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# THE WIND HORSE



NEWSLETTER OF CHAGDUD GONPA

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Fall 2002

Dear Sangha,

Tashi delek! This letter has been a little difficult to write, because I feel such regret about the necessity of canceling my autumn teaching tour of the United States and not seeing you then. Also, my life has been very quiet lately, without the usual outer events to provide a focus for my inner reflections. Rather, my reflections spark momentarily in the sky of my mind, then disappear.

Still, underneath this spaciousness, I find currents of deep disquiet over what is evolving in the world. We seem to be living in the presence of an invisible but razor-sharp sword whose blade could suddenly slice through existence as we know it. As practitioners, we should neither deny its presence, nor yield to anxiety and fear, but rather use it to whet the precision of our choices, the keenness of our skillful means.

Specifically I urge you to pray strongly to Guru Padmasambhava, who promised that to those who supplicate him he would come like a father to his children, especially in the darkest of times. He foresaw and prophesied everything. Also, pray to Arya Red Tara, the Swift Savioreess, who responds immediately with compassion and wisdom to alleviate the great fears of beings trapped in cyclic existence. Pray that the hard-heartedness and righteous anger that are so prevalent soften, and that moral discipline, patience, and virtue hold sway.

Each of you has accepted a level of commitment in your individual dharma practice. Strengthen it! Each of you has a connection to the lama or senior student who guides your sangha. Nurture it! Each of you abides, by fortunate karma and brilliant choice, within the interdependent web of our sangha. Uphold your position as a practitioner and support that of others!



Most important, each of you has become an heir to the treasures of Guru Rinpoche and Red Tara, my precious lineage legacies to you. I strongly encourage you to make excellent use of these jewels, for the benefit of all beings.

In the dharma,

The Chagdudpa

# A Gentle Yogi: Lama Padma Dorje

By Dorje Kirsten

Every spring I look forward to Lama Padma Dorje's visit to Rigdzin Ling. He is always happy to come; he considers Rigdzin Ling his home as well as a place of pilgrimage blessed by many great lamas and strong practitioners. Sitting on the carpet, sharing tea with a small group of friends, he asks about the well-being and activities of the staff during the past year. With the inevitable news that some are having good experiences and are content, while others are purifying karma and working through suffering, he comments that yogis have seasons—seasons of suffering and of bliss. What is most important, he adds, is that the yogi continue to practice through all these seasons until stable realization dawns.

Lama Padma Dorje is a householder. He and his wife, Kunzang, have four children. His example encourages those of us with children to practice diligently—showing us that caring for a family is not an excuse to avoid practice, but rather is part of our practice.

Every morning in his room he leads a handful of students in the *Riwo Sangchöd* puja. He emphasizes this practice as a powerful means for accumulating merit and wisdom, maintaining samaya, and benefiting the people and environment where we live. After the puja, and during his breaks from formal practice throughout the day, he tells stories of the great *ngakpas* of Tibet and India—how they skillfully tamed the minds of beings around them and benefited those with faith. He always speaks of their trials during practice, their tremendous realization, and their noble deaths. His capacity for telling stories seems endless. Each year he brings new ones, potent in their examples of correct conduct and proper view. He has also written many poems, songs, and offering prayers and, if asked, will sometimes share them.

Though he is humble and gentlemanly, his life has been one of great accomplishment. He was born in India while his parents were on pilgrimage there and spent his early years traveling with his family in H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche's entourage. Lama Padma Dorje's father was a highly respected chöd practitioner of the T'hröma Nagmo tradition. He was known for his ability to cure people through mantra and had completed many years of retreat on Mount Kailash. Lama Padma Dorje's family was very poor; his only toys were stones and sticks. He told us that as a child he would pretend to be giving empowerment to his friends with a stone, as if it were a *bumpa*. He grew up in caves and retreat hermitages and

completed his first ngondro before he was a teenager. In later years he was invited to accompany his father in retreats. He speaks of living "above the eagles" at a remote retreat center in Dolpo, Nepal, that his father founded at Dudjom Rinpoche's request.

Lama Padma Dorje recalls that he has often felt happiest when he had nothing—as when he first arrived in India—because life was so simple. As a young man, he helped Chagdud Rinpoche in the Orissa refugee camp in India as an English teacher. During this time he studied closely with H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and Lama Sherab Rinpoche. He learned t'hangka painting and began creating t'hangkas for many Nyingma monasteries and great Nyingma teachers.



With years of experience, he helps guide aspiring Rigdzin Ling artists in the methods of traditional Vajrayana art. When we recently repainted the Guru Rinpoche statue, he helped design the patterns and taught artists Rob, Rachel, and Karen how to proceed. Toward the end of his stay, he painted the statue's face and eyes. Lama Padma Dorje is confident and precise about what is traditionally correct, and the moment our artwork strays from this, he shows us how to correct it. As a result of his guidance, the Guru Rinpoche statue now overwhelms viewers with splendor.

He is also well-learned in the Dudjom Treasure tradition, as well as many other traditions of mahayoga, anuyoga, and atiyoga. He has personally guided me in several practices. Always willing to give individual advice, he keeps his door open to anyone who needs help. He seems to prefer a one-on-one teaching style, responding directly to a student's particular need. If a divination is called for, he will immediately perform it and come back with an answer. His advice is always simple, yet profound. He considers the following of utmost importance: "Have devotion for the objects of refuge, have compassion for sentient beings, and have pure view toward the sangha. Then no obstacles will arise and realization will come quickly."

Before he left this summer, Lama Padma Dorje emphasized that harmony within the sangha is the most important factor contributing to the longevity of any lama. I still remember these words—and now, whenever I want to argue with one of my vajra siblings, I try to examine my own mind instead.

His life example and his teachings on the yogic tradition have transformed my life. Anyone who is able to spend time with this lama has great fortune, for he truly is a living treasure, acting always for the benefit of beings.

*Lama Padma Dorje visits Rigdzin Ling in the spring and fall. To invite him to your center, contact Kim at Rigdzin Ling.*

## A Recent Teaching by H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche

*H.E. Chagdud Rinpoche gave the following teaching, interpreted by Lama Rigdzin Dorje (Chris Taylor) during the Essence of Siddhi drubchen in July 2002 at Khadro Ling, Brazil.*

As humans we need to recognize that we have the power to change our experience, because whether we are suffering or happy, we have created that experience. Suffering is caused by our previous negative thoughts and actions, whereas happiness is caused by our previous positive thoughts and actions. In this way, karma is infallible.

Now that we have the conditions necessary to purify our negative karma, we should not waste this precious opportunity. Not only that, if we apply the methods of the Buddhadharma, we have the potential to become a source of benefit for other beings—not just temporarily, but in the long term. We all have this opportunity, and have come together here because of our karma, so together we need to make enlightenment our goal.

Until we find liberation, we will strive in whatever way we can to help beings. We will engage in the development and completion stage practices of the Vajrayana, using our body, speech, and mind to be of benefit. Whenever an opportunity to serve others arises, we won't waste that chance, but will fully apply ourselves to it.

Recognizing that this opportunity to create virtue passes swiftly, we need to seize it with urgency. This life, with all of its favorable conditions, is as impermanent as a candle flame in a strong wind—at any moment it could be extinguished. Things constantly change. Think about how many people you have known who have died. So we must take this time to practice and remove our obstacles. We must decrease our negative thoughts and actions, and in that way close the door to suffering.

At the same time, we should practice virtue. Fully focusing our body, speech, and mind, we need to develop positive qualities such as faith, compassion, and love. We should always try to cultivate positive thoughts, words, and actions. We should remain vigilant in order to avert negative thoughts. No matter how insignificant they may seem, they can cause big problems, just as a spark can ignite a whole forest. We can't ignore them. In the same way, we should never deny the significance of the smallest virtuous thought; virtue accumulates like drops of water filling a bucket.

Remember that nonvirtue is the cause of suffering and rebirth in the lower realms; recognize the potential of your own mind to perpetuate suffering. Our goal is to go beyond suffering and remove its causes. The root of most negative karma is clinging to self and samsara; such clinging is liberated through the path of bodhichitta.

In their omniscience, enlightened ones know that all beings have at one time been our mothers. We can't see this because of

our obscurations, but if we have faith in what these buddhas tell us, we will recognize that all beings have shown us the kindness of a mother for countless lifetimes. And when we see how all of these mothers suffer because they hold to dualistic concepts, clinging to their experiences as permanent and solid, we feel tremendous compassion for them.

The combination of ignorance and dualistic perception causes the six realms of samsara to arise. Beings experience happiness and sadness, good and bad, going up and down like a roller coaster. Because we are so attached to our experiences, we suffer profoundly.

When we contemplate this, we develop great compassion, and rather than focus on ourselves in our habitual way, we practice in order to free others from their suffering. As we arouse this selfless and compassionate wish day after day, we reduce the self-clinging that is the cause of our own suffering. In many previous lifetimes, we have had good health, wealth, and favorable conditions, but have never found freedom from samsara. In many other lifetimes, we have found ourselves in lower realms. Now we need to establish our altruistic motivation to attain enlightenment in order to liberate all beings. This motivation puts us firmly on the path. But if it does not remain pure and selfless, then no matter how much we practice we won't make any progress.

If we have the pure motivation of bodhichitta, whatever we do benefits others, and when we increase this benefit through our aspirations, it becomes a source of inexhaustible virtue. If we don't have pure motivation, one moment of anger can destroy all the virtue we've created.

Our perception of the environment results from individual and group karmic patterns. Consider our dreams. Both during the day when we are awake and at night when we are dreaming, our environment seems solid and real. In our dreams, the sky is above us and the earth lies below. Friends and enemies seem real. In the same way, our waking experience seems real.

When this life is over and our next life has not yet begun, we pass through an intermediate state called the bardo. Our experience in the bardo is similar to a dream: we have a body,



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speech, and mind. An outer environment appears to exist and different situations arise—some difficult, some frightening. If in this lifetime we become accustomed to visualizing pure appearances through development stage practice, then we will experience pure beings and purelands in the bardo.

These appearances can be compared to beings' differing perceptions of water. To gods, water is nectar. To human beings, water is something that quenches their thirst and cleanses them. To hungry ghosts, it is blood and pus. To beings in the hell realms, it is molten lava. For each being, appearances are reflections of the mind.



If the predominant poison in someone's mind is anger, and if during his lifetime he causes great harm, his mind will reflect that anger as the experience of hell. In the same way, someone whose mind is dominated by greed can manifest an environment where he won't encounter even a drop of water or a morsel of food for years. It's not as if an architect designed these realms; our minds have created them.

If our mind is pure, pure experiences arise. The absolute nature of the mind is emptiness. Emptiness doesn't mean that nothing is there, nor does it mean that something is there. It is beyond these two extremes, beyond any conceptual elaboration. It is essential for us to directly experience emptiness—beyond object and subject, beyond dualistic concepts—because we cannot understand it with our dualistic mind.

The true nature of all phenomena is empty awareness. If we don't experience this, it is not because awareness has gone somewhere. It's inherent in us—we've just forgotten it. It is our habit to see things in an ordinary way.

Consider a small child who has had a bad dream. She runs to her mother and father, who tell her that she has nothing to be afraid of. She's only been dreaming, and dreams aren't real. They repeat this again and again until her fear is gone. In the same way, we believe that our everyday experience is solid and real. But Shakyamuni Buddha taught that it is just as illusory as a dream, a rainbow, a mirage, or a reflection of the moon in water. Just as a parent teaches a child that dreams are illusory, the Buddha introduced us to the empty nature of experience.

As vivid as our dream experiences may be, when we wake up, we realize that nothing actually occurred. However, we can't deny that we did have the dream. Our waking experience is similar to this. Phenomena do appear to us; this is relative truth. But though they arise, we can't prove that they have



*Lama dancing masks at Khadro Ling*

"Shakyamuni Buddha taught that our everyday experience is just as illusory as a dream, a rainbow, or a reflection of the moon in water."

inherent existence; this is absolute truth. We don't embrace absolute truth by denying relative truth. Samsara does arise, just as a good or bad dream arises, but if we examine this relative experience, we find nothing solid, singular, permanent, or true about it. The habits of the mind that make our dreams seem real—that make the ground seem solid, fire seem to burn, and water seem wet—also make our waking experience seem real. We shouldn't deny that experiences constantly arise, but we need to understand that their true nature is emptiness, beyond extremes. We need to recognize the absolute nature of both our waking and dream experiences. This recognition is called wisdom, or awareness.

The sky is a metaphor for the true nature of mind. There is nothing solid about the sky. Sometimes it is clear; sometimes clouds arise, or rain falls, or lightning flashes. Sometimes rainbows appear. Regardless, the sky has no substance. Similarly, the mind's nature is emptiness, yet it has an unceasing clarity that arises as a pure display.

In development stage practice, we use visualization to transform our ordinary habit of seeing things as solid or permanent, and to recognize their illusory nature. We visualize the details of the palace and the deity—the many implements, colors, and forms—understanding that they are made of light. Eventually, with diligent and consistent practice, we begin to perceive the purity of the display, simultaneously recognizing its empty nature.

At first, it may be difficult to experience this inseparability of emptiness and its pure display. So it is necessary to pray with great faith and receptivity to enlightened beings like the Buddha, asking for their blessings. This can create the interdependence that leads to great realization. Try to recognize the inseparability of your own mind's essence and theirs. We have the same potential as the buddhas, but it is veiled by our obscurations. We practice in order to remove these obscurations.

As beginning practitioners, we pray to enlightened beings as if they were separate from us. This is fine if we haven't yet experienced the inseparability of

the deity and ourselves. But it is best to understand that the form, speech, and mind of the deity are inseparable from our own pure nature.

The space inside this room appears separate from the space outside. But in essence they are the same. The walls that seem to separate them can be likened to our obscurations, which keep us from seeing that the nature of enlightened beings and our own true nature are the same.

A great Nyingmapa treasure discoverer, Ngala Sogyal, said that the essence of all the Buddha's teachings is to maintain recognition of the pure nature of experience. It can be difficult for beginning students to maintain or even to encounter this kind of recognition. When you receive empowerment, you are introduced to the true nature of phenomena. If you recognize it, that's wonderful. If not, that's okay—pray with faith to enlightened beings that you will eventually be able to do so; also pray that your own suffering and that of all beings be alleviated.

Every aspect of this drubchen practice has profound meaning. The liturgies, songs, images, and mandala all have the power to liberate the practitioner by being heard or seen. Likewise, the teachings have the power to liberate by being heard and contemplated. Focus your mind on practice at whatever level you can. When difficulties arise, keep going and remember

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## Family Life as Practice: Lama Padma and Susan Baldwin

*Lama Padma Gyatso is the resident lama of Chagdud Gonpa Amrita in Seattle. He and his wife, Susan, have three grown children—Jesse, Jordan, and Melong—all of whom have children of their own. Lama Dorje and Lama Trinley spoke with them at Amrita as sangha children played in the background.*

**Lama Trinley:** As dharma practitioners raising children and working toward integrating spiritual practice into our family life, we experience everything from inspiration to frustration. Since you two know something about that, could you offer some advice to other dharma parents?

**Lama Padma:** We went to India in search of dharma, and that was where our first son, Jesse, was born. We also met our teacher, Ven. Kalu Rinpoche, a monk, whose advice was to renounce worldly life, go into retreat, and meditate, just as he had. He was like Milarepa, the great Tibetan yogi who went off into the mountains alone to practice. All Kalu Rinpoche ever said to me was, “Go. Leave. Meditate. You can do it. But if you don’t leave, you will never do it.” That was pretty much the message I got from him for years. He never modified it, but he did become kinder to me because I had some faith and was able to hang in there, I suppose.

His advice was very difficult for me at the time; I felt my family responsibilities were competing with what I imagined were my dharma responsibilities. I lived for many years with that conflict, and it was not a pleasurable experience. I was always flipping back and forth between the two. That didn’t change much for about ten years, until I made some inroads with my practice. Then, as the dharma began to blend a little with my mind, I saw that there was no competition between my family and my spiritual practice, and they could even support each other. But that perspective didn’t come right away.

Dharma practice is a struggle for everyone at the beginning, but I think that the responsibilities of a family can teach

you to approach practice in a more sincere way. With a family, free time for meditation or retreat is at a premium, so you tend to use what time you’ve created with great diligence. You realize how rare it is and how you are making things a little more difficult for your family by being absent, even if it’s just for a short time. So you can apply yourself very directly to your practice.

One of the first things I realized when I began to practice more, doing



*Susan and Lama Padma (center) with children and grandchildren*

short retreats, was that I didn’t have bodhichitta. My concerns were very limited. Even though I would say the prayers of bodhichitta at the beginning of each practice session and meditate on them, I was certain that any real love I felt never truly extended beyond the confines of my self-clinging, in particular beyond my immediate family. That was very disheartening. I really wanted to accomplish something, but all I learned was what my problems and limitations were.

**Susan:** We had met the dharma before we had children. Without dharma, especially the teachings on impermanence, I don’t think we could have managed, either in our marriage or in raising the children. The dharma really did seem to be a part of our daily life, so I never felt the same competition between dharma and family that Lama Padma did.

One day while we were receiving teachings at Kalu Rinpoche’s gonpa in

India, I was sitting in the back so I could look out the window and watch Jesse play in the courtyard. At one point I became so engrossed in the teachings that I forgot to look out for some time until suddenly Kalu Rinpoche said to me, “Dechen Wangmo!” That was the name he had given me. He pointed out the window and said, “Jesse!” Jesse, less than two years old at the time, had climbed up onto the gonpa roof. I leapt up and ran down the stairs. By the time I got to Jesse, a monk had rescued him. While I was out of the room, Kalu Rinpoche said, “You saw how Dechen Wangmo ran. That’s the way you need to practice dharma. Your mind is like that baby on the roof. You need to practice dharma—just like that.”

**Lama Dorje:** If one of your students asked you if he or she should have children, what would you say?

**Lama Padma:** When they ask it’s usually too late, but I have specifically advised some new practitioners to wait to have children—to pray about it for a while. I prefer not to get that involved in people’s personal lives, but I

have said that it would be better if dharma blended with their minds before they had children. That’s just my opinion. We never *planned* on having children—they just happened. For some people, dharma practice may mean taking on a new level of responsibility. If they have children, it’s important to assume the responsibility of parenting before taking on a lot more. That being said, however, I have to admit that I did leave my family for personal retreats for up to six months at a time, and I have no regrets.

**Susan:** Looking back now, I can understand why he needed to leave. He had become almost transparent as a father and a husband. He had not made a firm decision to be with us, because his conflict with the dharma was so great. Kalu Rinpoche made it clear that it would be best for him to do retreat for a while. The only reason for the conflict in his

mind was that he loved us so much. But when his teacher said, "Practice in retreat for six months," he agreed to do it. It was winter of 1973. Jesse was five and Jordan was 18 months old. One day he was there, and then he was gone.

When my mother found out that Kalu Rinpoche had told Lama Padma to do retreat, she was furious. She drove from Long Beach to Hollywood and somehow managed to find Kalu Rinpoche. She was quite upset with him. She said, "Rinpoche, what kind of a religion would make a man leave his wife and two little children?" Kalu Rinpoche looked at my irate mother and said, "Ah, Karma Yontan (that's what he called Lama Padma), he loves Dechen Wangmo. He loves her so much I sometimes worry he will not even stay in retreat. Maybe he will just come home." My mother didn't know what to say after that. I think that in talking with him she started to soften a little; her anger melted. Kalu Rinpoche always knew the right things to say.

Having Lama Padma in retreat was hard for me at first, because I missed him so much. We had always been together,

hosted other lamas, I got a call from someone asking if a Rinpoche, Chagdud Tulku, could teach at our house. His name sounded familiar, so I agreed. After that, we hosted him and Lama Tsering regularly at our house. Rinpoche didn't like being fussed over, so he would eat at the kitchen table with us. I'm sure over the years he had a strong influence on our kids just by being there.

*Susan:* He would sit there with a knife and a piece of meat and just watch everything going on around him. I remember looking at him once and thinking, "He's a buddha, and he's sitting here." Devotion began to arise naturally, and then everything unfolded when he started offering more retreats here.

*Lama Padma:* In the beginning, Rinpoche came to Seattle five or six times a year. Then, as his activities began to increase everywhere, he came less frequently, but always a few times a year. Rinpoche was very respectful of the boundaries of our center. I supported his activities up to a point, but I had a responsibility to hold the Kagyu center.

I had the opportunity to observe

*Lama Padma:* We mostly talked about karma and impermanence. We never talked much about meditation or tried to get them to meditate. I don't think they would have liked that.

*Susan:* And generosity. They often gave up their rooms for visiting lamas or sangha members who needed a place to stay, and that taught them non-attachment as well.

*Lama Padma:* They didn't have a strong feeling about their possessions or personal space. It's hard to know what you actually teach your children versus what they learn on their own. Jesse was always very generous; he was always giving his things away. We couldn't have taught him that—it was just his nature, and it still is.

*Susan:* In India, when he was only two, beggars would come up to us and he would look at me with tears in his eyes and say, "Mama, give." I didn't think kids could be like that. Maybe we didn't really do so much.

*Lama Padma:* Like the rest of us, children are always experiencing the pain of loss and change. They don't really know what to make of it all. I think those are the most valuable points that parents can emphasize: that actions have effects and that things are impermanent. When we were in India, we met the great Chatral Rinpoche and asked him what we should teach our children. He said to teach them the refuge prayer. So when they were young, we would always say refuge prayers at night with them and offering prayers before we ate. I don't think we worried about whether they would become Buddhists, but we did want to make sure they had some understanding of karma and impermanence so they would have an advantage in their lives. We knew they would be better off.

*Susan:* You can only give them so much. Although all our children are respectful of the dharma, our daughter, Melong, seemed to have a real interest in Buddhism. When she was very young, I took her to retreats with Thich Nhat Hanh and she loved his teachings for children. She also went to the preschool at the Japanese Seattle Buddhist Church. Finally, when she was in high school, she went to one of Rinpoche's teachings and understood how meaningful it was.

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but suddenly, when I sat down to have a cup of tea, he wasn't there. Taking care of two little children was extremely difficult for me; I kind of lost it at times, but I didn't give up. We were living in Seattle and at that time, the early seventies, there was no dharma community where I might have found support from others who had gone through similar experiences. As intense as it was, though, I learned a lot.

At the end of his retreat, Lama Padma came back with a firm resolve to be my husband and a father to his children. The following year our daughter, Melong, came into our lives.

*Lama Trinley:* How did you meet Chagdud Rinpoche and come to establish a Chagdud Gonpa center?

*Lama Padma:* Around 1981 I was asked to start a Kagyupa center with weekly meditations. Since we occasionally

Rinpoche for many years. When he first came, he said, "If you have any questions, ask me." He knew that all my practices were written in Tibetan. Because of that I always had questions about translation. In retrospect I suppose it was the traditional way a prospective student and teacher check each other out. I wasn't looking for more practices or another teacher. The only thing I was looking for was more time. But over the years, going to Cottage Grove and Williams, it became obvious to me that Rinpoche was my teacher. In 1989, when my responsibilities at the Kagyu center came to a proper conclusion, I offered to help Rinpoche with Amrita in a more active way. Since then our sangha has been meeting for meditation at least once a week.

*Lama Trinley:* What aspects of the dharma did you talk about with your kids?



**Lama Padma:** When our boys were young, the national Buddhist community was not highly developed. Our living room was a shrine room, which was not normal. Other children hadn't even heard of Buddhism and didn't understand it, so our kids felt embarrassed. Now Buddhism has become more of a presence in our society. My parents had such a hard time with me in the sixties. I saw that they suffered because my interest in Buddhism was so far outside their experience. Now, we worry about being parents and try to gauge how both we and our children are doing, according to our ideas about dharma.

From my perspective, I'm not sure it helps to have too many ideas about raising children, or what you are going to do with them, as if they were a product that you ordered. Nor should we be disappointed when they don't fulfill a warranty we thought we had on them. It's not just what *we* do. Kids come in with their own karma. Basically, our job is to learn how to create conditions for them to work with that karma so they will begin to understand how cause and effect works, and how parents and children can grow together.

Some kids have difficult karma. When one of our sons was very young, he always felt as if he were being choked by his shirts, and whenever he heard sirens, he would start crying and say they were coming to get him. Later, he flirted with being an outlaw and got kicked out of the public schools, but we kept praying and continued working with him. Once when he got busted, the police were involved and he said to me, "Your dharma protectors—that's why I got busted." And he was actually very happy about it. My kids had heard me doing protector practice every night the whole time they lived at home.

**Susan:** First we grounded him, and then we sent him to a Catholic all-boys high school. All of our children went to Catholic schools at some point. It turned out to be wonderful for him. He responded well to the discipline and excelled in so many ways. He loved to debate. He loved the spiritual retreats they offered and became the leader of a prayer group, but never converted to Catholicism.

**Lama Padma:** The thing is to hang in there—to keep going, as Chagdud Rinpoche always says. Keep raising your kids. It never gets easier, because each situation and child is unique. You need to have tools that will work in any situation. The amount of intelligence you can bring to any situation is directly related to the amount of patience you have. If you're angry with yourself, your

your coat. We're going somewhere." We went to the house, knocked on the door, and let ourselves in. We walked through the whole house, looking around and sniffing at everything. It was quiet, a few kids sitting around, a couple on the couch with their arms around each other, and some in the kitchen eating popcorn. We found our son in the back bedroom reading comic books on a

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child, or the situation, you can't function well. You will only make mistakes. And that's what you will regret.

Fortunately, our family has been really close. I think it is because Susan was always so communicative, not letting things go unresolved. Just making sure that communication was open saved us many times.

**Susan:** I found I was interpreting the world for them; they needed that. When they saw a disturbing film, they would come to me for advice on how to feel or think about it, so that it wasn't so threatening. It takes a lot of energy, but being present for and listening to your children helps them interpret the world and gives them the means to work with it. Every night, while I was preparing dinner, my children would tell me about their days, and I would try to respond to each one appropriately.

One night, when one of our sons was in junior high school, an upset mother called to say that he and her son were at a drug dealer's house; she didn't know what to do. I calmed her down and then said to Lama Padma, "Get

bunk bed. When we walked in, he looked up and said, "Hi." We said we had come to offer him a ride home. I called the upset mother and told her what we had seen. We always tried to check out everything. It seems you have to do that—just go check it out and see what they're doing.

**Lama Padma:** Susan and I came out of a youth culture that tried everything. Not much shocked us. And although we were worried by some of the things our kids did, we weren't provincial or narrow-minded. We weren't overwhelmed because we had experienced, or at least had seen, a lot. I guess our kids knew we had some perspective just by the way we lived.

During a certain period, we were even seeing a family counselor about one of our children. When I was at Rigdzin Ling, I asked Rinpoche for his advice. I've never talked to lamas much about personal things. That's not my relationship with my teachers. But I explained to him very clearly what was going on in my life and in my mind with this one child. And then I asked, "What should I do, Rinpoche? Should I do this, should I do that?" He looked right at me and everything stopped. He said, "Have no hopes or fears." It was almost as if he had shouted "P'hat!" His words cut right through me. I didn't want to hear that. I wanted a hopeful answer. I just stood there in shock because it was way too much for me. But by the time I got to the door, I realized that that was it. That was the answer. I just stayed with that answer and it has become the answer to everything for me.



## Sangha News

### New Chagdud Gonpa Lamas Named in Brazil

Last February, during the Vajrakilaya drubchen at Khadro Ling, Brazil, Chagdud Rinpoche bestowed the title of lama on three of his senior students. Andrea Lima received the name Lama Sherab Drolma; Sonia Guilherme Taylor, Lama Yeshe Drolma; and Chris Taylor, Lama Rigdzin Dorje.

For many years these three have listened to the teachings, practiced diligently, and gained the confidence of Rinpoche, who has mentioned on various occasions their ability to serve and benefit beings. They have always sought ways to support Rinpoche's vast field of activity through their service.

After Rinpoche ordained the new lamas, sangha members offered them kataks. This special moment reminded us all of the transformation that is possible through the practice of guru yoga.

### Khadro Ling

We were standing in the tsok kitchen behind the doors to the inner temple. As we peeked out at the dancers portraying the Eight Emanations of Guru Rinpoche, who were seated in front of the drubchen mandala, Lama Sherab burst out, "Just look at what Rinpoche has done! It is so amazing to think that seven years ago none of this was even here."

Every time I return there I have a similar response to the way things are accomplished so swiftly at Khadro Ling. I think back on a photo taken the first time my family and I visited Khadro Ling, in 1997. It shows sangha children Diogo and Sam playing on a small sand pile in a cow pasture. Now that pasture lies beneath the temple complex that includes a large, ornately decorated shrine room on the main floor, Rinpoche's quarters and retreat rooms upstairs, and administrative offices and a dharma store on the lower level.

In the space of just one year, Khadro Ling has undergone a number of significant changes. The stupas are almost finished being painted, and an Akshobhya statue is nearing completion. A new

prayer wheel house has been built, and a new butter lamp house is under construction. The old barn, home to the many Khadro Ling fauna whose lives have been ransomed over the years, has been torn down, and a new barn is being built. Amitabha House, the hospice complex that was just plans on paper a year ago, has nearly been completed and includes two semiprivate residences alongside a large conference room that has several guest rooms upstairs.



*The Akshobhya statue at Khadro Ling*

One of the most noteworthy changes has been the purchase of a neighbor's land adjacent to the dormitory and kitchen area. Current plans for the property include the creation of a replica of Zangdog Palri (Copper-colored mountain), the palace of Guru Rinpoche that will fulfill one of Chagdud Rinpoche's lifelong aspirations. One such replica exists in Tibet at Katok Monastery, the mother monastery of Chagdud Gonpa. These monumental, four-story shrines house extensive artwork, including hundreds of statues. This project will take years to complete and will require extensive consecration ceremonies.

The large murals that visiting artist Palden has painted across the walls of the temple are nearly complete, with only the gold detail remaining to be done. Exquisitely carved ornate wooden frames made by visiting artisans have been placed around the large Tara and Shakyamuni Buddha statues in the main shrine.

Another master artisan, Lama Chimed from Katok monastery in Tibet, has been working on the Akshobhya statue and the stupas. He will soon begin overseeing work on a sixty-foot high stupa to be built according to the instructions of Dudjom Lingpa, who prophesied that its creation would amass the positive energy necessary to help avert catastrophic wars. The elaborate stupa will be filled with thousands of deity statues and tsa-tsas, and is expected to take many years to complete.

This year's *Essence of Siddhi* drubchen incorporated more dancing than the last. Several more masks were completed, thanks to the diligent efforts of the gonpa's mask makers, Biggie and Alan. Tulku Apé, who visited Khadro Ling from California, danced a fearsome Dorje Drollod.

On the final eve of the drubchen in July, people bundled up outside the temple with tubs of popcorn to join Rinpoche in viewing the screening of a documentary on drubchen as seen through the eyes of the sangha children, produced by Flavia Moraes. It was filmed during last year's *Essence of Siddhi* drubchen and includes Chagdud Rinpoche speaking about children in the dharma. Film clips of the drubchen are interspersed with the children's explanations of what they thought it all meant.

Longtime residents Lama Rigdzin Dorje (Chris Taylor) and Lama Yeshe Drolma (Sonia Guilherme Taylor) who have been integral to developing Khadro Ling have moved to Curitiba, in southern Brazil, to run the Chagdud Gonpa center there.

On an inward level, people's practice ripens within this pure display of Rinpoche's vision. In the space of a year, more ngondros have been completed, more obstacles have been overcome, and merit continues to accumulate, both for those in strict retreat and those who uphold Rinpoche's activity through their daily tasks at the gonpa.

In spite of all this activity, some things have not changed. With each visit we make, the cows still graze beside the temple, the workers still play soccer every Friday afternoon, and the storms and sunsets of southern Brazil continue to awe us with their splendor.

—Lama Trinley



## Rigdzin Ling

If you have not yet given your e-mail address to the office at Rigdzin Ling for the Chagdud Gonpa e-mail list, or have not notified us of an address change, please do so. We rely on this list to contact sangha members about schedule updates and other announcements between our semi-annual schedule and *Wind Horse* mailings. Send your address to Inger at Chagdud@snowcrest.net or call (530) 623-2714.

Padma Publishing needs a laptop computer (PC or Mac); please contact Gina Phelan for information and specifications (gina@tibetan treasures.com).

The upcoming Vajrakilaya drubchen at Rigdzin Ling was not listed in the fall schedule because Losar (the Tibetan new year) is not until March 3, 2003. Please note that the dates for the drubchen are February 22–March 3, 2003.

We extend our thanks to all of you who contributed prayers and monetary offerings to the one million Taksham Yeshe Tsogyal tsok offerings that were dedicated to H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche's long life in early August. Several thousand dollars were raised and distributed to pujas held at T'hondup Ling, Dechhen Ling, Rigdzin Gatsal, Iron Knot Ranch, Padma Ling, Amrita, Rigdzin Ling, and Orgyen Ling. By August 12, Rinpoche's birthday, 700,000 tsok offerings verses had been accumulated in North America. Khadro Ling in Brazil accumulated more than 400,000 in the following days to complete the commitment of one million. Several hundred butter lamps were also offered during these pujas. We dedicate our heartfelt prayers to the fulfillment of Rinpoche's enlightened activity for the benefit of beings in this and all future lives.

## Ati Ling

Last November we held our first annual Chokgyur Lingpa Kurukulle retreat and, in mid-January, the fourth annual Vajrakilaya retreat at Anderson Hall, a rustic camping lodge in the town of Camp Meeker, about ten minutes from Ati Ling. Jigme Tromge Rinpoche presided as Vajra Master for both events. This Vajrakilaya retreat far surpassed other such events because it involved an elaborate statue consecration ceremony.

For a week before the retreat, the Ati Ling shrine room was transformed into a statue consecration workshop. Long tables were set up, and the cutting, rolling, pasting, painting, collecting, and stuffing began. The core crew worked almost around the clock for a week, with sangha members dropping in at all hours. The statues were stuffed with precious and semiprecious stones, mantras, images, and sacred objects. Jigme Rinpoche offered medicine pills composed of more



*The newly painted Guru Rinpoche statue at Rigdzin Ling*

than 6,000 substances from great saints dating back to the fourth Buddha.

Approximately eighty-five statues were filled, including the three large statues of Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, and Guru Rinpoche from Ati Ling's shrine room, as well as many personal statues ranging in size from four inches to four feet.

In April, Jigme Rinpoche conducted Ati Ling's first Black T'hröma retreat, also at Anderson Hall. And the last weekend in June, Rinpoche gave the empowerments for the Chagdud Gonpa daily practices at Ati Ling. The shrine room was packed for the entire twelve hours of transmissions. It was fantastic!

## Dechhen Ling

In July we were delighted and surprised by an auspicious visit from Dzogchen Khenpo Chöga. He gave an evening teaching on ngondro, followed by a question-and-answer session, then returned for additional teachings on September 8.

On the evening of August 11, Lama Tsering gave a public talk entitled "Relationships and the Spiritual Path" at the University of Oregon Library in Eugene. Her special presence and refreshing blend of insight and humor captivated the audience, while the teachings enabled us to deepen our own stores of wisdom and skillful means. Thank you, Lama Tsering; we look forward to hosting you on your next trip to the United States.

The electrical rewiring of River House is nearly complete. All the circuits have been replaced and brought up to code, save one small circuit in the kitchen. Once the work is finished, we can get the wiring inspected and approved. We extend much gratitude to Dick Wilcox, Connie Carrel, Linda Jefferson, Chandra LaHusen, and others who made this possible.

## T'hondup Ling

In July, on the full moon of Saga Dawa, we released several tanks of bait fish into the ocean at Marina del Rey. We purchased all of the available fish so that the bait dock had none to offer the fishermen! During the release, Lama Gyatso performed a ceremony and led the sangha in other practices. The following week, on Guru Rinpoche's birthday, we returned to the marina to free several thousand more fish.

This September, T'hondup Ling said goodbye to Lama Thomge and Lama Thrinley, who had been invited by Lama Gyatso to build sand mandalas in Los Angeles. We are fortunate that Lama Rabjoer will remain in residence here; he exudes warmth, simplicity, and generosity of spirit.

H.E. Namkha Drimed Rinpoche returned to T'hondup Ling as Vajra Master at the annual T'hröma Drubchod, which was held September 13–21. His Eminence also bestowed a Medicine Buddha empowerment, conducted a public healing ceremony, and presided at several other public events.

The Shi-tro Mandala for Universal Peace is now installed at a private location near T'hondup Ling. Generous offerings of water, flowers, and butterlamps complement the pristine quality of the mandala. Once a month Lama Gyatso leads the sangha in a day-long Shi-tro practice and tsok at the mandala site. The

blessings of practicing in the presence of the mandala are palpable and profound. On September 11, the anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C., we conducted a special Shi-tro practice to benefit all those affected by the tragedy.

The Shi-tro Mandala Project has shifted into its second phase, one aspect of which is preparing the mandala for traveling exhibition. This will entail casting the fragile clay deity statues in metal and creating special traveling cases for the mandala's other parts. We are currently exploring funding for casting the deities.

Tools for Peace, the portion of the project dedicated to arts and peace education, is continuing to develop the *Personal Mandala Guidebook*. We will train thirty teachers in the Personal Mandala Workshop this November at the Pacific Asia Museum. For information on Tools for Peace and the Shi-tro Mandala, contact Shan Watters at (818) 905-7379.

## Amrita

For much of this year Lama Padma maintained an energetic teaching schedule. He traveled to Orcas Island and Winthrop in Washington, and to Vajra North in the Yukon. He also gave regular teachings and conducted retreats in Seattle. He continues to bring the dharma to sangha inmates at the Monroe State Reformatory. Inspired by his efforts, ten Amrita sangha members have signed up to participate in the prisoners' Buddhafest, the annual Buddhist open house at the prison. A number of prisoners are enthusiastic about Lama Padma's teachings and are encouraged by the support they get from visiting sangha members.

Amrita recently built an auxiliary butter lamp shed. On Saga Dawa, the anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment and parinirvana, the sangha gathered together to offer tsok and 2,400 lamps.

On the evening of June 7, Amrita was honored by a visit from H.E. Khenpo Chöga. More than twenty students listened to his teachings with great enthusiasm, and we look forward to more extensive teachings when he returns.

Brian Hansell, Kimberly Lacy, and their children accompanied Lama Padma

and Susan to Chokdrup Ling, their retreat land in Colorado. They all worked hard to build a new retreat house and add finishing touches to the existing house and kitchen. In mid-July, Ann Crain and her husband, Bud, traveled to the land to install solar panels, so now Chokdrup Ling has electricity.

## Refugio

The Odsal Ling Country Center (affectionately referred to as Refugio) is fulfilling its purpose as a tranquil and delightful retreat sanctuary for the São Paulo sangha. The old colonial-style house has been completely renovated, the shrine room capacity well tested, and the space blessed by the consecration and empowerments



*Lama Norbu teaching the children at Refugio*

conducted by H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche. We have set aside the first weekend of every month for ngondro retreats. Other intensive weekend events led by Lama Tsering have been well attended. Our first fundraising party, which took place on the day of Brazil's fifth World Cup victory, was a joyous affair and gave a big boost to the temple construction fund.

When Rinpoche came to Refugio in March, he invited all of the children in the sangha to a special teaching. The children were very receptive, and after the teaching, Rinpoche announced that Lama Norbu would continue these sessions. The children shown in this photo—Gabriel, Bruno, Lissa, and Thais—are regular attendants. Lama Norbu also holds a monthly storytelling session in Lambari that is attended by a group of eight disadvantaged children.

The guest and staff facility, under construction since the beginning of this year, is now almost complete. The style of

the building is based on the temple at Khadro Ling, but the color is a unique Lama Tsering favorite—a bright Manjushri orange. The three-meter-high bunk beds will allow enough space for their occupants to sit comfortably upright while doing practice. The building can accommodate twenty staff members and guests, with a large section of the first floor being set up for the tsa-tsa fundraising project.

Our perfect contractors, Lazineo and Sons, have just begun building an addition to the main house that will provide space for the dining room, as well as a small office in back. We are a little sad that their work at the center is almost complete, because they have been such a delight to work with. We hope that the purchase of the land next door and the construction of future residences there will provide enough projects to keep them busy until we are ready to start building the temple.

## Iron Knot Ranch

After six months without rain, monsoon commences just as we begin to raise the roof over our new shrine room. The roof, enormous and elegantly designed and engineered by Jeff Morris, David Mar, and Richard Hartwell, is the most complex construction we've undertaken at the ranch.

How to raise more than 60,000 pounds of structural steel 20 feet into the air and weld it into place between thunderstorms? Our thanks to all of you who offer much-needed assistance—through prayers, effort, and financing—to this adventure in off-road, off-the-grid, and nearly off-the-map shrine-room raising.

Also in the works: Lama Shenpen continues to offer Bodhisattva Peace Training intensives at the ranch and in Minnesota. Her house is nearing completion, thanks to Tony Styskal and a dedicated Iron Knot staff. A solar and wind power station (dubbed Minnesota Power and Light by our Minnesotan volunteers) is almost operative. We are planning housing for staff and visitors. And at long last, our butter lamp shrine is complete as of Chogyur Duchen, the full moon in Saga Dawa, when all 1,080 butter lamps were offered for the first time. Slowly, slowly, a dharma center emerges—45 minutes from the middle of nowhere.

# She Remembered Her Refuge

By Susie Wallace

I met Linda Richmoon at a teaching on sangha that H.E. Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche gave in Berkeley in 1987, and after that, we became close friends. Linda's health was never great, and for the past few years she used a motorized cart to get around, which she did in her inimitable style (imagine cut flowers in a vase). I would often see her miles from home, tooling around by herself, amazingly fearless and self-sufficient for someone so disabled.



Linda Richmoon, Karen Fuller, and Susie Wallace

When I tried to call Linda on her fifty-fifth birthday last March, I discovered that she had been hospitalized with breathing difficulties. When I visited her in intensive care later that night, I found her heavily sedated and hooked up to a machine to help her breathe. The mask over her mouth made it difficult for her to talk, and she was very uncomfortable.

The next morning, when I called the hospital, I was told that the hospital staff could only speak to

family members. I knew Linda would need an advocate, so I became her "cousin." When I met with the doctor, I signed releases for various medical procedures. I confirmed Linda's instructions not to be kept alive artificially and explained how important it was for her, as a practicing Buddhist, to be alert rather than heavily drugged, so that she could keep reciting her prayers as she died.

Over the next couple of days, Linda became agitated. She kept repeating, "Help me! Help me!" I told her that I would, and recited the Red Tara sadhana and mantra aloud to her. Once, after I said *Om Tare Tam So Ha*, she repeated it back to me. I also reminded Linda that she had received p'howa (transfer of consciousness) teachings and that she would need to rely on that practice as she died. I assured her that many lamas and sangha members were praying for her.

Finally, the doctor admitted that the procedures were not working. When Linda's brother, Drew, arrived from New Mexico, they removed the mask, gave Linda pure oxygen through her nose, and put her on a morphine drip for her pain.

I learned that Lama Tsering was in San Francisco and could come to the hospital. As Linda was a longtime Tara practitioner, it seemed auspicious that Lama Tsering had come to the

Bay Area at such a crucial time. Linda had become increasingly distressed, but as soon as Lama Tsering arrived—on Tara Day—something shifted. She became more relaxed and focused. Lama Tsering spoke to her for quite some time, giving her instructions, and then just sat and prayed.

Lama Tsering later commented, "It struck me how fortunate it is for us as practitioners to have the dharma as we die. These are truly marvelous methods. Linda was not a highly realized lama or practitioner; she was like us. She had maintained her Tara practice. I didn't do anything other than show up at the right moment to remind her of her own practice and help her find strength in that." By the time Lama Tsering left, Linda had calmed considerably.

Linda died a couple of hours later, with Drew and I at her bedside. As she took her final breath, I began to recite the p'howa practice. Late that night, when I finally left the hospital, I felt moved and exhausted—but also relieved that Linda had been released from the burden of her disabled body. I'm sure that she would have preferred to die at home, but I believe that she was nevertheless very fortunate in the way she died.

For me, the experience brought to life the importance of dharma practice and training. The phases of dying no longer seem remote, but real and inevitable. I know now that there are many details we must all address in planning for our deaths.

Lama Tsering said, "Because Linda had the dharma, it made all the difference in the way she died. I am certain that she really came into her practice at the end of her life. She was able to remember her refuge."

## Rinpoche's teaching (continued from page 4)

that you are creating virtue. Don't waste this opportunity to practice by trying to make things easier for yourself.

If your knees hurt or your back is stiff, think about the beings in the six realms, whose suffering is hundreds of thousands of times more intense than yours. Empathize with them and increase your compassion. Then aspire to purify their karma through the pain you experience while sitting, so that eventually they will find more fortunate conditions. In this way, you will purify your physical karma.

Sometimes it's difficult to maintain the mantra and chants. Your voice may get hoarse or your throat sore. Concentrate on the prayers and the words, pronounce them correctly, recite the mantra correctly, and project your voice. Have patience with the process because it will purify your speech karma.

Focus your minds on the practice. Rejoice in creating this virtue, and then dedicate it to all beings with the aspiration that their obscurations will be removed and they will attain enlightenment, beyond suffering. If you haven't been practicing as strongly as you might, renew your commitment and apply yourself even more diligently. Try always to create virtue and eliminate all nonvirtue. Resolve not to waste your life pursuing worldly pleasures. Every day, when you wake up, rejoice that death didn't take you during the night. You have one more day to live, practice, help beings, and create merit, all of which make the best use of this life.



## Practice by the Days of the Moon

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.

### October

- 1 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day
- 6 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 12 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 14 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 21 Full Moon: P'howa
- 28 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 30 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day

### November

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

### December

- 3\* New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 11 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 13 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 19 Full Moon: P'howa
- 26 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 28 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day

### January

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

### February

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

### March

- 2 New Moon: Vajrasattva
- 3 Losar (2130)
- 10 First Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 12 Tenth Day: Guru Rinpoche Day
- 18 Full Moon: Chhor'hrul Duchen
- 24 Last Quarter Moon: Tara Day
- 26 Twenty-fifth Day: Dakini Day

\*Eclipse of the sun; practice is multiplied 10,000 times; \*\*Eclipse of the moon; practice is multiplied 1,000 times.

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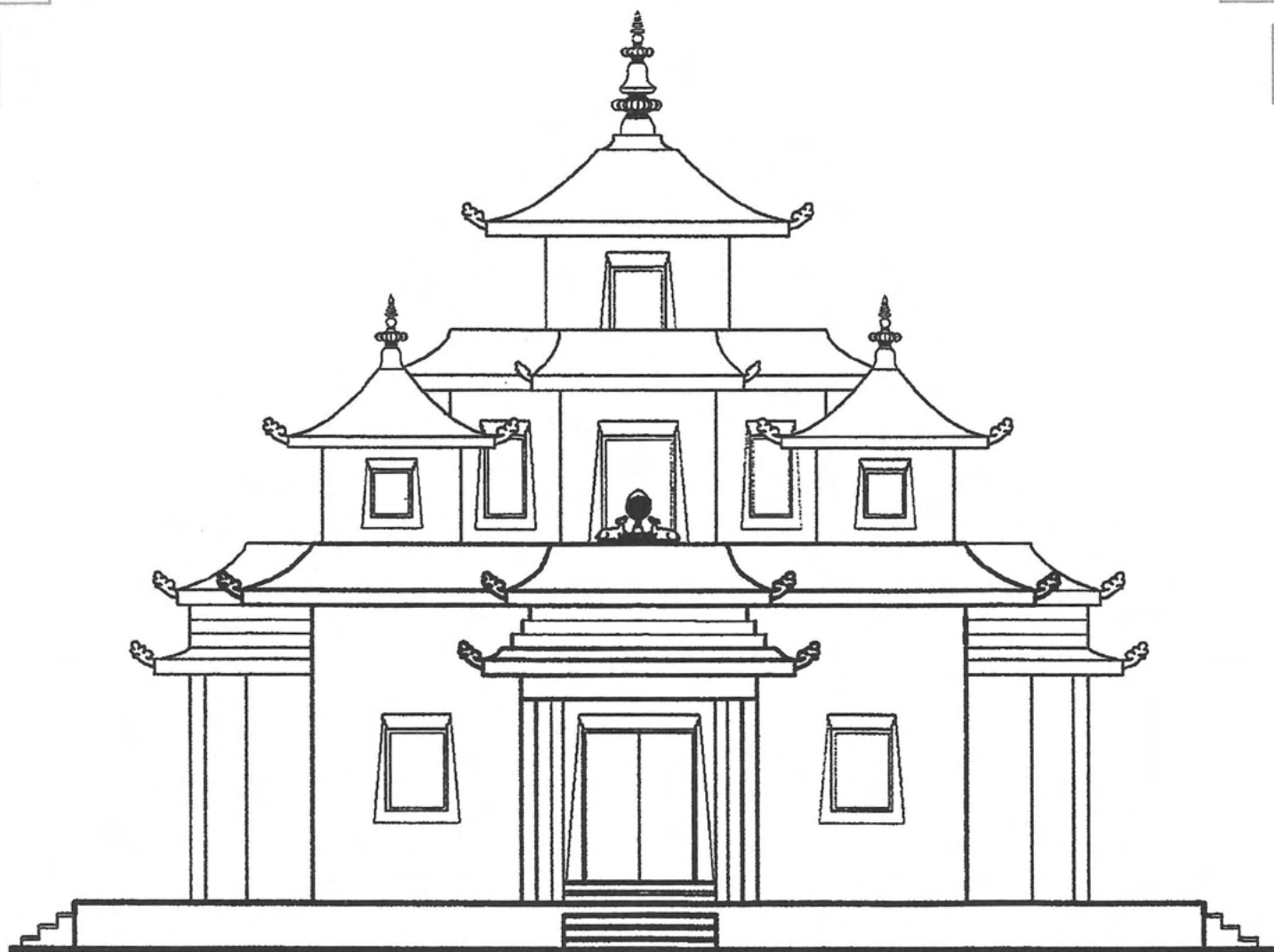
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