

# Animal Liberation Sanctuary News

## Save Lives, Make the Pledge!

July 2008

Khenrinpoche Lama Lhundrup, the Abbot of Kopan Monastery, has again highlighted the benefits of avoiding killing by adopting a vegetarian lifestyle.

“Let’s use this precious opportunity to accumulate merit, purifying our karma, and benefit so many sentient beings”.



“This is also an easy way to do something for the long life of our Holy Gurus - His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, your own gurus”.

“It is also very beneficial for prolonging our own lives, by not contributing to killing. I suggest that during the holy month of Saka Dawa (Buddha’s Enlightenment and Paranirvana) you can take one of the following pledges:

### KOPAN BULLS

In April the Coordinators travelled to Kopan, Nepal, to help progress the Animal Liberation Sanctuary project. While all efforts are now focused on finding more suitable land elsewhere in the Kathmandu Valley, there was an opportunity to look at the temporary facilities for existing goats and cattle and see if any

### Global Web Auction

We hope to have a web auction by the end of 2008. We have many precious items from great masters of all traditions. Keep a look out.

- To become vegetarian for this whole life.
- To become vegetarian for one year.
- To become vegetarian for the month of Saka Dawa ( June 1 - June 30).
- Keep precepts for the whole month of Saka Dawa.
- Keep precepts on all special days of Buddha and all precept days for the whole life.
- Not to eat meat during all special days of Buddha (4 days in a year) for one year.

Why not make the pledge? [ALS](#)



**Yamantaka, the Sanctuary’s big bull**

thing could be improved. Kopan renovated the animal shed in

### New Land Needed!

Just when we hoped 2008 would be the year for officially welcoming the animals to the land, we have been hit with obstacles. After careful and long consideration it has been unanimously agreed that the current 13 acres next to Kopan is no longer suitable to house the rescued animals. The steepness and small size of the land and lack of road access were prime reasons, but the final straw was the arrival of new neighbours - a Nepali police training ground. Not wishing to malign the trainees, but the risk of unauthorised night maneuvers for the ‘free meat’ next door might be too much temptation.

Kopan’s Manager, Tenpa Choden, has been actively searching for a more suitable piece of land and both Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Khenrinpoche Lama Lhundrup say this is urgent.

2007 and coupled with the kind-hearted and conscientious care of the new ‘cowboy’, Sherab, the animals are in excellent condition. (continued p.2).

### WHAT IS THE SANCTUARY?

The Animal Liberation Sanctuary is a project of Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche to have land available where animals that have been saved from the butcher can live out their days in peace and with Dharma. Rinpoche is the Spiritual Director of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international, organisation founded in 1975 devoted to engaging in compassionate activities worldwide through education, meditation and community service.

## HONG KONG LIBERATION

In March 2008 Lama Zopa Rinpoche visited the Mahayana Buddhist Society in Hong Kong. One of the events organised by the energetic and compassionate team included an animal libera-



tion. A large altar had been prepared with many holy objects including relics from Rinpoche's personal collection, as well as many offerings. We pulled away from the wharf and out in to the harbour, shadowed by another, smaller boat decorated with many 5-coloured Buddhist flags. The word soon passed around that the animals, over 45,000 fish and shellfish, were on this boat. When we reached a safe location, the second boat was instructed to circumambulate our boat with all the relics and holy objects. A wonderful idea and the first time the centre had embarked on this technique. Certainly it was news to the captain of the other boat because he initially started off anti-clockwise!

"I think they are doing Mother Tantra", Rinpoche quipped. Soon the precious cargo was circumambulating the preferred direction and Rinpoche lead the prayers and mantras.

After some time the 2 boats came together and Rinpoche went across to pour blessed water into the holding tanks. With the Buddhist liberation complete (the animals having circumambulated, collected merit and been blessed by mantra and prayer) it was time for their conventional liberation and everyone had the opportunity to release the fish and shellfish into the sea. It was a very satisfying feeling seeing these poor beings escape the markets and restaurants of Hong Kong, where we witnessed fish being cut up alive with their still beating heart laid out to

demonstrate its 'freshness'. [ALS](#)

## KOPAN BULLS

(from p.1.) One of the main reasons for establishing the sanctuary is to allow Rinpoche to rescue more animals otherwise destined for slaughter or sacrifice. The available space within the monastery grounds is naturally quite limited. So after a couple of young calves were born recently, putting more pressure on resources, it was decided to bring in the vets to sterilize the bulls. Hopefully this will keep the cow population from increasing, and also make the bulls more content! They were certainly looking good 2 weeks later, and Yamantaka the big bull loved being scratched!

## PRAYERS FOR REMOVING OBSTACLES

Lama Zopa Rinpoche was asked for advice as to what practices could be done to help remove obstacles to the quick success of the sanctuary, in particular for finding new suitable land. He said reciting the *Sutra of Golden Light* as well as Guru Rinpoche's prayer for removing obstacles (long version). The Coordinators made a special pilgrimage with Kopan Nunery teacher Geshe Tashi Dondrub and Ani Jan from Kopan to Namobuddha for this purpose. It was very moving to recite the chapter on the Tigris at the location where a great bodhisattva gave his life in such a way. Thanks to those at Tushita, Delhi, who also dedicated the Golden Light recitation to the Sanctuary.



Please dedicate for the Sanctuary with any recitations. The animals need our prayers!

There is a story when Buddha gave teachings to 500 swans in the field and the next life they were born as human beings, became monks, and they all became Arya beings, able to achieve the cessation of suffering and the true path. So the result is unbelievable, just by hearing Dharma words.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche



**Top:** Tamdrin with blessing cord from Rinpoche.

**Above:** Chickens at a market.

### WHY ANIMAL LIBERATION IS THE WISEST PRACTICE FOR ANIMALS

Animal liberation in the Buddhist tradition is not simply about freeing animals from immediate harm. What animals need is a get-out-of-jail card not just for this life, but also for the lower realms and ultimately from cyclic existence altogether. Our teachers explain how difficult it is to get out of the lower realms, where beings continually create more negative karma and the causes for more and more animal and lower realm rebirths. To really help our animal brothers and sisters, we need to help them create the causes for higher rebirth and enlightenment.

Another important factor is ensuring that the animals have the best possible care after they have been 'saved' from

### WHO'S FOR DINNER?

This article is an extract from "Vajrayana News" Aug-Sept: 2004.

Few people associate the meat they are eating with a live suffering animal. The fact that the killing is done by someone else makes it easier but, by eating it, we are really condemning the next animal in line. Have you ever really stopped to think about the cruelty we inflict on other species simply by eating them?

In the times of Shakyamuni Buddha a person would either kill their own animal or would go to the market and choose an

animal which would then be killed to take home as meat. This still occurs in many countries today. For most westerners, the process that brings meat to our table involves more steps. The raising and killing itself is out of sight.

In the United States alone, humans raise, transport and kill nearly 25 billion animals every year just to eat them - roughly 300 are slaughtered every second (not including aquatic animals). In the UK over 3 million animals a day are killed. A proportional number are killed in Australia. (continued on page 4.)



Animal liberation is not just a practice of buying animals and releasing them. You need to perform practices to benefit the animals.  
Lama Zopa Rinpoche

death. To release a rescued animal in a place where it will simply be recaptured and killed is obviously not ideal. For example, in some Buddhist pilgrimage places people sell caged birds or fish in bags, hoping the compassionate pilgrim will buy them. The birds often haven't the strength to fly far and are recaptured or killed by predators and the fish go back in the same pond. Or when well-intentioned people release animals into an environment that is not their natural habitat. If the animal dies, does it get much benefit?

This is where the holy objects are so important. When fish are rescued, circumambulated to generate merit, and then are released even if some of the animals die when released, they have generated causes for higher rebirth.

Bigger animals are more of a challenge. These animals cannot go into the wild, they are not safe on our streets, and you need a pretty big backyard to look after them yourselves!

This is what the Animal Liberation Sanctuary is about - to give those animals under the watchful eye of Rinpoche the best conditions to escape the lower realms. Not only will they be regularly led around the stupas, they will also hear mantras, sutras and teachings. Like the pigeon who heard the great pandit Vasubandu reciting the Abidharmakosha and was reborn human and became a great scholar, perhaps these animals will soon be helping others understand the Dharma.

[ALS](#)



**Drolkar, Sanctuary resident.**

Some people may believe that animals raised for slaughter by modern methods live a carefree existence on the farm, with their needs amply provided for and when it is time for them to be slaughtered, it is done so painlessly. This is a far cry from the truth. The factory farming of today's modern society aims to produce the most meat, milk, and eggs as quickly and cheaply as possible in the smallest amount of space as possible. Cows, calves, pigs, chickens, turkeys, ducks and other animals are kept in small cages or stalls, often unable to turn around. They are deprived of exercise so that all of their energy goes towards producing flesh, eggs, or milk for human consumption. They are routinely administered growth-promotants and hormones and are often genetically altered to grow larger or to produce more milk or eggs than is natural. Millions of chickens, calves, lambs and pigs are conscious when their throats are cut. Most animals eaten in industrial countries today are intensively raised in dark, sunless sheds where they are fed a diet of processed foods. As these crowded conditions create a prime atmosphere for disease, most animals destined for eating are fed or sprayed with huge amounts of pesticides and antibiotics.

## ***Cattle & Sheep***

There are over 26.7 million cattle and 120 million sheep in Australia. Most cattle are raised for beef but around 3 million are kept by the dairy industry. Many cattle are branded with hot irons and many, such as dairy cattle, are regularly dehorned. Some females are desexed without painkillers by cutting their flank and pulling their ovaries out. Males are castrated by removing testicles with a knife or by placing a rubber ring around the scrotum, without painkillers. Sheep are often subject to harsh arid and semi-arid conditions and extremes of weather with little or no shelter or windbreaks. Thousands of newly shorn adult sheep die in cold and wet weather. Around 20% of lambs die within their first few weeks, mostly from exposure and starvation. This figure rises in bad seasons.

Up to 3 million sheep a year die of flystrike. Blowflies lay their eggs on sheep and when they hatch, maggots eat the living flesh. To prevent flystrike around the buttocks, lambs are 'mulesed' - the skin is sliced off the buttocks to produce a scar. Sheep also have their tails cut off. No painkillers are given. Increasingly, cattle and sheep from pasture are trucked long distances to feedlots to be fattened before slaughter. New disease threats associated with intensive rearing are becoming more prevalent. The animals also often suffer from lameness.

Feedlot animals are fed hormones and antibiotics to curb disease caused by this system of husbandry and also to promote growth. They are denied ade-



## **Food for Thought**

### **Cattle**

US - about 100,000 killed daily.  
Australia - about 9 million yearly.

### **Pigs**

US - Over 2 million killed per week.  
Australia - 6 million killed yearly.

### **Chickens**

US - 23 million chickens killed daily.  
Australia - 9 million birds per week.

### **Fish**

2000 - 94.8 million tns caught globally.

quate exercise in order to facilitate the fattening process and have no relief from excessive heat and cold. Their diet is often comprised of manure from broiler sheds, ground-up fish meal, sawdust and offal.[ALS](#)

## **Did You Know?**

### **Goats**

Goats are the most widely killed animal for meat in the world.

Australia is the world's largest exporter of goat meat (1.1 million animals were killed in 2007).

The largest consumers of goat are China, India and Pakistan.

## **Animal Liberation Sanctuary**

For more information about the project or to donate, please check out the website or contact the Coordinators directly:

*Tania Duratovic & Phil Hunt,*

+61-2-9808 1045

[sanctuarynepal@animail.net](mailto:sanctuarynepal@animail.net)

[www.fpmt.org/projects](http://www.fpmt.org/projects)

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Editors: Tania Duratovic & Phil Hunt