

**Issue 6**  
June, July & August 2012

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# 'The Wisdom Age'

**Newsletter of Drogmi Buddhist Institute**

*A Tibetan Buddhist Centre in the Sakya Tradition*

### **Water-Dragon Year 2139**

Welcome back to our precious teacher Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe for another full and inspiring year in the Dharma together. Upon his return in March from an annual visit with family in Nepal for Losar celebrations and some well earned rest, Khenpo-la was greeted by an enthusiastic group offering a traditional Tibetan Welcome, with the chanting of the Sixteen Arhat Puja with tea and rice offerings. Khenpo-la looked well and relaxed, and was in very good humour. Everyone attending remarked how wonderful it was to see Khenpo-la back in Australia. Khenpo-la said he was looking forward to working with everyone again this year, and continuing to teach the Dharma. He thanked everyone for coming and offering such a welcome to him.

Khenpo-la has hit the ground running. In fact, even before his arrival in Sydney, Khenpo-la had conducted a busy ten day teaching programme in Malaysia via Nepal. Back here in Australia, Term 2 of the Sapan Shedra programme is now underway, in Sydney,



*Khenpo-la in Shamatha & Mindfulness Retreat (Q & A time) 2012*

Richmond, and Lawson in the Blue Mountains. The national weekend teaching programme has begun in earnest. Though travelling extensively out of Sydney, Khenpo-la also maintains a busy schedule in Sydney with regular meditation sessions two times a week in Ashfield, and also a Meditation Workshop at the Buddhist Library. Khenpo-la has already led a very successful three day Shamatha and Mindfulness Retreat at Easter. He has conducted other important activities within the community, discreetly and without fuss, such as giving spiritual advice, guidance and support to those who are ill, to their carers, to young parents, and to people new on the path.

When we read of "old time" masters whose life's purpose was pure and profound, to turn the Wheel of Dharma as much as possible to help all sentient beings, Khenpo-la automatically springs to mind as a living and breathing example of one such authentic and selfless teacher.

Thank you Khenpo-la for your continued presence here in this part of the world. Thank you for encouraging us all to share in our experiences of learning and applying the precious Dharma you teach us in and throughout our everyday lives.

May you receive great support for all your Dharma activities here in Australia and around the world.



*Khenpo-la visits Malaysia, March 2012*



**Above:**  
Bodhi Path Kagyu Centre in  
Kuching Malaysia

**Left:**  
Kuching Sakya Association

**Right:**  
Tse Chen Samten Ling  
Retreat Centre



**Right:**  
View from the  
retreat centre,  
following the  
teachings a  
rainbow streaming  
through the  
mountains ...





Another benefit of Shamatha meditation is that no matter how difficult your job, or stressful and complex your life, you always remain calm, nothing bothers you, your mind is like a rock. No matter how windy it gets out there it cannot shake your mind. A further temporary benefit is we get less tired. Usually we get tired not because we're physically active, that is not the main creator of exhaustion. Think about being physically tired, and mentally tired. When we compare mentally tired it is more dangerous. When we are physically tired, it is possible to get refreshed afterwards, yet mental exhaustion is very hard to get refreshed. You have to go for a massage, a spa, or other expensive things, and afterwards we only feel refreshed for two hours. Then after that it's back to the same exhaustion. It's very hard to refresh your mind, but Shamatha meditation makes you have an extremely peaceful mind. When you have such a calm and relaxed mind, you will have a better sleeping pattern, and a much deeper sleep. So in the daytime you have a calm mind, and at night you have a quality sleep, and when you live with such good quality your life is much more refreshed. A good example is His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Whenever you see Him it's like He's just come back from holiday, but He hasn't. He's always working, yet He's always refreshed. The reason He's always refreshed is because His mind is always concentrated, not on worldly things, but always concentrated on virtues. When you are always concentrated on virtues these virtues energise you, rejuvenate you. When we think about samsaric things, non-virtuous things, it is very easy to get tired due to the complexity. Virtues are not complex. Virtues are simple. This is the reason the Dalai Lama says "My religion is not complex, it's simple, it's kindness". So the object of Shamatha are the virtues.

From a spiritual point of view, it can help you to understand the Dharma when your mind is clear. When your mind is not clear it is very hard to absorb teachings. The teacher can give crystal clear instructions, but when your mind is not clear, they are very hard to absorb. Thus, Shamatha is very important from a worldly point of view and from a spiritual point of view.

**Ultimate Benefit:** Without Shamatha it is impossible to have insight or wisdom. Without wisdom you will not be able to uproot the grasping of self, or the grasping of phenomenon. Without uprooting these two, we're never going to attain full enlightenment and to be free from samsara. So Shamatha is important in order to develop insight mind, Vipassana mind. Therefore it is very important to be aware of the value of Shamatha; of the temporary and ultimate benefits, and also to follow the structure, making sure all the preparations are done before starting meditation.

#### Preparations:

**1.** Try to make sure all the tasks you have to do are finished, or mentally decide, "I'm going to stop this for now". Like there are two types of a holiday, one being, even though samsaric activity is still there, you switch off. The other kind you worry about your job then you're not going to have a good holiday. The same with Shamatha, it is important to totally switch off our samsaric activities and to make a firm decision to be committed and dedicated to doing good quality Shamatha meditation.

**2.** Develop motivation: there are many motivations, for example wanting to calm the busy mind. This is a positive motivation, but it's a very limited motivation. The greatest

motivation is that we're doing this to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, this including all other motivations.

**3.** To pay respect to the shrine, to Buddha or Bodhisattva's or your teacher, such as doing prostrations.

**4.** Offering of food, flower or candle. We need to know the purpose of doing things, from a worldly spiritual belief system it's like "*If I offer you this flower or candle, then God/Buddha/whatever you believe in, you have to help me*". From a Christian point of view it's like: "*If I do this good thing then God will give me something nice*". In Buddhism it is different. The Buddha is free from concepts. There is no expectation. It's not that if you make an offering Buddha is going to be happy, or if you don't make an offering Buddha will be upset. Because happy or unhappy is a state of conceptual mind, so making offerings is entirely for the sake of one's own benefit. When I make an offering I feel good, so really I am offering to myself, for the sake of my own happiness, rather than to someone else. Then when I don't make the offering, there's nothing to feel good about because we don't create any cause. So the whole reason for offering is to make us feel happy, to make us feel positive. It's not offering so Buddha will make us happy, if you have this expectation then it is a mistake, it's impossible. In Vajrayana tradition some teachers say when you go to see the Vajrayana master, in an auspicious condition way, they say you don't go empty handed, you always take something to offer to them. This is a cause and effect reason. If you go with something then you get a result, if you go empty handed then you get an empty result. This is conventional terms, we have the person making the offering, the object and the receiver, so even taking the tiniest flower is good. In the absolute, the offering doesn't exist, the receiver doesn't exist, the offerer doesn't exist. This is not Eastern culture, this is Buddhist culture. Whoever practices Buddhism should follow this structure.

**5.** Sit and read a few verses of the teachings of the Buddha.

We have so many layers until we reach the peaceful state of mind. Our mind is like an ocean, if you look on the surfaces there are so many waves and turbulence, but when you go deeper it's calm. Same with our mind, deep down there is calmness, but to get there we first have so much to remove, like our turbulent lives. All of this important preparation, it's the instruction how to calm down the mind, not just ritual things. Then when you sit on the cushion, that mind is already calmed down, with that mind it is much easier to meditate. Without preparation your mind is distressed and complex. When you try to sit and meditate it's not going to happen and you'll get disappointed, and think your meditation is terrible. The reason it's terrible is because you're not prepared, or because you haven't followed the instructions. If you logically think about it, each time you prepare something it is a way of bringing more calmness to your mind.

**6.** When you sit on a cushion make sure you are comfortable so nothing bothers or disturbs you, then you sit in the correct meditation posture.

**7.** Focus on your breathing. To improve the quality of mindfulness, count twenty one times, or even up to fifty. This is a very profound mental exercise. They say a crossword puzzle is good mental exercise, but when you are breathing there is less stress. In the beginning it is hard, you may get to seven, then the mind goes somewhere else, and you lose track. So you have to constantly bring the mind back. Once you have done that, then you are ready to focus on the object.

All of this preparation is to prepare our mind, then when you become an expert you don't need all the preparation, you can go straight into the meditation, but without training that is impossible.

**Continued and concluded in the next issue (7) of the Wisdom Age.**



**Auspicious dates in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar for June / July & August 2012**



28 May  
*Birth of the Buddha*



4 June



**Saga Dawa Duechen**

*Buddha entering the womb, attaining enlightenment and passing into Parinirvana*



12 June  
*Anniversary of the enlightenment of Mahasiddha Virupa (837 - 909)*



14 June



18 June



**A** Anniversary of Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche



19 June  
20 June: *Solstice*  
26 June *Birthday of the seventeenth Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje*



27 June



29 June



**Anniversary Days**



**Dharma Protector Day**



**Buddha Day**



**Sojong: confession to teacher or shrine**



**New Moon**



**Full Moon**



**Dakini Day**



**Inauspicious days to hang prayer flags**

The fourth month of the Tibetan Buddhist lunar calendar is known as Saga Dawa and is the most holy period in the Buddhist calendar. This year, Saga Dawa falls in May and June, and in particular, the 15th day (4 June, full moon) marks three special events: *the date Buddha entered the womb; attained enlightenment and passed into Parinirvana*.

It is very good to practise Dharma during Saga Dawa and to bring offerings for the shrine such as candles, flowers, incense.

During this time, Khenpo-la also encourages everyone to be vegetarian as much as possible from 21 May to 4 June.

**Please join us to celebrate Saga Dawa at the centre:**

**Light offerings from 21 May to 4 June**

The centre will be marking the very special and auspicious month of Saga Dawa Duechen with the lighting of 100 candles a day for the first 15 days of the month. We offer you the opportunity to sponsor a day for the lighting of these candles. Once you indicate your wish to sponsor (with a payment of \$20), via the Drogmi Buddhist Institute website [www.drogmi.org](http://www.drogmi.org) you will be emailed a date of sponsorship. You may also nominate a preferred date to sponsor by emailing us at [info@drogmi.org](mailto:info@drogmi.org) **Please note that up to date, due to popular interest all sponsorship will be shared, check our website to learn more.** If you are able to attend the centre it may be possible for you to light the offering candles yourself if a suitable time can be arranged, otherwise they will be made on your behalf.

**Monday 4 June 7:30 - 8:30pm Wheel of Dharma Day**

On this day it is auspicious to perform meritorious activities - the merit generated from these virtuous activities increases ten million - fold. On Wheel of Dharma day, the most auspicious date in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar, we are holding Buddha Shakyamuni practice and chanting, plus the lighting of 200 candles. **At: 37 Albert Parade Ashfield.**



2 July



3 July 'Universal Prayer Day'

6 July

*Birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama*



10 July



11 July



13 July



17 July



19 July



**Choekhor Duechen**

*The first turning of the wheel of Dharma at Saranath, the Buddha teaching "The Four Noble Truths"*



25 July



26 July



*Guru Padmasambava's Birthday*



Light offerings being made on behalf of all sponsors at Drogmi Buddhist Institute Ashfield Sydney.

1 August



21 August

2 August Je Gampopa



25 August

6 August



26 August

10 August



31 August

12 August



31 August

17 August



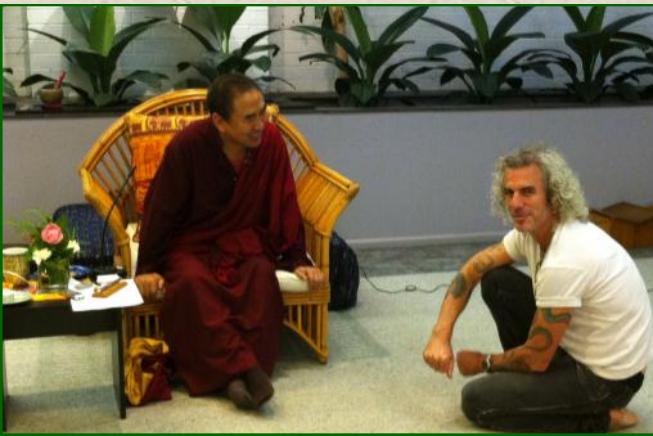
## Shamatha & Mindfulness Retreat - Easter Long Weekend 2012



### The Buddhist Library Workshop in Camperdown Sydney "Meditation, Discussions with a Master"

My mum and I enjoyed Khenpo's teachings very much. Now mum tries to meditate every day and concentrate on the breath 21 times. I never tire of Khenpo's wisdom and the way he relates the Dharma to everyday situations. We try to live in the moment and work on the correct posture for Shamatha. Also to have more positive thoughts as Khenpo suggested, results in a more compassionate, clear, calm and peaceful state of mind. It is a gradual process but we have been given more inspiration to keep on the path towards enlightenment. Thank you again Khenpo-la.

*Liz and Elly*



Khenpo-la gave clear instructions on why we meditate and the very beginnings of how to actually do it. He talked about how some forms of meditation that people do to relax or unwind are like taking panadol, its effects work for awhile and that is ok, but it doesn't get rid of the problem. Whereas Buddhist meditation practices up root the causes of our problems and the results of it are long acting and sustainable. Khenpo-la talked about the real need for practicing meditation in a joyful way, so that we keep doing it. Like anything in our lives, if we enjoy it we are more likely to keep wanting to do it. It was a beautiful afternoon, Khenpo-la embodied his topic, looking relaxed and joyful throughout.

The retreat was a gift that I will always have. I met some wonderful people and started new friendships.

The Dharma was presented simply, practically and in a way that I feel I can draw upon in my day to day life.

Thank you Khenpo, and I look forward to seeing and learning with you all again. The opportunity to learn from Khenpo-la is rare and not to be missed. *Dino*



### Sakya Tenphel Ling Buddhist Centre Singapore Dharma Talk on 17 March 2012



Venue	Term 2 Evenings / Dates	Times	Teaching
Richmond Community Centre	<b>Monday nights</b> 28 May - 4 June and 18 June - 23 July <b>One week break Long Weekend (11 June)</b>	7:30 - 9:00 pm	<b>Meditation</b> Weekly subjects listed below (8 weeks)
Lawson Mountains Community Resource Centre	<b>Wednesday nights</b> 30 May - 25 July (9 week term)	7:00 - 8:30 pm	<b>Meditation</b> Weekly subjects listed below (9 weeks)
Ashfield Centre	<b>Tuesday nights</b> 31 May - 26 July (9 week term)	7:30 - 9:30 pm	<b>Kamalashila's "Stages of Meditation"</b>



### ***Ashfield Sydney***

#### ***"Stages of Meditation"***

I take notes to focus my mind. Khenpo-la's teaching - on *Kamalashila's* text 'Stages of Meditation'. Principles for preparation and meditation practice so clear and practical. Sequences I have noted down before, yet there is always another nuance, a different angle - making connections, recognising at deeper levels the purpose for following the structure. Chiselling away, recognising the importance of having a purpose, understanding the reasons why, performance with high expectations, but committed ongoing practice. Khenpo-la's infinite patience and kindness, the clarity of his explanations and his continuous encouragement of each of us clearly demonstrates the teaching action.

*Anita*

### ***Lawson, Blue Mountains***

#### ***"Introduction to Meditation"***

Moving classes down the mountain top at Katoomba, Khenpo-la has recently begun teaching the Dharma at Lawson in the mid-Blue Mountains. We are a small and dedicated core group. Khenpo is presently teaching the fundamentals of meditation. These instructions continue to give benefit to both newcomers and the more experienced sangha.

This is a great opportunity to experience the Dharma and we hope to attract others as word spreads throughout the mountains.

*Pam*

### ***Weekly teaching topics***

***Richmond/Lawson:***

- 1. Ways to create the causes of temporary and ultimate happiness.**
- 2. Our greatest happiness comes from helping others.**
- 3. Transforming misfortune into happiness.**
- 4. The greatest antidote to overcoming our aggression mind is patience.**
- 5. Transforming disadvantage into advantage.**
- 6. Attachment and anger is the path to overcoming our problems.**
- 7. Recognising ones own illusion.**
- 8. Our reaction to someone's unkindness can lead us to developing great kindness.**
- 9. Lawson-Discussion & meditation.**

### ***Richmond***

#### ***"Introduction to Meditation"***

Here is something I would like to share with my very short experience with Khenpo.

I am new to Buddhism, and I am loving the simplicity of Khenpo's teaching. Joy and wisdom shine from his eyes and I feel very happy just to be in a room with him! It's so inspiring to be reminded by his words and his presence of some of the things that are truly important in life... *being fully focussed on whatever it is we are doing right now... taking responsibility for our own happiness... being kind to ourselves...* Thank you Khenpo.

*Onagh*

As I reflect I come to realise what an important part of my life these shedra classes have become. As I sit and listen to Khenpo-la's quietly spoken powerful words, they creep stealthily a little deeper into my heart helping it sing a little more vibrantly and then the pleasure of being led into a meditation to begin and end the class, the effect of this carries with me for longer and longer periods. What of my fellow students, what strength I gain from them as I see and sense their own personal suffering as I am sure they do mine as Khenpo imparts his knowledge to give us a little more understanding of the thoughts that are occurring. These classes are the foundation of the path to myself becoming a better asset to all. What a fun journey it has become. Regards to all and your families.

*Tony*

### ***'Meditational Experiences in Body and Mind; A Weekend Workshop'***

*Conducted by Tony Richardson renowned Somatic Psychiatrist / Tibetan Buddhist Practitioner and Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe will be leading a meditation session during the workshop!*

*Date: 18 & 19 August Time: 9 - 5pm Venue: DBI Ashfield Cost: \$250*

*A fundraising event with all proceeds given to support DBI programmes.*

*Bookings essential, limited seating - info@drogmi.org / (02) 8005 1757*

### ***"Meditation for Everyone"***

*A three hour workshop on the benefits of meditation and how to apply this to our everyday lives, please join us.*

*Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe*

*Date: 21 July Time: 2 - 5pm Cost: \$50*

*Venue: The Buddhist Library Camperdown Sydney*

*To book in please go online to our website/ring or email*

## Bookings available now for both upcoming retreats in 2012 - see website or phone for more information.

### Queen's Birthday weekend retreat:

#### *Loving Kindness & Compassion Retreat*

**When:** 9 June - 10 June 2012  
**Where:** Drogmi Buddhist Institute, Ashfield  
**Time:** 10am - 6pm (9 June) & 9am - 4pm (10 June)  
**Cost:** \$180 / \$100 a day / or \$162 - members/concession/early bird.



### October Annual Retreat:

#### *Shamatha Retreat with teachings on "The Parting From the Four Attachments"*

**When:** 28 September (Friday) to 6 October (Saturday) 2012  
**Where:** Ararat Lodge / Upper Colo

The cost of the Annual Shamatha Retreat includes accommodation, all meals, refreshments and teachings.  
 Please check website, or phone/email for more details.

**Milton/Ulladulla NSW, Manjushri Buddhist Centre, Lael**  
 1 - 3 June contact: (02) 4454 3183/0438 545 761

**Gympie Qld., Dharmachakra Gompa, Rob & Sandra**  
 22 - 24 June, 3 - 5 August, 24 - 26 August, 2 - 4 October,  
 14 - 16 December contact: (07) 5484 9152/0427 540 694

**Merimbula NSW, Chenrab Mark**  
 13 - 15 July contact: (02) 6495 9851/0466 231 707

**Canberra ACT, Ann**  
 27 - 28 July contact: 0403 779 099

**Auckland NZ, Nyima Tashi Kagyu Buddhist Centre, Ani Jangchub**  
 3 - 5 August

**Christchurch New Zealand, Frank**  
 10 - 12 August

**Melbourne Victoria, Sakya Choebar Lhunpo, Genevieve**  
 31 August - 2 September

**Dubbo NSW, Suzi**  
 14 - 16 September

**Rongton Brisbane Qld., Venerable Lekshe Tsultim**  
 21 - 23 September

**Alice Springs N.T., Zara**  
 11 - 15 October

**Bermagui NSW, Samten Healing Group, Alan & Annie**  
 26 - 28 October contact: (02) 6493 4971

**Cairns Qld., Khacho Yulo Ling Buddhist Centre, Ani Rinchen**  
 9 - 11 November

**Rockhampton Qld., Ananda Buddhist Centre, Dan**  
 16 - 18 November contact: 0409 631 124

Would it not be inspirational and supportive for our year in the Dharma to plan around all outside, samsaric activities to be in an eight day retreat together with our most precious teacher, Khenpo-la? To set this time aside, as Khenpo-la's students to commit to being in our practice in retreat with our teacher in pristine meditative surroundings and to experience, to learn and apply the profound teachings of the Buddha, shared continuously and endlessly by Khenpo-la, then to dedicate this for the happiness and end of suffering for all sentient beings...

### Retreat Topics

#### *Loving Kindness & Compassion Retreat*



A two day **non-residential** retreat to be held at the DBI centre Ashfield Sydney, will be offered by Khenpo-la to help us to see that there are different ways that can help us cope with life's challenges and our everyday problems. In this retreat Khenpo will explain how developing loving kindness and compassion can help us achieve more loving relationships with others and bring real happiness to our lives.

#### *Annual Shamatha Retreat/28 September - 6 October 2012*

The great Indian scholar/master *Shantideva* states in "*Bodhisattvacharyavatara*" - **"Knowing that special insight endowed with calm abiding thoroughly destroys the afflictive emotions, one must initially seek calm abiding. It is achieved by those liking non - attachment to the world".** During this eight day retreat Khenpo-la will give detailed explanations on Shamatha meditation, blended with theory and practical sessions. It truly is a superb opportunity to spend a solid week practising meditation techniques in peaceful and pristine surroundings. Please read further in an excerpt on the importance of making time for retreat in our extraordinarily busy lives, written by Khenpo-la in an earlier edition of the *Wisdom Age*...

**"Living in a spiritual way of life is the best way not to waste this human precious life and to accommodate and create more merit and wisdom. Every great master gives heart advice to their students whenever you could manage the time to go on retreat. During the retreat it is best opportunity to learn the precious Dharma and put it into real practice. Also it allows us basic things such as to clear out our busy mind which causes us so many clouds of inflections. This way it gives us the opportunity to refresh ourselves. When we live in such a busy life it is very hard to find time to do a retreat for months or years. Doing such a eight to ten day retreat will give you a solid foundation and reintroduce your nature of mind. So while we have this precious human rebirth it is good to give yourself something that is valuable in this life and the future. Otherwise we are just caught up in Samsaric way of life. We are going to waste again this precious opportunity..."**

**Khenpo-la**

Firstly, a very big thank you to Victoria who officially stepped down as President on 18 March 2012 after a hectic and very demanding two (plus) years.

Victoria worked with enthusiasm, tenacity, grace, an astounding sense of diplomacy and discretion, and an inclusive, co-operative approach regarding all matters pertaining to the functioning of DBI. And all of this whilst various committee members were scattered to the four corners of the globe, presenting additional technological and logistical challenges on top of everything else.

Victoria was a pleasure to work with, and to work for. Thank you Vic, you will be missed.

At the April committee meeting, Jack Heath was nominated for the position of President. He accepted his nomination and the vote was carried. Welcome back Jack. At the May committee meeting, Vanessa Howie agreed to take on the role of Vice President vacated by Jack in April, and was voted in unanimously. Thank you and welcome to the role Vanessa.

A reminder that memberships are due this month for the 2012-2013 period, with the exception of those individuals who took out a new membership between 1 December 2011 and 1 March 2012 - those memberships are current to 1 March 2013. Please don't forget that membership not only entitles you to substantial savings at DBI events - more importantly, it is vital to support the continuing work of Khenpo. And if you are reading this and you are not a member - please consider joining, we'd love to have you aboard. In addition to memberships, we have two or three individuals who are regularly making a financial contribution to the Centre each month by way of sponsorship / donation. Although the individual amounts vary, by virtue of being regular and on going, such contributions are actually of enormous benefit to DBI. Without setting any dollar values, I would simply ask all members and supporters to consider whether their own circumstances might permit a modest, regular financial contribution to DBI to support Khenpo's work in Australia by helping to ensure the financial viability of DBI.

Easter saw another successful retreat at Ararat Lodge - some 18 participants, which is very encouraging. The 2012 October Retreat will also be held at the Ararat Lodge.

An assistant Lama for Khenpo is one step closer, with Lama Kalsang's application for a Resident Visa under consideration by the Australian Embassy in Delhi.

Looking forward to the rest of the year - and quite probably beyond, too - the Committee has an eight point programme to further develop and grow DBI, broadly consisting of:

- ◆ A Spiritual programme accessible for both new comers and experienced students;
- ◆ Recording and reproduction of Khenpo's Teachings;
- ◆ Increased awareness of DBI through advertising and promotions;
- ◆ Building finances;
- ◆ An assistant Teacher to help Khenpo;
- ◆ Building the membership base;
- ◆ Securing a suitable premises on a long term basis to provide stability for the organisation;
- ◆ Strengthening the capabilities of the Committee to better serve both Khenpo and the Membership. *Peter G. (Treasurer)*



### ***A baby blessing ritual given by Khenpo-la after a request made in Wentworth Falls Blue Mountains***

On Sunday, April 25, my wife and I had our 14 month old daughter, Lucinda Luna, blessed at our home in Wentworth Falls.

The beautiful and distinguished Khenpo-la came all the way to the Blue Mountains with his chaperone Suzi to perform a Buddhist Blessing which was both inspiring and memorable.

About 50 family members and friends joined Julia and myself take part in Lucinda's entering her personal and spiritual journey into life.

*Khenpo spoke of his wishes for Lucinda to enjoy a positive life and deal with the obstacles she will inevitably face with peace and understanding and through harmonious energies and kindness.*

With a lot of noisy children in the house holding the potential to distract from the ceremony, Khenpo's Tibetan chanting delivered a tranquillity and calming effect on everyone in the room.

His presence is that of a sacred one and changes the atmosphere of every room he enters with nothing but positivity.

Julia and I will be forever grateful to Khenpo and to Suzi for coming to our home and bringing such a beautiful day.

Lucinda is most precious to us in this world and to have her blessed by someone so prestigious in the Buddhist faith is truly a gift. *Shannon (Father)*



An interview with Rob Assink

### How did the Dharmachakra Gompa come about?

I went to His Holiness the Dalai Lama teachings in 2002 and was enraptured. Three years later I met Khenpo in Brisbane. I went to a couple of Khenpo's teachings at the Geluk Centre and found that as others were not able to continue running of that centre, it was offered to me to take over. So from then on it has just blossomed. My wife Sandra and I had just built a glorious huge home with wonderful views of Brisbane. Khenpo walked into our home and remarked how this home was filled with love, and proceeded to say how it would be suitable to have His Holiness Sakya Trizin stay, due to having a separate wing. I thought at the time how nice.

The deck was extremely large, so we use to hold teachings there. After three years or so the country/bush was calling me so we sold up and found a hundred acre block, with 360 degree spectacular views and decided then to build a retreat centre on it. We let Khenpo know what we were doing and he replied how nice for us. Then I said I'm going to build a retreat centre on it and there was a silence. Khenpo-la then said okay, it's name will be the Dharmachakra Gompa!

### How did it come about that you helped Khenpo-la host His Holiness Sakya Trizin in Brisbane in 2009?

Sandra and I were already living in Glastonbury (via Gympie) when Khenpo-la made the suggestion that we host His



*Above: Rob from Dharmachakra Gompa offering Khenpo-la new robes from this centre and his national students*

insecure and shy about this prospect and thought no way. Being a two hour drive from the city where it was to be held, only a few members to help and just didn't think it was possible. Khenpo encouraged me immediately that I could do it, so I decided to have a go. I was then given a manual on all to be done and carried out in preparation as thick as a phone book. I immediately booked the Convention Centre, it was like dealing with the FBI, absolutely huge complex and organisation. Then began a daunting organisation of all the bedding, crockery, cutlery, everything had to be brought in to this five star hotel right next to the Convention Centre, fittingly called The Mantra. My head was spinning and carried on for about three months having six months until the arrival of His Holiness and entourage straight from the six week Lam Dre in Sydney. This was a full time job! We needed to prepare everything in His hotel room which was challenging to the staff, yet in the end they accommodated us fully and happily. It was getting harder and harder, a bit snowed under and really had no idea it was going to be such a challenge just being a few of us. The I met one of the girls from a local Rigpa group, she offered to help and had a team of twelve! In a meeting they all looked at me and said, Rob you just tell us what you need and we'll do it. Approaching a week before the event the group panicked! They reckoned they couldn't continue on. We sat quietly together and I asked them "Are you not enjoying this, because I am? I think we must remember this is the Dharma, if you are not enjoying the process then it's not work in the Dharma, so just all kick back a bit and take a good look at all that you have accomplished. It truly is the most superb job ever and now it's time to enjoy this, the work is all done. It is so important to come from a joyful heart." Everything seemed to just shift immensely from that point and the event all went phenomenally smoothly and easily. His Holiness gave the Empowerment of Vajrakilia and offered three days of teaching on "Parting From the Four Attachments". I am entirely grateful for

this once in a lifetime experience.

### You have restored a Stupa given to you many years ago, what now?

This Stupa was given to me upon opening the centre here from a local Geluk group that was closing. The Stupa was incomplete, having dry rot and in need of a lot of work. After sitting covered in my carport for many years I attempted the task of restoring it under Khenpo-la's guidance and a few books of "How to Make a Stupa". It had already been blessed by Geshe Tashi Tsering from the Chenrezig Institute in 1986 with relics and mantras inside, so I worked around that. Khenpo-la has brought a stunning Buddha back from his last trip to Nepal and now encourages as many people possible to contribute and put their treasures inside it before sealing, whether semi precious stones or old jewellery. I feel so fortunate to have had this opportunity to not only run a Dharma centre for my teacher yet to also have been in the right place at the right time to be able to rebuild this Stupa for Khenpo-la and for all beings.

**Rob**

This time we were very fortunate. This teaching on Nagarjuna "Precious Garland" has never been given in Australia. We were fortunate Khenpo was also able to find the complete teaching only days before his leaving Nepal on his last visit there to see his parents.

Because of the length of this teaching it will be in two separate sessions. The next date for the second teaching is on our website [www.dharmachakra.org.au](http://www.dharmachakra.org.au) and see photos from our last retreat.

Thank you Khenpo for your effort to obtain this precious teaching for all sentient beings...

**On a different note, our Stupa is nearing completion and we would invite you to donate old jewellery or semi precious stones to go into the Stupa, an opportunity not to be missed!!!**

**Rob Assink**



**Cairns**

Khacho Yulo Ling Buddhist Centre once again hosted Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe for an inspired weekend of teachings. The weekend started with a public talk on "How to Create the Causes for Genuine Happiness". As usual, Khenpo gave very clear, insightful and helpful instructions of how we can transform our lives with mindful, ethical actions of body, speech and mind.

We then had two days of teachings on the rituals and practise of *Green Tara*. Our centre regularly does the *Green Tara puja* so it was so inspiring to have it explained in detail. Khenpo gave such beautiful and detailed teachings on the deeper meaning of the puja and the 21 *Tara's*, inspiring everyone there.

We are very grateful that Khenpo is able to spare the time to come to Cairns regularly to give us teachings.

**Ani Rinchen**

**Introducing the  
'Samadhi Buddhist Centre' just named  
by Khenpo-la, Bermagui NSW**

**Rongton  
Brisbane**

Good medicine from Khenpo-la. Mothers Day weekend saw Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe give comprehensive teachings on the "Parting From the Four Attachments" to the members of Rongton Buddhist Centre, Dharmachakra Gompa and friends from the Rigpa Centre gathering at Mercy Place. Khenpo-la skilfully guided us through the pith instructions of this invaluable text with his characteristic clarity warmth and humility, also encouraging us to listen to, and look out for authentic Buddhist masters who may be teaching in Brisbane irrelevant of which tradition they may be from. Without doubt we are very fortunate when we have one sitting right in front of us! I'm sure I can speak for all when I say, when will you be back Khenpo-la? with metta, **Venerable Tsultim**

On 5 & 6 May this year about 25 students of the Dharma from as far afield as Milton in the north and Merimbula in the south gathered at the hospitable home of Alan and Annie in Bermagui to hear Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe talk about "Parting From the Four Attachments". Basing his teachings on words spoken by *Manjushri*, Khenpo-la spoke about the attachment to this present life, to samsara, to one's own personal liberation (without working for the liberation of all sentient beings) and grasping.

The Dharma or wisdom teaching involves loving kindness (*bodhicitta*) and wisdom. Bodhicitta (loving kindness or "the Awakened mind") begins with oneself but then we expand it to the most loved person in our life and from there in small steps to encompass everyone in the world. The key words are patience, joyful effort and concentration leading to wisdom. Happiness is the absence of negative emotions, withdrawing the power of the negative mind. The antidote to grasping is single-pointed meditation with a non discriminating mind. But in meditation without practical compassion - helping other sentient beings - is not enough. And we guard against arrogance.

We are very grateful to Alan and Annie for opening their home to us in surroundings that - as Khenpo-la observed on a previous occasion immediately put one into a meditative frame of mind. **Peter**

The trip to Bermagui was my first experience with a Buddhist teaching and I was lucky enough to share the experience with my mum. The area was so beautiful and tranquil it made for a perfect place to absorb such wondrous teachings. I found Khenpo-la's words digestible and so incredibly relevant to my everyday life that I found myself wondering why people are so resistant to Dharma and to happiness. **Julianne**

Fantastic autumn weather, delightful company, stunning Bermagui location, provided the perfect situation for two days of teachings from Khenpo. With his gentle wisdom Khenpo discussed "Parting From the Four Attachments", the nature of the mind and guided us in meditation. I am very grateful to Khenpo for making the trip down to the south coast, and also to Annie and Alan for opening their home for this occasion. We all enjoyed a delicious lunch each day, before the afternoon session. Khenpo's teachings are always relevant to us in our modern lifestyle, and Khenpo listens carefully to our questions, and gives us helpful insights. It was a true privilege to attend the weekend at Bermagui. Thank you to Khenpo, Alan and Annie. **Ben D.**