a practitioner.

How can we attain irreversible faith? We move along the path as the enlightened ones showed us, step by step, precisely and thoroughly. A foundation in shamatha and vipassana alongside contemplation of the four thoughts sharpens our understanding of the nature of phenomena, animate and inanimate. Repeatedly reflecting on impermanence destroys our rigid

(Continued on page 15)

Understanding the Goal

A Teaching by Chagdud Rinpoche

The following is taken from a public talk given by Chagdud Rinpoche in Los Angeles in 1988. It is the second in a series of archival teachings by Rinpoche that have never been published.

Whether we are spiritual practitioners or not, we all live in the same world. Whether we practice or not, we all experience the same relative, ongoing drama of happiness and sadness, hope and fear, good and bad: the whole gamut of experience. This is called relative truth, which means that it is not permanently true; it is changeable, momentary. We can't deny it, because it is happening to us; still, we must not get stuck in it, believing it to be the complete truth. We have to examine things more deeply, to see through them. We must understand that there is a truth that underlies what seems to be true in the world.

The essence of all things is absolute truth. This absolute truth is with us constantly. It is not somewhere else, apart from our worldly reality. Rather, simultaneously with relative truth there is an absolute truth that we're not quite aware of. That truth is beyond what we can conceive with our ordinary faculties. We can't reach it with ideas or concepts.

What does all of this mean in terms of the spiritual path? How can we experience less suffering, and how can we deepen our awareness not only in this lifetime but in lifetimes to come? To understand the spiritual perspective, we need to realize that life is like a dream. However, even if we know this intellectually, although it may reduce the fear we experience in the context of the dream, it doesn't make the dream disappear.

The nature of mind of every being is purity, or perfection, and this is sometimes called buddha, or true nature, or absolute truth, or some other term that has been coined to express our essence. Once we have fully revealed this essence—our own pure, intrinsic being—then the dream dissolves and worldly truth is no longer binding. Therefore, people strive very diligently to reveal the nature of their mind. Some pray and chant and contemplate; some simply relax and remain in quiet abiding. Both ways work to some extent. But neither method is easy, neither is complete.

Reliance on an external object, such as a deity, or a personification of God or of wisdom, helps us to some degree. But it will not enable us to achieve absolute enlightenment. This is because it does not go beyond our concepts; it does not go beyond the limits of our ability to mentally project an external being's qualities and then relate to them. We might then conclude that it is misguided to use concepts or to develop a relationship with wisdom through a deity or some representation of enlightened qualities; it may just be an obstacle. So we might decide to just sit quietly and do nothing. But this will not produce absolute enlightenment either. If it could, there would be many beings who had become enlightened simply through a process of hiberna-

tion that prevented any thought from crossing their minds. But that's not the case. We don't have enlightened gophers.

We need to understand that in our spiritual practice, both tendencies—relying only on a conceptual process and relying only on the relaxation process—are extremes. We need to adjust them in order to find a point of balance in which we incorporate both aspects simultaneously. This can produce enlightenment.

The first thing we must do, then, is to understand the goal. What does it mean to be enlightened? What does absolute truth mean? What are the benefits of achieving realization, of abiding in the truth? We all have ideas about the goal: we have an idea of buddhahood, we have an idea of heaven. But what do those terms mean? We have to understand the goal, on both the relative and absolute levels.

Relatively speaking, if you want to get to New York City from Los Angeles, you have to have some idea of why you want to travel there, and some idea of how far away it is and in what general direction. Then you can choose a vehicle. You can drive or fly or ride

a bicycle, but you have to know where it is you're going and why you want to get there.

But if your aim is shy of the target—if you aim at your feet with your bow and arrow—you can't possibly hit the long-range target. Similarly, we need a full understanding of the goal, of what it means to reveal the true nature of mind. What limits people's meditation is that they do not know the absolute goal.

The nature of mind is beyond our concepts. It is impossible to encapsulate its meaning with ideas: "It is this; it is that." The only way to approach the nature of mind is to see that it is beyond extremes: it is indivisible, indestructible, true, unbreakable, immovable, unstoppable, and invincible.

This nature of mind you cannot prove. You cannot point at it and say, "There it is! That's it!" You can't define it by size or shape or color; you can't isolate it. And yet you cannot deny it, because it is the foundation on which everything possible happens. For most of us, however, it is obscured and so we experience reality as divisible, destructible, impermanent, and so on. What we must do, then, is to dissolve the obstacles and obscurations that distort our experience of reality, and reveal what is intrinsically pure.

How far away is it? It is only as far away as the depths of our attachment. It is only as far away as the extent of our aversion. It is only as far away as the crust of our ignorance. When each of these three obstacles has been removed, it is there. It has always been there; it has never gone away. Because of our attachment, aversion, and ignorance, we just can't perceive it. Once we understand where we're aiming, what we need to achieve, we don't aim at our feet. We don't miss the target, because we're fully aware of what must be done.



Remembering Rinpoche

By Lama Shenpen Drolma

Lama Shenpen Drolma is the founder and resident lama of Iron Knot Ranch in New Mexico.

For all too brief a time, I served as one of Chagdud Rinpoche's interpreters, traveling with him as he turned the wheel of dharma in various corners of the world. This was before the advent of e-mail and cell phones, and keeping up with his ongoing activity while we were on the road involved a tangle of fax and message machines.

Once, during a retreat in Brazil, after a long day of teachings and interviews, Rinpoche woke me late in the night. "Someone called my name. Somebody needs me. I don't know who it is." He didn't tell me how he knew this but asked if I would check: Had there been any messages? Who was it that needed him? After a series of calls, I was unable to find out anything, so he sat up most of the night doing practice for someone whose face he couldn't see but who had nonetheless called out to him in a moment of need. This is only one instance of many, but it has stayed with me over the years. I never once saw Rinpoche ignore a cry for help or overlook even the smallest opportunity to serve others. I think it would have been impossible for him to do so. Caring for sentient beings, quite simply, was his life.

On more than one occasion, he said that he aspired to follow the life example of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, one of his beloved teachers, whose door was open twenty-four hours a day. Chagdud Rinpoche would get up in the early morning hours to begin his practice, meet with students in person or by phone before formal teaching sessions, and conduct interviews during the breaks and on late into the night, often regaling us with old Tibetan folktales and dharma stories of wandering yogis and lineage masters. Then he would finish his practice and rest for a few hours at most before beginning all over again. He did this in town after town. Back home at Rigdzin Ling, he would continue on the same schedule, never missing a beat. It wasn't that his health was perfect or that it was easy for him to do so, but that he was nourished by bodhichitta rather than exhausted by hope and fear.

Rinpoche often said that airports were his favorite place to meditate. He would sit in a busy terminal, making eye contact with every being in the passing stream of travelers, never separate from the realization of the fleeting nature of the phenomena unfolding before him. His mala never stopped moving. One could almost feel the power of his simultaneous generation and dedication of merit manifesting for passersby in a chance meeting or exchange. Convenience stores, gas stations, and restaurants along the way were no exception. On an occasional trip to the zoo or aquarium, he would stand before a glass tank or a

cage, reciting prayers. It seemed as if those beings knew he was reaching out to them. Returning home, Rinpoche never failed to pick up occasional hitchhikers, gently chiding them about the dangers of hitchhiking and inviting them to the Gonpa. Some stayed a night or camped for several days before moving on. A few returned months or even years later and helped with this or that project. For us, it's likely impossible to comprehend the extent and subtlety of such activity as he engaged in it, but I have no doubt that in each of these encounters, a door to liberation was opened for another sentient being.

At Rigdzin Ling, Rinpoche would begin another series of teachings or perhaps launch preparations for a drupchen, delighting in the skillful means of the Vajrayana for gathering merit and wisdom. Rinpoche always found a way for everyone to join in the activity. Whether by attending an event, phoning in butter lamp dedications from three thousand miles away, stitching a costume, running errands, chopping vegetables, taking out the garbage, fixing, building, moving—there was always something for people to do, even if they were just passing through. He made room

for everyone and, in so doing, invited all into the mandala of accumulation.

Through his tireless creation of rupas (representations of enlightened body, speech, and mind), he manifested immeasurable benefit for those who worked alongside him as well as for those who would see, touch, or remember a statue, prayer wheel, or stupa. He dedicated this boundless merit to those he met while on the road, as well as to those who fell outside his reach, those who couldn't hear the words of the teachings or participate in the building of a pure land, so that every sentient being was held within the scope of his compassionate activity.

When I think of Rinpoche's life, I'm reminded of his mother's dream early in her pregnancy with him. She saw a being with many arms, each holding a different implement, emblematic of the countless avenues of enlightened activity his emanation would undertake. Now, though his physical form is no longer apparent to our obscured vision, the radiance of his enlightened intention continues to manifest. Until his tulku returns to us, we can find Rinpoche in each of the purely motivated actions of body, speech, and mind his lamas and sangha undertake, as we collectively and individually endeavor to practice the teachings that were his heart's gift to us. The rain of Rinpoche's blessings falls wherever we tend to the seeds he planted, whether we stumble or stand firmly in our efforts to do so. Rinpoche is ever present: when we pick ourselves up, having tripped over a habit for the thousandth time, when we move past our discouragement, or when we carry on in spite of it. His encouragement to "keep going" is his embrace.



*Chagdud Rinpoche and Lama Shenpen
at an early Bodhisattva Peace Training
in Brazil*

It is the singular kindness of the buddha or bodhisattva in extending his hand to us that determines whether we drift endlessly in the ocean of suffering or are established on the path of liberation. When we shy away from undertaking practice or activity on behalf of numberless sentient beings, we might consider the depths of misery that we experienced as reality before the hook of the lama's compassion pulled us from that sea.

It was Rinpoche's intention that not a single being remain bound to suffering. He broke samsaric chains with every possible skillful means. To those who would fulfill the most minimal commitments, he opened the door to the nature of mind itself. He imparted instructions and created environments in which to do retreat. He unlocked the treasury of Vajrayana empowerment and ritual. He demonstrated the method and purpose for the creation of rupas. He launched an epic series of translations and publications that serve practitioners far beyond the reaches of Chagdud Gonpa. He created residential centers for those wishing to immerse themselves in purification and accumulation by upholding ceaseless dharma activity that provides opportunities for the larger sangha to join together to partake of the expanse of skillful means. For those committed to uprooting suffering but disheartened by a poverty of method, he created the Bodhisattva Peace Training, opening the treasury of the bodhisattva path to those of all faiths. Through the dedication of this vast accumulation of merit, he added oil to the lamp, dispelling darkness for all beings in these degenerating times. Throughout every moment of his activity, he displayed the conduct of a consummate yogi, taking all circumstances as practice, an opportunity to refine his awareness of inner and outer display inseparable from mind's nature.

One last remembrance: the gentle and delicate mudra with which Rinpoche removed an ant from his robe and placed it on a petal. No contrivance. No fear of samsara, no longing for nirvana. No separation between him and this fragile sentient being. A simple mudra of kindness and care.

Mudra is the display of awareness and of the compassionate means that arise inseparably from that awareness. "Outwardly, work ceaselessly for the benefit of beings; inwardly, rest in the flawless expanse of mind's nature." This was Rinpoche's mudra, displayed for every living being. Only the spontaneous expression of love and compassion, without judgment or bias, wanting that each of us abandon the causes of suffering and accomplish the path of liberation.

May the sphere of benefit of Rinpoche's activity only increase. May his tulku be recognized swiftly and trained without impediment. May all beings benefit.



*Rinpoche at a retreat
in Crestone, CO*

Bodhisattva Peace Training: Compassion in Action

The kindness of a buddha is extraordinary, meeting the needs of sentient beings wherever they are on their spiritual path, wherever they are in time and space. H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche exemplified this remarkable quality when he created the Bodhisattva Peace Training (BPT) for those of all faiths, or of none at all, who aspire to increase their capacity to benefit others. A distillation of the Mahayana teachings on bodhichitta, the BPT presents dynamic and effective methods for cultivating loving kindness, compassion, and wisdom through contemplation and meditation, both during formal practice and in daily life. Through the introduction of a vast and accessible perspective on applied bodhichitta, the BPT has been an open door to the Buddhist path for many new practitioners and a powerful support for existing practitioners, as well as a spiritual foundation for people of other faiths. One way in which Rinpoche manifested his all-encompassing and uncompromising commitment to ending the suffering of beings was to make these tools available to anyone willing to use them to reduce nonvirtue and increase virtue and wisdom—in their families and communities throughout the world—thereby increasing their capacity to benefit others in the short term and leading to liberation in the long term. Rinpoche envisioned BPT participants, over time, gaining enough knowledge and facility with the methods that they could share them with others, like one candle lighting the next, steadily increasing the light in the world.

Rinpoche offered the first BPT in 1988, and in 1991 authorized Lama Shenpen and Lama Tsering to teach it. In 2001, when Rinpoche articulated his vision for the development of a Bodhisattva Peace Training Institute at Iron Knot Ranch to make the BPT more widely available, Lama Shenpen began to teach it more broadly to youth and adults and to train others interested in offering it in their own communities.

Rinpoche stressed the importance of compiling and publishing his BPT teachings as an introduction for people unfamiliar with the teachings and as a manual to support those attending the trainings. Lama Shenpen finished *Change of Heart: The Bodhisattva Peace Training of Chagdud Tulku* in 2003, and a generous grant is making it possible to disseminate books free of charge to at-risk youth and adults around the country. Over the years, a growing number of participants have taken the teachings to heart and are applying them in their daily lives. These are some of the stories of those fulfilling Rinpoche's vision.

The Ghetto Film School Project

The Ghetto Film School (GFS) is an organization in the South Bronx that provides educational, artistic, and career opportunities in film and video to local youth. GFS students will travel to Iron Knot Ranch for an immersion in the principles and practice of the Bodhisattva Peace Training, as well as instructions on how to work with the teachings after the training. Each student will then make a short film documenting the way the principles of bodhichitta are reflected in their community.

The films will debut at the GFS Annual Public Screening at Lincoln Center, New York, and will also be widely distributed through GFS networks to national film festivals, television and web platforms, and schools and youth service organizations with free copies of *Change of Heart* included as a study guide.

Facing Domestic Violence with Equanimity

The brutal reality of domestic violence is an intense context for the practice of compassion and equanimity, but Ellen Pence steps squarely into it. She's the director of Praxis International in Duluth, Minnesota, a nonprofit organization that works to eliminate violence in the lives of women and children. Due to the successful track record of Praxis in training advocates for battered women, responders within the system such as judges, prosecutors, police, and facilitators of groups for men who batter, the federal government now requires that anyone receiving federal funds for domestic violence work in rural areas be trained by Praxis. So when Ellen speaks about the impact the Bodhisattva Peace Training has had on her approach to training and curriculum development, we see the principles of good heart filtering into diverse segments of society, from Wyoming ranch country to Lakota reservations in the prairies to remote villages in Alaska.

Many of those Ellen works with are facilitators of groups for men who batter. She used to exclusively address the batterers' lack of remorse and anger, but now the training also focuses on the facilitators' own judgments and frustration and provides tools for them to work on their own minds. Meditation is one such tool that has led many facilitators to realize that the poisons of their minds only obstruct their attempts to help these men.

The BPT methods have also helped Ellen's work with police officers in improving their response to domestic violence calls. Now that she is addressing her own bias and aversion, she is better able to help officers reflect on their shortcomings, thereby supporting them in their work without abandoning the needs of the victims of violence.

Chuck Derry, cofounder of the Gender Violence Institute, also works with law enforcement departments by providing domestic and sexual violence training and policy development in rural and tribal areas of Minnesota. Initially, his organization's relationship with law enforcement was often delicate or even conflicted. But the BPT has given Chuck a greater understanding of the officers' concerns and frustrations, and consequently their interactions have become more open and trusting. Now when Chuck works on a policy with the police, it is more likely to actually be implemented and make a difference in the lives of battered women and their children.

Tools for True Peacemaking

Drawing from Quaker traditions, Friends for a Non-Violent World in Saint Paul, Minnesota, provides programs that help prison inmates learn nonviolent skills and mobilizes grassroots, nonviolent citizen coalitions to participate in electoral

politics. Its director, Phil Steger, was looking for tools to transform his anger, fear, and fatigue, as well as to cultivate in himself the peace and joy he encouraged in others. He explains that "the most formidable obstacles to my being an effective peacemaker reside not in other people, in the media, or in the administration, but in my own mind." As a practicing Catholic, he sought spiritual practices that would supplement his religious life without replacing it.

The Bodhisattva Peace Training offered methods unlike any he had encountered before; they suited his life's activity and goals by opening his heart, addressing the roots of violence in his own mind, and being easily applied even in moments of heated conflict, making them invaluable to his work. "When so much is beyond my power to control, it is bracing to experience even an inch of freedom and peace that no piece of propaganda or presidential action can take away." During campaigns, Phil trains citizen activists in tonglen and equanimity meditation to ensure that their efforts are genuine and effective, and transcend the facile strategy of trading one set of opinions and prejudices for another.

"The most formidable obstacles to my being an effective peacemaker reside not in other people, in the media, or in the administration, but in my own mind."

Coursework in Compassion and Wisdom

The Bodhisattva Peace Training principles are also being discussed in academic settings, from social work to communications and political science departments. Mari Ann Graham, director of the Masters in Social Work Program at the College of Saint Catherine/Saint Thomas University in Saint Paul, has found the principles and methods to be especially valuable in conflict mediation and problem solving with colleagues and students in what can often be a politically charged and polarized atmosphere. Mari Ann is so convinced of the value and efficacy of these teachings on applied bodhichitta that she considers them more important than her Ph.D. education.

Julie Andrzejewski, professor of Human Relations and Multicultural Studies, teaches a class called "Change Agent Skills" at Saint Cloud State University in Saint Cloud, Minnesota. In the arena of civil and social rights, the channeling of outrage and anger into protest and confrontation has often been used to respond to and reverse societal injustices, which makes what Julie teaches unique. She witnessed in her classroom that fixating on social oppression only implanted in her students the bias and myopia that characterized the very systems and institutions they were trying to change. She has therefore shifted the emphasis of her curriculum from confrontation to compassion. She now instructs her students not to blame others, but to examine their own motivations and notice how they get in the way of the changes they want to see in the world. This approach has been well received by her students, even inspiring some of them to attend a BPT themselves.

Godfrey Mnubi is one such student. Born and raised in Tanzania, he intends to return home after completing the master's program in Social Responsibility at Saint Cloud State. Urban areas in Tanzania are experiencing a massive in

flux of homeless and poverty-stricken youth who leave their rural homelands to find jobs in the city. Godfrey plans to help youth remain in their communities by providing job training and other services. He believes that the BPT methods will increase his effectiveness in facilitating compromise between communities with different values and will help make accessible a wisdom that's been lost among the youth of Tanzania. A practicing Roman Catholic, Godfrey was taught the importance of loving your enemies and "turning the other cheek," but he never learned how to actually do it. Having completed the training, Godfrey now thinks he has a chance.

Finding Gold in Garbage

During Bodhisattva Peace Trainings, Chagdud Rinpoche would often use the example of the peacock to illustrate the activity of a bodhisattva. A peacock can ingest what is poisonous to other animals, transforming the substance into colors that are both brilliant and beautiful. Susan Hubbard is CEO of Eureka Recycling in Saint Paul, a nonprofit curbside recycler for more than 275,000 people and their 60,000-ton yearly share of recyclables. Their fleet of bio-fuel-operated trucks is just one of their many innovations in sustainable community service.

Susan recounts that she was about to "pop off" from complete burnout when a flier advertising the BPT landed on her desk. Four years later, she's still with Eureka Recycling, meeting challenges with patience and practice. She's found creative ways to work with corporate polluters that encourage them to explore alternatives that are eco-friendly yet profitable, thereby saving jobs as well as preserving their relationship with and reputation in the community. Susan credits the BPT methods with enabling her to explore skillful ways of relating to institutions and people with very different values in ways that minimize harm while building trust.

Change of Heart Study and Practice Groups

During Bodhisattva Peace Trainings, Chagdud Rinpoche encouraged participants to ask questions, express doubts, and examine the teachings closely to see if they made sense in light of their own life experience. This kind of examination and contemplation thrives in *Change of Heart* study groups, where folks can review the teachings, help each other come to a better understanding of the methods, and support one another when the going gets tough. These groups keep the spirit of the training fresh and alive.

Candy Palmo works with one such group in Weaverville, California, which assiduously studies each chapter, line by line. They examine their lives and beliefs in light of the teachings, and if they have lingering doubts, they can voice them during a monthly conference call with Lama Shenpen.

In the group that Susanne Fairclough facilitates in Arcata, California, participants become more familiar with the meditations found in the book. Their discussions alternate with brief periods when the mind is allowed to relax into the spacious nature of being. There is also emphasis on viewing one's experience as a mirror reflecting one's own mind, and members of the group have shared insights into how their habit patterns obstruct opportunities to benefit others.

Peace Training for Addicts

Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other 12-step programs (collectively known as "the Program") offer a process of self-examination and discovery that can lead to release from addiction for those who, through substance abuse, have become what the Program calls "as desperate as only the dying can be." Shelly D. has been in the Program for 11 years and has found the steps extremely effective. She has attended numerous Bodhisattva Peace Trainings since 2002, has cofacilitated a *Change of Heart* study group in Silver City, New Mexico, and aspires to bring the BPT methods to others in recovery communities. Shelly comments, "While the Program helps one negotiate addiction to particular substances, the BPT offers tools for becoming aware of how our experience of reality is informed by our deep habit to fixate on anything we think will make us happy and reduce our suffering. Because the practices are clear, simple, and nondenominational, they are easily workable, even for folks with hang-ups about religion and prayer." She considers three- or four-day retreats in treatment centers and rehabilitation clinics an ideal context in which addicts can work with the BPT principles.

Through these profound practices of compassion and wisdom, Chagdud Rinpoche has illuminated the hearts and minds of many others, inspiring them to help reduce nonvirtue and increase virtue in the world. May all beings meet with such kindness.

— Tony Simon



Beyond Happiness

Meditation is mostly an inner journey of the soul, of the spirit. With the kind guru as a guide and pith instructions for maps, one travels through new and unknown landscapes—sometimes traversing seemingly impassable emotional and mental terrain, and at other times discovering enchanting groves of spiritual delight. The ego is never satisfied with anything, complaining all the way. Without its usual stances and facades, there is no gratification for the ego anywhere, no way for it to maintain its fictitious existence. And so it perishes—dying into the radiance of awareness. Who's traveling here anyway? What is this ongoing openness of being that doesn't seem to go anywhere, that is no "thing" at all? Without a future, without a past, existence is the ineffability of each moment. With each step taken it is as if one has arrived home, yet at the same time in the freshness of a new place. Where else could one go? The movements, sounds, and thoughts of the day leave no trace in awareness' sky. Without trying to do so, one enters the realm of suchness that has been here all along. There is no thing to "do," since this miracle is self-occurring. The dark night of the ego's confusion is cleared away by the daybreak of awareness; so one is no longer groping for happiness in the dark. Wherever one sits or walks, whatever one does, it's as if everywhere were a pure realm of experience. All beings are part of this—simply unaware. Anyone, anywhere can find this place, if they only wish to make the journey.

— Lama Drimed

Turning the Wheel

At the age of eleven, news of his mother's death reached the young Chagdud Tulku in retreat. Soon afterward, he declared that his mother's assets were to be sold off and the proceeds used to construct an enormous prayer wheel containing 10 million Vajrasattva mantras. It was a costly and ambitious undertaking. The paper was extremely expensive, coming all the way from China by yak, a journey of many months, and the nearest timber for construction was an arduous seven-day trek from the village. Progress was slow, but two years later the work was completed and the wheel consecrated.

Rinpoche compared the reverberation of the spinning mantras inside the prayer wheel house to an actual experience of Vajrasattva's pervasive purification: "This fulfilled my mother's intention that all persons who came there and prayed with faith would be cleansed of the obscuring habits and poisons of the mind, and that by the blessings of Vajrasattva's compassion and wisdom, all would come to abide in the intrinsic purity of their mind's absolute nature."

Chagdud Rinpoche oversaw the construction of many prayer wheels in his life. Of the 40 or more now spinning at Khadro Ling in Brazil, he said their blessings were so powerful that to merely set foot on Gonpa land ensured eventual liberation. So when the opportunity arose to undertake a project of similar scope in North America, we were delighted to follow in our teacher's footsteps.

Almost three years later, a total of 32 prayer wheels containing some 350 billion mantras are turning 24 hours a day, year-round, in two pavilions, one at Rigdzin Ling in northern California and one at Iron Knot Ranch in southern New Mexico. In September Katok Getsé Rinpoche, the retreat master at Katok Ritro in Pharping, Nepal, graciously traveled from India to visit both centers, and with the assistance of Jigme Rinpoche and other Chagdud Gonpa lamas, consecrated the wheels over the course of several days of group practice. When the wheels finally began to turn, there were indeed reverberations of blessing, along with laughter, relief, and more than a few tears of gratitude.

The prayer wheel project was conceived in response to a prophecy by Guru Rinpoche, who brought the practice of the prayer wheel to Tibet 600 years after Nagarjuna introduced it in India. It foretold that when difficult times arose and the teachings of the Buddha were waning, negativity would be averted through heartfelt prayer to Guru Rinpoche: "Whoever puts this advice into practice will help to quell all warfare, social unrest, and disease in negative times." Guru Rinpoche exhorted practitioners to recite the Vajra Guru mantra day and night. Because of this prophecy, the primary mantra of the

prayer wheel project is the Vajra Guru, with more than 5 billion mantras printed on paper and 97 billion on microfilm.

Also, because the lives of the many great contemporary Buddhist lamas are sustained by the merit and faith of their students, one-third of the paper and film is covered with the longevity mantras of Amitabha, Amitayus, and Chenrezik, with the merit dedicated to the uninterrupted appearance of great masters in our time to benefit all beings. The mantras of 11 other deities are included in the wheels. Nine of the mantras are duplicated from the mantras in the 40 prayer wheels that

Chagdud Rinpoche created at Khadro Ling: those of Dorjé Drolö, Amitabha, Chenrezik, Amitayus, Vajrakilaya, Vajrasattva, Hayagriva, Kurukulle, and the Lion-Faced Dakini. The wheels at Rigdzin Ling and Iron Knot Ranch also include Longchenpa and Green Tara mantras, as well as the Red Tara mantra in its hand-turned wheels.

The original files of the ten mantras that Rinpoche approved for inclusion in the Brazilian prayer wheels (the nine just mentioned as well as the Vajra Guru mantra)

were sent to Rigdzin Ling so that the mantras and dedication prayers in the wheels in North America would duplicate those that Rinpoche selected.

Conceived for the sole purpose of benefiting of beings, this project is breathtaking in its scope. Consider the paper. Each of the hundred-plus rolls of nearly translucent paper is 3 feet wide and approximately 25 miles long. That's 2,600 miles of paper in all. According to the printing company, the print run was six times greater than any that had preceded it. The young employee who monitored the inking process said he began to see mantras in his dreams. The ink itself had been consecrated by sacred substances, some containing minute quantities of past masters' relics. Four tractor-trailer loads arrived at their respective destinations having first traversed the continent by rail. On the road to Rigdzin Ling, one trailer was briefly detained by the Highway Patrol for being too long. In New Mexico, it took some negotiation to get the semis partway down a 15-mile dirt road, where each of the fifty-one 1,700-pound rolls was unloaded, reloaded onto a smaller flatbed truck, then unloaded once more, before being ferried by forklift to the hilltop jobsite. Had the yak option been available, it might have proved less of a hassle.

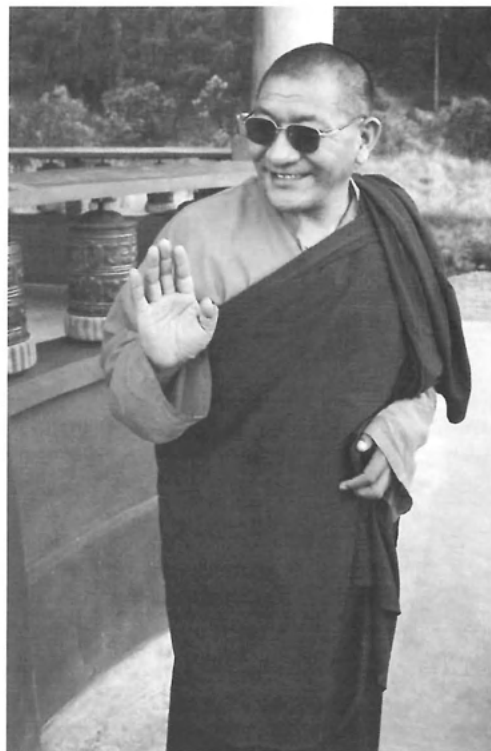
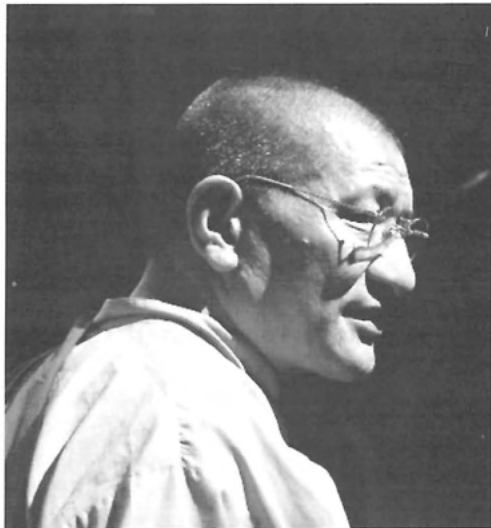
In addition to the mantras printed on paper, the wheels contain more than 200 miles of microfiche. To the naked eye, microfiche appears to be an opaque film, but with magnification, impossibly tiny and confoundingly numerous syllables



The prayer wheels at Iron Knot Ranch

(Continued on page 10)

Prayer Wheel Consecrations



H.E. Katok Getsé Rinpoche at Rigdzin Ling

*May the prayer wheels
turn for every creature
on this fragile earth,
our spinning home.
May they help cool
the rising seas
and clear the skies.*

*On this hot, bright
end-of-summer day,
we sit beneath steep
cliffs blasted by men
in a hurry for gold
and see everything change.*

*We chant, ring bells
and pray for peace.
Conches call, damarus clatter,
drums pound, horns blare
and we circle,
throwing saffron rice
for the sake of all.*

*Massive columns, millions
of mantra twirl as we
circumambulate the pavilion
spinning little copper
wheels around the edge,
each with a wish.*

*Forests grow here again,
ponds reflect the arching sun.
Ravens call from the treetops,
guardians gather.
Prophecies may be fulfilled
that benefit us all.*

*The gold is found within.
Seeking together
with pure hearts,
the alchemy of kindness
can transform.*

*May these brightly painted
wheels bring peace
for all of us,
may every living being
feel the soothing freshness
of this breeze.*

— Annette Boushey Holland



Getsé Rinpoche and Jigme Rinpoche offering dedication prayers at Iron Knot



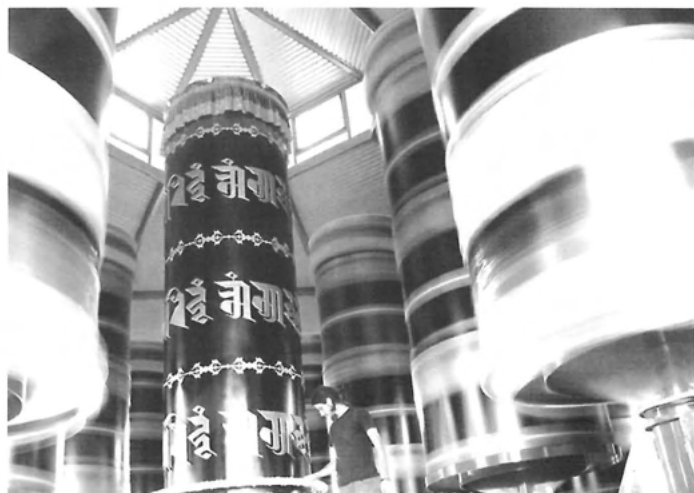
Lama Zangpo and Travis Robinson



Procession to Iron Knot prayer wheels



Rigdzin Ling's prayer wheels



Iron Knot's prayer wheels spinning



Rigdzin Ling sangha doing White Vajrasattva sadhana



Ceremonial tent in front of Rigdzin Ling pavillion

(Continued from page 7)

spring to life. Because every mantra had to be perfectly legible, the staff of Padma Publishing spent untold hours proofing reel after reel of film. On top of that, the final product was delivered in relatively small canisters containing spools several hundred feet long. In order to accommodate the larger diameter of the prayer wheels, the slippery film had to be rewound using a spooling table custom-built for that purpose in the Rigdzin Ling shop. The process took months and the labor of several dedicated long-term retreatants who came out of retreat just for this purpose.

To house the wheels, two sizable pavilions were constructed. Extensive excavations and forms were made, and rivers of concrete were poured and finished. The road leading to Iron Knot was too treacherous for concrete trucks, so the mix was batched by hand. Pours begun midmorning sometimes lasted into the wee hours of the following day. In California, enormous cedar timbers were hauled in from the coast, and the crew was schooled in timber-framing techniques. Structural members were fashioned meticulously by hand, then raised carefully into place. The huge rafters now support an elegant roof of earthen tiles imported from Japan, the installation of which was an art in itself. In New Mexico, the welding of framework took the better part of two summers and the winter in between.

In both locales, crews pushed on through sun and rain, the obligatory equipment failures, engineering headaches, and logistical quagmires. All those who participated worked beyond themselves, giving up weekends, gainful employment, teachings, and retreat time to get the job done. Our extended sangha, and old friends as well as new, rose to the occasion. Some traveled thousands of miles to lend a hand, and in so doing, *made* it happen. Both projects were aided time and again by reinforcements from afar, just as stamina was failing. Happily, it's likely no one knows the full extent of what everyone else did in order to bring the projects to fruition. They simply wouldn't have happened without the collective effort, which is a gratifying thought and par for the course for anyone accustomed to working within the mandala of Chagdud Rinpoche.

Even after we'd labored through the numerous details, the finished product still came as a big surprise. Though the various crews crafted and assembled the pieces, there is a sense that the prayer wheels themselves appeared miraculously. It is difficult to describe their effect on the mind in a way that doesn't diminish their actuality, but if you've spent any time with the wheels, you know they speak quite eloquently for themselves. We can only admit that we've had front row seats on another act of the lama's compassion. Our efforts—the sweat and tears, the soreness and fatigue, the weight of decision and management—were nothing other than the embrace of the Guru, the bear hug of the lineage.

Mantra is the reverberation of awareness, perfect speech unsullied by ignorance. Laden with mantras written in ink that contains the heart blood of the lineage, then set spinning by the breath of peerless lamas who themselves have gone beyond deluded mind, the prayer wheels now turning cast their blessings to the ten directions so that all beings may come to abide in the intrinsic purity of their mind's absolute nature.



Samurai

*As a child, I wanted to be like the Samurai.
I remember watching old kung fu movies—
how after each battle,
Samurai in full regalia would slowly wipe
the blood from their swords, revealing
something so stainless
and so pure. It was beautiful.*

*But years later, when the battles were
my own, I was surprised to see how
blood wasn't quite the same.*

*Cleaning on hands and knees
a mess on the floor. It was something
which had to be gotten rid of. It was
a life, only now red and splattered.*

*It's hard for me not to marvel at the Samurai.
I mean, how could one be so
uncompassionate and yet so graceful?*

*There are nights, still, when they come for me
in dreams. Arriving like spiders
from some woodwork of the subconscious,
blades drawn and slashing.*

*As usual, I run from death.
And as usual, they turn
me into a cloud of red ribbons
which dance and spiral for a moment,
until settling slowly to the ground.*

*The next morning
when I am supposed to know
it was all just a dream, but don't,
there is the trash
that I haul. And there are
the paper shreds
which need to be sorted and recycled.
Shreds of some draft
from some Buddhist teaching
on compassion. In the parking lot
I am often found
digging through the cans,
I am often found trying
to piece it all together.*

— Bryan Kraus

Sangha News

North America

Rigdzin Ling

This year at Rigdzin Ling was rich with dharma activity, as we rolled from one event to the next. Among the many retreats and teachings was the annual Bodhisattva Peace Training with Lama Shenpen; each year, more and more people receive these teachings, practice the methods, and experience positive changes in their lives. Khentrul Lodrö T'hayé Rinpoche taught Atisha's "Seven-Point Mind Training" in two installments; both events were unprecedented, in that the entire staff, including the cooks, attended the teachings. In addition to the consecration of the prayer wheels, August brought the laughter and joy of young participants in the annual children's retreat. And then... there was the fire.

The day after the prayer wheels were consecrated, just before Labor Day weekend, a fire started a few miles downriver. Initially, we weren't too worried; there had already been two seasonal fires in the area that hadn't affected us, and it didn't seem that this one would either. A more immediate concern was getting ready for the fifty people soon to arrive for our fourth shedra with Khentrul Rinpoche. However, within days the wind shifted, sending the fire in our direction, and we were placed on standby evacuation. This warning was not lifted for the next three weeks.

Lama Drimed directed our efforts from his retreat cabin, making himself available for advice and guidance. Packing up his own belongings while continuing his retreat, he taught us by his example to be fully present yet see the dreamlike quality of the experience. Rigdzin Ling is Chagdud Rinpoche's heritage, and the spiritual home for so many, and he wanted us to make every effort to protect it.

We emptied the shrine room, carefully placing tangkas, statues, and texts into U-Hauls and taking them to a safe place. Staff members, shedra students, and retreatants furiously cleared brush and trees from around the buildings. Tibetan Treasures people packed up their inventory and moved to a vacant house in nearby Weaverville. Elaborate evacuation plans were put into place. Big fire trucks cruised our land like vigilant protectors.

Yet in the midst of the oppressive smoke and uncertainty, life at Rigdzin Ling continued. We cooked, we ate, we washed dishes, we took out the garbage. Students attended the shedra. The prayer wheels kept turning. We were surprisingly organized, yet flexible and alert, always watching the sky, checking the direction of the wind.

It was a time of great blessings. Lamas from around the world called, prayed, suggested practices that would help, and had their monasteries do pujas. Support and prayers poured into Rigdzin Ling from the sangha. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche told us that if the fire enveloped us in spite of all the prayers, we should offer everything as a fire puja. Lama Tsering reminded us that "all phenomena are an opportunity for wisdom." We thought about impermanence and examined our attach-

ments as we considered which personal belongings we would take with us in the event of evacuation and which we could let go of.

Over all, there were incalculable benefits. For one thing, we are now more prepared should another fire threaten us. For example, a crew of Rigdzin Ling residents designed and installed a sprinkler system on the roof of Creek House. In addition, everyone's efforts created a great deal of merit, which we dedicated to all beings. Many people purified their karma, some of them by enduring serious cases of poison oak and lung irritation. People who would never have set foot on our land if it hadn't been for the fire showed up, experiencing for themselves the blessings of this holy place. Among them were fire fighters from around the country, including the "Apache Hotshots" from Arizona, as well as medics and information personnel from the nearby fire camp. They were awed by the prayer wheels and asked questions about Buddhism while requesting brochures and Tibetan Treasures catalogs. We learned much about what it takes to fight forest fires, and to protect life and property; we felt a deep respect for these brave people. They, in turn, learned something about our community. A kinship developed that was good. And Rigdzin Ling did not burn down. We express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone for their prayers.

Lama Drimed has told us that he will complete his three-year retreat this spring and will attend the Red Vajrasattva drupchen. We are overjoyed!

Ati Ling

This very joyful and busy year for Ati Ling and the Padma-sambhava Peace Institute started with Jigme Rinpoche presiding over the Vajrakilaya drupchod that usually precedes the Tibetan new year. Shortly thereafter we were honored to host Chagdud Khadro for a p'howa retreat. Many new practitioners joined us for this event, including some working in hospice care or general healing, as well as some individuals who were seriously ill. All who attended the teachings commented on Khadro's insight and clear guidance; it was obvious to us why Chagdud Rinpoche had placed so much trust in her to disseminate the teachings on this practice. Practitioners remained very focused throughout the weekend, and many newer students were inspired to take up more extensive practice. We felt very fortunate that Khadro accepted our request to return whenever her schedule allows.

In May our prayers of the previous year were answered when H.E. Namkha Drimed Rinpoche returned to PPI for a three-day Tröma retreat and healing ceremony followed by several days of rest. Again, the shrine room was filled with sangha members from all over the country, and the environment was transformed by the energy of the practice. His Eminence and his entourage, together with Jigme Rinpoche and some sangha members, spent one beautiful sunny afternoon relaxing in a tent overlooking the ocean while His Eminence told stories of the great lineage masters. From the moment of his arrival until long after he left, the tertön's compassion and his warm presence filled everyone's hearts.

Through May and June, Jigme Rinpoche offered a series of public dharma talks as well as empowerments for and teach-

ings on ngondro. These were supportive for both older practitioners and a growing number of new ngondro practitioners, and more ngondro practice events will be organized in the coming year.

This summer was also the start of a relationship with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, which brought 40 teenagers to PPI for a week of meditation, silent work practice, and group discussions. Each day ran from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and watching the students and highly skilled facilitators work together during this intensive period of transformation and learning was extremely inspiring. We will be delighted to welcome back the teenage group as well as a college group next year.

The annual *Rigdzin Düpa* hundred thousand tsok offering retreat this year was led by H.E. Katok Getsé Rinpoche, in between his consecration of the prayer wheels at Rigdzin Ling and those at Iron Knot Ranch. The newly built sangkhang and surkhang (fire-offering hearths employed in various practices such as *Riwo Sangchö* and making offerings to the deceased) were used for the welcoming smoke offering, an auspicious start to a wonderful weekend.

For Chagdud Rinpoche's parinirvana commemoration ceremonies, we were touched by the presence of both H.E. Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche and Tulku Orgyen, making for a truly delightful three days of retreat. The first day ended with a late-night butter lamp ceremony and fire-stick and fire-ball spinning, two forms of light offerings made with deep love and gratitude in honor of Chagdud Rinpoche. The following two days were spent on the Chokling Padma Dakini practice, with the exquisite text raised to an even more exalted level by the presence of lamas so rooted in this lineage. Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche kindly offered daily teachings on mind training, and he enriched the final tsok unforgettably by singing songs by Milarepa, telling stories of mahasiddhas, and giving a rarely heard account of Jigme Rinpoche's lineage. It was a blissful retreat, generating incredible peace, devotion, and goodwill.

Ati Ling ended 2006 with a Vajrakilaya retreat with Jigme Rinpoche, and in early spring, when Rinpoche returns from South America, he will begin another series of teachings. In the summer, he will lead a group on a one-month pilgrimage in eastern and central Tibet; those interested in accompanying him should e-mail atiling@hotmail.com as soon as possible. For more information about future events, as well as updates of Jigme Rinpoche's schedule, see www.atiling.org.

T'hondup Ling

Oh, the indefatigable Venerable Lama Gyatso! How many of us in the T'hondup Ling sangha aspire to match our unsteady trot to his full gallop for the sake of sentient beings.

In January 2006, we were honored to welcome the Most Venerable Tulku Thondup Rinpoche. Rinpoche gave several public teachings and led a live release at Marina del Rey. As with all lineage masters, spending time in his presence was a great blessing.

In February Lama Gyatso and his family flew to Asia for the Tibetan new year. There, they attended the Vajrakilaya drupchen held at Chorten Gonpa in Sikkim, and prostrated to and supplicated Lama Gyatso's lineage masters for the swift manifestation and unhindered recognition of our precious lama, Chagdud Rinpoche.

This past year, Lama Gyatso made two additional trips to Asia to check the status of Chagdud Rinpoche's kudung stupa, which will be installed at the mountain retreat center of Ari Bhöd in Tehachapi, and to make corrections with the help of the artist, Pema Namdol Thayé.

March brought a visit by H.H. Kusum Lingpa to Los Angeles. His Holiness gave the Shi-tro and Orgyen Zambhala empowerments and led a live release. He also bestowed a rare transmission of "p'howa while alive," which ensures that the recipient will attain a pure realm upon death.

In early April, we were pleased to welcome Chagdud Khadro for teachings and a workshop entitled "Healing the Emotions," as well as a talk on life in relation to death. Khadro's visit was brief but rewarding.



Lama Gyatso and Pema Thayé in Nepal perfecting gold plates for Chagdud Rinpoche's Thondup Ling stupa

At the end of April, H.E. Namkha Drimed Rinpoche returned to lead the annual Yeshe Tsogyal drupchod, held at Ari Bhöd. Rinpoche has included T'hondup Ling in his U.S. tours for nearly a decade now, and we are profoundly grateful for his tremendous blessings. Rinpoche again commented on the inherent power of the Ari Bhöd retreat land to support spiritual practice and seemed very pleased by the dharma activities that are ongoing there under Lama Gyatso's direction.

July 5 brought the Third Annual Sand Mandala for Universal Peace in Hollywood, this year for the first time a *Rigdzin Düpa* mandala. Lama Thokmé, master of mandala arts, with the assistance of Lama Ludrup and Lama Lhundrup, spent two weeks publicly creating the mandala, grain by grain. Lama Gyatso offered teachings during the construction in addition to daily pujas that are part of the mandala creation.

Gelong Kelsang Rinpoche (a former vajra master of H.H. Chatral Rinpoche's retreat center in Nepal) made an extensive visit to Ari Bhöd, where he oversaw the consecration of the Guru Rinpoche and other statues. Retired professor and Nyingma scholar Nyichang Rinpoche, visiting from Japan, joined six Tibetan lamas for the formal ceremonies.

The annual ngondro retreat was held in late August at Ari Bhöd. We were so happy to attend the teachings in what will be our new Ari Bhöd temple, far from the noise and distraction of the city, with only the trees and mountain as a backdrop.

It was with great sadness that we learned in September of the passing of the great dharma mother Khandro Pema Dechen, the wife of His Holiness Doderupchen Rinpoche. Khandro led a life of selfless dharma service, spending many years in solitary retreat and accomplishing thirteen sets of the extensive *Longchen Nyintik* ngondro practice, among many other things. Lama Gyatso and his family were present at her cremation ceremony in Sikkim. Khandro remained in a state of samadhi (meditative absorption) for seven days following her passing, and many miraculous events surrounded the cremation.

In October Lama Gyatso and our lamas drove to Rigdzin Gatsal in Williams, Oregon, to cut down a sacred cedar tree at a specific time for the central channel of Chagdud Rinpoche's kudung stupa. Lama Gyatso chose the site because of Chagdud Rinpoche's extraordinary blessings, which pervade the land. We are indebted to Lama Jamie of Rigdzin Gatsal for so kindly and generously offering the precious gift of this tree, which was 119 years old and cut strictly according to the text. On their way home, the lamas visited Rigdzin Ling, the North American headquarters of Chagdud Gonpa Foundation, from which the enlightened activities of our precious master Chagdud Rinpoche radiate uninterruptedly and unceasingly throughout the world.

The Shi-tro Mandala has been reassembled and consecrated in its new home, the Mandala Peace House at Ari Bhöd. Prema Swearingen came from Rigdzin Ling for several days to help reassemble the mandala.

October also brought the twelfth annual Tröma drupchod, held at Ari Bhöd and led by Loppon Jigme Rinpoche for one week. In November there were three days of ceremonies commemorating the anniversary of Chagdud Rinpoche's parinirvana. In early December, we were honored to welcome Yangtang Rinpoche for several days of teachings and dharma events. In late December, we again rang in the Western new year with the annual Orgyen Zambhala retreat, led by Lama Gyatso.

If you wish to contribute to a live release or to attend our practices, or would like to be placed on our e-mail list, please e-mail thondupling@yahoo.com.

Yeshe Ling

For Yeshe Ling, 2006 was a year filled with Chagdud Rinpoche's blessings. It was a delight to host Lama Sherab, who was visiting from Khadro Ling, Brazil. After arriving in California in the middle of June, she gave a shamatha meditation training in San Francisco as well as three public talks in different towns in the area. She then led a wonderful week-long ngondro retreat here at Yeshe Ling, which was well attended by students old and new. At the end of July, Lama Tsering led a three-day retreat entitled "Finding Equanimity in a Jagged World." Her teachings were both profound and practical. It was such a gift to receive teachings from these two extraordinary women lamas, both of whom were thoroughly trained by Chagdud Rinpoche. His presence was strong at both events.

At the beginning of September, we were honored by an af-

ternoon visit by Katok Getsé Rinpoche. Jigme Rinpoche drove him across the mountains from PPI, and they were welcomed by a small group of sangha members. We sat together in the shrine room while they drank tea, told stories, and received offerings. As Getsé Rinpoche was leaving the shrine room, he placed a beautiful statue on our altar! He blessed the land as well as our Guru Rinpoche statue and promised to teach at Yeshe Ling in the future.

The annual Lion-Faced Dakini retreat was held later in September. Jigme Rinpoche inspired us as he led the practice and also gave beautiful and thought-provoking teachings. In the isolated surroundings of these hills, the power of the practice was palpable. How fortunate we are!

Finally, progress on the Guru Rinpoche statue continues. Through the extensive efforts of various sangha members, the decorative base has been painted and the damage caused by last winter's harsh weather has been repaired. We hope to erect a roof over the statue, and Lon Hill has donated some beams to get the project going. We are gathering funds and donations for the remaining materials, and now the sacred substances are being collected. More mantra rolling is planned for the coming months, and we are hoping for the auspicious interdependence of a consecration ceremony before the end of 2007. May all beings benefit!

Rigdrol Dechen Ling

The roots of Vajrayana Buddhism in Canada's far north were firmly established in 1977 when the Sixteenth Karmapa, Khenpo Kartar Rinpoche, H.H. Kalu Rinpoche, and an entourage of many lamas traveled to Whitehorse. They trekked up to Montana Mountain, blessed it, and named it Karma Gyurmé Ling. We are compiling a more complete story of these extraordinary events.

Chagdud Rinpoche first traveled here in 1984, performing many ceremonies, including a ten-day fire puja, day and night. He named this land Rigdrol Dechen Ling, Place of Liberating Awareness and Great Bliss, and composed the following verse for his students here:

The view of unwavering, self-arising awareness
is the foundation.

Meditating by letting the mind rest in its true
nature,

Uncontrived and self-liberated, is the path.

Effortlessly expressing one's true nature is the
blissful fruit.

May this precious place of happiness and benefit
to self and others expand and increase.

This year, we hosted five retreats, bringing Lama Zangpo, Lama Inge, Lama Padma, and Lama Norbu to this corner of the planet. Thirty-five people received the Red Tara empowerment from Lama Inge. Sangha members also traveled to Orcas Island for the Chenrezik drupchen, to Rigdzin Ling for the prayer wheel consecration and shedra, and to PPI, Spokane, and Alaska for other retreats.

We have been extraordinarily fortunate over the past year to have so many lamas spin the dharma wheel at Whitehorse.

Each of these wonderful lamas has inspired our sangha members and sparked increasing interest in the Vajrayana throughout the larger community. This momentum will only grow in the coming year, as Khentrul Lodrö T'hayé Rinpoche will be honoring us with a visit for several days at the end of March.

Tromge Ling

Greetings from Tromge Ling and the Alaskan sangha. The Fire Dog year has been blessed by teachings nearly every six to eight weeks. In February Khentrul Lodrö T'hayé Rinpoche conducted a ten-day retreat in the shadow of Mount McKinley. Participants from Alaska, including those from Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, as well as some from Whitehorse, Canada, benefited from the teachings. In November he returned to give the first of a two-part teaching on Atisha's "Seven-Point Mind Training."

Lama Zangpo came in the spring, continuing a series of instructions on sadhana practice. His teachings are a wonderful stitching together of the practices and wisdom of the dharma. In July Lama Zangpo also led a Red Tara retreat. In August Lama Tsering gave a public talk and generously offered the Red Tara empowerment.

Our sangha does sadhana practice together once a week; on these evenings, we also read from Chagdud Khadro's *Red Tara Commentary* and share our experiences of implementing the dharma in our daily lives. We also do a weekly ngondro practice. We extend an invitation to all to come and visit.

We feel very blessed and supported by the generosity of the lamas and the teachings of the dharma for the benefit of others. We are grateful that Rigdzin Ling was protected from the fire that devastated the area and have prayed for those affected by the fire. Tashi Delek.

South America

Khadro Ling

On the fourth anniversary of Chagdud Rinpoche's parinirvana, we naturally reflected on the flow of his blessings, which continue to manifest inwardly as spiritual well-being and outwardly as teachers, teachings, and dharma activities.

Earlier in the year, in July, more than 150 students participated in a powerful, transformative *Essence of Siddhi* drupchen led by Jigme Tromge Rinpoche. A few weeks later, 350 people received Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's inspiring teachings on the extensive Dudjom ngondro, *The Chariot of the Path of Union*. The text was translated into English and Portuguese for the occasion by Joe McClellan and the Makara Translation Committee, who appreciated Rinpoche's suggestions as he reviewed the translation during the course of the teachings.

Next, Katok Getsé Rinpoche arrived to consecrate Khadro Ling's 42 enormous prayer wheels. The Vajrasattva sadhana used for the consecration was the same one used in Nepal for Chagdud Rinpoche's 2002 parinirvana ceremonies, reminding many of us of that period when the recognition of impermanence was profound.

Then, 250 people had the great fortune to receive teachings from Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche on the *Eight Verses of Mind Training* of Langri Tangpa—teachings that demonstrated the

power of the Mahayana to shift our ordinary minds toward the pure perspective of bodhichitta.

Meanwhile, a team of people have continued the extensive preparation of the mantras to be inserted in the statues of the Padmasambhava Pureland. They are working under the direction of our Bhutanese consecration master, Lama Rigdzin Samdrup, whose effort is nonstop and totally inspiring. As Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche once commented, "Lama Rigdzin is really a rinpoche, even if he doesn't accept the title." We know that.

Many people have asked when the consecration of the Pureland will take place. Our best guess now is July or August 2008, and even with that seemingly long interval, it feels like tomorrow in relation to the effort involved. We request that all of you who are devoted to Chagdud Rinpoche offer your



The Padmasambhava Pureland at Khadro Ling

prayers that this amazing endeavor, which is so dependent on the merit of the entire Chagdud Gonpa sangha, will move toward completion without major obstacles. For their part, practitioners in Brazil, Uruguay, and Chile are close to completing 100 million recitations of the Vajra Guru mantra, as well as extensive accumulations of Amitayus and Medicine Buddha mantra recitation.

Finally, we are fulfilling Chagdud Rinpoche's aspiration that 1,000 tsa-tsas be mounted on the back of the throne of the monumental Akshobhya Buddha statue he created. Almost 300 tsa-tsas, which are deep-blue tiles with a carved image of Akshobhya, have been offered by those who are sponsoring mantra recitation and images for the deceased and for loved ones facing untimely death or violence. Information about tsa-tsa sponsorship can be obtained from the Mahakaruna Foundation.

Odsal Ling

In the past few months, Odsal Ling has been blessed with empowerments and teachings by several great lamas. In August Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche gave teachings in São Paulo on the *Wheel of Life* to more than 400 people. He also visited Refugio, where he blessed the temple and performed a ceremony to establish the temple protectors. He helped to determine which

statues were to be included and gave some very welcome instructions to the artists. Katok Getsé Tulku Rinpoche arrived for a brief stay, and more recently, Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche blessed us with the Lojong teachings for training the mind. After extending his stay, he gave teachings on the vows of refuge and bodhichitta. Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche also led an expedition to the beach to perform a ceremony for saving life, accompanied by the release of millions of shrimp and the appearance of auspicious rainbows. It was wonderful to experience such a rich period of "great master" visitors!

Meanwhile, the activities at Odsal Ling, under the direction of Lama Tsering Everest, continue at a rapid pace. Most noticeable has been the creation of artwork that is beginning to adorn the Odsal Ling temple. Four artists from Tibet and Bhutan are coordinating the painting of two 16-foot by 16-foot ceiling tangkas and the making of the five central statues, as well as all of the architectural details of a traditional Tibetan temple. Along with Lama Norbu and the artists, many sangha members are assisting with the artwork and construction details and are learning much in the process. Soon to begin is the process of making thousands of mantra rolls that will be placed in the throne bases of the statues and elsewhere, and assembling the sacred substances.

At the city center, in the urban heart of São Paulo, many new people continue to attend the weekly teachings of Lama Tsering. A new program called Dharma Stream provides her distant students with an opportunity to listen to these teachings live over the Internet (see more details at www.odsalling.org/dharmastream). This program has attracted many new members from all over the world, giving them an innovative way to follow through on their original connection with the teachings. Dharma Stream is supported by membership pledges and was recently reorganized to correspond to the Brazilian standard, making it more affordable for people living outside of Brazil. We are receiving wonderful feedback from those who love to listen in to Lama Tsering from afar.

To find out about upcoming events and progress on the temple, go to www.lamatsering.org. You are always welcome to visit us. Accommodations for personal retreats are available at Refugio, and we would love to have you participate in the temple project. Contact Marcelo at sangha@odsalling.org for more information.

This spring Rigdzin Ling will replace the long bank of prayer flags that line the northern side of the stupas. We have recently printed and begun sewing more than four hundred 5-foot-long longevity prayer flags. The cost of each is \$4.00. If you would like to sponsor one or more of these flags, please contact the office at Rigdzin Ling (530 623-2714).

(Letter continued from page 1)

belief in things being real and permanent; we observe how all phenomena, at every level, are subject to impermanence, how everything eventually exhausts itself and dissolves. Breaking through our self-clinging and attachments, recognizing the illusory nature of phenomena, we become more receptive to the teachings on the nature of mind and emptiness.

Yet we neglect to practice properly some of the things we are taught, and so remain stuck in our dualistic patterns and limited faith. For example, many of us have done the preliminary practices, or ngondro. The hundred thousand repetitions each of refuge and bodhichitta, as well as the refuge and bodhichitta prayers we recite in our daily practice, are supposed to leave an imprint. But although our hands come together nicely in prayer and we sing beautifully, where is our mind? Are we engaging fully in the practice, or have the mudras become an automatic reflex while our minds remain distracted? It is important to reflect honestly on this because we have a strong tendency toward duality, and if we are not vigilant, our habits kick in and obstruct our practice. If we do not make an effort, the Tara or Guru Rinpoche whom we visualize in front of us becomes an exalted object, and we stay as ordinary as can be. There is nothing we can achieve from this kind of approach. We have to remember that there are relative and ultimate refuge and bodhichitta; on the relative level, we have a mandala in front of us, but on the absolute level, the mandala of the deity is none other than our own true nature.

Thus under the guidance of a master, we develop a suitable foundation and maintain ongoing awareness of our practice; only this allows us to approach the place where irreversible faith can arise. We can have glimpses of the nature of mind, but glimpses will not make us free; when the experience evaporates, we are back to being ordinary. What is required is constant practice, renewing, integrating. At first, we perceive something or other, then fall into the trap of judgment and reaction; perhaps five minutes later, we recognize how we've strayed, re-apply the teachings, and allow whatever has distracted us to dissolve. This can be a lengthy procedure, but the more we apply the teachings and practice, the faster we will recognize our straying, avoid the traps, and dissolve our clinging, until we reach the point where the moment something arises it is liberated. Remember, it is not that realized masters do not see or hear anything. They see and hear as much as we do; the only difference is that there is no attachment or aversion. This is because they understand the true nature of whatever arises. We should realize that every experience has to become a practice. The practice of absolute truth or emptiness encompasses every imaginable experience. Nothing need be abandoned or rejected. Certainty about the lack of inherent truth of phenomena, trust in the teachings, and boundless gratitude to the masters of the lineage deepen our faith.

Even people who never met our beloved Chagdud Rinpoche have been inspired to set out on the path of dharma after simply seeing his picture, listening to his singing, or reading his words. All those who make a connection with him can build on those initial stages of faith and apply the teachings so that they too can develop the irreversible faith that will keep them steady on the path to enlightenment.

CHAGDUD GONPA FOUNDATION DIRECTORY

Please visit WWW.CHAGDUD.ORG for a complete directory of centers,
including web site addresses.

North American Centers

Rigdzin Ling

Lama Drimed Norbu
P.O. Box 279
Junction City, CA 96048
(530) 623-2714
(530) 623-6709 fax
chagdud@snowcrest.net
www.chagdud.org

Ati Ling/PPI

Jigme Tromge Rinpoche
23125 Fort Ross Rd.
Cazadero, CA 95421
(707) 824-0291 (Cgf Events)
(707) 632-5629 (PPI)
atiling@hotmail.com

T'hondup Ling

Lama Chödak Gyatso
Nubpa
P.O. Box 292499
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(323) 953-0755
thondupling@yahoo.com

Dechhen Ling

Lama Dorje and
Lama Trinley
198 North River Road
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Sharon: (541) 942-5258
jwmiller@efn.org

Amrita

Lama Padma Gyatso
2223 N.E. 137th Street
Seattle, WA 98125
(206) 368-7974
info@amritaseattle.org

Chokdrup Ling

Lama Padma Gyatso
P.O. Box 182
Dove Creek, CO 81324
(206) 368-7974
info@amritaseattle.org

Padma Ling

Lama Inge Zangmo
1014 W. Seventh Ave.
Spokane, WA 99204
(509) 747-1559
padmaling@icehouse.net

Iron Knot Ranch

Lama Shenpen Drolma
P.O. Box 769
Silver City, NM 88061
(510) 315-1960
ironknot@ironknot.org

Lhundrub Ling

Lama Shenpen Drolma
Flagstaff, AZ
(510) 315-1960
ironknot@ironknot.org

P'huntsog Ling

Santa Barbara, CA
(805) 569-0766
energymedicines@aol.com

Yeshe Ling

Napa Valley, CA
(707) 963-8340
lahdvm@napanet.net

Chhö Khor Ling

Arcata, CA
(707) 445-8248
hubbard2@cox.net

Minjur Ling

Ashland, OR
(541) 488-0682
phansen@mind.net

Orgyan Rigjed Ling

c/o Dennis Kennedy
Boulder, CO
(303) 443-1569
dken1208@aol.com

Padma Center

c/o John Chen
Belvedere, IL
(815) 978-7159
chen0981@yahoo.com

Dungkar Ling

c/o Sandra Belfiore
Honey Brook, PA
(610) 942-2512
dungkarling@aol.com

Orgyen Ling

c/o Karen Fuller
New York, NY
(212) 932-8442

Tromge Ling

c/o Mary Wladowski
Anchorage, AK
(907) 345-4889
tromgeling@gmail.com

Rigdrol Dechen Ling

c/o Cheryl Buchan
Whitehorse, Yukon
Canada
(867) 667-6951

U.S. Practice Groups

Rigdzin Gatsal

Williams, OR
(541) 846-7814

Corvallis, OR

(541) 754-7443
cvopractice2002@yahoo.com

Orcas Island, WA

(360) 376-5881
nakedlamb@rockisland.com

Twisp, WA

(509) 997-2407
crain@methow.com

San Francisco Bay Area

(925) 229-0599
mzchel@sbcglobal.net

Moscow, ID

(208) 882-1871
blumun@moscow.com

Reno, NV

(775) 351-9129
nusangha@charter.net

Silver City, NM

(505) 538-5647
ter2verdi123@aol.com

Albuquerque, NM

(505) 247-4374
kmeidell@yahoo.com

Minneapolis, MN

(612) 724-4899
practice@usinternet.com

Danbury, CT

(203) 743-5355
boianuws@yahoo.com

Ithaca, NY

(607) 592-1038
carmela@usedbookfind.com

Main Brazilian Centers

Khadro Ling

Chagdud Khadro
Cx. Postal 121: 95660-000
Três Coroas, RS, Brasil
011-55-51-3546-8200
chagdud@chagdud.org

Odsal Ling

Lama Tsering Everest
Av. Brig. Luis Antonio 2870:
01401-000
São Paulo, SP, Brasil
011-55-11-3885-3945
sangha@odsalling.org

WIND HORSE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Wind Horse is published approximately twice a year by Chagdud Gonpa Foundation. If you are a member, you will receive it at no charge. Nonmembers can subscribe for \$6.00 for two issues (\$10.00 for two years; \$15.00 for six issues). Foreign subscriptions cost U.S. \$10.00 per year (\$17.00 for two years). Send a check payable to "Chagdud Gonpa Foundation" to Rigdzin Ling, attention Wind Horse.