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marpa house news

BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND RETREAT CENTRE

Summer 2013



The Marpa House 40th Anniversary Live Streaming

Lama Chime Rinpoche's May Teachings

From The Trustees • From The Committee

Lama Samten • Khenpo Gyurme

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From the trustees

As part of the 'live streaming' event held to celebrate 40 years of Marpa House, I was asked if I would give the opening speech, which while a little daunting was also a great honour. It was a wonderful evening, with students not only attending from all over the world, but also, for the very first time, being able to watch all over the world, so it presented us with the opportunity to let our Lama know how very special he is to us, and how much love and respect we all have for him. Therefore, I thought that this Newsletter would provide the ideal opportunity for all those people who either couldn't make it or couldn't watch it to see what was said on the night:

Rinpoche, Fellow Students, In 1959 Lama Chime Rinpoche was one of thousands of Tibetans driven out of their own country by the Chinese invasion, and I would ask you to try to imagine what that must have been like, to have to escape from your own homeland, leaving everything that you held dear behind you. Such a thing can be devastating, but Rinpoche was determined that this would not stop him doing what he had been born to do, teach Tibetan Buddhism to the people. After many challenges and obstacles had been overcome along the way, and with the help and support of a small band of dedicated students Rinpoche finally arrived at Kham Tibetan House in 1973, later to be re-named as Marpa House. During the early days, Rinpoche didn't only help



to run the House, but also worked full time in London to support it, travelling backwards and forwards each day, and all this while bringing up a young family, a truly dedicated teacher. I think that it would be fair to say that had Rinpoche and the other Lamas who came to the West with him at that time decided to return to the East, then Tibetan Buddhism may well have left with them, but now, thanks to their efforts it is not only still here, but more importantly is continuing to flourish. Over the last 40 years we have been fortunate to play host to a number of high Lamas, including HH the 16th Karmapa, HH Sakya Trinzin Rinpoche, HH Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and HE Tai Situ Rinpoche, and as can be witnessed here this evening, students now

*Keith Howell
(Chair of the Trustees)*

Committee news



Dear All, After a fabulous May Teachings, the Marpa year is rolling on! As a Committee we are trying to make sure that this 40th year sees the Sangha continue to grow and flourish. In addition to the regular summer events we have some fabulous one-offs coming up including Lama Klaus's retreat, a sponsored walk and a special black-tie celebration in November.

In June I took over from Neeltje as Chair of the Marpa House

come from all over the world to sit in this very Shrine Room and learn about Tibetan Buddhism and the Karma Kagyu lineage. Therefore it is important that we never forget that without his imagination, drive and determination we wouldn't be sitting here this evening, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the House that our beloved teacher Lama Chime Rinpoche built. Rinpoche, on behalf of all of your students, those here tonight and those watching from all corners of the globe, I offer you our utmost love and respect, and we all look forward to the next 40 years.

*Ben Henriques
(Chair of the Committee)*

Reflections on Ancient Wisdom, Modern Mind with Lama Samten

It's really three years since we last saw Lama Samten and Kate?

Tip tap, tip tap, tip tap. Om...

Concentrate Stephanie. You have precious cargo on board. Lama Samten is all seat-belted up in a haze of golden yellow and maroon to my left. Kate, calm but expectant in the rear of the car.

Tip tap, tip tap, tip tap... What is that noise? Oh no Lama has his mala gently running through his fingers.

Oops lost already and we haven't even left Peckham with all the hubbub of sirens, traffic and flying litter. Wherever is that sign for the Dartford tunnel? Down some back streets, so much traffic, still no tunnel. EMERGENCY BRAKE! Two pedestrians glare and speed off.

Breathe. No judgement. Of course this is all my own thoughts running through my head. Time to focus, let go and breathe.

Now I hear further tip tap, tip taps from the back. For some reason I am driving spectacularly badly with my precious cargo.

It seems that I am about to start my lesson of 'Ancient Wisdom, Modern Mind' sooner than expected. This is my real every day dharma which was to be explored over the weekend at Marpa House, where the fight between modern life and practice can run together. True dharma means truth and change through meditation and how I can change my mind from negatives to positives.

Wisdom, described by Lama, is innate, primordial and is not about cleverness or intelligence but means being able to see from within. He spoke of ten levels of wisdom and discussed two, the Ye and the Hera. Lama has so much knowledge to share and there were many more people attending who have a greater purchase on the teachings involved. I

can see that sometimes my wisdom becomes foggy. I become over stimulated, disturbed and need to attend to my practice: quiet meditation. To be conscious of the elements around me in the quality of air, food, water, shelter and space that I require in order to follow my path. The external environment is as important as the inner.

Back to basics, keeping

a clear unclouded mind which stops me from spiralling down into depression. Do I come from a poor seed and if so how can I recover? Anger has been one of my bodyguards but I do learn about true happiness and contentment. If I take 'desire' out of the equation and let go of my trappings maybe I can ask the more appropriate question of why I want this? Stop stirring and muddying the waters so that clarity can rise and the debris settles to the bottom.

My fear which comes from all of my attachments in my modern life cannot overwhelm what wisdom I was born with and have accrued to date if I keep to the practice.

Thank you Lama Samten, Kate and all other dharma sisters and brothers for this opportunity to explore my journey. Marpa House itself is a wonderful, welcoming place of refuge to find my Truth.

Blessings to all, *Stephanie Hunter*





May Teachings

Venerable Lama Chime Rinpoche

How nice it was to see so many good friends, both old and new, all gathered together in one place to listen to Lama Chime Rinpoche's Bank Holiday Weekend teachings again. Some coming just a short distance from their local homes, others arriving from further afield, and a significant number travelling from other countries to learn from the Lama. A veritable gathering of Clan Benchen. The Young Sangha were very much in evidence, ably helping the trustees and house secretary look after the day to day running of the weekend's events. (It made me muse whether I should consider myself part of an Old Git Sangha?)

At the start of the teachings, Lama Chime Rinpoche reminded us all that he is the Captain of our ship as we sail across the sea of Samsara to the other shore. His wisdom and wit were handed out to us in equal measures throughout his teachings. He prayed for good weather on the first day, and we then enjoyed it for the remainder of the weekend. The teachings were generously interlaced with wonderful recollections of Rinpoche's time with Khenpo Gangshar, and the teachings he himself received.

As always, Rinpoche provided teachings for us all on a group level and on an individual level simultaneously. I am sure we all took away with us gems of wisdom of high significance to us personally.

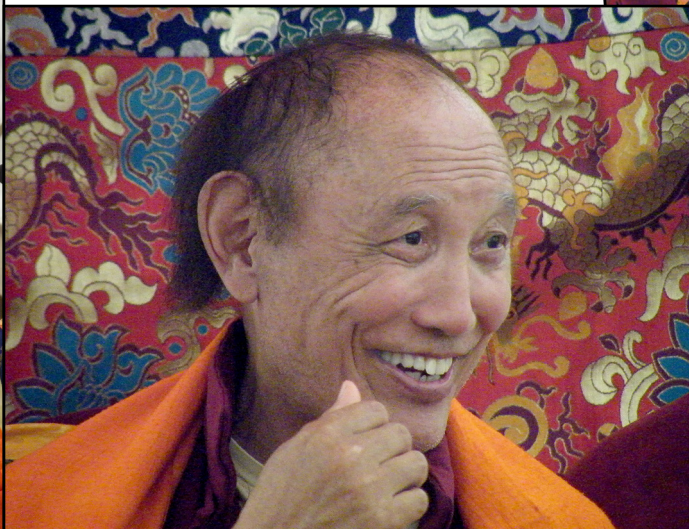
Those which hit the target with me included, "Letting go of clinging is the real practice," "Real attachment is attachment to our own bad habits," "Our perception is blinded by ego-clinging," and "The Lama is our mirror."

Time appears to stand still on such occasions and the weekend's teachings were over all too soon. We dispersed for our homes with feelings of immense gratitude to Lama Chime for his untiring generosity, and thoughts of how fortunate

we have been to have this precious opportunity to attend and listen. Rinpoche said during the weekend "The teacher tells us just like it is, but the students misperceive." He sure knows me well.

Don Martin

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Venerable Khenpo Gyurme Tsultrim

Tibetan Course - An offer I couldn't refuse

When I saw the flier announcing Khenpo Gyurme Tsultrim's anticipated visit, it seemed to be a timely opportunity. After ten years of very rewarding retreats within the Triratna Buddhist Community, I was nevertheless looking for a new experience that would shake me out of my comfort zone. I sped to the phone to book my place and went off on a month's birdwatching trip. Returning only two weeks before the scheduled event, I found that Marpa House had provided an outline daily programme. It was only then, after puzzling over this document for some while, that it finally dawned on me that I had inadvertently signed up for a six week intensive course in Dharma Tibetan language.

I contemplated withdrawing. But: I had put a lot of effort into clearing six weeks in my diary and could not imagine when I would be able to do so again; the opportunity of spending time in close connection with a dedicated monk still appealed; and I could hardly complain that this was within my comfort zone. I concluded that the fates had

determined my future and set off for Marpa House. On arrival I had already achieved the distinction of being the only candidate for the full course.

I found myself at first somewhat overwhelmed with shyness in the presence of Khenpo, who proved to be a remarkable personality. Vice-Abbott of Shechen Monastery in Nepal, and with a primary role in the reconstruction of Kham Shechen Monastery in Tibet, he is clearly a man with grave responsibilities. Why was he giving six weeks of his precious time to a group of beginners in Tibetan? Khenpo appeared relaxed about this contradiction. Indeed, he apologised several times for his lack of status as a language teacher! This, really, turned to our advantage very quickly. After an initial intensive week in which he introduced us to the Tibetan alphabet and basic word construction, Khenpo began working with us to translate prayers and pujas through which he skilfully illuminated the deeper Dharma meaning of the phrases. I became an admirer of the astonishing historical



transformation of Tibetan from a language largely suited to the needs of nomadic yak herders to a beautiful expression of Buddhist devotion and scholarship, in which every phrase seems to contain some Dharmic reference.

Two weekends were given to special teachings, firstly on Guru Rinpoche and next on Dzogchen. During this time, Khenpo, who had never before taught in English, showed his growing confidence and mastery of the language – an advance more noticeable than mine in Tibetan.

Khenpo's demeanour throughout the six weeks was inspirational. He has travelled much of the globe to represent his monastery and to teach, he is an IT geek and he loves cinema. Yet he sustains a simplicity of approach to all these worldly activities, suggestive of a deep

mindfulness and insight into the reality of human experience, which overrides their superficial attraction. He threw himself with obvious pleasure into mundane experiences: taking photographs of the deep snow and, later, the early flowers; showing off his skill in making momos (Nepalese dumplings) in exchange for tuition in the art of leavened bread making; and exploring the sights of Cambridge on his days off. Khenpo also revealed a great sense of gentle humour. All this, for me, in itself was a teaching. I have much to reflect upon and to take forward in my life. Thank you, Marpa House and Khenpo for an offer I am grateful not to have refused!

Judith Rumgay



40th Anniversary Live Streaming

The celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of Marpa House began with a live streaming, a first for both Lama Chime Rinpoche and Marpa House. For those who were there, and those watching around the world, it was an amazing, solemn, heartfelt occasion. A chance for all students of Chime Rinpoche to give thanks for all he has done for us.

There will be another opportunity to celebrate 40 years of Marpa House in November. To mark the official opening ceremony of Marpa House we will be holding a Black Tie event at the village hall in Ashdon, see the back cover for more details.

On a personal note I would like to thank everyone who supported, and joined us for, the live streaming. Especially those who donated money to cover the costs. It was such a privilege to help organise such a special event for Lama Chime Rinpoche and I was so proud of how everyone really

got into the spirit of the event. I don't think as the event was being planned I realised quite what a momentous occasion it would be or what an amazing feeling or spirit would be generated on the night. I was humbled by how well the streaming went and by the hard work from all those involved. Particular thanks go to the technical team of Karrim Rabi-laleh and

Michael Stone and of course to our wonderful teacher. Huge thanks also to those that donated articles for the Anniversary edition of the newsletter, I am sorry for those that were not included, I simply ran out of space! I will, however, be creating a larger hardback version of these articles to be presented to Lama Chime Rinpoche at the Black Tie event. To anyone who hasn't contributed that would like to please do email me your contributions! With thanks and love,

*Neeltje Berger
Marpa House Committee*



A group of students gathered at Kagyu Benchen Ling in Germany to watch



Students in Australia tuned in to watch

Dear Marpa House,
I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those involved in organising the live streaming of the anniversary ceremony - and also, of course, great gratitude to the Lama himself for his presence there. It was absolutely thrilling to be able to be part of it - to be, more-or-less, in the Shrine room with you all - from so far away. It brought tears to my eyes. I miss you all - and it was exciting and fun to try and figure out who was there mostly from the backs as people walked up for a blessing!! A wonderful experience to be there with you all and feel part of the celebration.

I would also like to apologise for the fact that in my letter about early days at the House in the last Newsletter, Rinpoche was referred to as

simply 'Chime' - it was intended to be 'Lama Chime'. Neeltje and I had been talking about how we used to address him back then as simply 'Chime' - but that is not the case these days! I have the deepest love and gratitude for Rinpoche - and would not want to be disrespectful in any way.

Jaki Deere (in Canada)





40/40 Fundraising
marpa house



40th Anniversary
Black Tie Celebration



Food, Live Music & Dancing!

Saturday 9th November 7pm

Ashdon Village Hall

Tickets £20



Limited number of tickets. Buy tickets on the Marpa House
website via PayPal or from the Secretary
or Committee members.

