



# LOTUS ARROW

Newsletter of the Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies

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## OPENING THE NEW CENTER: A PERSONAL JOURNEY

by Jane Larsson

Sometimes karma works in mysterious ways. On October 30th last year, I found out that I was being laid off, effective November 1, after fourteen years with the company. Although it wasn't a total surprise—there had been rumors of layoffs for weeks—you're never quite sure if you are on the list or not.

The weirdest thing was suddenly having no place to go and nothing to do, five days a week. How many times had I said to myself, "I'd love to do a long retreat—if only I had the time—if only I didn't have to work...?" Well, here I was with plenty of time, but somehow I didn't feel like I had the right frame of mind for a successful retreat. But what to do? I sure wasn't ready to start looking for another job! Yet, as anyone who knows me will tell you I'm not the kind of person that can sit around for very long; I get antsy.

Well as life would happen, I was presented with a perfect opportunity to practice Dharma in another way—a seemingly endless list of things to do at our new center at 68 Magoun Avenue. Geshe-la would be returning from India in January and was to move into his room at the Center, and a date for an Open House had already been set. We had a deadline to meet. So, I just started going to the Center. And, I found the more time I spent working there, the better I felt. I was contributing to something I care deeply about. My efforts were needed and had a broader purpose. It was just what I needed, too.

And I rarely worked alone. Through

the process, I got to know so many members of the community. We had conversations that we never would have had in the limited time before and after teachings.

In early January, with Geshe-la due to return in a few days, I was at the Center daily. Palden and Damchoe had moved everything over from the Pennsylvania Avenue apartment. As Palden worked day and night upstairs to clean and set up Geshe-la's room, Damchoe and Chuck Blais were downstairs building the beautiful altar for our gumpa. And, in between, myriad others were cleaning windows, sewing curtains, painting trim, laying floors, and the list goes on. Finally, after months of work, the place was coming together. It was very exciting, and I so hoped that Geshe-la would be pleased.

On January 16th, our beloved Geshe-la safely returned from India. When I went to see him the next day, he personally thanked me for my efforts. I felt

warm inside. Most importantly, I'm told that he's very happy in his new home.

On Saturday, the 19th, we opened our new Center to the public. It was a wonderful celebration. Over 100 people attended, including my parents, who had been very curious about where I'd been spending so much of my time (instead of looking for a new job). As if I hadn't reaped enough benefit already, it was very special to be able to share this important part of my life with them. No matter how old I get, I can't help swelling with pride when my parents nod their approval.

I've always believed that things happen for a reason, even before I'd ever heard the word "karma." Well, these last few months just underscored the truth of that statement.

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE IS  
COMING TO KURUKULLA  
CENTER SEPTEMBER 15–16!  
DETAILS INSIDE.



Jane Larsson gives her parents a tour of the new gumpa.

Photo: Debbie Cavalier



Scott Tusa and Joanie Cosselman at a recent teaching.  
Photo by Damchoe.

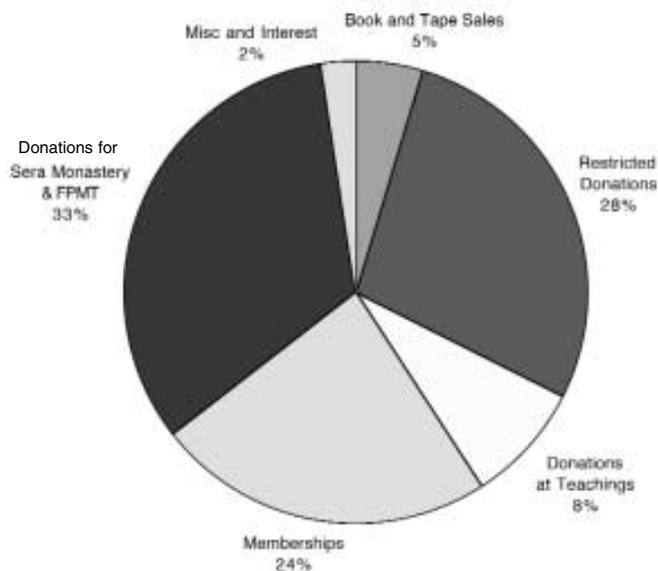
## Refuge News

In February, three people took refuge at a ceremony given by Ven. Geshe Tsulga at Kurukulla Center. Scott Tusa is a student at Berkeley School of Music in Boston, Joanie Cosselman teaches English and lives in Newburyport, and Andi Young is an undergraduate at Yale University. Congratulations and best wishes!

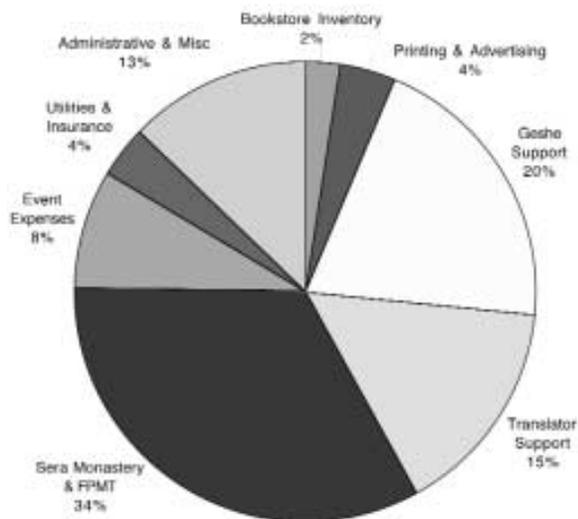
## Gyuto Monks in Boston

The Gyuto Tantric Choir will be staying overnight at Kurukulla Center during their visit to the Boston area on April 27th. They will be giving a performance at Sanders Theatre in Cambridge at 8:00 P.M. that evening, and will join Kurukulla members in a *Guru Puja* at the Center the next morning. If you would like to find out more about their concert, contact the World Music box office at (617) 876-4275.

## Kurukulla Center 2001 Operating Income: \$98,681



## Kurukulla Center 2001 Operating Expenses: \$99,366



## 2001 FINANCIAL REPORT

*by Jennifer Barlow*

2001 WAS A YEAR of outstanding growth for Kurukulla Center, yet we were able to keep our income and expenses nearly even. We were only \$685 short on our budget, and while we still face the challenges that come with growing our programs, we rejoice in the successes of 2001. We are so grateful to all of you who donate to the Center throughout the year, and to those who make special donations to help support Geshe-la, Damchoe, and Sera Monastery in India. In particular, the support of so many of you through the membership appeal at the end of last year was outstanding, and helped us to finish the year on a high note.

The pie charts to the left represent Kurukulla Center's Operating Budget for the year 2001. (Note that this Income and Expense breakdown does not include donations and expenses related to the purchase and renovation of the new building.)

The **Income** categories represent the donations that you make to the Center when you are at teachings, when you offer your monthly memberships, when you purchase books and items from our bookstore, or when you respond to a special appeal. The **Expense** categories represent all of the costs associated with presenting classes and other programs throughout the year. They include support for Geshe-la, Damchoe, and visiting teachers, rental of teaching space, the costs of the newsletters, and administrative costs. There is also a category representing the projects we support at Sera, including monk sponsorship, donations to the monastery, and special pujas.

May our collective efforts bring happiness to all being everywhere!

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

On January 19th, my excitement at witnessing the inauguration of our new home was inexpressible. It was such a pleasure to be director during this important transition in the life of Kurukulla Center, and I rejoiced greatly at the efforts of so many people that was now bearing fruit, especially the way everything seemed to crystalize in the few hours leading up to the open house—carpet, library, temple...voila! I feel great hope that the wishes of all our teachers for the Center and our own best intentions for benefiting others now have surer conditions within which to mature and ripen.



One of the ways that we have been able to take advantage of our new space is by increasing the range of programs that we are able to offer. This Spring we will be launching the “Discovering Buddhism” program, a fourteen-part introductory curriculum developed by the Education Department of the FPMT. This program will allow us to introduce

the teachings in keeping with the path as laid out by the Gelug lineage founder, Lama Tsongkhapa, while also drawing on the special methods for reaching the Western sensibility used by Kurukulla Center’s founders, Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche. A lot of work by experienced Western students has gone into developing this curriculum, and it promises to become a mainstay for new students at Kurukulla Center.

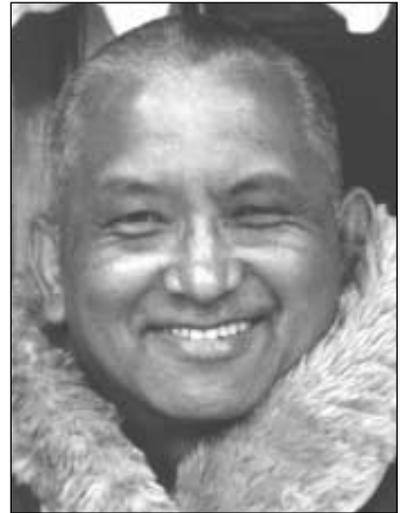
While our new home has definitely provided new opportunities, it has also created new challenges and responsibilities. We no longer have the tasks of finding rides to teachings for Geshe-la, stowing cushions, or setting up the altar, but we now have all the responsibilities of property owners, and for a fixer-upper at that! The coming year will ideally involve several major improvements to the physical plant, including replacing the boiler and installing zoned climate control, painting the exterior, and enlarging the meditation hall, which is already overflowing at Geshe-la’s Sunday morning class.

In addition, the strain on our all-volunteer administration has increased. The financial, program, and facility responsibilities, not to mention the day-to-day upkeep, could keep several full-time staff busy, yet we are currently relying on people to take care of these things in their spare time. If Kurukulla Center is going to thrive into the future, something will need to be done to ensure a sustainable administration.

The bigger picture, however, is one of manifold good fortune. To have such an excellent teacher and example in Geshe-la, to have Ven. Damchoe translating, to have this brand-new home, to have such dedicated volunteers and contributors, and, most of all, to have the pure and precious liberation teachings of the Buddha—our cup overflows. May we continue to create the merit for the Buddha’s message to flourish.

## LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE IS COMING!

LAMA THUBTEN Zopa Rinpoche, Kurukulla Center’s Spiritual Director, has announced a US tour for this August and September that includes a weekend of teachings here in Boston. This information is subject to change, so please stay tuned for up-to-date details.



*Milarepa Center, Barnet, VT*

AUGUST 10–11: general teachings

AUGUST 12: Mitrugpa Initiation

AUGUST 13–SEPTEMBER 10: Mitrugpa Retreat

*Kurukulla Center, Medford MA*

SEPTEMBER 15–16: The 37 Practices of All Bodhisattvas

*Kadampa Center, Raleigh NC*

SEPTEMBER 22: blessing Kalachakra statue

SEPTEMBER 23–26: Heruka and Vajrayogini initiations

## Share Your Voice: Buddhism and Health

Tina Deck, a student at Harvard Divinity School who attends Kurukulla events for both spiritual and research reasons, is currently engaged in a fieldwork project on health and Buddhism. She is hoping to learn how personal health and the alleviation of illness are supported by Buddhist practices, including meditation, participation in pujas, and recitation of mantras. To get an honest sense of the landscape at Kurukulla Center, Tina is looking for people willing to complete a short, specific interview on their take on health and Buddhism, whether you’ve been coming to the Center for three months or three years. If your schedule does not allow a face-to-face interview, you could share your responses by email or telephone. She can be found at Sunday morning practice and Thursday evening meditation, but she can also be reached at [cdeck@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:cdeck@hds.harvard.edu) or by phone at (617) 498-0474. Tina will present her observations at Harvard’s Center for the Study of World Religions on May 14 between 3 P.M. and 7 P.M. along with a number of presentations from other religious traditions. All are welcome to attend.



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## DEFYING DELUSIONS IN THE CITY

*Lama Zopa Rinpoche*

One nun who runs an American city center raised the issue that people don't come to the center regularly, but only from time to time. I said in the West, there are a lot of obstacles in people's lives. There are family obligations, and people have to work very hard to take care of their family, or even just themselves, because the style of life is very expensive here compared to other countries.

Not only that, but they also have a lot of distractions. Life is full of external desire objects, and there is also a lot of desire within the mind, which leads to many excuses. So it is not easy for them to come to the teachings at the centers. It is easy to have a stronger interest in other things, things having to do with the pleasures of this life, and not so much for the

happiness of future lives, let alone liberation and enlightenment. Also, after working long hours all day, they are tired when they come back home. So people have many reasons.

There are so many obstacles in life, so many distractions from Dharma practice or even just from listening. Without question, the practice to focus on and the thing to actualize in the West is dealing with the objects of desire. There are so many advertisements. Even when you close your eyes, there is so much desire in the mind. Then when you open them, advertisements inflame desire in the most effective way possible.

Therefore, even if just six people come, or even if just one person is able to come to the center to receive teachings, that is really amazing! That's incredible! It's unbelievable! They are very brave. They are defying the delusions, not following them. That is following Dharma.

KURUKULLA

CENTER is a member of The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana



Tradition (FPMT), a worldwide community of Buddhist centers dedicated to preserving the pure teachings of the Buddha as found in Tibetan Buddhism. Founded by Lama Yeshe in 1975 and currently under the spiritual direction of his main disciple, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the FPMT provides teachings, retreats, literature, hospice care, and social services in twenty countries.

Kurukulla Center was founded by Lama Zopa Rinpoche in 1989 and is named for a wrathful emanation of Red Tara who manifests the buddhas' compassionate activity in the world.