

# GATSAL

**On the cover:** Maha Prajapati Gautami, the first Buddhist Nun (Bhikshuni). She was the aunt and stepmother of Lord Buddha. Detail of DGL Temple mural. Photo by Peter Aronson

# Dear friends,



Our nuns recently completed their annual 2 months silent Rains Retreat and once more we are on the brink of starting a new academic term.

At the beginning of May this year Kyabje Dorzong Rinpoche and senior monks from the Khampagar Monastery came to bestow the Shramaneri ordination on 15 of our newer nuns. Now all our nuns above 15 years of age have been ordained as novices and perform the Posadha or Sojong ceremony twice a month with the assistance of a senior monk from Khampagar.

The back wall of the shrine room in the study centre is now adorned with a mural of the Green and White Taras along with other figures settled in a background of mountains, trees and flowers. This magnificent display was lovingly painted by the Swedish artist Marianna Rydvald as an offering to DGL Nunnery. We had first met many years ago in Bali and Marianna at that time promised to paint the wall of our shrineroom in the future when the Nunnery became a reality instead of only my dream.

Earlier this year two of our nuns attended a 5 day course designed for confidence building and arranged by the Tibetan Women's Association. It was held at Shugseb Nunnery near Dharamsala. About 25 nuns participated from different nunneries coming from as far away as Ladakh and Nepal. The course began at 7am and continued until 9pm each day with group discussions and lectures. Each nun also had to give a talk and

undertake a project to help others. Our nuns chose to give instruction in hatha yoga to another nunnery nearby.

Later in May and June I went with the Singaporean nun Trinley Palmo to New York to deliver a series of talks and to promote my latest book *Into the Heart of Life*. My visit was well organised by the devoted members of DGL Initiatives, especially Evan Zazula, Chrysanne Stathacos and Deborah Garrett, as a fundraising event for our DGL Endowment Fund. It was lovely to meet with old friends again and to acquire many new ones. New York is such a lively city with so many people of diverse origins that it reminds me of a minestrone soup.



Immediately after this we went to Bangkok to attend a Sakyadhita [Daughters of the Buddha] conference held in the luxuriant grounds of Sathira Dhammasatan - the meditation and community centre set up by the Thai nun Maechee Sansanee. With its mature spreading trees, lotus pools, traditional wooden houses and the air of tranquillity, it was difficult to imagine that we were actually in a suburb of Bangkok with concrete high

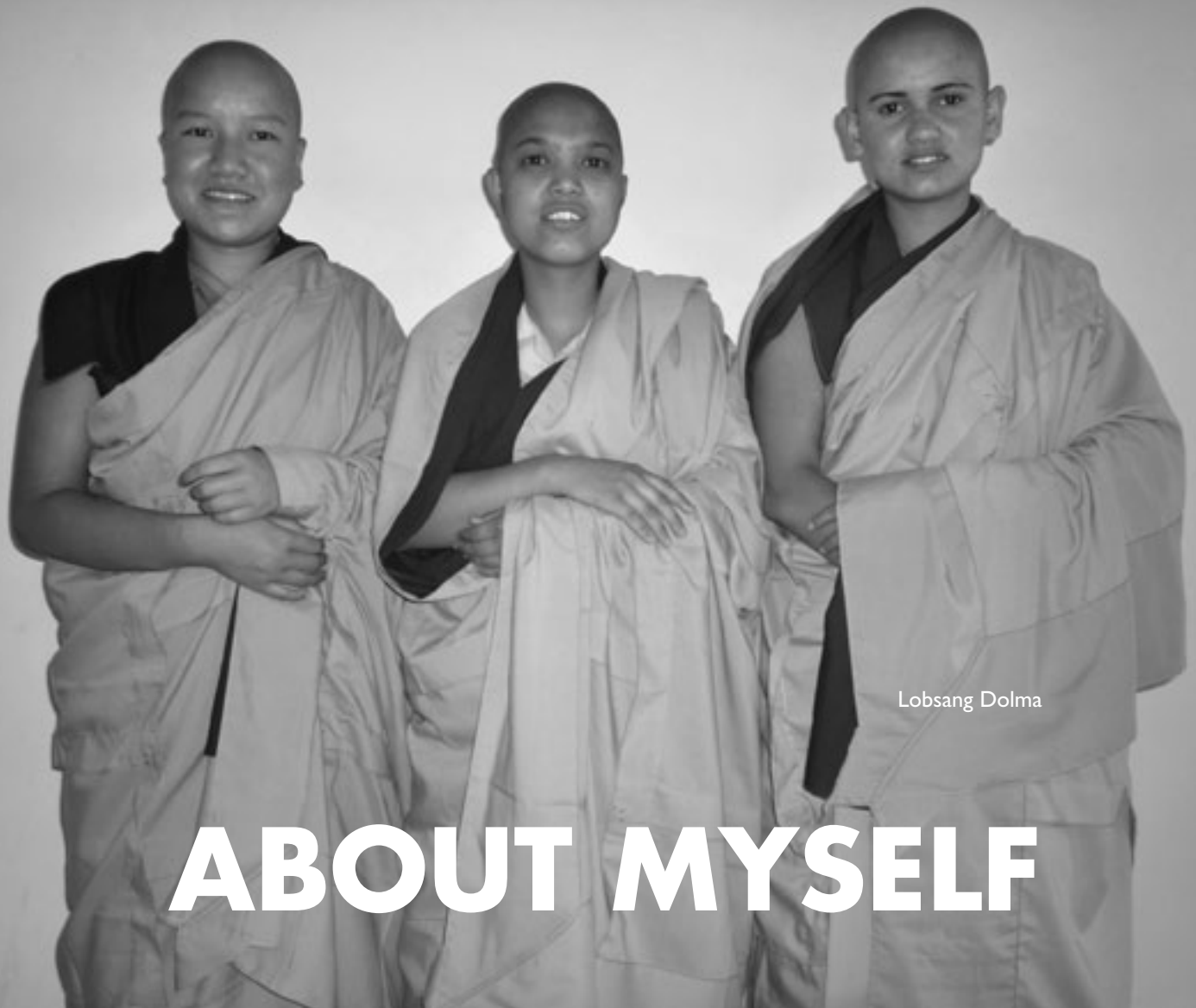
rises and roaring traffic just outside the gates.

In August I attended the Annual Drukpa Council which this year was held at Shey in Ladakh. Scottish nun Ani Kay and our DGL Accountant Tenzin Lhakpa also accompanied me and we enjoyed meeting the many esteemed Lamas of our tradition and visiting several of the old monasteries which dominate that arid landscape. Ladakh is an antique Buddhist land and the people there are still good hearted, simple and devout. His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa directed most of his talks to the many thousands of Ladakhis gathered there. His Holiness speaks fluent Ladakhi since he spent much of his childhood in that region. It was a great blessing for the people to receive the Dharma so clearly from such a great Lama.

This year we have received a senior nun from Namdroling Nunnery and two senior nuns from Dolma Ling Nunnery. These Genlas along with Khenpo Ngawang Sangpo will be the teachers for our nuns in Tibetan grammar and Buddhist philosophy.

Once again we thank all our friends and supporters through whose generosity this DGL Nunnery is sustained and continues to grow.

May all beings be well and happy



Lobsang Dolma

# ABOUT MYSELF

by Ani Lobsang Dolma

I am Lobsang Dolma and I am 22 years old. I come from Kinnaur.

I became a nun after having passed my 6th standard examination from a local senior secondary school.

When I was at my school, I liked Buddhist nuns very much. I wanted to be like them one day. As I grew up and began to understand this life and the world, I started to want even more to become a nun. I saw that there were different kinds of people in this world. Some were happy and some unhappy, some were sick and others poor. First, I liked this world very much and everything was ok, but as I looked, the way I saw things began to change slowly.

I began to feel sad about the world and the people and other beings living in it. There were many poor and helpless people living in the world. Some people have no-one to take care for them in times of need.

So long as I was living at home, I had my parents to take care of my every need. I did not know what unhappiness is, what misery is like. My parents did their best to keep me away from unpleasant and frightening things.

It is just possible that the choice to become a nun was taken by me fast and without much thinking to it, but it was a good decision as I now know.

Now, as a nun, I can help all those people who are in need of help. I can also help others who are not following the right path and who can make their lives miserable and unhappy through their not knowing.

Some people think that they don't need to follow the Buddha's path to be happy in life and to end sorrow. But I think that we have nothing else before us, than taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Because, if we live our lives in Buddhism and if we practice Buddha's teachings, it will make love and compassion for others in our hearts. We do this by taking other peoples' sorrow and pain as our own. We can save others from the path of unhappiness by our example. I am trying to live like this to the best of my ability.

My prayer is that people should not delay any more, before practicing the Dharma. Together we can bring peace and happiness in the world.



Konchok Palmo

# Being a Maintenance Nun

by Ani Konchok Palmo

Let me introduce Ani Sherab Wangmo and myself Konchok Palmo being the maintenance nuns at DGL Nunnery this year 2011. Every year in the election, the nuns voted for office barriers [bearers] including two maintenance nuns to help the nuns for maintaining the nunnery look good and clean. This year we were choose to do this job.

We both are from Kinnaur region, which is in the north of Himachal Pradesh. I became a nun at DGL Nunnery in 2009 and Ani Sherab Wangmo in 2008. I love being at DGL Nunnery and be a part of this institution.

Let me tell you about our duties as maintenance nuns. When there is any problem in the nunnery like licking [leaking] the water pipe or there is electricity problem in any room etc. Nuns tell us about the problem, we note it down on our problem book and then we go to our office sister. They tell our workers to fix the problem

immediately in our knowledge so that we should know if that has been fixed or not. So far our workers has been a great help in fixing the problem for the nuns. We really appreciate that.

Each day we check our toilets whether it has been clean properly or not. If they haven't clean it well then we go to the nuns who got the duty and ask her to clean it again.

We also round the nunnery every morning if there is any dirty like papers been throwing on the ground or the dustbin has been clean or not etc. We try our best to maintain the nunnery neat and clean all the time.

Whenever Monica Joyce is around, she calls us in the office and gives us some advice on how to keep it clean and other maintenance tips. She helps us a lot.

We make sure that we will do our best in our maintenance duties. We are very proud of our Nunnery.



## A VISIT TO H.H KARMAPA TEMPLE

by Ani Ngawang Chozom

On the 9th of April, we went to Gyuto Temple in Sidhbari near Dharamsala. It is a monastery where H.H Karmapa is living at present.

That day many great Lamas such as H.E Khamtrul Rinpoche, H.E Dorzong Rinpoche, H.E Choegon Rinpoche, H.E Chogyal Rinpoche, Popa Rinpoche, Somang Rinpoche, some other Khenpos and many monks and nuns of Drukpa lineage had gone there to greet him and make offerings.

Our Ven Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and 24 senior nuns were also present there. Before making offerings, all Rinpoches, monks and nuns did a special puja of Guru Padmasambhava. In the midst of the puja, all Rinpoches made their offering to H.H Karmapa.

Apart from monks and nuns, there were many lay men and women from different places who had come to see His Holiness Karmapa and to get his blessings. It was really a great opportunity for us to see H.H Karmapa with our root Guru H.E Khamtrul Rinpoche and other Rinpoches of Drukpa Kagyu Lineage masters.

We were very happy to have this chance to go there and see H.H Karmapa that day.

I wish that in the future, we will get opportunities to see H.H Karmapa and have his blessings from time to time.

# WANTED: DHARMA BOOKS!!!

The wooden shelves in the Library at DGL are now in place and we are anxious to fill them with precious Dharma books. So please consider sending us any second hand Dharma books - in good condition - that you no longer need. These can then be borrowed and read by our nuns, staff and visitors.

As the Buddha himself said,  
“The gift of Dharma excels all other gifts.”



**Above:** Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo with Chrysanthe Stathacos and Ani Trinley Palmo. **Opposite:** Jetsunma with Gloria Steinem

## DEBORAH GARRETT

DGL Endowment Fund

Monday, May 16, 2011, Jetsunma's first full day in New York City and she has decided to visit the Rubin Museum of Art. My first chance to see her! Running late, I leave my home, scanning the streets for a yellow cab. The skies are heavy and gray. Rain in the air. Zero cabs. I mad-dash from 10th Street in the East Village to the Museum on West 17th Street, dodging cars and trucks, hoping the incessant sound of traffic, trapped and amplified on this overcast day, isn't too unbearable for someone fresh off the mountains. Bedraggled and out of breath, I burst into the quiet, mostly empty museum, and ask the startled guard if he knows where she is. He smiles...and has no idea what I'm talking about. Okay. Strategy. I jump into the elevator straight to the top. Exit sixth floor. Scan. No Jetsunma. Flying down the spiral marble staircase to fifth, scan scan, empty. Worry creeps in. I've missed her. Fourth floor. Desperate scan. Not here either. I'm running out of floors. On to the third floor.... hold on, behind the column, in the soft glow of a thangka's spotlight, I catch fluid maroon, a beautiful head...Jetsunma! She places her warm hands on my face, gazes into my eyes, smiles so gently. She has a gift for me. In her bag. She can't remember where she has left her bag. A bit of worry. Aaaaah, Ani Trinley, her travel companion, is coming up the staircase carrying her saffron bag. Out comes a brilliant Medicine Buddha thangka...it's so beautiful Jetsunma.

Thank you thank you thank you! We walk gently down to the ground floor cafe for tea. Important people come by to say hello. She starts to look tired. Time to go home. I shepherd them out - Jetsunma, Ani Trinley, and Chrysanthe, her host. A light rain has started to fall. It is 4 pm, the shift-change witching hour for taxis in New York City. Cabs drive by, windshield wipers going, all off-duty. I jog over to corner of 7th Avenue and 17th. Baby leaves are peeking out on the few saplings. Looking back, I see that Ani Trinley has opened a maroon umbrella to protect her precious friend. I wave frantically at the passing cabs. It's raining harder. All of a sudden, one slows down, off-duty, the driver is from India. An important nun from India has just arrived, she is very tired, can he drive her uptown, please please please? Yes? Ok. Don't go. She'll be right here. From the corner I gesture wildly at the little team under the umbrella in front of the museum, yelling over the noise, finally catching their attention. Chrysanthe, Ani Trinley, Jetsunma, come come come, they're on their way driver, promise, they're nearly here...aaaah, here they are! I open the door and safely into the cab go Jetsunma, Ani Trinley and Chrysanthe. The door closes, the cab pulls away from the curb, they're headed for home. I stand there, waving till the cab is out of sight, alone in the rain, a few warm tears. My heart is so soft and tender. Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo is here.

# JETSUNMA'S NEW YORK VISIT



## CHRYSANNE STATHACOS

DGL Initiatives

It was truly wonderful to have Jetsunma with us in New York City again. My New York friends have developed a special appreciation for Jetsunma and her teachings. This is very touching as most of them are not Buddhists, but women artists of many different backgrounds who consider themselves feminists with a deep appreciation for equality, spirituality and the environment. Many donated artworks for our Benefit for the DGL Endowment – Finding our Voices – which was held at Tibet House after the conversation between Jetsunma and Gloria Steinem at the Rubin Museum. It was a wonderful evening and made us all realize that we have so much more in common, – no matter who we are or what we do - nun, artist, writer, teacher, therapist, mom, or political activist. The evening brought us all together reinforcing how important it is for the world to have female voices heard and respected. All who attended said it was one of the most special evenings that they had experienced- and this is from busy New Yorkers!!!

## ARDYTHE ASHLEY

DGL Initiatives

Jetsunma's teachings are with me everyday. Her gift for bringing the Dharma to those of us in the busy New York lifestyle is a gift beyond price. We look forward to Jetsunma's next visit and are so grateful for our time with her and her assistant, Ani Trinley.

We're also thankful for all the love and support received from all of Jetsunma's supporters that participated in so many ways.

## EVAN ZAZULA

DGL Endowment Fund, DGL Initiatives

For me, the highlight of Jetsunma's trip was being witness to her generosity and kindness to others. It always amazed me to see that no matter how tired or busy she was (or jet-lagged), Jetsunma went out of her way to be present and caring to those wanting to meet her. During the Refuge ceremony at her last teaching here in New York, it was deeply moving to experience her radiant, open heart as she connected one by one with every student participating, allowing each person to be truly seen.

## CAMILLE HYKES

Editor, Into the Heart of Life

The teachings that Jetsunma offered us in New York were clear and direct. And her simple embodiment of the heart teachings led me to reflect on the importance of loving the truth. Not in order to get anything, or to cover over anything, but because loving the truth for its own sake opens you to what is present. I am grateful for Jetsunma's immensely kind and mirroring presence in this world. It is said that experiences are like mist. But inspiration can ever deepen.



# A DAY EXCURSION TO SWIMMING POOL AND TWO TEMPLES

by Ani Tsultrim Palmo

During our annual holiday, the new comers don't have holiday because it is the rule of our nunnery that they have to stay here until two years. One day our office staff sisters took us to the swimming pool at Kanwari road near Dharamsala. It was the first time we nuns have had this opportunity to swim in the real swimming pool though we don't know how to swim but we really enjoyed it.

All of us were really excited to go there when our staff sisters first told us day before. We took drinks, some fruits and have had lunch at the swimming pool. We were there for couple of hours and all the new comers were really enjoying the moment. There were many Tibetan students near by who were also there. It was fun.

Most of the nuns can't swim but some nuns can. Those who can't swim, it was so difficult to go around the pool because the water was quite deep.

After finishing it, we went to McLeod Ganj to visit the Temple where the Dalai Lama occasionally teaches. We visited inside the Temple and also did circumambulation and came back. On the way back, we visited Gyuto Monastery where His Holiness Karmapa reside.

At last near the Gopalpur road, we have had chance to see ZOO which was really fascinating and all the new comer nuns were so excited to see the different animals. We took lot of picture while we were playing.

We came to the Nunnery in the evening at about 6 pm and we rested for a while. After that we did our daily evening puja. We really enjoyed a lot.

Our excursion to swimming pool and visiting two temples was sponsored by one of Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo's friend Teng Eu, who lives in Australia and we really appreciate her generosity.





# The Third Nuns' Leadership Programme

by Ani Ngawang Drolma

On the 24th April 2011, Samten Dolma and I, Ngawang Dolma went to Shugseb Nunnery in Dharamsala to attend a Nuns' Leadership Programme. Altogether 25 nuns took part in the 5 days long leadership programme.

On the first day Kirti Dolkar Palmo, the Head of the Woman's Association and Cham Kushoe Rinchen Khandro, gave wonderful speeches about how to build self-confidence among nuns and its importance and value to the nuns. I thought of the words of our Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, who often talks to us about how important it is to be self-confident.

At the meeting they told us that in the past only monks were able to give talks and were given the chance to study the Dharma. Nuns were not given higher education however clever and wise they were. But today it is not the same. Now things are changing faster day by day. Now there are many nunneries where nuns follow and practice religious ceremonies, chanting of prayers and mantras the same as monks. Nuns are managing the running of their nunneries more confidently and in a better way. Nuns should study very hard, build up their confidence and take part in different contests, debates, conferences and try to prove themselves. If they do this they can certainly serve all beings in a better way.

Next day, another group of four women came and taught us about the difference between science and Buddhism and environment. Their names were T. Dolma, T. Dhardon, T. Woebum and Nyima Chime. They stayed with the nuns and they were very kind. During the first two days Samten Dolma and I faced some problem and were nervous. This is because we didn't have the habit to speak before big crowds of people and also we never had a chance to do this before.

These nuns talked about Science, Buddhism, Environment and Health. After our lunch, we divided into four groups and talked about what the nuns had said in the morning. From each group one nun had to tell the others about the important part of the morning session. It was a really good exercise that improved our knowledge and experience.

One day the Women's Association gave Rs1000 to each group of nuns and said to us that now that we have this money, we will have to spend this amount within three hours. They said we had to spend this money so that it benefits everyone. They asked us when we will spend this money and how we will spend it.

Then we were lost in deep thoughts and started thinking what we should do and how to do it. One group suggested that they would buy flowers seeds and set up a garden growing different flower plants, which would help in looking after our environment.



One of the groups went to an old people's home. This group purchased medicines, fruits, ghee and other items for them, which they very much needed.

Our group gave a serious thought to it and decided to go out in the countryside or go to some nunnery and teach the people/nuns about health sanitation and yoga. We wanted to help them through speeches, telling the people about the benefits of yoga and good health. Yoga helps our every physical and mind related problems and anyone can do and it costs nothing. Only one has to practice yoga and breathing exercises regularly to lead a happy, healthy, meaningful and long life.

We went to Gendun Choeling Nunnery and got together 25 nuns from that place and I taught them yoga and breathing. We promised them that we would come back to the nunnery again to run a regular yoga camp. For the present, we purchased a book on yoga and presented it to them. One of the nuns from our group gave a speech which everybody thought was good. Having done that, we invited questions from them and those who asked the most questions and good questions were rewarded by us. We were surprised how our three hours had passed in doing this.

It was a five-day long training Programme and how these five days passed so quickly. If I get a chance to do such a course again, I shall volunteer myself to attend because it gives us a chance to build up our confidence, meet with the nuns coming from different places and learn many things from each other.

My name is Sithar Yangchen. I am twenty-three years old. I have nine family members. They are at Kathmandu (Nepal). I have my Father and Mother. Two of my brothers are monks and other three are in school. I have one elder sister. They love me and I love them too.

My father works in a shop. My mother is a housewife. My family members are friendly with each other. I spent my time looking after the home and feeding the animals like yaks and horses, I decided that my life would be happier and better as a nun studying the Buddha Dharma. I believe that studying and practicing Dharma will give me a chance to make my life better and save other in the world that are suffering and have no hopes of living a good life.

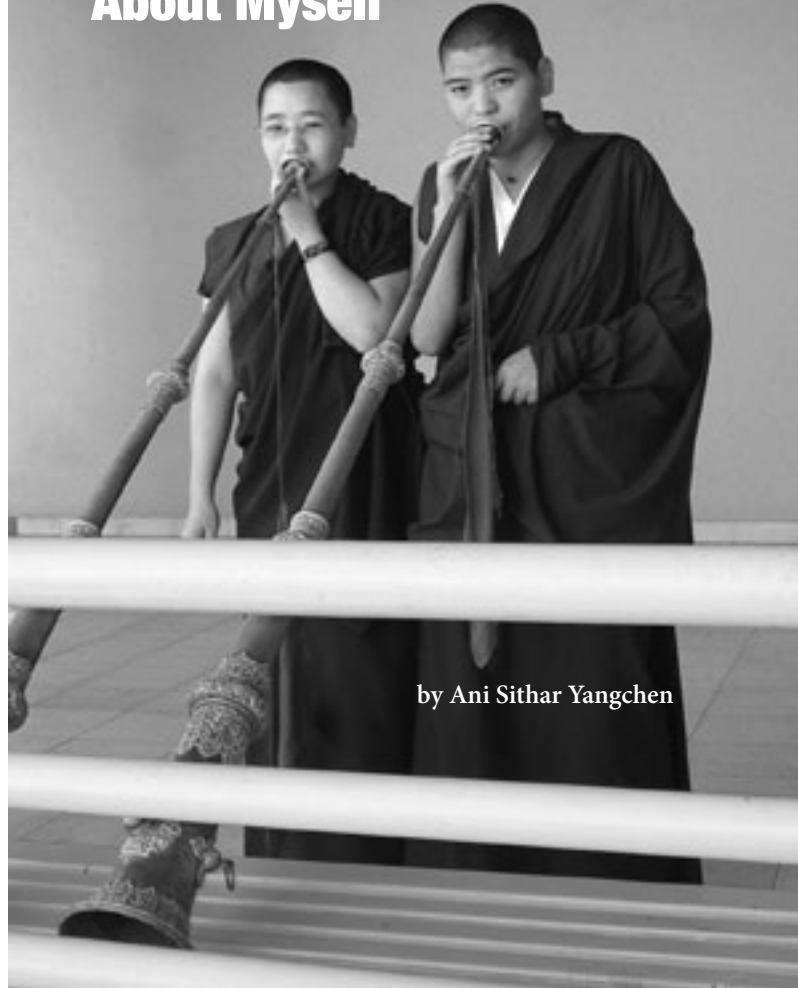
H.E Sherab Tendhar Rinpoche ordained me as a nun in 2007. I lived and studied the Dharma in Osel Choeling Nunnery in Kathmandu for about 2 years in 2009. Then I got a chance to come to India. I had hope that this visit would give me an opportunity to see the H.H the Dalai Lama and H.H Karmapa in Dharamsala.

I reached Delhi by bus and after a while, I was put on another bus going to Dharamsala. After my arrival in Dharamsala, I was taken to my uncle's house. It was there that I heard from my brother about the DGL Nunnery in Padhiarkhar. I asked for his permission to join this Nunnery. I had heard that it was a very quiet and peaceful place for studying and practicing the Dharma. Apart from that it has a class for studying English language.

I also came to know that all the teachers to teach us were very good and very kind. After I got permission from brother, I took a bus to the DGL Nunnery and reached here. I found that things are not different than what I had imagined and been told while living in Dharamsala.

This Nunnery is really a wonderful place with many more facilities that I had even dreamt of. I have my sponsor who is so nice and kind to support me because of their kindness. I have this great chance to study and practice Dharma for the benefit of all sentient beings. I am very grateful to them

## About Myself



by Ani Sithar Yangchen

and especially Ven Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo for making it possible for me. Now, to my surprise I speak and write in simple English.

I want to be a good Nun for my all life. I am quite sure that I will be able to spread the Dharma in these places and areas where it could not reach until now. No-one should live without the knowledge of the precious Dharma. I want to use my life as a nun to help others.

## How to Support the Nuns at DGL

Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and the nuns at Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery thank our supporters in a most heartfelt manner. Your kindness helps our Nunnery to flourish and keep the Dharma alive. Sponsoring a nun costs the equivalent of US\$365 a year.

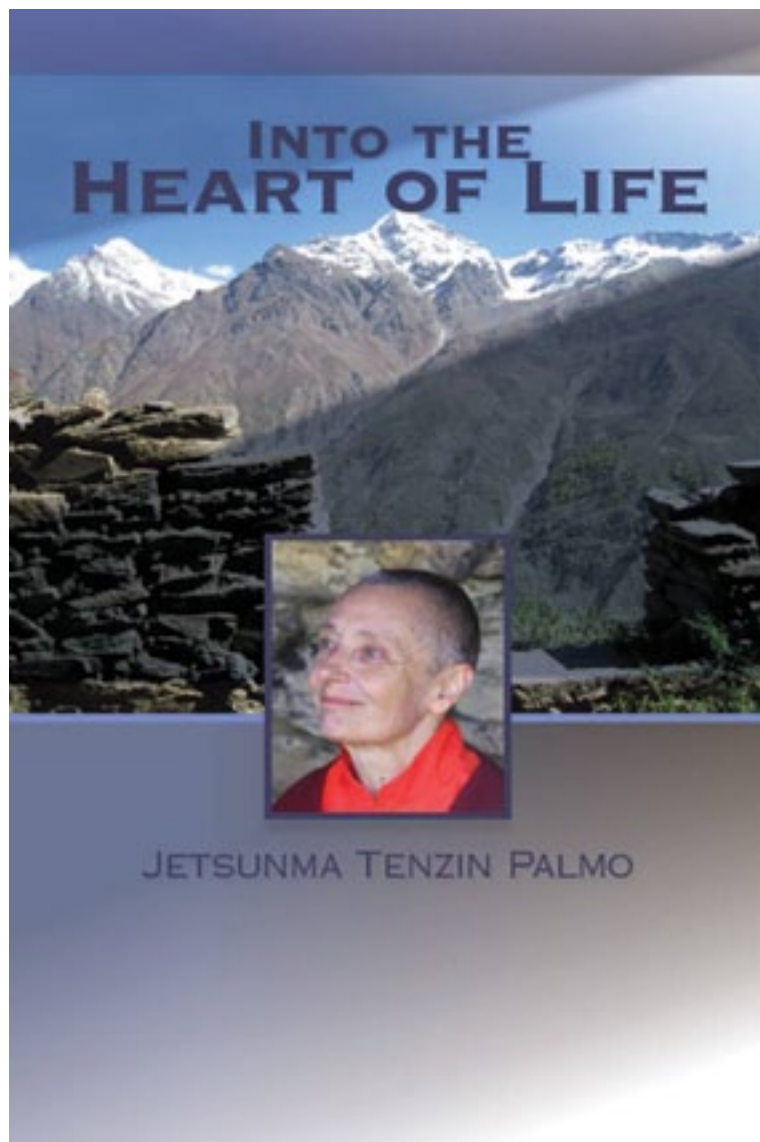
Cheques should be made payable to 'Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust' and posted to:

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery  
Village Lower Mutt, P.O. Padhiarkhar, Via Taragarh  
Distt. Kangra, H.P. 176081, India

Anyone wishing to make a donation to DGL Nunnery via Tenzin Palmo's account in their own country by Swift or Telegraphic Transfer, please email Eliz Dowling for details on [eliz\\_palmo@hotmail.com](mailto:eliz_palmo@hotmail.com)

For further information or to contact Tenzin Palmo please email DGL on [dgloffice@gatsal.org](mailto:dgloffice@gatsal.org)  
Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust is registered in India as a charitable organization designated for the support of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery and its activities.

# INTO THE HEART OF LIFE and the new CHOD Chanting by DGL Nuns



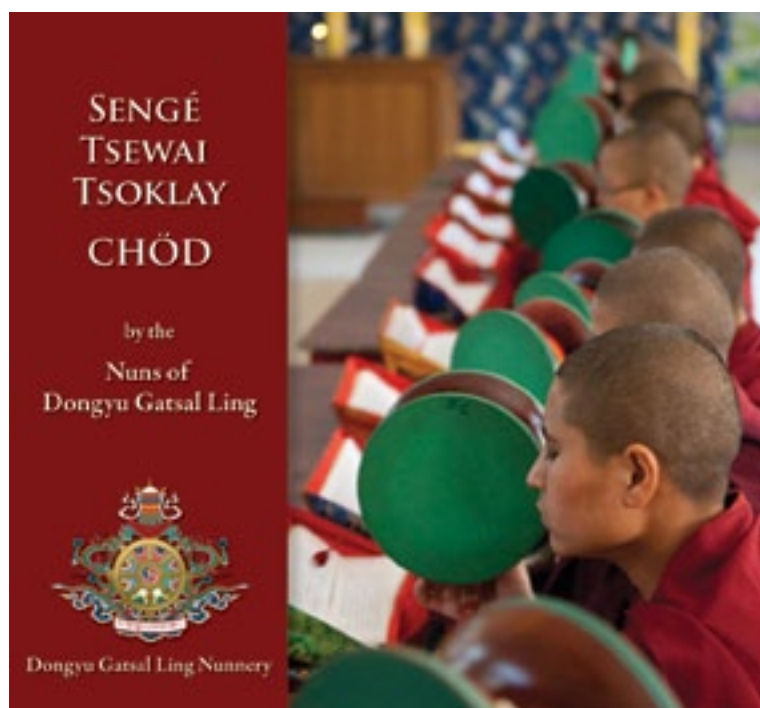
*Into the Heart of Life* is now available on the DGL website under 'shop'.

Foreword by His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa and recently published by Snow Lion in the U.S. and Allen & Unwin in Australia, *Into the Heart of Life* is a collection of Jetsunma's teachings gleaned from more than 40 years of engagement with Buddhist practice presenting practical advice for Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. With warmth and wisdom Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo shows how we can enhance the quality of our lives and develop more sanity, fulfillment and compassion.

As Jetsunma says in her Preface, 'This book comprises some of the talks that I have delivered over the years to audiences in the East and West who are united in the common challenge to make something meaningful of their lives .... This is not a book about esoteric practices or advanced methods of meditation. The contents of this book deal with ordinary practitioners concerned with translating Dharma instructions into an ongoing life experience.'

"One of the true yoginis of our time, a woman who has dedicated her life to Buddhism...Tenzin Palmo's is a voice we need to hear, a woman who has fully experienced what she speaks about with an absolute honesty, delightful humor, and real insight."—Tsultrim Allione, author of *Feeding Your Demons*

"Tenzin Palmo is one of the most genuine and accomplished of Western practitioners."—Jack Kornfield, author of *The Wise Heart*



**Sengé Tsewai Tsoklay CHÖD** by the Nuns of DGL Nunnery

This is a recording of the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery performing the Chöd ritual called The Lion's Play.

The practice of Chöd or "Cutting Through the Ego" was propagated in Tibet during the 11th century by the yogini Machig Labdron and is basically a spiritual practice based on the Prajñāparamita or Perfection of Wisdom sutras. It combines specific tantric visualisation with melodious chanting to the beat of the Chöd drums.

The nuns of DGL perform a short Chöd ritual every evening following their pujas to the main Protectors. On the full moon of each month they carry out this longer Chöd rite.

[www.tenzinpalmo.com/shop](http://www.tenzinpalmo.com/shop)



**BY AIRMAIL**

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