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E: info@drogmi.org
T: +61 (0)2 8005 1757

'The Wisdom Age'

Newsletter of Drogmi Buddhist Institute



A Tibetan Buddhist Centre in the Sakya Tradition

End of Year Message from our Precious Teacher
KHENPO NGAWANG DHAMCHOE

Dear friends, Tashi Delek!

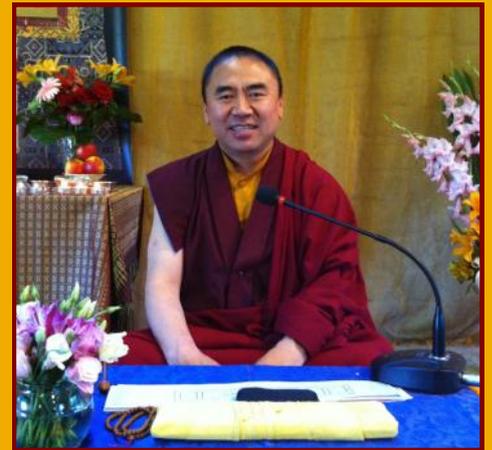
As we approach the end of the year I wanted to share with you a few thoughts as my small contribution on the importance of living life well in the precious Dharma.

As we are sentient beings we all have the desire to be happy and to avoid discomfort and unpleasant feelings. We are all doing our best to achieve this goal. But when we are rushing around we can get lost in our own small world and lose our sense of perspective. So we end up achieving exactly the opposite of what we set out to achieve.

Based on his own realization, Lord Buddha said the true cause of happiness is virtuous action and the greatest happiness we can experience is the result of helping countless other beings without discrimination. Similarly, all the distress in our lives is the result of non-virtuous action - our deepest states of dissatisfaction come when we cause harm to others. Therefore it is so important to have a deep understanding of the law of karma, the value this understanding brings, and based on that, we must integrate it into our practice on a daily basis. If we can do this it will free us from misery and achieve peace and happiness.

The root cause of all our distress is found in our mental afflictions "*Nyon Mongpa*". The root of the mental afflictions is self-grasping. So for the Dharma practitioners who work joyfully and tirelessly to reduce the mental afflictions, they will eventually free themselves of self-grasping. This particular practice is the real Dharma and it is the only path to bring everlasting peace and happiness. To practice Dharma we need to have the right conditions and be free from all obstacles - this is our precious human rebirth. While we have this perfect form - which comes as briefly as a flash of lightning in the night - we should be grateful for our good fortune and make sure this opportunity is not wasted through laziness or mental afflictions.

Thank you to all the centres, both in Australia and overseas, who have been so hospitable to me this



past year and worked so hard to promote the Buddhadharma and benefit so many people in your local communities. In 2013, I would like to visit your centres again so that together we can help innumerable beings.

I also want to offer my heartfelt thanks to the hard working members of the committee, our benefactors and all the other members and friends who make me feel so comfortable at Drogmi Buddhist Institute be it through cooking, driving, or lending a hand in so many other ways. I want to particularly acknowledge the generosity of our sponsors and the efforts of committee members involved in bringing Lama Kalsang to Australia - this has made life much easier for me.

So as we approach the Christmas - New Year period, I sincerely wish that you value and respect your own traditions and culture so that the coming break is a time of great joy and celebration with your precious family, friends and relatives. I also ask that in particular, you take care as you travel around in the coming weeks.

Speaking for myself, I am most happy when I am engaged in the Dharma activities and surrounded by so many beautiful people and for this reason I am very much looking forward to 2013 as we set about our important work to spread the precious Buddhadharma. May the Buddhadharma arise in all the lands, at all times, now, and forever.

Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe



Above photo: Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe and Lama Kalsang in Queensland Australia and below Lama Kalsang's welcome lunch with members & friends of DBI.

Below right: Khenpo-la and Lama with the Tibetan Community in Sydney July 2012.



It is such a great blessing for Drogmi Buddhist Institute to have Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe as our Spiritual Director. As you know, Khenpo-la is one of the most highly qualified Tibetan lamas living in Australia today.

Only a very few Dharma students ever have the opportunity to learn from a Master who is so compassionate and wise. In our country, where there is so much stress and mental suffering, to have him so easily accessible is incredibly fortunate.

Because our Teachers have made great sacrifices to be with us in Australia, we invite you to consider supporting them so they can continue their tireless and selfless work. By supporting our Spiritual Teachers you create the opportunity for people right across Australia to benefit from the precious Buddhadharma.

There are a number of ways that you can help:

You can offer to cook food and prepare meals for our Teachers or you can make a financial contribution towards the centre's running costs and our Teacher's living expenses.

When you give \$25 each week for one year you will cover the centre's total operating costs for one week including provision for our Spiritual Teachers.

You may also wish to consider individual sponsorships for our Teacher's. When you give \$5 each week for one year, you will cover a Teacher's essential living costs for one week.

Or you may prefer to make a one-off contribution. All contributions can be made either on line at www.drogmi.org from 1 January 2013 or by sending a cheque made out to **Drogmi Buddhist Institute** to **PO Box 388 STRATHFIELD NSW 2135.**

Please know that whatever you can give will be deeply appreciated and make a huge difference - when you support our Teachers you are supporting everyone who benefits from their tireless work. We see all offerings, whether financial or in kind, as a simple and practical way to repay the generosity of our precious Teachers.

Unless you wish to remain anonymous, we will list the names of people who have kindly chosen to become centre or Teachers sponsors on the website. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss ways you might support the centre please contact me president@drogmi.org or Peter Green, Treasurer at accounts@drogmi.org

Thank you.





I was a little apprehensive about attending a retreat for eight days. I had thought about this type of thing for many years and had always felt meditating all day for over a week would be a long time and probably a bit beyond me. By day five I thought, "I could live like this"! The teaching for me was very practical and immediate. I have moved from seeking peace from my meditation at the end of my work day, to taking the teachings into everyday. What we were taught gave me the materials and tools to build the happiness that we seek all the time. *Dino*



We were at the Shamatha Retreat for three days over the October long weekend. We would have liked to have stayed for the full retreat especially after we'd experienced the first session of teachings with Khenpo-la. The beautiful shrine room and group of fellow attendees made for a very special 'space' to receive Khenpo's guidance, which was always clear and concise. I was aware of how he seemed to know what we needed to hear, and what we most needed to pay attention to in ourselves. There was a great feeling of connectedness and care and amongst all who attended. It would have been wonderful to have stayed for the full retreat - after three days I could feel a stillness setting in. I can only imagine how transformative eight days of Dharma teachings and guided meditations would have been. Thank you for this special opportunity. *Gabrielle*





The Shamatha Retreat was my first real experience of Buddhism - by immersion! I was lucky enough to share it with my parents and the great group of twenty or so who in three short days became like extended family. Khenpo-la's teachings opened my eyes to a whole new world which I'm so excited to continue exploring. I remember looking up at the full moon at the end of the day we took the Mahayana Precepts, being so thankful to have discovered something so amazing. Ararat Lodge was the perfect setting with swims in the Colo River between teachings, walks to the orange orchard and sessions punctuated by Suzie and Peter's fantastic meals! Back at work on the Tuesday after the long weekend I followed the movements of the group still immersed in the experience - chanting "*Tadyatha Om Muni Muni Maha Muni Shakya Muni Ye Svaha*", at any moment alone and following all the bell ringing times! The real world came back all too quickly but a new journey has nonetheless begun. Thank you so much to Khenpo-la and all who shared the experience. **Lizzie**

One sign of a great Teacher is an ability to create an environment - physically, emotionally and spiritually that is conducive to receiving the precious teachings of the Lord Buddha. For those of us who had the immense good fortune to attend Khenpo-la's teaching and retreat on "*Parting From the Four Attachments*" we experienced this environment first hand. The atmosphere for the entire retreat was quite special which helped ensure that these profound teachings penetrated our mundane minds. For those of us who are jaded practitioners it is always very special when you return to a precious teaching such as "*Parting From the Four Attachments*" and it's as if you are receiving the teaching for the first time with quite profound insight. This is, of course, a reflection on the qualities of the Teacher and it is a stark reminder of just how fortunate we are to have Khenpo-la as our Teacher. All aspects of the retreat were harmonious, warm and caring - from the preparation of the shrine, to the cooking of food, to the way that everyone kicked in to lend a hand, to the clarity and humour with which Khenpo-la taught. It was also a wonderful gathering of Khenpo-la's students both old and new from right around Australia. This retreat was one of the most special retreats Khenpo-la has led that I have attended. **Jack**





Last year when Khenpo visited, he taught Nagarjuna's "A Letter to a Friend". This year we were fortunate that Khenpo was able to continue with this teaching. The instructions are of special interest to those who wish to take up spiritual activity while continuing to live and work in society so was very appropriate for us who all lead busy and often hectic lives. Khenpo imparts much sound advice during his teachings. Last year he spoke of treating anger like a hot ball of fire in your hands and like a ball of fire, we should drop anger very quickly as it has potential for much harm. Since that teaching, whenever I become angry, Khenpo's words come into my mind and although I am not always able to drop it as quickly as I'd like, my anger is diminished. This year Khenpo spoke of the importance of doing our daily sitting practice with joy. I was reminded that sometimes, my daily practice would be just another task on a long list of things I had to do. Other times I am bored by the repetition. Khenpo's words have been a reminder that my daily practice is a very precious opportunity. **Dorethy**



In terms of Khenpo-la's teaching, I think the comment that stood out for me was when he said practice is not so hard when the alternatives are so intrusive and stressful - such as watching TV, being out in the world etc. I understood that because I have definitely found since regular meditation practice, TV holds less appeal to me and is just mindless noise (for the most part). To sit and be peaceful is a lot more natural. **Kate**



The weekend of teachings was a great experience. It was my first time to sit and listen to teachings from a classical text. I felt privileged to have such a high lama explain and expound the teachings. The power that the gathering harnessed has strengthened dedication, and see that taking refuge is a worthy practice. Thank you once again for holding these teachings in our home area. **Wayne**

Seminar on 'KARMA' at UWS

Please forgive my ignorance mind, as Khenpo-la fortunately has great skill imparting the teachings with crystal clarity and wisdom, so as I hear and process with my defiled mind it may not be the true meaning of what Khenpo-la was teaching. I took away with me the feeling that I needed to be more vigilant and aware about what my mind thinks, before it puts the thoughts into words "need to pause for a cause" and check whether what I'm about to say is going to cause harm to someone else or myself even in jest... (negative karma imprints on my mind for future rebirths = unhappy rebirths = samsaric cycle). If we wish for happiness in both this and future lives we had better be careful about what we do, say and think during this lifetime. To open ourselves to others, be warm hearted and positive in every aspect of our life, this also includes how we treat ourselves and others, therefore, imprinting the mind with positive deeds and seeds. So if we cannot help others, at least, do them no harm, through our body, speech and mind. **Suzanne**



As always it's a treat to hear Khenpo explain complex phenomena such as karma in such an unforced and easy manner. His use of modern day examples makes it much simpler to grasp difficult concepts. His wit and sense of humour are just magic. I usually experience some small awakening or realisation either about myself or what's happening around me, yet Saturday's must have been a doozy as I haven't eaten meat since. It just didn't click with me before but when it did I could no longer ignore it. The subconscious became conscious. It was a powerful afternoon of teachings and I thank Khenpo and Lama Kalsang for travelling out to Richmond and for Khenpo sharing his knowledge with us. **Anne D**



Above: Khenpo-la makes an offering of the Medicine Buddha Thangka to Master Min Khon at the opening of the Master's temple in Melbourne.

Above Right: Wendy receiving blessings.

Right: Attendees at the University of Western Sydney, Richmond NSW Seminar on Karma.



The teachings were incredibly accessible and helpful; the icing on the cake for me was accompanying Khenpo-la, along with Zara and Richie to Uluru, following the teachings and continuing the conversations. Our time in Uluru with Khenpo-la gave me a delicious taste of how to bring Dharma into everyday activity. I was able to get it a little more that the state of my mind really does reflect how I enjoy the environment around me. The four of us enjoyed a sunset camel ride through the beautiful landscape, with Uluru and Kata Tjuta in the background. We meditated on a sand dune whilst watching the sun rise over Uluru. We circumambulated Uluru, accompanied by a cool morning breeze. What especially stood out for me was how Khenpo-la was able to bring fun into the most unexpected moment. I came home feeling inspired and hopeful; being a witness to how practice can transform a mind into such a kind, joyful, clear and peaceful state, and how wonderfully infectious this is for others, has left me with a sense of such optimistic determination. **Amanda**



This year, Khenpo-la's teaching focus was on meditation. I'm not sure how he did it but Khenpo-la seemed to communicate volumes of useful information in a very short time as well as guiding meditations within those sessions. The Saturday felt both full and rich, but also very relaxed. A pearl that I took away from this visit was Khenpo-la's explanation of the Five Obstacles to Meditation, especially the last: "pushing and forcing". In my attempts 'to do my best' at meditation or 'get it right', I am pretty prone to an element of pushiness or harshness on myself. Relaxed diligence sounds so simple, but it actually feels like I am rewiring my brain. Which is the point, I guess! So the reminder that pushing is actually stirring up the muddy waters of my mind, not settling them, was very timely. As was the encouragement to have kindness and gentleness in one's approach to meditation. Khenpo-la's visit brought many of us Centralians a freshness and focus to our approach to Dharma and to life.

Thank you! **Zara**



An Interview with Zara in Alice Springs

Q1./ **How did you first meet Khenpo-la?** This is a great question - I love to hear other people's 'how it all began' stories! After returning from a journey in China which involved a horse trek in the mountains of Szechuan, an annoying Austrian and a realisation that I wanted to become a Buddhist, I returned to Australia, took refuge in the foyer of the cinema at Wonthaggi, then flew back to my life in Alice Springs with lots of enthusiasm, questions and absolutely no idea how to start. Incredibly enough, a Tibetan nun happened to be living around the corner from me and I began attending regular tsogs at her house. It dawned on me quickly, however that if I was to get anywhere on this path I really needed to find a teacher; someone with whom I had a heart - connection, someone my mind really wanted to listen to, someone who was actually an embodiment of these profound ideas I was trying to understand. I asked Ani Miranda how I should go about finding such a person, She said "Everyday, from the depth of your heart, call out to Guru Rinpoche, that you would like to find your Teacher". So that is what I did everyday, reciting the Seven Line Prayer to Guru Rinpoche and made prayers. Three to four months later, a young, smiley, humble looking monk turned up at the Alice Springs airport - it was Loppon-la (Khenpo)!

Q2./ **How did it evolve to receive regular teachings at Alice Springs?** Khenpo-la had been invited to Alice Springs to teach and I attended his teachings on *Vajrasattva* along with thirty other locals. We were all quite taken with his clarity and... something else. It wasn't until I had known Khenpo-la for a few more years that it dawned on me that we all felt so calm, open and trusting towards Khenpo-la, we could all hear his teachings very clearly, because he *lives* the teachings. All the complexity of Buddhist philosophy becomes so much simpler to access when you have the opportunity to see what it looks like in everyday life. So the Alice Springs Buddhist Group and I have invited Khenpo-la regularly since then. The days that he is here are always so meaningful and special.

Q3./ **What lead you to the Northern territory?** I came for a holiday. At the end of the week I didn't want to leave. It's a very common story up here. The vast blue skies, the ancient rocky landscape, the amazingly diverse community: this place can really steal your heart.

Q4./ **How do you incorporate the Dharma in your everyday life?** Ummm... well, having studied *The Bodhisattva's Way of Life* by Shantideva with Khenpo-la and the study group here, I feel like that is where I take my everyday guidance from. Not that I am reading it everyday, but there is so much in there that has begun to inform the way I go about things. Khenpo-la has said to us that it is good to start with generosity and I think that is one thing I try to practice everyday; to be kind to others - by listening, sharing, offering, helping - and also being kind to oneself. The kind to self part is REALLY important and is not selfishness. *Shantideva* points out that we are the only sentient being that we have control over, so we should look after this precious being. Because if we are happy, calmly disciplined and flexible, we are the best possible support we can be for other beings, to make *their* way a little easier. **Zara**



END OF YEAR CELEBRATION!

Long Life Puja Ceremony

This Long Life Ceremony is offered to Khenpo-la and all our Teachers. It is the most precious and appropriate way to offer our most heartfelt gratitude and thanks to our precious teacher/teachers for their boundless spiritual guidance and assistance throughout the year.



10am: Annual General Meeting for DBI members, but observers are most welcome.

11am: Long Life Puja Ceremony

12pm: Shedra / Retreat / Workshop Presentations by students.

1pm: BBQ / food to share / festivities *and* winners of the T - Shirt slogan contest to be announced!

AGM: Member participation is invited, very much valued and deeply appreciated. **Long Life Puja** for Khenpo-la and all our precious Teachers. Attendance by all is highly recommended as an opportunity to offer our deepest thanks to our Teachers. **Shedra and Dharma talk presentations** - is an opportunity for anyone who has attended the regular Shedra classes in Sydney, Richmond or Lawson, or attended any retreats or teachings given by Khenpo-la, including meditation sessions at the centre or elsewhere, to share something of what they have learned. Duration no longer than five minutes and please email us at info@drogmi.org to register your interest. **BBQ, festivities and T - Shirt slogan competition.** This competition has been a lot of fun with over 40 high quality entries, thank you to everyone who entered!

**Healing and Purification Retreat
Vajrasattva and Medicine Buddha**



These healing and purification practices, Vajrasattva and Medicine Buddha, belong to a rich history in the Tibetan Buddhist School and have been practiced for centuries in Tibet. This tradition descends directly from the Buddha to this day. Many of our mental stresses, physical illnesses and emotional distresses are a result of negative causes and conditions. The Vajrasattva practice helps to purify these and free us from negative results. Our physical and emotional sickness and mental unhappiness are caused by past and present negative karma. To heal and purify these, the best method is Medicine Buddha.



These practices help free all our negativity and allow us to experience genuine health, peace and happiness in our life. These practices can help us as well as help others. They are suitable for everyone, in particular those working as health care givers and who are engaged in helping others.

In this non residential retreat you will have the opportunity to learn the correct way to practice so that in the future you can help yourself and others. During the retreat Khenpo will instruct the group on the techniques and methods and we will practice together. This retreat is a good way to prepare for the New Year, with a fresh mind and a healthy life. It is a great opportunity that happens but once a year!

Date: 30 December - 1 January

Times: 9 - 5pm (30/31 Dec) 9 - 12pm (1 Jan)

Fee: Full retreat \$180 Per day \$70



Tibetan Language Course with Lama Kalsang

Twelve eager students attended Lama's inaugural Tibetan Language class on 14 November. The initially quiet group, unsure of what the night would hold, was soon learning to recognise letters and grapple with the nuances of pronunciation. There was much laughter as students of all abilities had to identify and say various letters. Lama has a gentle and supportive teaching style, mixing precision and patience perfectly. *Linda*

The Tibetan Language Introductory Course will be held again (starting Wednesdays)

30 January to 6 March 2013: In this six week course students will learn the Tibetan alphabet, to read and write script and basic vocabulary. It is designed for both those with no prior learning of Tibetan, and for those wanting a refresher from this year's class. Classes are fun and a great way to fuel our studies! Lama Kalsang has been a Tibetan Buddhist monk for over 20 years. Lama has regularly taught the Tibetan language to westerners in his monastery in India and has a natural love of teaching. He is assistant Lama at DBI in Sydney. Bookings are essential so please feel free to contact us. Cost: \$50 full course / or \$10 a class, 7:30 - 9:00pm.



'Introduction to Mind Training'

Have you ever wanted to learn how to meditate?

This four week course is offered to people of all levels of experience in meditation, from beginners to the more experienced. You will learn how to develop a correct sitting posture and methods to focus your concentration during meditation. Meditation can bring positive changes to one's life, an improved physical and mental health and a greater feeling of wellbeing. This course is based on the classic Tibetan Buddhist teachings "**Seven Point Mind Training**".



The Course Instructor Hollie Driscoll is a senior student at Drogmi Buddhist Institute in Sydney and is a qualified yoga teacher. She has practiced meditation for over ten years.

When: Thursday evenings 7:30 - 9:00pm, **7 - 28 February 2013 / Suggested donation: \$10 class or \$30 course**
Bookings / at the door or by emailing info@drogmi.org / 02 8005 1757 / or check out our website www.drogmi.org



Dr. Khenpo Ngawang Jordan
March 2013

DBI will be hosting a teaching program conducted by Dr. Khenpo Ngawang Jordan as part of his National Tour in March 2013. Dr. Khenpo Jordan is Director of the International Buddhist Academy (IBA) in Kathmandu and is a very highly qualified scholar and teacher. Included in Dr. Khenpo Jordan's credentials are a Ph.D from Harvard and a Loppon degree (Archarya or "Master of Arts") from Sakya College, India. Dr. Jordan also holds the title Khenpo, (Abbot) for his skill and experience as a professor of Buddhist Philosophy. **We will inform you of the program schedule once finalised.**

Weekly Centre Program 2013

- 30 December 2012:** No Sunday Practice due to Healing & Purification Retreat.
- 6 January :** 9:00 - 10:00am Green Tara
 10:00 - 11:00am Shamatha Practice / then Shamatha each following Sunday.
- 8 January:** Tuesday - 7:30 - 9:00pm Vajrasattva & Medicine Buddha alternating weekly with Chenrezig Practice

LOSAR - Tibetan New Year of the Water Snake 2140

10 February (Sunday) WORKING BEE
 Cleaning away the physical obstacles for the Tibetan New Year.
 10:00 - 11:00am Shamatha Practice
 11:00 - 12:00pm Cleaning the gompa for Losar!

11 February (Monday) 7:30 - 9:00pm
 Losar Celebration Practice and light offerings of candles



Khenpo-la returns from overseas 28 March 2013 !!

- 29 - 30 March:** Easter Mindfulness Retreat to be held at Ararat Lodge Upper Colo
SHEDRA PROGRAM COMMENCES:
 - 8 April:** Richmond
 - 10 April:** Lawson
 - 11 April:** Ashfield Sydney Centre
- More details of the upcoming 2013 program with DBI will be updated in the March Issue of the *Wisdom Age* and posted on our website www.drogmi.org

Internet Access to teachings: We are very pleased to inform you that Khenpo-la's teachings are now available on You Tube! The first in a series of Khenpo-la's teachings on "**Parting From the Four Attachments**" are available on You Tube in videos of fifteen minute duration each and available each week on a Wednesday. These most precious teachings were given at this years Shamatha Retreat. We hope you can find time to access these teachings!!
The official You Tube Channel is "Sydney Drogmi" PLEASE check our website for further links.

Committee Corner News on Membership

We encourage people to consider renewing or taking up financial membership of the centre. Drogmi Buddhist Institute is an Incorporated Association therefore membership is very important to the centre. People often ask **What are the benefits of renewing or taking out new memberships?** The answer is twofold. There are benefits to oneself and to the centre. For self benefit, you are gaining great merit in assisting a genuine Dharma centre to exist in this country. You are assisting in all aspects of the organisations operation due to your financial contribution. You are also entitled to the 10% discount on all teaching program fees. Benefits to the centre are that we have a robust and active membership, expressing ideas and ways to improve things. The centre also then has an economic base from which to run its daily functions and plan its future growth. Membership is only \$75 and due in March each year. The committee is offering, for those who join on the day at the **End of Year Celebrations on 9 December**, three months **free** membership. If you join on 9 December you can access the discounts and other benefits immediately. Your membership would be valid until March 2014. We hope that you consider joining, we would love to have you as a financial member.

Right photo: Fortnightly Newtown Market Days and Review of the Newtown Festival

The crowds were out and about, and there was a lot of interest in the DBI stall. A good number of people stopped to talk about DBI, taking information about the program. The day was profitable, raising \$550 for the centre. Lama Kalsang, Linus, Lan and Linda made an enthusiastic and hard working team for the day.



ROOM FOR RENT

At the centre from mid - December to mid - March 2013.
 Cost is \$170 a week with two weeks bond.
 Rent includes electricity, gas and water usage.
 For enquiries and applications please email the committee at info@drogmi.org



Above: Khenpo-la and Lama Kalsang on their road trip down the south coast, first stop the blow hole at Kiama also viewing mother & baby whales frolicking along the coastline.



I went to the two day retreat at Bermagui with no expectations and an open heart, coming away with peace and humility. The teachings from Khenpo-la were concise and enlightening. His warmth and smile fills your heart with joy. It was wonderful to see again Khenpo-la's assistant Lama Kalsang also at the retreat. It was an honour to share this time with other Dharma brothers and sisters, a big thank you to Alan and Annie for sharing their home with us.

Bronwyn



On the 27th & 28th of October I had the privilege of spending two days in beautiful Bermagui at the Samadhi Buddhist Centre and the meditation retreat with Khenpo-la. Khenpo-la is a sincere, kind, gentle, humble and thoughtful man, and an inspirational teacher. Just spending time in his presence was a highlight and I felt blessed by the generosity of spirit in which he shared his profound spiritual knowledge with us all. Khenpo's teachings have encouraged me to persevere with my meditation practice and to use this practice to enrich the quality of my daily life, my interactions with others, and to continue to pursue spiritual growth. I would like to express warmest thanks to Annie and Alan for having the retreat on their gorgeous property, divine weather, wonderful food, and the joy of being amongst like-minded people all contribute to the special ambiance at Bermagui retreats, ensuring that the weekend, and the wisdom, remain in head and heart. *Maryanne B*

As wonderful as it is to receive fundamental meditation instructions personally in a small group from a true meditation master, for me the real benefit of time with such a teacher as Khenpo-la goes beyond mere words. A strong atmosphere of peace, spiritual warmth and serenity make our goals seem achievable and our troubles very small... Unforgettable. *Chris* (A very special thank you to Jennifer for her beautiful photos!!)

Transcribing an afternoon guided meditation with Khenpo-la, Shamatha Retreat (part 1)

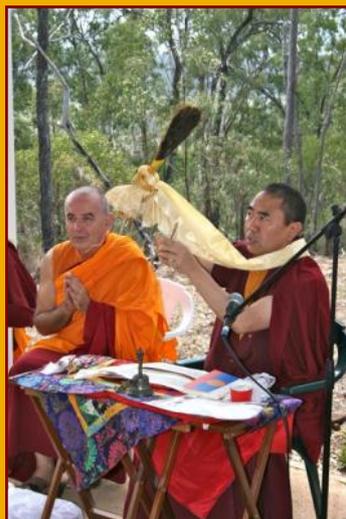


So, firstly, we gently invite our mind to come back to the place where we are meditating, even if it takes time, there is no need to rush, it is very important when we meditate that the mind be present. Once we manage to bring our mind here, then it is good to inspire oneself, since we started retreat six or seven days ago till now, we have accumulated much wisdom, more knowledge and at the same time we have gained more experience, so in this way in the last few days we haven't wasted our time, we have gained so much, in this point of view we are so fortunate making the decision to come to this retreat.

Just imagine this amount of time if we were somewhere else, with the same wandering mind, being with nothing to achieve, nothing to help us move forward. So whatever knowledge we gain out of this retreat, all the benefit that we gain, also may benefit for the rest of our lives as well as towards many of our future lives. This is very important to acknowledge to oneself. Then, still there is much to do, we are on the path each day, we actually are closer to reaching enlightenment if we keep concentrating, meditating and collecting wisdom and knowledge. Living in this virtuous and wisdom way, is the best way of life. At the same time, it is also important to develop great mindfulness towards others. We are all mother sentient beings, sooner or later this life or future lives may they have the opportunity to hear the Dharma, may they have the opportunity to meditate, eventually may they be free from all sorts of suffering and gain full and perfect enlightenment. In this way we can spend a few minutes just to realise how wonderful to live in such a virtuous state of mind, how wonderful to have a great mind towards others, we cannot have it better than what we are creating right now, so in this way just enjoy ourselves in having a kind mind and a warm heart...

Now in this joyful state of our mind in this very warm state of our heart this is the perfect platform to practice Dharma. Always important to begin with Refuge. We then briefly reflect on the qualities of the Buddha, the Buddha's wisdom is limitless, He knows exactly what is right to teach to each and every single sentient being. The Buddha's compassion is vast and as limitless as space. Buddha's skill is there to help beyond description. So He is our supreme guide, to guide us from this samsara, from this traumatised place, all the way to reach perfect enlightenment. From this point of view we are extremely fortunate to have such a perfect person to guide us. Secondly, the qualities of the Dharma. Dharma is our travelling, where we take our journey is of non-violence, but always helps others non-stop with the right view, this is our path. There is no more greater path which one could take on, from this point of view we are so fortunate to have found this perfect path. The qualities of the Sangha, they are our role model, they are our example, they lead their life all the time perfectly training their mind training their meditation and training their wisdom. They never reject, whenever we need help and without any request they are always ready to help in whatever way to progress and to go forward on our spiritual journey, unconditionally without any hesitation and with this point of view we are extremely fortunate to have this great Sangha who gives us support and companionship. So while we have these three excellences, if we cannot move forward, if we cannot progress on our spiritual journey, then we will never move forward. Therefore, if we constantly follow the guidance of the Buddha, take the path of the Dharma and the excellence of the Sangha this life is not the last we will have 100% confidence we will have a life after life to be born in this precious human rebirth until we reach fully and perfect enlightenment.

To be continued in Issue 9 March 2013



The consecration was outstanding. Khenpo was an inspiration of knowledge. We made the tormas in the morning, set up chairs and altar at the Stupa. It was beautifully spoken and chanted in Tibetan and was truly inspiring to be present. When finally Khenpo told us **“that now the eyes of the Buddha were open”**, it was very moving spiritually and there were only smiles to be seen by all. We had a lovely lunch and shared our experience of what had transpired in the morning together and after lunch, we started the *Medicine Buddha* retreat, also skilfully explained by Khenpo. What a fantastic weekend!

On behalf of Khenpo, I would like to thank all the people who sent their personal treasures that are now sealed into the Stupa at the Dharmachakra Gompa.

All that was left to do on my part was to maintain the offerings to the Stupa for seven days, yet now it is ten days and we are still going. It is a privilege and honour to be able to continue on for a while yet. Our next teaching weekend with Khenpo will be December 15 - 16 for the Shamatha Retreat. **Rob**



Ease in Life Somatic Workshop

In a two hour experiential workshop Magda Georges introduced us to the principles of somatics: that we can release tensions held in the body through gentle exercises. The increased sense of relaxation and mindfulness manifests in a greater sense of wellbeing. Magda guided us through a sequence of simple movements, involving light touch, breathing and soft sound. We were encouraged to engage at our own comfort level, experimenting with our own subjective experience and perception... What a delightful way to spend a sunny spring afternoon!

I learnt that discharging tightness does not have to be confronting or strenuous, but can come with ease in a supportive, safe environment. All participants felt energised and would be happy to join another session of somatics. Thank you to all for bringing it into being.

Anita





**Pilgrimage 2013 in the planning to INDIA and NEPAL
with Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe**

**Khenpo Ngawang Dhamchoe will be leading a three week
pilgrimage to the four holy sites in India and Nepal.
The preliminary dates are 22 November - 13 December 2013!**

PLEASE NOTE THESE DATES ARE NOT CONFIRMED

The cost of the pilgrimage will be approximately \$5,500.00 which will include airfares, internal transportation, accommodation and ALL meals. Further details of the pilgrimage will be available in early 2013. To register your interest in accompanying Khenpo on this pilgrimage, please email the centre on:

info@drogmi.org or call **02 8005 1757**

Further information will be emailed to you as it becomes available.

Studying at the International Buddhist Academy - Kathmandu

I remember seeing a flyer for the IBA at least six or seven years ago and thinking that one day I would love to study there. Luckily this year I had the opportunity to take time off work and go to Kathmandu. Khenpo's own teacher *Khenchen Appey Rinpoche* set up this academy as a place where the Dharma would be more accessible to westerners through the summer program of having teachings in English for three to four months of the year. It was opened in 2001 and since then has expanded its program to include a two year translators course and also courses in which learned monks from other monasteries come to study language such as English and Chinese.

This year IBA offered three separate month long philosophy courses during June till August and a ten day retreat in September. I had taken five weeks off work to study the July course and about four to five days after arriving I knew I wanted to stay for the rest of the summer and ended staying for twelve weeks! The main reason being, seeing my mind so busy and scrambled within the first few days, wondering if I would even get to the point of being 'present' within the month, also realising what this incredible opportunity was to take time out away from my day to day busyness and have the chance to just focus on Dharma.

It was an incredible experience, I had the time after each class to really contemplate the teachings and also time to meditate and discuss Dharma with the other students and the monks who live there. Distractions are minimal, although IBA has wifi and there is an international phone booth two minutes down the road, the whole place is set up in a way that is fantastic support of doing your Dharma practice. The cooks create three beautiful healthy meals a day which are served buffet style in the dining room, so meal times become the social hours in the day! As well as each student having their own room, very clean and comfortable with a desk so you have all you possible could need for study and revision. Classes were Monday to Friday so the weekends were a chance to go to the great Boudanath Stupa, just a fifteen minute walk away, as well as so many beautiful monasteries to visit in the Boudha area and often day trips to sacred sites such as '*Parping*' and *Namo Buddha* were organised too.

To be surrounded by such sacred sites, receive incredible profound teachings and have the time to immerse oneself in the precious Buddhadharma was absolutely inspiring and an experience I am deeply grateful for.

If anyone has been thinking of taking some time out I cannot recommend some time at the International Buddhist Academy enough!! **Hollie**

The website address is www.sakyaiba.edu.np

