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marpa house news

BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND RETREAT CENTRE

Summer 2016



Summer is Here (and Now)

From The Trustees • From The Committee

The Celebration of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West

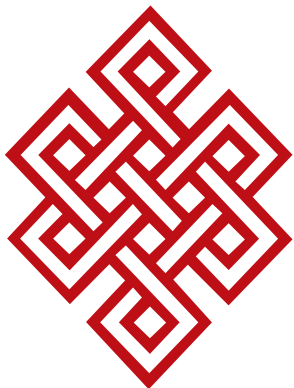
Chime Rinpoche at the Buddhist Society

A Welsh Idyll • Tibetan Alphabet Construction • Goodbye Yasuko Nomura



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BUDDHIST
MEDITATION AND
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Trustee News

This time of our 50th-year celebration gives us room to think. We are an unusual centre. We often have odd tales of how we came to this place, nestled invisibly in Ashdon. Some of us experienced being inexplicably drawn here. Many felt 'magnetised' so that we cannot and do not want to ever part. From the centre, from our Lama, from each other.

This is not a floppy fantasy relationship. It is viscerally real, exposing our flaws, our upsets and the flaws of others. Sometimes we want to be shot of it all and wallow in the world's outside 'delights'. Sometimes we drift away long distances – but, like planets, we orbit our sun. Some are quite a long way out, like Pluto. I prefer a different metaphor – that we are bound by an elastic cord that lengthens and lengthens but eventually reaches its limit and back we zoom. Reality is frustrating because we know enough to realise that the outside 'delights' do not lead to any safe place. Somehow, some secret is only found here.

This isn't the transitory brainwashing of a cult. This is no restricted, gated community from which we cannot escape. Indeed Marpa House is so intense that it is almost impossible to remain living here for more than a year or two. No one converted us. The teachings, this centre, this Lama awoke something that was already present inside us.

The great difference between us as Marpa House and other Buddhist centres is that we, the lay students, all of us, run it. Although rooted in the Kagyu tradition of the Vajrayana, the tradition of oral transmission from teacher to student, we stand apart from the formalities and discipline of any monastic order or any other centre. Buddhism doesn't have bishops or cardinals laying down overarching precepts – each person has their own separate journey, to 'work out their own salvation with diligence'. At Marpa House, more than any other centre I know, we see the traditional rules more as signposts.

We make the mistakes that we have to make, to learn out our safe passage. Many of us have been on staff, Committee or Board of Trustees, stitching into the Marpa House structure the fabric of our knowledge and experience. Every tiny bit of us is vital to having a living,

evolving Centre that works. We are doing this on our own.

All of this flows from Rinpoche's guidance. He gave this centre to us and trusted us to make it work, saying it is up to us what we do. Once, when we were repainting the Shrine Room, he said that it was entirely for us to choose the colours – it could be white if we wanted, though he did want retreat rooms without windows (not possible with fire regulations). His common theme is to emphasise practice instead of froth, substance, not just words. This doesn't mean having to do prostrations or the Four Foundations. Or retreats or mantras. Or pilgrimages. Or having to do anything. We choose. We do have to choose. We are each sown with the seed of our own path. All our paths are different, but always rooted in the awareness of Here and Now.

It is extraordinary to observe how Rinpoche's teachings ebb and flow into the waters of the Nyingma and the Kagyu, the Gelug and the Sakya, the Zen. Those present in the early days of Marpa House observed Chime Rinpoche's fine subtlety in his choice of teachers for it. We are learning to find that subtlety.

Running Marpa House is to live within it, to visit it, to support it, to want it to be here for us and for those yet to find it.

To practise at Marpa House is to find peace (most of the time, anyway). At some point, we will be on our own, standing on our own two feet.

Lama Chime has shown us this path out of our pain. He has helped us to survive. It is up to us whether to follow it, to do more than just survive.

The Committee recently recommended that we hold all residential fees static for a third year, and we will trial a reduced-fee retreat – made possible because of recent large donations. Our purpose is to encourage and make it easier for you to visit and stay. Come whenever you can. Share your time, your

knowledge and your good heart.

Having farewelled Paul from the Committee in our last newsletter, we now sadly farewell the irrepressible Amy. A huge whirlwind of non-fracked Texan energy. Please always be close to help out, Amy, please.

Roger Britton (Chair of the Trustees)



Staffing Opportunities at Marpa House

We need volunteers to come on staff in 2016.

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, to receive teachings from visiting teachers and to practise 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





Committee News

These last six months have been a great time for the sangha as a whole. We can all be very proud of the way we pulled together to help Lama Chime Rinpoche celebrate his 50 years of teaching in the West.



We must give a big thank you to all of those who helped out at the event itself and especially to Paul Wootton and Anne-Marie Scott. Without their direction and hard work, I am sure the Celebration would not have run so smoothly or been such a success. In fact, when Rinpoche thought it was too much to tackle, Paul's initial insistence that it happen and monetary contribution set off the whole thing.

To add to this, during the final preparations for our big event, the way the Committee and Trustees pulled out all the stops to organize this year's May Teaching in three weeks gives me confidence that Marpa House will go on long into the future. I am sure that Chime Rinpoche was very happy to see us all working and pulling together as one big family.

There is a lot of change within the Committee. We are losing Amy Corzine, who has made such a difference over the last three years, and for that, we thank her. We have welcomed Vicki Tofts to our ranks and she is already a great asset to the Committee and House. I am sure her dedication, hard work and wisdom will be tested and developed over the next few years. I have only really started finding my feet as the Chairman, but I am grateful for the opportunity to attempt to make my

spiritual home function and survive.

Within the sangha, I see a lot of talent and ideas. If you don't have the time to become a committee member, but have an idea for an event or something you would like to do, please get in touch and perhaps we can work together in some capacity to make it happen.

Karrim Rabi-laleh (Chair of the Committee)



Chime Rinpoche Is a Shortcut to Laughter

The cherry tree under which I sit
Entangles its branches in the long grass
beneath.

There is white blossom, a dandelion,
Even a bird's feather.

In the same way Lama Chime
Entangles our minds in sensation;
All life noticed and accepted,
Everything sharp and lucid,
Everything makes us laugh.

I cannot tell the truth about the Lama.
This is what a worm sees.
A worm looks at creation.
That is a big eyeful for a worm.

Ann Brunskill



The 50th Anniversary of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West



I arrived at the Friends Meeting House early, just before the main flow of attendees appeared for the 50th anniversary commemoration of the arrival of Vajrayana Buddhism into Western culture – its vanguard being three special individuals: the ‘Three Young Tulkus’ Akong, Chogyam Trungpa and Chime. At the door I was met by smiling, cheery volunteers garnished with red ID lanyards, blurry-eyed from their early start to the day, yet full of energy.

Inside, I looked around the room to see a mix of familiar and new faces, listening to the hubbub of different languages. I spoke to a man new to me from a different part of Britain, but we had something in common – we had both known Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche since our youth.

The guest of honour was His Holiness Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche. The grandson of Chime Rinpoche’s maternal uncle (the great Nyingma master HH Dilgo Khyenste Rinpoche), he and representatives of Kagyu centres from Britain and Europe had come for the day, including Lama Yeshe Rinpoche of Holy Island and Samye Ling, Lama Zangmo of

Kagyü Samyé Dzong in London.

A video by HH Tai Situpa Rinpoche drew attention to the historical significance of Lamas Akong, Trungpa and Chime and a short documentary by filmmaker Piotr Obal described the life and teaching career of Chime Rinpoche. Other speakers, including the President of The Buddhist Society Dr. Desmond Biddulph, Chairman of The Tibet Society Fredrick Hyde-Chambers, OBE, and author/scholar/translator Ken Holmes, told of the political and social upheavals surrounding the tulkus’ appearance in England. Prior to the 1960s, Buddhism was little understood in the West and Vajrayana Buddhism virtually unheard of. The materials available to its eager audience were often poorly translated and confusing and the distant land of Tibet portrayed as something phantasmagorical and otherworldly.

After that, honoured guests of the Tibetan diaspora now living in Britain offered traditional Tibetan music, dance and song to the crowd. Most endearing was the performance of their children in traditional Tibetan costume.





In the afternoon, some of Lama Chime's musician-students showed off their considerable talents. Comedian-storyteller Craig Boulton compered the acts, just as he does at Lama Chime's Summer Camp in France. Between each, he told a segment of a hilarious saga involving a young Englishman's first encounter with 'the Lama'. It resonated with the mainly western sangha when he confessed at the end that it was a 'true story' – and his own.

No account of the day would be complete without saying something about the true star of the day, Chime Rinpoche. A living example of a great teacher in the oral tradition, he doesn't simply look at the outer packaging of individuals and present-day consumerism. He digs deeper, drawing upon the everyday, the commonplace, repositioning it within a spiritually awakened context, shortcutting intellectually constructed defences and appealing straight to our hearts.

Thank you, Rinpoche, for your tireless efforts in planting the seeds of Dharma in your new homeland. May it bring joy to all.

William J. Giddings



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PROGRAMME OF EVENTS
July 2016 - December 2016



MEDITATION PRACTICE DAY

Sunday 3 July, 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

A day of calm abiding meditation, led by a student of Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche.

VOLUNTEER GARDENING WEEKEND

Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 July

Free meals and accommodation in exchange for some physical work! Day volunteers are also very welcome.

We welcome enthusiastic volunteers to help in the garden. No special knowledge or skills required and tools are provided. Please come and help us look after the garden this summer!



MEDICINE BUDDHA PRACTICE DAY led by Karrim Rabi-Laleh

Saturday 23 July, 9.30am and 2.30pm

£10 per day. Lunch is available for £5 but needs to be booked in advance.

The Medicine Buddha practice was first taught by Shakyamuni Buddha himself in the Sutra of the Master of Healing and is now practiced in all forms of Buddhism across the globe. This practice is very useful for everybody, but especially those who are currently affected by any kind of physical or mental illness and those who work in health care in some way or another. This retreat will be

balanced between learning and practice, giving plenty of opportunity to those who are familiar with the practice to deepen their relationship with the Medicine Buddha, and also will allow beginners the space to learn.

'If one meditates on the Medicine Buddha, one will eventually attain enlightenment, but in the meantime one will experience an increase in healing powers both for oneself and others and a decrease in physical and mental illness and suffering.' – Ven Thrangu Rinpoche

The Medicine Buddha practice day will be led by Karrim Rabi-laleh. He has been a student of Lama Chime Rinpoche since taking Refuge with him in February, 2005, at Marpa House, where he had the opportunity to study his mind under the guidance of the Lama while living in the house for two and a half years. He wishes his light-hearted approach to spirituality and personal experiences will help to create an atmosphere that will benefit all of those who attend.

July Continued



TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 24 July, 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!



SUMMER CAMP in BAERENTHAL, FRANCE with Khenpo Tseten

Saturday 30 July - Sunday 7 August

Please contact the Secretary for information and booking forms.

August



PRAYER FLAG MAKING

Saturday 13 – Tuesday 23 August, 9.30am - 6pm daily

Usual accommodation costs apply

Mantras bless all corners of the universe carried on the breeze by prayer flags, and where they're raised the flags themselves help to harmonise the elements and remove obstacles. Join us to help print and stitch our beautiful 'lung-ta' – auspicious prayer flags, to be raised later this year.

Please book in advance via the Secretary if you'd like to join in.

September



FAMILY WEEKEND

Saturday 3 – Sunday 4 September

Places must be booked in advance. Please contact the Secretary for further details, including pricing.

For families with children this is a rare opportunity to all stay in the House and practice together – a chance for children to enjoy the Dharma and for parents to learn and practise together in the House.



VOLUNTEER GARDENING WEEKEND

Saturday 10 September

Free meals in exchange for some hard work!

We welcome enthusiastic volunteers to help in the garden. No special knowledge or skills required, and tools are provided. Please come and help us enjoy the beautiful garden!



GURU RINPOCHE PRACTICE and GURU RINPOCHE TSOK

with Karrim Rabi-Laleh and Sangha Members

Sunday 11 September, 10.30am and 2.30pm

By donation, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but needs to be booked in advance.

A morning of Guru Yoga, followed by a Tsok in the afternoon to celebrate Guru Rinpoche day. Guru Yoga is a swift, powerful practice and Tsok is a traditional and effective method for generating merit and repairing damaged samaya in the Vajrayana tradition.

TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 18 September, 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!



VAJRAYOGINI RETREAT (closed)

6.30pm Friday 23 – 9am Monday 26 September

This is a closed retreat. We are very sorry but the House and retreat wing will not be open to day visitors or guests during this time.



MEDITATION PRACTICE DAY

Sunday 2 October, 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.
A day of calm abiding meditation, led by a student of Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche.

KYABJÉ CHIME RINPOCHE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Saturday 8th October, 2.30pm

By donation, lunch is available for House guests only.
Please join us in prayers, practice, offering of Khataks and celebration for Rinpoche's birthday!



TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 16 October, 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch
For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!



CHÖD and MAHAKALA PRACTICE DAYS with Vicki Tofts and Sangha Members

9pm Friday October 28 – 5pm Sunday 30 October

By donation. Usual accommodation costs apply for house guests. Lunch is available for day visitors for £5. Please note you will need to book in advance if you wish to attend; you must have prior permission to do these practices.

On the Friday and Saturday, we will be practicing Chod, and on Sunday we will be practicing Mahakala.



MEDITATION PRACTICE DAY

Sunday 6 November, 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.
A day of calm abiding meditation, led by a student of Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche.



KHENPO TSETEN on the 'FOUR DHARMAS of GAMPOPA'

**Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 November,
10.30am and 2.30pm each day**

£15 per day plus £5 for lunch.

Khenpo Tseten was born in Thimpu (Bhutan) in 1974. In the early 90s, Khenpo joined Shechen Monastery in Nepal. In 2000, he successfully graduated from its Shedra (monastic university). HH Rabjam Rinpoche then gave him responsibility over

the same Shedra, which he managed for three years. In 2006, Rabjam Rinpoche asked him to settle at Nyima Dzong to teach, responding to the repeated request of Ogyen Kunzang Choling. During a stay at Shechen Monastery in 2009, he was inducted Khenpo (Master of Studies and Monastic Discipline).

Khenpo Tseten now has over 20 years' experience as a teacher of philosophy and Buddhist practice, leading retreats and the organisation of important events. He is this year's resident teacher at Rinpoche's summer camp in France and we are absolutely delighted to welcome him back to Marpa House to teach!

TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 20 November, 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!

CHÖD and MAHAKALA PRACTICE DAYS

with Vicki Tofts and Sangha Members

9pm Friday 25 – 5pm Sunday 27 November

By donation. Usual accommodation costs apply for house guests. Lunch is available for day visitors for £5. Please note you will need to book in advance if you wish to attend; you must have prior permission to do these practices.

On the Friday and Saturday, we will be practicing Chöd, and on Sunday we will be practising Mahakala.

December



TRALEG KHANDRO, 'INTEGRAL BUDDHISM - BRINGING ALL ASPECTS OF ONESELF ONTO THE PATH'

Saturday 3 December and Sunday 4 December, 10.30am and 2.30pm each day

£30 per day plus £5 for lunch.

Director of Yeshe Nima Buddhist Centre in Australia and EVAM Buddhist Institute New York, Khandro has taught for 20 years and studied Lu-Jong under 'Traleg Rinpoche's guidance. This is her first visit to Marpa House and we are honoured and delighted to welcome her.

NEW YEAR SILENT RETREAT with John Howard

7.30pm Tuesday December 27 – 2pm Monday 2 January 2017

£200 per person plus an initial £50 deposit to secure your place at time of booking.

This is a closed retreat. The House will not be open to day visitors and guests during this time. Places are available but limited to one guest per room, so please book early! We are delighted that John Howard will be leading us into the New Year with a silent retreat. John is a senior student of Rinpoche's and has completed the traditional three-year retreat practices. He is loved by all for his presence and inspiring, direct approach to meditation.

January 2017



MEDITATION PRACTICE MORNING and NEW YEAR GURU RINPOCHE TSOK, led by a student of Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche

Sunday 8 January 2017, 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge. Please bring a donation for Tsok. All welcome. Lunch is available for £5, but needs to be booked in advance.

Please join us to celebrate the New Year with the aspiration that all beings everywhere have a peaceful, healthy and joyful 2017! And our thanks and best wishes to you all for your continued support. We hope to see you at the House soon!

Marpa House Chös Khor Ling

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Words About the Celebration

The 50th Anniversary celebrations were a living colourful mandala of preparations, planning, invocations of deities, Mandala Offerings and arrival of Rabjam Rinpoche and Chime Rinpoche. Then so suddenly it was over – a reminder of the impermanence of this life. Working both before and behind the scenes was alive with magic. I worked with the most delightful team, attending to anxious performers, trying to peek at their performances through the door; helping the dancers receive scarves from Chime Rinpoche and then hearing about the life of our Lama in a panoramic fashion. The joy of seeing and being part of so much love and respect, of watching it all come together, is an experience never to be forgotten. *Vicki Tofts*

I have been thinking long and hard about last Saturday – well it was amazing looking at the videos of the Rinpoche, listening about his life (so far) and the lovely tributes to him, but the most moving part for me was seeing him receive the Mandala Offering. I had seen this in films and never thought I would ever witness something like this. It was so powerful and, I found, very emotional. But what a day ... it was blooming marvellous. *Clare Leaper*

Since our move to the west country I have been an infrequent visitor to Marpa House mainly because I am not fond of huge groups of people, but I have loved attending Chime Rinpoche's teachings in Cornwall. So I came to this massive celebratory event with mixed feelings, dominated by fear and trepidation! How wrong I was. The day was superb in every way, mellow and relaxed but efficiently run down to the minutest detail, nothing was left to chance. The 'Light' room (so appropriately named) was filled with light and love. *Wendy Britton*

The Lama, shining glory
Reflects in grateful eyes
of students set to laughter
by the strength of love and light
in half a century of trust.

The Sun has gathered all
his loyal stars upon the
slopes of Now, to gaze
in wonder at the valley
of remembered bliss
and up to dawn-gold
peaks of what must be
tomorrow.

By the Jewels and by
the Roots of practice
I pray to tread the bright
and flowered heights
of future's hope.

Ben Smithies



What a wonderful celebration of the last 50 years, and how nice it was to listen to the various speakers, with their personal recollections of those far-off days. I would like to share a memory sparked off by it from oh-so-many years ago.

I had considered myself a Buddhist for around six or seven years when I attended one of the Buddhist Society's Annual Summer Schools in High Leigh, Hoddesdon. Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche had just completed a teaching about the Tibetan Wheel of Life, and was answering questions from the audience when he was asked about the future of Tibetan Buddhism in the UK. He explained that the seeds had already been sown in us, and just like in the Bible story, some seeds would start



growing straight away, some would be wasted, and some would lie dormant, to reach fruition many years hence. I am still hoping I may be in that latter group.

At that time, I had not yet met Chime Rinpoche, but lots of people at the Summer School were telling me about this other Lama named Jimmy (as I heard). Needless to say I did meet Rinpoche soon afterwards, and on our first meeting he said I should join the staff at Kham House. And so the dance began.

Thank you, Rinpoche, for accepting me, and for all your wisdom and guidance. I am still proud to be your worst-ever student and treasure my blank sheets of paper:

Don Martin

What a deeply moving event it was. And most of all it hit home once again, how unique our teacher is, what a privilege it is to know him and to be part of his sangha. Thanks so much, Rinpoche!

Brigitte Schokarth

I found the 50th Anniversary party deeply moving. It reminded me of why Chime Rinpoche, Marpa House, the Sangha and Dharma are so important to me. Thank you to everyone who made the day so special.

Karen Packwood



When asked, 'What did you enjoy most?', Tashi (11 years old) replied, 'Craig's story!'

Every moment was a pure jewel and especially I was moved by Katia Holmes' words about revolution, change and the inner path – linking to Rinpoche's, the wish needing to come from within, not imposed.

And joy: the spirit of joy embodied in the day, by Rinpoche, by everyone present, replete with blessing seeds for all beings.

In immeasurable gratitude, Sophie Muir





A Welsh Idyll with Lama Chime

It was January 15th, 2016 – a cold evening in Brynmawr, South Wales. The surrounding hills were covered in snow and the streets of the town in ice. About sixty people sat in a spacious, two-floor shrine room in what was once a church at Palpung Changchub Dargyeling, the main seat of Vajradhara Tai Situ Rinpoche in the UK, as Chime Rinpoche began his teaching with recollections of Tai Situ.

When the previous Tai Situ died, he said the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa entered retreat for one month in order to find his reincarnation. Eventually the baby of a widow from a poor

confidence, karma, the nature of the mind, the four extraordinary foundations and practising the Dharma in daily life. Doing this in a western culture is not a problem, as 'you still have a mind, so you can practise Buddhism.'

He spoke of three different kinds of confidence: the desire to be confident, a clear and spontaneous confidence and indestructible confidence. 'Clear confidence' is something you can experience spontaneously upon seeing an image, visiting a temple, or meeting someone – it's [a sense of] being at home.' 'Indestructible confidence' is something you develop, something that grows through practice.



family was recognized as the new Tai Situ and his enthronement at Palpung Monastery was attended by hundreds of thousands of people.

Rinpoche described him as a very intelligent child, and recalled an episode when he mischievously wanted to 'test' the 7-year-old tulku's wisdom. 'I am thinking of going to England,' said Chime Rinpoche. 'What do you think about that?' Tai Situ Rinpoche replied, 'But that is a different country with a different custom. You should stay with Sangye Nyenpa until he dies.'

Lama Chime then proceeded to teach on

These three kinds of confidence are related to the body, speech and mind. 'The body and speech are quite easy to manage ... The speech is always visible, when we talk to others. But the mind ... nobody can see it!' The mind is critical for us because the body and speech do exactly what the mind says. He explained there are actually two kinds of mind – one is very pure and one is made up of habits. 'When you

become Buddhist, the first important thing is to remove your bad habits.'

Karma is very complicated, Rinpoche said. 'My view is it's a kind of action-reaction. You perform a skilful action, and you have [the] result of happiness. An unskilful action – reaction is suffering.' Some people see karma as something external they can't change, like the 'will of God'. But they don't take responsibility or recognise what they themselves have done.

We need to search for our mind. Where is it? First, find out what shape it is, what colour. 'If you try to locate this habit-mind, you can't



– it doesn't exist. If you have a problem, look inside and try to locate it – you find you can't. Actually, it doesn't exist.'

Speaking on the four special foundations, Rinpoche said: 'Prostrations are very good – [they purify] the body.' Vajrasattva is the same. 'It's like taking a bath.' The mandala offering works with attachment. 'All our life, attachment is a big problem. So we assemble a mandala, symbolic with [precious things], and offer it, to be free of attachment.' Guru Yoga, he said, 'for Westerners can be a big headache!' In Tibet the importance of the Lama was emphasised. 'The teaching has been handed down from one teacher to another' and is proof it is authentic. How can we judge who is a good lama? 'Look at the effect of their teaching on you – how has it affected you?'

'We landed on a golden land, a land of opportunity,' said Rinpoche about coming to England. 'And I have had fifty years of freedom.' He, Akong Rinpoche and Trungpa Rinpoche all became British citizens.

'Practise doesn't mean you're locked up in your room... My body is working in the British Museum, but my heart is still in the right place – I am still a Tibetan lama. Whether you're working, wherever your body is, [it's] very important where your heart is.'

On the floor of the shrine room that night, I'm glad to say my heart felt it was in a good place.

Jamie Pinto

Chime Rinpoche at the Buddhist Society

I was asked to write something about Rinpoche's January teaching because I came from far away. I don't think it is too far away to come from Todtmoos to London; Rinpoche himself has done it lots of times. It

is so precious to get teachings from Rinpoche and to be in his presence.

He explained that our suffering (of course we don't like it!) is the chance to gain enlightenment. (At summer camp last year, he said that problems are our root guru.)

As I understood, he often recommends foundation (Ngöndro) and the first foundation, refuge with prostrations, as a good antidote against too much intellectual thinking. It also gives us great benefits. And then we have to follow our Lama.

He explained:

'In the beginning, I took my master for my master;
In the middle, I took scripture for my master;
At the end, I took my mind as my master.'

Also he talked about the difference between western people and Tibetans. Westerners do a lot of meditation; nevertheless, they have no confidence; maybe they all think too much about quantity, not quality. Tibetans do hardly any meditation, but they have a lot of confidence.

Doing dharma does not mean that we have to leave our modern western lives. Rinpoche teaches us to do both, to live in modern society and to do meditation. He helps his students to survive as he conveys how to see negative things/difficulties in a positive way. All obstacles are chances for transformation. If we do not avoid them, than we will survive.

When we are meeting our lama we should be open and when he opens the door, there is no space for doubts, etc.

It is not sensible trying to be perfect; if we accept we are not, maybe we will be in the future. The right way is in the middle, between right and wrong. Buddha could only show us how to get free, but everybody has to go this way on his own.

Iris Treibl of Todtmoos, Germany





Tibetan Alphabet, Word Construction and Calligraphy with Brian Richardson



Three years ago I attended the first weekend of a three-week course at Marpa House studying the Tibetan alphabet with Khenpo Gyurme Tsultrim of Schechen

Monastery. Unfortunately I never managed to work out the word structure from the book about it that I bought on this occasion.

Now here was a chance. Brian Richardson's course offered all I could hope for – an opportunity to relearn the Tibetan alphabet and find out more about the way words are structured in Tibetan, plus calligraphy too (the latter new to me).

With Brian's enthusiasm for the subject and thoughtful preparation, the first weekend included practising the formation of the Tibetan characters with a calligraphy pen, which he provided, and then writing the Refuge Prayer on A3 paper in Tibetan. (Did I really do that?!)

Due to Brian's easy teaching manner and patience, the rest of the week flowed gently while I learned more Tibetan characters and words and how to use a Tibetan-English dictionary – and more calligraphy. With few outside influences, my attention was focused yet relaxed.

The staff was wonderful as always and so, for me, this was certainly a week to remember. In fact, I would say it was another Marpa House miracle.

Gloria Barley

Goodbye to Yasuko Nomura



I arrived at Yasuko's funeral on a cold winter's day. It was standing room only, the crematorium packed with all kinds of people. Calling it 'a celebration of her life' was very apt. With two choirs performing and readings of moving poems and

eulogies, it was a send-off like no other. She was, without a doubt, one of my best friends in the Dharma and one of my best friends, full stop. In life she was bubbling with joy, zest, warmth, enthusiasm and compassion – all of this confirmed very emotionally by those with whom I spoke on that day. Love and good luck on your journey, Yasuko...

John O'Doherty

Yasuko

Yasuko where are you?

Whose dream are you in now?

Is it a Japanese dream, second flush green tea in porcelain, precise and perfectly executed?

Is it an English dream, polite murmurings, black tea with milk, in bone china, on the lawn?

Or a South African dream, direct and more adventurous, rooibosh on the veranda?

Or is it a Tibetan dream, offering tea to the Lama, saltier than the sea, creamier than butter, full of surprises, beyond pain?

Yasuko I long to hear your scratchy cello again.

Play it for us now, talk to us again, in your dream, Yasuko.

Ian Pearce, 2010



An Open Letter to Chime Rinpoche after His May Day Teaching



Kerry and I decided we had to attend your May talk. Memories rose.

I can't describe the feeling on first meeting you as a young man. You seemed to be vulnerable yet possessed of great power. I knew nothing of Tibetan Buddhism, had no idea what a tulku was and worried about leaving the School of Economic Science and the School of Meditation, which seemed to have answers.

'Come and study with me for three years, three months and three days and then make up your mind,' you said.

My concerns instantly disappeared. I didn't so much make up my mind as forget there was any question.

When you were looking round for somewhere to stay other than student accommodation, we suggested you live with us. Living with a fully realized man was daunting. We decided the only way to deal with it was to treat you as we would any other dear friend.

Understanding you wanted the experience of living with an English family, we tried to be the family you had lost. Do you remember calling me your little brother? I don't think I ever managed to give back what you gave.

One afternoon in the flat, awed by your and Akong Rinpoche's knowledge and power, you both teased me mercilessly with, 'You

are better than us because you are aware you know nothing. We both think we have knowledge.'

After you left our flat, I felt you cut yourself off from me. One day I met you in the street and you hit me again and again with, 'You are your own Guru.' I didn't understand, just again felt separation.

I know less now than I did that afternoon in our Streatham flat. 'You don't know much, but you should teach,' you told me not long ago. Maybe it doesn't matter whether you strike steel with a stone or stone with steel – you still get a spark.

The power of your May Day teaching increased as the day wore on. Towards the end, particularly when you spoke of the empowerments you are going to give, your face began to change. I saw a cycle of faces – each different, but each one Chime. You radiated light. Your upper robe was no longer dull but vivid red, seemingly made of electric light. As you left the marquee, you looked at me and said, 'Old man.'

Outside, people talked about a solar halo that had appeared. I thought, 'Why are they surprised at signs and wonders?' The surprise would have been if there had been none.

We set out tomorrow for the 50-year celebration. Can it be that long? I don't know which of us will move on first, but the thought of a life without you in it is hard to contemplate.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for helping me realise I am my own Guru. You used to quote Hughie Green's tag line: 'Opportunity Knocks!' I hope I've had the sense to open the door.

Ron Ede





*Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche and the Sangha making a mandala offering to
His Holiness Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche*

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