

Gaden for the West News

Letter from Rinpoche

To all my Dharma students and friends,

Greetings and happy year of the fire pig!! I am writing to let you know where we are with the Gompa Temple project and what we need now!

As you all know when I first came to Canada it was to Nelson where I have lived most of those years. Nelson is the great place for the Gompa Temple as it is beautiful, natural and amidst rivers, lakes and mountains and we all have a special feeling for the area. It is a perfect setting for long term and short term retreats and will serve the Buddha Dharma for generations to come.

We have completed Phase 1 of the Gompa Temple Renovation. The Gompa area has been expanded and made safe for large gatherings. Now it is time to do Phase 2 which its to build an external stairway from the top floor. This will be built within a tower and will complete another step in making the building safe for large gatherings. We have to do this renovation to meet the building regulations.

To do this next phase we need to get a mortgage, to do this we need a steady source of funds so that we can pay back the mortgage. We are grateful for all the donations you have offered and also for the income from retreats. However, we need more money on a regular basis.

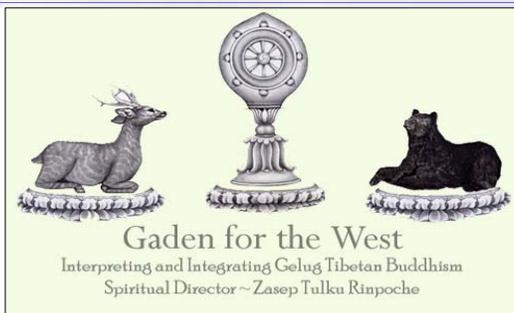
Some of you are currently offering "A DOLLAR A DAY" to this project. Thank you! I myself have made a commitment to offer "A DOLLAR A DAY" and I am asking those of you who are not currently doing so to join me and yourself offer "A DOLLAR A DAY". With your participation we will be able to complete Phase 2 and go on to Phase 3, which is to build a dormitory wing to accommodate more retreatants at the Gompa.

I want you each to think very seriously about doing this, "A DOLLAR A DAY" is not even one coffee. This is to benefit all beings and future of Buddha Dharma in Canada so please do offer "A DOLLAR A DAY".

You may send postdated cheques or sign up for electronic deposits from your bank account. To learn more please contact us at Gaden for the West, #605 - 3495 Cambie St., Vancouver, V5Z 4R3 or email Sonam Loga at sonamloga@shaw.ca or Sharon at tenzing1@telus.net.

Thank you for joining me in this project!

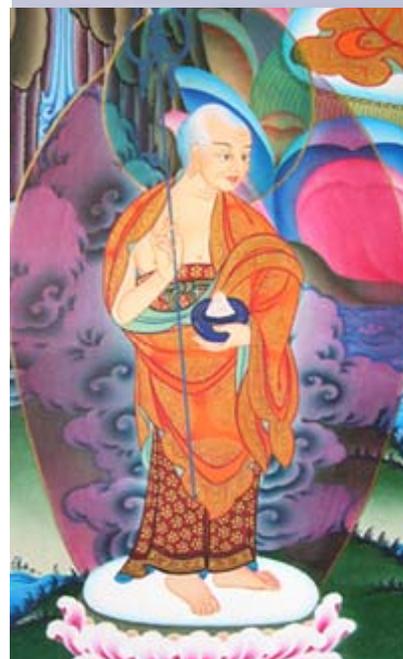
Yours in the Dharma
Zasep Rinpoche Bhagshi



Summer 2007

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A Kata For Bob Kapitany

Over the last few years, out of his Guru Devotion, Bob has developed a practice of generosity outstanding in our sangha. Bob embodies his generosity in the form of offerings to his Guru on a daily basis; these offerings include many practices one of which all of us at Gaden for the West applauds. Bob contributes 'A dollar a day.' to Gaden for the West to support Zasep Rinpoche's dream of a Gompa for all his students.

Bob also gathers practitioners both at Gaden Tashi Choling Retreat and in Thunder Bay and Ottawa and offers initiations, teachings and practice retreats which generate funds, all of which Bob passes on as donations to Gaden for the West. Bob's retreats are beneficial and enjoyable to all who attend them. One of the additional things Bob also offers is his own home cooking.



We, at Gaden for the West, want to thank you Bob for your generous and exemplary form of fundraising and for embodying the principals you teach. We send you a big white Kata with all our love and good wishes.

Tales from the Gompa Check Book

In October, 2001, we took possession of our beautiful Gompa house and land - a magic place. It is thanks to our Guru Zasep Rinpoche and his dream of a meditation centre in the mountains that we are here today. I was flipping through our check book and noticed that every entry written in it has a story to tell about our adventures in developing the retreat center. I'd like to share a few of them. The first entry was for a massive pile of fire wood that was dumped on the hill before the snow flew to feed the furnace with wood - a daunting thought for a city slicker from Toronto. Fortunately Wayne, from Tasmania, took it all in stride. During our first retreat we formed a human chain to get the wood stashed out under the deck, through the Gompa and over cushions and texts, into the hallway and then into the furnace room. Those pioneer days are over now - for safety and ease we heat with electricity!

A check for A-3 Plumbing. That reminds me of the ceilings and walls that we had to rip out so that a legal sized gas line could be installed. One for Simon- who worked on the metal roof and tried to brace the chimney but with all of the snow it fell off anyway. Septic tank pumped. Just before the first retreat there was a dreadful smell in the Gompa. Little Alex who accompanied his Mom to the weekly study group was accused of smelly diapers but several days later we realized it was the sewage backing up from the septic tank. Panic- no one could get up the hill in the snow to do the job. After a lot of groveling and paying a premium price a truck with chains on its wheels made it up the icy drive just in time for people to gather and stay for the retreat.

An entry for paint, plaster, nails and hardware for the staunch group of friends who helped fix up for the retreat. A check to Sharon for the car loads of Ikea, hardware and food that arrived from Vancouver along with a car heaped with kitchen donations from George. The retreat itself was an event with sparks and fire coming out of the fuse box. Thanks to Colin for his bandaging and spotting of the situation! A massive amount of snow fell off the roof and smashed the entire back deck as we were completing the retreat fire puja. What an amazing inaugural retreat Rinpoche led. Plumbing supplies, plumber's fees, snow plowing, and A-3 back again to replace the gas line that was flattened by the porch. Electrical work deemed necessary after spotting live wires where Nancy was painting and fun with new fixtures as a result. I had forgotten how much plastering, dry walling, tiling etc. that we did that first winter shepherded by Peter, Nancy, Wayne, Joan, Fern, Warren, Ivana and others. They all helped that year and most have continued to do so to this time. By spring we had a new bathroom and shower installed downstairs and recruitments of friends to help tile the floors. Then there is an entry for an out house toilet seat. I remember being in the kitchen preparing food for lunch. Warren and Wayne were up to their necks in a huge pit they were digging so that a little shed just off the driveway could be converted into an out house. Peter had put a chain on it attached to his truck in order to pull it aside for the digging. At some point Peter decided to leave to buy supplies in town, forgetting that the shed was still attached to his truck. Bear in mind that an electrical wire was strung from the shed to a huge power pole next to it with a transformer on it. I looked out the window and saw the power pole swaying dramatically. Fortunately enough screaming and jumping up and down on the part of spectators alerted the driver just in time! (Continued on p. 10)

A Brief History of Gaden For The West

In 1999 at the Presidents meeting in Moscow, Idaho. Zasep Tulku Rinpoche founded Gaden for the West and appointed the Board of Directors. Rinpoche's vision was to form an international organization to promote the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism and the Gelugpa tradition in the West, and especially to introduce these teachings in a different way than they were traditionally taught in the East. Buddhism has nothing to do with particular cultures. Its essence is compassion, wisdom and understanding the human mind -- working for the enlightenment of all beings.

There are four major goals for this new organization. The first is to adapt Tibetan Buddhism into western society. The Buddha suggested that his teachings should adapt and be relevant and clear within different cultures. With a different method of interpretation, such topics as karma, reincarnation and the six realms become easier for westerners to understand. Another goal of Rinpoche's new organization is to translate and publish Dharma sadhanas and books, adapting to and making them more helpful for the western mind, changing some of the sexist words that show up in the old Tibetan texts and encouraging lay people into Dharma practice. It is also Rinpoche's wish to promote Dharma in action, Buddhism in this world, socially engaged Buddhism, not just sitting and talking about Dharma all the time like some people do. In our own towns and communities we can be doing charitable work -- not retreating or studying only. The final purpose for Rinpoche's Gaden organization was to build a Gompa, a Buddhist Temple, near Nelson, British Columbia, for all students to retreat and study and work together. We have done this and we are inviting you from wherever you are in Australia, Europe or Mongolia to join us here.

GADEN FOR THE WEST, Interpreting and Integrating Gelugpa Tibetan Buddhism was incorporated by Canada Corporations Act, under the seal of the Minister of Industry, as of September 28, 2000 File Number 381695-8. We received Charitable status and our tax number is 89626 0718 RR0001. The charity was registered effective January 1, 2002. Gaden For The West was incorporated in British Columbia on April 24, 2007, our incorporation number is A0070965.

The major activity of finding a place to build the Gompa had been underway for some time. Tashi Choling Society had already raised \$15,000 for this project. After much searching of many people a call came in that a place was available in Sproule Creek just a twenty minute walk from Rinpoche's home. The purchase went ahead with all of the centres and 80 individuals contributing the funds (including individuals who generously made interest free loans). We moved in October 2001, Pamela Graham and Wayne Duncan came out from Toronto and Tasmania to take care of the Gompa for us. We had our first meeting, gathering all the Presidents at our new Gompa and on Dec 22, 2001 Rinpoche began our first retreat, Gyalwa Gyatso, Red Chenrezig, since that time Rinpoche has led many meditations, teachings and twelve retreats. Bob Kapitany has led a retreat at the Gompa each year as well as one in Thunder Bay each year all to benefit the Gompa (see a Kata for Kapitany). Also Jampa Shaneman, Jaime de la Berrara, Matthew Richards, and Chuck Damov have led retreats at the Gompa.

Every year Tashi Choling Society holds regular practices at the Gompa including celebrations of auspicious days, Sunday meditation, Tuesday and Thursday teachings and Monday and Wednesday deity yoga practices. There has been much work to do to make the space useable for our purposes and also to meet code and regulations for a gathering place a RETREAT (our official government designation). Many people have volunteered many hours, cleaning, organizing, designing, building, painting, flooring, gardening, plumbing, doing electrical work, advertising, emailing, phoning, writing, sawing, hammering, mailing, cooking and meeting to create the beautiful space we now have. Many thanks to each of you! Thanks also to the many workers hired to reconstruct, build, dig, and renovate, waterlines, roads and the septic system. And the work goes on.

Today we are finishing the construction of a tower to house bedrooms and a second essential stairway from the top floor. This is the completion of Phase Two of the renovation. Phase One was the expansion of the Gompa and Phase Three will be the expansion of the bedroom wing. The primary source of income to achieve all of this is the sangha. Rinpoche offers teachings and retreats, which the sangha attends, and thus we have income. Also many of the sangha have joined Rinpoche in contributing on a regular basis A DOLLAR A DAY. We also have income from individuals who do retreats and from individuals who periodically make offerings to the project. Also over the years various centres have done fundraisers for the Gompa Project. Thanks to all.

Up to now donations and income from retreats have been adequate to pay our debts however at this time we have found it necessary to go to the bank for an ongoing mortgage to pay for completion of the changes necessary to meet code. Therefore we will have greater monthly expenses and will need more help from each of you! We are very happy to be able to do all of this as the outcome will be to meet the goal of Zasep Tulku Rinpoche's vision, we will have a Gompa which is a sanctuary for meditation and contemplation where people can find peace, a gathering place where practitioners can purify their mind and body and attain realizations of Enlightenment and Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

Sharon Gretzinger Nelson, May 2007

Gaden For The West Income Statement

January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005

Categories - Income/Expenses

Income

Donations	\$77,408.13
Interest Earned	\$39.87
Retreat/Rent/Teaching Income	<u>\$14,167.26</u>
Total Income	\$91,615.26

Expenses

Bank Charges	\$122.07
Cost of Goods	\$12,725.79
Labour	\$52,252.06
Materials	\$69,931.08
Gifts: Teacher Honorarium	\$6,340.00
Insurance	\$2,820.00
Miscellaneous	\$492.78
Office	\$1,160.50
Rent	\$2,300.00
Telephone	\$1,123.94
Utilities	<u>\$2,563.80</u>
Total Expenses	\$151,832.02

Total Income/Expenses (\$60,216.76)

Debt: (\$50,782.63) as of Oct 27, 2006

Monthly expenses:

Telephone: $1,123.94/12 = \$93.66$ per month (on average)

Utilities: $2,563.80/12 = \$213.65$ per month

Miscellaneous: $492.78/12 = \$41.07$ per month

Yearly expenses:

Insurance: \$2,820.00

Office supplies: \$1,160.50

Rent: \$2,300.00

Bank charges: \$122.07

A Real Gompa by Nancy Harris

Rinpoche leaned over and quietly said to me, "Now it looks like a real gompa." We were standing in front of the new hand-hewn entry way that Rinpoche's friend Hart had made for us last fall. This fall, thanks to many friends the gompa has become more and more like a real gompa with another hand-worked wooden doorway happily constructed by Colin, Ken and Brian. A magnificent flagstone walk-way now covers the ground under our central entrance thanks to Pamela, Ivana and Matt. The front door was freshly painted by George and opens into a re-designed by Eric and expertly constructed and donated by Jane and Ivana. Pamela finished off this room with beautiful that really give our entering place the solemnity that it deserves. in the hallway, stairway, kitchen and expanded gompa walls hands at work. The authentic Tibetan colour scheme that proved to be a bit of a challenge at first but has comfortably remarkable new gompa space thanks to the crew of Evan, Diane, Murray, Allan, Debbie and all the others who showed up day after day to paint and re-paint.

Wayne astonished us all with his beautifully crafted wood window and door trims and found himself swept into the vortex whirlwind of the cork floor laying of Warren, Brian & Allan. Peter appeared regularly with new supplies of wood and tools. Jane patiently stained all the trim as George took on the job of painting the new floor in the sun room up-stairs. The floor in there has been raised so that we will not have that head bumping place in the gompa anymore. Ivana, Cheryl and Oya painted the entire second floor and it looks so much better! Joan, Fern, and Sharon moved the kitchen upstairs for the work party and Jitka and others cooked meal after meal for the volunteer workers.

Mother Sharon planned and shopped for all the provisions and arranged just about everything for just about everybody. Plus housed masses of dharma travelers from far-away centres. Pamela and Wayne were there day after day with humour and grace doing whatever needed doing. Brian and Trish were de-layed in their arrival time to help out by the need to fly to Texas to receive their new bundle of joy, the lovely Rosalyn. Nothing like a new baby to perk up a tired work party. There was a bit of final scurrying about just before the consecration of the space. If you have not seen The Real Gompa give yourself a treat and come see. But if you really want a treat come sit in The Real Gompa.

Special thanks to all who helped in so many ways to make out Gompa so beautiful and especially thank you to The Precious One Zasep Tulku Rinpoche for the vision and continuing loving kindness.

"If you have not seen The Real Gompa give yourself a treat and come see. But if you really want a treat - come sit, close your eyes and truly experience The Real Gompa. "

cloak room totally Daren, stained by new floor coverings Newly painted walls saw many kind Rinpoche chose settled into a Matthew, Cristina,

GADEN FOR THE WEST GOMPA
@ TASHI CHOLING RETREAT



In the quiet sunny spacious mountain valley of SPROULE Creek close to Nelson. Space is available for individual personal retreat. The third floor of this charming light filled Retreat is devoted to Dharma practice.



Come alone or with a friend and enjoy this vista as you complete the practice of your choice.

For further information call Pamela Graham at Gaden for the West Gompa
250-352-3423

Reflections on a trip to Mongolia by John Huizinga

The purpose of my trip to Mongolia was to put together a solar electric system for a monastery. The journey turned out to be about much more than just this task.

It was about the experience of living at a remote Buddhist monastery in a community of monks where the rhythm of day to day life centres on the commitment to learn and live the dharma. In particular I was to get to know and develop a real affinity for the two young monks who were chosen to be my helpers. Erij and Tandzer aged 16 and 17 both came from nomad families living in the Gobi and reminded me in some ways of the farm kids I grew up with in Canada. They were unfazed by whatever came their way and immediately prepared to do whatever was needed. Erij and Tandzer were both eager to learn and quick to figure things out.

I first put them to work digging a 600 foot trench in the dry rocky ground, laying the heavy underground cable (the grid), digging holes and pouring cement to anchor the solar panel mounting and weather proofing the power house. Later they learned to connect up the electrical hardware, wall plugs, light fixtures, switches etc. and laying wires in hard to get to places for a less agile adult, eg in the ceilings of the temple. Their approach to the work was patient and methodical, especially for 16 year olds, with often finicky and repetitive tasks. My helpers would persist with an intricate task until they had exactly right; until they felt they had achieved perfection. Because of the language barrier very few words were ever exchanged between us but they would beam with satisfaction when showing me a perfectly completed task. The smiles on their faces spoke louder than anything they could ever say. I am left with memories of these two diligent, always cheerful young monks that I simply cherish.

It was also about traveling in the company of two robed lamas, Zawa Rinpoche and Zasep Rinpoche. We drove in a four wheel drive vehicle all the way to Karakorum with Bilgoon, a hearty monkish driver. The road is a mere jeep trail that winds and braids its way across a vast unfenced open range country. During the entire drive we did not see a single road sign or as much as one tree. The land is vast and unbroken and dwarfed only by the immense blue Mongolian sky. One can see forever. The horizon is so far and distant that at one point Zasep Rinpoche remarked that "here you can see the earth is round". When encountering the occasional nomad ger (yurt) we stopped to ask directions. Almost always we are invited to come in. The interiors of the gers are all quite similar with a stove in the middle and with brightly painted roof poles and door. There is painted furniture around the perimeter of the ger and a shrine with incense burners, candles, miniature prayer wheels, statues, photos, blue katas, perhaps a tanka against the far wall opposite the door.

The first thing to take place once we are seated is the performance a Mongolian ritual, the exchanging of snuff bottles. Snuff bottles are small rounded vessels made from a wide variety of natural stone with a cap stone of red coral. These are highly prized and handed down for generations. Zawa Rinpoche has an ancient and much admired jade snuff bottle. There is a well understood protocol of how to present and receive a snuff bottle. The exchange is a welcoming ceremony that can also signal one's intentions, be they friendly, strictly social, about business, not friendly..... Needless to say our visits were only friendly.

We were invariably offered a, filled to the brim, bowl of Arik. This is the traditional drink of fermented mare's milk is most definitely an acquired taste. Fortunately for queasy Canadian stomachs it is acceptable to take only one small sip and then put the bowl down. As well we were always offered food eg mutton broth, cheese, deep fried bread, Mongolian dumplings and more mutton. Before leaving the Rinpoche's would attend the shrine with Tibetan chants and lay their hand on people's heads to confer their blessings. We were often presented with bright blue katas, the colour of the Eternal Blue Sky. It was probably hard to figure how I, obviously not a monk, fit into the scheme of things, so sometimes I was presented with a kata as well. I was touched by the deference and the devotion shown to the two lamas wherever we went. I experienced levels of genuine hospitality and devotion that I rarely have encountered in our own affluent society.

(Continued on p. 13)

"The land is vast and unbroken and dwarfed only by the immense blue Mongolian sky. One can see forever."

The Great Chöd Retreat of Summer 2006 – PHAT!

by Cristina Sanchez

The Great Chöd Retreat, lead by Zasep Tulku Rinpoche at the Tashi Chöling Gomba, was a dream come true for a number of aspiring Chöd-pas. The retreat began July 1st with the auspicious celebration of Rinpoche's 57th Birthday and ended on the 15th. Participants and many people from the community at large converged at the Gomba in the afternoon, showering Rinpoche with many gifts. Among these, the "Collected Works of Dharmabadra", thanks to the generous contributions of a great number of people!

Later that evening, the crowds thinned out to 20 or so participants—people from as far as Toronto, Australia, and Korea, all eager to settle into our demanding retreat schedule. The following day began in earnest, with the first session starting at 7 AM. Between four meditation sessions, two teaching sessions, and karma yoga, our days were quite full. Our meditation sessions varied between quiet mantra recitations and energetic singing and several distinct singing and amongst the participants. Once it particular Chöd session in would happily sing and drum along, had to practice together, learn from that there is only one correct style. allowed us to deepen our experience profound practice that serves to cut PHAT!



As with any retreat, there were some off the cushion. After a week or so of Rinpoche suggested we give so that afternoon we hiked the

beautiful clean mountain air. On a more spontaneous note, during another session, a bear was spotted not 30 meters from our Gomba window. We all leapt from our cushions and spent the remainder of the session watching in awe as this magnificent and surprisingly nimble animal made a lunch of the cherry tree. To our delight and a little hesitation, Rinpoche ventured out to capture the bear's attention and take a few good pictures. We didn't know then, that many of us would see bears up close many times before this retreat would end.

It soon became clear that drumming styles were to be found was decided who would lead a Rinpoche's absence, the rest of us recognizing the great fortune we all each other, and to let go of the notion Rinpoche's teachings and blessings and understanding of this most the root of all our delusions, the ego.

very memorable moments both on and sitting, sitting, and more sitting, ourselves a break and take a hike. And Sproule Creek trail and took in the

The highlight of the retreat had to be the night we spent on Copper Mountain. Rinpoche's plan was to have us practice outside in the wild, outside of our comfort zone. The excursion was many days in the planning, with the Nelson community providing tremendous support. It would never have been possible without their generous donations of clothing, tents and other supplies. With a handful of all-terrain vehicles overflowing with people and supplies, the drive to the base alone was quite a challenge as the road was quite treacherous. Having arrived at the base, we quickly set up our tents and set off to hike to the summit. This too proved to be quite a challenge, but nevertheless, everyone made it up. As we were taking in the breathtaking views whilst catching our breath, Rinpoche set out to hang prayer flags on a precarious spot on the peak. Then the moment arrived to practice the precious Chöd on the summit of this most auspicious mountain, singing and drumming with our beloved Lama. What great fortune! Reader, the next time you find yourself at the Gomba, take in the view of Copper Mountain and know that at the very peak where the wind blows strongest, Rinpoche's blessings are flowing forth in a never ending stream.

Great Fortune by Evan Zaleschuk

How fortunate we are to have our lama here with us, living within such close proximity and so accessible. Spending five weeks traveling and rooming with him in his homeland, and seeing how devoted and respectful the Tibetans are to him back in Tibet, was a blessing in itself. This started when we went to Kum Bum monastery in Xinnig. Seeing the pilgrims there, complete strangers to him, come up for blessings was very moving. He would listen to them and watch while they prostrated and then bless them as they knelt before him. The warmth and intimacy was palpable.

We left Xinnig by car and drove sixteen hours to Yushu, going over two passes at elevations of over 16,000 ft. all the while Rinpoche would be checking in with us to see if anyone was having any of the typical signs of altitude sickness; headaches, nausea or edema. We were doing fine as far as we knew. We arrived in Yushu and were greeted by Rinpoche's brother, nephew and nephew-in-law, a typical Tibetan greeting with khatas and tongues protruding. They would be with us as our guides and occasional bodyguards against dogs for the duration of our stay. The day after our arrival in Yushu, Rinpoche and I were having a conversation about the time difference between there and Vancouver, I couldn't quite understand him or hear him properly, thinking to myself "now that he is back home he is speaking Tibetan without even knowing it." At the same time he was looking at me like "who is this idiot I brought and what did I get myself into." A couple of days later we laughed about it realizing that, due to the dramatic altitude change, our brain functions weren't quite up to snuff and we weren't understanding things too clearly.

Driving into Yushu was like driving into the gateway to Tibet. The road leading up to it had a flowing river on one side leading us there with rows of trees and a monastery overlooking the vista. I was already impressed. Driving into the city of 80,000 mostly Tibetans was equally impressive. The facades on the building were decorated with colourful Tibetan painting and the doors all had work overlaying them. The in traditional garb with amber, our translator, Drolma, who

When we finally came up to the last pass where we could see Tashi Lhapug down below in the valley, it was awe-inspiring—like arriving upon Shangri-la.

From Yushu we were off to sacred mountains and his and stayed with his niece and picked up in Yushu. The word

was with us and any expectant mothers could come for a consultation. We heard of one woman who lived just outside the city. She had been to the local Chinese hospital where they had told her it was unclear whether she had twins or just one baby and a large cyst. Her brother went out to bring her in and she arrived six hours later (we were to learn that nothing happens quickly there). Diane did an assessment of the expectant woman and discovered two heartbeats. We were all very excited for her. These would be her ninth and tenth children! The doctors at the hospital, after performing an ultrasound, had said that she was around 30 weeks pregnant, but Diane thought it was very much closer to 40 (according to the timing of her last menses). We left a couple of days later for Tashi Lhapug with the thought that when we came back she might have delivered them.

the eight auspicious symbols in metal-locals themselves were beautifully clad coral and dzi beads. Here we picked up was to be a big part of the trip.

Zadoh with Rinpoche pointing out his family's ancestral camps. Here we met Neeten, her husband, whom we had was given out that Diane, a midwife,

It was a 10-hour drive up to Tashi Lhapug with a couple of stops along the way to eat and rest in some nomadic camps. Of course, there were also the spontaneous stops for locals who would come up to the truck Rinpoche was in for blessings. It was uncanny how they knew he was there. We would see them walking across a big open field with family in-tow to come and make an offering to Rinpoche and receive his blessing, a deity card, and blessing pill or cord. When we finally came up to the last pass where we could see Tashi Lhapug down below in the valley, it was awe-inspiring—like arriving upon Shangri-la. Here, in the middle of nowhere, (I kept looking for a sign that said "Nowhere") was this magnificent monastery rebuilt from rubble. There are 100 monks, including four yogis from the old days and many young boys, now living at the monastery. Some mature monks have come back after spending many years in Tibetan monasteries in Lhasa and India and this has been very inspiring for the younger monks.

Rinpoche gave teaching and initiations which the monks accepted enthusiastically and gratefully. He opened the Debate and Logic school where 32 monks will study. There was plenty of time for meetings with the monks so much was accomplished administratively. The goals set out in these meetings are to raise \$10,000 annually to support the monks of the debate and logic school. These funds will be used for food and living expenses, and the building of a kitchen, storage area and dung house. There are no washrooms and no wells, so plans are underway to build these and to construct a fence around the areas that contain underground springs so that they can be kept sanitary. *(Continued on page 12)*

A Thank You by Pamela Graham

Thank you so much to all the friends and students of Rinpoche's who took the time to write letters to forestry and signed our petition. The response was gratifying and as a result the location of the planned logging road was changed from going right through the valley and past the Gampa's driveway. It is now located fairly high up on the ridge instead. The original proposal pulled our little community together and we had many meetings and long hikes including some with forestry. The community protested vehemently about the historical walking trail that would be destroyed and so that too has been saved.

Every letter made a difference. We still get emails from them updating us on the road building and areas that are to be logged. Last fall they came and checked the exact location of our underground spring and water source and did studies to make sure this would not be disturbed by the location of the coops (logging patches).

Thanks again for taking the time to write.

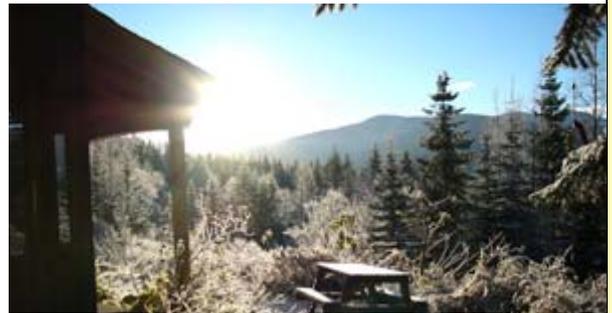
WINTER RETREAT SNAPSHOT

by Nancy Harris

After morning exercises Peter brings in the anticipated package from the mail. Annila Ann has had Tibetan cymbals couriered from her centre in White Rock for use in our retreat. Rinpoche and she excitedly open the brown paper wrapping to reveal the beautiful royal blue and red brocade covered cases that surround the instruments. These look like fancy hats sandwiched in between large flat donuts. Rinpoche tries the different shape cases on Annila's head. She beams. We laugh.

Now Rinpoche's practiced hands began to vibrate the two parts of the pounded brass. Annila claps the larger domed cymbals in perfect rhythm. Rinpoche's feet began to lift and turn in a graceful lama dance. A delighted smiling Mathew joins in the early morning kitchen dance, swirling slowly left and right with raised arm and foot postures. The rich clashing vibrating sound of the Himalayas fills the dining room as the dancers circle round.

Beyond the dancers the tall picture windows of our centre fill with the first cascading of fluffy new snow. Our retreat is blessed with ancient sounds and eternal whiteness.



Tales from the Gompa Check Book (cont. from p. 2)

Peter rented a jackhammer. The large planter box in the Gompa was removed to make more seating room but a sewage pipe was discovered hovering above the floor and so the concrete had to be broken up to bury it. It seems to be a rule when renovating a house that before you actually do the task set out in hand there are at least three other things that have to be done first. In July we hired a back hoe to dig out the entire back of the house. A work party headed up by Colin re-built the back wall- a mammoth task- which had rotted in spots, including some of the joists into the house, and we held our breath as the house was jacked up. So many helped with the building and the cooking- working long hours to get it completed with flash lights strapped to their heads. Jitka had to sit on Colin so he wouldn't wake up the house hammering before five a.m.

In Oct. we had the roadway re done in the hopes that the previous winter's excitement of cars getting stuck and sliding down backwards and sideways regularly would not re occur and we got ready for another retreat led by Rinpoche. Water jugs. Have you ever had over twenty people and lots of them to sleep over and your water line froze for almost a week? Just into the retreat it suddenly got unusually cold and this happened. Our friends in town rallied to the call and the front hall was filled with water jugs within hours. These were topped up at Rinpoche's house daily. Dianne our cook dealt with this seamlessly, and our two Australian retreatants Maurice and Rosie cheerfully hauled buckets of water through the snow from the semi frozen creek to flush toilets. Friends in town volunteered to share showers and baths. A neighbor picked up laundry. We carried on. Heroic attempts by the fellows attending the retreat ran a new temporary line from the creek over the ridge and to the Gompa and so in the end we had water.

For the rest of the winter most of the entries include building supplies – the work continued through spring summer and fall. Sept. brings an entry for a water box from Vancouver – it is a box used for storing and freezing fish on boats- an inspiration from Colin who works on one. It is going to be our source of gathering water on the creek situated way up on a cliff behind us. Our gung ho fellows loaded it up on a truck, drove it up the mountain and winched it back down the gorge and muscled it into position. We hired a mini excavator to dig a trench for us to burry our line properly so it wouldn't freeze. Heat tape and electric cable were purchased and installed – there was a race to get it done before winter.

Excavating. George arrived as the freeze sets in and installed a new septic field in the nick of time .It is geared for commercial use. Whew. We have water and a new septic field. We prepare for a much looked forward to retreat with Rinpoche in November .Have you ever had over twenty people and lots of them to sleep over and your water line froze for almost a week? O.K. so it happened yet once again and our well oiled emergency plans rolled into place. With the help of many friends installing heat tape and other things with flashlights strapped onto to their heads into the night water was restored. If you plan to come to a future Winter retreat please note that the glitches have been worked out!

Then there is a check written commemorating the happy day we got our building permit thanks to all the hard work put in by Eric for months of designing and working with the building committee. Gravel. On a hot day this summer several of us went to the Gompa to do a Puja to find Rinpoche, Peter and Marpa digging huge holes for four foundation posts. They were there all day and late into the evening mixing concrete and getting ready for Heart a neighbor to put in a post and beam entry way that he donated. It is now installed and it truly feels like entering a temple. Special thanks goes to Rinpoche for his spiritual retreats, teachings, guidance and inspiration for our retreat centre. Also for all the digging and working on the land! Special thanks for Sharon and her incredible energy and commitment and time given to the Gompa. Thanks to Wayne, Nancy, Peter and Ivana who share with me the responsibilities on a daily basis and thanks to all of our friends too numerous to mention who have given their time and energy to help us – those who live here in Nelson and those from far.

I look forward to the next installment of our check book diary!

Pamela.

Song of the Profound View

by Geshe Rabten

The Razor that Cuts Down the Enemies of Desire and Hatred

In a precise frame of mind, through a very sound analysis
Of the speech of my experienced father,
The treasure of the meaning of the conqueror's Mother sutra
Was unearthed that day by the illusion of a hundred rupee note.

Once more in my small stone hut into which I alone could fit,
A battle was waged between appearance and reasoning.
To distinguish which was true and which was false
I relied upon the host of magical illusions.

When I examined this old monk who previously seemed so existent,
He turned out to be just like the tracks of a bird in the sky.
The appearance of a bird just turns through the mind,
But if one looks for its tracks, they are inexpressible:
emptiness is all there is.

I reflected upon the mode of being of phenomena;
How can they be different from the example of space?
The manifold things that briefly appear in a variety of ways
Are like drawings on water, they cannot stay forever.
Being of the nature of water, they arise from water;
They repeatedly arise from and dissolve back into it.

When the appearance of the pillar before me came to mind,
The thought would occur, "this is a pillar".
When I started to analyze this mode {of appearance},
I thought, "It is not the pillar but its basis of imputation".
Again I analyzed this appearance
And thought, "it is not the pillar's basis of imputation but a
non-existent apparition,
Just like those pieces of hair for the mother with cataracts".
I wondered whether this was a nihilistic view or not.

No matter how much the various transformations of appearing
objects
Continue as before to present a smiling face,
Are they not merely non-existent apparitions
{Created} through the power of a mind distorted by ignorance,
Like the disturbing mass of fearful apparitions
For one confused in feverish delirium?
I wondered whether this was the case or not.

Relying upon the help of the example of the pile of stones,
I reflected upon the ways of conceptual imputation.
Being nothing but mere apprehensions of the mind,
Fabricated apparitions disappeared into the sphere
{of emptiness}
But I feared that this was a nihilistic view.

While absorbed in the sphere of the mind's emptiness,
I precisely examined the ways in which
Merely nominal things were able to function.
To my mind they appeared
Like the behaviour of objects in a dream,
Like water running beneath ice,
And like the surface of a vast lake disturbed by a breeze.
But I was not entirely comfortable
With this way of positing the functioning {of things}.
I wondered whether these were false apparitions or not.

Something endowed with these three characteristics
Can be called the basis of imputation of a phenomenon:
At times of examination, a condition for seeing suchness;
At times of no examination, a condition for seeing the
phenomenon;
And a condition for seeing the functioning of the phenomenon.

If one does not understand the way in which the
enemy, the afflictions, exists,
Then in spite of one's lifelong pride of being a spiritual
person, one will be like a cave.

If one makes no effort in the means of controlling the
self-grasping within one's own mind
Then although one proclaims vast and profound spiritual
truths, they will be like echoes.

At Times I would think how happy and fortunate I was,
Having been cared for by a Conqueror,
Having listened too much and now living in the woods.
But at times when I was disturbed by waves of afflictions,
I would think I was the same as the wild animals living in the
jungle.

In the forest of the coiled striped rope of pleasure and pain
I wished I could encounter the rope-snake in a truthful way!

When I thought in terms of conceptual imputation,
These numerous distorted apparitions appeared,
But they were still accompanied by the innate grasping within my
own mind.
It made me sad to think that I was still uncertain.
So it came time for my miserable self to seek refuge
In that protector of beings whose kindness exceeds that of my own
mother.

Great Fortune (continued from page 8)

Five days later we were on the road again up to Rinpoche's brother's camp. We got off the road at one point and drove over hill and dale using valleys and mountain tops as our signposts until we arrived at his camp. We were greeted by Jamda's wife, two daughters, son and his wife and many barking Tibetan mastiffs. We felt as if we were back in time 300 years, living in the yurts, eating yak yogurt and tsampa for breakfast and boiled mutton for supper. It was spartan but offered graciously. The only electricity came from a solar panel that lit a single bulb in the main tent used in the evening for cooking and eating. Like Jamda, his family was very giving and helpful with anything they could. A few days later it was decided that we should go on a pilgrimage to Lama Norlha. Who was Lama Norlha I asked, not who but what was the response. Lama Norlha is a sister mountain to Mount Kailash where a terton discovered that it is a holy seat for Padmasambava. Rinpoche hadn't been there before and was excited to go.

Jamda arranged the horses and gear and we were off, a small expedition of seven, with three pack-horses in tow. It took two days of nine hours each of horseback travel, during which we went over a mountain pass of 17,000 ft., to get there; and it was worth every step. Enroute we stopped at hot springs which Rinpoche and I had envisioned as a glacial outpouring into a snow-lined pool with steam coming off the water and were eagerly anticipating. We were sadly disappointed by what we saw. It was a swamp with a sulfur smell that was heated by the sun. We went in anyway not having bathed for a week and feeling the need to be clean. One older fellow in the pool recognized Rinpoche and had heard all the wonderful things he had done for the locals. He did darshan at Rinpoche's feet and received his blessing. We passed Lama Norlha and many stupas that day and camped up at a glacial lake. There were no westerners here, just pilgrims to Lama Norla and the lake, an amazing site.

After spending a few days circum-ambulating this holy site, we set out by horseback back to Zadoh. We checked in to find out if the woman pregnant with twins had delivered but it hadn't happened yet. Diane suggested she go back to the hospital to get some more tests done and possibly stay since she was now getting very large and not able to move around well.

We left Zadoh and carried on by jeep to Jamseng Health Care Centre. There we met Dr. Shamar who told us he was resigning. Dr. Leder and Jamda quickly found another local doctor to replace him. We bought some pill-making machines (grinder, oven and pill roller) so the doctors could make their own traditional pills from the herbs that they had collected. Diane and I saw many patients there and, along with Rinpoche, dispensed many of the Tylenols and arthritis and stomach medicine. We also erected a prayer flag stupa for the locals to circumambulate and made plans to erect a concrete one next summer. It will be a 24-foot stupa of Namgyalma Buddha for long life and of Medicine Buddha for good health. The stupa will cost 2,800 yuan.

We then went back to Zadoh again and discovered that the woman still hadn't delivered. Her husband asked Rinpoche to do a "mo" about the delivery: would it be safe with a natural birth or a caesarian? The answer came back equally good either way. Later that night Diane went to see the woman and taught her husband how to induce labour through reflexology techniques. We left for two nights to go visit some of Rinpoche's relatives and when we got back we got a call that two little boys had been born just 12 hours prior, at home with no medical support and both breech, feet first! We went over right away and Rinpoche blessed them and Diane checked them out as well as the mother. They were all fine and healthy. What a blessing.

Our journey trip to Tibet was filled with many more amazing experiences too numerous to be recounted in a single short essay. It was wonderful to see first-hand how everyone's contributions here are used so efficiently and effectively. Many thanks to all who have contributed time, money, articles of clothing, sunglasses, medicines and so forth over the past few years. Your generosity has made, and will continue to make, a profound difference in the lives of the people living in this area of Tibet.

Thank you Rinpoche.

Reflections on a trip to Mongolia (continued from page 6)

Once back in Ulaanbaatar Zasep Rinpoche and myself went to an antique store where we each bought a snuff bottle with attractive grains and colours embedded in the stone and the requisite embroidered pouch to keep our new treasure. Next time we travel in the Gobi we to can participate in this ritual greeting.

In the end I glimpsed another way of life; where the Mongolian nomads live a traditional, free, direct and self sufficient life and where the new monastic communities are bravely struggling to revive another ancient way of life. These small monastic communities have a historical and spiritual tradition that was pushed to the brink of extinction but now has a new lease on life. I feel that these monastic institutions and the people living there deserve all the help they get. The support and help we were able to bring directly improved the Spartan lives of the monks living at Delgeruun Choira.

Roman Mongolia, now free of a repressive Soviet ideology, is seeking to retrieve its own traditions and revive its Buddhist past. This is a long and difficult road with few resources to make it happen other than the will and determination of the people involved. Our support and our help can make a huge difference in the revival of a people's heritage, and the advancement of the Buddha Dharma.

I am grateful to Zasep Rinpoche and to Gaden Relief for giving me the opportunity to see and experience Mongolia in a truly unique way and to make my small contribution to this one community of monks.





SNAP SHOT II

by Nancy Harris

A lovely Japanese born woman begins the long sadhana of Vajra Yogini in precisely spoken Tibetan. The big ex-New Yorker carefully adjusts the recording equipment so that we all will have the exact pronunciation in the future. The doctor from Winnipeg, who travels the world to help others, leans forward in close attention. The small twinkly Czech behind him readies herself to play the Tibetan cymbals at the close of the sadhana. The gentle man from Los Angeles, who has lost a grandchild, respectfully places tea on Rinpoche's teaching table. The maroon clad nun from Saskatchewan looks on with compassionate eyes.

Others have come too, from Toronto, Idaho, Salt Spring Island and Oregon to receive the teachings and do the practices of the Six Yogas of Naropa; the yoga of lucid dreaming, the famous tumo energy heat, the powa method of ejecting consciousness at the time of death and the achievement of the rainbow body of light.

Upstairs the musical opening of the internet sounds as Rinpoche quickly checks his email from Mongolia, Australia, Tibet and Thunder Bay, before he comes to teach. Soon he will sit patiently pretending to shuffle his papers as he watches us try once more to coax energy winds into our central channel in order to produce the tumo heat that will melt our bodhicitta drops to purify our mind streams and make offerings to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas for the benefit of all living beings.

How could we possibly doubt miracles, when all this is happening in Sproule Creek, British Columbia?
