



March 2001

VAJRAYANA NEWS

BRINGING TIBETAN BUDDHIST TEACHINGS, NEWS & VIEWS TO SYDNEY

Our New Assistant Director

I first came to VI in 1995 because I was having some very strong dreams about death, and a doctor told me that it might be a good idea to look into Tibetan Buddhism. It took me another two years to get the prescription filled – I thought the doctor must be a bit wacky – but when I ended up sharing a flat with someone who worked in the VI office I saw the newsletter and really liked the look of the centre.

When I first walked into the gampa I started to cry. There was the beautiful, benevolent face of the Buddha, the brocade, the smiles of the lamas in their pictures, sunflowers and irises in tall vases. I found it difficult to believe how peaceful and welcoming it was. That night Geshe Dawa was teaching on the preciousness of the human rebirth, and this had a profound effect on me. I wasn't really feeling very grateful for anything, and it had never occurred to me to be grateful for my life.

I made a decision early on to keep coming to VI for at least a year, no matter what. I have a terrible temper, and I knew that no matter where I went or how much I liked a place initially, the time would come when I would start blaming others for my uncomfortable feelings and want to run away. I had read in a book by a western Buddhist nun that if we keep jumping from


one tradition or centre to another, starting off all starry eyed and enthusiastic, and then leaving as soon as things get difficult, we will never learn, because it is when difficulties arise and we persist in working through them that spiritual growth occurs.



The teachings which affected me most were those on karma and emptiness, and when I have doubts I have only to think of those two words to know that I am in the right place. Learning about karma gave me a great feeling of relief. It confirmed my instinctive feeling that neither was there a reward and punishment system being run by someone on a cloud, nor was the universe a random accident or a bad joke. All I had to do was the best I could, as a fallible human being, one day at a time.

I edited the newsletter for a few years and found it's true that if you want to feel you belong somewhere, that you are part of a community, doing service is the best way, because it brings you into contact with

★ THIS MONTH ★

 Refuge: Gaining Happiness by Relying on the Three Jewels
a workshop with Logoan Rinpoche
Saturday 24, 10 am – 4 pm

Animal Liberation Day
with Andrew Fisher & Renate Ogilvie
Saturday 31

Day of Miracles
Guru Puja & Light Offerings
Friday 9, 7.30pm

people and gives you reasons to do things together.

Being asked to be Assistant Director was a great surprise – I still feel like such a new student – and I have very nervous moments about it. My main aim is to do the best I can to help preserve the wonderful harmony of the centre, which is what makes it so precious to me, and to serve the lamas and the membership to the best of my ability. I'm looking forward to working with everyone, in what promises to be such a time of expansion for us.

Darri Adamson

[Settling in to her new role as Director, Cheryl Gough has not had time to write for this issue. We promise a story from her next month.]

Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche and Kalachakra

The Kalachakra Initiation has a special importance amongst the Tibetan tantric teachings, being said to especially contribute to world peace. It is also the only initiation which is given to large public gatherings, and during his visit to Sydney in December last year, Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche said that this is because it has a special connection with all human beings, a connection that will manifest in events in the future of this planet.

Rinpoche conferred the Kalachakra Initiation at McLauran Hall at the University of Sydney. This is one of the historic buildings of the university, and the towering Gothic hall with its magnificent stone carvings and lion-headed rafters seemed to have been purpose-built for the occasion. Through a fortunate chain of events and the help of a benefactor, the hall was offered to the centre at a greatly reduced rate, which of course at the time was considered to be "very auspicious"!

Two hundred people attended the three

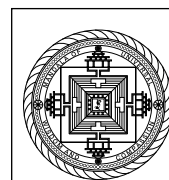
days of initiation, which was preceded by teachings on the Stages of the Path, and followed by a five-day commentary on the practice.

During the course Rinpoche spoke about the spiritual significance of Uluru, which he had visited prior to coming to Sydney. He said it is one of two possible locations for a place mentioned in the ancient texts as the home of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion.

For our Centre Director, Chris Beveridge, this was the last major project before she retired as director, and what a wonderful parting gift to give to all of us who have benefited from her perseverance and dedication.

For me, Rinpoche's visit was like a three-week detoxification process, as I was forced to cut down on some intoxicants, such as sleep and TV, to attend the teachings. My symptoms started with anxiety and

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Vajrayana Institute is a branch of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), a network of Buddhist Centres in Australia and around the world.

On Emptiness

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

The right way of perceiving that the I is empty is an extremely deep, intensive experience, but there are basically two kinds of experience you can have. You can feel incredible, that you have discovered the most precious thing, such as a wish-granting jewel. Or like a person who has been looking for or waiting to meet a dear friend for many, many years—praying, wishing, to meet that person for many years—and then, after all these many years, suddenly meeting that friend. Or like you've been waiting to get a billion dollars for a long time and then suddenly you get the money. In other words, when you see emptiness, you feel unbelievable joy; incredible joy that makes you cry.

The second kind of experience is one of unbelievable fear, incredible fear. Not just any kind of fear. Not just the fear of being attacked by somebody; not that kind of fear. It's a very deep fear; something deep inside your heart, in the very depths of your heart. A very deep fear. The other fear is not fear of losing the I—something is going to happen to this I, but it's not losing the I. The ordinary is fear that this real I is going to receive some harm, but here, something that you've believed in—not only from birth but from beginningless rebirths up until now—something that you've believed in one hundred percent, only *now*, only *now* you realise that it's not there. Only *now* you realise that it's totally non-existent. This can cause an incredibly deep fear to arise.

As I often say, even when you recite the *Heart Sutra*, when you say the words, "No ear, no nose, no tongue, no ice cream! No coffee, no chocolate, no cigarettes, no drinks!"—if fear comes into your heart then you say "no this, no that", if fear arises, that's a good sign. Fear arising means your recitation of the *Heart Sutra*, the *Essence of Wisdom*, is hitting, or touching, the root of samsara, hurting it. Your recitation of the *Heart Sutra* has touched the root of samsara, ignorance; has hit it. Your recitation of the *Heart Sutra*, your way of thinking when you recite the *Essence of Wisdom*, is hitting—like an arrow or a bomb. As an arrow hits its target, as a bomb or a torpedo hits its target, the enemy at which you aimed, like that, your recitation of the *Heart Sutra*, those teachings on emptiness, your way of thinking, your meditation, has hit its target, the object of ignorance, the inherently existent I—the I that is apprehended by simultaneously-born ignorance. You have hit the target you're supposed to hit. The target that you are supposed to hit with the arrow bomb of your recitation of the words of the *Heart Sutra* and thinking on their meaning is the object to be refuted, the inherently existent I. Fear in your heart means that you have hit the target.

The texts explain that it is highly intelligent practitioners who have the experience of incredible, blissful joy, tears running down their cheeks, and feel as if they'd found an unbelievably precious jewel, and less intelligent practitioners who feel fear when they realise emptiness. At that time, you should not try to escape from this fear—trying to do so is your greatest obstacle to realising emptiness. Instead, you must realise that this is the one time, the one opportunity, to realise



emptiness—the only wisdom that can directly cut the delusions, the root of samsara, the gross and subtle defilements, bringing liberation from samsara and full enlightenment. Knowing this, you must go through the fear; you must complete your experience. Go through the fear like crossing a river. Otherwise, if you block your own progress the one time that you have the opportunity of realising emptiness, if you run away from that, like running away from teachings, from meditation courses, especially my meditation courses—of course, those are good to run away from!—if you run from the fear that arises when you realise emptiness, that is no good at all.

However, you never have to worry about the I ceasing, because the I never ceases. The I that is the label never ceases. The I never stops, never ceases. Why is there always continuity of the I, the label? Why is there always continuity of the self? Because there is always continuity of consciousness. Even after enlightenment, the consciousness continues forever. Even though the body might change—one body stops, another body is taken—the continuity of consciousness is always there, even after enlightenment. Therefore, the continuity of the I never ceases. It always exists because the base, the continuity of consciousness, always exists. Therefore, thinking, "I'm going to cease, I'm going to become non-existent" is totally wrong. When that feeling arises, the appearance of losing or having totally lost your I, you shouldn't be worried that that appearance means you're falling into nihilism. Because of that appearance, you should not be worried that you are falling into nihilism—just as you should not be worried that the I is becoming non-existent. There are two things—one is the fear of falling into nihilism; the other is the worry, "I am becoming non-existent." You should not be scared of those things. If you do get scared, you'll block yourself from realising emptiness; this one opportunity to realise emptiness will have arisen and you'll have blocked it yourself.

[Extracted from *Teaching from the Vajrasattva Retreat, Land of Medicine Buddha*, February – April, 1999. Wisdom Publications]

Around VI

OFFICE CHANGEOVER

The lure of India must have proved too much for Helen Patrin, who has decided not to return to Australia and her work in the VI office. Fortunately for us, Beth Phelan, who has spent many years working for community organisations, including Streetwise Comics and Women in Film and Television, has stepped in to fill the gap, and is now our Office Manager. In her spare (!) time Beth runs the World of Women's Cinema (WOW) International Film Festival. She has been coming to VI for about three years.

OFFERING LUNCH

Ven. Dekyi has requested that all arrangements for offering lunch to Rinpoche be made directly with her. If you would like to take the opportunity to spend precious time with Rinpoche in this way, please phone 9519 7820 and leave a message.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

Now that Rinpoche has been here for a while we have some very nice shots of him, particularly from the January Initiation and retreat, which were attended by 25 very enthusiastic people. Copies of some of these photos are available in the bookshop.

CHILD CARE

We had a request to investigate whether it would be feasible to provide child care at the centre during the Sunday morning meditations. Unfortunately the biggest obstacle to this is the size of the centre. It is just not possible to accommodate a group of children, particularly on rainy or cold days, out of hearing of the people who are meditating. If anyone would like to discuss the possibility of organising child minding somewhere else for this hour, please phone Debbie Rhana, on 9837 7237.

MILLION MANIS

Alan Marsh has spent a week at Chenrezig reciting manis, and says, by way of encouraging other people, that the sadhana is not as long as it looks, because one does not have to recite all the prayers. If you have any time to take part in this wonderful project of Rinpoche's at home, you can pick up a copy of the sadhana in the office. In April we will be having a couple of group recitations at the centre.

VAJRAYANA.COM.AU

We are now the proud owners of our own domain name, and will be upgrading our computing capacity and our email system and working on a web site over the next few months.



march spiritual program

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3 <i>Tara Puja 6.30pm</i>
4 Sunday Meditation 10am – 11am	5 <i>Guru puja 6.30pm</i> Guided Meditation with Ven Dekyi, 7.30pm.	6 Lines of Experience with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	7 How to be Happy and Useful with Ven. Dekyi 10am Seven Point Mind Transformation with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	8	9 ○ <i>Full Moon</i> <i>Precepts</i> Day of Miracles Guru Puja & Light Offerings 7.30pm	10
11 Sunday Meditation 10am – 11am	12 Guided Meditation with Ven Dekyi, 7.30pm.	13 Lines of Experience with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	14 How to be Happy and Useful with Ven. Dekyi 10am Seven Point Mind Transformation with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	15	16	17 Vajrayogini Self Initiation 9am (must have completed retreat and puja)
18 Sunday Meditation 10am – 11am	19 <i>Guru puja 6.30pm</i> Guided Meditation with Ven Dekyi, 7.30pm.	20 Lines of Experience with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	21 How to be Happy and Useful with Ven. Dekyi 10am Seven Point Mind Transformation with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	22	23	24 ● <i>New Moon</i> <i>Precepts</i> Refuge: a teaching by Logoan Rinpoche 10am – 4pm
25 Sunday Meditation 10am – 11am	26 Guided Meditation with Ven Dekyi, 7.30pm.	27 Lines of Experience with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	28 How to be Happy and Useful with Ven. Dekyi 10am Seven Point Mind Transformation with Logoan Rinpoche 7.30pm	29	30	31 Animal Liberation Day with Andrew Fisher and Renate Ogilvie

WEEKNIGHTS & DAYS

Guided Meditation

with Ven Dekyi, Mondays 7.30 – 8.30pm
Experience meditation from the Buddhist perspective, using the three techniques of single-pointed concentration, analytical meditation, and visualisation. Suitable for both new and experienced students. *Cost:* by donation.

Lines of Experience

with Logoan Rinpoche, Tuesdays 7.30pm
Lama Tsong Khapa wrote three *lam rim* texts: the Great (*Lam Rim Chenmo*), the Medium and the Small. These teachings focus on the Small *lam rim*, also known as the *Songs* or *Lines of Experience*. This beautiful and inspiring condensed version of his great work, the *Lam Rim Chenmo*, contains all the essential steps to be taken on the path to enlightenment. *Cost:* by donation.

Seven Point Mind Transformation

with Logoan Rinpoche, Wednesdays 7.30pm
This is one of the most celebrated manuals on the practice of lojong (mind transformation). Written by the Kadampa master Chekawa, the text expounds, within the framework of seven points, the essential practices for training the mind in the generation of Bodhicitta and integrating the Bodhisattva ideals into daily life. *Cost:* by donation.

How to be Happy and Useful

with Ven Dekyi Wednesdays, 10am
Ever wondered why terrible things happen to “good” people, or why wealth doesn’t necessarily bring happiness? Have you even

simply felt that there is more to life, if only we could understand it properly, and that there must be a way to make our life more meaningful? These issues are examined in detail in the *lam rim* teachings, which will continue on Wednesday mornings. Suitable for both new and experienced students. *Cost:* by donation.

Sunday Morning Meditation

Sundays 10 - 11am
These meditations give students a precious opportunity to sit peacefully and quietly, and to integrate into our lives the teachings that we receive during the week. In this way we can learn to put study into practice. As Lama Zopa Rinpoche has said: “If the teaching is preserved by the experience, then the teaching is not just mere intellectual understanding.”
N.B. We regret that we are unable to accommodate children at the centre during Sunday morning meditation. (See “Around VI” for further information.) *Cost:* by donation.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Day of Miracles Guru Puja and Light Offerings

Friday 9, 7.30pm
This is the first of the four main Buddhist festivals of the year, and celebrates the first 15 days of the lunar year, when the Buddha displayed a different miracle each day. We will be marking the day by doing a Guru Puja and Light Offerings dedicated to the long life and health of our teachers. Offerings of food and flowers welcome.

Animal Liberation Day

with Andrew Fisher & Renate Ogilvie, Saturday 31
This practice has enormous benefits for removing life obstacles, healing life-threatening diseases, and for purifying the karma that causes them. It can be done for oneself and others. Following Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s instructions, Andrew and Renate will liberate animals at VI on Saturday, 31 March, and invite you to join this very special occasion. Please phone 02-4787 5514 for more information.

WEEKEND COURSES

Refuge: Gaining Happiness by Relying on the Three Jewels

A teaching by Logoan Rinpoche Saturday 24, 10am – 4pm. For details see enclosed flyer.
“Whether or not a person is a Buddhist is determined by whether or not he has taken Refuge in the Three Jewels of Refuge, purely from the depths of his heart. Merely saying Buddhist prayers, playing with mantric rosaries and walking around temples do not make one a Buddhist. Even a monkey can be taught to do these things. Dharma is a matter of mind and spirit, not external activities. Therefore, to be a Buddhist, one must understand exactly what the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are, and how they relate to one’s spiritual life.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama.
Cost: \$40 (Members \$36) For details please see the enclosed flyer.]

Vajrayogini Self Initiation

Saturday 17, 9am. (Contact Sandy Sharpe on 9439 3540 to confirm.)

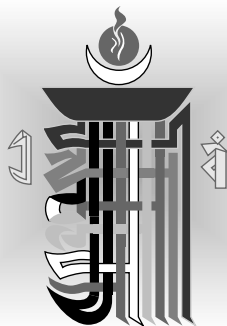
Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche and Kalachakra.
cont from front page

irritability as I got involved in helping with the preparations. It felt to me at times as if the world would fall apart if we didn't get everything right and on time. Then I felt a heavy tiredness and difficulty concentrating when the teachings started, and this lasted most of the three weeks. Towards the end of the visit this gave way to increasing energy and concentration, and a sense of reconnectedness with myself and the rest of the world, particularly those people doing the course (some of whom had previously seemed to be the cause of my problems).

It felt to me as if Rinpoche's purity had gradually infused us all and shifted my focus from negative to positive, so that everything looked and felt better - practice is possible in this chaotic and pressured city, Dharma friends are precious and an invaluable support, it is my inner world, not the outer world and it's events, that determines how I feel.

The event reminded me yet again of something I keep losing touch with - that putting energy into spiritual practice does seem to bring me more peace and happiness than all the other ways I try to find it!

Margaret Castles



The Maitreya Project
Raffle

My wish is that by building this statue, others will be inspired to build even higher.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

You or your friends could win a beautiful statue of Maitreya Buddha, the prize in our raffle to help raise funds for this awe-inspiring project to build the largest Buddhist statue in the world. Please contact the office if you would be able to sell tickets, or would like to buy some. The raffle will be drawn on June 6, Saka Dawa.

Multiplying Centres

Another member of VI has requested and received permission from Lama Zopa to start up a new FPMT centre. Jill Grosche is now the happy director of Kadam Sherawa, on the Central Coast of NSW. As yet the centre does not have a location, and Jill has decided to start slowly and steadily. The first activity of the centre has been to invite Logoan Rinpoche to give a public talk, and this will take place at Central Coast Campus of the University of Newcastle on March 17. If you would like to attend, please book by phoning Jill Grosche on (02) 4324 8266. (Entry is by ticket only.) Kadam Sherawa will be closely aligned with VI as it starts out. May all be auspicious!

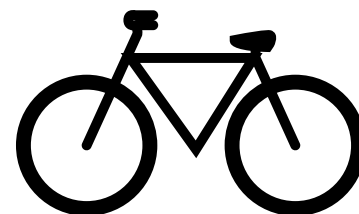
Vajrasattva Mountain Centre

P · R · O · G · R · A · M

For details call Norma Brahatiss on

4782 1931

155 LURLINE ST, KATOOMBA



Freedom for Tibet
Cycle Marathon

Led by two former political prisoners from Tibet, this marathon will start at the Chinese Consulate, Elizabeth St Sydney at 11am on March 10, and travel to Federal Parliament in Canberra by March 13 at 11am. This is a wonderful opportunity to help let people know about the plight of the Tibetan people, and to travel with and get to know Tibetans and other people who support their cause. If you would like to be part of this event, which marks the 43rd Anniversary of Tibetan National Uprising Day, please phone Lobsang Lungtok on 9386 4854.

Zazep Tulku Teachings

Zazep Tulku will be teaching on the Central Coast over the Easter Weekend.

For details please phone Margery: 4382 4203 or Bess: 4341 7258.

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday - Thursday 1.30 - 5.30pm

Newsletter deadline is the 7th of the month.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS DHARMA MATERIAL - PLEASE TREAT IT WITH RESPECT.

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