

DR. KARAN SINGH
PATRON

H.E KHAMTRUL RINPOCHE IX
SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

DR. BHUPENDRA KUMAR MODI
PATRON



GATSAL



Front cover: H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche at DGL Temple Consecration. **Above:** Jetsunma with nuns after Guru Rinpoche puja.

Dear friends,

This edition of our Gatsal Newsletter is full of the recent activities at our Nunnery culminating in 3 days of celebrations for our Temple consecration which also commemorated the completion (almost) of the Nunnery buildings.

Last October 2012 all our nuns and staff went to Jangchub Jong - the monastic settlement of Kyabje Dorzong Rinpoche - for 3 days of empowerments and teachings on Chöd bestowed by His Holiness the Gyalwang Karmapa. It was a very joyful and inspiring occasion in this perfect setting and was especially meaningful for our nuns since they perform a short Chöd ritual every evening and a 4 hour Chöd puja each full-moon day.

In January my assistant Ani Aileen

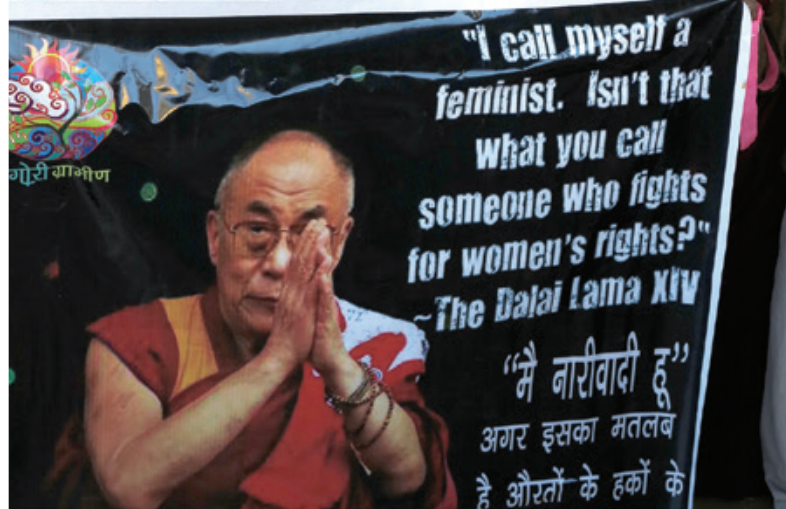
and I went to Vaishali in Bihar to attend the International Sakyadhita conference being held this time at the place where Maha Prajapati - who was the Lord Buddha's aunt and stepmother - became the first Buddhist nun. The Vietnamese Nunnery in Vaishali went to great trouble to create a charming setting for this gathering - despite the cold weather. Sakyadhita (Daughters of the Buddha) is an important women's organisation that brings together female scholars and practitioners from around the world to meet and discuss topics of interest to Buddhist women.

Also in January five of our senior nuns went to His Holiness the Gyalwang Drukpa's Nunnery in Nepal to learn the sacred art of Khandro Cham - Dakini Dancing - with the intention of bringing back what they had learned and teaching suitable nuns here at DGL. HH the Gyalwang Drukpa kindly covered all their

expenses and provided ten of the elaborate costumes needed for these dances.

During February all our nuns took part in the International campaign called "One Billion Rising" to raise awareness about violence towards women. We held a local march, joined enthusiastically by our on-site workers both women and men. Later a busload of our senior nuns travelled to Dharamsala to take part in an evening candlelight March to the main Temple. By this time the nuns were well-practised in their Hindi campaign song and were the defining voice of the March!

Our second graduating class of 6 nuns travelled to Sri Lanka in March, again sponsored by HH the Gyalwang Drukpa, to join 400 others (mostly nuns) on a Walking Pilgrimage, known as a Padyatra. The walk covered over 500 kilometres and was a Peace walk from south to north, visiting many Pilgrimage places along the way. It was a very



Top left: Gyalwang Karmapa bestowing Chöd empowerment.

memorable trip for everybody.

Nowadays our nuns are also practising their typing skills and the senior nuns are receiving computer instruction from an IT couple named Anu and Ravi who have been wonderful in teaching the nuns so that they can gradually take over more of the tasks involved in running this Nunnery.

Also in March 2013 the Khampagar Monastery at Tashi Jong held their annual Guru Padmasambhava Cham or Lama Dances for 3 days. This year was especially auspicious as it commemorated the 300th anniversary of the 3rd Khamtrul Rinpoche's vision of Guru Rinpoche and his Eight Emanations on which the dances are based. This year our nuns were requested to join the monks in their chanting rituals inside the newly rebuilt shrine room [Kunga Rawa] at Tashi Jong. This must be the first time that such an invitation has been offered

to nuns in the history of Khampagar!

Shortly afterwards Kyabje Dorzong Rinpoche assisted by 9 senior monks of the Khampagar Monastery offered Getsul ordination to 19 of our nuns. They were very happy to receive these vows and now all but the smallest nuns have this novice ordination.

The main event of the Nunnery has been the consecration of our main Temple on 18th April officiated by Kyabje Khamtrul Rinpoche with Kyabje Dorzong Rinpoche, Kyabje Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche and other Lamas and monks including five togdens from Khampagar Monastery and the monks of Jangchub Jong Monastery. Our nuns displayed their confidence in ritual by enacting the roles of chant leader, sacristan and musicians while the monks joined in the chanting which lasted throughout the day.

The next day was the Celebration

attended by almost 1000 guests - monks, nuns, officials and friends from around this region. Speeches were given and after lunch the nuns gave performances of which they have written their own accounts within.

I feel that this entire project has been in the hands of Arya Tara and fulfils the wishes of my root Lama Khamtrul Dongyu Nyima. How much gratitude we have to all those who have made Dongyu Gatsal Ling a reality through their generous offering of service and support throughout the years.

Now Dongyu Gatsal Ling is no longer a dream but a reality that we pray will realise the intentions of the Three Jewels and all our precious Lamas. Thank you.

May you all be well and happy,

Tenzin Palmo

TEMPLE CONSECRATI

The following are a compilation of accounts written by various nuns.

How lucky we are! It has taken some years to build our temple and finally the opportunity came for consecration by His Eminence Khamtrul Rinpoche with H.E Dorzong Rinpoche, H.E Choegyal Rinpoche and some other tulkus. All nuns were very busy up to this day and everyone very excited. The Temple has been very nicely painted from inside and outside. It had also been beautifully decorated. On the morning of April 18th we were ready to welcome H.E. the 9th Khamtrul Rinpoche, Shedrup Nyima, the Spiritual Director of our nunnery.



All the nuns were wearing ceremonial dress for the occasion and playing cymbals and trumpets. He was given a very warm welcome and we escorted him to the Temple where he cut the ribbon and did some auspicious prayers outside the new Temple's door and then we all went inside together. Later Jetsunma and nuns offered mandala to our guru for Long Life. Then we offered sweet rice to Rinpoche and all the others.



After these offerings we started our Vajrasattva Puja. We were very happy to join the puja because this is first time to celebrate puja with our root guru in our nunnery. We tried to lead our puja to the best of our ability. Ani Jigme Chodron was the Umze – chant leader – she did very well. It was her first time to lead chants with monks. Although she was feeling shy on this day, her voice was steady when we do the puja.



Now the 3 statues in the Temple are blessed. We were very happy that from now on the temple was blessed by great Rinpoches, Tulkus, Togdens and Khenpos. It was a star Puja! I love my temple. All the Rinpoches, Tulkus and Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo were highly pleased with our performance.



Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dorzong Rinpoche, Chogyal Rinpoche and some of the Togdens stayed overnight in our temple. We were so lucky that they accepted our request.

ON & CELEBRATIONS



I was the chanting leader (Umze) at that time. I felt so worry of that and I thought how is it going to happen. Because I never done before. It was my first time to be Umze with my root guru and monks. At first I was little bit nervous. Suddenly I thought I am very lucky because I got a very good opportunity to do Puja with my guru. When I thought this I felt very happy and comfortable. Therefore my voice was stronger than before.

Jigme Chodron

Next day on the 19th April there was a celebration of the Consecration. Nearly 1000 people had been invited and sitting arrangement had been made for all, with the Rinpoches and VIPS sitting on the porch outside the huge doors of the temple and the rest down below on chairs kept in row. We were honoured that Kalon Pema Chinjor (Minister for Religion & Culture) and Rinchen Khandro Choegyial (Director of Tibetan Nuns Project) were in attendance and gave speeches.



The celebration started with Ven Jetsunma's speech welcoming everyone. She thanked first our root guru and other people. She gave a brief history of DGL nunnery, explained what made her to set up the nunnery here, how she raised funds for building it, who all were involved in its construction and she explained how many difficulties to build our nunnery together with the nunnery aims and objectives. She was loudly cheered by the audience when she finished her speech.

Both Rinchen Khandro and Kalon Pema Chinjor spoke

about how much knowledge is useful to our life. Then H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche gave his long speech. He spoke of Jetsunma's life story.

Finally, H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche was invited to deliver his speech and bless the people gathered in the courtyard. He said in his address how to go about the future plans of the DGL nunnery. He also gave some important pieces of advice to the nuns reminding us that it is important to not just study but to practice whatever we study. We need to train our minds. If we have lots of material things we do not get happiness but if we train our minds then we get inner happiness. He thanked Jetsunma for establishing this beautiful nunnery for the benefit of girls from the Himalayan region. We felt so happy listening to him. Whatever he said is so very useful for our present and future.

After the speeches, then it was time for lunch. At 1 30.pm all assembled once again in the courtyard. Then there was programme presented by the DGL nuns. The first item was the Dakini dance. The first dance was only five nuns. They are looking very nice because they are wearing the brocade Khandro-ma dress. The next dance was with 16 Dakini nuns. Everybody liked it.



TEMPLE CONSECRATI



The Rinpoches said that we looked like we had been doing this dance for a long time but we had just learned it and this was our first time doing it in public.
(see report on Trip to Nepal on page 8)

The nuns also performed a very funny play where they were trying to get the attention of a nun who had gone into Samadhi. Everybody laughed a lot.



After thinking a lot, I decided to learn the Dakini dance. Many nuns volunteered but only 13 were chosen. First I worried, then I thought I will offer this dance to my guru. Very calm I was very happy to my lamas and everyone. This was my first time to show the Dakini Dance. I am so grateful to offer the Dakini dance to my Root Guru, Jetsunma and all the people who came to see. I was so happy of that.

Samten Chodron

Then there was a short play by the nuns relating to the Buddha's life and his Step Mother, Mahaprajapati, the first ordained nun of the sangha. It was quite a moving performance.



ON & CELEBRATIONS

This was followed by a scene about the Buddha. The Rinpoches and everybody stood when the Buddha walked in. It was very special. Our Gen la, Tsultrim Zangmo, who guided us with these plays made a special hat of black beads for the Buddha's hair. She asked many tailors, they could not help. So she made one herself, it took her a long time to do.



Then there was an exciting philosophical debate. Our debate teacher is Gen Ngawang Losal from Khampagar Monastery

Finally the function came to an end and all the visitors were invited for tea on the other side of the temple. They were all given packets of Tsog (blessed food offerings) for them.

All people enjoyed and it was very auspicious day. All nuns did very well and all peoples were very happy. All kind of programs which we made went very well. It was kind of our Genlas who helped us in every way.

After our program finish on the third day we have the special Puja of Guru Padmasambhava in our new Temple for all sentient beings. On that day it was only our nuns attending and after the puja we got blessing from Jetsunma and we have our photo taken with Jetsunma.



I played the role of the Buddha. I was happy to act as the Buddha. I was feeling so good. I felt as if the Buddha himself was helping me to behave and speak the way I did on that day.

Sherab Tsomo

I was scared at the beginning of the Buddha play but after some time I was fine. When I was saying the food prayer I did not even notice anything around me. I was feeling very light calm and happy. I was thinking only of the Buddha and even after the play was over I stayed in that very light feeling of being with the Buddha. I wanted to stay like that all the time.

Tsewang Chodron



Dakini Dancing at Druk Amitabha in Nepal

We five nuns went to Druk Amitabha Mountain to learn Dakini dances on 19th December. We were there for 20 days. They taught us very happily and nicely.

All the nuns were very welcoming. Our teachers, Gen-la Tenzin and Gen-la Yeshe did not behave like teachers, more like friends. Because it is our first time dancing ever I did not know how to do the hands, legs and body. They were very patient. Gen-la Tenzin is studying English in Delhi but she made time to come to Nepal so she

could teach us. For the first day it looked very difficult and I thought how am I going to learn it. So I practiced again and again and became even more interested to learn properly.



On New Year's Eve from 10pm we did a big Puja with H.H. the Gyalwang Drukpa, Rinpoches, Tulkus and all the nuns. There were many butter lamps and each nun took a lamp and circumambulated the Stupa while chanting.

After we learned the dance the Gyalwang Drukpa called us with the Gen-las to show him what we had learned. (see photo) We were scared and happy because it is lucky to have the chance to dance in front of him. He asked us not to forget the steps and to practice the dances in our nunnery. He offered ten brocade Dakini costumes clothes to our nunnery. That was very kind and so nice.

When they returned to DGL the nuns trained other DGL nuns in dancing skills. Within a short time they practice hard and were able to do it nicely. We were asked to give a performance at the Consecration ceremony. Though we had less time yet we practiced really very hard to put up a good show. At first as I was dancing I only concentrated on my steps, however after a minute or two I was hardly aware of others. I realized I had regained my confidence. I felt as if the Dakinis themselves were helping me in my various dance movements. I started to enjoy every moment of it. I was overjoyed later to learn that everyone present were delighted to see our performance even Khamtrul Rinpoche and H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche and H.E. Choegyal Rinpoche were very happy to see us dancing so well despite our little practice. I am sure if we get another chance to present the dance again we will do much better.

Kelsang Tsono



PAD YATRA IN SRI LANKA

It is a tradition of DGL Nunnery to send the graduating senior nuns once on a Pilgrimage to various religious sites within India. This year it was our turn. We were very lucky as we were chosen to go to Sri Lanka to join a Peace Pad Yatra which is leading by His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa.

His Holiness was invited by His Excellency Mahind Paypaksa, President of Sri Lanka, to undertake this sixth Pad Yatra, which was also the first to be held outside of India. From the beginning we were very happy and excited about this Pilgrimage. None of us had been outside the country and had not seen the ocean ever once.

From here at DGL we went to Delhi by bus, from Delhi we took the train to Chennai, from Chennai we went to Colombo by air. In Sri Lanka we were all given a very fine Reception Party. The Pad Yatra started on March 6th. We walked 15 kilometres every day. We went to many holy places there including Sri Pada, Kandy, Matale, Dambulla, Sigiriya, Polonnawuwa and Auradhapura. We went to Jaffna also.

We cooked our food ourselves. We were put in groups of ten nuns each. Each of us carried our own



bedding material. When we reached some good place we slept there by spreading our beddings on the floor. We would always get up four o'clock, did our Puja, then we would have our breakfast. After this we resumed our march. At 12 noon we cooked our lunch, listened to a Dharma teaching from H.H. Gyalwang Drukpa and after listening we were again on the road. Then we would stop for cooking our food for the night. Again we did our puja. We were hardly conscious of our passing time. The most amazing part of our Pad Yatra was ascending 12,000 steps to reach the top of a holy place called Adam's Peak. We also went in a boat to see Nagarjuna's place. It was very nice and well maintained.

H.H. the Gyalwang Drukpa presented a relic of the Buddha to the Sri Lankan Government on the last day of our stay.

It was first trip of going on a Pilgrimage with such a High Lama and big group of nuns, monks and other lay people. We were all together about four hundred from around the world. I enjoyed the whole Yatra. Sri Lankan people are very nice. They all are maximum Buddhists. They offered us water and biscuits, sweets and flowers on the way. They were very devoted to us.

It was very kind of Jetsunma to us. If she is not here we never get a chance like that in our life. We are very thankful for all the people who helped to us for that Pilgrimage.





GETSUL ORDINATION

Due to the kindness of H.E. Dorzong Rinpoche along with 9 senior monks from the Khampagar monastery during the month of March nineteen of our nuns received Getsulma

[novice] ordination here. There was a very joyful atmosphere amongst the nuns as they prepared for their respective ceremonies to take these vows.

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

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 or email 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.



ABOUT OURSELVES

My name is Kunsang Lhamo and my sister name called Kalden Chotso. I am eighteen years old and Kalden is sixteen. We are come from Nepal. We have three brothers and two sisters. Two are elder and one is younger. Our elder brother is a monk in Kathmandu monastery. Our elder sister was married. And we both are in D. G. L. Nunnery. Our father passed away at the age of 60. Our Mother is 50 years old. She is a good housewife.

She is very kind. She always helps others however she can do. Our mother loves us very much. She believes in Buddhism therefore she sent us here to practice Dharma. We always think that we studied very well and tell our mother what is meaning of Buddhism. She really loves them who teaching about Buddhism. We both are very happy here in D.G. L. nunnery. We both are very thankfully Jetsunma who take care us like our mother.

Above: Kalden Chotso and Kunsang Lhamo (left to right)

Back cover: Stained Glass Window in DGL Temple by Ani Thubten Jamyang, Yulokod Studio



BY AIRMAIL

To:

From:

Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery
VILLAGE LOWER MUTT
P.O. PADHIARKHAR, VIA TARAGARH
DISTRICT KANGRA (HP) 176081 - INDIA
dgloffice@gatsal.org

