

GENTLE VOICE



A NEWSLETTER OF SIDDHARTHA'S INTENT

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How to Look for Guru and Be Student

by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

What's the Sanskrit word for *gewai shenyen*? *Kalyanamitra*. Now let's talk about *kalyanamitra*. *Kalyanamitra* means 'spiritual companion' and 'relative', I think. We will talk about guru and disciple, guru and student, teacher and student. But don't expect that this is going to give you a clear guideline. It's not like I will give you a list and with this list you will go around and ask, "Does he have the qualities?"

I think the word 'guru' has probably been marred by some of the contemporary gurus, with their inexpressible actions at times. And don't think that this is a recent phenomenon; it has always been a bit like that. We even hear stories of what happened at Nalanda University (we are talking sixth or seventh century), of how some of the gurus misbehaved and that very misbehaviour was also cherished and recounted year after year as an incredible thing that happened. So it's very difficult. There is no clear guideline, but it's worth discussing.

Also, the concept of the guru is a very Asian thing, especially a very Indian thing. So introducing that to a different culture, a culture that cherishes individual human rights, is another matter. But the good news is it's all workable.

The *kalyanamitra* concept, the spiritual teacher or actually even just the teacher/student relationship, is very much cherished in places like India. We are not even talking about a spiritual teacher. A teacher is considered someone who gives you wisdom. I'm not talking about spiritual wisdom, just anything: how to cook, how to do carpentry, sewing, everything. Someone who gives you knowledge is very much cherished. There are sayings, there are poems, there are stories dedicated to this, saying, "People can give you gold, people can give you diamonds and pearls, but that's not as precious as someone who gives you knowledge." Knowledge is priceless. Someone can give you a kilo of gold; it still has a price. But if someone gives you knowledge, you can use it, it's priceless.

So the teacher is someone who gives you knowledge. Among the knowledge- or wisdom-givers, someone who provides you with wisdom or knowledge on the spiritual level is even more cherished because 'spiritual' has something to do with beyond this life, to Buddhist or

Hindu thinking it does, anyway. Someone can teach you how to cook, but this knowledge works only now. Someone else can teach you how to pray or how to communicate with god and that is very precious because it will bring you peace and liberation or the experience of heaven in the future. It's an important fact. So this is why a spiritual teacher is even more cherished.

But that's changing now everywhere, I think. In Asia it's changing because the materialistic emphasis is becoming very strong. Having said that, it's very nice when you go to India and suddenly you see *sadhus*, wanderers – no slippers, almost half-naked, ashes everywhere – in the parliament lounge or university campus. It's so nice to see because this is a culture that venerates beyond-this-world issues.

In the past someone who renounced wealth and their worldly life and went out as a pilgrim or a wanderer was very respected because they were considered to be doing something incredible. While the rest of us are all confused and intoxicated by this endless delusion of wealth and attention and comfort, those few wanderers had the courage to get out of this system. But, as I said, that's changing a lot everywhere because materialism is very important. And there is a very good reason for that. Aeroplanes fly and boats don't sink, whereas you cannot see enlightenment, you cannot touch it, it's not tangible. That's how the modern mind thinks.

Basically, what I'm trying to tell you is that your motivation, your intention, is the key to all this guru/student thing. What is your intention? First of all, why are you looking for a guru? And why are you looking for this particular guru? And why are you looking for one? Why are you looking for many? Intention plays a very important role.

In the past, even in Tibet, supposedly one of the greatest nations that had this really strong Buddhism, there were a lot of incidents where students looked for teachers who were politically powerful or teachers who were wealthy because students wanted a certain access. If it is clear: "I'm going to this guru because he's wealthy", it's much easier to deal with. The worst is when this comes with a mixture of wishing to gain enlightenment, wishing to learn something spiritual. That gets so murky, that gets really difficult. In fact, if you are looking for a master

with this kind of intention, you are not really looking for a *kalyanamitra*, a spiritual companion. You are not. You think you are, but you are actually not. You are looking for a *mitra*, a friend, not a *kalyanamitra*, a spiritual friend.

Maybe we are not really attracted to political power, wealth or influence. But some of you, maybe without you even knowing (meaning you haven't come out of the closet yet), have a certain hormone that is actually pushing you towards a certain guru. There are a lot of incidents like this: he's very attractive, not necessarily physically, but as feminine, as masculine, as a father figure, as a brother figure, as a sex object. All kinds of things! A small, tiny-weeny hormone has changed the complete vision of the guru and you don't realise it.

And then many of us are lonely. Loneliness is a big problem. We are all very lonely. For instance, if I show you a pen and I ask you, "Can you see the pen that I see?" we all say, "Yes, I can see that pen." But somewhere deep down in the reality we don't. You will never see the pen that I see. You will *never, ever, ever* see it until you achieve enlightenment, which means what you see, what you experience, is all only what *you* experience. Basically, we can never share anything. Scary, isn't it?

Out of that comes a completely different motivation: you are looking for a guru out of loneliness. I'm not judging that. I'm not saying it is good or bad. We don't know. If you happen to have a hormone change, one single atom of hormone in your body can suddenly pop up and make you passionately driven to a master who is actually a great master. With this passion you go to him or her and, based on that, the master gives you the teaching and it may work. You could get enlightenment. All thanks to this atom of hormone. We don't know, we cannot judge. All I'm saying is this happens. It's good to know.

Okay, spiritual companion. When I talk about the spiritual path, I'm talking more about something like Buddhism, so I don't know how this will complement Judaism or Christianity. When we talk about the spiritual path, we are not talking so much about this life, the gain and the loss of this life. In fact, if you are really a strict Mahayana practitioner, we are not even talking about next life. We are talking about enlightenment. So for someone who wishes to have a guru the ideal motivation is the wish for enlightenment. That should be the driving force of the motivation, seeking enlightenment. Attention,

influence, companionship, friendship, someone to share with – not important. Someone who could show you the path to enlightenment should be the driving force of your motivation. If you have that, very, very, very few things can go wrong.

So the wish to gain enlightenment is the main thing. But that's easier said than done because most of us are not interested in enlightenment. Enlightenment is an idea, it's abstract. Maybe some of us are serious about enlightenment, so we may put more emphasis on that. But we will consider all the other aspects as a bonus – wealth, prosperity, attention, friendship, companionship, someone to share a pizza with. If you have the chance of getting that, you will grab it, basically. You will grab it before someone else *grabs* it. You understand what I'm saying? You will not give it up. But if those things

happen to someone who is really, really, really only thinking about enlightenment, it's okay; if those things don't happen, it's fine, too.

That's difficult because we have a strong habit of the eight worldly dharmas, of course. We love praise, we don't like criticism; we like attention, we don't want to be ignored. And

when you have that kind of motivation, when you are looking for attention, not looking to be ignored, looking for praise, not looking for criticism, a real *kalyanamitra* is difficult. You are closing the doors. You are not letting in the real guru. It's very difficult because he or she can't tell you the truth. If they tell the truth, you don't like it. A seeker of enlightenment is a seeker of the truth. You have to hear the truth. During the path especially it's very, very hard, painful truth.

Seeking enlightenment should be the main motivation. Of course, that covers a lot of things. If you are looking for a guru, that means you must also, intellectually at least, know that samsaric or worldly life has no value. Basically, you have to change your value system. While you see some value in worldly life, you will not seek enlightenment, not real enlightenment, anyway. Maybe you will seek some kind of fake enlightenment, temporal enlightenment, but you will not seek the real enlightenment because you are still attracted to worldly life.

So we are talking about renunciation. Here we are not talking about renunciation like renouncing Sydney and adopting Nimbin. That's not really renunciation. Many people do think that's renunciation. Many people think that wanting to live like a capitalist and work like a

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important role.*

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Deer Park g a t h e r i n g

By Luc Dierckx

"As Buddha said, we should not take the dharma at face value. We should examine his teachings, analyse and properly contemplate them, then apply them if we find them beneficial."

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

Deer Park Gathering was conceived by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, who felt that many of the young people in countries like Bhutan and Sikkim had lots of questions about their lives and the Buddhist path, but had no place to turn to. Ironically, he said, in the last remaining Vajrayana countries ordinary people seem to have very little access to the lamas. Cultural habits have created a great distance between teachers and disciples. This seems to be especially problematic for the young people, who have grown up much more inquisitive and questioning than previous generations, but at the same time find no place to address their doubts.

Rinpoche asked Ugyen Wangchuk, Dolma Gunther and me to create a place on the web where these issues could be discussed freely and thus Deer Park Gathering was born. While the original audience was certainly mostly young Bhutanese and Tibetans, word soon spread and we started seeing people from all over the world dealing with very similar issues in their lives.

Since then Rinpoche has given a number of teachings addressed specifically to the people at Deer Park Gathering, while the discussion forum itself was integrated into a larger framework of the Three Prajnas: Hearing, Contemplating and Cultivating. The focus has been to integrate these three prajnas. Reading a dharma book or listening to a tape is great, but next we need to properly reflect on that, we need to go beyond mere intellectual understanding, we need to make the teachings part of our being.

I'm sure we all have a whole bookshelf full of dharma books we intend to read "one day". The Book of the Month Club takes a book (or some selected reading from the *Gentle Voice*, for example) and uses it for further reflection, questions and discussions.

Deer Park Gathering has filled a different niche for different people. Some people live in isolated areas and feel a need to connect with a community of people who want to investigate the words of the Buddha, some people might not have a chance to attend a certain dharma teaching in person yet would love to study the materials and so on.

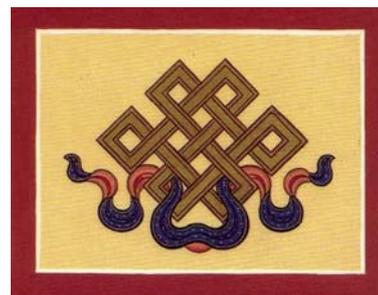
Of course venturing into the brave new world of the internet brings up all kinds of challenges as well. Already many of us have fallen victim to a sort of spiritual consumerism: we look at dharma teachings being offered the way we look at the TV guide, what else is on, what's next? Sometimes there is an overwhelming amount of information at our fingertips. How do we assimilate all that or how do we discriminate what to accept and what to reject? Then there are all the issues with on-line communication – it seems so easy to have misunderstandings and miscommunications.

Of course on-line meetings will never replace direct face-to-face contact. Having said that, perhaps no area in our lives is in greater need of mindfulness than the time we spend on-line. I am sure we are all too familiar with the phenomenon of a whole evening in front of the computer that just zoomed by with complete lack of awareness on our part. As Pengar Jampal Zangpo said:

"Awareness is the body of meditation, as is taught; Whatever arises is fresh – the essence of realisation."

We are taught again and again to challenge our limited concepts of what dharma is. Deer Park Gathering provides an opportunity, nothing more, nothing less. What we do with that opportunity is, as Dzigar Kongtrül Rinpoche pointedly puts it, "Up to us."

(You can visit Deer Park Gathering on the web at <http://deerparkgathering.org>)



Kalachakra Initiation at Amaravati

By Diana Cousens

The significance of Amaravati as the place to hold Kalachakra derives from legend. Legend has it that at the same time that the Buddha was teaching the Perfection of Wisdom on the mountain at Rajgir, he was also preaching the Kalachakra Tantra at the Dhanyakataka stupa in Amaravati. His appearance was not as an ordinary human being but as a subtle tantric being, who could only be perceived by those with extraordinary insight.

So the significance of Amaravati derives from the Buddhist point of view that there can be different levels of experience, common and subtle. There is a visible reality and, behind that, a subtle reality that only those with purified karma can perceive.

At any rate, Amaravati was not chosen because it had a large sports stadium, capable of seating 100,000 people, or other facilities. No. All the facilities had to be brought in. The state government of Andhra Pradesh upgraded the roads, water, electricity, drainage and provided thousands of tents at a cost of over \$Aus16,000,000. They also constructed a 125-foot cement Buddha statue at a cost of \$Aus600,000. While the intention might be seen as simply to promote tourism, the promotion of Buddhist pilgrimage is perhaps one of the most beneficial and benign forms of tourism. The development of Amaravati as a venue for this huge event was combined with a developing awareness of India's ancient history and rich archaeological heritage.

And the event was huge. Ninety thousand people attended from 47 countries. Nine thousand Tibetans came from Tibet with passports and visas issued by China which, while they were only valid up to Nepal, functioned to get them into India. For these Tibetans it was their first sight of the Dalai Lama and they demonstrated the great affection and faith for which they are famous. Every day he had audiences with new arrivals, all of whom were expected to return to Tibet.

The accommodation for most people was extremely basic. Simple tents without floors were offered, beds were layers of straw covered by a sheet. The weather was both hot and humid and four Tibetans died of heatstroke combined with heart conditions. People cooked on kerosene stoves inside the tents and washed themselves and their vegetables under public water pumps outside. The heat was unrelenting and all the tented areas were routinely sprayed every other day with Malathion, a toxic insecticide. While this was meant to control mosquitoes, the poison's long-

term side effects were of much greater concern to most Westerners than malaria.

The opportunity of the gathering was used to promote vegetarianism. No tent restaurant or tea shop could serve meat, on pain of a \$Aus1500 fine. The available food included vegetable noodle soups, cabbage or potato *momos*, and various Indian rice plates. Ice creams were popular. Campaigns were also run to create awareness of Tibet's endangered species. The gathering was told that it was no longer acceptable to wear leopard or any other rare animal skins, a practice which had apparently become increasingly popular in eastern Tibet.

All day a loudspeaker announced the names of people seeking their friends and relatives. The Kalachakra serves as a meeting place for people from all parts of the Himalayas, the Tibetan diaspora both within India and overseas, as well as Indian enthusiasts and Western Buddhists. The element of coming together is one of the most significant parts of the Kalachakra experience. Very few see the Dalai Lama very closely, his image was relayed back through the initiation area via video, but that is not important because everybody is in his presence.

The outer reality was of a massive public event, something like a sports grand final every day for a fortnight where everybody is camping in tents. But the inner reality for the pilgrims was one of making connections, both with each other, with the Dalai Lama as the supreme initiator and with the subtleties of the *Kalachakra Tantra*, whose history takes it from central India to central Asia, from Amaravati to Shambhala, and back again.



An Amdo family holding kusha grass (Photo Diana Cousens)

Interview - Khandro Thrinlay Chodon



(Photo Christina Peebles)

As a great-granddaughter of the renowned Drukpa Kagyü master Drubwang Shakya Shri, Khandro Thrinlay Chodon was born into a family of great meditators. She recently spoke to the *Gentle Voice*.

Could you please say something about your family background for the readers who haven't met you?

I was very fortunate when I opened my eyes on this earth. I was born in the most beautiful landscape of the northern Himalayas in an area known as Lahoul. And I was in the lap of my amazing mother and compassionate father, Apho Rinpoche.

My great-grandfather was known as Drubwang Shakya Shri. He was an accomplished *yogi* who started out as a cook in a monastery. He was born in a very humble nomadic family in the Kham region of Tibet and from there he bloomed into one of the great yogis of the time. My great-grandfather was brought up in a Drukpa Kagyü monastery and he did a lot of practice in that lineage and accomplished the highest realisation in *mahamudra*. Later he met Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and from him he received all the Nyingma transmissions and teachings and mastered *dzogpachenpo*. He was very involved in the *rimé* (non-sectarian) movement of the time. In his later years he became well known and had students everywhere.

People used to flock from the Himalayan regions like Lahoul, Ladakh, Pangi, Zanskar, Bhutan and Nepal. This is how we are connected to that land. Our connection comes from that time.

I believe you went to a Catholic school, while being of Tibetan background. That must have been a great contrast for you?

Yes, it was a great contrast. I think my father wanted me to understand the Western way of thinking as well as the Tibetan. At first they were planning to make me a nun. But later my father said that since his elder daughter had died, I couldn't be a nun; I had to study. They found a very good Catholic school, which was only two hours away from home. Maybe my father knew that he was going to die soon because he wanted his children to be very close. And he didn't live long after that, so it was a very good idea to have us close. I was born in a beautiful family, but this beauty vanished one by one.

And your father died when you were six?

Yes, after my father passed away I was sent to Catholic boarding school. I experienced quite a bit of prejudice from the Indians. Tibetans were considered very dirty and they would tease me by saying, "The Tibetans eat cow meat." The school was kept very clean and was quite fancy and sometimes I would look at the Tibetan settlement near our school through their eyes and I would see the Tibetans living in tents and looking very dirty and I would feel ashamed. Then I'd go home and my family would talk about *bodhicitta* mind, we would sit and do *pujas* together and I would melt into the practice and none of what the Indian children said would matter. When I was home, I was totally lost in our tradition. But when I came back to school, I would hear nothing good about it. It was very confusing. Yet I knew deep inside that the Tibetan tradition was the right path for me, although for a time I had to be at school, which was also very important for me.

I'm glad you survived and drew strength out of it and got the English language skills.

I was a very good student. Church was part of the curriculum and because I would get so much devotion out of singing, the teachers thought that I would become a very good Christian. When I went home I would sing Christian songs and I would be so devotional about Christianity. Ama-la got so worried that she told me, "You go to church, but you visualise the Dalai Lama." For me as a child it was very beautiful because I didn't see a difference between Christ and the Dalai Lama – so my

devotion to the Dalai Lama was only strengthened by this and to this day it grows.

What did you do after you finished school?

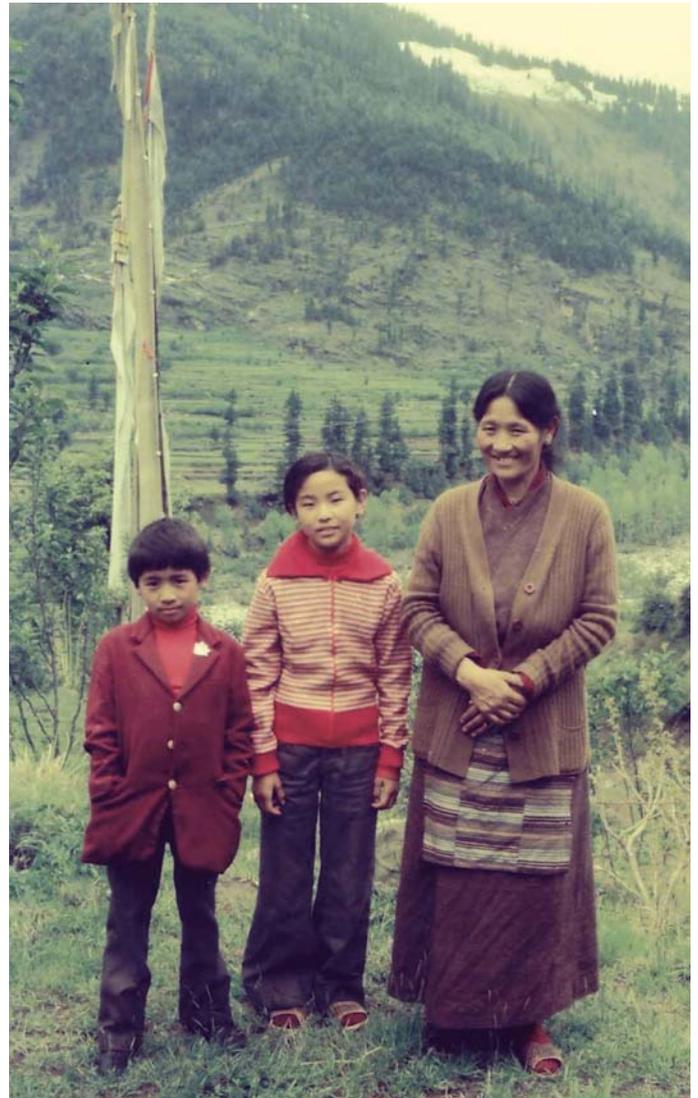
After school I did my bachelor's degree at Chandigarh. And then I spent a lot of time with my master Gegen Rinpoche. I used to serve him, massage his feet and look after him. At the same time I was being courted by many suitors because of my youth and good family. There were many proposals from esteemed Tibetan families. For Tibetan women it is important to have a good husband with lots of money. That is the ultimate kind of salvation! But I didn't want to get caught up in that, preferring to stay with my teacher, although at times part of me was tempted.

If I wasn't to get married, it was at least expected that after achieving my B.A, I would start my career. Again I had to choose, this time between my master and my career. I stayed according to my heart and when I looked back later, I said to myself, "It doesn't matter that this part of my youth has gone to my master. It was the biggest offering." Practice was very important to me from a young age. Even in Catholic school I wanted to do my prostrations as my mother had instructed and I used to prostrate in the bathroom because all the children mocked you if they saw you prostrating.

And later you completed an M.A. in the United States. How did that come about?

I had met the American author and peace activist Joanna Macy in Tashi Jong. She became my American mother and this meeting set in motion events that led to my going to America and meeting my future husband, Shabdrung Rinpoche. We fell in love and, while I was studying in America, we had a long-distance relationship – it was very beautiful, always spending money on calls! Then Gegen Rinpoche died and I came back to India for his cremation in 1997.

In 1998, I finished my M.A. and went to New York to visit Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's father. Shabdrung Rinpoche came from India to America and we were married by Joanna Macy. It was very beautiful. That was when my life as wife of an important rinpoche started, which was devoted to supporting him in his activity. However, our happiness was short-lived and in 2003 Shabdrung Rinpoche got cancer. It was very difficult – he spent six months in hospital before he died and I was by his side at all times. When he died I felt I could hardly grieve for him. I had to be strong for all his followers and make sure that all the ceremonies went well and were beautifully accomplished. With all the death I've experienced I feel it has helped me to understand impermanence truly. Now I want to devote my time to fulfilling my mother's dream of providing for the women practitioners who find it very hard in our culture to get support. It's important for me to provide firstly for twenty-



A young Thrinlay Chodon (centre) with her mother Sangyum Urygen Chodon and brother Jigme

one nuns who are very devoted and will form the cornerstone of achieving education and spiritual support for women and children in the remote areas of Ladakh.

Would you like to say something in conclusion?

What I would like to say is that even though outwardly it seems that we are in a much-degenerated time in some ways, please realise that we are nevertheless in a time when so many wonderful masters exist. And if we have pure vision, they're inseparable from the great masters and Buddha himself. So just open yourself totally without any doubts. And if we keep ourselves open, Guru Rinpoche, Tara and all the bodhisattvas are there, right in front of us, blessing us all the time. Whether we are Easterners or Westerners, our physical appearance doesn't matter; the blessings are always there. So therefore pursue your practice and be aware!

(For more information about the work of Khachodling Trust and the nuns of the Himalayan regions supported by Khandro Thrinlay Chodon, please go to www.khachodling.org.)



Independent School Arising

By Simon Thomas

"The Siddhartha School inspires students and staff to vitalise their lives through rigorous, compassionate and fearless recognition of the causes and results of their own actions ..." (Mission statement)

At the Khyentse Foundation's inception, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche outlined a long-term goal of establishing international, non-denominational schools for children with curricula based on Buddhist principles. In subsequent years he has consistently reiterated how important the project would be for the establishment of the dharma in the West and how children from diverse backgrounds and religions would benefit enormously from such an education. Finally, the opportunity has arrived for us as a sangha to pull together to support the foundation of the first Siddhartha School campus in Lismore, a small city in northern New South Wales, Australia (not far from Vajradhara Gonpa).

This pilot project is being established by an enthusiastic and dedicated group of Rinpoche's students that is well on the way to opening a primary school in 2008, a school that will fulfil both Rinpoche's vision and the requirements for schools operating under the New South Wales state syllabus. Now is a vital moment in the life of the school for it to gain the most auspicious conditions possible to begin establishing Rinpoche's vision in the world of education. Please consider your own role in the establishment of the Siddhartha School, whether as a volunteer, educator, builder, donor, fund-raiser, provider of interest-free loans, or in some other activity.

When questioned about how Buddhist principles might be integrated into a Western primary school curriculum, Rinpoche replied, "The Siddhartha School's aim is to plant a seed for the next generation, who will not only value the success of the material world, but who will also have a fundamental belief in cause, condition and effect and therefore have tolerance, integrity and understanding." In operational terms, this implies that the essential principle will be the development

throughout the curriculum of a deep understanding of the cause and effect of one's own thoughts and actions, thus empowering children to take responsibility for their life and to have the courage to see the world with an open-minded view based on wisdom and compassion.

The syllabus will be presented in a secular manner that encourages rigorous enquiry as a method of promoting optimal creative and academic achievement.

After several years of background work, the Siddhartha School Board has established the legal structure of the school and comprehensive financial projections for the school's establishment costs. At present we are considering various sites for the campus location. All options are on the table, including (1) buying land and building, (2) buying an existing building and (3) renting an existing building. Rinpoche has given specific instructions that the school must adhere to the highest possible environmental standards, and it is the aspiration of all involved to create a showpiece of sustainable development that will inspire the school community and the greater community beyond its walls.

Wherever you live and whatever your means, there is sure to be some contribution you can make to ensure the flourishing of the Siddhartha School, not only to benefit the people of Lismore, but also as a model for education in the wider world and as an

important step in developing Rinpoche's vision for the benefit of beings. It is clear from the financial forecasts that a great deal of money must be raised in a fairly short time, so be creative, be inventive and, most of all, be generous. Don't let this opportunity pass!

The Siddhartha School's aim is to plant a seed for the next generation ... who will have a fundamental belief in cause, condition and effect ...

(For more information contact: sschool@khyentsefoundation.org or P.O. Box 520, Kyogle, NSW, 2474, Australia.)

Fragile Palm Leaves



By Professor Peter Skilling

Through its Publication Fund the Khyentse Foundation is supporting the preservation of the fragile palm-leaf scriptures of the Theravada tradition.

For about two thousand years the teachings of the Buddha were written down on natural materials, such as palm leaf and birch bark. In Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, where palm trees were abundant, palm leaf was used to inscribe Pali from the early period. After being treated, the long, narrow leaves were incised with letters and then inked. In north-western India, including areas now in Pakistan and Afghanistan, birch trees were plentiful and the texts were written in ink on birch bark. Later, when paper was introduced to Southeast Asia, texts were also written on folding or accordion books made of hand-made paper from the mulberry tree.

In ancient times the manuscripts were cherished. They were wrapped in special cloth covers, tied with embroidered ribbons and carefully stored in beautiful cabinets. In the twentieth century, however, attitudes changed and the manuscripts became commodities, sold to collectors and tourists as curiosities.

In the 1990s the Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, Bangkok, collected over ten thousand manuscripts in an effort to prevent these priceless treasures from being dispersed around the world, by preserving them as a single collection. Most of the manuscripts are inscribed on palm leaves, while some are on traditional paper. The languages include Pali, Tai Khun, Shan, Thai, Burmese and Mon.

The texts cover a wide range of subjects. There are not only the teachings of the Buddha with their commentaries and sub-commentaries, but there are also histories, legends and grammars. At present the collection is being catalogued and digitisation has begun. Through digitisation the collection will be made available to the scholarly community.

The publication programme of Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation aims to catalogue and describe Buddhist literature. Three volumes of a series called *Materials for the Study of the Tripitaka* have been published so far. Volumes 1 and 2 are descriptions of the Buddhist literature of Thailand, in Pali, Thai and northern Thai. Many of the texts are unknown to modern scholarship



Paper accordion manuscript in Lanna script and Pali language. The text is the Sutra on Dependent Arising, one of the most important teachings of the Buddha

and the volumes are just a beginning, an attempt to sketch out the contours of the field. Volume 3 is a catalogue of Khmer and Pali texts microfilmed by the French Far Eastern School (Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris) in a programme to preserve what remains of the Khmer literary heritage after the terrible years of destruction in the 1970s. *Materials for the Study of the Tripitaka* is published in conjunction with the Lumbini International Research Institute (Lumbini, Nepal). Five more volumes are under preparation.

In 2004 Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation established the International Centre for Buddhist Studies (ICBS), Bangkok. The ICBS, still in the planning stage, will become a resource centre and library for the academic study of Buddhism. The ICBS is non-sectarian and seeks to promote scholarship and exchange of ideas among all traditions and schools of Buddhism.

(The President of the Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation is Peter Skilling. For the autumn semester, 2005, he was visiting Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. Fragile Palm Leaves is grateful for the support it receives from the Khyentse Foundation.)

How to Look for Guru and Be Student

by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

Continued from page 3

socialist is renunciation. That's not necessarily renunciation. That's just being lazy, that's just deceiving yourself, basically. You are migrating from one samsara to another samsara.

We are not talking about that kind of renunciation. We are talking about really seeing that this endless worldly life has no essential value. That is going to bring a certain amount of depression. I think that's good. I'm beginning to realise depression is good, especially if you are practitioners. I think this is what Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche talks about: this heart of sadness.

So seeing the futility of this worldly life will make you long for enlightenment, long for liberation. That's a good start. The good thing about this is when seeking enlightenment is your main motivation, that will one way or another, sooner or later, lead you to a lama who actually gives you the path to enlightenment because you know what you want. You have this agenda. Your agenda is looking for enlightenment so sooner or later when you are looking for the lama, you will look for a lama who can actually give you enlightenment.

Practitioners with such an agenda are like bees. They fly around looking for flowers and they will sooner or later find a flower. Right now most of us are a bit like flies. Of course, if there are nice things to suck, you will do it, but along the way if you find shit, you will opt for the shit. You will not think about the flower. This is because flies value shit, whereas bees think shit is very smelly, so naturally they will go for the flower. So it is really important to develop this renunciation mind. The bottom line is longing for enlightenment. That should be your agenda, your main desire. Therefore lama's looks, lama's height, lama's size, guru's education, guru's influence, guru's charisma, guru's hobbies don't really matter any more. Whether the guru can provide you with the path to enlightenment becomes more important; all the other things become secondary. Right now they are important for many of us, because we are not seeking enlightenment. We are seeking companionship, we are seeking *mitra*, not *kalyana*.

(The Gentle Voice thanks Tom Pengelly and Claire Blaxell for their transcription. This teaching is available from Siddhartha's Intent, Southern Door, as an MP3. For details please contact Anna Vlajkovic at annavlaj@yahoo.com or phone 02 9518 1363.)



Nuns reading prayer books during the Kalachakra ceremony, see page 5 (Photo Diana Cousens)

Dharma Dates

MADHYAMAKAVATARA — SECOND SERIES IN SYDNEY
Siddhartha's Intent Southern Door would like to remind those students who wish to attend the second series of *Madhyamakavatara* in Sydney from Friday 26 May to Sunday 4 June 2006 to register as soon as possible. Rinpoche has advised that those students who were unable to attend the first series will be able to attend the second series. However, he recommends that they listen to the recordings of the first series and read the commentary beforehand. Please contact Anna Vljakovic to purchase recordings: annavljaj@yahoo.com or call 02 9518 1363. For those who did not attend the first series, a copy of the commentary will be issued free when you register for the second series. Contact australia@siddharthasintent.org or call Jill Robinson on 02 9420 1340.

SEA TO SKY RETREAT CENTRE

Join us for three days of samatha meditation from 14 to 17 April 2006 (the Easter long weekend) at Sea to Sky Retreat Centre. This programme is open to everyone from beginning meditators to advanced practitioners. Luc Dierckx, a long-time student of Rinpoche, will lead the programme and provide guided group meditation instruction.

Sea to Sky Retreat Centre is also hosting a ten-day intensive, led by Luc Dierckx, for students who have received the Longchen Nyingthik ngöndro transmission, from 14 to 24 July 2006. The main emphasis will be on practice, with some information sessions and a few talks. Whether you want to rekindle your enthusiasm, whether you are a new ngöndro practitioner or whether you just want to accumulate merit and purify obscurations before Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's teachings in Vancouver, come and join us for any portion of this ten-day event. If you have any questions, please contact Michiko, SSRC Manager, at ssrc@siddharthasintent.org or telephone 604 932 1677.

TSAMPA SONAM'S VISIT

Last year the three-year retreatants at Vajradhara Gonpa were blessed with a visit from Tsampa Sonam, a yogi of the Dudjom lineage from the Bartsham *gomchen* community in East Bhutan, who has spent twenty-five years practising meditation and yogas in retreat and as a retreat master. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche asked Tsampa Sonam to teach one of the most important parts of the three-year retreat training, which he did with gentleness and humour, inspiring the retreatants with his example of humility and dedication to Rinpoche and the dharma. Tsampa Sonam also conducted daily pujas, Chogyur Lingpa's *Green Tara* and Dudjom Rinpoche's *Riwo Sang Cho*, for the benefit of Siddhartha's Intent centres and sangha members, together with prayers for rain for the drought-stricken areas of Australia. Since the puja that Tsampa Sonam is seen performing in this photo, we have had regular, ongoing rain and the water restrictions have now been lifted in northern New South Wales.



Tsampa Sonam performs From the Vast Expanse of Absolute Space by Dudjom Lingpa (Photo Paula Raymond-Yacoub)

Tsampa Sonam has returned to Bhutan to his post as tutor to the Bhutanese Dudjom tulku. As we said a teary farewell to Tsampa Sonam, he repeated over and over, "I make prayers again and again that we will be able to meet in the future in Guru Rinpoche's Pureland of the Copper-Coloured Mountain. The way to be reborn there is to meditate on Guru Rinpoche and one's root teacher as inseparable and to make supplication to the guru day and night." Our heartfelt thanks to Tsampa Sonam for all the wonderful teachings in Australia.

WORLD PEACE VASES PROJECT COMMUNIQUE

Hardly a day passes when we don't have some news of a new location or enquiries leading to contacts in new areas that will eventually allow us to locate peace vases in every nook and cranny of this vast planet earth. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche has described it as "the work of a lifetime" and now, about fifteen years into the project, we can see that the work becomes progressively more difficult. As we finish the project in countries where we could tap Buddhist contacts and place vases freely, we are faced with more and more parts of the world – vast tracts of Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East, China, Africa and many other less travelled regions like the Arctic ice and even space (for which we have twelve vases allocated for the moon and satellites). These are the challenges in front of us.

Many extraordinary individual and group feats remind us of what can be done and we approach this next phase with optimism. Over the last year alone co-ordinators and individuals have begun placing vases in eastern European nations, Poland, Hungary, Croatia (completed!), Bosnia and the former Yugoslavian states, Bulgaria (none placed as yet) and down to Greece, which is all but done. The timing for our work in this area is interesting because it coincides with eastern Europe opening up in a way it could never have done before.

Cont...



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We must now see Africa and the Middle East with their various problems and immense human sufferings as priority areas, so please let us work to find ways and means to get vases located in Africa through finding local co-ordinators via friends, work and business. With untold millions suffering HIV AIDS epidemics, starvation, totalitarian governments and civil wars, we must do all we can to bring some solace to these hells on earth. Now would also be a fantastic time to locate vases in Palestine and finish the work in Israel. Is anyone going that way? There have been amazing placement journeys, some of them recorded on the website <http://www.siddharthasintent.org/peace/journeys.html>, so have a browse.

WORLD-WIDE DATABASE

An international database has been set up for those who would like to receive information about Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's teachings world-wide and about his activities such as Siddhartha's Intent, Khyentse Foundation and Lotus Outreach. In this way you can receive details about teachings and related events organised by Siddhartha's Intent, while at the same time reducing our costs and, in accordance with Rinpoche's wishes, conserving resources and eventually conducting all communication via email. If you are interested in the teaching schedule, please register at:
- SI website at <http://www.siddharthasintent.org/maillinglist.html>
If you are interested in Khyentse Foundation activities, go to:
- KF website at
<http://www.khyentsefoundation.org/maillinglist.html>
If you are interested in Lotus Outreach activities, apply at:
- LO website at http://www.lotusoutreach.org/mailling_list.html

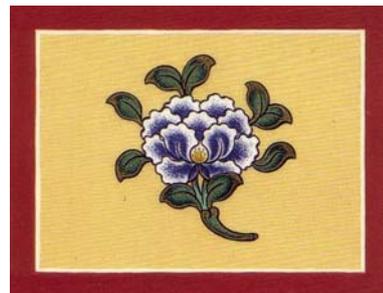
DVD ABOUT KING ASHOKA

The Siddhartha School children's days are evolving into a new format with an established group of youngsters. Celluloid theatre is now centre-stage; over the next year or so we plan to produce a series of music-clips on DVD that tell the story of King Ashoka. The reformed Indian king lived two hundred years after the Buddha and actively promoted secular ethics, health care, aged care, animal rights, environmental protection and world peace.

The first song, portraying Ashoka in his grumpy, pre-dharma days is complete on DVD. Currently in production is a rap song about non-violence, an up-beat rewording of the Buddha and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings. Some of the older children (and young adults) are writing their own rap on this theme, also to be included. Any young rappers out there who'd be interested in contributing, please contact us for the blueprint. Phone Shakti Burke on 02 6633 3208 or email anshakti@hotmail.com.

PRACTICE DETAILS

Here are the contact details for practices in your area.
Sydney: Jill Robinson on 02 9420 1340 or australia@siddharthasintent.org; Blue Mountains: Pamela and Hugo Croci on 02 4757 1352, 02 4757 2339 (after hours) or 0402 894 871; Adelaide: Tineke Adolphus on 08 8362 7553; Byron Bay Buddhists: 02 6685 1646 or byronbay@siddharthasintent.org; Buddha Down Under in Auckland, New Zealand: 09 424 3334 or buddhadownunder@ihug.co.nz.



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Because of its sacred content, please treat this newsletter with respect. Should you need to dispose of it, please burn it, rather than throwing it away.