



LOTUS ARROW

Newsletter of the Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies

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ADVICE FROM THE DALAI LAMA

On September 13, 2003 we were blessed with a visit from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Below is an excerpt from the talk he gave to a group of hundreds of members, friends, and neighbors assembled in the gumpa, garden, and on the street. Read an account of the visit, listen to His Holiness' address, and read the full transcript online at www.kurukulla.org.



Juli Sawva

I have known Geshe-la for many years and can say that he's a very sincere practitioner. He often comes to the major teachings I give in India and I've noticed that when, after many hours, some of the listeners are starting to nod off to sleep, Geshe-la always remains fresh and alert. Also, when I tell some emotional story and start to cry, Geshe-la also sheds a tear, which means he has genuine feelings and some experience. So, as a small follower of the Buddha, I would like to thank Geshe-la for all that he's doing.

One of the main practices of Buddhadharma, especially the Mahayana, is to be dedicated to serving others, not just in this life but infinitely. Therefore, one of my favorite prayers is

As long as space remains
And as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
And dispel the miseries of sentient beings.



Greeting Captain DiChiara of the Medford Police while wearing a gift from Rev. Hank Peirce (behind) (photo: Kris Snibbe)



With Medford Mayor Michael McGlynn and US Congressman Ed Markey. (Photo: Jim Bourg)

This is something like the pledge of a Mahayana practitioner, and with motivation, in whichever way we can, we try to offer service to and help all sentient beings in general and human beings in particular.

With respect to the blessings of the Buddha, the real blessing is that which we develop within ourselves. Buddha always stressed to his followers, "You are your own master." Therefore, as followers of the Buddha, we should practice well and in that way gain more blessings.

The first level of benefit we receive is that of inner peace, which helps us deal with any problem that we encounter, whether manmade or natural, such as old age, illness or death. The inner peace we develop through practicing Buddhadharma gives us the inner strength to face any kind of problem.

When practicing the Buddha's teachings, our main task is to struggle with our negative emotions with the goal of attaining the complete freedom of Buddhahood, and the path to this goal is not ceremony or ritual but transformation of mind. In order to transform our mind, we first need wisdom and enthusiasm, and enthusiasm itself much depends on wisdom. In order to gain wisdom, we need knowledge; therefore, study is most crucial.

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition is actu-

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His Holiness promotes twenty-first-century Buddhism (photo: David Kittelstrom)



His Holiness delivers a message to the backyard folks... (Photo: Kris Snibbe)

ally the pure tradition of Nalanda. In the Nalanda tradition, study is indispensable. Thus, you should study as much as you can. In that way you gain deeper awareness of reality—of external reality, internal reality and the present reality. On that basis there is the possibility of change. Change is natural; everything always changes. With the kind of right effort you can make change positive. Therefore, through study you get a fuller knowledge of reality and in that way develop enthusiasm for transforming your mind.

We all want happiness; nobody wants suffering. If there's a way to overcome suffering, naturally, it's worth pursuing. So, knowledge brings enthusiasm. Then with enthusiasm, or determination, and self-confidence, practice Dharma.

When it comes to practice, we have the three higher trainings: ethical discipline, or morality; concentration; and cultivation of insight into selflessness. The question is,

how do we integrate these three higher trainings with our daily life?

The first stage is to restrain ourselves from indulging in negative actions; actions that harm ourselves and others. In addition to this, if possible, we should also be proactive and try to help others; at the same time, we should be trying to decrease the intensity of our self-centeredness.

By the way, when we speak of selflessness in the Buddhist ethical context, we don't mean a total disregard of our own interests. The very premise of the Buddhist spiritual path is the pursuit of liberation and freedom.

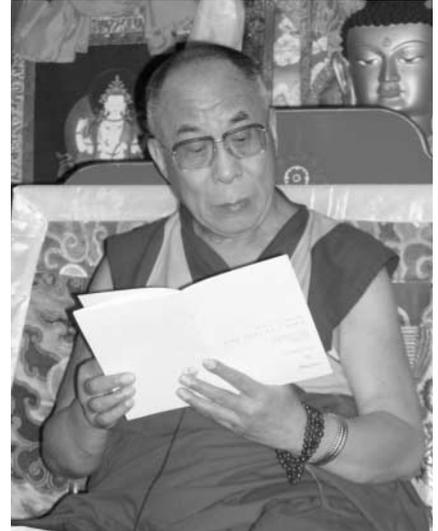
With respect to the second training, that in concentration, or meditation, although normally our single-pointed concentration is not very well developed, we do experience instances of it in our day-to-day life. What we therefore need to do is to enhance this natural capacity that we all possess, and here the key is cultivation of mindfulness and vigilance, or introspection.

The third training is that in wisdom, or insight. In Buddhism, the key insight is that into no-self, or selflessness—an understanding of the manner in which things exist; a certain characteristic of the nature of reality. In order to ground such

an understanding, we must also have a deep knowledge of the diversity of phenomena, upon which we are trying to cultivate this insight into no-self.

Although we accomplish advanced levels of the three higher trainings—especially those in concentration and wisdom—only later in our progress along the spiritual path, we do possess similitudes of them in our normal daily life.

Sincere Buddhist practitioners uphold these three higher trainings as their main practice; prayers and recitation of mantras



His Holiness reviews program before dispensing with it. (photo: David Kittelstrom)

are ancillary. The main practice is that of the three higher trainings. But many traditional Buddhists—Tibetan and Chinese, for example—sometimes get their priorities wrong and come to regard chanting and mantra recitation as the main practice and contemplation, reflection, and the three higher trainings as something to be done on the side. However, while we can definitely attain liberation by practicing the three higher trainings, we can never do so by simply reciting OM MANI PADME HUM, the six-syllable mantra.

Therefore, I tell many of my fellow Tibetan Buddhists—partly in joke, partly seriously—that now we are in the twenty-first century, it is important that we strive to become twenty-first century Buddhists, which I define as practicing Buddhism on the basis of sound knowledge and understanding.

That also means that although Geshe-la's hair looks white now, his heart and mind should be fresh, just like this new, twenty-first century!



...and the crowd listens. (Photo: Kris Snibbe)

FROM THE DIRECTOR



I was with Geshe-la in his room the other day and, although it was almost two months since His Holiness the Dalai Lama blessed us with his incomparable presence, Geshe-la was still shaking his head in disbelief and saying, "Amazing!" It certainly does feel like a dream. But what a dream. Geshe-la says that it was one of the most

important days of our lives, and I believe it.

I also spoke to Lama Zopa Rinpoche recently, and he said that His Holiness' visit to the Center was very good for Buddhism because it showed the universality of the Buddha's message. Rinpoche's comment really resonated with what I've been thinking about that day. There are



With Mayor McGlynn his wife Sheila, Tufts chaplain Rev. David O'Leary, Rev. Hank from the Medford Unitarian Universalist Church, and Medford Police Captain Mike DiChiara. (photo Kris Snibbe)

countless positive things you could say about it, but one that stands out for me was the interfaith response. Several leaders from Medford's other religious communities wrote reflections, and here are a few words from them:

"It is the mark of a noble and immense soul to reveal in a world so infatuated by power and hostility the simple kindness of personal presence, hospitality, and joy." —*Rev. Thomas R. Cook, Grace Episcopal Church, Medford.*

"I experienced the Dalai Lama as a man of peace, prayer, and playfulness." —*Father Pat McLaughlin, Saint Joseph Catholic Church, Medford*

"It was an inspiring, once-in-a-lifetime experience." —*Pastor Doreen, Community Baptist Church, Medford.*



The Tibetan community erected a beautiful welcoming gate. (Photo: Tony Lulek)

"...a purified resonance of love and joy and happiness, along with an unmistakable spiritual authority, shines through [the Dalai Lama's] every word and from his very presence. His good will dignified us all, and leaves us desiring to dignify others.... I cannot help but think that the effect of Christ on people who met him would have been much the same." —*Rand Peabody, Congregational Minister; Medford resident.*



Jim Bourg

"Thank you...for honoring me and the entire city of Medford, and may there always be friendship between our two religious communities." —*Rev. Hank Peirce, Unitarian Universalist Church, Medford.*

Thank you to everyone who worked tirelessly and generously to help make the day truly memorable. May His Holiness' life be long and may all his wishes be instantly fulfilled.

Wendy

The Fourth Yana

by Askold Melnyczuk

Most students of Buddhism know there are two or even three vehicles for navigating the path to enlightenment. Few are aware that four were needed to ferry the dharma through Boston during His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit last month; fewer still that the fourth was a Ford minivan.



Drivers Askold Melnyczuk, Justin Miller, and Wendy Kan with His Holiness

The first, a Chevy Tahoe driven by Tommy O'Laughlin, director of the Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service in Boston, chauffeured His Holiness himself, along with several body guards. The other three, manned by Kurukulla volunteers Wendy Kan, Justin Miller, and me, carried among others His Holiness' brother, Geshe Thupten Jinpa (His Holiness' interpreter), a biographer, a Swiss photographer whose documentary project is to photograph His Holiness every day over a period of three years, Richard Gere, several officials from Tibet House, and a number of lamas young and old.

After a quick training session from Tommy at Logan, the Kurukulla volunteers were declared fit to drive. Standing together discussing the day's responsibilities, they were approached by a Tibetan gentleman who leaned forward and said in a conspiratorial half-whisper, "Don't trust too much in the guru." He then offered chewing gum all around. Only later did we learn that this purveyor of wisdom was His Holiness' brother, Tenzin Choegyal Rinpoche.

His unconventional attitude set a

tone. The rest of the weekend unfolded in ways that were equally surprising. Along the way, many obstructions were removed, including six miles of midday traffic along Route 93 North from the airport to the Medford exit. At Kurukulla, SWAT teams guarded the neighborhood while the bodhisattva in the gompa threw ritual out the window in favor of more direct outreach and communication with those assembled.

Perks for the drivers included a chance

to attend the Mind and Life conference at MIT—in which His Holiness participated along with other Buddhists who were variously quizzed and tested on stage by Western psychologists and neurophysiologists from Harvard, MIT, and Princeton—along with the chance to hear His Holiness speaking on many other levels, revealing himself

equally comfortable engaging politicians, psychologists, and regular folk.

Our weekend culminated in a brief but unforgettable private meeting with His Holiness, who blessed us with khatas and posed for a group photograph in which our faces reveal both panic and joy.



Tibetan singers await the arrival of His Holiness' motorcade (Photo: Tony Lulek)

Treasurer's Report

By Jennifer Barlow

Throughout all of the activity surrounding His Holiness' visit to Kurukulla Center, I was reminded of how much we have grown since I first started attending the Center in 1996. From the time that I became director in 1997 through today, I have witnessed up close the growth that has taken us from our humble beginnings to hosting His Holiness in our own home.

I cannot help but feel so positive about the incredible generosity of the Kurukulla community, particularly during the preparations for the September event. Through your kind donations, we were able to cover all of our expenses and make a tremendous offering of nearly \$7000 to His Holiness on behalf of our community. Many others gave "in-kind" donations—in particular, the generous sponsor who designed and built the beautiful mandala garden in our yard—and many more gave of their time and energy to make the place shine. Thank you all so much.

We remain, as usual, mostly current in our monthly expenses, but are facing a few large, as yet uncovered expenses, such as our quarterly water bill, accountant's fees and Geshe-la and Damchoe's health insurance. Thanks to those who responded to our recent e-mail appeal.

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An overview of our income and expenses for 2002 follows. As you can see from the pie charts, there was about a \$7,500 shortfall. Note that about \$5,300 of this shortfall was money for special purposes that was spent in 2002 but raised in 2001—so in terms of covering our monthly expenses we were only about \$2,200 short (1.5% of our total expenses). This corresponds with the reality that we are always just a bit short of covering our monthly expenses.

To give some explanation of the various pie-chart categories: **Special Events** includes hosting visiting teachers and Lama Zopa Rinpoche; **Restricted** includes donations for specific purposes like Geshe-la's health insurance, but does not include the Building Fund (which is not represented here); **Unrestricted** includes donations made at teachings and regular events; the **Sera Monastery** projects include monk sponsorship and Sera building projects; and **Admin, Publicity and Misc** includes printing and mailing the newsletter and calendar, accounting and legal fees, *Mandala* subscriptions for members, and a large one-time expense for shipping our gompas' statues to the US.

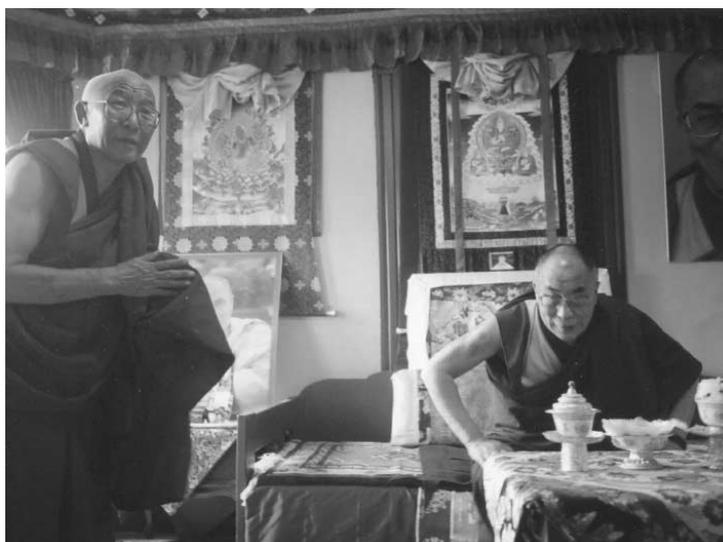
Remember, you can always make a donation or pay a membership through the "Donations" tab on our website. Once again, thanks for your generosity, which makes paying the bills a much less onerous task!

2002 Operating Income

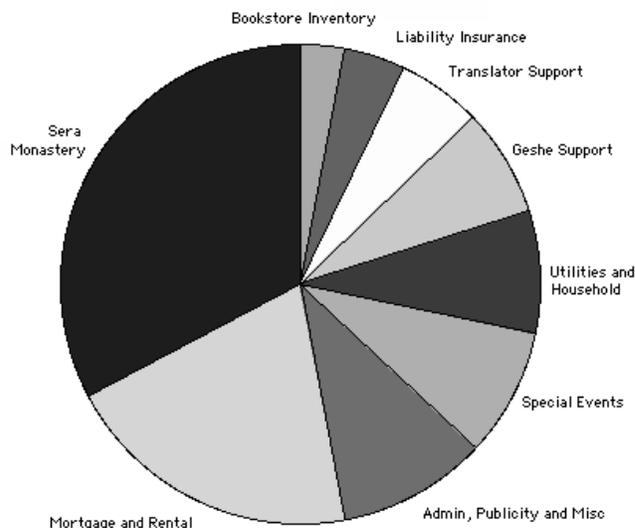
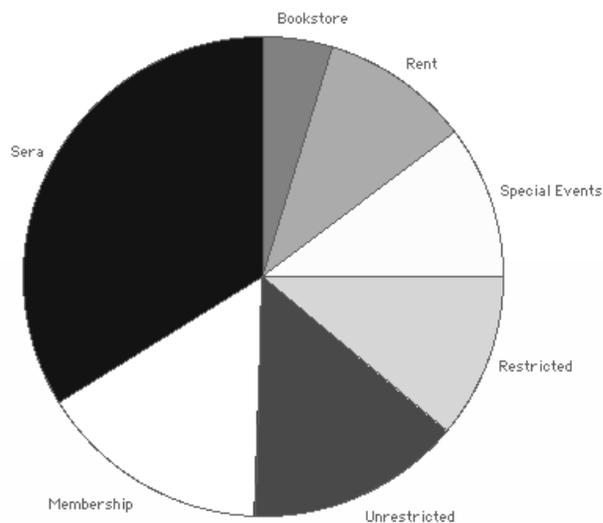
		Percent
Bookstore	6,427.00	5
Rent	13,200.00	10
Special Events	13,831.00	10
Restricted	14,813.00	11
Unrestricted	19,351.00	14
Membership	20,764.00	16
Sera Monastery	45,464.00	34
	\$133,850.00	100

2002 Expenses

Bookstore Inventory	4,511.00	3
Liability Insurance	5,706.00	4
Translator Support	7,766.00	6
Geshe Support	10,172.00	7
Utilities and Household	11,880.00	8
Special Events	12,059.00	9
Admin, Publicity and Misc.	14,116.00	10
Mortgage and Rental	28,769.00	20
Sera Monastery	46,326.00	33
	\$141,305.00	100



His Holiness journeyed upstairs to visit Geshe-la's room. (Photo: Kris Snibbe)





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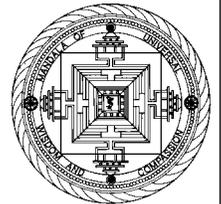
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Scenes from the Dalai Lama's visit to Kurukulla Center, September 12, 2003.

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 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.