
THE WIND HORSE



NEWSLETTER OF CHAGDUD GONPA

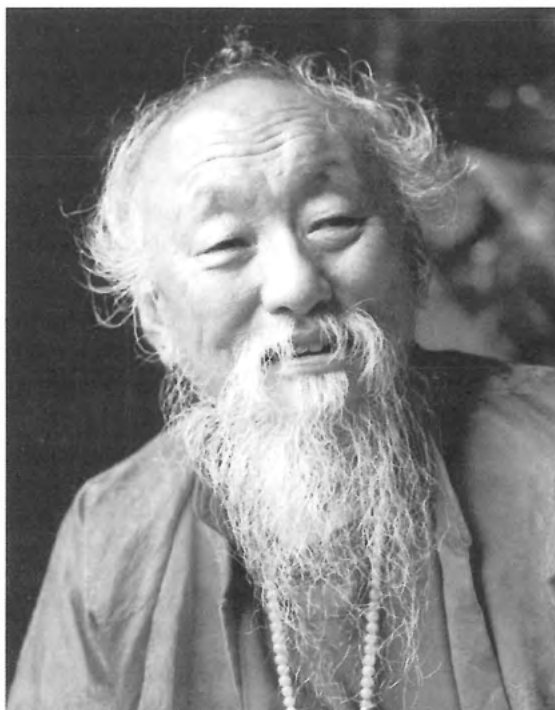
WINTER 2000

Dear Sangha,

At this point in my life, each of these letters to you becomes a marker. Many of you know that since the *Essence of Siddhi* drubchen at Khadro Ling last July, I have gone through a turbulent period with my health that culminated in an angioplasty to open two blocks in my arteries. I am much more comfortable now, the beneficiary of excellent medical care, tireless assistance by my attendants, and generous support and powerful prayers by the sangha.

Naturally there is a lesson in this for me, as there would be for anyone who goes through a life-threatening crisis. The truth of the Buddha's teachings is presented to me with stunning impact. Whatever comes together is impermanent and will surely fall apart; whoever is born will surely die. I myself have taught this fundamental insight into how things are again and again, and it has illuminated many situations in my life, but this time it flashed like brilliant lightning.

Students sometimes express surprise that their teachers and others they revere as having extraordinary realization should ever be sick. Yet whoever takes rebirth in the human realm—either by choice as a bodhisattva or by karmic destiny—is subject to the relative phenomena of this realm, which include birth, old age, sickness, and death. We hold the seeds of all phenomena in our mindstream. Depending upon whether or not we recognize their true nature, we experience them either as the pure display of awareness or as the impure display of our own confusion and delusion.



Illness has stimulated my compassion for all who share the human condition and has increased my desire to serve them. Limitations on my physical activities and oral transmissions have caused me to rely more heavily on the capabilities of my mind. I can tell you unequivocally that of the three—body, speech, and mind—mind has by far the greatest power and benefit. My faith and my devotion to my precious lamas, who have blessed me continuously with their mind transmissions, have deepened beyond what I ever would have imagined at my age. My greatest wishes are to repay their kindness and to convey it to you, my cherished students.

I really don't know if I have entered the moment-of-death bardo and this heart condition will be the cause of my death, or if this is just

the deterioration of old age and the real cause of death has yet to introduce itself. At times, dreams seem to indicate that the transition is near, but then auspicious dreams and visions follow. Maybe your prayers and practice are staving off the inevitable; maybe I am held by my unfinished projects.

Dharma activities have always served as a means of both training my students and creating sacred mandalas where pure dharma will be practiced for generations. The lamas I have ordained are now upholding my projects and adding their own. The activity of some of them already has great scope. I think particularly of Tulku Jigme's projects in Tibet, Lama Drimed's at Rigdzin Ling, Lama Gyatso's with the Shi-tro Mandala, and the work of lamas Chökyi Nyima, Zangpo, Dorje, and Tsultrim to

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According to Veronica Miller, "Sometimes fishermen pull up to the dock in their motorboats to buy bait. Seeing twenty people surrounding a Tibetan lama, praying over a net full of little fish, probably comes as some surprise. But it must affect them, however subtly."

Chagdud Khadro spoke about an earlier fish release: "In 1981, when Rinpoche's life seemed quite tenuous, his students in Santa Barbara sponsored a fish release. Some of the bait sellers were insulted when they learned that the fish and crustaceans would not be used for bait and actually refused to sell them. Some, however, cooperated fully, and seemed to enjoy participating in a life-affirming activity. In addition to the small bait, we purchased some lobsters and crabs and went out on a fishing boat to release them in an appropriate environment. One lobster in particular Rinpoche fervently prayed over at length, making the aspiration that this benighted being would someday become a Dzogchen master. At the time I found it a little far-fetched; now I expect I could meet this creature again in some future lifetime and prostrate to it as a rigdzin—a master of awareness."

Julianna Balistieri, a resident of Rigdzin Ling, said she walked into a fishing shop on Balboa Island to buy some bait fish to release. The owner offered to give her a few anchovies, but he said, "They are still going to die eventually." She replied, "We all will, but perhaps they might live a little longer." At a nearby dock, not far from some Vietnamese fishermen, Julianna released the fish and sat briefly praying for them. When she looked up, she saw one of the fishermen watching. He smiled at her and folded his hands in prayer. It seemed that, having come from a Buddhist country, the idea of saving life was not at all foreign to him.

The practice of saving life had an auspicious beginning at Iron Knot Ranch when Susan Baldwin ransomed the life of a particularly spirited cow, now affectionately known as "Lady," who was supposed to be shipped off to auction the day the sangha took possession of the ranch. According to Michael Bradfute, Susan offered to pay for her when "Lady leaped the loading ramp fence at the last possible moment and took off for the hills, no small feat, for as it turned out, she was with child. . . . About two months later, and on a Tara Day no less, we ran into Lady on the side of Crystal Mountain. I don't know who was more surprised to see who when out from behind her stumbled Spot, prettiest little bull you ever did see."

This fall, Iron Knot Ranch invited individuals to participate in a "Cattle Drive," which resulted in the ransom and release of ten heifer calves, who will live out their lives free of the fear of the slaughterhouse. Two new horses were also acquired (escaping the more traditional means of being retired) and are now companions of the previously lonely equine Norbu. These Iron Knot newcomers join Lady and Spot, an unconfirmed number of dogs (the most well known being Yeshe, a stray rescued by Don Delaquil from an L.A. freeway), two cats, and several goldfish

(refugees from a Walmart "feeder fish" aquarium) in the cool shade of the lama's blessings.

Chagdud Khadro recounted some of the Brazilian sangha's life-saving efforts: "In 1996 we saved a pig, who is now enormous, and allowed the first of a pack of about a dozen street dogs to take up permanent residence. The worst looking, Gina, an abused female with one eye and paps hanging down to the ground, has the finest, bravest character. Rinpoche never looks at her without rejoicing that she has survived and found a comfortable haven here. This year, deeply concerned about Rinpoche's health, we recklessly organized the purchase of ducks, geese, guinea fowl, and roosters, all of whom were slated for sacrifice by black magic practitioners—there's a market for such animals in Brazil. It is alarming to survey these flocks and contemplate their potential for rampant propagation. Twelve little ducklings have already appeared. But Rinpoche doesn't worry. He only wants them well cared for, and to that end he is sponsoring the construction of a barn."

There are times that we simply can't save a life, but that too becomes practice. While living in Nepal recently, Paloma Lopez was moved by the suffering of animals being sacrificed there: "When a couple of the nuns and I went down into the town of Parping, just minutes away from the Ani Gonpa, we saw hundreds of hot, thirsty goats tied up waiting to be sold for sacrifice. We bought a couple and took them up to the gonpa, but all we could do to ease the suffering of the others was to give them water with dutzi in it."

Julianna spoke about a wounded cat she found on a highway and took to an emergency veterinary hospital. The vet did not think the cat would survive—even with emergency treatment, which in any case Julianna could not afford. She sat crying in the room with the dying cat, wishing there were more she could do. She prayed to the lama that there would be some benefit from the connection she had made with the cat.

It really comes down to guru yoga. We need to pray to the lama for the purest intention. We might feel attached to helping other beings—even proud. But our own minds are so small. If only we can access the lama's vast mind, it will help us to understand the karma and interdependence of all beings.

Samsara is such that for every being we may save there are countless others we cannot. And impermanence is such that all beings will eventually die. So it may seem that our efforts have no more effect than a drop of water in the ocean. But the real power of such practice lies in our selfless dedication of the merit to the longevity of our lama. Even if we do not feel that our own practice will ease the suffering of others, we have felt the power of the lama's blessings—the lama's ability to turn people's minds to the dharma—an extraordinary accomplishment. By praying that the life and activities of the lama will flourish, we ensure that many others will have the fortune to make a connection with an authentic teacher and gain the potential to attain enlightenment, so that all of samsara will be emptied.

Lama Trinley

An Interview with Paloma Lopez

Paloma Lopez grew up at Rigdzin Gatsal in Williams, Oregon. At the age of two, she saw H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche for the first time during the construction of the Guru Rinpoche statue. Now twenty-one, she practices dharma, is learning the Tibetan language, and recently spent an extended period of time studying in Nepal. Since speaking with Lama Trinley, she has returned to Nepal.

LT: What inspired you to go to Nepal?

Paloma: I had always thought it would be nice to learn Tibetan, but it wasn't until three years ago, when I did a ngondro retreat, that I got serious about it. My mom [Drusilla Lopez] visited me in retreat, and as she was leaving, she said a prayer in Tibetan, which I didn't recognize. I had been doing all my ngondro prayers in English. When I asked her what it was she replied, "That's the refuge and bodhi-chitta prayer that you recite during prostrations." And I thought, "Maybe I should learn it in Tibetan."

To me, there is an amazing blessing in the Tibetan language. If I can read a practice in Tibetan and understand the meaning, it is so profound it makes me cry.

Once I learned the ngondro prayers in Tibetan, the shift in my practice was obvious. I realized that learning Tibetan was something I wanted to seriously pursue. It began to look like the best way to do that would be to sit down with a group of Tibetans and immerse myself in the language. That isn't exactly what happened, though, because the Tibetans in Nepal all wanted to learn English.

LT: Was it difficult for you when you first got to Nepal?

Paloma: It was really difficult. I had considered going to Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche's shedra [dharma school] for Westerners, but Lama Sonam, the resident lama of Dechhen Ling in Oregon, thought I might get distracted. I was eighteen and still liked to party, so he sent me to Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche, who lived about forty minutes from Boudha. Being in a monastery, where the monks wouldn't talk to me, was like being in retreat. For three months I stayed in a room by myself. Khetsun Zangpo kindly gave me a teacher, but to really learn Tibetan you need to speak it and no one would talk to me, except in English. My teacher was a very nice older monk, but he would only read aloud from my book and say, "Do you understand?" The English

was written below the Tibetan, so I would say, "Yes, I understand," because I didn't know enough Tibetan to ask questions.

I became really frustrated, but the experience taught me to discipline myself—to be alone, and just study and practice. Now I know how to study, whether I have a teacher or not, whether I'm around people or not. Although those three months were challenging and somewhat miserable, they were good for me. I did a lot of practice and contemplated the four thoughts, which was really powerful.

After that, I spent a couple of weeks in Boudha. I heard that Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche needed help, and I ended up working with him at his Ani Gonpa, translating faxes from the West into Tibetan. Every day there was a new fax. For two months, I worked with my dictionary, Tulku Sang-ngag, and a couple of nuns, and my Tibetan took off.

Once Tulku Sang-ngag left for the United States, I spent all my time at the Ani Gonpa. That was wonderful. I've never been so content. For about six months I stayed with the nuns and taught them English every day. I enjoyed doing tsok with them because they all had such melodious and vibrant voices. They do an amazing chod practice and a Chenrezig practice that is so beautiful.

LT: Have you kept up with your study of Tibetan since you have been back in the United States?

Paloma: Speaking it is a little difficult since I'm not around Tibetans, but I listen to tapes and read every day, as well as study grammar and vocabulary. The most frustrating thing has been trying to find a good teacher. I met one the last month I was in Nepal and discovered mistakes I had been making for the past fifteen months—that was okay because I've learned from those mistakes.

The sentence structure of the Tibetan language is amazingly challenging. I am surprised at what I got myself into. But in talking with other Western translators, like Lama Chökyi Nyima and Eric Pema Kunzang, I've realized how much more difficult it was for them to learn Tibetan, considering how few texts had been translated. Chökyi said he had to sit down with a text and one of Herbert Gunther's translations and translate word for word. But because of the work they've done, I've had an opportunity to learn much faster.

Tibetans stress the importance of spelling. For the first few years, kids in the monasteries don't learn vocabulary. They just spell, read, and learn how to write. When I read, I don't worry about what the words mean. Sometimes I'll understand a whole page and sometimes I won't understand anything. But slowly I'm starting to comprehend. Some day I'd like to try translating, although I won't know how skilled I am until I try.



Paloma at the Ani Gonpa

Lineage Holders of Inherent Truth

This is the final article in the series by Lama Padma Drimed Norbu recounting the lives of great beings who have maintained the teachings and practice of the Dzogchen path, particularly those of the Longchen Nyintik lineage revealed by the great Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa.

Khenpo Ngaga had many students, but the one who most pertains to our lineage was one of H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche's teachers, Khenpo Dorje. Aside from what Chagdud Rinpoche recounts in his autobiography, *Lord of the Dance*, little has been written about Khenpo Dorje. What follows are a few words that Rinpoche has passed on to us.

As a young boy, Khenpo Dorje was very inspired by the dharma and studied assiduously. Having no lamp to read by, he would often study in the moonlight, moving up the hillside as the moon traveled across the night sky. Sometimes he would read by the glow of an incense stick. After many years of study and contemplation, he concluded that knowledge gained through study would not lead to full realization of the true nature of mind and that he should now follow the path of meditation.

After receiving empowerments and teachings of the Longchen Nyintik cycle from Khenpo Ngaga, he went into a three-year retreat. As a minor accomplishment of his meditation, he became clairvoyant. Whenever anyone traveled to his retreat site to bring him food and supplies—a three-day journey—Khenpo Dorje knew who it was, what he was bringing, and what he was thinking.

After three years, he examined his mind honestly and saw that his attachment and aversion hadn't really changed, so he left retreat and returned to Khenpo Ngaga for more teachings. After completing another retreat, he was still not satisfied and went to a great siddha to request further teachings. The siddha began to dance, and when he made a particular gesture, the fixations of Khenpo Dorje's ordinary mind dissolved and everything changed. When practicing the path of tōgal, he experienced the four visions unceasingly, day and night, for two weeks.

Khenpo Dorje didn't chant or use a mala but always simply rested in equipoise, in the nature of mind. Chagdud Rinpoche met Khenpo Dorje in Central Tibet, where he studied with and served him. Once as they sat together at the site of a former channel ground, Khenpo Dorje told Rinpoche to get some chang (alcohol). When Rinpoche returned, Khenpo Dorje blessed the



Khenpo Dorje

chang, offering it as tsok. He poured some into his small cup, drank a little, and then offered the tsok chang to Rinpoche. In this way teacher and student offered tsok and then shared it with one another.

During the Chinese occupation, Khenpo Dorje and Chagdud Rinpoche fled Tibet together. During the arduous journey, they lost all their possessions. At one point, realizing that there was not enough food for the two of them, Rinpoche offered to go his own way so that his teacher would not go hungry. Khenpo Dorje ended up in Bhutan, where he founded a small gonpa just outside of T'himpu that is maintained to this day. Practitioners do private retreat there, and the main shrine room houses a small golden stupa containing Khenpo Dorje's relics.

Khenpo Dorje passed the Dzogchen lineage on to his student Chagdud Rinpoche, our beloved lama. One of Rinpoche's names, Padma Gargi Wangchuk, means "Powerful

Lord of the Dance of the Lotus Family." "Of the Lotus Family" means that he is free of all attachment and that his perception of samsara and nirvana is pure. He has the eyes of lotus wisdom, discerning wisdom. "Powerful Lord" means that he has complete mastery over all phenomenal appearances. "Of the Dance" means that he moves like a dancer through the phenomenal world, manifesting as our teacher, caring for and guiding us without his mind ever moving from the vast expanse of awareness. This is dakini.

We are fortunate indeed to have found a guru in whom the entire Dzogchen lineage is embodied. This series of articles ends with a quote from Padgyal Lingpa, treasure discoverer of a Red Vajrasattva cycle and Chagdud Rinpoche's dharma friend:

"If you aspire to become free from the dungeon of samsaric ignorance, you must first of all rely on a spiritual teacher. To start with you should be wise in searching for a teacher. In the middle you should care for him as you would your own life, through the three ways of pleasing him, and in the end you should receive his wisdom mind, like a vase being filled to the brim.

"Without reliance on a spiritual teacher, there would be no buddhas of the three times. Without being cared for by a teacher, one would never gain realization. Whoever is under the guru's care will reach the land of unending bliss. The guru is the source of an ocean of siddhis; therefore, be earnest in relying on him in the right way."

An Interview with Tulku Jigme Rinpoche

Jigme Tromge Rinpoche is a tulku of Tsewang Norbu, the son of the first Chokgyur Lingpa. In a previous life Jigme Rinpoche was also Yudra Nyingpo, one of the twenty-five close disciples of Guru Padmasambhava. Born in 1964, he received a traditional Buddhist education in Asia and then completed a three-year retreat in the United States. Jigme Rinpoche has received empowerments and teachings from many masters, including his father, H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche. He spoke with Lama Trinley after the Essence of Siddhi drubchen at Rigdzin Ling this fall.

LT: Could you tell us about some of the masters who are your teachers and talk about what you have learned from them?

Jigme Rinpoche: When I was about six years old, I began studying at Chokling Monastery with all the monks and tulkus. We had a tutor, but Chokgyur Lingpa's son, Tulku Urgyen Topgyal Rinpoche, also instructed us. He was quite wrathful and at the time I didn't enjoy the discipline, but toward the end of my stay there I really appreciated it, because in a short time I learned reading, writing, and ritual arts. When I was nine years old, I received my first formal teachings from my father, Chagdud Rinpoche, on Nyingthik ngondro and the p'howa cycle of Rigdzin Longsal Nyingpo.

Later on, I studied with Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche, a very great scholar and practitioner of the Nyingma lineage who had just opened a shedra in India. We were among the first batch of students. I lived with him for four years and received teachings on Patrul Rinpoche's *Words of My Perfect Teacher* from him. Rinpoche also taught other, more scholarly texts, but from the standpoint of practice those were the most important teachings he gave me. I have deep respect for him. He has a very strong presence, and as teenagers, whenever we saw him coming, we would run away. Yet I never saw him get angry—he is very loving, gentle, and kind. I think of him as one of my main teachers.

Over the years I've received many teachings and empowerments from H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche, H.H. Jigme P'huntsok Rinpoche, H.E. Tulku Orgyen Rinpoche, H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche, Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, Do Drubchen Rinpoche, and Trulshik Rinpoche. There were other important connections I made as well.

I didn't receive so many teachings from Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, but from the time I was very young, whenever I saw him it gave me something. I didn't know how to label it then, but later, when I had done some retreat and practice, I could feel it as some shift in my meditation. In India, I used to visit him every day and felt very strong comfort from him. Later, while in retreat in Williams, I received Khenpo Ngaga's Dzogchen teachings from him. I consider him one of my teachers because whenever I saw him, my practice, which I don't have much of, took a small leap.

When I was quite young, I received many teachings, empowerments, and oral transmissions from H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche, but due to youthful distraction I didn't study closely with him. When I did three-year retreat under the guidance of

Chagdud Rinpoche, I felt very guilty because I realized what a precious opportunity I had blown. During my retreat, whenever I would think of His Holiness, my deep, heart-felt longing to be in his presence intensified, because I knew what an opportunity I had missed. So I prayed one-pointedly to Khyentse Rinpoche and began to receive teachings from him in my dreams.

In these dreams, he was always in the same big temple like a palace and he was always on the second floor. A few lamas that I recognized were always there. But on the day of his passing, in September 1991, he asked each of us questions about Dzogchen and we each answered according our own understanding. Then he gave us brief instructions and asked, "Are you sure you've got it?" We all nodded. Then he told us that if, in the future, we had any doubts about Dzogchen practice we should read a particular text by Longchen Rabjam and it would help resolve those doubts. The minute he said that, I realized he was dying. I started crying in the dream and when I woke up at four in the morning I was still crying—there were tears everywhere. I called Rigdzin Ling to see if they had heard anything. At first they hadn't, but later that day someone called back with the news that His Holiness had passed away.

I felt very lonely. I called my father, who was on pilgrimage in China. I was very emotional and I said to him, "I think I want to go. I don't really care about three-year retreat. I just want to go to pay my respects and do practice." In response, Rinpoche gave me a very brief teaching on guru yoga. With just a few words, he made me feel free to go, yet at the same time he made me understand that going and staying in retreat were exactly the same. With those few words, he completely cut my attachment to being in Nepal, so I didn't leave retreat.

But sometimes when I practiced guru yoga I still thought about it. Then one day I really started to think that living was not so worthwhile. So I prayed to Khyentse Rinpoche and went to sleep. In my dream I saw him in the same palace but this time on a very high throne, giving empowerments. I came a little late, so I sat by the door. When he finished and I went up to receive his blessings, I said, "Please take me with you." Then he pulled my head, and it was very strange because it stretched all the way up to his throne and into his lap but somehow my feet still touched the ground. Then he asked me for some scissors and, when they appeared in my hand, I gave them to him. He took a big clump of hair and said, "O fortunate son, it is not time for you to come yet, but it is good to think in this way." And he cut off some of my hair. Then he put his huge hands on the sides of my head. When I woke up, I could still feel the warmth and softness of those hands. Later when I sat down to do practice, I could feel quite a change in my meditation.

Another turning point in my practice was my connection with Tromge Tulku Arik Rinpoche, although due to my lack of merit I never met him. When Chagdud Rinpoche, Khadro, and I went to Tibet in 1987, we traveled to Tulku Arik Rinpoche's hermitage on a small hill near Tromge Monastery. We came around a ridge, and the minute I saw the hill I was a different person. It really did something to me. The qualities of enlight-

ened beings and bodhisattvas are so great that their presence can change the whole environment. Before then I had very little compassion, but in that moment I got at least some *sense* of compassion. It came very naturally, and I knew right away that I wanted to stop eating meat and to give up worldly things. True dharma arose just from seeing the hill Tulku Arik lived on.

In order to establish our connection with him, Tulku Arik Rinpoche gave Chagdud Khadro and I a longevity blessing through his retreat cabin window. At that time my ordinary thoughts dissolved and I rested naturally in rigpa—awareness.

When I met H.H. Jigme P'huntsok, I felt a very strong connection with him. I haven't received so many teachings from him, but I had an interesting experience when I first saw him at the airport. Before I could even say hello or receive his blessings, he made a gesture with his index fingers linked, which in Tibet is the sign of friendship. There was a definite connection between us. When I saw that gesture, my practice changed in a nice way, and since then His Holiness has kept me under his care. Whenever I practice Manjushri I see him, especially when I give the peaceful Manjushri empowerment he asked me to bestow. Sometimes when I'm offering this empowerment, I feel that if I could touch my heart it might be in the shape of him. I have very little knowledge or practice, but what tiny bit I have comes from his kindness. I consider him one of my main teachers, because even that first gesture helped to untangle confusion in my practice.

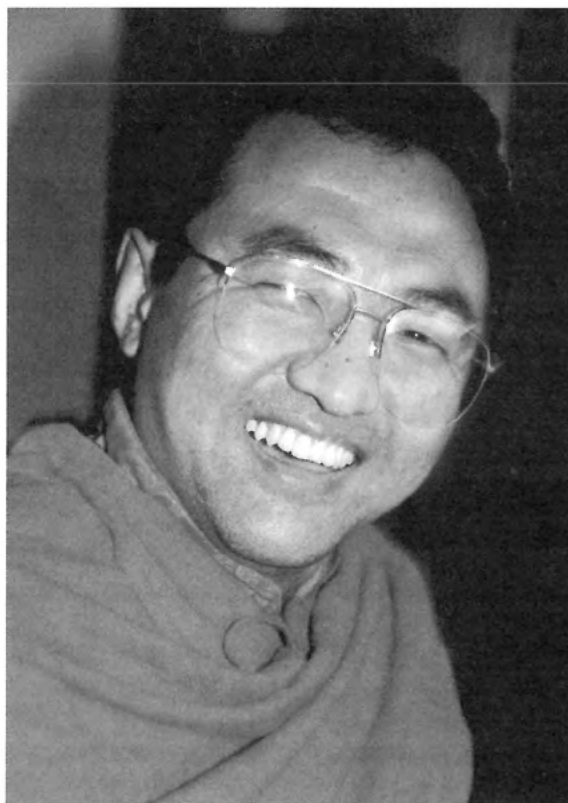
When I first started retreat, I had many different experiences which I now think were obstacles. I would call Rinpoche to tell him about them, and at first he was patient with me, but it seemed that the more I told him the more I would experience. Eventually, after a few months of this, Rinpoche started getting irritated, so I stopped calling him. The phenomena began to dissolve, which disappointed me. Maybe I had just been trying to please Rinpoche so he would praise me. But when he became wrathful I stopped hoping for praise. We can read in the biographies of great masters about how they practiced and related to their own teachers, but it's difficult to follow their examples because our own habits are so strong. After three or four months, I realized how Rinpoche had in one moment cut through months of useless thoughts.

As I said, when I was in retreat I often dreamt of H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche. In the daytime if my view wavered or my recognition was not so stable then in my dreams, when he gave me blessings, he would either turn his head away or touch me

with just one finger. It was very powerful being poked on the head with one finger. It corrected me naturally.

So these are some of the masters I think of as my teachers. My two main teachers are my father and H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Chagdud Rinpoche is both my father and my teacher, but mostly our relationship is as teacher and student.

LT: You mentioned once how important it is for Chagdud Rinpoche's students to start doing the practices that are his terma.



Tulku Jigme Rinpoche

Jigme Rinpoche: Rinpoche never calls them terma; he prefers to call them pure visions. But other lamas have predicted that he would discover terma and that's what I think they are. It is my thought that since we have the texts we should request the teachings and empowerments and start doing the practices. I was hoping to take these teachings to Chagdud, Tromge, and Tenpel gonpas in Tibet so they could establish them there. But when I asked Rinpoche about it, he said it wasn't time to do the practices openly yet.

He's not making a big deal about them, because he is humble and respects other terma that were revealed before his. I think it is our responsibility to request these teachings and empowerments and try to hold the practices; otherwise they might be lost. Although many great tertons have discovered terma, and although there may be texts for these practices, in some cases there is no lineage because no one did the practice. The omniscient Padma-

sambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal hid particular teachings to be revealed at a certain time; I'm sure Rinpoche's treasures are meant for this generation—otherwise he would not have revealed them.

LT: What is the difference between pure vision and terma?

Jigme Rinpoche: Terma are teachings that were spoken by great masters in the past such as Guru Padmasambhava. They were then hidden intact, in various ways, such as earth terma and mind terma, to be revealed, with the blessings of Guru Padmasambhava, by great masters in degenerate times in order to benefit beings.

Pure vision depends on, and is an expression of, the master's realization. Those with less realization may have a meditative experience and write things down, but a pure vision can still be tainted by their own expectations or mixed with their own experiences. But the meditation of such great masters as Chagdud Rinpoche and H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche is unwavering.

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Their view is grounded and unchanging, so their visions are authentic.

It may sound like I'm just praising my relatives, but in the Tromge family each generation has a Tara siddha. Khen Rinpoche, Khenpo Achung, and many other lamas around Tromtar, Tibet, believe that my father is the Tara siddha of this generation. That's quite obvious because he has many visions and terma concerning Tara, including one very elaborate Green Tara sadhana. Also H.H. Khyentse Rinpoche used to tell me that my father is a siddha who mastered Vajrakilaya. Basically, if you are a master of view then everything else follows, but at the same time individuals do have connections with specific practices.

LT: Could you tell us about your ongoing dharma projects in Asia?

Jigme Rinpoche: I have two current projects in eastern Tibet and another that will begin this summer. At Chagdud Gonpa, the oldest monastery in the Nyarong region and the seat of H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche, the shedra project is almost two-thirds completed. My intention is to serve and extend Rinpoche's activities by making the school available to both monks and lay people.

The second project is the construction of a drubdra [retreat facility] at Tromge Monastery, my family monastery. I feel that it is important to provide an environment where many students can benefit from doing traditional retreats under the guidance of great masters such as Tromge Khachod Wangpo, a great-grandson of Tertön Sogyal, and Tromge Trungpa Rinpoche.

The third project—another drubdra—will begin this summer at Nyugshul Monastery in Tromtar Valley, the seat of Khenpo Lungtok and Khenpo Ngaga. The abbot of the monastery is Khenpo Ngakchung, the incarnation of Khenpo Ngaga, who was an emanation of Vimalamitra. There is already a shedra there, but the drubdra will help to ensure that the lineage of these two great khenpos can continue.

I am equally involved in all my projects, but the most challenging has been the construction of what will be the largest Guru Rinpoche statue ever built, which will be located on a site in the Parping Valley, just a few hundred feet from Yangleshod Cave. I am building the statue to help fulfill a prophecy of great masters of the past who predicted that to do so would bring peace to the world. The land has been purchased, and I am now in the process of raising funds for the project, which will also include a temple. I hope to begin construction in 2002.

LT: You are in an interesting position because you were trained in Asia yet live in the West. You travel back and forth. Do you have any advice for Western dharma practitioners about keeping the dharma pure?

Jigme Rinpoche: It is very important to keep the dharma pure. "Pure" means not being influenced by the three poisons. "Pure" means staying away from the negative mind. Keeping dharma pure all depends on how pure our intention is. For that reason, it is important to contemplate and try to understand the suffering of samsara. The more we understand the suffering of samsara, the more we are able to allow our pure intention and

(continued on page 11)

Our practice may be
likened to a cast iron pot
cooking still even after the flame is off.
So whether we are in formal practice or not,
the practice is profound in accord with the
profundity one brings to it.

Whether or not one enjoys meditative absorption,
whether or not one is caught up in thoughts
or sleepy torpor,
recognizing the unique occasion of
this precious human body,
we arouse the intention to be of
benefit to motherly sentient beings.

We recall the meaning, the very words of the
precious Khenpo—
"Let rest the exhausted mind—
beaten helplessly by karma
and neurotic thought."
We wish this for all beings—
we wish this for ourselves as well.

Whether or not we find happiness or sorrow,
we acknowledge the endless stream of
outer and inner phenomena.
Knowing that the great ones have likened
all of these to appearances in a dream,
we continually make offerings;
we offer our practice according to
our capabilities.

Whether or not we find long or short moments
—a long or short life—
we know all mortal existence
to have no more holding power
than a butter lamp in the wind.
We dedicate whatever little merit
we have generated—at any given point—
for the sake of beings.

Freeing ourselves of the eight
worldly concerns
our faith arises, blazing
amidst the great equality of being.
May the nectar of the lama's
blessings fall like rain.
May we ever remain a field
of merit for beings.

Somewhat like the old Paul Simon song—
we're still cooking after all these years—
how fortunate.

This was found near an empty teacup at Rigdzin Gatsal.

Sangha News

The Rigdzin Ling Stupas

This summer and fall the Rigdzin Ling stupa project shifted into high gear, with some residents working fifteen-hour days, seven days a week. The following comments were made by Rob and Rachel Olds, two of the many individuals who lent extraordinary effort and diligence to various phases of this immense project.

We had given up our art careers before coming to the dharma in our search for a teacher. And now, as we worked on the stupas, the blessings of the lama poured through our hands as we sculpted and painted with an intention beyond words.

Shortly after we started working on the stupas, Lama Drimed told us that Rinpoche's projects have a compelling quality, and that was familiar, a lot like getting ready for an art exhibit, only instead of putting everything into our egos, we flung ourselves headlong into the guru's blessings.

The stupas were hard work, but they opened something up in us. Being in the midst of all that sanding, grinding, plaquing, and painting was like riding through a car wash, being relentlessly scrubbed, shaken, and whirled, and then emerging a little dazed, dazzled by a brightness hard to define—more of the lama's blessings.

The blessings appeared in shapes and colors sculpted and blended into these reflections of enlightened mind. As we worked through the summer and fall people would stop by, having heard of the Gonpa and the stupas. It seemed that everyone who saw them was affected, somehow opened or changed. What a blessing to experience enlightened form manifesting, touching the hearts of people circumambulating and even the insects that swirled around them in pools of light.

Now that we're back in retreat we can more clearly see that same quality in our retreat process, compelling, all-encompassing—there is a deeper reliance on the lama's blessings.



Rob and Rachel Olds working on the Rigdzin Ling stupas

Khadro Ling

Rinpoche recently completed an extended retreat, the major part of it at Khadro Ling but continued at the beautiful new temple in Belo Horizonte, whose shape is rather like that of the celestial palace in Tara's pureland.

Rinpoche's retreat energy has been reflected in many of his students. A group of twelve practitioners were sealed into retreat in August, half of them for six months, half for three years. The blessings of their practice are palpable on the land. There is also an inspired group of ngondro practitioners who are up and prostrating at 4 am, maintaining four strict sessions a day. Their energy and enthusiasm are highly contagious.

Projects here proceed at a dizzying pace. Here are some of the highlights: Work is beginning on an Akshobhya garden and statue. Khadro led a powerful four-day Akshobhya retreat during which more than 200,000 mantra repetitions were accumulated. Soon after, Rinpoche decided that the time was right to begin the statue, which will be about twenty feet tall. Contributions of \$50 or more to the main statue will be honored with individual statues of Akshobhya. These will be placed in the garden wall with short, personal dedications inscribed if wished.

The stupa project is progressing under the supervision of Patrick Harestadt. The bumpas are currently being poured and spires are almost ready for casting. In January, Dzogchen retreatants should have the opportunity to participate in this merit-making activity. Khadro is writing a short text on the stupas to emphasize the tremendous significance of the project.

Another retreat building, dubbed "Retreat House 2," has been finished under the watchful eye of Alejandro. The architectural plans for the hospice are complete and are moving through the Três Coroas bureaucracy and a bidding process, with the hope that construction will begin in January. Plans are being drawn for additional housing for our growing community of practitioners, and a second prayer wheel house is under construction. It will contain twenty-one prayer wheels in addition to the nine large wheels that presently rotate, turning millions of printed mantras.

Palden's work on the shrine room walls continues, adding an element of awe-inspiring beauty to the already glorious lha khang. He finished the first wall after nine months and estimates that the second wall, with its more intricate details, will take about two years to complete.

As Rinpoche's blessings manifest here at Khadro Ling, people have requested centers and offered gifts of land throughout Brazil and in Uruguay. The guru's magical display is like a bright sun illuminating the darkness of samsara for countless fortunate beings in this world.

Ati Ling

The activity at Ati Ling this past year has been a wonderful mixture of purification and blessing. One only has to sit in the shrine room or walk on the land to know that here is a place where the blessings of all the great masters have manifested to tame beings in these degenerate times.

Tulku Jigme Rinpoche, the Ati Ling resident lama, returned

from India and Nepal after receiving the Nyingma Kama empowerments from H.H. Moktza Rinpoche of Katok Gonpa. He attended them with his father, H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche, and son, Orgyen, an emanation of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche.

During this trip to Nepal, H.E. Chokling Rinpoche, an emanation of Chokgyur Lingpa and Guru Rinpoche, agreed to come to the United States for the first time. Many of us had been waiting for this auspicious occasion for as long as we have been connected to Jigme Rinpoche. In a previous life, Rinpoche was the son of the first Chokgyur Lingpa.

His Eminence bestowed the Three Roots empowerments from the Chokling Tersar. He also gave the precious Dzogchen empowerment of Kunzang Tuktik Zugyen. Then, at Jigme Rinpoche's request, he bestowed the rare Padma Dakini empowerment, and Jigme Rinpoche made a commitment to perform an annual Padma Dakini drubchod at Ati Ling. The event culminated in a *Shower of Blessings* tsok. The Ati Ling sangha thanks His Eminence and his wife, Dechen-la, for everything.

In October, Tulku Jigme Rinpoche gave empowerments for the Chagdud Gonpa daily practices, an event that was well attended. We are presently preparing for the fourth annual Vajrakilaya retreat, to be held on January 12–15. This year, along with the Dudjom Vajrakilaya empowerment, Jigme Rinpoche will give the empowerment for Purba Gurkhuma as revealed by H.H. Jigme P'huntsok, in order to refresh our connection to this terton and his terma.

We pray for H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche's long life. May his activities increase for the benefit of all beings. We also wish long life, wealth, and enlightenment for all sangha members.

Dechhen Ling

In June, Lama Tsering spoke on the Four Immeasurables, as well as Six Keys to Happiness. We were deeply inspired by the insights that always come through in her teachings. Please return again and again, Lama Tsering.

Gatsal Lama has been traveling up from Williams on Guru Rinpoche Day each month and guiding us through the *Tsok Kye Tuk Tik* puja. We are grateful for this opportunity to deepen our practice and our understanding of dharma.

October's Guru Rinpoche Day brought a surprise visit from Bhaka Tulku, who presided over the tsok as Gatsal Lama led the practice. It was wonderful to see him again.

Our traditional potluck and Chenrezig practice were held on Thanksgiving Day, and on Thanksgiving weekend we were honored to have Tulku Jigme Rinpoche, Lama Pema Dorje, Lama Gyaltsen, Lama Jigme, Jangchub Palmo, and Gatsal Lama join the sangha for the twentieth annual Red Tara tsok.

We are pleased to announce that as of July the mortgage on the Dechhen Ling Gonpa was entirely paid off. When Chagdud Rinpoche established Dechhen Ling, he gave us, like all his centers, a precious gift and opportunity. We want to thank our sponsors and supporters for their generosity, which has made it possible for us to honor Rinpoche's gift. It is our deepest wish to continue to do so into the future, so that as many people as possible may come into contact with the dharma and truly benefit. Thank you, Rinpoche and sponsors, with all our hearts!

T'hondup Ling

Lama Gyatso led the sangha through another season of intense activity here in Los Angeles. T'hondup Ling was honored to sponsor an intimate morning with H.H. the Dalai Lama, who came to bless the Shi-tro Mandala project on June 29. His Holiness answered questions from the audience, especially youths from local juvenile prison camps. A moment that will remain in many people's minds came when a young woman in prison fatigues asked His Holiness, "How can I stay out of trouble?" After a brief response, he asked her to come to the stage, got up from his chair, and gave her a warm hug.

The event helped raise funds to complete the Shi-tro Mandala for Universal Peace. The two Tibetan artists, Pema Namdol Thaye and Kunzang Wangdu Thaye, were joined by full-time volunteer Fred Raich and subsequently by Michael Frey from



Lama Gyatso and Shi-tro Mandala artists

Switzerland. A ten-minute video of the mandala was produced and screened during the Dalai Lama's visit.

In June Lama Gyatso led the annual Orgyen Zambhala retreat, and during Saga Dawa, thanks to offerings from other Chagdud Gonpa centers, he organized the release of \$5,000 worth of fish to benefit the health and longevity of Chagdud Rinpoche. Later in the summer we welcomed Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche, and H.H. Sakya Trizen bestowed the empowerment for the Apong Terton Red Tara, which is practiced at Chagdud Gonpa centers.

In September Lama Gyatso was in Switzerland for his annual teaching tour. October brought the sixth annual T'hröma retreat, led this year by Tulku Jigme Rinpoche. In November we hosted the Most Venerable Gonjang Rinpoche during his first visit to the United States. He bestowed the Longchen Nyingtik Three Roots empowerments and a Red Vajrasattva empowerment. Rinpoche also led our annual Yeshe Tsogyal retreat during Thanksgiving weekend.

On November 18, Gonjang Rinpoche led a Red Vajrasattva ceremony to consecrate the Shi-tro Mandala, which had just been completed after almost a year of construction. We offer our

deepest thanks to the many volunteers, donors, and benefactors involved in the project. The consecrated mandala is breathtaking and has the potential to grant liberation upon being seen. We would like to display it as widely as possible through our Tools for Peace program. If you wish to contribute in some way to this project, contact Thondup Ling.

The completed mandala will remain on display at Forest Lawn in Glendale until early February. It will then be exhibited at the Pacific Asian Museum in Pasadena until early May. We encourage any sangha members who might be in the area to view the mandala.

Amrita

In April and May Lama Padma spent six weeks working on a retreat house in Colorado. In October he returned to Colorado, finished the house with the assistance of Amrita sangha members Cyd Smith, Michael Gilden, and Brian Hansel, and then undertook a six-week solitary retreat there.

In June Lama Tsering gave the Red Tara initiation and teachings to about 50 people and celebrated Tara tsok with us. Her public talk drew over 100 people, a large audience for an Amrita event.

Also in June, Kristen Gilfoil and Jonna Hansen gave birth to sons. On June 25 the Amrita sangha presented Lama Padma with relics of the Karmapas, which had been acquired by Emmanuel Go.

In October Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche gave the Tagsham Yeshe Tsogyal initiation to some 30 people. This will enable them to participate in the annual Yeshe Tsogyal drubchod planned for March.

Iron Knot Ranch

A big-sky thank you extends to all the kind-hearted folks who sent contributions to our rebuilding fund after the Dakini Day fire of last year. Your generosity supported our move to our new headquarters at the base of Crystal Mountain, where Guru Rinpoche presides over all our endeavors. Your support made possible the purchase of a commercial-grade, two-seater composting toilet as well as the southwestern-style, wheelchair-accessible structure that houses it.

Our warm-hearted but cold-fingered winter crew almost has a new adobe butter lamp shrine under roof. With ample space for the preparation and offering of 1,080 butter lamps, it stands as our first adobe structure on the mountain, flanking the Guru Rinpoche statue as a perpetual offering dedicated to the liberation of all beings.

Now that we've established the proper foundation for our new headquarters, we're about to break ground for a solar adobe

shop that will serve as an interim kitchen/dining/living area to replace our vintage army surplus tent, which finally succumbed to the forces of impermanence in an unseasonal Election Day snowstorm.

Thanks also to the generosity of many kind-hearted sponsors, *we've got cows!* Yes, we became full-fledged Buddhist ranchers as of November 1st. Ten heifers on their way to market were ransomed from a local ranch and will now live out their days in Vajrayana pastures, joining our existing herd of two. We're tickled pink, and dedicate the merit of these lives saved to the health and well-being of H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche.

Chagdud Khadro visited in April and opened once again the Mandala of Vajrakilaya during five days of teachings and sadhana practice. Tulku Jigme Rinpoche came in September and generously bestowed a wealth of empowerments to sangha members from throughout the Southwest. We pray for their many returns, as they themselves embody and convey to those of us in the borderlands the warm embrace of Chagdud Rinpoche.

(continued from page 8)

dharma to grow. Faith and devotion to the Buddha, dharma, and sangha are essential. With-

out them we will not be able to receive the enlightened blessings that are necessary to reveal our own buddha nature. When you recognize the qualities of the Buddha, dharma, and sangha, then your faith and devotion will arise naturally.

One thing to be avoided, which can happen in both the West and East, is when certain students, who want to be close to the lama or have the lama to themselves, push others away to "protect" the lama. This can disturb others' practice and make people think this is an appropriate way to practice Vajrayana or show devotion to a teacher. But it shows a weakness in one's practice and a misunderstanding of guru yoga. So it is important to recognize this if it arises in our own practice and to dissolve it.

I've been to many different centers, and I'm very happy to see how harmonious our Chagdud Gonpa sangha is under Rinpoche's kind and compassionate guidance. I see that many of Rinpoche's senior students are content with their practice. They aren't trying to show off how much they know. In my travels I often see people who teach yet don't have any practice, understanding, or the blessings of their own teacher, and this is very scary. The whole world knows that Rinpoche is one of the living Dzogchen masters. Some of Rinpoche's senior students have understanding of his teachings, have recognition, and have done practice. I'm very happy about this and I hope it continues, because eventually these students will help to hold the lineage. Right now we have some masters from Asia, but eventually our lineage has to be taken on by Western practitioners as well.



Jinbeb dancers and stupas at Rigdzin Ling

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

2 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
4 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
9 Full Moon: P'howa
16 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
18 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
24 New Moon: Vajrasattva

February

1 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
3 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
7 Full Moon: P'howa
14 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
16 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
23 New Moon: Vajrasattva
24 Losar: Tibetan New Year (2128)

March

2 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
4 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
9 Full Moon: P'howa
16 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
18 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
24 New Moon: Vajrasattva

April

1 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
3 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
7 Full Moon: P'howa
15 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
17 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
23 New Moon: Vajrasattva
30 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day

May

2 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
7 Full Moon: P'howa
15 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
17 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
22 New Moon: Vajrasattva
29 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
31 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day

June

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

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Farmland and houses are available for rent at Rigdzin Gatsal. Call (541) 846-7814 for information.

Rigdzin Ling's Wish List: Desktop computers with pentium processors and/or a 486 processor laptop with at least 32 MB RAM.

WINDHORSE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The *Windhorse* is the biannual newsletter of Chagdud Gonpa Foundation. If you are a current member of Chagdud Gonpa, you will receive the *Windhorse* free of charge. 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 *Windhorse*.

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For information regarding sponsorship of Akshobhya practice and to commission Akshobhya images, contact Lama Thubten at The Mahakaruna Foundation, P.O. Box 344, Junction City, CA 96048, telephone (530) 623-2302.