



marpa house
chös khor ling



Khenpo Gangshar teachings

newsletter - november 2024 to april 2025



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**BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND
RETREAT CENTRE**



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TRUSTEE NEWS

The last six months have been a strong reminder of the nature of impermanence. The sad loss of two great teachers, who both graced Marpa House over the years, sharing their wisdom, compassion, gentleness, and humour with an incredible ability to bring the profound into the everyday. We will greatly miss Ato Rinpoche and Lama Samten, but their blessings and teachings remain in our hearts and minds and continue to permeate the shrine room and House.

We've also had to say goodbyes to Sangha members, which brings sadness to the loss of Dharma brothers and sisters. Yet, sometimes with that deep loss, there comes a great act of generosity when an individual leaves a legacy to Marpa House. We have had two such generous donations this year for which we are incredibly grateful.

Another subtle reminder is the changeover of staff. As you read this, Jan and Gail will be back in New Zealand and we share our thanks and gratitude to them for the warm welcome they gave everyone, and their enthusiasm and dedication in looking after the House and guests over the last six months. We also welcome Gabrielle back; however there continues to be a struggle to find long term staff.

The need for staff along with the other practicalities of running and maintaining Marpa House has led us over the last year to review and discuss at length the necessary changes required to keep Marpa House and its activities flourishing long into the future. Identifying three key areas, we are busy creating a working plan for the coming months and years covering:

1. Spiritual (Our teachers, teachings, and sangha. Courses, activities, and retreats, as well as the shrine room, ritual objects, texts, and recordings.)
2. Organisation (The people who run and work for the House, from governance and management to



staff and volunteers. Includes systems like IT, data storage, security, policies, and processes.)

3. Physical - building & grounds (The physical aspects of the House, the rooms, space, layout, functions, maintenance, refurbishment, and development, as well as running costs and sustainability.)

Marpa House will continue to change and evolve, as it has done over the last 50 years. The one 'constant' is Rinpoche. His teachings and transmissions are the heart of Marpa House, embodied in the beautiful way the sangha joins together with love, care, kindness, and generosity. This is such a blessing and something so precious, so any changes that are made, in whatever way, will always have Rinpoche's teachings at their core making them 'the heart' of any decision. This ensures that anyone who hasn't had the incredible fortune to meet Rinpoche, as so many of us have, come to 'know' Rinpoche through the blessings of the House, the sangha, and its activities.

That is our responsibility, and it is a responsibility not only for the trustees in the planning and running of the House but also the responsibility of the sangha in the way we share Rinpoche's teachings and be with others in the world.

Change can also bring many blessings and we've been incredibly fortunate this year. It was pure joy to welcome Rinpoche to stay in the House when he gave precious teachings in May. It was such a special weekend to all be together in the marquee again and to offer Rinpoche a long-life mandala, sponsored by Karma Wangdi from Bhutan, The Dharma Trust, and Rinpoche's students.

We had the delight of welcoming Lama Kunga for an incredible weekend filling and

consecrating both new and old rupas. After 2 years of rolling mantras and collecting the precious substances it was such a joy and a privilege to be part of the weekend. For anyone who hasn't yet been to the House, the rupas have a very different quality to before, the only way I can describe it is it's like they are 'shining', but words aren't really sufficient, you need to experience it for yourself, so please visit and sit for a while in the shrine room under their gaze.

We have now received the smaller 21 Tara rupas, which look exquisite. These will be filled and consecrated next year and will complete the Shrine. Another wonderful offering to Rinpoche.

And as I write this, we have just finished making and raising the prayer flags. We started with a full shrine room reciting prayers for our precious teacher's health and long life. This was a beautiful way to start making the prayer flags, which brought everyone together in joyful activity. It seemed important to make the prayer flags this year, during Rinpoche's 84th year, to help remove obstacles for Rinpoche and the activities of Marpa House, as well as for individuals involved and the wider sangha. As the old, tattered flags battered by the elements were taken down, there was a pause and bareness in the garden before vibrant new prayer flags were hung, again a reminder of impermanence and change.

Activities such as these teach us to accept whatever arises and offer us the chance to fully let go, finding joy in the little moments. A perfect way to practice which then hopefully can ripple out into our daily lives in small and big ways!

With love and warmest wishes

by Louise Kuka - Chair of the Trustees



COMMITTEE NEWS

My term as chairman of the Committee is coming to an end and so – first and foremost – I wish to thank all the wonderful people who have helped run Marpa House and make it an enjoyable and inspirational place in which to spend time.

We were very pleased to welcome Sara Rottensteiner as the new editor of the Newsletter: Sara has started her work with great enthusiasm and not only that, she also came to the House during its Summer Camp closure and helped redecorate three rooms in the House.

The House members confirmed Tony Martin as a new member of the Committee. Tony had been co-opted last year and as well as helping at some of our events, has already made a number of inspiring interior design contributions, doing quite a lot of the practical tasks himself. Joe Taylor is now serving in his second year and has been a reliable and keen helper during the key events at the House as well as giving his time for the redecoration project. He lives near Brighton, but since we have Zoom, attending our Committee meetings no longer requires a presence in the House thus saving the lengthy hours of travel that the journey to Ashdon would take.

In April, we were joined by Jan Crawford, as our secretary, and Gail Wright on staff as our cook. The team from New Zealand turned out to be a great combo, and we had a lot of fun together, with Jan very ably looking after the secretary role and Gail doing a wonderful job in the kitchen, as well as often with the housekeeping and helping in the garden! They were supported by a wonderful group of helpers, including Cherry Cooke, Sarah Harrington, Natasha Bolce, Fe Dunbar,

Jaki Deere, Sarah Playden, Sue & Richard Sternberg and Wendy Britton.

I would also like to remind readers about the **Register of Ad-Hoc Volunteers**, also known as the **Volunteers List**. The way this works is that whenever the House needs more hands on deck, people from the list are contacted to see if they can help out for a short period of time. This is an important support base for the House and also suits many students who may not be able to come on staff but still would like to spend some active time at the House when they can (as well as benefit from free attendance at events whilst at the house). So why not have your name added to the list – there is no commitment but plenty to gain.

Lastly, I want to express my huge appreciation of all the hard work done by our competent team of Trustees. They have provided great guidance and often chipped in with their own time when help was needed. This ensured that I had a great time at the House and would not have wanted to miss a minute of it.

by Hartwin Busch - Chair of the Committee



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Staffing Opportunities

We need volunteers to come on staff in 2024/25. You can volunteer for up to one year and would receive a small honorarium to cover basic living costs. All meals and accommodation are provided free of charge.

This is a great opportunity to spend time in a beautiful Dharma centre and to practice in a lovely and peaceful environment. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the Secretary:

t: 01799 584415 e: mail@marpahouse.org.uk
w: www.marpahouse.org.uk



POEMS

By the Pond

Where is my silence?
Where is my stillness?
How can these trees remain quiet and firm,
while dancing with the wind?
The rustle of their leaves
emerges from a field of silence,
the sway of their branches
is born from a deeper stillness.
And the same stillness is in
the robin, singing and darting through the
woods,
the frogs, croaking and jumping in the water,
the otter, chewing grass by the shore,
the dove, fluttering amongst the bamboo,
the clouds, flowing through the sky...

In this quiet afternoon by the pond,
everything is waving and whispering,
dancing and singing,
docking and uttering
- in perfect stillness.
How come that all beings rest while moving,
while I sit still in restlessness,
bashed by a storming mind?

I remain so, lost in my inner noise,
until the last cloud melts into the sky,
and the noise fades into silence,
until another frog jumps into the pond
- plop!
But, this time,
and for the first time,
without a sound,
without a movement.

by Valerio Avitabile



If I were a tree

If I were a tree
I would dig my roots deep into the soil
To drink the earth's juice
If I were a tree
I would stretch my arms
Right up to the sky
To reach out for the sun
But alas I am a human
Full of woes and sorrows
How I long
To be strong
Like a tree

by Dominique Simpson



MAY THE FORCE BE WITH US ALWAYS

A summary of the 2024 May teachings



How do I sum up the incredible teachings of our dearest Chime Rinpoche so kindly shared this May?

I will do my best to relay Rinpoche's teachings in a nutshell. The topic was Khenpo Gangshar's teachings. (Please forgive me if I have misunderstood ANY of what he said, I'm doing my best to relay the "what" and the "way" he transmitted his wisdom... so bear with me!)

Rinpoche encouraged us to consider our teacher as a doctor, not an ordinary doctor that doesn't know what is wrong, not a doctor we go to with a medical illness. Our ignorance can be the headache, anger, hatred, or jealousy, if you're in that cycle, the doctor

acknowledges and writes a prescription, this is your medicine. In Buddhism, the medicine is the meditation. The Authentic Doctor's prescription...Fun is medicine!

When you practise, what is your motivation? "I want to become enlightened." "I want to help all sentient beings." Rinpoche emphasised:

"FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTEMPT"
"LOVE NEVER DISAPPEARS"
"LOVING KINDNESS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING"
"COMPASSION"

All these miserable sentient beings are equal. From Khenpo Gangshar's point of view, compassion and sentimentality get confused.



If you look at Avalokiteshvara, he has four arms, he sees all directions, and compassion is very, very powerful! Avalokiteshvara vows that he wants to empty the world of suffering, and when he thought 'I can't do it', his head exploded and all the Bodhisattvas gave him 1000 arms and 11 heads, so that he could help ALL BEINGS. So that compassion is very, very deep.

Then when it comes to Loving Kindness... Love is very difficult to separate... Love and emotions. Pure Love means no self. Therefore, when attachment comes up you have a lot of problems, and you can't help it. You need - to know and understand - the difference between attachment and Loving Kindness.

With Loving Kindness, we have no pain! Love is spontaneous...EQUANIMITY. "I love my mum..." equals 'so much bias'...it's very, very difficult to have equanimity. Equanimity goes with Empathy.

'JOY' is the one...not many people have the joy - In order to have the 'joy', you can't have 'jealous'...I'm happy for him! Same as "You look unhappy:", "Yes, I'm a Buddhist!" It's very important not to be sad!

Khenpo Gangshar is a Mahasiddha. After enlightenment, he only taught and gave transmissions. Very, very, outstanding!

Rinpoche told us that Khenpo Gangshar was 25 when he became a Mahasiddha. Before that he was quite strong and very wild. His teacher, Dilgo Khyentse, had to discipline him even though he was a very learned Khenpo. Dilgo Khyentse invited Khenpo Gangshar to teach.

Khenpo Gangshar told Chime Rinpoche personally - they all had lunch inside the temple with all the monks, he was sitting next

to Dilgo Khyentse, Dilgo Khyentse picked some bread, chewed it, took it out (of his mouth) gave it to him... Khenpo Gangshar was so upset as 10,000 monks saw it. Khenpo Gangshar said it was the best teaching ever for his pride. He was healed of pride. You could go to Shedra for months and months (and never overcome your pride).

You can memorise 10,000 words but if you don't know how to control your anger it doesn't help. HE knows how to control his anger. Therefore...

Loving Kindness...

May All Beings Be Free of Suffering and The Causes of Suffering

When I'm Happy May My Happiness Spread to All Beings...

Just pray like that...

With Loving Kindness, you have to practise with your husband or with your wife. Khenpo Gangshar always said: "You practise Loving Kindness, and Prajna is the proof. Give Loving Kindness to yourself."

If you look in the mirror at yourself and you are happier, the Love is because of you...

Khenpo Gangshar's Loving Kindness...

Learning Loving Kindness is The Foundation.

Khenpo Gangshar said:

"Love and Compassion..."

by Immy Hayman

A CUP OF TEACHINGS



Rinpoche often tells us a story illustrating a point of view involving a Cup of Tea. It is a happy coincidence that the word 'Teaching' begins with the word 'Tea' especially as the tea table was the first place that everyone came to when they arrived at Marpa House for Rinpoche's May teachings.

A seat near the open door of the marquee during Rinpoche's teachings gave a clear view of the tea table outside with steam gently rising above two large kettles. Then looking straight ahead, there on a platform surrounded by beautiful flowers and thangkas, sat our dear Rinpoche, his face aglow with an expression of absolute Joy.

Three of us served the tea before and after each teaching. We came from countries far apart, Jamaica, Germany and Spain, but we were united, as Rinpoche taught us, 'All of one Mind' as we topped up the water in the kettles, smiled and laughed together, placed piles of biscuits onto plates and took full Responsibility for all the soggy tea bags.

The weather was perfect even for a short while on Monday when we confronted Obstacles of rain and cold, but we welcomed this change as a special opportunity to get saturated in Rinpoche's teachings.

The lure of a British cup of tea is very powerful and the insatiable attachment to chocolate digestive biscuits was severely apparent.

I visualise the scene now: there is the tea table with just the right amount of space between us three and the advancing friendly faces. Harmony prevailed even when there was a grumble about no Rooibos tea to be seen. Can't win 'em all.

We were very mindful of the two kettles though, that the water was just the right temperature, neither boiling too much nor ever allowed to cool down so we soon learnt that the Middle Way is always the best temperature. Joyful is the word for the feeling that serving tea gave us.

Tibetan Buddhism is like sharing tea and biscuits. They are in mutual Equanimity and the taste of loving kindness and compassion is the flavour which lingers long after the last cup reveals emptiness. But is our cup ever truly empty?

Our cups are overflowing with heartfelt loving gratitude dear Rinpoche.

However, there remain among us many who still bear a deep attachment to chocolate biscuits because these all vanished in the twinkling of an eye. But as Rinpoche said, 'Everything is Impermanent', only the crumbs of wonderful memories remain.

by Anne Westley



Memories of Ato Rinpoche



and back to the practical, nitty-gritty of trying to live the teachings every day. Which, of course, was what he himself did.

Many of us heard him teach on the Noble Eightfold Path countless times. Whether it was this teaching, or commenting on songs of Milarepa, Rinpoche always kept his focus practical and down-to-earth. With his trademark grin, he would remind us again and again, "Nobody's perfect, but it's worth a try." And "Go along with it, keep it going." Perhaps the closest he came to publicly pointing out the nature of the mind was his occasional instruction to "Mind the gap!" Always with the grin, and the twinkle.

"Be kind. Just be kind." Those were Ato Rinpoche's simple but profound words when I asked him, many years ago, how to stay patient while living with a severely autistic stepson. I had expected some profound teaching, perhaps about transforming obstacles into the path. But as was often the case, Rinpoche gave the answer I needed to hear, rather than the one I wanted to hear.

It was similar when I asked him (with starry eyes), in one of my first meetings with him, about the value of doing three-year retreat. Rinpoche smiled his usual twinkly smile and said simply: "Three-year retreat is easy. The difficult thing is practising every day, for your whole life." Again, he had ignored my expectations and given an answer whose truth and profundity I am still now slowly understanding.

What were some of Ato Rinpoche's qualities? A radiant, loving presence, and a deep and genuine humility and simplicity masking his deep realisation. Plus the ability to drag us away from our fantasies about high empowerments and pointing out instructions,

Rinpoche, like his cousin Chime Rinpoche, knew that most of us didn't belong in a cave, a three-year-retreat, or monastic robes. He knew most of us needed to keep our focus on practising within a family and working environment right now. When I recently mentioned wanting to do more retreat, he immediately said "Yes, but don't push it. It is much more important to recognise our nature for short moments as often as we can, every day."

Rinpoche's humility was amazing and genuine. At the end of a teaching in Germany in 1998, he told us to take from his teaching anything that seemed valid and useful for us, but to leave anything else behind in the shrine-room. He added, smiling, "The masters of my lineage have always been extremely patient and tolerant of my rubbish, so you can leave it here with them."

Another time, I was attending a course in Pullahari Monastery near Kathmandu. Pullahari is the monastery of Jamgon Kongtrul



Rinpoche. Ato Rinpoche's root guru was the second Jamgon Kongtrul, Khyentse Ozer. So while Rinpoche was visiting Kathmandu, he came up to Pullahari, alone, unannounced, wearing ordinary clothes, and walked into the monastery stupa temple to pay his respects and circumambulate the stupa of the third Jamgon Kongtrul incarnation, who had passed away a few years earlier. The only thing was, he walked in right in the middle of the morning teachings which were being given by Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal, a very special lama himself. The moment he walked in, Drupon Khenpo stopped teaching and jumped off his seat, remaining frozen until Rinpoche left a minute later. Rinpoche could come as quietly and incognito as he liked, but the lamas knew exactly what level of being they were dealing with.

Such was Rinpoche's humility, he seemed to even feel that praising his own guru publicly would be a sign of pride. During teachings at Marpa House one time, I asked Rinpoche to tell us a little about his guru's qualities. He totally deflected the question, saying that it is impossible to see the qualities of a master, before moving on immediately.

It is said in the teachings, that when a Bodhisattva reaches a certain level, they become "like an eight-month pregnant woman" – no longer able to conceal the qualities that their realisation gives birth to. Ato Rinpoche was like that. He may have tried his best to seem ordinary, but the trouble was, he was extraordinarily ordinary! So we weren't fooled – sorry Rinpoche!

"Be kind. Just be kind." Rinpoche, you made it sound so simple. I guess it was, for you (though you would never admit it). When somebody totally embodies kindness with their whole being, such words can have a profound impact on those who hear them.

I didn't really get the transmission, but that's on me, not the lama. For those of us who still need it, may your inspiration constantly remind us to "keep it going." Yes, every day. For our whole life. Thank you, Rinpoche. Thank you.

by Jon Armour



The Life of Venerable Lama Samten



Although Lama Samten was born in West Tibet at Gertse on 25th February 1947, he identified as a Khampa through his family. The family lived in a 'ba,' a large black tent made from woven yak's hair, which was approximately 15m by 45m and was home to sixteen people: Lama Samten's mother, two fathers, four brothers, five sisters, and three servants.

When Lama Samten was five years old, he lived with an uncle at his monastery, Tagjam Gompa, a Sakya monastery, which housed about a hundred monks. It was here that Lama Samten first took refuge. He was taught to sit up straight in the lotus posture

and chant "Om mani peme hung".

In 1959, the Chinese army invaded Tibet, and the 10-year-old Lama Samten escaped with his family. It was a very dangerous time and many people perished.

By the time the family reached the border region between India and Nepal, everyone, except for Lama Samten and his sister, was sick, was hospitalised and died. His sister was adopted by a Nepalese family, which meant that of the original sixteen members of his family, now there was only Lama Samten left, a child of 13.

He joined H.E. Beru Khyentse's monastery, taking novice monk vows at 16 and full ordination at 21. Lama Samten completed two traditional three-year retreats and then spent another 3 years in solitary retreat in a forest near the retreat centre, receiving instruction from H.E. Beru Khyentse Rinpoche and Venerable Kalu Rinpoche. He was preparing to spend the rest of his life in retreat but in 1981, His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa requested Lama Samten to go to Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Lama Samten spent 24 years in NZ, developing the Buddha Dharma. With the help of skilled students, he established a traditional temple at Kaukapakapa, built the biggest Buddha statue in the Southern Hemisphere, and a row of 8 stupas. He developed the use of traditional Tibetan healing practices and assisted Tibetan Doctors on tours of NZ.

Lama Samten travelled throughout NZ, and he especially enjoyed the McKenzie Basin in the South Island, with its mountains and lakes. He was known to conduct fire pujas there to

placate the Naga spirits of the area. He also loved the hot pools throughout the country and a quick trip to the hot pools at the end of a day of Ngöndro practice was always a possibility.

He is the author of many books on Dharma practice and he guided a team of students in the translation of the Ngondro text, producing *The Message Book* which has been used by many students around the world for their Ngondro practice. He was the creative force behind the 2004 Grammy Award-winning music recording *Sacred Tibetan Chant* – the monks of Sherab Ling and has recorded a series of his own chanting CDs entitled *Sounds of Liberation*.

Lama Samten gathered people around him and took care of his many students. He retired in 2004 but continued to teach internationally, guiding his students in their practice and taking them on pilgrimages to holy Buddhist places around the world. His teachings in English were known for their direct and earthy manner, sprinkled with a sense of humour. He had the ability to cut through samsaric demands and concerns.

He was the Lambchop Lama, the Cup of Tea Lama, but mostly he was the 50:50 Lama, reminding us of the Middle Way and his strongest message was always - do your practice.

by Jan Crawford





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PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2024 – APRIL 2025



Meditation Sundays

**Sunday 6th October, 10th November,
1st December, 2nd February, 2nd March, 6th April**

Guided shamatha or calm-abiding meditation practice.

Sessions at 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge. Lunch is available for an additional cost but needs to be booked in advance.

Shamatha (or 'Shi-Neh') is an essential meditation practice. It is designed to create the calm, stable, supple mind necessary for Mahamudra and Dzogchen practice as well as in its own right. These sessions are suitable for meditators of all levels, with guided meditation from experienced sangha members, and are offered free of charge. We hope you can join us.

NOVEMBER



Family Weekend

1st – 3rd November (closed to guests and retreatants)

The House will be closed to visitors on November 1st -3rd for a private event, a family weekend. If you are interested in joining these in future, please contact us to be put in touch with the organisers.



Tulku Pasang Rinpoche

Zoom Teachings

November

We are delighted that Tulku Pasang Rinpoche has very kindly agreed to share some teachings with us by Zoom this November.

Full details will be shared by email nearer the time.

Tulku Pasang Rinpoche was formally recognised by HH 17th Karmapa and HE Kenting Tai Situpa, he is the heart son of Dolmo Choeje Rinpoche and runs Damkar Monastery, as well as being the nephew of Kyabje Chime Rinpoche. We are absolutely honoured and delighted to welcome him back.





New Year Silent Meditation Retreat with Sophie Muir

A wonderful opportunity to deepen our practice together in the deep peace of the House at this magical time of year.

**Saturday 28th December – Friday 3rd January 2025
£300 for 6 nights, including all meals.**

Starts after supper on Saturday 28th December and finishes after breakfast on Tuesday 3rd.

We are delighted that Sophie will be leading us into the new year with this silent meditation retreat, inviting us through the heart of midwinter to rest in simplicity, refreshing our aspiration over the new year for the benefit of each and every being.

There will be daily group practice sessions in the mornings and afternoons, retreatants are also welcome to practice in their own room. There will be time to go for walks and enjoy nature as part of your practice.

As this is a closed retreat, the House will not be open to day visitors and guests during this time. Each retreatant will be given a single room, so we recommend to book early as places are limited. To secure your place we ask for a non-refundable £50 deposit at the time of booking.

Sophie has been a student of Kyabje Chime Rinpoche since 1986 and is a member of Rinpoche's White Sangha, authorised to teach Mahamudra. She leads retreats in Wales and in the South West, and is currently receiving Transmissions of the Mahamudra Ocean of Certainty from H.H. Tai Situ Rinpoche. Sophie is a qualified teacher of Tai Chi and has a Post-grad. Diploma in Mindfulness Based Approaches from the University of Exeter. She works teaching these in Cornwall where she lives with her two sons.

If you wish to book or have any further questions, please contact the secretary:
mail@marpahouse.org.uk

Tel: 01799 584415

FEBRUARY



Mahakala Pujas with Lama Alasdair

Tuesday 25th, Wednesday 26th and Thursday 27th February at 2.30pm each day.

These Dharma protector practices are performed before Losar every year to avert obstacles for the year ahead.

Lama Alasdair has been a student of Kyabje Chime Rinpoche's for over forty years and was Rinpoche's resident Lama at Kagyu Cho Khor Ling in the Black Forest. We are absolutely delighted that he's leading these practices for us at Marpa House.



Losar - Tibetan New Year of the Wood Snake **Friday 28th February**

Bonfire & Celebrations 2.30pm
Free of charge

Losar Tashi Delek!

Losar is a wonderful holiday and time of celebration. We will have a bonfire and hope you can join us too for an auspicious start to the year. Our love and good wishes for the New Year; may you and all beings be peaceful, healthy and happy, and may we swiftly realise our true nature!

MARCH



Additional Losar Bonfire & Tea Party **Saturday 1st March 2.30pm**

For anyone who cannot attend on Losar itself, please join us for a bonfire and tea party- bring vegetarian food to share!





Easter Teachings with Kyabje Chime Rinpoche

Saturday 19th April

10.30am - 4.30pm

Details – including how to book – will be shared soon. For now please save the date!

We are absolutely overjoyed that our beloved teacher will be giving these precious teachings at Marpa House.

Kyabje Chime Rinpoche was recognised by HH16th Karmapa as Radha Tulku, one of the four tulkus of Benchen Monastery in Tibet. Rinpoche's teachers were HH16th Karmapa, his two uncles HH Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

and 9th Sangye Nyenpa Rinpoche, and Khenpo Gangshar Wangpo of Shechen Monastery. Chime Rinpoche founded Marpa House (then Kham House) in 1973, after being one of the first Tibetan Lamas to come to the West, arriving in Oxford in 1963 with Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche and Akong Rinpoche.

Rinpoche brilliantly combines Mahamudra and Dzogchen instructions and teaches in an incredibly engaging, accessible way, relating with warmth and humour to students in the West. His deep compassion, vast loving kindness and timeless wisdom are profoundly moving for everyone who meets him. Rinpoche is one of the last remaining direct disciples of Khenpo Gangshar as well as being one of the last tulkus to have been traditionally educated in Tibet.

This is a rare and precious opportunity to receive such important teachings directly from such a highly realised teacher. We are very blessed, and absolutely delighted to be able to share this wonderful weekend of teachings with you. We hope you can join us.



Marpa House 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Sunday 20th April

Free of charge

Save the date for a very special anniversary!

Health permitting, we are delighted that Kyabje Chime Rinpoche hopes to join us as we celebrate 50 years of Marpa House together!

Full details, including booking information, will be shared nearer the time. We very much hope you can join us!



The Statues



During the Filling of the Statues, I was asked why we do the filling. So I went to see if I could find a book which might say something about it. I looked for Robert Beer's book on Tibetan symbols, but couldn't find it. Instead I found 'Buddhist Symbols in Tibetan Culture' by Daggyab Rinpoche, Wisdom Publications 1995. In this book he describes the Seven Jewels of Royal Power, which are offered in mandala offerings. They are the Precious Wheel, The Precious Jewel, the Precious Queen, the Precious Minister, the Precious Elephant, The Precious Horse and the Precious General. The last one, the Precious General, is replaced by the Precious Householder in some lists. The quality of the Precious Householder is to possess such wealth that disagreeable places are completely filled with jewels and other precious things, unasked. And, the wealth of the Precious Householder is inexhaustible. All the people are fond of such a person, who does no harm to others.

From their beautiful exteriors, you might not think that the insides of statues could in any way be disagreeable. But in fact they need cleaning before filling, to get rid of bits left over from their casting. Then they are lined with bright golden yellow cloth before the precious substances are put in them.

Daggyab Rinpoche says that the qualities of all the symbols he describes are to be transferred to the spiritual plane. So maybe filling the statues can be taken as an inspiration to fill our disagreeable places with spiritual jewels, and to practice unlimited generosity; we may not have unlimited wealth but we can have the unlimited wish to give. He also encourages his readers to keep in mind the ultimate view of reality, so while filling statues we should remember that the precious substances, the filling process, and we ourselves, are all empty of inherent existence. This lessens our attachment to precious things.

by Brian Richardson

When I entered the shrine room on the 21st of June, I was a little dismayed. Where the large Buddha normally sits, there was now emptiness for us to contemplate. Most of the other statues were missing too, having congregated on a table by the French windows. Some of the Buddhas had their head bandaged as if they'd been in a car crash. Others were standing on their heads in various corners of the room. Was this a yoga class for Buddhas or the neurological wing of a Buddha hospital?



As many of you are aware, about two years ago, we started a process of rolling mantras. We had now come to the final stage. It was time to fill the statues with mantra rolls as well as other precious substances: small sticks of incense, incense powder, herbs and spices, semi-precious stones and jewellery offered by the Sangha. To do this, we asked Lama Kunga to come over from Germany and direct the filling out of the statues which he would later consecrate according to the tradition.



On Saturday morning, we all sat in the shrine room around Lama Kunga, eager to start. He first explained that Chime Rinpoche had given him several garments coming from the 16th Karmapa and from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and instructed him to cut a piece out of each garment and place it inside the large Buddha. He said he found this very difficult to do! But he bravely picked up the scissors and cut into the precious robes and brocade now laid out in front of him.



Lama Kunga sat in the middle of the shrine room, surrounded by several bowls containing the precious substances to go into the rupas.

Several of us sat around him, passing him whichever bowl he asked for. Tirelessly for three days, he held each rupa in turn upside down on his lap and filled it up. It was a joy to watch him and I think we were all transfixed. He moved with such energy as well as such grace and beauty, it was like watching a dance. Many of us sat there for hours, just watching. In the evening, I enquired about clearing up for puja. "This is puja," said the Lama. And it certainly was. For several days the Lama and his helpers worked late into the night. I had retreated to my room by then, but the joyous sounds of Sangha working and laughing, drifted up to my semi-dream state.



Lama Kunga had his meals with us and was always so easy to be with. His presence filled the house with happiness. By Monday, all the rupas had finally been filled and were lifted back onto the shrine. In the afternoon, the consecration was done with the Medicine Buddha sadhana "A stream of Lapiz Lazuli", a beautiful, moving moment. And now we had a new shrine room, with Buddhas filled to the brim with the Sangha's aspiration.

In the evening, we took Lama out for a celebration meal. Everyone in the house was invited to join in if they wished. It was a very

happy occasion. The next day we said goodbye to the Lama. I left the following day, a piece of Dilgo Khyentse's garment, which I'd been given, safely tucked into my trousers pocket. How incredibly blessed we all were to participate in such a magical time.

by Dominique Simpson

Summer Camp 2024

The Summer Camp takes place in the Vosges mountains in Alsace, north-eastern France, which is famous for its crystal glassware. The place is surrounded by trees, streams and rivers, and the air is cool and sweet.

The Camp is on a large site with room for caravans and tents. It is next to a forest which has a river running through it. It is also a 10-minute walk away from Baerenthal village where there are restaurants and a river where you can swim.

What was precious about this Summer Camp, although Rinpoche was unable to come, was that the 300 or so people who came spent the 10 days in harmony.

When I thanked one of the young organisers for such a wonderful atmosphere at the Camp he said that Rinpoche had said in one of his Teachings that he had "built a monastery in each one of our hearts". The love and compassion, joy and fun which flowed between us all was palpable!

Khenpo Tseten, who had flown from Bhutan at a moment's notice in order to undertake the evening Teaching programme, explained this was not by chance. On Wednesday evening Rinpoche spoke to us all on a Zoom

call. He explained why he had started the Summer Camp 45 years ago. He saw that Buddhist families were in conflict when the time came for a holiday. Parents wanted a Buddhist holiday but then the children were bored, and if the parents did what the children wanted then the parents were not happy. So he started the Summer Camp and laid down guidelines. He always repeated these every year. Rinpoche repeated the guidelines again on the Wednesday evening Zoom call - no quarrelling, be nice to each other, speak positively, be in the present, don't talk about disturbing things - leave the world outside, be happy, time is short! Rinpoche concluded by saying "The Summer Camp is my Legacy, you are all bonded by love."



The following evening the Khenpo told us that Rinpoche had given us an extremely profound Teaching. He said we should listen to it again and again. He explained it in its Dharma context as the 5 perfections - right place, right teacher, right attitude, right view, right experience. When these 5 perfections are present there is harmony and joy.

So Summer Camp caters for children, young people, parents and grandparents and even great-grandparents! The children can play, and do what they want safely, the parents can attend the morning and evening teachings,

as well as morning and evening pujas if they wish. They can relax at the bar in the evenings, (no drugs), alcohol in moderation - attend workshops in the afternoon, or go walking, or swimming. A cafeteria opens in the

afternoons serving delicious cakes and patisserie, with teas and coffees. You can sit and catch up with friends you haven't seen for a year or more who come from all over Europe and in fact the world. It is truly a global Sangha.

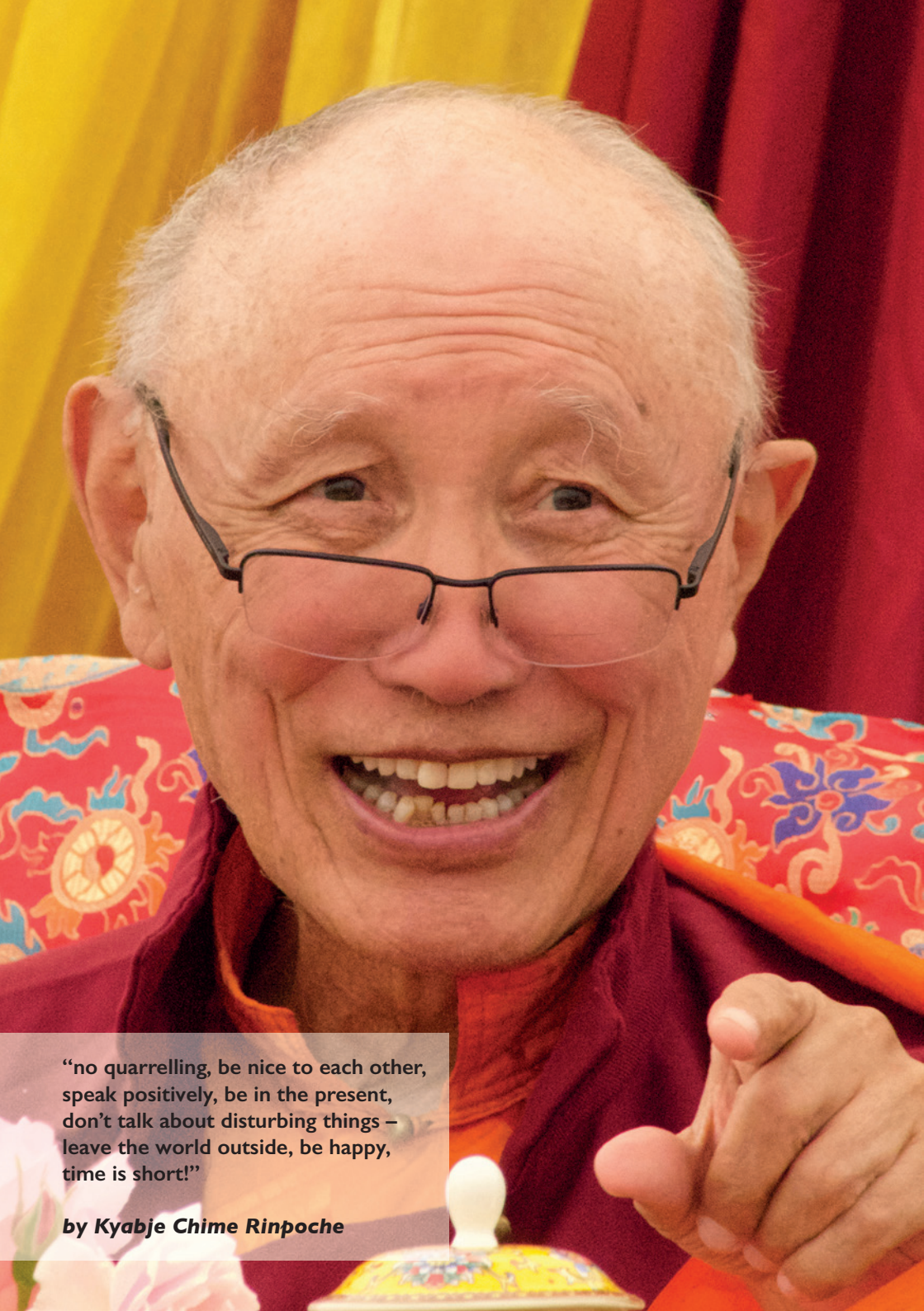
The morning Teachings were given by Lama Sean, who had also come at short notice at the request of Khenpo Gyurme, who was unable to come as planned. Lama Sean taught on Shignas. He stressed the need to relax, to notice

all the knots and tension in our own body, to place the mind there, then let go; to sit normally and not to make "a big deal" out of sitting on the cushion. He said it's possible to sit and relax throughout the day while resting the mind in peace; gradually one can familiarise oneself to relaxing the body and settling the mind in peace. This then becomes one's normal way of being.

Many of us felt that this Summer Camp was one of the best.

by Gabrielle Costello





“no quarrelling, be nice to each other,
speak positively, be in the present,
don’t talk about disturbing things –
leave the world outside, be happy,
time is short!”

by Kyabje Chime Rinpoche



We were all blessed at this year's May teachings, not only with the presence of our esteemed teacher, Kyabje Chime Rinpoche, but also with a happy Sangha and delightful weather!

The Zambhala shop at Marpa House sells all things Tibetan and Buddhist, from Thangkas and Rupas to books and shawls. Just ask the secretary when visiting.

For mail order or if you have any questions please contact Joyce McCleary via email for more information: joycemccleary@gmail.com



Marpa House Accommodation prices are:

Standard House Charge (shared accommodation and 3 vegetarian meals)
£38.00 per night £228 per week

Standard Retreat Charge (single room accommodation and 3 vegetarian meals)
£40.00 per night £240 per week

Further discounts are available for retreats of four weeks or more, provided they are pre-booked and pre-paid.