

Melody of Dharma

❁ An Introductory Teaching on Taking Refuge
by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

❁ An Interview with
H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche

❁ Losar at Dolma Phodrang



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HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN

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A MESSAGE FROM H.E. LUDING KENCHEN RINPOCHE

His Eminence
Ngor E-Wam
Sharchen Ludingpa

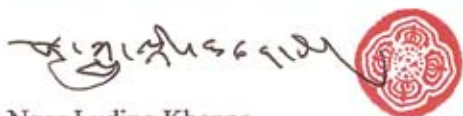


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I would like to extend my heartfelt greetings to all those who initiated the publication of *Melody of Dharma*. I believe this publication will benefit immensely to the people in general and the younger generation in particular. As such, I have my deepest appreciation towards this great work.

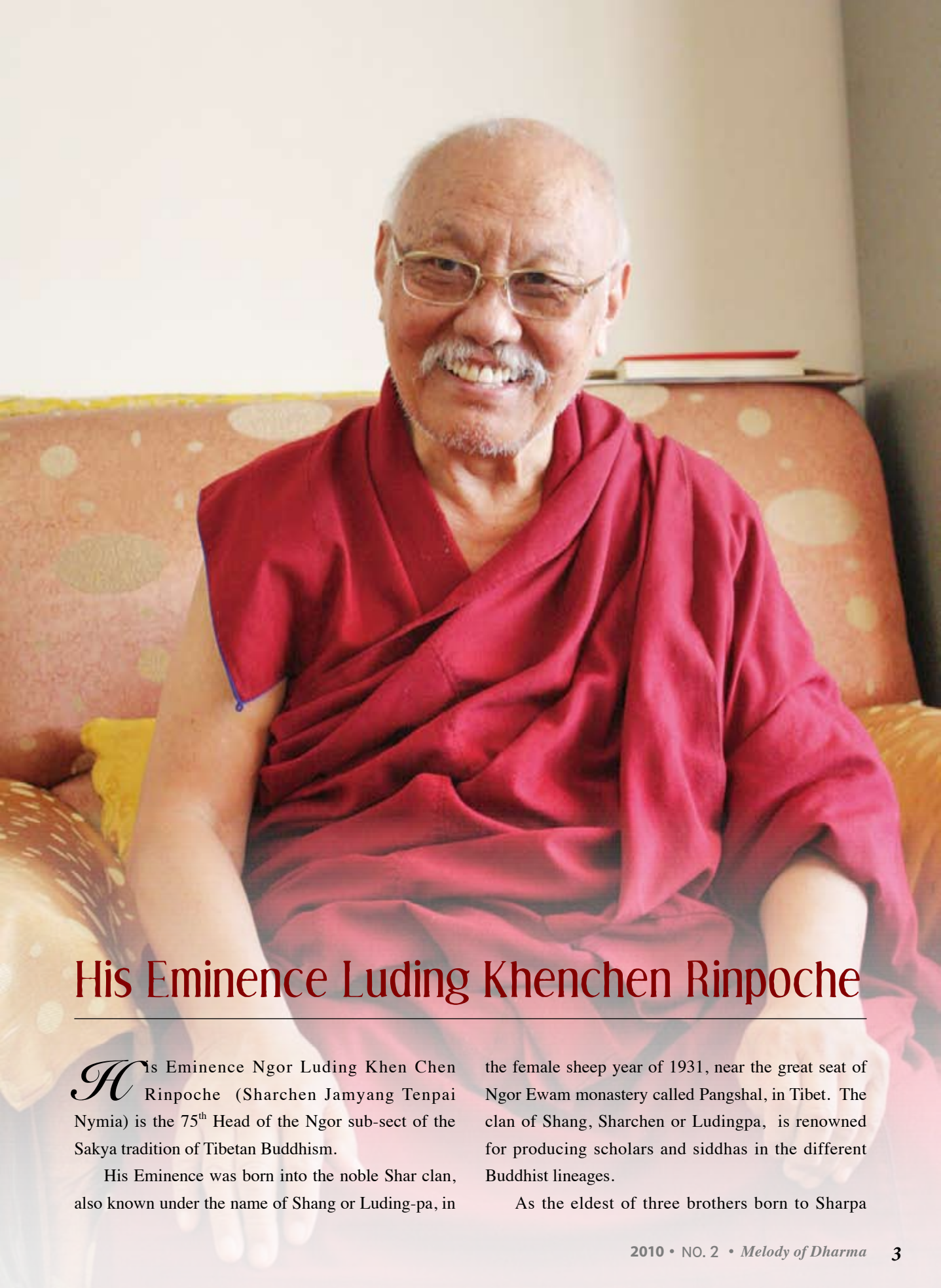
It is a known fact that practicing of compassion and love with genuinely pure heart toward others and oneself is always beneficial to gaining temporary happiness, as well as obtaining *Bodhicitta*, the ultimate goal. For example, if you cultivate a medicinal plant and nurse it for long time it will ultimately pay back with saving you or your son's life; whereas if you cultivate a poisonous sapling, then it will definitely harm you or whoever that comes to close contact with it. Therefore, always keep away from harmful thoughts and its relevancies. One should always keep in mind that by practicing compassion with genuinely good heart, the day will come that negative actions and thoughts will diminish, and one's mind will turn positive.

Once again my greetings to you and my best regards to you all.



Ngor Luding Khenpo.

February 26th 2010



His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche

*H*is Eminence Ngor Luding Khen Chen Rinpoche (Sharchen Jamyang Tenpai Nymia) is the 75th Head of the Ngor sub-sect of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

His Eminence was born into the noble Shar clan, also known under the name of Shang or Luding-pa, in

the female sheep year of 1931, near the great seat of Ngor Ewam monastery called Pangshal, in Tibet. The clan of Shang, Sharchen or Ludingpa, is renowned for producing scholars and siddhas in the different Buddhist lineages.

As the eldest of three brothers born to Sharpa

Dagchen Tashi Gyaltzen, he was ordained as a monk at the age of ten and began training to become Head Lama of the Luding Ladrang, one of the four Abbacies of Ngor Ewam Cho Dan Monastery. For the next thirteen years, His Eminence received numerous initiations and oral transmissions, notably the pith instructions of Lamdre, as well as rigorous training in other essential Dharma disciplines. His main teachers include His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche. From the age of seventeen, His Eminence spent nearly four continuous years in retreat, mainly practicing Hevajra. In 1954, at the age of twenty-four, His Eminence was enthroned as Abbot of the Ngor Ewam Cho Dan Monastery and 75th Supreme Head of Ngor.

Following the 1959 Chinese invasion of his homeland, during which his monastery was destroyed, His Eminence fled to Darjeeling in India. Since then,

together with His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and His Eminence the late Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, His Eminence has worked tirelessly to revive the Sakya tradition. Not only has he blessed countless followers with teachings and initiations, and ordained thousands of monks and nuns, but he has founded many monasteries in India, Nepal and Sikkim. His Eminence has also reestablished the Ngor Pal Ewam Cho Dan Monastery in Manduwala, Himachal Pradesh, in India.

Under his leadership, the Monastery has now fully reinstated its traditional tantric practices, and has become a major centre of tantric and ritual learning for the hundreds of monks who enroll there every year.

In 2000, His Eminence retired from the Ngor-pa abbacy, and his nephew, H.E. Luding Khenpo Kushon Rinpoche (son of Her Eminence Jetsun Kushok and of His Eminence's brother Sey Kushok), was enthroned as 76th Head of Ngor.



NGOR EWAM CHO DAN MONASTERY

Ngor Ewam Cho Dan Monastery was founded in 1429 by the great master Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo. The Monastery was given this name because while it was under construction, Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo dreamt that the collection of all Dharma arises from the letters E and WAM.

It was renowned as a major centre of learning, ritual practice and long-term retreat. It was also famous for celebrating Lamdre once a year, which was attended by hundreds of followers from all over Tibet.

There are four ladrangs (Houses) to the Ngor school: Luding, Khangsar, Thartse and Phende and, traditionally, the position of Head Abbot alternated every three years between the four ladrangs.

Following the Chinese incursion of 1959, and the ensuing destruction of the Ngor monastery in Tibet, His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche rebuilt the monastery in Manduwala, near Dehradun in Northern India, and became its head up to the year 2000, when he was replaced by his nephew, His Eminence Luding Khen Rinpoche, who now acts as the 76th Abbot of Ngor.

From The Editors

Dear Readers,

We hope that you enjoyed the inaugural issue of Melody of Dharma, and we thank all who have sent feedback and suggestions.

It is with great pleasure that we bring you our second issue. It is a very special issue, as it gives us a unique and privileged glimpse of how Losar is celebrated at the Dolma Phodrang and at Sakya Centre, along with a description of the Torma Throwing Puja that is practiced at the Monastery at this time of year. We will be reading about the conclusion of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's Golden Jubilee Year, and about other recent Dharma activities undertaken by His Holiness and Their Eminences the Dungseys. And we will be enriched by an essential teaching on 'Taking Refuge' by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

We will be featuring an article on His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, 75th Head of the Ngor sub-sect of the Sakya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, and on his main monastery, Ngor Ewam Cho Dan. We will also be sharing with our readers a short interview which His Eminence very kindly granted *Melody of Dharma*.

It is with great devotion that we have undertaken the publication of this magazine, and we earnestly hope that it helps Dharma followers form a closer bond with their Teachers and with each other.

Yours in the Dharma,

The Editing Team

SCHEDULE OF HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN'S RUSSIA - EUROPE TRIP 2010

HOST	DATE	EVENT
MOSCOW, RUSSIA Moskovskaya obl Pavlovo-Posadsky raion pos.	May 22	"An Introduction to Buddhism and History of the Sakyapa Lineage"
	May 23	"Boddhichitta and Bodhisattva Vows"
	May 24-25	Empowerment: "Hevajra Cause Empowerment"
	May 26	Teaching: "Commentary on Hevajra Practice"
Bolshie Dvori ul. Mayakovskogo 12 "B" Kulturno-Ozdorovitelniy Tsentr "Sosnoviy Bor"		
ELISTA, RUSSIA Geden Shedup Chokorlin (Kalmyk Central Buddhist Monastery)	May 28	Official Reception at Monastery
	May 29	Vajrayogini Blessing and Teaching (limited)
	May 30	Initiation: "Tak-Chak-Kyung Sum" (Hayagriva, Vajrapani and Garuda)
	May 31	Public Teaching at Kalmyk State Institute of Humanitarian Studies and Scientific Research at Kalmyk State University Public Teaching at Kalmyk Central Buddhist Monastery
Kalmyk Central Buddhist Monastery		
READING, U.K. Sakya Ling	Jun 3	Public Teaching
97A Swansea Road Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8HA, United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0) 118 967 2744		
BOURNEMOUTH, U.K. Sakya Thubten Ling Tibetan Buddhist Centre	Jun 4	Official Welcome Ceremony (evening)
	Jun 5-6	Empowerment: "Hevajra Cause"
	Jun 7-8	Empowerment: "Vajrayogini"
	Jun 10	Public Teaching: "Buddhism Today"
167 Shelbourne Road, Bournemouth BH8 8RD Tel: +44 (0) 1202 538 108 - info@stl.org.uk		
LONDON, UK Tibet Foundation	Jun 11	Public Talk (evening)
	Jun 12	Public Teaching
2 Saint James's Market, London SW1Y 4SB Tel: +44 (0)20 7930 6001 - karma.hardy@tibet-foundation.org		
LONDON, U.K. Sakya Buddhist Centre London	Jun 13	Teaching (evening): "Parting from the Four Attachments"
	Jun 14-15	Empowerment: "Kalachakra"
31A St Lukes Road, Notting Hill, London W11 1DB Tel: +44 (0) 20 7183 2109 - london@dechen.org		
THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS Sakya Thengchen Ling	Jun 18	Initiation: "White Tara" Teaching: "Explanation of White Tara Practice"
	Jun 19	Long Life Ceremony for His Holiness Teaching: "Application of Dharma in Daily Life and Teaching on Samatha / Vipassana"
Laan van Meerdervoort 200a, 2517 BJ The Hague Tel: +31 (0)70-360 66 49 - sakya.denhaag@hotmail.com		

HOST	DATE	EVENT
BIARRITZ, FRANCE Sakya Thukje Ling (Centre d'Etude et de Pratique du Vajrayana)	Jun 22-23	Empowerment: "Kalachakra"
	Jun 24	Teaching on Kalachakra
	Jun 25	Teaching on Kalachakra
Le Sahel - 25,av Edouard VII, 64200 Biarritz Tel: (33) 06 14 02 45 53 - sakya.thukje.ling@gmail.com		
FRANKFURT, GERMANY Sakya Kalden Ling	Jun 26	His Holiness arrives at Frankfurt Airport
	Jun 27	Amitayus-Hayagriva Initiation - Refuge
	Jun 28	Vajrakilaya Teaching and Empowerment
	Jun 29	Vajrakilaya Empowerment
Tibethaus	Jun 30	Ushnisha Vijaya
Sakya Kalden Ling	Jul 1	Teachings from Choegyal Phagpa's "The Gift of Dharma"
Sakya Kalden Ling	Jul 2	Consecration of new Gumpa Public Talk
Sakya Kalden Ling Linkstr.66, 65933 Griesheim Tel: +49 (0) 69 9563 7237 info@sakya-foundation.de		
BERLIN, GERMANY Rigpa-Zentrum Berlin	Jul 3	Teaching (evening): "The Six Paramitas"
	Jul 4-5	Empowerment: "Vajrakilaya"
Soorstraße 85, 14050 Berlin Tel: + 49 (0)30 232 550 24 - info@rigpa-zentrum-berlin.de		
STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN Sakya Changchub Choling	Jul 9	Teaching: "Shine Lakthong / Samadhi Vipassana"
	Jul 10- 11	Empowerment: "Kalachakra"
Opetrigatan SE-11534 Stockholm Tel: +46 (0) 8 33 77 46 - sakyaswe@hotmail.com		
KUTTOLSHEIM, FRANCE Sakya Tsechen Ling	Jul 14 - Aug 6	Teaching: "LAM DRE Tsogshe"
5, Rond-Point du Vignoble 67520, Kuttolsheim Tel: +33 (0) 3 88 87 73 80 - sakya.tsechen.ling@orange.fr		
AROSIO, SWITZERLAND Thubten Changchub Ling	Aug 8	Initiation & Teaching: "Mahavairochana"
CH-6939 Arosio/ Altomalcantone Tel: +41 (0) 91 600 32 15 - tcling@ticino.com		
ASCONA, SWITZERLAND Monte Verità	Aug 9	Teaching: "The Six Paramitas"
6612 Ascona Tel: +41 (0)91 785 40 40 - info@monteverita.org		
SWITZERLAND Tibet-Institute Rikon	Aug 14	Long Life Initiation for the Public (in Tibetan)
Wildbergstrasse 10 CH - 8486 Rikon Tel: +41 (0) 52 383 17 29 - info@tibet-institut.ch		

REMEMBERING GREAT MASTERS

JETSUN DRAGPA GYALTSEN (1147-1216)



The twelfth day of the second Tibetan lunar month (March 27th) marks the Parinirvana Day of Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen.

Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen was the Third of the Five Founders of the Sakya Lineage. He was born in the year 1147 in Sakya, Tibet, the third son of the great Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, the First Founder of Sakya.

When Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen was conceived, his mother, Machig Odrön, dreamed that a naga king came to her, requesting shelter. Several auspicious signs heralded Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen's birth.

He took his upasaka vows at a tender age, and throughout his life, maintained them with the utmost strictness. He never partook of meat or alcohol except for the samaya substances at tsog offerings. Throughout his life, he was extremely disciplined in performing his daily meditation sessions and in reciting his sadhanas. In his daily practice, he would meditate on seventy complete mandalas, and did the entire Hevajra practice while climbing to his throne to give teachings. He dedicated every moment of his day to spiritual activities. He was an ascetic, and whatever he received, he gave away either as Dharma offerings, or as donations to the needy.

He started his studies when he was still a young child, and started giving teachings when he was eleven, including instructions on the Hevajra sadhana, astounding everyone with the depth of his understanding. This awarded him the name Lodu Chenpo (Great Intelligence).

After his father passed away and his older brother, Loppon Sonam Tsemo, left Sakya in order to pursue his education,

Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen effectively became Throne Holder of Sakya, and Head Teacher of the Monastery. In the following years, he gave and received numerous teachings. He was extremely diligent in his studies, memorizing and understanding all the texts that he was taught. As a teacher, he was always very clear and practical in his explanations. Due to a promise that he had made to his guru, however, it wasn't until he reached the age of 26 that he began teaching the Lamdre, even though he was highly qualified to do so. He was well immersed in every aspect of it, both through study and realization. The latter he had already gained at the age of twelve, when he dreamed that he swallowed the three tantras of Hevajra, and realized the true aspect of all phenomena. Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen composed a voluminous body of works. His most famous work, "Song of Experience", expanded on "Parting from the Four Attachments", a four-line teaching which his father Sachen Kunga Nyingpo had received directly from Manjushri. He wrote in such a way that his teachings were accessible to every level of reader. This was mainly because his words were a direct expression of his own meditative realizations, and thereby had the power of instilling these same realizations into the minds of whoever read them.

He was a truly realized master, a Vajradhara. Not only did he have magical powers, but he also conversed with deities – he himself related that he often met with Virupa, and many of his deep realizations were obtained during these encounters.

He had vivid and detailed memories of previous lives and had visions of prophecies revealing future ones.

When he was 70, Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen was beckoned by celestial beings to go with them to Sukavati, the Buddha Amitabha's realm. This was not the first time that he had been invited, but he had always declined, preferring to remain in an impure realm in order to help beings. This time, though, he did accede to their request and, on the twelfth day of the second lunar month, in the year of the Male Fire Bird (1216), Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen departed for the realm of Sukavati.



An Introductory Teaching on Taking Refuge by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

(An excerpt from a teaching on Ngon Dro at Dolma Phodrang, 26th April 2000)



The preliminary practice of taking refuge has two foundations: the common and the uncommon.

The common foundation I believe you are all familiar with: in order to overcome the suffering of samsara, we need to practice Dharma. And in order to practice Dharma, we must have a precious human life. Although every living being possesses Buddha nature, and every living being has the possibility of becoming a Buddha, a human being has the best opportunity to do so. To obtain a human life is extremely precious, particularly one endowed with the eighteen prerequisites and the ten favourable conditions, and which is free from the eight unfavourable places. This human life is more precious than the wish-fulfilling jewel, as the wish-fulfilling jewel can bestow all our material needs, but it cannot bestow higher rebirth or personal liberation. The reason why this human life is so precious is that, if it is used to practice the Dharma, it can free us from rebirth in the lower realms, it can help us to obtain a higher rebirth, and it can lead us to personal liberation, and eventually to ultimate enlightenment. But at the same time, a human life is very difficult to obtain.

Everything is impermanent. The Lord Buddha taught that all compound things are impermanent. 'Compound' means anything that is created from causes and conditions. Human life is impermanent. It does not have a definite duration, and it depends on many outer and inner conditions. There are many

factors that can cut it short at any time, whereas there is very little that can prolong it. There is complete uncertainty as to when death will occur. And, of course, there is only one thing that is certain in this life, which is that anyone who is born in this universe will eventually die, even the fully enlightened Buddhas. Even though the fully enlightened Buddhas are completely free from the suffering of birth and death, in order to show impermanence to human eyes, They appear to die and enter Paranirvana. So we, as ordinary people, can disappear just like a bubble in boiling water, we can lose this life at any moment.

So, while we have obtained a very precious human life, so difficult to obtain, everything is impermanent, everything is changing momentarily, and we never know when we will lose this opportunity. It is therefore very important to utilize the life span that we have, to use it in the most beneficial way, in a way that is beneficial to oneself and to others. And the most beneficial way to spend our life is to follow the law of Karma.

One of the Lord Buddha's special teachings is that He explained the law of Karma. All the lives that we go through do not happen accidentally, nor are they created by an outside force, nor are they acquired without cause. Each and every thing must have its own cause, and everything that we experience now, whether pleasant or painful, is created through our own Karma. All the sufferings that we go through in this life, such as death, illness, poverty, and so forth, are created through our own previous negative actions. And all the good things, such as long life, good health, prosperity and the fulfillment of one's wishes,

are also not created by an outside force, but rather by positive actions that we performed in the past.

Believer or non-believer, everyone wishes to be free from suffering, and everyone wishes to experience happiness. But whether we experience one or the other lies in our own hands. So therefore, we must follow the law of Karma. We must not commit any negative deeds. Negative deeds are physical, verbal and mental actions that are committed out of desire,





hatred and ignorance. It is those non-virtuous deeds which create suffering, and if we do not wish to experience suffering, then we must abstain from committing them. If we wish to experience happiness, then we must create its cause. Without creating its cause, we cannot expect to experience it. We cannot expect the result without the cause. And the cause of happiness is to perform virtuous deeds, that is to say, actions that are based on generosity, love and compassion, that are beneficial to other beings. So we must practice very carefully.

We are in samsara, and all samsara is suffering. The word 'samsara' is Sanskrit, and in English, we call it 'The Circle of Existence'. We call it so because it has no end. When this life ends, we begin another one. And so it goes on and on, like a wheel, the 'Wheel of Life'. And as long as we are in samsara, we experience suffering.

In general terms, there are three types of suffering. The suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and the suffering of the conditional nature of all phenomena.

The suffering of suffering refers to the suffering that we experience as suffering, such as physical pain and mental anguish. The suffering of change, however, is more subtle. We experience as happiness the absence of great suffering, but it is not real happiness. It is actually suffering, the suffering of change. And then, the suffering of conditional nature means that our very existence in this samsara is suffering, in the sense that wherever we go, whatever we do, whoever we associate with, there is no satisfaction to be found. Even if we are in the most advanced country, with all its luxuries, we find no satisfaction. So, whatever our circumstances are, as long as we're in samsara, we find no satisfaction, and that is the suffering of conditional nature.

So these are the common foundations, concerning which we need more than intellectual understanding. We need to analyze them, contemplate and meditate on them, until



we have a real kind of inner feeling regarding their nature. It is important to reflect on the different types of suffering, the hell realm, the hungry ghosts realm, the animal realm, the human realm, the demi-god realm, and the god realm, so we realize that wherever we are, as long as it is within samsara, it is suffering. For example, if a poison is mixed with food, whether it is good food or bad food, it is harmful. So similarly, as long as we're in samsara, whether it is in a lower realm or in a higher realm, it is still suffering.

So it is very important to practice Dharma. To help us practice Dharma, the Lord Buddha, who possessed infinite wisdom, compassion and skillful means, bestowed an enormous amount of teachings in order to suit every level of mentality, propensity and situation. But the most advanced, the highest form of teaching, is the Vajrayana teaching. In order to practice Vajrayana, we need to practice the uncommon foundations.

Now, of the uncommon foundations, the very first one is taking refuge, because taking refuge is the root of the entire Dharma, the preliminary practice of the entire path, and the foundation of all the vows. Also, whether one has taken refuge or not is what differentiates a Buddhist from a non-Buddhist. If one has taken refuge, then one is a Buddhist. Even though one is born in a Buddhist family, it does not mean that automatically one becomes a Buddhist. Until one takes refuge in the Triple Gem, one is not a Buddhist. When one has taken refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, then one becomes a Buddhist. It is through taking refuge that we leave behind the worldly path and embark on the path of liberation. So taking

refuge is very, very important.

Normally we explain refuge in five aspects. These are: the cause of taking refuge, the object of refuge, the way we take refuge, the benefits of taking refuge, and the rules of taking refuge.

The first aspect is the cause of taking refuge. We take refuge out of three causes: fear, faith and compassion.

There are three types of fear. Fear of the suffering of samsara, fear of self-clinging, and fear of impure vision. Because we are in samsara, we experience suffering. Nobody wishes to have suffering, neither in this life nor in future ones. But at the moment, we are very ordinary persons, we have no choice. We are completely bound to our own karma and defilements, and we find ourselves wherever the wind of Karma takes us. We are fearful of suffering, but we are unable to overcome it through our own efforts. We need to rely on someone who is wise, who is powerful, and who also has compassion. So we take refuge out of fear, fear of the suffering of being in samsara.

Why we experience suffering in samsara is because we continually cling to self. We cling to self, without any logical reason. There

is no way to prove that there is a self, such a thing as self but because, from beginningless time, we have had a very strong propensity to cling to self, we keep doing it. This is based on ignorance, ignorance of the true nature of reality. In fact, reality is selflessness. But we do not realize this, and instead we see ourselves as a separate self, and we cling to this notion of a separate self. And due to this, we create the notion of other, and then we feel attachment to ourselves, and aversion to others. And then, defilements such as jealousy, stinginess, and pride, increase. And it is due to these defilements that we create Karma, by performing negative actions, physical, verbal and mental, thus creating suffering for ourselves. If we cling to self, then we are bound to experience suffering, hence the fear of self-clinging.

And also, according to Vajrayana, there is the fear of clinging to the impure vision. Impure vision means our normal life as we experience it, from a point of view of ignorance. We are now totally in samsara, experiencing different sufferings. The present life that we are going through is the impure vision. It's not real, it's all illusion, but we cling to it as real. It is because of our impure vision that we experience suffering, so we feel fear of clinging to the impure vision. So fear is the number one cause of taking refuge, and

fear has three aspects. Fear of the suffering of samsara, fear of self-clinging, and fear of clinging to the impure vision.

And then the second cause of taking refuge is faith. There are three types of faith. Clear faith, desiring faith, and believing faith.

Clear faith means that when we see very clearly the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, it somewhat refreshes our mind. It also gives us hope, or relief in the midst of this suffering of samsara, so it's called clear faith.

Desiring faith means that when we see the very great qualities of the Buddha, we wish to obtain such qualities for ourselves.

And believing faith means that we don't just blindly believe the teachings of the Buddha, but that we scrutinize them, we analyze what the Buddha said, what the Buddha taught, and realize that it expresses the genuine truth in our lives. We are convinced that what the Buddha said is the genuine truth, not merely because somebody has asked us to believe it. It is after careful examination and analysis that we have become convinced that it is a genuine truth, so we believe in it. This is called believing faith, and it is very, very important. Buddha Himself said that His followers should only believe in His teachings after careful examination, and not just out of faith.

And then the third cause, the main cause

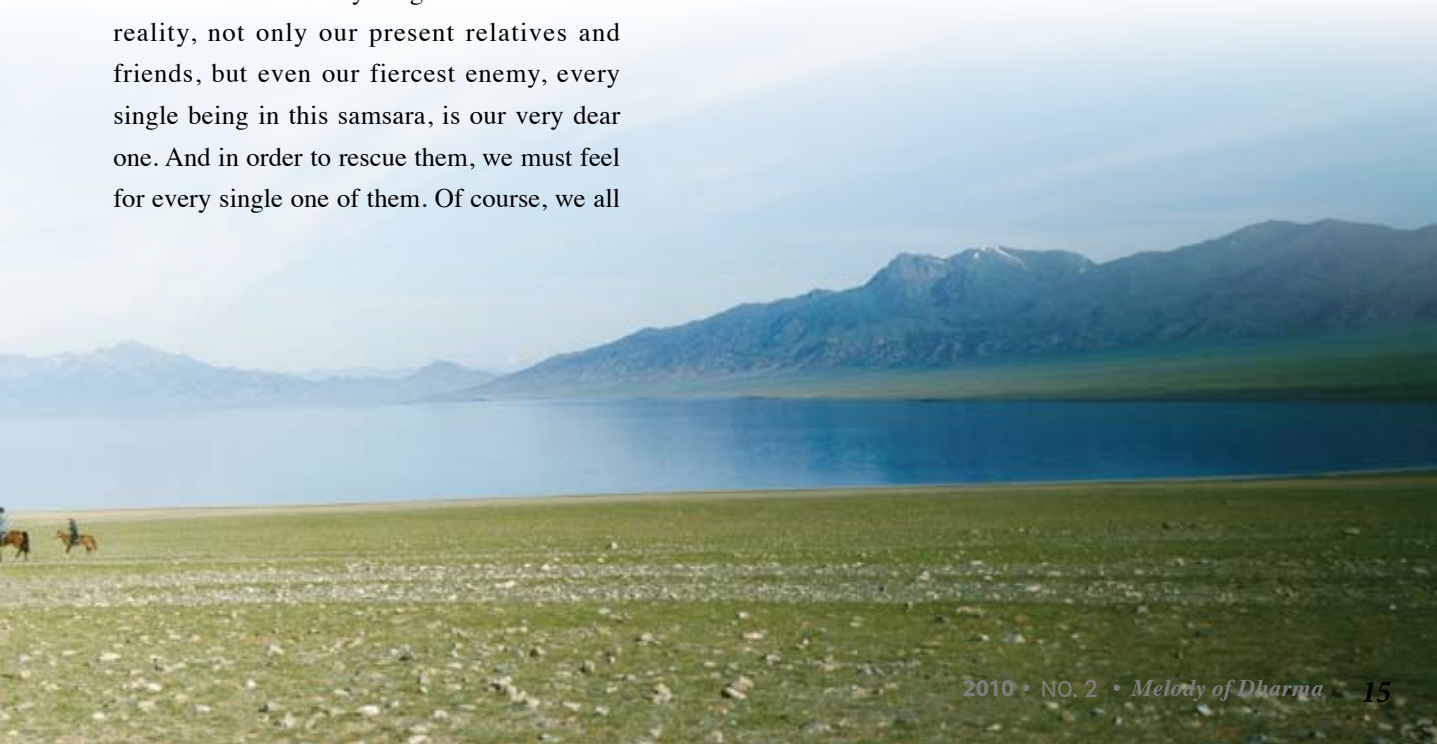


according to Mahayana, is compassion. Just as we ourselves wish to be free from suffering, every sentient being, both visible and invisible, from germs and insects right up to the highest devas, everybody wishes to be free from suffering, nobody wishes to experience suffering. But since beginningless time, we are caught up in this circle of existence, we are reborn over and over again. And, in one life or another, every sentient being has actually been our own father, mother, relative or friend, and every time that they have become our parent, they have given us as much love and as much care as our present parents have given us. So, in this way, it's not right to think only of our own welfare. We have to think of all the other sentient beings, each of whom is actually our own very dear father, mother and dear one. But due to the change of life, we do not recognize each other. We see some beings as enemies, and we hate them. We see some as our friends and relatives, and we have a very close and strong attachment to them. We see some as indifferent, and we don't feel anything for them. But in reality, not only our present relatives and friends, but even our fiercest enemy, every single being in this samsara, is our very dear one. And in order to rescue them, we must feel for every single one of them. Of course, we all

have some kind of feeling. When we see either an animal or a human being who is suffering, of course, whether we are practitioners or not, we all have some kind of feeling, pity, some kind of compassion. If our friend or relative or even just someone we know is suffering, we feel compassion. But that kind of compassion is limited compassion. Real compassion should be felt for everybody on the same basis, with the same intensity. And if we feel compassion for someone, we wish to save them from suffering, from the suffering of samsara. So if we have real compassion, we want to save all sentient beings from samsara, and the way to do this, the very first step, is to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Without taking refuge, we can't proceed any further.

So the very first step in practicing the Dharma is to take refuge. The three main causes of taking refuge are fear, faith and compassion. And in Vajrayana, which is the extraordinary Mahayana, compassion is the main cause of taking refuge.

To be continued in the next issue...



Dharma Activities

Looking Back At His Holiness' Golden Jubilee Year

On the 19th of February, the Golden Jubilee Year of the Enthronement of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin drew to a close.

This was marked by a special ceremony at the Sakya Centre. Gathered to honour His Holiness were Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, the Phuntsok Phodrang Dungseys, His Eminence Luding Khenpo Rinpoche, Her Eminence Jetsun Kushok, and Sakya high lamas, monks, nuns and lay followers.

His Holiness and Their Eminences arrived at the Sakya Centre, heralded by the sound of ritual music, and made their way up the flower-strewn stairs of the Temple. The congregation joined in the chanting of the "Sixteen Arhat Puja", during which His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche offered His Holiness the Five Auspicious Symbols Mandala. Following this, another Mandala representing the Universe, was presented to His Holiness by Venerable Lama Lekshey, director of the Sakya Centre. Then hundreds of devotees made their way to the Throne with offerings of gifts and

white scarves for their Guru.

After the ceremony was over, His Holiness stood outside the Temple doors, and one by one set free dozens of bright green and pristine white parakeets, which gracefully glided over the Temple courtyard before disappearing into the neighbouring trees. Then His Holiness and the Dungseys released several clusters of "prayer balloons", inscribed with mantras and invocations, that for a while coloured the skies above the temple, before dispersing and spreading their blessings to the four directions, bringing peace, compassion, strength and wisdom to all beings.

As His Holiness' car disappeared behind the monastery gate, the gathering dispersed, young monks scurried to their classrooms, the older ones to their respective duties, and the normal bustle of monastery life resumed.

A very unique and remarkable twelve months were now over. They had started a year earlier, on 4th



↑ Disciples prostrating to Lhasa for His Holiness' long life

← Cham dancers welcoming His Holiness to the Gonpa in Lumbini



His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, His Holiness Dagchen Rinpoche, the Dungeys and Rinpoches in Lumbini

March 2009, with a grand ceremony inaugurating His Holiness' Golden Jubilee Year, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of His Enthronement as the 41st Sakya Throne Holder.

Throughout the year, Sakya centres all over the world, New York, Singapore, Mainland China and Nepal in particular, showed their devotion to His Holiness by holding ceremonies commemorating this important event, during which Sangha members communally prayed for His Holiness' healthy and long life. Several followers pledged to refrain from eating meat for a specific amount of time, some for months, others for years, and some even for life. In October 2009, eight disciples from Kham, Tibet, began a 2000 kilometer journey of prostrations all the way to Lhasa, in dedication to the long life of His Holiness the Sakya

Trizin.

This culminated in the Annual World Peace Prayer Festival in Lumbini. This year's Monlam started with three days of special celebrations, during which His Holiness gave teachings on the vital role that protecting our environment and nurturing our individual spiritual practice, play in the attainment of world peace. On the third day, a grand Golden Jubilee Ceremony was held at which thousands of followers gathered to celebrate this momentous occasion with His Holiness.

This year-long homage paid to His Holiness was inspired and largely organized by the Tenzhug Committee, headed by Sakya Centre Director, Venerable Lama Jamyang Lekshey. The Committee spared no effort in insuring that the strong devotion

which is at the forefront of the minds and hearts of all His Holiness' followers, find expression throughout the year in an uninterrupted succession of events and celebrations dedicated to His healthy and long life.



← Monks and devotees at His Holiness' Golden Jubilee inauguration ceremony at Sakya Centre

His Holiness' Visit to Dharamsala

On 28th February, His Holiness left the Dolma Phodrang to spend the first nine days of March in Dharamsala, in order to participate in a long-life ceremony offered to His Holiness the Dalai Lama by the Tibetan Government in Exile, as a gesture of gratitude and reverence for His strong and compassionate leadership. The elaborate ritual, which took place on 2nd March, lasted over three hours and was conducted by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, who also presented a Mandala offering to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The combined presences of Their Holinesses, and the signs of the very special relationship that reigns between Them, were deeply touching and inspiring. Also in attendance were high Lamas from the four lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, including His Holiness the Karmapa.

The two state oracles of Tibet, Nechung and Gadhong came to pay their respects to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tsering Che-nga, a female state oracle, in a trance, also made an appearance at the ceremony, and sought blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



H.H. the Dalai Lama, H.H. the Sakya Trizin and H.H. Gyalwa Karmapa leaving the Palace

In the days following the long-life Ceremony, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, along with several high Lamas, received from His Holiness the Dalai Lama the conclusion of a two-year Guyasamaja teaching. This teaching had been initiated in 2007, and was to conclude the following year but, due to His busy schedule, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was unable to finish it until now.

Following the teachings, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin spent an additional day in Dharamsala giving blessings and interviews to disciples, before starting His journey back to the Phodrang,



H.H. the Sakya Trizin offering a Long-Life Mandala to H.H. the Dalai Lama



An audience with H.H. the Sakya Trizin

His Holiness Gives a Long-Life Initiation at Puruwala

The Tibetan settlement of Puruwala (which lies at the foothills of the Indian Himalayas), was established by His Holiness Sakya Trizin in 1969, ten years after His exile from Tibet. The majority of its thousand-plus inhabitants belong to the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism, and many of these followed His Holiness out of their home land in 1959.

Throughout a period of four months in the winter, a large part of Puruwala's settlers scatter to other parts of India to sell their woolen handicrafts. They then return to their community in time for Losar, the Tibetan New Year. Shortly after the celebrations, His Holiness is traditionally invited to perform a Long-life initiation, a blessing which leads people down the path of liberation, as well as offering them a great sense of wellbeing.

In Vajrayana Buddhism, we take refuge in the Triple Gem - the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - for help and guidance in attaining liberation for the sake of all beings. And all aspects of the Triple Gem are contained in the Guru, our guide and teacher, the one who will eventually lead us to liberation. For

Tibetans, the Guru is the key to spiritual life, and their devotion to him comes from the core of their being: they view him as an embodiment of the Buddha. So for them, when they receive a Long-life initiation from His Holiness, they are being blessed by the Buddha Himself, and the benefits of this blessing are commensurate with their faith.

We have much to learn from Tibetan devotees, the importance that they give to inner life, their devotion to the teacher, and the ardour with which they pursue their spiritual goals. When a devout follower - and this, of course, is not limited to Tibetans - comes to his Guru for an initiation, his devotion, the Guru's spiritual realization, and the ritual all come together to create a sort of alchemy that brings deep inner change and happiness in the devotee.

So the significance of a Long-life initiation is enormous and, if one receives it from a realized master, and with the right motivation - seeking liberation for the sake of others, one can benefit not only oneself but also countless other beings.



↑ Lamas and followers welcoming His Holiness to Puruwala

← His Holiness giving a Long-life initiation at Puruwala Monastery



H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche with his students

H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Puruwala

In 1977, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin undertook the construction of Sakya Thupten Namgyal Ling Monastery at Puruwala and in 1980, its inauguration took place. In its shrine stands a superb statue of the Buddha filled with several rare and precious relics, which was jointly blessed by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche and His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche.



↑ Students listening to His Eminence teaching in the gonpa



↑ Students listening to a teaching on Tantra

Also known as the Sakya Institute, the Monastery houses some 80 monks, who spend from seven to nine years there studying Buddhist philosophy. Its surroundings are idyllic, and provide a peaceful atmosphere for the monks to pursue their studies. Since September, His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche has been giving teachings at the Gonpa. The first part of the teachings, “The General System of the Tantras” by Lobsön Sönam Tsemö, deals with the



↑ Devotees at Puruwala settlement gonpa



↑ Sakya Thubten Namgyal Ling in Puruwala



↑ Devotees listening to His Eminence teaching on the “Mani” at the settlement gonpa

overall description of Tantra, its different classes, its methods, and the fruit obtained through it. The second part, “Precious Wish-Fulfilling Tree” by Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen, explains the different ways for a practitioner to train his mind in order to attain enlightenment. It is a privilege for the monks to be tutored by such an eminent teacher, and all the monks dedicate themselves entirely to making the very most of their time at the Institute.

The settlement at Puruwala, a two-hour drive from Dehradun, was founded in 1968 and houses some 1500 Tibetans, mostly Sakyapas. They have built a small Mani Lkhang (recitation hall), where they meet regularly, and it is very inspiring to see the high number of followers who attend the gatherings, and how well-versed they are in the recitation of their prayers. His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche occasionally teaches and gives empowerments at the Gonpa. In February, His Eminence gave a week-long teaching on the importance of the recitation of the “Mani” (Om Mani Padme Hum), including a lung on the mantra transmission. This teaching concluded on Chötrul Düchen, one of the four festivals commemorating the most important events in the

Buddha’s life, according to Tibetan tradition. Chötrul Düchen celebrates the Buddha’s display of miracles during fifteen days, in order to bolster the devotion of His disciples. His Eminence expressed how whatever merits gained during this day are multiplied due to its auspiciousness, but also pointed out how important the motivation is behind our spiritual practice, that it should not be directed to our own happiness, but to that of others. He stressed the importance of bodhicitta, the desire to obtain liberation for the good of all beings, and reminded those present that loving kindness and compassion are the very basis of Buddhadharma. His Eminence also said that a real practitioner was one who saw all of samsara as pure suffering, who strived every single moment to control his or her mind in order to free it from negative emotions, and who dedicated the merits gained by virtuous deeds to the happiness of all sentient beings.



His Eminence in Sakya Drogong Ling, Denia

H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche's European Teaching Tour

In the first days of February, His Eminence Gyana Vajra Rinpoche returned to India, in time to spend Losar with his Family, after completing an intensive two-month European Teaching Tour.

During the course of his trip, His Eminence visited Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Spain, England, and Hungary, and imparted important empowerments

such as Vajrapani Buthadamara, Yellow Jambhala, Vajrakilaya and Padmasambhava, amongst many others.

Disciples were also graced by Dharma teachings, including Vajrakilaya, Ngöndro and 'The Importance of Wang Chen', and his public talks drew large audiences, notably in Hungary, a country relatively new to Buddhism, where over two hundred people came to hear His Eminence give an introduction to Buddhism.

All who attended the Wangs, teachings and talks given by His Eminence were charmed by his gracious presence, and greatly impressed by the depth of his wisdom and progressive outlook.

Nyima Palzum, from Sakya Thubten Ling, Bournemouth, writes:

"We felt very privileged to receive Vajrayana teachings from one of the principal lineage holders; Gyana Vajra

↓ His Eminence teaching in Budapest



Rinpoche is set to become one of the most important of the younger generation of eminent Buddhist teachers.

Following His Eminence's departure, I asked a student what she thought of the special visit, she said: 'The quiet, relaxed presence of His Eminence Gyana Vajra Sakya created a peaceful atmosphere within the centre and was conducive to an inspiring Vajrasattva Initiation. I think the people present all felt privileged to have guidance from such an experienced and unassuming teacher.'

The time for His Eminence and his attendant to leave came all too quickly. But we all have our own precious memories and experiences to hold in our hearts and the inspiration to continue to seek enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings".

And Karin Heinemann from Sakya Kalden Ling Frankfurt, writes:

"How compassion manifests:

This was the first time that His Eminence Gyana Vajra Rinpoche accepted the invitation of the organizing Sakya Jetsün Foundation and many European centers to visit Europe and to bestow initiations and teachings. Frankfurt am Main was the first and last stop of his two month journey through Europe, at winter time, with a lot of snow.

Vajra sisters and brothers were happy to welcome him and his entourage. Those who were taking care worried about the comfort of our guests, but His Eminence always gave us the feeling that everything was fine for him.

During each initiation ritual, His Eminence proposed that everybody meditate silently together with him about loving-kindness and compassion for all living beings for some minutes. For me this meditation time became more and more meaningful during each initiation, feeling my responsibility to

do my very best to make a link to all beings in a way that the ritual I was attending becomes a real cause from my side to overcome all sufferings. At the same time I felt so supported by the master and his kindness to meditate together with us. My awareness was sharpened to recognize the preciousness of these moments where everything comes together: the qualified master with compassion, the teaching and the interested students here in Frankfurt at Sakya Kalden Ling."



↑ His Eminence blessing a baby



→His Eminence giving a public talk in Budapest

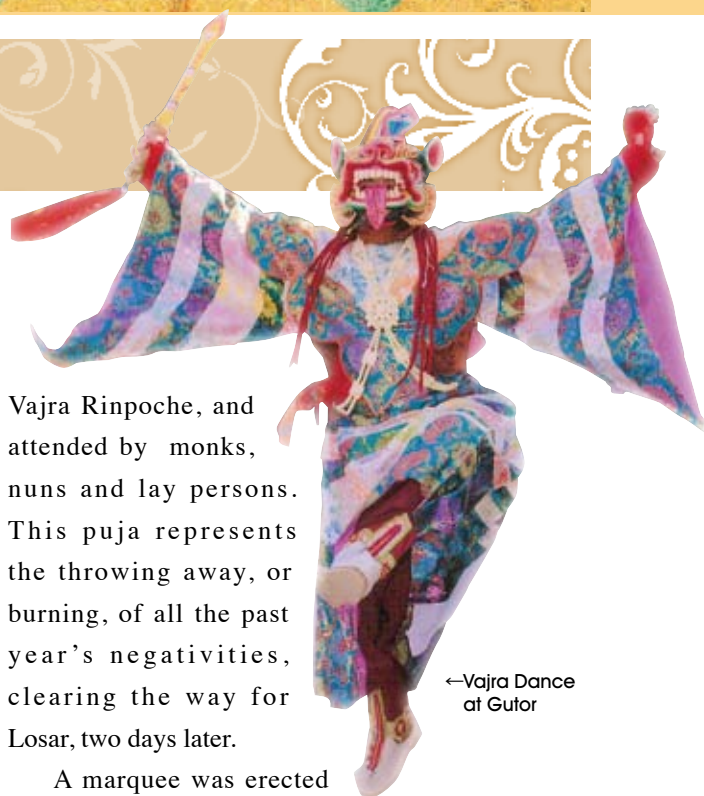


→ Their Eminences the
Dungseys presiding
over the Gutor
ceremony

Torma Throwing Ritual

Vajrakilaya, or Phurba, is a special deity of the Khön family. He is an emanation of all the Buddhas' and Bodhisattvas' mundane and dharmic activities. He is the most important yidam in pacifying worldly and spiritual obstacles, and in freeing from fear and disease, evil spells and spirits, and inauspicious dreams. He protects all Dharma practitioners, and is also powerful in bringing prosperity, long life and good luck.

Starting 8th February, a Vajrakilaya Gutor or Torma Throwing Ritual was held at Sakya Centre, concluding on the 12th with a ritual ceremony led by Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Gyana



← Vajra Dance
at Gutor

Vajra Rinpoche, and attended by monks, nuns and lay persons. This puja represents the throwing away, or burning, of all the past year's negativities, clearing the way for Losar, two days later.

A marquee was erected on the lawn adjacent to the Centre, whence Their Eminences presided over the proceedings. A series of ritual dances (cham) took place on the Centre courtyard, culminating in the 'cutting up of evil forces'. Then the Dungseys led the assembled followers in a procession that made its way to a nearby commons where the Tormas, representing all of last year's adversities and inauspiciousness, were thrown into a large bonfire, to the stirring sound of ritual cymbals, drums, oboes and horns.



↑ Their Eminences with Black Hat dancer, closing the ceremony



↑ The Holy Family – Losar at Dolma Phodrang

Losar at Dolma Phodrang

During the days preceding the Tibetan New Year, the Phodrang kitchen became a hubbub of activity, as the traditional Losar pastry (khapse) was being mixed, kneaded, cut and molded into intricate shapes. Every year, His Holiness' wife, Her Eminence Gyalum Kushok, presides over the proceedings and, true to custom, she was to be seen in the kitchen on the first day, very adeptly fashioning a strip of dough into a complex geometrical figure.

On the evening of 12th February, His Holiness and Family, auspiciously including Her Eminence Jetsun Kushok and Sey Kushok, who had come to greet the New Year with His Holiness, and the entire household, assembled in the Phodrang library to celebrate Gutuk, the traditional ceremony bringing the old year to a close, in preparation for Losar. His Holiness recited some prayers, after which a vessel was brought into the library, carrying a black effigy

made out of tsampa. This effigy represents all of last year's negativities. Everyone present was then given a small handful of tsampa dough, and rubbed it over their bodies in order to get rid of impurities gathered during the past year. The lumps of tsampa were then discarded in the vessel, around the black effigy.



↑ Losar at Sakya Centre – Lama Lekshey presenting a kata to Dagmo Sonam

An assistant, wearing the traditional Tibetan chuba, appeared at the library door bearing a torch, which he hastily swayed around the room in order to purify it.

Later, a special thukpa (Tibetan soup) was served, made with nine different substances, each with its own symbolism. A remainder was left in each person's bowl, to be later discarded in the effigy's vessel. The black effigy was then carried outside and disposed of, along with its inauspicious load.

At seven, on the morning of 14th February, everyone again gathered in the library for the traditional Losar ceremony. It opened with His

Holiness making prostrations to the Buddha in the Library shrine, before taking a seat on His throne. This was followed by the offering of khatas, first by the Family, then by the household staff and guests.

After a small breakfast consisting of barley porridge and tea, a photo session was held, a sample of which we share with you here.

Later, at 9 o'clock, Their Eminences the Dungseys, Jetsun Kushok, and young Jetsunma made their way to the Sakya Centre to celebrate the New Year with the Sakya monks and nuns.

The ceremony began, with the chanting of the Sixteen-Arhat Puja, followed by a long life ritual dedicated to His Holiness, and the recitation of the "Prayer for the Happiness of All Beings". All merits were dedicated for every being to



←His Holiness and the Two Dungseys

↓ The Holy Family with Dolma Phodrang household and guests





←Losar Morning at the Phodrang - Gyalyum Kushok, Jetsunma, Dagmo Kalden Dagmo Sonam

↓ Jetsunma giving young monks their New Year robes



enjoy happiness throughout the year.

Venerable Lama Lekshey, representing all the monks and nuns, offered a Body, Speech and Mind Mandala to Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, after which all present partook of a special New Year rice, butter tea and khapse.

It was a simple but very inspiring ceremony, and a most auspicious start to this Year of the Iron Tiger.

And lastly, on the evening of 20th February, everyone in the Phodrang once again met in the library, this time for drodun, the ceremony bringing Losar to a close. It opened with His Holiness leading those present in prayer, after which tea and rice were served. His Holiness narrated how traditionally

everyone was given a large bowl of chang (barley beer), which had to be drunk until the last drop, and then all present had to sing or dance for the gathering. Sadly, the chang was given a miss in favour of tea, but those present were regaled by an energetic performance of Tibetan song and dance by Dorje la, one of His Holiness' attendants. And, to everyone's delight, His Eminence Gyana Vajra's wife, Dagmo Sonam Palkyi, lent her truly heavenly voice to a Tibetan song, a prayer of offering to the Triple Gem.

And thus ended a week of festivities, filled with glee and 'Tashi Delek!'s. In the merriment of those days, never one moment did the secular part from the spiritual, and one could not but bring to mind the 'non-duality of samsara and nirvana'.

An Interview with H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche



MoD - Your Eminence, we have heard that in Ngor Monastery in Tibet, bringing meat anywhere near the monastery, let alone inside the compound, is not allowed. Was this practice also observed when you were there?

H.E. - *Yes, when I was in Ngor Monastery, I remember we were not allowed to bring any meat at all within the Monastery.*

MoD - From a Buddhist point of view, what are the rules regarding the consumption of meat, and what are the benefits of being vegetarian?

H.E. - *Within the Hinayana Sangha, one is allowed to eat meat from an animal who died naturally (of old age or accidentally). This kind of meat is permitted, as it does not involve the taking of a life.*

In the Mahayana Sangha, however, one is not

allowed to eat any meat, even if it died of natural causes. There is the exception of the Tsog offering but even then, the meat cannot be bought in the market and should come only from an animal which has died of natural causes.

As for lay people, it is good if they choose to be vegetarian, as they accumulate merits by averting the killing of animals for food.

The Lord Shakyamuni said that we should abandon all non-virtuous deeds and, according to the essence of Buddhist teachings, we should try to help all sentient beings. We should not harm a single sentient being. So, by being vegetarian, we obey the Buddha's precepts.

Even for a non Buddhist - if we become a vegetarian, it means that we will cause less harm. We won't be the cause of a being losing its life.

The benefits of being vegetarian are huge, as it is an act of compassion, and is in compliance with the Dharma, which is the greatest source of merit.

MoD - Tibetans like to receive Tsewang (long-life initiations), and Chinese prefer Zambhala initiations. Do you have an opinion on why this is? Also, what kind of actions (karma) will help to have a longer and a healthier life?

H.E. - *In Tibet lay people don't usually receive high tantric empowerments like Hevajra, for example. They prefer to be given long-life initiations in order to have a healthier and happier life.*

Chinese followers perhaps believe that through Zambhala they can become rich, and so they prefer this kind of initiation.



Anyway if you perform virtuous actions, it will make your life healthier and longer. And if you receive Tsewang it will make it even more so. But long-life initiations are only effective if you feel very strong devotion.

MoD - In Tibetan and Chinese societies, it is very easy to accomplish Dharma activities, such as building monasteries and stupas, and this is usually a quick process. But in the West, it is a lot more difficult to do this, and it takes a long time. Could you tell us why you think this is?

H.E. - *Chinese and Tibetan societies are quite similar from a religious point of view. They share the belief that if you take refuge in the Triple Gem, you will be blessed and won't encounter obstacles. So people are very generous and support the monasteries.*

But people in western countries look to the religious path as a personal one, and don't rely so much on support from an external institution or community, so they don't feel the need for realizing Dharma activities.

MoD - What advice would you give to someone who is new to Buddhist practice?

H.E. - *Beginners should know more about Lord Buddha Shakyamuni's life story, as this can help develop their faith. Then they need to become familiar with the four foundations- meditation on precious human rebirth, impermanence, karma, and the faults of samsara. But if they are unable to still their minds, they should thrive to develop loving kindness, generosity and compassion.*

MoD - We are undergoing a process of global degeneration – more and more difficulties are arising in the world. Why is this, and how can we make it better?

H.E. - *In general, if the overall accumulation of merits decreases because of a weakening in people's devotion, the Triple Gem also becomes weaker. The power of the yidam becomes less, and can even lose its effectiveness. This is happening at the moment, and it is the reason why the world is becoming more and more degenerate. In order for the world to get better, we need to try very hard to develop a good heart, a good mind, and good inner qualities, in order to benefit the world around us.*

MoD - Nowadays, many westerners take vows, and then find it difficult to keep them when they are back in their countries. Would you have some advice for them?

H.E. - *Many westerners say that they don't have enough time to practice the Buddha Dharma. Even if one is in a western country, and one needs to work many hours everyday, it is still possible to organize one's life in such a manner as to find time for practice, and in this way, keep one's vows. It is a matter of personal choice. If one really wants to keep the vows, one finds the means to do it. And one should always remember how important it is to keep the vows, as it affects not only this life, but future ones also.*

One should be patient and put a lot of effort into maintaining the vows.



Shakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment

by His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche

Now Siddhartha Gautama's mother had passed away seven days after giving birth to Him, and she was reborn in the land of the gods known as the 'realm of the thirty-three.'

As a deva of this realm, she possessed some limited clairvoyance, and was able to see that her son from her previous life, Gautama, was undergoing great hardships. As this goddess, the former Mayadevi, wept for Siddhartha, her tears fell miraculously from the celestial world, forming a small pool in front of the meditating Buddha.

In response to this, the great meditator Gautama broke His silence, just one week before He was to attain enlightenment. He spoke out reassuringly to his mother, saying, 'Although I have gone through

these ascetic practices of unimaginable difficulty, yet I still have not reached my goal. I have only one week before I gain enlightenment. Then I will repay your kindness, and will come to teach you in the near future.'

In this way, His mother was the first person for whom Gautama broke His vow of silence, just prior to attaining enlightenment. Completing His six years of meditation, Siddhartha arose from that place, setting out on foot for what would come to be known as Bodhgaya, the Diamond Seat. Thus He came to arrive before the great Bodhi tree there. He knew that this was indeed the very place where all the past Buddhas, such as Krakuchandra, Kanakamuni, and Kasyapa, had attained enlightenment, on the very seat He

himself now approached.

In deepest reverence, Gautama bowed before the vajra seat and then took His place upon it, leaning His back against the Bodhi tree. Upon that very throne of enlightenment of the Buddhas of the past, Siddhartha repeated the greatest act of all of history, achieving complete enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya. Gautama had spent six years meditating on the banks of the Niranjana, and had come to the Diamond Seat of Bodhgaya to finish His meditation training.

He entered again into seated meditation at dusk of the full moon night. Terrifying hosts of mara-devils and evil beings swarmed about Him in a jealous frenzy. They threatened Him with fearsome apparitions, brandishing terrible weapons and hurling them at Him in rage and envy. These demons had great power and were able to destroy whatever they set themselves upon. Yet due to the invincible power of meditation, compassion, and loving kindness emanating from Siddhartha, they could not defeat Him.

Now only hours from gaining enlightenment, in a meditation of unassailable stability, He transformed all that was flung at Him into celestial flowers. He suffered not the slightest harm. Thus conquering and subduing all the mara-devils during the period of dusk on that night, then continuing on through the middle watch of the night He remained in the deep samadhi of meditation. Finally, at the early dawn which followed that full moon night, He gained complete perfect enlightenment, samyak sambuddha. Having attained enlightenment, Siddhartha Gautama, now the Buddha, entered into the most sublime and indescribable state of bliss and emptiness which is the enlightened state.

In this profound condition He gave rise to a great wish, thinking, 'How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings could share in this realization which is now my own.'

(From "An Introduction to Buddhism", given by His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche in Barcelona, Spain, in 2000).

On the 15th day of the 4th lunar month (May 27th), is the celebration of Saka Dawa Duchen, Shakyamuni Buddha's Entering the Womb, Enlightenment and Parinirvana.

The Song of Happiness

by Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen

I request the blessings of the Lord Guru,
whose body is the nature of all Buddhas.

Residing in a secluded place, I thought
“Presently, whatever I am thinking is deluded,
I am not unhappy, so I am happy.”

Obtaining the precious human birth difficult [to obtain] is bliss;
meeting with the Mahayana Dharma is bliss;
relying on a true guru is bliss;
meeting with the Vajrayana Dharma is bliss;
being ripened according to the method of tantra is bliss;
Keeping the samayas and vows is bliss;
meditating on the yoga of the two stages of the Path is bliss;
practicing the profound conduct is bliss.

There is no harm to the mind by apparent objects;
those essenceless objects are false,
similar to the reflection of form in a mirror;
although one acts with grasping, it is essenceless,
also the three objects (odors, flavors, and tangibles) are similar to
that.

Whatever sound is heard is similar to an echo;
Although one acts with desire and anger, it is essenceless;
Also mentally determine that whatever is thought is an illusion;
in the state of illusion, there is bliss.

Because illusion is searched, nothing exists to be expressed;
in the inexpressible state, there is bliss.



Although searching for samsara, it is not found;
the nature of that is nirvana;
in the nondual state, there is bliss.

Although searching for suffering, it is not found;
the nature of that is great bliss;
in the state of union, there is bliss.

As samsara cannot be abandoned,
yogins, do not give rise to the thought of abandoning [samsara].
As buddhahood cannot be accomplished,
yogins, do not give rise to the thought of accomplishing [buddhahood].

That understanding of the nonexistence of samsara and nirvana,
is the view of the inseparability of samsara and nirvana;
In the state of inseparability, there is bliss.

Yogins who understand in this way,
although there is nothing to practice, practice diligently!
Although there is nothing to meditate, meditate diligently!
Although there is nothing to protect, protect samaya!
If it is understood in that way, there is bliss.

I also am in that state,
Son, you also should remain in that state.

Having attained unattainable enlightenment,
the buddhahood that cannot be accomplished
exists in one's own mind;
mind is not unhappy, so it is happy.

This is superior upadesha of the Jetsun
and was also requested by Yeshe Dorje;
may the highest enlightenment be obtained
with my effort of writing this.

(From "Treasures of the Sakya Lineage" by Migmar Tseten)



Annual Grand Pujas at the Sakya Centre (May-Aug)

- **Annual Grand Mahavairocana Puja:** 11th of the 4th lunar month for five days (24th - 28th May)
- **Wrathful Guru Rinpoche Puja:** 10th of the 5th lunar month for one day (21st June)
- **Annual Grand Vajrakilaya Puja:** 11th of the 7th lunar month for eleven days (20th - 31st August)

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Saka Dawa Düchen: 4-15 (May 27)**

The day the Lord Buddha entered His mother's womb, attained Enlightenment and passed into Parinirvana.

- **Chokhor Düchen: 6-4 (Jul 15)**

The day the Lord Buddha turned the first Wheel of Dharma in Sarnath.

- **Birthday of Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche : 5th July**

- **Birthday of H.H. the Dalai Lama : 6th July**

✽ Lamp offerings in the monastery or food offerings to the monks are welcome during all important pujas and ceremonies. Please contact the Sakya Centre in Rajpur directly if you wish to make any offerings (Contact details on the last page)

INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST ACADEMY (IBA) SUMMER PROGRAM

The IBA, in Nepal , teaches the key Classic Indian Buddhist treatises that are studied by all Mahayana and Tibetan traditions. Courses are taught in a traditional manner directly in English by senior khenpos of the Sakya Tradition.

PROGRAM

COURSE ON ABHIDHARMA » June 7 to July 2

Khenpo Jamyang Tenzin will present a detailed line by line explanation of Gorampa's authoritative summary of Abhidharma.

COURSE ON LOGIC AND DEBATE » July 5 – 30

Khenpo Dr. Ngawang Jorden will lecture upon the third chapter of Sapan's Gateway: the practice of debate.

COURSE ON DEPENDENT ARISING » August 2 – 27

Khenpo Dr. Ngawang Jorden will teach upon Gorampa's presentation of dependent origination by means of the individual nature of the twelve links, how they are related as causes and results, and within how many lifetimes these twelve links are fully manifest.

ANNUAL 10-DAY RETREAT » September 1-10

This year's retreat will be based on the Seven Point Mind Training. These pith instructions are treasured by all Tibetan traditions equally, as they embody the essence of what needs to be done to bring about a wholesome change of mind.

TIBETAN LANGUAGE COURSES » June, July & August

For those seeking a more complete understanding of the study texts, we offer Tibetan Language instruction at various levels. We will also run an intensive Translator Training Course, beginning on Oct. 1, 2011.

Please visit our website for more information on the topics, fees, registration and downloading teachings.
www.sakyaiba.edu.np

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H.E. Jetsun Kushok with members of Sakya Kalden Ling, Frankfurt

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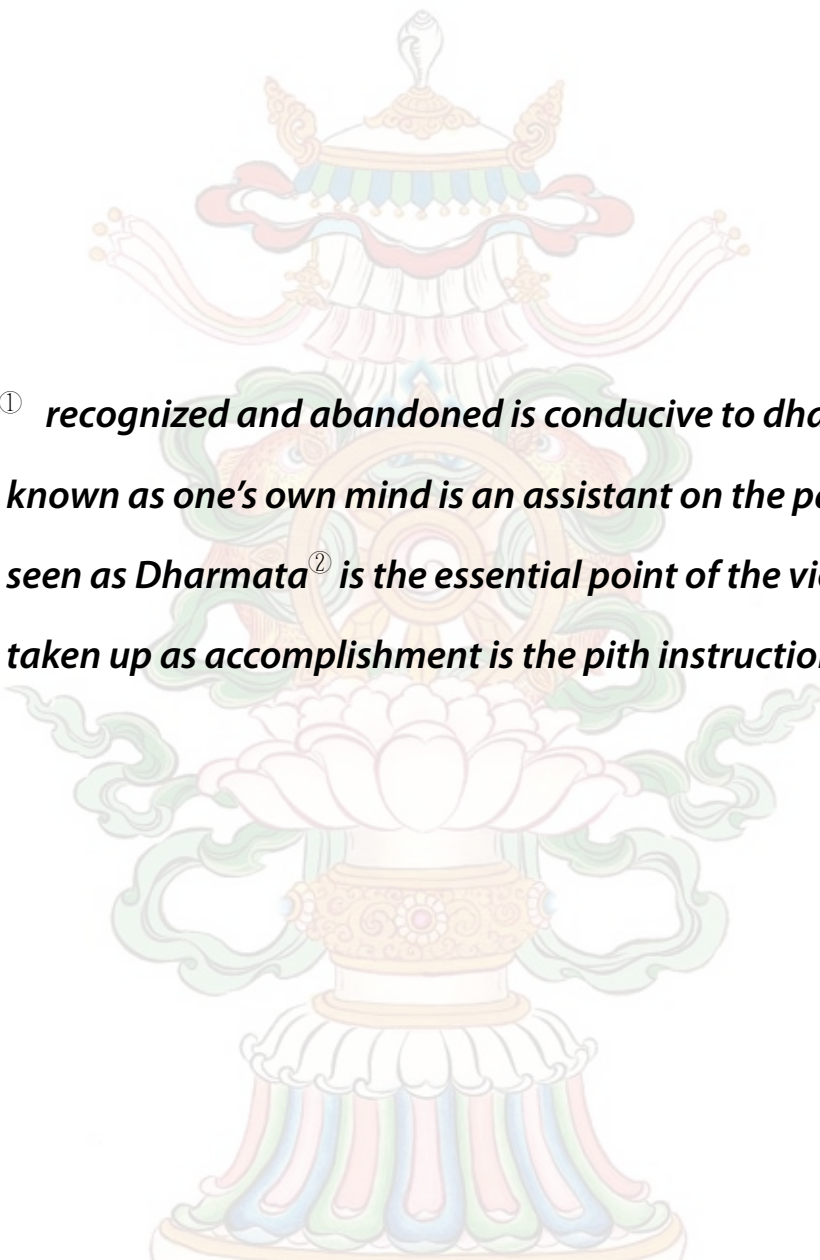
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Mara^① recognized and abandoned is conducive to dharma
Mara known as one's own mind is an assistant on the path
Mara seen as Dharmata^② is the essential point of the view
Mara taken up as accomplishment is the pith instruction.

① Mara: obstacles, demonic forces, the negative aspects of mind, including: Mara of the aggregates, Māra of afflictive emotions, Māra of the Lord of Death and Mara of the son of the gods.

② Dharmata: 'dharma-ness', i.e. the intrinsic nature of phenomena, which is revealed through the removal of delusion by practicing the path.



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