



# 'The Wisdom Age'

Newsletter of Drogmi Buddhist Institute  
A Tibetan Buddhist Centre in the Sakya Tradition

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## WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY SAGA DAWA

*May your prayers for all sentient beings to be free from suffering manifest!*

The most important month in the Tibetan lunar calendar is Saga Dawa, the 4th month. The 15th day of this lunar month, the full moon day is called Saga Dawa Duchen. Duchen means "great occasion" and this day is the single most holy day of the year for Tibetan Buddhists. This year, Saga Dawa Duchen falls on **29 May**.

Saga Dawa Duchen commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana of Buddha Shakyamuni. In other Buddhist traditions this occasion is known as Vesak or is sometimes called Buddha Day.

Saga Dawa is known as the month of merits. Tibetan Buddhists make extra efforts to practice more generosity, virtue, and compassion in order to accumulate greater merit. Tibetans believe that during this month, the merits of ones actions are multiplied. On the 15th day of the month the merits of ones actions are hugely increased. Saga Dawa usually begins in May and ends in June. Accumulating this merit is understood in many ways, it could be seen as the fruits of good karma, especially when it



brings us closer to enlightenment. The three grounds of meritorious actions are generosity and mental culture or meditation. Traditionally, the holy day of Saga Dawa Duchen is observed through practice, generosity, and the performance of meritorious deeds, such as the practice of Life Release. This is commonly performed by purchasing animals that are destined to be killed (like worms, crickets, or fish), and releasing them into their natural habitats with prayers and positive aspirations. The act of giving life in this way is believed to extend the practitioner or benefactor's lifespan and create positive circumstances. Another excellent way to make offering of life on this special day is to observe a vegetarian or vegan diet, a common tradition during this month. You can also take an extended vow or vegetarianism, creating vast merit through your noble aspiration to reduce suffering.



*"Behold, O monks, this is my last advice to you. All component things in the world are changeable. They are not lasting. Work hard to gain your own salvation". The Buddha*



## MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES SYDNEY



Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe was invited by the Assistant Curators of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS, the Powerhouse Museum), Sydney, to assist them with a project of examining ancient Buddhist statues. The Project Scope MAAS, wish to seek forensic analysis assistance from Australian Nuclear Science & Technology Organisation (ANSTO) to characterise the content of the three Tibetan religious statues in the collection. In Tibetan tradition, during the consecration ceremony, holy articles such as Buddhist texts, bones, hair, textiles and plants are occasionally sealed inside the statues. Non-invasive examination, in this instance neutron tomography, will provide the opportunity to characterise the content of the statues in a non-destructive way. This is imperative for both the preservation, cultural and ethical reasons. Khenpo la attended the museum to offer his advice to the curators.

Khenpo la met with Ming-Jung and Vanessa to discuss the three statues known provenances. He suggested that if dating of these artefacts was accurate, it is more likely



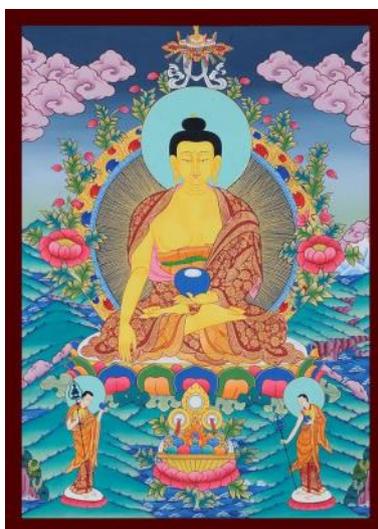
that holy articles such as Buddha relics and nectar pills as opposed to written mantra would be contained within the statues.

Khenpo la discussed that he personally felt non-invasive examination proposal for the purpose of gaining knowledge about the cultural artefacts was respectful and was happy to give his support and approval of the project.

Photo credit to: Marincio Kojdanovski, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Thank you to Suzanne for providing transport to Khenpo la on the day.

### CHOTRUL DUCHEN DAY "Great Day of Miraculous Manifestations"



Khenpo la and sangha recited the Sixteen Arhat Puja to mark Chotrul Duchen or "Great Day of Miraculous Manifestations" at Kamalashila Tibetan Buddhist Centre. As well as the unveiling of the most beautiful Buddha on the shrine, a very special day.

Chotrul Duchen closely follows Losar the Tibetan New Year, and takes place on the fifteenth day of the first month in the Tibetan calendar during the full moon. The first fifteen days of the year celebrate the fifteen days during which the historical Buddha displayed miracles for His disciples so as to increase their devotion.

Chotrul Duchen is one of the four great holy days observed by Tibetan Buddhists. To commemorate this occasion, Tibetans make lamp offerings, traditionally of yak butter, called butter lamps in the shapes of flowers, trees, birds and other auspicious symbols. The Sixteen Arhat Puja is often recited in Monasteries during such celebratory occasions.



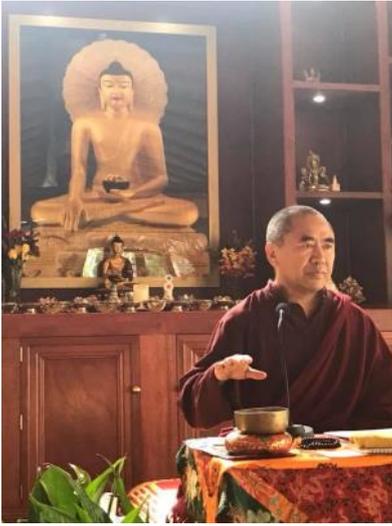
### REGULAR SUNDAY & TUESDAY PRACTICE at KTBC 10—11 am

*Words from Peter F.*

My name is Peter, I'm 64 years old and have recently begun attending meditation practice at Kamalashila as a novice meditator. Khenpo is a kind, wise, friendly, gentle man. He, and the community of practitioners have made me feel welcome and supported me while I learn how to practice effectively. The significant benefits that are evident from participating in this environment have improved my well being considerably. I had been struggling to contend with the consequence of the passing of my 95 year old mother, who I had lived with and cared for over the last 12 years; the concurrent failure of a relationship, and the subsequent demands as an executor of my mother's estate to sell her/our home and relocate whilst continuing full time employment. The insights provided by the Buddhist perspective coupled with regular meditation are enabling a transformation from anguish, grief and distress to acceptance and accountability. I thoroughly recommend this environment for healing and growth.



**SHAMATHA & MINDFULNESS  
EASTER RETREAT**



I learnt that being calm is a decision you have the power to make and meditation is a tool that can be used to develop your capacity to stick to that decision. Khenpo is a humble and caring teacher who imparts his knowledge generously. Thank you Khenpo la. **Vanessa G.**

Khenpo la gave very clear teachings on the techniques of correct posture when doing sitting meditation and the actual benefits of meditation. Shamatha meditation is a method to stabilise our mind. With a stable mind we have great capacity to truly help others and in doing so happiness naturally arises. Thank you Karma la for your wonderful food during the retreat!



**TUNCURRY NSW TEACHINGS**



Khenpo's light heart helped us through what can be a difficult topic. We had been studying *The Heart Sutra* in our Wednesday study group for most of last year, so it was enriching to hear Khenpo teach on this topic. He often said it was complicated which made us relax a little. It's nice to come away with something specific from each teaching to work with for a while and digest its meaning. For me Khenpo brought up the notion that our ordinary education is great for us developing knowledge capable of humans, but there is knowledge higher than that which becomes available to us if we generate merit. This is my interpretation from the teachings. It was heart warming to have plenty of company for the two days with members from The Tibetan Buddhist Institute of Studies enthusiastically attending. We hope that Khenpo will come again very soon. **Peter M.**

Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe graced us at the Marpa Centre in Tuncurry for two wonderful days of teachings on *The Heart Sutra*. A teaching the Buddha gave over 2,600 years ago on the Heart of the Perfection of Transcendental Wisdom. Khenpo delivers his teachings in a very clear, masterful and practical way so we students

can gain invaluable understanding and knowledge. We are so fortunate to have such a highly esteemed scholar to guide us. All is not serious as many analogies and laughter shared. **Jenifer C.**

Khenpo la flew into Port Macquarie, arriving to our small community in Tuncurry on the mid North Coast of NSW, with his usual calm positive attitude ready to begin teaching despite a four hour wait at Sydney airport, engineering problems with the plane, which required a change of aircraft and a tedious one and a half drive from our airport down the Pacific Highway. It would have rattled the average traveller, even an eager Buddhist practitioner like myself I felt weary and dispirited by the delays. Still the teachings on *The Heart Sutra* during the weekend were so wonderful and explicit, that we all agreed at our meeting the following week, that we had never before experienced such lucid and uplifting instructions. Khenpo la took us through this extremely complex sutra line by line and it was like stepping out of darkness into the light, for he was able to explain so much about the difficult concept of emptiness (Ultimate Reality) which I have been repeatedly told, is inexpressible. He broke through the barrier for me, for I feel I am on the way to beginning to understand how to let go of self and duality. Thank you Khenpo la for such a gift. **Sherry S.**



**A fun day at the DBI stalls at the  
Bermagui Seaside Fair**  
*Thank you Bull Hae for your efforts!*



## AN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL RETREAT

### My Retreat at Kamalashila

After the teachings and the initiation I was lucky enough to have an audience with (the then) His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin. I asked anxiously "Will I be alright doing my 3 month retreat Your Holiness"? I could hear the fear in my voice. (Somewhat unbecoming for a Vajrayana practitioner I thought). "Where will you be doing your retreat"? He asked. "At Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe's retreat property", I answered. "Oh, you will be FINE! Fine! You are in good hands" He answered expansively (as He does). My balloon of anxiety was pricked instantly and I breathed out with relief. "Oh GOOD"! There was no more need to worry. All would be well. And so it was. I was especially fortunate because Khenpo la did not go away this January and so most of the time he and Karma la were in their house not far from the retreat hut. I felt very safe in my retreat hut with wallaby as my dear friend. She came every day for banana skins and rolled oats and the day I packed up she stood at the bottom of the hut steps for every box I packed. I swear she waved a paw as I drove down the driveway.

Kamalashila was a perfect place to do retreat. Beautiful and peaceful, lush and full of life; the land underneath the great Mother Gulaga Mountain nurtured me, as she nurtured the great variety of living things around me. I have to say those 'living things' happened to very essentially include Ann and Lael both of whom shopped for me (sorry I am such a finicky consumer guys), worried for me (a very important job), rang me to tell me I wasn't going to die in the bushfire, encouraged me and generally made time in their busy lives to care about me and support me. Prior to my arrival



Annie had prepared with love and care a beautiful retreat hut. I felt VERY supported by the Drogmi Buddhist Institute Sangha and of course by Khenpo whose wisdom and calm presence was available when I needed it.

Karma la brought me his delicious homemade bread when he baked and a couple of times he made me momos and I got some wrapped still warm and soft. I offer my grateful thanks to all of you, not only for your time and care but also for holding my retreat in your hearts. It was a very special time for me thanks to you all. I hope I can give back one day soon. Retreat is such a great thing! You give out more than you are used to giving out, but you get back more than you usually get back. I wanted everyone to experience it and I envisaged a whole hillside of retreatants! I hope my 12 week retreat at Kamalashila is only the first of many retreats I have there.

**Penny M.**

## SOLAR POWER SYSTEM UPGRADE:

*Donations welcome*



The centre has scheduled a major upgrade of the KTBC Solar Power System this year. As you may know, KTBC relies totally for its electricity supply from the sun. A fundraising appeal is being launched for the purchase of new batteries for the system, which will render it more efficient and secure our energy supply well into the future. The battery upgrade alone will cost over \$30,000 and we have already raised a substantial amount towards this, but we require more funds. If you can make a contribution towards this vital project please call Jack Heath: 0419 239 115 or email: [info@drogmi.org](mailto:info@drogmi.org) **A contribution such as this for the Dharma will have lasting benefits for others in years to come. Thank you for your support.**

## UPCOMING WORKING BEE

**Weekend 12 & 13 May**

**8am - 4pm**

*Your help would be greatly appreciated!*

- ◆ Tidy up around new retreat huts.
- ◆ Cleaning gomba including windows.
- ◆ Cleaning kitchen
- ◆ Gardening & mowing

We will break for Sunday meditation from: 10 to 11am. Lunch & refreshments provided both days. Please let us know if you are coming for catering purposes, details below.

## UPCOMING MINDFULNESS & COMPASSION RETREAT

6 - 8 July



Within this weekend retreat Khenpo la will give detailed and practical explanations on mindfulness and compassion, both in meditation and in our everyday life. This retreat is a rare opportunity to spend time learning about practicing meditation in a remote and naturally beautiful bush environment, under the instructions of an accomplished and experienced teacher such as Khenpo la.

**When:** 7pm Friday 6 July to 1pm Sunday 8 July

**Where:** 9000 Princes Highway, Tilba

**Cost:** \$200 / \$180 members

Costs include teachings, texts, accommodation, food & drink

**BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL:**

[info@drogmi.org](mailto:info@drogmi.org) / 0403 779 099

## TIBETAN LANGUAGE CLASSES

We are so grateful to Karma la and DBI for giving us this most precious opportunity to attempt to learn the Tibetan Language. In just 4 weekly classes we managed to plough through and learn the 30 consonants and 4 vowels with our happy, patient and most kind teacher in Karma la. Even though it rattles our western brains to get around such different concepts, glimmers of light did occasionally shine through to see the formula of the Tibetan script. At least there has been a planting of a seed, and a goal to never stop learning this most important language holding the precious Dharma. Thank you, Karma la from us all.

