

Winter 2006
Spiritual Advisor
Venerable Acharya
Zasep Tulku Rinpoche

Sukkhā Siddhi

Tashi Choling Society Newsletter



Rinpoche led prosperity
vase building workshop-see
more photos on page 2/3



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*Tashi Choling
is a registered
not for profit
Society*

*Thank you to everyone
who contributed
to the newsletter*

President
Peter Lewis

Vice-President
Sharon O'Shea

Secretary
Oya Yansa

Treasurer
Joan Silvey

A Real Gompa

Nancy Harris

Rinpoche leaned over and quietly said to me, "Now it looks like a real gompa." We were standing in front of the new hand-hewn entry way that Rinpoche's friend Hart had given to us last fall. This fall, thanks to many friends the gompa has become more and more like a real gompa with another hand-worked wooden doorway happily constructed by Colin and others. A magnificent flagstone walkway now covers the ground under our central entrance thanks to Pamela, Ivana and Matt.

The front door was freshly painted by George and opens into a cloak room totally redesigned by Eric and expertly constructed and donated by Daren, stained by Jane and Ivana. Pamela finished off this room with beautiful new floor coverings that really give our entering place the solemnity that it deserves. Newly painted walls in the hallway, stairway, kitchen and expanded gompa walls saw many kind hands at work.

The authentic Tibetan colour scheme that Rinpoche chose proved to be a bit of a challenge at first but has comfortably settled into a remarkable new gompa space.

Wayne astonished us all with his beautifully crafted wood window and door trims and found himself swept into the vortex whirlwind of Warren's cork floor laying. Peter appeared regularly with new supplies of wood and tools.

Jane patiently stained all the trim as George took on the job of painting the new floor in the sun room upstairs. The floor in there has been raised so that we will not have that head bumping place in the gompa anymore. Ivana, Cheryl and Oya painted the entire second floor and it looks so much better! Joan, Fern and Sharon moved the kitchen upstairs for the work party and Yitka and others cooked meal after meal for the volunteer workers.

Mother Sharon had planned and shopped for all the provisions and arranged just about everything for just about everybody. Plus housed masses of dharma travelers from far-away centres.

Pamela and Wayne were there day after day with humour and grace doing whatever needed doing.

Brian and Stacy were delayed in their arrival time to help out by the need to fly to Texas to receive their new bundle of joy, the lovely Rosalyn.

Nothing like a new baby to perk up a tired work party.

Prosperity Vases *Margrith*

Saka Dawa 2005: "the word Gompa," Rinpoche teaches, "means place for cultivating the enlightened mind. We already have the seed within us."

I start with a herbalist's vision: Row upon row of Calendula plants cultivated on a verdant piece of land, their glorious saffron-colored blossoms dotting the rows of luscious green that stretch all the way to infinity. A mountain towers in the distance. "Mount Zasep," I hear Peter say.

"Calendulas are medicinal plants. They are great wound healers," my mother writes. "They will improve your soil. They are quite hardy and they self-seed. Once you have them in your garden they never leave."

I visualize a large field of Calendula. Calendula Mind takes over. The seeds have been waiting in my kitchen cupboard, recalling an abundant harvest of a couple of years ago. A plot

the size of a football field might be required to grow all these seeds. How safe will it be to plant them out in the open? Will the deer come and eat off the young shoots?

March 2005: On the phone with Sharon Gretzinger in Vancouver. She offers us the use of her greenhouse up on Sproule Creek Road. Now we can get started!

April 2005:

Within 2 weeks, every single seed we planted in the greenhouse has come up. It will take patience, perseverance and mindfulness to look after these babies. With the help of Green Tara mantras, wind and weather, storms, sun and rain, everything will grow. We discover hoof prints in the soft earth. The deer have come to check things out, but they don't like calendulas as much as we do.

July 2005: Great, glorious harvest. Blossom heads in baskets, later on spread out to dry.

August 2005: The sangha works together at the Gompa. With the guidance of Rinpoche, it takes two days to fill the 74 Prosperity Vases. Dried calendula petals and many other medicinal plants are placed alongside an image of Yellow Tara, precious stones and metals, mantras and incense.



greenhouse
photo
courtesy
of
Margrith
Schraner

...cont. from p. 1...

There was a bit of final scurrying about just before the consecration of the space and the joyous wedding of John & Stacy. (p. 4)

If you have not seen The Real Gompa give yourself a treat and come see. But if you really want a treat come sit in The Real Gompa.

If I have forgotten anyone's name who helped, please forgive me. The Buddhas know and they rejoice in your joyous effort.

Blessings, Nancy

TIME

Warren

Time itself is no wonder
an endless mirror,
wrapped up space,
on my wristband.



November 2005: Consecration of the Prosperity Vases.

December 2005: Rinpoche gives Yellow Tara initiation in Toronto.

Rinpoche will give Yellow Tara initiation in Vancouver February 25, 2006, and in Nelson Wed. Feb. 15

With gratitude to Rinpoche for a wonderful project that provided a focus for the creative energies of our sangha. Thank you to Sharon for the greenhouse and the field; to Peter for tilling the field and adding the manure; to Joan and Fern for hosting the committee meeting; to Ivana, Peter, Oya and Ernest for offering rides up to Sharon's place; to Oya for digging and widening pathways and for mulching the soil; to Ivana and Oya for their expertise in preparing the soil in the



greenhouse and the open field, for thinning and transplanting the seedlings; to Annely, Pamela and Wayne for turning on the soaker hose to keep the seedlings alive in the greenhouse; to Ernest for watering the

calendulas out in the field; to Isabel for her vision of calendulas lining the road to the Gompa; to Pamela for including calendula plants in her landscaping plans; to Annely for the thought of creating a calendula massage oil and to everyone who helped with the harvest. I add to it the thought of making a salve.

It has been a growing season.

Love and Marriage

Joan Silvey



*left to right
Fern & Joan, Pamela & Wayne,
John & Stacy*

It was the summer of love and marriage here in the Kootenays! Three couples were very fortunate to have beloved Venerable Zasep Rinpoche conduct beautiful Buddhist wedding ceremonies to celebrate love and a spiritual life together.

Fern and Joan, who met at Gaden Tashi Choling Retreat in Sproule Creek, were married on June 25 at the Gray Creek Hall.

Pamela and Wayne, who met at Dorje Ling Retreat in Tasmania, were married at the Gompa on July 22.

Stacy and John, who reside in Moscow, Idaho, were married outdoors at Gaden Tashi Choling Retreat on September 3.

The newly renovated Gompa was consecrated in the morning of Sept. 3, just before Stacy and John's wedding.

All 6 newlyweds are grateful to Rinpoche for his spiritual guidance and joyful encouragement and to the Sangha for their loving support.

Astrology Corner

Sharon O'Shea

The cosmic meditation is quite interesting at this time. Saturn in Leo, responsibility to the intelligence of the heart, is retrograding in the beginning degrees of Leo until April, so we are all involved in an inner adjustment to heartfelt circumstances. Responsibilities to children in all forms; youth, childhood, inner child, beginning projects, consciousness in nurturing any creation, is the area of most responsibility for each individual. (In process until Sept 2007)

The collective healing is represented by Chiron in Aquarius opposition Saturn intensifying until the beginning of April. This is a time to develop the heart chakra and knowledge of the human condition. For instance, if your heart chakra opens and you receive healing, generosity to others is very beneficial. For those of you involved in chakra studies, this is a time of the quantum leap in light-body awareness. Generally, with an aspect of awareness like this we find we are lacking in some way and the realization is ego challenging, but this is how awareness is awakened, and we will right ourselves. Or the challenge is some element of political or social or simply human conditioning that may need readjustment in the light of truer knowledge. Old karmic patterns are coming up for review. We will be suffering these breakthroughs until May 2010 so be prepared to be of service for healing the human condition with heartfelt conviction as this is played out.

*Develop skillful means of service;
what will heal you,
will heal others.*

Simultaneously, Pluto, the planet of aligning oneself with spirit, is connecting with the heart center of our galaxy. Pluto is nothing if not thorough, so pay me now, or pay me later. This vibration will be in play until Nov 2007. Rebirth and vision are key.

The reason I am talking about all of this centering and projecting into the future is so that you will understand that if you have a heart connection to anything of importance in your life, it is the time to develop awareness and skill and the forces are with you. We do have time as, you can see, these are slow but powerful energies. Center, and look for the center in others.

Spirituality in astrology is defined as no separation. Mirror-like wisdom is another way. Compassion is the great informer. Love is the motivation. All this is not easy.

Best to you, Sharon

SKY DANCER

Originally written by Keith Dowman '96 , now humbly offered in a simplified series by Clo

Once, a long time ago in the high, snowy lands of Tibet, a girl child was born unto the royal couple of Kharchen. But this was no ordinary baby, nor were these ordinary times. In those days, Trisong Detsen was the Emperor, but in truth he was an emanation of the Bodhisattva Manjusri. To firmly root Buddhism and to displace the Bon shamanic ways among his people, the Emperor invited Pema Jungne, a great master from India, to come and teach. After the great monastery of Samye Ling and many other smaller temples had been made, with the light of the Buddha's teachings beginning to shine forth, Pema Jungne thought to himself ..." hmm, if the Goddess Saraswati would project an emanation, I could spread the teachings of Tantra".

Immediately, the guru disappeared in a flash of radiant light! Travelling instantly to Orgyen, the land known as Dakini Paradise, Pema Jungne spent the next seven years courting the Goddess Saraswati to join him in ultimate pleasure. When the Guru's vajra and the Dakini's lotus were united, the elements of the worlds quaked and trembled, light shone forth from the radiant divine couple, and from this aura a shooting star, a sacred bead of light fell towards Tibet. Like a humming golden bee, it entered the Prince Kharchen's head while he was making love to his queen, and she conceived that splendid night.

Many auspicious signs and dreams foretold the wonder and glory of this child to come.

Nine months later, in a shower of gorgeous blossoms and celestial music, a baby girl was born with waist-length black hair, able to sit up in a full lotus and to recite full chants. The royal parents were enraptured and named her Tsogyel, Dakini of the Ocean, because their nearby lake had increased in size upon her birth.

Tsogyel grew miraculously so that when she was a month old she looked like an 8 year old girl.

To protect this amazing child, her parents kept her hidden away for 10 years. By then, stories of her astonishing beauty had spread to China and many sought her in marriage. But Tsogyel

wanted to remain chaste and refused all suitors.

To avoid tribal strife, her father eventually felt compelled to betroth her to a rich local prince. On her wedding night though, Tsogyel took one of the finest dowry horses and ran far away to a secret valley to live on her own for a year.

Eventually one of the competing princes found her, put her in irons and dragged Tsogyel back to her father, hoping to gain his permission to marry her. Alas, all this did was make everyone unhappy.

The father wrote the Emperor asking him to wed his beautiful daughter so as to avoid inter-tribal wars which were brewing to claim Tsogyel. It was also pointed out that Tsogyel was miraculously gifted and would be of immense help to the Emperor in spreading the Dharma. The delighted King sent an armed envoy of over 900 men to quell the unrest and to escort Tsogyel properly back to the Palace.

Their lavish marriage was celebrated with a three-month feast. The Emperor then appointed Tsogyel custodian of the Dharma, and gave her access to his best scholars.

Eventually, the king wanted initiation into Tantra from the great Guru so he invited Pema Jungne back and offered him a mountain of jewels and wealth, plus Tsogyel to be his consort. This started her initiations and empowerments into secret yoga with her Master.

During this period of instructions Saraswati appeared to Tsogyel and gave her the power of infallible memory, divine intuition, and other miraculous skills.

.....to be continued.....

President's Message

Peter Lewis

Hello Everyone,

Well once again after the last AGM, Joan and I are back on the TCS board. Joan resumes her role as Treasurer and I as President.

Additionally, Sharon O'Shea is Vice President

...cont. from p. 5...

after a 15 year hiatus as a TCS board member. (She was President when I first came to Nelson in 1988.) Oya is Secretary and Newsletter person while Ivana, Aradia and Warren are members at large. Many thanks to Rinpoche and all the executive for keeping things going another year.

By the way, if you are interested in helping out, there is no need to wait for the next AGM. Just let us know what you would like to do.

For this year we plan to organize Dharma movie nights, an open house for TCS's 26th year and hold another Tibetan Bazaar. This is along with the regular Sunday meditation and Union of Sutra and Tantra evening discussion groups.

Rinpoche will be holding a Gaden For The West (GFTW) planning meeting in May for GFTW directors and the Gompa Committee. If you have any visions about where you would like to see the center in the next 5-10 years please let me know. The first phase of transformation of the Gompa is almost complete and its now time to consider the next phase.

Well it certainly seems that the energy in Tashi Choling is increasing and I encourage everyone to stay in touch and participate.

Many teachers say that Guru-Buddha-Dharma-Sangha activity is really the only activity of consequence in the larger scheme of things.

Although we may suffer setbacks and times of what appears to be little progress, it is the long term commitment and action that are important.

All the best,
Peter

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Scholarship/Bursary

Sharon O'Shea

Hello Everyone,

After much deliberation about the most skillful approach to my "agenda", I have once again volunteered to work on the TCS board. My agenda is to develop a TCS scholarship program for our members, their children and unborn members in perpetuity. For over 25 years now, Rinpoche and anchoring Tibetan Buddhism has been the focus of our spiritual attention and goodwill. And look at the resultwe have teachings we have always dreamed about and our teacher is worthy.

However, in sharing our teacher with the world, the world asks us to pay attention to hard currency. We still do have what TC has always had, and that is each other. We have always been a collective of good people who could appreciate the struggles of our members and could support the path each has taken as a step closer to illumination in this lifetime.

At this time Tashi Choling must negotiate a scholarship program whereby we are placing at least one or two people a year from our group in a retreat of their choosing. If consciousness is awakened in any one of our members, we will all benefit in a large way. I am considering that this would be a forgivable loan, many of us are very aware of the law of returns and it does work.

Collectively, we will try once again to promote our Tibetan Bazaar and along with other donations we may be able to accomplish for one member a "completion" retreat of a practice begun 15-20 years ago. Imagine it!!!! Or give aid to other beginning retreatants.

If anyone would like to donate money for this cause, we may be able to benefit Gaden For The West, Rinpoche, and our membership. If you have any input on how this can be fairly and properly administered, please feel free to contact any board member, preferably in writing. If you are interested in negotiating a work exchange, let us know and the board will work on that. Thank you, and much love to each of you, Sharon.



Gaden Tashi Choling Retreat

Regular Events

Sunday Meditation 10 - 11:30 am

Tuesday Study Group:
Psychology and Buddhism 7:00 pm

Thursday Study Group:
Three Yanas 7:00 pm

Special Events at the Gompa

Yellow Tara Initiation

Practice For Prosperity
Wednesday, Feb. 15 7:00 pm
\$15 - \$25 suggested donation
Everyone is welcome

Benefit Potluck Dinner For Dennis Zommershoe

Thursday Feb. 16, 6:00 pm
at Margrith and Ernest's house
706 Mill St. (354-0494)
suggested donation \$20

Rinpoche will be showing a short CBC
production completed this year
about his life titled
"Come Again"
and perhaps a movie about
Mongolia titled "Woked Up Field"
featuring traditional Mongolian music

Stay Tuned For The Tashi Choling Tibetan Bazaar

For updates on events
go to www.gadenforthewest.org
and www.tcs.kics.bc.ca/events.html/

Kootenay Bells *Warren*

Like Autumn's last drink,
Yielding I am
for the falling Mallet of stillness,
as it eases itself into numbness again.
Clearly the Osprey must get going.
Kootenay Bells are sounding down time,
Down into the current of life's regeneration.

Tomorrow

Warren

Tomorrow isn't a day that I know
isn't that inviting?
I love tomorrow for that quality.
Tomorrow brings what is from today,
Moulding from familiar,
To what can't ever be known.
Tomorrow is magic contained
In a hope or a wish.
Please let all be fulfilled tomorrow.

The Tepee

Warren

Darn, I've left the tepee too long.
It doesn't like it like that,
peace shares itself.
Some sort of pyramid power,
How!
People smile inside making laughs,
is what covers tepee's giggles,
its outside quiet and inside,
all giggles.



Do you have
a beautiful item
to donate for the Auction?
Phone Oya 505-1198 to have it picked up