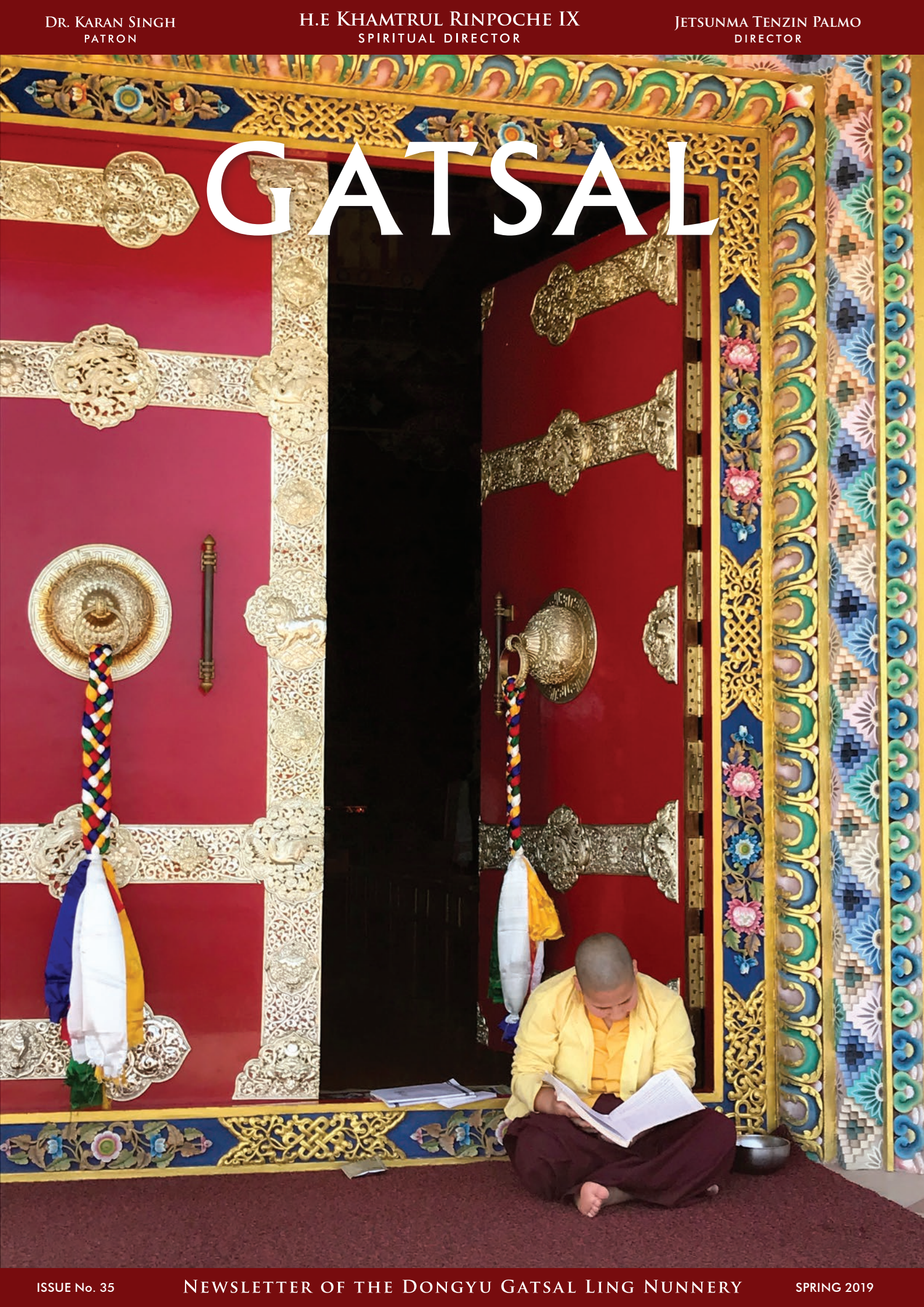


GATSAL





Anam Thubten Rinpoche

Jakusho Kwong Rinpoche

Dear friends,

Once more the months slip by and now it is again spring after a long cold winter. The nuns at DGL Nunnery continue to study and practise the Dharma and are settled into the monthly rituals throughout the year for the benefit of the world.

Last summer Tsunma Aileen and I travelled to California, New Mexico and Colorado where again we met with many friends and I gave talks at various centres and everything went very well. We especially appreciated the time we spent with friends travelling by car from New Mexico through Arizona to Tara Mandala in Colorado. Such amazing landscapes and a feeling of the deep indigenous culture.

In July after their annual exams and one month holiday, the senior nuns gathered with the monks of Khampagar Monastic College to receive the oral transmission, given by

Togden Thutop Nyima, of the collected works of the great Drukpa Kagyu scholar Kunkhyen Padma Karpo. This transmission lasted for one month.

logic and philosophy for more than 15 years. Kyabgon Khamtrul Rinpoche and the senior Khenpos attended this auspicious ceremony when Rinpoche handed the graduation certificates to these learned nuns. Now the nuns are continuing their studies with 2 years of Tantric studies on their way to becoming Khenmos or Professors.

In December Dr B. Alan Wallace again came to DGL and continued with his retreat teaching on the Vipashyana section of a Dudjom Lingpa terma called The Vajra Essence. The nuns deeply appreciate having such clear meditation instruction in Tibetan and we are very grateful to Alan for taking time out of his busy schedule to come here to teach the nuns.

Later in the month Aileen and I again left DGL and I went to Singapore for my one-week annual retreat with Wangdrak Rinpoche, abbot of Gebchak Nunnery in Tibet. As always it was a joy to be with him and I am



Ladies who taught Vipassana

In August the nuns again sat a 10 days Vipassana course led by the kind ladies from Pune. After this the nuns continued with their own retreat until the new academic term which started in early September.

In 2018 for the first time in DGL history 17 nuns graduated as Lopons or Acharyas (somewhat equivalent to an MA). Some nuns have been studying



Top, our Yogini Nuns from long-term Retreat Centre. Bottom, in Korea

Kanheri Monastery Caves near Mumbai

very grateful for all his help in practice.

Then Aileen and I travelled on to Korea where I gave some talks, especially under the auspices of Lama Ngawang Ludup, in order to raise funds for the sponsorship of nuns in Theravadin countries such as Thailand and Sri Lanka, and also the Himalayan regions, allowing them to attend the Sakyadhita conference. They cannot afford to travel without financial help.

At present I am the president of this international Buddhist women's association called Sakyadhita or Daughters of the Buddha. This non-sectarian organisation includes both monastics and lay women from all the various Buddhist traditions without any discrimination. We usually meet every two years in a different Buddhist country, but this time we are holding the Sakyadhita conference in the Blue Mountains north of Sydney in Australia in late June 2019.

After Korea we returned to India where I gave talks in Delhi, Mumbai and Pune and again met up with many dear friends. There is a growing interest in the Dharma among modern Indians who are rediscovering the

spiritual treasures of their greatest son, the Buddha.



Up the pole!
Nuns putting up prayer flags for losar

In January 2019 our long-term retreat nuns emerged for a break to have medical check-ups and meet with friends and family. Most of them have now completed nearly 10 years of retreat and they come out every 3 years for a short time. They have now returned to retreat again. Two of

these nuns – Yeshe Palmo and Pemba – returned to their nunnery in Nepal to act as retreat masters for the 3 year retreat being held at their Nunnery in Nepal. We were so sorry to see them leave but appreciate that they will be a great help and inspiration to their Dharma sisters in Nepal.

Losar or New Year was again quiet due to the sudden passing of a young and gentle tulku at Tashi Jong named Nubgon Choegyal Rinpoche who was only 28 years old and had just completed his academic studies. He died of cirrhosis of the liver following hepatitis C. So the second day of Losar was spent performing the rituals at his cremation and no one was in a mood for celebration.

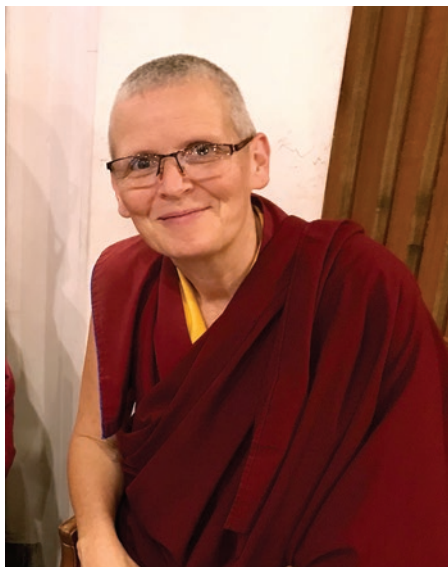
After Losar the nuns performed a week of Nyungné or fasting which is based on the practice of the thousand-armed Avalokiteshvara. This ritual was founded by a Kashmiri princess nun in the 10th century who had cured herself of leprosy through this practice. It includes visualisation, mantra recitation, prostrations and fasting. Many lay people from Tashi Jong also participated.



Top left, Sr Lucy Kurien of Maher Homes. Top right, Retreat Nuns with Khamtrul Rinpoche. Bottom left, in Mexico. Bottom right, Nuns performing Life of Buddha.

In March Kyabgon Tai Situ Rinpoche visited DGL. He is a well-known high Lama of the Karma Kagyu tradition and his monastery of Sherab Ling is about 40 minutes from DGL and can even be seen from here. The nuns welcomed him traditionally, wearing their yellow dharma robes and red hats and playing musical instruments to lead him to the temple. I have known Tai Situ Rinpoche for many years and he alluded to this connection in his enlightening talk on Mahamudra to the nuns. After lunch Rinpoche visited the long-term retreat nuns and gave them an encouraging talk. We are very grateful that Rinpoche came here to be with us all.

Early in March my long-time friend and assistant Tsunma Aileen Barry left us to continue with the next stage of her life back in Australia. Aileen has been at DGL for many years, dealing



Tsunma Aileen Barry

not only with administrative duties, but especially planning and organising the many Dharma tours that we have undertaken together. At all times she has been concerned for my well-

being and her warm personality has attracted many friends in numerous countries throughout the world. But impermanence and change are universal principles and now Aileen has moved on to new horizons and challenges where we trust that her Dharma knowledge and experience will sustain her and be much appreciated.

So our Nunnery goes on like a great Dharma ship sailing through the waves of samsara. Again sincere gratitude to all our many friends and supporters around the world. Thank you. Our nuns continue their prayers for the wellbeing of this beautiful but endangered planet.

With all good wishes in the Dharma,

Tenzin Palmo



LEARNING MATHS & SCIENCE

On March 16th 2019 a group of 25 of our younger nuns accompanied by their teacher, Genla Namzey, had an exciting educational outing to Aavishkaar.

Aavishkaar is a Center for Science, Arts and Technology whose mission is to make learning a fun and hands-on experience for all, irrespective of their social or economic background. The aim of the program is to shift the focus from teaching to learning. They encourage curiosity and creativity along with critical thinking and hope to spread the culture of science and scientific inquiry in schools and colleges both locally and across India.

The visit took place on the final day of Hamaari Kakshaa which was attended by teachers from all over Indian and included many teachers on 'Teach for India' leadership schemes. The focus of the day had been on quadratic equations in Math and the guest lecturer Dr. Rinku Dutta talked about the fascinating world of cells, the building blocks of life, and raised the curiosity by making everybody wonder about the origin of the first cell and existence of life.

Our nuns were welcomed to the campus in the second half of the day. They had a fascinating and fun time learning Maths and Science with the workshop participants.

The Aavishkaar teaching team have been visiting DGL for 2 years now working with our very enthusiastic younger nuns. They began with Maths classes and encouraged

creative thinking and enquiry through stimulating questioning and provision of hands-on tools and equipment to discover answers. In recent lessons they have been working on collecting and presenting information, looking first at what information is required; what are the right questions to ask for data collection; how to collect data; and then how to present it.

The Maths lessons were so popular and successful that we have added Science to the curriculum, working this term on understanding magnetism, its properties, and how we use it. The nuns were surprised to learn that the earth is one big magnet! And the compass always pointing North←→South caught everyone's attention.

The Aavishkaar team really enjoy working with the young inquisitive minds of DGL nunnery in Maths and Science and say that as teachers it brings them "great joy and satisfaction". They certainly teach energetically and are dedicated to introducing diverse and interesting knowledge and useful topics - the most recent science exploration has been understanding plants, their leaves, flowers and fruits, and also Vision; while in Maths the nuns enthusiastically worked on length & area measurements, and graphical representation of data.

Thank you Sandhaya and all at Aavishkaar!



VISIT OF TAI SITU RINPOCHE

Jetsunma and DGL nuns have long awaited a visit from His Eminence Tai Situ Rinpoche and so we felt great gratitude and excitement when he accepted our request. He is one of the highest Lamas of the Karma Kagyu Lineage and is the founder of Sherabling Monastery. He also has several nunneries so he is busy and has many commitments. But at last he came on 12th March. It is the first time that he has visited DGL so it was a very big event for the nuns.

The nuns gave him a warm ceremonial welcome with incense burning and horns blowing. Also many lay people came to give welcome and get blessings. Tai Situ was escorted along the petal strewn path to the temple. When he was seated on the golden throne, Jetsunma and Khenpo and several of the nuns offered the Mandala.

This was followed by all the nuns receiving the oral transmission of the Prayer of Mahamudra. Also many lay people, a great number from Tashi Jong, filled the temple. Tai Situ gave us teachings for more than 2 hours. He told us that he had known Jetsunma for many years and that they had a special friendship and he said many kind words praising her and we are so lucky that she is our founder mother. He also taught us the meaning of the Mahamudra transmission.

After lunch with Jetsunma, Tai Situ visited our retreat centre to spend some good time with our Drubda nuns.

It was the first time for the nuns to meet Tai Situ and we all felt very blessed and lucky. We hope we will have a chance to see him again.





SENIOR NUNS GRADUATION

Genla Tsultrim Palmo

The sun was shining and the flowers blooming on 5th September 2018: the nunnery looked more beautiful than ever. On that historic day we were privileged to welcome His Eminence Khamtrul Rinpoche to DGL Nunnery for the presentation of graduation certificates to our sixteen senior nuns. It was the culmination of almost 20 years study of Buddhist Dharma and Philosophy and Tibetan language and grammar. [The nuns have now reached the rank of Lopenma or Acharya, equivalent to an MA in Buddhist Studies.]

We are so thankful and consider ourselves

extremely lucky to have had this golden opportunity. Even though at times we found our studies difficult, we always tried to do our best. We feel so grateful to all our kind teachers through the years who have taught us with such dedication.

This was the first graduation of nuns at DGL and so gives encouragement and inspiration to those nuns still studying, showing what can be achieved through dedication and many years of hard work. Now we are continuing with a further 2 years of Tantric studies.



GIRL GUIDES TRAINING OUTING

This year the younger nuns started weekly training with kind and dedicated Scout Master Mr Suresh Sharma from whom they have received their neck-scarves as DGL Guide members of the Bharat Scouts & Guides, India.

On 6th April the 25 nuns and their teacher Genla Namzey, together with some older nuns who were keen to help, went on a Training Outing. The venue was nearby, just 3km drive from DGL and a hike across the river overlooked by Neel-Kanth a famous local Temple on the grassy grounds of Badrina Primary School – a beautiful setting surrounded by wooded hills, rocks and water.

Before their morning departure the nuns gathered for inspection, roll-call, final instructions and an encouraging ‘good-luck’ speech from Jetsunma.

The main subjects of the day’s training were Tracking, First Aid and Signalling.

Once on site the trainee Guides were divided into their three Patrols – Rose, Marigold and Daffodil, each with a Patrol leader. They assembled in their guides ‘horse-shoe’ format while the flag was hoisted. This was followed by a brief inspection of ranks where points were given for deportment and discipline.

After a relaxed lunch break the patrols re-formed for First-Aid and Signalling training classes. This was followed by the Entertainment programme where each patrol performed songs, short plays and sketches while Mr Sharma captivated and delighted his audience with renditions on his harmonica.

At 4pm the flag was lowered and the nuns returned to DGL where they were greeted by Jetsunma who presented awards for ‘best patrol’ and ‘best all-round Guide’.





TSAMPA

ROASTED BARLEY FLOUR

On Sundays we have tsampa [for breakfast] because we get up late [5.30am] and don't make chapattis. Tsampa is good for our health. Also in the puja when we have tea we eat tsampa. The ritual offering 'cakes' are also made of tsampa.

First, we have to buy the barley, then we have to wash it and dry it when the sun is shining for a whole day. Then we gather all this barley. We make fires behind our kitchen and put the barley in big pans with sand and roast it. Then we sift in big screen trays to remove the sand. We put barley on tarpaulin and look for small stones.

Later the Nyerpa (kitchen manager) takes the roasted, cleaned barley to Tashi Jong Monastery where it is ground into tsampa.

Tsunma Ngawang Paltso
Tsunma Sonam Chodron
Tsunma Samten Wangmo
 (Lodak/Middle Class)



PLASTIC MATS

Last September when the nuns duties changed, 8 monitors and the 2 recycle nuns met and decided to make mats from plastic wrappers. Tsunma Lhachoe taught us how to make them.

First we collect the plastic, secondly we wash and thirdly we cut the plastic into strips. Next we tie the strips and begin the round mats by adding one piece at a time. This project stops pollution and helps save the environment. Last year we learned that burning plastic is very bad and it

takes 300 years to decompose.

When Lhabab Duchen came we displayed the mats for the first time and some people bought them. At first we had no idea to sell the mats. We wanted to make them for seat cushions. Now we are making three sizes and selling them in our cafe.

Tsewang Chodron
Ngawant Paltso

Samten Wangmo
Rigzin Dolma



CHILDREN SINGING PEACE AROUND THE WORLD

In April 2019, Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery welcomed Dawn Ferguson and her musical peace project for one week. The young nuns were taught to sing a song that has been taught to children in 29 cultures around the world in their native languages, including Native American, Aboriginal and African languages, Hawaiian and many others, with the 30th language being Tibetan.

A heartfelt thanks goes to DGL's former teacher, Geshe Ma Tenzin Kunsel, who translated the song from English into Tibetan.

The young nuns learned to sing the song in Tibetan and English, and then performed it for Khenpo Sonam Wangmo, Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and the entire nunnery. We are very grateful to Dawn and everyone enjoyed it very much.



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

on **Sponsor a Nun** page

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 MYSELF

I am Rigzin Dolma. I came from Kinnaur. There are fourteen members in my family. I became a nun on 2nd September 2015. Now I am twenty four years old. The reason I decided to become a nun is because I love to help others and pray for others. From the time I was ten years old, my interest is to only do dharma practice. Because I was born in a Buddhist family, sometimes we all family members are doing Puja together. That time I feel so good. My family are happy because I am a nun. I wish that the sentient beings may have karma like my family, and they may all be happy and stay blessed. I pray every time like this. When we have holiday that time I like to do meditation. I think I am so lucky because I can change my mind. So I am very grateful to all my teachers, venerable Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo and my Root Guru, H.E. the 9th Khamtul Rinpoche



My name is Karma Chodron. I come from Tsum Nepal. My family are living in the town. I have four brothers and two sisters. I am youngest in my family members. Before I was a nun I went to school in Nepal. In school my favourite subject is maths. I have one best friend at school. Her name is Karma Rinzin. When I was young I wanted to do a job where I can help other people. I became a nun to become enlightened. When I became a nun I was fourteen years old. Now I am twenty one years old.

My family was very happy when I became a nun. I didn't know anything about a nun's life but my mother thought it would be good for me as a way to help others. Now I understand why a nun's life is so important for me. I learn Dharma, philosophy, debating and Tibetan. Here very special Teachers are in DGL Nunnery.

When I have free time I like to listen to music and talk with friends. If I have more free time I would play more games like Ludo, and reading stories. I miss being able to make food for my mother when she is working. I have a special job learn to become an Umze [chant leader]. I am so happy here to learn Dharma. Be happy and keep smiling ...

Every day I work and pray to give my heart-mind to dharma. If I was a super hero I would be an ideal Tsunma [nun] and I would help all sentient beings to become enlightened.





BY AIRMAIL

To:

From:

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

