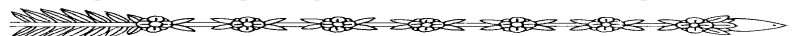


# LOTUS ARROW



*Newsletter of the Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies*

Number 24, December 2002

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## KYABJE ZOPA RINPOCHE'S VISIT

*Kurukulla Center's spiritual director, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, head of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, our parent organization, visited the Center from September 14 through 18. Nick Ribush reports.*

Four wonderful days. Rinpoche was supposed to arrive from Milarepa Center, Vermont, on Wednesday, maybe Thursday, so we planned the first Kurukulla event for 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon—a reception for Center members and volunteers. Rinpoche arrived fashionably late—at 3:30 p.m.! Not too late, though.



Ven. Geshe Tsulga greets Lama Zopa Rinpoche upon his arrival.

We were very excited. This was Rinpoche's first visit to our new building; in fact, our first building. Although Kurukulla Center started in 1989, we had always used rented premises for our program until the beginning of this year. Most *Lotus Arrow* readers know that we bought an old nursing home in June last year, and after fixing it up, mainly our-

selves, for six months, we began having teachings there last January. Even though he hadn't yet been there in person, we kept hearing that Rinpoche thought the place had a good feeling.

After the reception—during which Rinpoche was greeted in the traditional Tibetan way by our beloved Geshe Tsulga and Damchoe and served sweet rice and Tibetan tea—we had a Medicine Buddha puja, which was beautifully led by English nun Venerable Sarah Thresher. For those of us who had done some or all of the Mitukpa retreat at Milarepa, it was an excellent segue into the next set of teachings by Rinpoche, as Sarah had done a fantastic job leading the retreat, and her chanting of the Medicine Buddha sadhana the way Rinpoche likes it done brought back many fond memories of our time in the mountains of Vermont.

The next day, about 150 people attended the first day's teachings on the *Thirty-seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*. Rinpoche taught mainly on why we should practice Dharma, emptiness and guru devotion, but the first verse of the text did get a brief mention at the end of the evening. Since we couldn't fit so many people into our gompa, we had hired a tent and put it up in our back yard. It worked OK until the rain started and one of the loud speakers went out. But that was near the end.

The next night, we knew fewer people would come, so we squeezed about 80 chairs into the gompa and filled the front half with cushions. The teaching was preceded by the *Guru Puja*, again beautifully led by Venerable Sarah. It started just after nine in the morning and eventually finished, after a two-hour break at some point in the afternoon, just before seven in the evening, right before the teaching was due to start. We all loved it.

The two-hour teaching stretched to

four or five, as they do, and everybody went home totally satisfied. Although the prescribed text didn't get taught espe-



Lama Zopa teaching at Kurukulla Center.

cially, Rinpoche did give us the oral transmission, which was a great blessing, and spoke a little about the inspiring life of the author, the thirteenth-century Tibetan bodhisattva, Thogme Sangpo.

After a busy Tuesday seeing people at the Center, visiting Wisdom Publications and doing another Medicine Buddha puja, this time at the Mt. Auburn Cemetery, on Wednesday, Rinpoche offered lunch to the Kurukulla management committee and the staff of the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive. Right after lunch, at 6 o'clock in the evening, Rinpoche and his entourage drove off for a flying visit to Guhyasamaja Center, in Virginia, before continuing on for his scheduled series of teachings at Kadampa Center, North Carolina.

We thank Rinpoche from our hearts for visiting our Center, but mainly for being who he is and so compassionately spending his time among us. We pray that he will come back soon and often.

## CENTER NEWS

### Geshe-la goes to India

Our precious resident teacher, Geshe Tsulga, has gone to India for a couple of months. During his absence, teachings will continue at the Center, as indicated in the schedule. Center resident Sue Macy and Ed Softky are accompanying Geshe-la on his trip. (If anybody would like to greet Geshe-la on his return on Christmas Day, he arrives at Terminal E on Lufthansa 422, at 12:00 midday.)

In India, Geshe-la will attend teachings by his guru Khensur Rinpoche Losang Thubten on a lam-rim text by the First Panchen Lama, *The Path to Bliss*, and teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Sera-mey Monastery—on Lama Tsong Khapa's *The Essence of True Eloquence*—and Drepung Monastery—on Lama Tsong Khapa's commentary on Nagarjuna's *Root Verses on the Middle Way*.

For a week in mid-November, Geshe-la will participate in a meeting of *lharampa* geshe, of whom there are about 100 worldwide. He will also officially open the new second floor of his house at Sera, which, thanks to the kindness of his students in the West, has more than doubled the living space for his students and means that there is space for new monks to come from Tibet.



Three world travelers at Logan Airport.

Photo by Beth Della Piana.

### Local Tibetans have a temple, too!

When Tashi Lokyitsang, former president of the Tibetan Association of Boston, brought a large group of family and friends to Kurukulla Center for a service for the death of one of his family members late September, he was very impressed with what he saw and said, "This is great. Now we Tibetans also have a temple to come to." In the month since, there have been two more large gatherings of local-area Tibetans at Kurukulla—once for a Tara puja and more recently, to celebrate Lha-bab Du-chen, the Buddha's descent from Tushita heaven. As Jampa Palsang said, "This is all due to Geshe-la's reaching out to the Tibetan community."

### Heating update

As regulars at the Center know, there were times when we were somewhat thermically challenged, but due to the kind-

ness of many Center members, all that has now changed. The two huge old boilers have been removed and a shiny new small one, which is more than up to the task, has been installed, along with an energy efficiency device to conserve oil and precious Center resources. All this cost about \$12,000. The special appeal we sent out in August raised about \$3,000, and the rest came from private donors and reserve funds held back at the time of our mortgage closing. We are very happy that Geshe-la, the other residents and all our students and visitors will now be comfortably warm when they come to the Center, and we thank most sincerely all those who contributed to this cause. However, this is a two-phase operation; next year we will probably undertake phase two, when the house will be divided into further zones for even more efficiency. Please start saving up for the next appeal!

### Bon voyage, Ed!

We wish Ed Softky, who has gone to India with Geshe-la, a wonderful trip and a fruitful stay, and thank him so much for the amazing amount of work he has done around the Center these past few months. Ed will be remaining at Sera Monastery in Geshe-la's house, to immerse himself in Dharma and Tibetan language studies. Save all your hard questions for Ed's return some time mid-late 2003.

## Kurukulla Center Financial Report

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY of all of you, Kurukulla Center has a home. As we settle in to our first year in the house, we are able to see what our average monthly expenses are for regular, recurring expenses:

Mortgage:	\$2,290
Administrative / Health Care / Stipends:	970
Utilities:	745
Program (Newsletters, visiting teachers):	570
Household (Food, maintenance):	450
Bookstore:	400
Building / Liability insurance:	310
Professional Fees:	265
<b>Total Average Monthly Expenses:</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>

Many of you generously offer memberships and donations at teachings to help us with these regular monthly expenses, for

which we are very grateful. Kurukulla Center could not operate without the support of those in our community. Unfortunately, these memberships and donations do not cover our regular monthly expenses. On average, your membership and donations total \$4600 per month, leaving a shortfall of about \$1400 each month.

These shortfalls are made up from time to time with unexpected windfalls from donors, with reserves we have set aside to help pay the mortgage in our "lean" months, and by extra donations from large special events. We have been lucky thus far to have these unexpected windfalls when we need them, but we cannot count on them, and our reserves will not last.

Please consider supporting the Center with a membership if you do not already do so, or make donations at regular teachings if you are not a member. Every little bit counts! Note that you can now set up automatic debits from a credit card for your membership; visit [www.Kurukulla.org/membership.htm](http://www.Kurukulla.org/membership.htm) to set this up. Questions, please contact [membership@Kurukulla.org](mailto:membership@Kurukulla.org).

Thank you!

Jennifer Barlow, Treasurer

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

When I go Kurukulla Center I find myself looking around with joy and amazement that we have a wonderful home after so many years of transience. Since there are many people who have started coming to Kurukulla Center only in the past couple of years, I thought it might be interesting to briefly recount our history.

Kurukulla Center started in September 1989, when the late Geshe Losang Jampa, who was the resident teacher at Milarepa Center, suggested to Lama Zopa Rinpoche that he might be able to reach more people if he lived in Boston rather than Vermont. Rinpoche



agreed, and thus, Kurukulla Center came into being, and teachings were held at Wisdom Publications' offices on Newbury Street. Rinpoche appointed Nick Ribush as director "for the time being," which stretched into four years. Sadly, six months after arriving in Boston, Geshe Jampa-la was found to have stomach cancer, and he died a year later. For the next two years, the Center continued holding a few teachings and meditation at Wisdom.

In late 1993, our beloved Geshe Tsulga arrived to be resident teacher for a three-year term for three East Coast FPMT centers: Kurukulla, Milarepa and Kadampa, in North Carolina. While in Boston, Geshe-la lived in apartments in Brighton and Jamaica Plain. Teachings were held in Geshela's apartments and at Wisdom Publications. After his three years were up, much to our delight, Geshe-la decided to settle in Boston. He has been here full-time since, living in a couple of Somerville apartments. From 1997 until late 2001 most of the teachings were held at the Friends Meeting House in Cambridge. In January we moved into our home on Magoun Avenue, Medford. After Nick, my predecessors as center director have been Steve Rosenberg, Suzanne Persyn, Jennifer Barlow and David Kittelstrom. Each put their heart and soul into being director for roughly two years.

Now it's my turn. That's truly the way I feel and I'm happy to "have a go." For over thirteen years so many people have served and dedicated themselves in large and small ways, all to help make the center flourish. We've come a long way and there's much to rejoice and feel good about. And together, I know we'll continue our efforts to further establish Kurukulla Center as a wish-fulfilling jewel for the people of Boston, for future generations and for all beings.

With much love,

Wendy

## ADVICE FROM OUR SPIRITUAL FRIEND



This human life we presently have is not an ordinary human rebirth; it is a perfect human rebirth adorned with the eight freedoms and the ten endowments. It is very difficult to achieve this kind of rebirth because these eighteen qualities are very hard to find: we have to create the cause for each one individually, and these causes are very difficult to create.

This perfect human rebirth is more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel. By relying on a wish-fulfilling jewel, we cannot achieve good future rebirths, liberation or enlightenment, but by relying on this perfect human rebirth we can achieve these excellent results.

Also, this perfect human rebirth does not last long; it perishes very quickly, like lightning in the sky. It is very unreliable—today we are human; tomorrow, a corpse. Thus, we have to think about death and impermanence and practice Dharma, so that when we die, we will not fall into the three lower realms, from which it is *extremely* difficult to escape.

Therefore, since we have received a perfect human rebirth, found the Mahayana teachings and met spiritual teachers who can explain them to us, it is crucial that we listen to the advice of our gurus and put it into practice every day of our lives.

### The kindness of the Center

My being able to teach Buddhadharma and your being able to come here and receive it is all due to the kindness of the Center. But do not think that this Center is temporary, just here for your convenience. This Center is going to be here for a long time to come, to serve not only the present generation but many future generations as well.

In order for this to happen and for the Center to improve, to bring more benefit to others, it needs support, financial and otherwise. Therefore, I request all of you to think of the different ways in which you can sustain the Center. I have been here for almost ten years, and during this time there have been many directors and many translators, but from the beginning of this year we have found ourselves in our own house, our own solid center. Please do what you can to help Kurukulla Center develop.

*Excerpted from a teaching given by Venerable Geshe Tsulga at Kurukulla Center the day before he departed for India for two months. Translated by Thubten Damchoe. Edited by Nicholas Ribush. The full text of this teaching may be found on our Web site, [www.kurukulla.org](http://www.kurukulla.org).*



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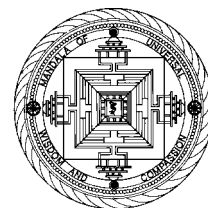
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Scenes from a community potluck, October 20, 2002.



KURUKULLA  
CENTER is a  
member of the  
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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 thirty 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.