



Buddha House News

Buddha House, 1 Fisher St, Tusmore. Office Hours: Mon – Fri 9.30am – 2.30pm

Nov-Dec 2008

Phone: 8333 2824 Email: info@buddhahouse.org Website: www.buddhahouse.org

Affiliated with the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT)

THE STORY OF GESHE PEMA TSERING

Kindly transcribed by Chrys Dombroyannis

Part 1 - Tibet

Geshe Pema Tsering was born in 1939 in a small village in Dhargye in eastern Tibet. For Tibetans it is customary for parents to decide if a son or daughter is to become a monk or a nun. Geshe-la's family had already put his name down as a monk at Dhargye monastery before he was born and soon after his birth his family performed the ceremony of ordination.

Geshe-la led an idyllic and happy life as a young child in his village. There was no school so he spent his time eating, sleeping and playing with the children and animals in and around his village. When he was 7 he moved to Dhargye monastery where his uncle



was a Geshe. It was there that he took the vows of Rabjung, the vows of renunciation.

This was the beginning of his formal schooling and a difficult transition. His carefree days were over; he was unable to see his parents even though he could see their home in the distance. He would watch the animals on the hillsides that he used to be able to play with, but couldn't any more, and he would weep.

The Dhargye monastery was very large with approximately 300 to 400 children living there. Geshe-la did not attend classes with the other children, as his uncle supervised his education. He was very unhappy and instead of playing he had to learn the alphabet and to read and write. Then there was the difficult task of memorizing the texts of all the rituals and ceremonies of the

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MERIT BOX PROJECT

The Merit Box Project is a fantastic opportunity to help actualize Lama Zopa Rinpoche's projects - and an easy and incredibly meritorious way to practise generosity.

In previous newsletters we have mentioned some of Lama Zopa's charitable projects. Over the years, Lama Zopa Rinpoche has personally performed most of the fundraising for his various projects. Contributing just a small amount of money to the Merit Box each day or each week gives us the opportunity to open our hearts to generosity. At the same time we can really assist Rinpoche in actualizing his aim of helping all sentient beings.

Some of the projects that benefit from contributions collected through the Merit Box include: the Sera Je Food Fund, the Lama Tsong Khapa Teachers' Fund, Lama Yeshe Food Fund, the Maitreya Project and various projects in different centres all over the world. One of Lama Zopa's projects, the Amdo Eye Clinic, uses microscopes Jen's (in the office) dad manufactures



Lama Zopa Rinpoche

in Adelaide. At this clinic many hundreds of people have their sight restored each year.

If you would like to participate in the Merit Box Project you can get a beautiful donation box from Buddha House office to place on your altar. Included with the box is a prayer book

containing the visualisation, motivation, dedication, and prayer to use as you practice generosity with the Merit Box. In this way you can make the yoga of generosity part of your daily practice by placing a money offering into the box, while at the same time carrying out the suggested prayers and visualisations.

Once a year we will collect the money and send it to Lama Zopa Rinpoche's office.

There are a few merit boxes in the hall at Buddha House. You can use these for your practise of generosity while at Buddha House. Do not forget to do the visualisations and prayers as described in the prayerbook.

If you like to participate in the Merit Box Project and would like to use your credit card for your offering you can go to the virtual Merit Box at:

www.fpmt.org/meritbox/practice.asp

We rejoice in your practice!

Buddha House

FOUNDER (1981)

Lama Thubten Yeshe

SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche

TEACHERS

Venerable Geshe Pema Tsering

Venerable Jamyang

Jampa Gendun

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Lindsay Holmes

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

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GESHE-LA'S ATTENDANT

Anthony Sweeney

SPIRITUAL PROGRAM

COORDINATOR

Ven. Jamyang

CENTRE/OFFICE MANAGER

Jen Watkins

OFFICE & BOOKSHOP

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LIBRARIAN

Sally Shipway

NEWSLETTER & PROGRAM

Ven. Jamyang

Program – Anthony Hall, Becky

Geisler, Lisa

News letter – Luke Mosley &

Jen Watkins



BUDDHA HOUSE AGM—NOV. 23RD

Important Diary Date - Buddha House Annual General Meeting November 23rd - All Buddha House members and students are invited to our November 23rd, 2009 Annual General Meeting to be held at Buddha House at 1:30 pm after lunch at 12:30 and following the first of our two 'Living and Working in Harmony' Sunday sessions at 10:30 a.m. The AGM will deliver the 2008/09 reports and financial statements and elect our board. But it will also be a time of celebration of our successes as a dharma centre, as we review our past year activities and update members and students on the directions for the coming year. The successful future of Buddha House depends on its members and its board. If you think you have skills that will strengthen our board, please consider serving Buddha House by offering yourself for service. Talk to our Director Lindsay Holmes (contact details below) about your interest or register for our board Governance Training workshop (details below).

On November 23rd -Come at 10:30 am and stay for lunch and the 1:30 p.m. AGM to: Participate in our community building, Celebrate the past year., Bring an object, a photo or a poster that symbolises what Buddha House means to you.

Before the AGM - Put Nov 23rd in your diary, Update your membership so that you can vote at the AGM., email any questions you would like the AGM to address, to director@buddhahouse.org or lcholmes@meetingsuccess.org.

If you are considering offering yourself for election to the Buddha House board, register now for the **Governance Workshop** to be held on **Sunday Oct 26th** from 1pm-4pm.

We look forward to your participation in our Annual General Meeting as we together build and strengthen our community in offering the Buddha dharma to Adelaide.

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monastery. Every day there was a new passage to memorise. Geshe Pema Tsering recalls that he didn't like his uncle very much at all because he set many tasks and made him study. He is now very grateful for what his uncle taught him and recognizes the kindness of his uncle.

Geshe-la does not remember his father because he died when he was very young. When he was 9 his mother passed away followed closely by an uncle. By the time he was eleven years old his only close relatives still alive were an Aunt and her daughter. As he was the only one left in the family, he had to go and work and help them as well as continue with his studies.

This became the pattern of his life, living with his family for part of the year working in the fields, planting and harvesting, and studying in the monastery for the rest. Geshe-la recalls that this respite from studying was a welcome one and he was happy. Everyone treated him well and with respect because he was to become a monk and he lived in the monastery. When he was 17 his Aunt told him it was time to go back to the monastery, commit to his studies to become a

Geshe otherwise he would become a lay person or a monk without much knowledge.

When Geshe Pema Tsering was 8, the first Chinese had already begun their invasion of Tibet, and by the time he was 17 there were even more Chinese bringing with them traders and cars. It was in one of these cars that Geshe Pema Tsering went to Lhasa, to the great Sera monastery, with a letter from his uncle, Geshe Konchug, addressed to his new teachers.

Geshe-la's main teacher, the teacher who taught him scriptures, was Khensur Rinpoche, who was also a junior tutor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The teacher who looked after his needs and meals was Geshe Kunsul.

Between the ages of 17 to 20, Geshe-la continued to study under the guidance of Khensur Rinpoche and Geshe Kunsul at Sera Jey. He recalls that he found it difficult to understand the concepts he was studying. However through the process of daily debates that took place after classes, gradually everything started to become clearer.

In the next newsletter read about Geshe-la's move to India as a refugee...

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let's replace Fear with Generosity as an Antidote to the World Economic Crisis.

We live in times when fear is every day projected at us in the media. Fear underlies the television and radio news, current affairs bulletins and newspaper headlines and it creeps in and can dominate our conversations with our friends and in workplaces.

The current fear of *World Economic Crisis* has replaced *Terrorism* as the prominent object of fear. There is a strong argument to say that the World Economic Crisis has been created by the greed of a few, supported by the greed of many.

If we overcome greed, we can reduce fear in the world and in our minds. So let's work together to reduce greed by recognising the generosity that is acted out all around us and that lies within each of us, eager to leap out!

We can start by recognising the small acts of generosity from those close to us such as the act of a child sharing a toy or some food with another child (or adult) or the everyday care given by a partner or parent in preparing good food for a hungry family. Lets not forget the smile or kind word said by a shop assistant, a stranger on the street or a friend who supports and encourages us. And more close to home, the incredible generosity of our dharma teachers!

Acts of generosity can be passed on from one person to another in an ever-growing demonstration of kindness. We can start the wheel turning by offering generosity to someone who doesn't show generosity to us such as taking the blame when someone shows anger to us. The 8 verses of mind training encourage us to be generous by returning loving kindness and compassion if somebody is angry with us.

Buddha House exists only because of the generosity of its students. It is seen in the time that people give to help organise activities, in the money that people give to support our Sangha and our centre and in the attitudes that people display to others that they meet at the centre. The simple act of welcoming a new person, swapping names, offering a drink and taking of a person into our trust and circle of friendship begins with a spark that can lead to a bushfire of generosity and



kindness.

Each week there are opportunities for people to practice generosity at Buddha House as 'meet and greeters' at workshops and regular sessions, as assistants in the centre, as newsletter folders, fundraising and community activity organisers. Additionally people are needed as board members to govern Buddha House's policies and finances. As community members we all benefit from those who offer flowers to the gomba and bring food for shared lunches, which reminds me that we also need people to assist equipment transport to WOMAD for Buddha's Bowl and volunteers to staff the food stall over the three days. This not only raises money, it builds our community.

Because we are a volunteer organisation, there are always opportunities for people to organise functions that bring us together so get to know each other, better supporting each other as we grow our practice in our dharma community.

The opportunities are many, but the latent generosity within each of us is greater than we can ever imagine. Thanks to the generosity of all our past and current volunteers, Buddha House is alive and well and remains completely dependent on future generosity.

Let go of fear! Offer your generous heart and mind unreservedly to the world in everything you do and, if you can make space for it in your life, offer yourself as a volunteer at Buddha House. As a community of practitioners, we can together be a powerful antidote to the World Economic Crisis.

*Lindsay Holmes
Buddha House Centre Director*

*Do you know a poem, a
skit, play an instrument?
Can you dance, sing or
make us laugh?*

End of Year Party and Concert!

7pm Saturday
December 6

Buddha House, 1
Fisher St, Tusmore

*It's easy - turn up with
your piece, put your
name up
on the blackboard and
perform when your turn
comes.*

*It doesn't have to be
professional,
just entertaining!*

Join in or just
enjoy

BYO drinks and food
chai and cake provided

Bring friends, bring
family - all welcome

*PS : Jen will play with her
folk duo Ladybird Johnson,
Debra (BH Barossa) and her
husband will also play!*

BACK TO THE ROOTS

Did you wonder what Venerable Jamyang was up to while she was away in July? Here is a little taste of her experiences...

In July I had the opportunity to visit two FPMT sister centres in Europe: Instituto Lama Tsong Khapa in Italy and Vajrayogini Institute in the south of France. These centres are two of the first FPMT centers to be established, and the tradition of the organisation and the energy of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa were present in everything you could see, hear and feel. It was hot summer in Europe, and it reminded me of the warm holidays I've spent in



Instituto Lama Tsong Khapa

Europe years ago: the relaxed atmosphere, the hospitality, the beautiful food. Every day was like a precious gift.

At Instituto Lama Tsong Khapa I participated in a training course on working with children and families using the 16 Guidelines for a Happy Life. About 35 people from all over the world had gathered and we received lectures, discussed, exercised and got inspired by the 16 Guidelines. So many different people from different cultures, speaking different languages and all having the same goal: how can we help



Ven Jamyang & friend



Sunflowers near Vajrayogini Institute

our children (and ourselves!) become better human beings? How can we pass on the values that make life so beautiful and worthwhile? What can we do to facilitate their inner process of developing wisdom and kindness? The harmony in the group was wonderful and after 5 days I had the feeling I had to say goodbye to many friends.

At Vajrayogini Institute, Yangsi Rinpoche was teaching. At 40 years of age he is one of the young lamas who speaks English. In his previous life he was Lama Yeshe's teacher. I met Yangsi Rinpoche for the first time in 2000 in Dharmasala and it was during a two month Lam Rim retreat with him



Vajrayogini Institute

that I got inspired to become ordained. He teaches with such sharpness and deep compassion that it penetrates the heart directly. Seeing him and hearing his teachings again after 8 years was amazing, and inspired me to deepen my practice.

I feel so fortunate that I've been able to do this trip, which has helped me to reconnect with my physical and spiritual roots and I would like to thank those who have made this possible for me, from the depth of my heart.

From November 5 Ven. Jamyang will facilitate workshops on the 16 Guidelines for a Happy Life every Wednesday at 7.15 pm. For more information see the program.

Buddha House News

P.O. Box 434

Glenside 5065

South Australia

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Huge Thank You!

Thanks to Geshe-la for his wonderfully clear teachings. Thanks to Jampa for delivering meditation sessions at the Uni SA Nursing School. Thanks to Ven Jamyang for her organising of Mandala Offerings to assist our finding a new centre. Thanks to Nadine Levy for writing a Buddha's Cafe article for Mandala magazine. Thanks to Christele Kervin for being our (honorary) Human Resources Manager. Thanks to Jen and the Buddha's Cafe people for raising over \$1,000 selling Chai and Cake at the Moon Lantern Festival. Thanks to all the people who work in the office, do meet and greet, make soup. Thanks to people who have brought flowers for the Gompa. Thanks to people who vacuum after sessions and clean up the kitchen, Thanks to Hilary Marshall for being available at short notice to help people in the bookshop. Thanks to all who make financial donations to Buddha House. Thanks to Sally Shipway for looking after our library and Raquel for assisting. Thanks to Angela Dawes and Corinna Freytag for organising the upcoming WOMAD Buddha's Bowl. Thanks to Anthony Sweeney and all the people who provide meals and support for Geshe-la. Thanks to Anthony Hall for being our webmaster. Thanks to Sue for being our bookkeeper. Thanks to all our Wednesday and Sunday morning meditation leaders. Thanks to Rob Hattam for his 5 inspiring Friday evening seminars. Thanks to Gesar for leading Kids Dharma Club. Thanks to the newsletter team and Gordon Russell for printing it. Thanks to Debra Gibson for coordinating the BH Barossa group. Thanks to all who are living acts of generosity around Buddha House, seen and unseen, listed here and not listed... it is so hard to mention everyone, and if we have forgotten, please know we thank you from the bottom of our hearts....

 **GO GREEN**—Please sign up to receive this newsletter electronically by emailing the office: info@buddhahouse.org