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# GATSAL



# Dear friends,

Nowadays the monsoon rains have finally departed after several months of downpour and the landscape is looking green and refreshed. The construction workers are busy laying the stones for the Temple courtyard and the various pathways around the nunnery. We also have a team of decorators repainting all the DGL buildings so now we will soon be looking clean and fresh and hopefully will stay that way until the official Inauguration in late 2013.

In May 2012 I spent about 3 weeks in Bhutan accompanied by Dr Tashi Zangmo, president & founder of the Bhutanese Nuns Project, along with my Singaporean friends Ani Trinley Palmo and Yeo May Ling. We visited as many nunneries as possible as far east as Trashigang in order to look into the present day conditions and opportunities for nuns. Everywhere we were met with open friendliness and took the occasion to talk with the teachers and senior nuns in the various nunneries. We were encouraged to see that in recent years the situation for nuns has greatly improved with new buildings and educational programs being set up along with long term retreat facilities. We were fortunate to have meetings with His Holiness the Je Khenpo (head Lama of Bhutan), Her Majesty Tsering Yangdon Wangchuk and the Prime Minister - all of whom were optimistic and are working to elevate the status and opportunities for nuns in their country.

Meanwhile in DGL the nuns took their exams at the end of May and then had a break until their annual 2 month retreat started in July. In September the new academic year commenced with the two

nun Genlas from Namdroling and Dolma Ling continuing with their teaching schedule.

In July I was again travelling - this time to Singapore-Malaysia-Hong Kong and Taiwan - at the invitation of the various Drukpa centres in those countries. Everywhere we met with friendliness and an enthusiasm for Dharma practice. I had not been back to Hong Kong and Taiwan for several years so it was lovely to meet with old friends again. The whole tour was well organised and smooth running and I thank all those wonderful people who helped to make this visit so successful.

Recently His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa, head of our Drukpa Kagyu lineage, kindly invited some of our nuns to participate in a one month Padyatra (walking pilgrimage) in Sri Lanka during the winter. It is estimated that about 700 people will join this walk including several hundred nuns. As it happens, seven of our graduating nuns were this year due to go on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred sites in India such as Bodhgaya. So given the choice they unanimously agreed to join the Gyalwang Drukpa's pilgrimage which will be an unforgettable experience in their lives. The President of Sri Lanka has requested that the Padyatra proceeds from south to north as a Peace Walk dedicated towards bringing harmony in this uneasy region.

In September we welcomed Ouyporn Khuankaew and Varaporn (pictured below) from Thailand who came especially to conduct a 5 day Empowerment Workshop for 24 of our senior nuns. The nuns enjoyed this opportunity to learn new ideas and ways of listening and interacting. We hope that they will share their experiences with the other nuns and that Ouyporn and associates will return next year to carry on their good work.



In late October the DGL nuns and staff attended the 3 day empowerment and teachings on Chöd given by His Holiness the Gyalwang Karmapa Orgyen Trinley Dorje at Jangchub Jong, the hilltop monastery of His Eminence Dorzong Rinpoche. Since the DGL nuns perform a short chöd ritual every evening and a 3 hour chöd

puja once a month, it was important for them to receive this empowerment so we are grateful for this auspicious opportunity. Our next newsletter will have a full report on this wonderful event.

Once again we thank all our many friends and well-wishers around the world for all their encouragement and support in helping us to realise our dream of the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery.

Love and peace,

*Tenzin Palmo*



L to R Samten Tsomo, Sonam Dechen and Sonam Dolma

# ABOUT US

My name is Sonam Dolma. I am fifteen years old. My village is Darjeeling. I became a nun 2011. I have six brothers and one sister. My sister is also a nun in Nepal. I like to become a nun therefore I become a nun. Now I am very happy in nun life. All of my family members are very happy too. I try not to think about my family but I miss them. I do good practice in Dharma and I want to become a teacher. If I don't become a teacher then I do work in my nunnery, DGL.

My name is Sonam Dechen. I am 17 years old. I come from Kinnaur. There are six members in my family. They are at the village. I have one sister and one brother. My sister is 19 years and my brother is 14 years old. I am fine here. I come live in this nunnery in 2010. There are

66 Buddhist nuns living in the DGL nunnery. They are from different Himalayan regions. We all live here like a close-knit family. We always help one another. There is big playground here where all the nuns play different games. There are beautiful flowers growing all over the nunnery. There is a library with lots of books to help us learn. We have very good teachers who teach us different subjects and we enjoy studying under them. There is no fear of any kind here. Ven Jetsunma has set up a beautiful nunnery to help us grow, we are very grateful to her. I have only spent 2 ½ years here and this short stay has made a big difference in my life, thanks to Jetsunma and all the teachers here. I wish the DGL nunnery every success.



We have a few dogs living in the nunnery. They are very friendly with all of us. Recently, one dog hurt his leg very badly; we think that it was run over by a car.

The dog was in great pain and I offered to go to the vet's hospital with him. The vets operated on the dog – he had lots of stitches and a broken leg. I watched the vets very closely and learned how to change his

bandages. We took him there every day but the wound got worse. They said his leg would need to be amputated but he got better with antibiotics and cleaning the wound.

I was assigned the job of taking him to the hospital whenever it was needed. Ani Tenzin Chokyi and Ani Kunsang Lhamo also came, along with other nuns too.

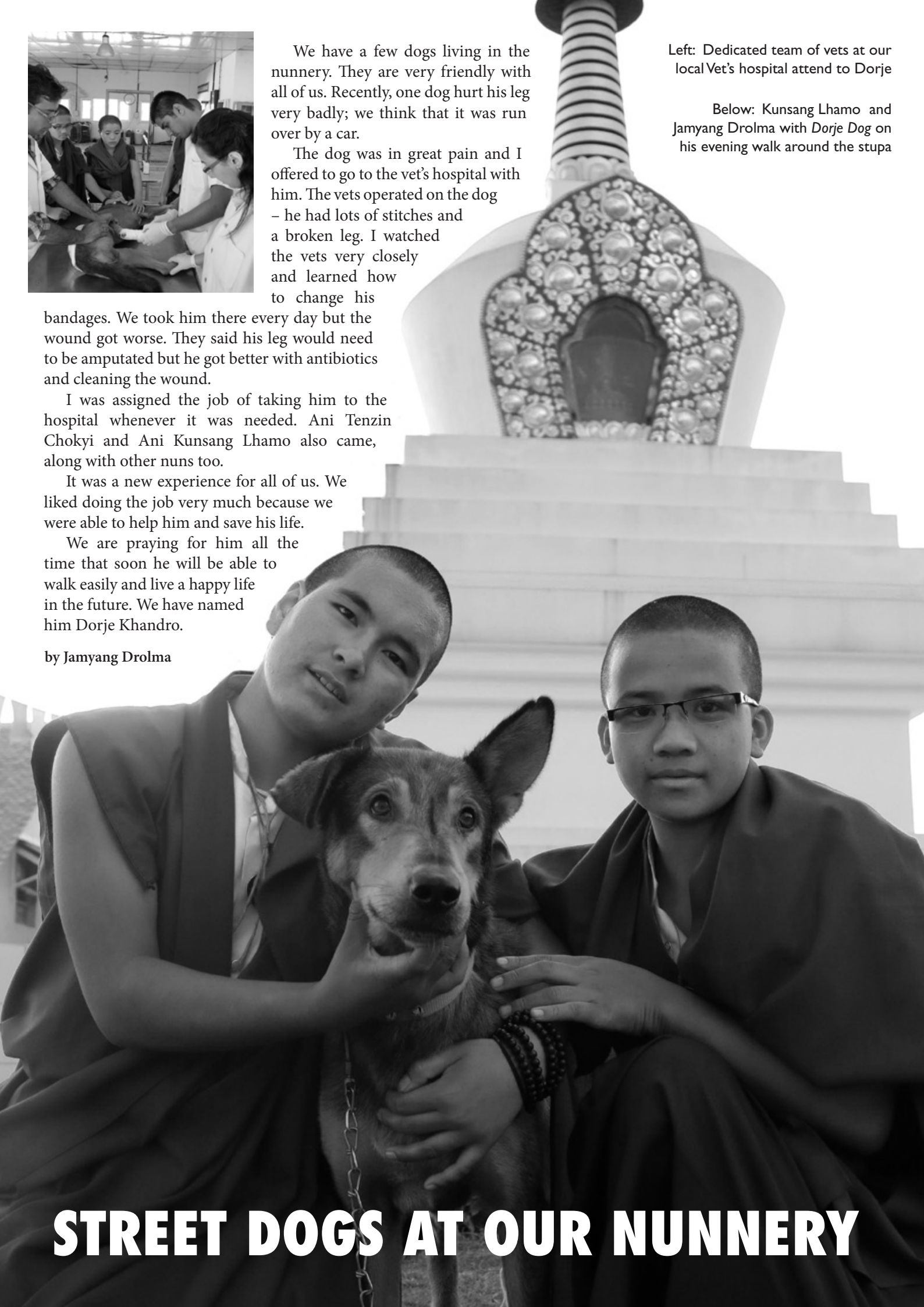
It was a new experience for all of us. We liked doing the job very much because we were able to help him and save his life.

We are praying for him all the time that soon he will be able to walk easily and live a happy life in the future. We have named him Dorje Khandro.

by Jamyang Drolma

Left: Dedicated team of vets at our local Vet's hospital attend to Dorje

Below: Kunsang Lhamo and Jamyang Drolma with Dorje Dog on his evening walk around the stupa



# STREET DOGS AT OUR NUNNERY

# THREE MONTHS INTENSIVE TRANSLATION PROGRAM

by Ani Tsultrim Palmo



Ani Tsultrim Palmo (to right of Jetsunma) with her translation program classmates

I had a golden opportunity to join the course organized by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala.

It started on 2nd July and there were 26 students participant in it, there were seven monks, two nuns and the rest of them were lay people. Most of them were highly educated and they were willing to share their knowledge with those who wish to improve upon their weaknesses. Every day we have four classes: Translation class, English, Tibetan language and Dharma classes, except for Sundays and the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month. We started our classes at 9am and finished at 5pm.

All the teachers were very kind and they taught us with love. They have skillful method to teach us. They worked very hard to teach how we students will

improve our knowledge.

I felt very happy to get that chance because I got a lot of very important ideas when we do translation and I got some experience in different skills.

I am very grateful to Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo for supporting me. If she didn't let me go there I would have missed that wonderful chance. I also say thanks with my deepest heart to Gen la Tenzin Kunsel, here at DGL, who inspired me to take that opportunity. We have finished our course 30th of September.

Lastly, I pray that everyone will get this chance that wants to learn to be a better translator.

*Ani Tsultrim Palmo translates for Jetsunma at DGL nunnery and is a well respected teacher for the younger nuns.*

My favourite part of the workshop was playing games in a group, which tells us about co-operation. I want to teach the little nuns at our annual picnic.

# NUNS EMPOWERMENT

*“We were asleep, now we are awake and we must wake up the others.”*

After the second Saturday holiday in September the empowerment workshop started. We had two teachers and one translator and one photographer. The teachers names were Ouyporn and Varaporn, the translator's names was Tenzin Khando – she is a layperson studying in a nunnery near Dharamsala. The teachers were from Thailand. Twenty-four nuns joined this workshop. This was the first time that we had this at our nunnery. Some nuns and Ouyporn told the story of their past and one nun spoke of her long

sad story. Some nuns were weeping because their stories were very sad.

I felt happy to join the workshop because I got so many knowledge there. They said that all women have the power whatever they want to do but they think we can't do anything and they discourage themselves. Every one have inner power but some can out and some can not!

I got an experience that if any women get an opportunity to do study they have the power to do it. I pray that all women get this power sharing chance and lead the

women who don't have courage they will show how to increase it.

We learned about bodhichitta mind, deep listening, mindfulness and power: Power over is not good to use in community, power sharing is important and requires deep listening and big responsibility. By deep listening we increase empower in us as well as in our friends too. We would listen with very carefully by not ignoring them. We'll have good ideas to help them with their problems. The person who is speaking us will have some courage and talk





# MENT WORKSHOP

*ther nuns who did not have the chance to attend this workshop.”*

without hesitate, so it is very important for us to listen and good for them too. When we practicing deep listening we develop our mind for bodhichitta mind. It means we are mindful, it is good for practice in our classes with friends, sharing our feelings, with teachers, Lamas, Rinpoches and talking with dharma sisters.

In group games we used power sharing, deep listening and wisdom to try and all win together. Group planning work is very useful for in a community. If there is any work that we cant solve by one person

that way if we work with a group and share new plans for each other. We can do it easily either that was so difficult at first. Deep breathing is also very good for those who cannot put their mind in one point and them who are new that how to do meditation. It is easier than normal breathing for concentrate our mind. When we have to talk in front of people it help us if we take some deep breathing before we talk or have to do some new things.

My favourite part of the workshop was playing games in

a group, which tells us about co-operation. I want to teach the little nuns at our annual picnic.

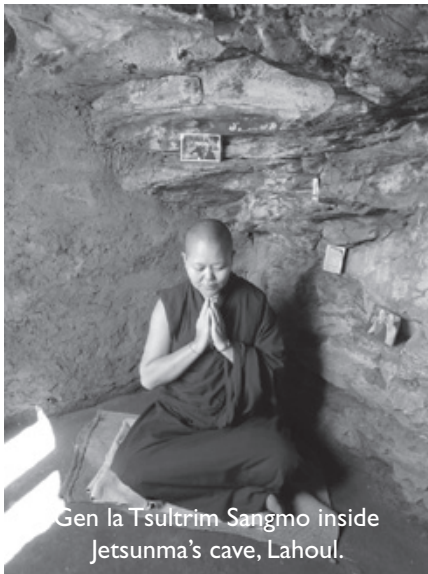
The teachers promised that they will come back here next year. We hope that they can come here for long time and teach all of our nuns. We are very happy that we had this good opportunity to join this workshop and we are going to teach the other nuns what we learned.

*This article is a compilation of many of the nuns feedback from the workshop.*



Each nun gave a speech about the benefit of the workshop and how we will use power sharing.

# OUR RESPECTED GEN-LAS



Gen la Tsultrim Sangmo inside Jetsunma's cave, Lahoul.



Gen la Tenzin Kunsel and Gen la Tsultrim Sangmo



Jetsunma's cave, Lahoul.

My name is Tsultrim Sangmo and I am a teacher at DGL nunnery.

I came from Tibet in 1997. I was born in small village. My mother's name was Choedon and my father's name is Namsel. They have eight children. I am their first child, that's why I became a nun. My father take care of us very well but I left them when I was thirteen years old to enter my root Lama's monastery without any friend. When I was eighteen years old my father found me and took me home. I made him little bit difficult to keep me with him. After two months I left them to return to monastery. I studied in Tso Gyal Shedrub Ling which founded by HH Penor Rinpoche. When I finished my studies I joined here last year. It is my first job. I felt this nunnery is little bit same my own nunnery in Tibet. That's why I am very happy to stay here.

I went to Lahoul for summer vacation this June with another nun from here. I saw cave of Jetsunma. It is very quiet, cold place and situated in very high place. I heard that she stayed there 12 years but I only stayed there one night. That's why I thought that how she used her long time there. It showed us she is courageous nun in the world.

Now I teach new class continuously. Lastly, I wish that Jetsunma success with her job and I also hope that she have been working continuously in DGL nunnery.

My name is Tenzin Kunsel. I am a debate teacher at DGL nunnery since last January. I came from Tibet to see H.H. the Dalai Lama and to study Buddhist Dharma. I studied at Dolma Ling nunnery for thirteen years and seven years in South India. I like to do debate very much. I also got very good chance to learn English in British Council in Delhi for only four months last year with my friends. But I am not confident speaking English and still a bit nervous to write about myself.

I went to Tibet last June for my summer vacation without any friend. I was very happy to meet my family, relatives and old friends in there. I wore lay people's clothes because it is a little bit comfortable to see by Chinese police or army. I never got any obstacle on the way and where I went but I was afraid of

China's police or army in my heart because some of them stay near my younger sister's house with gun. I stayed there only for two months. I returned the end of August in DGL nunnery. My family was crying when I left them in Lhasa.

I have seen Jetsunma first time in Delhi. During that time she made me happy and she looked like courageous Western nun. After that I joined her nunnery. I enjoy my

job very much because I have learnt many things from Jetsunma and all her staff's valuable experience. I felt I became an adult just now because I take care of young nuns.

Lastly, I wish that Jetsunma success with her valuable job without any obstacles on the way and long and long live Jetsunma for us and your nuns please. I always support your aim.



Gen la Tenzin Kunsel with her family in Tibet





# NUNNERY SHOP HAS OPENED

A small shop has been opened inside the DGL nunnery. There was no shop earlier here. When some nuns requested Ven Jetsunma for opening a small shop here she immediately agreed. And the same was opened this year. The nuns had to walk a long distance to buy today's necessities. It was very hard for them. The shop, which has been started here, is not very big. Now all of us can buy bathing and washing soaps, toothpastes, toothbrushes, notebooks, pens etc. It is really a great facility for all the nuns here. We are getting quality products at reasonable cost. During the summer season when we feel like something cold to drink and eat it is readily available in this shop. Ven Jetsunma has provided a

refrigerator in which cold drinks bottles and ice-cream cups (made here at the nunnery) etc are kept. As I am looking after this shop I am responsible to stuff it with all the necessities, which are in great demand here. I am determined to expand the scope of this shop so that all the nuns here get practically everything they need while staying here. To make all the nuns happy and satisfied is my aim in running this shop. I am working hard to achieve my goal.

*We are keen to introduce more eco-friendly products in the nunnery shop, to help reduce packaging, use of plastic and so on. We are also checking out recipes for making healthy sweet treats.*

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

We welcome your ideas on how to develop an eco-friendly, nutritionally balanced shop. Suggestions for resources, perhaps ideas from school shops; recommendations for posters and other tools to promote education on healthy eating; recipes for healthy snacks and so on are all welcome. Just send your ideas, attention Shop Keeper to: [assistant@gatsal.org](mailto:assistant@gatsal.org)



## Our Heartfelt Thanks

To all of you who responded to our request for books for our library we would like to say a big thank you. Our library is looking very nice indeed we will offer you an update on library activities in a future newsletter.

## How You Can Help

We are always on the look out for useful training tools here at the nunnery and we would welcome any recommendations you may have on available resources, in such areas as:

- Computer software in basic maths/ English language, Accounting and Science.
- Films and documentaries that portray positive images of women, inspiring people and projects.
- Online resources/books/ DVDs on environmental education.

The nuns are all learning English, some of the senior nuns have more advanced English but for all of the resources we are seeking ones that use simple English and have good visuals.

You can email your ideas include links to online resources where possible to: [assistant@gatsal.org](mailto:assistant@gatsal.org) and please mark the subject field "Suggested Resources".

## SAVING ON PAPER

Our newsletter is available in electronic format. If you would prefer to receive this rather than our printed version please let us know. Email our office at [dgloffice@gatsal.org](mailto:dgloffice@gatsal.org) and please mark the subject field "please send electronic newsletter". Please include your name and postal address as it appears on your newsletter so we can match you with our records.

## 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.

Sponsorship of a nun here costs \$365 per year.

Credit card and electronic bank transfers can be made online by visiting our website [www.tenzinpalmo.com](http://www.tenzinpalmo.com)

Cheques can be made payable to *Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust* and posted to:

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery  
Village Lower Mutt  
PO Padhiarkhar, Via Taragarh  
Distt. Kangra HP 176081 India

US Donors can make their donations tax deductible by making them via Dongyu Gatsal Ling Initiatives, a U.S. not-for-profit organisation.

Kindly go to [www.dglinitiatives.org](http://www.dglinitiatives.org) or email [info@dglinitiatives.org](mailto:info@dglinitiatives.org) for further information.

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Trust is registered in India as a Charitable organisation designated for the support of Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery and its activities.



Work continues here with our loyal team of workers busy paving the courtyard around our nunnery





**BY AIRMAIL**

**To:**

**From:**

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