

# GATSAL





Celebrating International Womens Day in Peru

*Dear friends,*

Once more the months flow by and the nuns are now busy revising for their end-of-term exams – walking or sitting with their noses in a book!

In August 2017 the nuns participated in a 10 days Goenka Vipassana retreat conducted by five charming lady instructors who had travelled by train from Pune in Maharashtra. This was the first time our nuns had sat such a retreat and they felt great benefit from so many hours of introspective meditation.

In October the nuns were invited to participate in the inauguration of the Temple at Bhuntar near Kullu. This is the monastery of Kyabgon Choegon Rinpoche who is a good friend of DGL. Many thousands of people attended this event, mainly from Kinnaur and Lahaul, and it was a very festive occasion. The nuns participated in the rituals along with the monks and performed their Dakini Dances in full costume before the large audience in front of the temple. One evening they also performed a 3 hours Chöd puja. Their attendance at this event was much appreciated.



Indigenous Faces of the World,  
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil

Then in November we had the privilege of hosting Dr B. Alan Wallace who conducted a one-week Shamatha retreat for our nuns in the Tibetan language! This was the first time that Alan had taught in Tibetan and the nuns were very pleased and practised diligently under his guidance.

Dr Wallace will return again at the end of this year to continue with the Vipassana section of this Dudjom Lingpa terma. The retreat was recorded and made available on the Meridien Trust website as a resource for other Tibetan speakers.

In December Yonge Mingyur Rinpoche again graciously visited DGL Nunnery and gave a talk on meditation to all the nuns as well as visiting the nuns in long-term retreat. He had given teachings at Sherab Ling which Tsunma Aileen and I attended.

Later that month I visited Pune for my annual talks. There is a growing interest in Buddhism among the Indian middle class and we have many dear friends in Pune and Mumbai. Then we travelled to Sankassa in Uttar Pradesh where the people claim to be descended from the original Shakya clan of the Buddha. There is a large ancient stupa in disrepair, that commemorates the place where traditionally Shakyamuni descended from Heaven after teaching Abhidharma to his mother for 3 months. The people there are sincerely trying to study and practise the Dharma to the best of their abilities in the face of many social problems.

Straight after this I travelled with



Jetsunma with our accountant Tenzin Lhakpa and her father Gonpo



With Cistercian Monks in Sao Paulo, Brazil

my friend May Ling to Myanmar on pilgrimage for 3 weeks. We visited many meditation centres and spoke with the Sayadaws or monk teachers to learn more about their techniques and facilities for practitioners. We also visited several nunneries and met with nun teachers also. Despite the current political situation, Burma is still alive with the Dharma and it is always a pleasure to be in a genuine Buddhist country.

In Singapore I met again with the bodhisattva Wangdrak Rinpoche who is the abbot of the yogini nunnery of Gebchak Gonpa. During one week we would go through a dzogchen text in the morning which was ably translated by Tsunma Chozom, and in the afternoon I was left to practice alone.

Losar or Tibetan New Year in February was again very quiet out of respect for the passing last year of Kyabje Dorzong Rinpoche. After Losar the nuns completed a 3 cycles of a Nyungney retreat. This is a purification practice of fasting,

prostrations and chanting based on the 1000-armed Chenresig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. A number of monks and lay people from Tashi Jong also participated.

At this time Tsunma Aileen and I departed for a tour of Latin America: Mexico, Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala,



Easter Religious Festival we attended in Guatemala

Chile, Brazil and Argentina. This part of the world is fascinating with its blend of traditional and modern culture. Everywhere we met with kindness and enjoyed the company of many good friends.

Meanwhile the nunnery has now introduced the teaching of maths

and science into the curriculum of the junior nuns. This is taught by a dedicated local team with innovative methods to make these subjects both interesting and relevant. A general education for young nuns and monks is nowadays being taught more and more in monasteries as an important addition to their traditional monastic training.

This year after Losar, Nunneries from India and Nepal came together to organise a Long-Life offering for His Holiness the Dalai Lama. DGL Nunnery also supported this and several of our nuns participated in the actual ceremony held in Dharamsala.

This year our senior class will be graduating from their 10 years' course in Buddhist philosophy, debating and Tibetan grammar. They will be given the title of Lopon. We are planning that they will continue with a 2 years' course in Tantric studies taught by a senior Khenpo from the Khampagar Monastic College in Tashi Jong.



Our chief gardener Sundar Lal



Suet Kun with Wangdrak Rinpoche

Meanwhile some of these senior nuns will continue in their present role as Genlas or teachers for the junior nuns.

This has also been a time of transition. Sundar Lal was a local man who was with us from the start of our building project in 2002 and eventually became our chief gardener. Last year he died of lung cancer and was deeply grieved by his family and many friends. The nuns all knew him well and offered prayers on his behalf. We were so grateful to him for his dedication to the growth of DGL.

Then in April this year our dear friend Ko Suet Kun in Singapore passed away, also from lung cancer, although she had never smoked. Suet Kun had also been with us from the start, working on our finances and website for many years, along with Eliz Dowling in Singapore. Suet Kun

always remained a good friend and is sadly missed by all who knew her. The nuns offered prayer dedications and 1000 butter lamps.

We also regret the sad passing of Gonpo, the dear father of our accountant Tenzin Lhakpa. Gonpo was a good and devoted man who died of cancer peacefully with some of our nuns reciting the Bardo text for several days at his bedside. The monks from Khampagar monastery recited pujas and our nuns also performed the requisite rituals for his safe transition.

In April 2018 Tsunma Aileen and I travelled to Delhi for the celebration of Buddha Jayanti which was organised by the Ministry of Culture. The event was held in a large stadium and representative monks and nuns from many monastic centres were invited to attend, with 7 nuns from DGL also

participating. The chief guest was the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who presented sets of robes to a selected group of monks and nuns. Thus, I became the owner of a full set of Theravadin monk's robes!

Next week Tsunma Aileen and I set off on our travels to Israel, the States and Australia....but that is another story for next time.

Thanks again to all our kind friends throughout the world whose support and encouragement are always deeply appreciated.

May all beings be happy and free of suffering.

In Dharma,

#### Jetsunma Teaching in Sao Paulo, Brazil



## ATTENDING HIS HOLINESS' TEACHINGS IN DHARAMSHALA

I went to Dharamshala for teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The teachings were on the Middle Way Practice in Meditation. I did not understand thoroughly but still I got knowledge about our daily practice and how to maintain our discipline. His Holiness spoke of how human beings are different in their conceptual level than the animals and told us that as Dharma practitioners our first aim must be liberation from samsara not only for ourselves but for all sentient beings. These teachings so benefit to my life.

Tsunma Ngawang Dolma Lhamo



## RETREATS AT THE NUNNERY



### Alan Wallace Shamatha Retreat

Attending Alan Wallace's Shamatha retreat was very helpful for me. When Jetsunma told us that he was coming to teach us in Tibetan language, I was very curious because I have never heard or seen a foreigner teaching in Tibetan language.

As the course started, he taught us how to do meditation in plain yet profound Tibetan language. I was really moved by the way he taught. It was exactly the type of explanation I was in need of.

When I first came to the nunnery and started to meditate every morning, I was faced with lots of difficulties. Sometimes, I dozed off and sometimes I was carried away by the conceptual thoughts. I didn't know the proper technique to bring back my mind to the present moment. I even thought that I would never be able to meditate in my life. But after attending Alan

Wallace's teaching, there is some rays of hope now. His style of teaching is superb. It really, really helped me a lot. I am very grateful to him.

Tsunma Tsewang Chodron  
(Bhutan)

*A group of the nuns sent me a card after the retreat:*

'Dear Jetsunma,

Thank you for inviting Alan Wallace to DGL to teach us zhinay meditation. We learned many things from him. Now we know how to focus our minds and that everything we do is a meditation. We know how to make our minds and bodies work together.

It was very easy to understand Alan Wallace's Tibetan. We enjoyed the stories he told. We know his teachings about zhinay are important for our lives. We thank you for giving us this opportunity.'

### Vipassana Retreat

I would like to pay my gratitude to the Teachers, for your great effort. I started my vipassana with great happiness and joy. Firstly, I felt like I can be able to do this but I started bravely for few days, then faced many problems but I kept patience and continued. What helped me to carry on the Vipassana is the night time teachings – these made things clear and encouraged me a lot. Ultimately, whatever the difficulties in this practice, I could assure myself that this is the only path to get liberation from aversion, craving and finally samsara.

The course touched my heart. I have studied Tibetan Buddhism for many years but until now I haven't found the way of practising into my daily life.



Mingyur Rinpoche visiting the Long Term Retreat Nuns



Mingyur Rinpoche with Jetsunma on his visit to the Nunnery



Kalon for Religion and Culture - Ven. Karma Gelek Yuthok visits DGL



Jetsunma examining the artwork from the nuns for Lhabab Duchen



Following Jetsunma's travels across the World



Lhabab Duchen classroom displays



Graduation Day



Graduation Day



Lhabab Duchen enacting the Descent of the Buddha



The nuns put on a wide variety of performances



Venerable Honu landscaping our gardens



Creating a bench from plastic bottles



# INAUGURATION OF CHOEGON RINPOCHE'S TEMPLE IN BHUNTAR

In late September we went to Dechen Choekhor Mahavihara in Bhuntar, the monastery of Choegon Rinpoche. Many people came from different places because there was a special inauguration of the temple. We welcomed Khamtrul Rinpoche with khatags, flowers and incense. The next day, our nuns did Dakini Dancing. I helped them put on their costumes. I was also helping to make meals for Khamtrul Rinpoche. First I felt, I can't do that job but I was very happy to have that opportunity. I felt that the merit I created previously helped me have this chance. Many people came from different places. I was very happy to meet with my brother and many of my villagers from Kinnaur.

**Tsunma Ngawang Mingyur**

We received the empowerment of the text of the Essence of the Supreme Jewels of Guru Padmasambhava by our main root Guru, Khamtrul Rinpoche. I felt it was very special because our root Guru is a manifestation of Guru Padmasambhava. I think that was a very extraordinary moment for me. That morning we wake up early in the morning and did puja of the same text, together with Khamtrul Rinpoche, Choegon Rinpoche and the rest of the

Tokdens, Khenpos, monks and nuns. Many lay people from different places like Kinnaur, Ladakh, Lahoul and Spiti, Tashi Jong and from around Kullu gathered for the empowerment.

**Tsunma Tenzin Chokyi**

When we first entered the ground to perform Dakini Dance, I felt a little bit nervous as there were so many Rinpoches and people there. After starting the performance, I felt relaxed. I thought, I will perform well, as it is a good opportunity to accumulate good merit. After the performance I felt very happy and satisfied. We were able to do the performance without mistake.

**Tsunma Samten Chodron**

On the second day, H.E. Choegon Rinpoche told us the history of Dongyu Palden Drukpa. He told the lay people, when you come to see the temple, do not only look at the temple, go to the Rinpoches and Khenpos and listen to the teachings of the Dharma.

**Tsunma Tsewang Chodron**

We arrived in Bhuntar before the ceremonies started. All nuns were cleaning the temple. I was amazed because we were given the monks'

rooms to stay in. They were happy to give them to us. [The monks stayed in tents]. Jetsunma was so happy and said thank you to their Khenpos.

**Tsunma Karma Chodron**

The nuns led a Chod Puja. When we started our Chod puja, the main temple doors had been closed. Choegon Rinpoche came to see our Chod puja. He opened the door so many people could come into the temple, so they were very happy.

On the final day, Khamtrul Rinpoche gave us an empowerment.

Many high lamas came from the Drukpa Kagyu Lineage and many monks and nuns came from different places. Then, two deities came from Kinnaur. I saw the deities for the first time. Also many people came from different places.

The monastery was very big and so quiet. I worried about our Dakini Dance, then I prayed to my root Guru to help me, then when I was performing, I did not feel afraid. Tsunma Jigme Chodron

My village deity had never been outside my village till now. It was the first time it went out. It was one of the biggest most wonderful surprises of my life. Usually my village deity doesn't like to go in a car, but this time he did.

**Tsunma Jangsem Dolma**





Khamtrul Rinpoche  
and H.E. Drukpa  
Choegyon Rinpoche  
with traditional  
Kinnauri hats



Dakini Dancing at  
Dechen Choekhor  
Mahvihara Inauguration



Dakini Dancing at  
Dechen Choekhor  
Mahvihara Inauguration



Damchoe Tsomo



Yeshe Tsomo

# ABOUT MYSELF

## 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.

We welcome your contribution to support our nuns and accept credit card, check/cheque, direct deposit or electronic bank transfer.

US residents are entitled to tax-deductible donations via Dongyu Gatsal Ling Initiatives, a US not-for-profit 501(c) (3) organisation.

Full details for all these methods of payments, including link for US donors wishing to make a tax deductible donation, can be found by visiting our website

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

on **Sponsor a Nun** page


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classmate  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Page \_\_\_\_\_

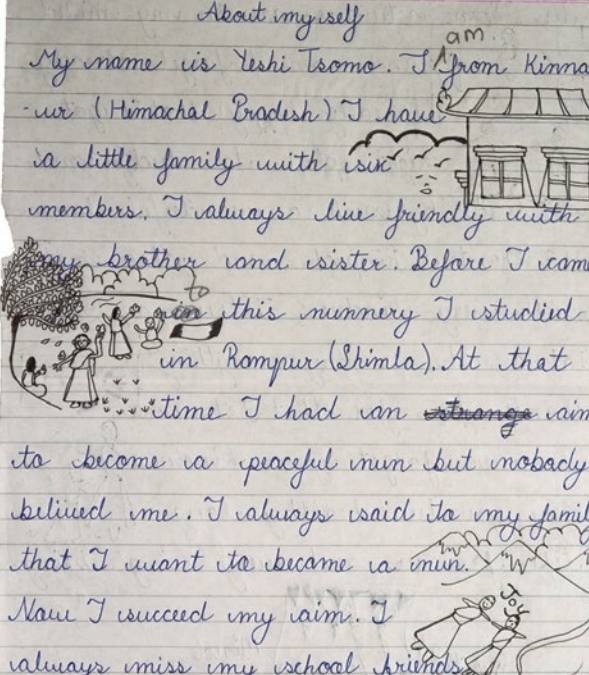
About my self  
My name is Dhamchoe Tsomo. I am from Arunachal Pradesh. I am 13 years old. I became a nun in 2015. My aim in life is to be a good nun. I am studying in 4<sup>th</sup> class. I like reading, story books, drawing and coloring. Before I was a nun I went to school till class 5. Here at nunnery my bigger sister is also with me. I have learn many things and I have known many things from my nunnery. I felt

classmate  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
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I am so lucker that I had got a chance to do Dharma study. I think only this much about my self.  
Thank you.

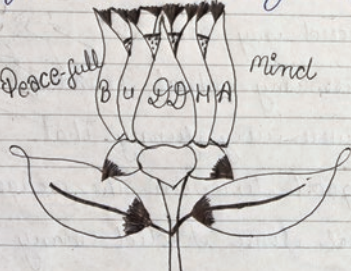


About myself  
My name is Yeshi Tsomo. I am from Kinnaur (Himachal Pradesh). I have a little family with six members. I always live friendly with my brother and sister. Before I came to this nunnery I studied in Kompur (Shimla). At that time I had an ~~strange~~ aim to become a peaceful nun but nobody believed me. I always said to my family that I want to become a nun. Now I succeed my aim. I always miss my school friends. They all were very funny. That was a good time in the school. In the school time I did many activities



Some activities are in my mind and some I forget already. I am really happy that I got a right place to study and benefited by such a wonderful lama H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche and also met with very kindness Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo. She is my everything. Thank you for that Jetsunma. I never forget your kindness. May you live healthy long life for us and every single being.

Peaceful mind  
BU DHMA





**BY AIRMAIL**

**To:**

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