

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE NEWS – May 2006

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RINPOCHE'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

For the confirmed schedule and details of how to book for these events, please contact the center directly or go to <http://www.fpmt.org/teachers/zopa/schedule.asp>

Rinpoche is beginning a teaching tour of Australia, which will include blessing the new building which is now home to Vajrayana Institute, and helping Atisha Centre celebrate its 25th anniversary and Tara Institute its 30th anniversary. Rinpoche then goes to New Zealand, where Dorje Chang Institute celebrates its 30th anniversary.

A little excerpt from Jim Aherne, director of Hospice of Mother Tara, about Rinpoche's arrival in Australia:

"Our Lama arrived to a wet but warm day in Perth and was greeted by a group of about 30 people when He came through the arrivals gate at the airport. Rinpoche was greeted with flowers and katas and walked along an impromptu line of devotees in the waiting area including me! Many of those waiting were in tears as Rinpoche touched them in a warm greeting and blessing."

AUSTRALIA

Hayagriva Center, Perth - May 26th Teaching on How to Have a Meaningful Life
27th - 28th - Great 1000 Armed Chenrezig initiation

Buddha House, Adelaide - May 30th - Teaching on Making Life Meaningful

Chagtong Chentong, Tasmania - May 31st Teachings on Refuge

Tara Institute, Melbourne - June 2nd - Teaching on Why We Need a Spiritual Path

3rd - 30th Anniversary Celebrations; Teaching on The Need for Wisdom and Compassion at all Times

Atisha Centre/Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Bendigo - June 4th - Teaching on Buddha Nature
5th - 21 Tara Initiation

Vajrayana Institute, Sydney - June 9th, 10th - Teaching on Door to Satisfaction - Buddhist Solutions to our Life Problems



Photographer John Berthold,
Portland, OR; May 06

11th - Medicine Buddha initiation

12th - Animal Blessing

Langri Tangpa Centre and Karuna Hospice, Brisbane - June 16, 18, 19 - Teaching on 8 Verses of Mind Training

19th - White Tara initiation

Chenrezig Institute, Eudlo - June 21st - Long Life Puja offered to Rinpoche

NEW ZEALAND

Dorje Chang Institute, Auckland: 24 - 25 June - Great Medicine Buddha initiation

Mahamudra Retreat Centre, Coromandel: 28th June - Cittamani Tara 4 Mandala offering puja

Chandrakirti Centre, Nelson: July 1 - 2 - Mitrugpa initiation.

Rinpoche's next scheduled teaching will be during the November course at Kopan Monastery, Nepal.

RINPOCHE VISITS THE NEW INTERNATIONAL OFFICE

Rinpoche visited the new home of FPMT International Office in Portland, Oregon, USA, and was very pleased with it. The building includes a gumpa which International Office shares with Maitripa Institute, which currently is also based in the building. Rinpoche has offered \$3,000 toward the construction cost of the altar for the gumpa.



Rinpoche also opened the eyes of the statue of the Buddha in the entrance lobby.

Rinpoche was in Portland in order to attend the meeting of the Board of FPMT Inc., and then stayed to give teachings and accept a long life puja offered by Maitripa Institute.



FPMT Inc Board members



Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Yangsi Rinpoche
and International Office staff

Rinpoche had this message for International Office staff as the Portland era begins -

"Billions of thanks to everyone for your service.
This is the beginning...the rootlike the sun rising in the world,
Now begins the real development of FPMT in this world Liberation and enlightenment for all sentient beings.
It is like a good seed has been planted, now a great plant with many flowers

With much love and prayer
Lama Zopa"

MOVING - OR LIFE ON THE ROAD - OR LIFE IN A DAY WITH RINPOCHE

by Ven Roger Kunsang

Written after International Office moved from Taos to Portland. Ven Roger's account gives us more insight into life on the road with Rinpoche...

"Actually I have my own "moving" experience..... it goes like this (it's a mini one compared to yours)We are on the move all the time , the 250 kgs we carry doesn't ever seem to rest (nearly all are texts). Checked baggage is about 170 kgs and the cabin baggage is about 80 kgs. Often it goes up to 300kgs, and then I have to find other people going in the same direction to help out. Each place you arrive at you have to unpack..... set up Rinpoche's altar, lay out the texts, put up the thangkas, set up the daily offerings for pretas, Dzambala, sur offering (means having a barbecue stand for the burning offering) etc. Then set up my office.....find a power outlet...different plugs... see if I can get online.... Often a little complicated, find a table and chair, etc. Then after a day or two, or sometimes longer, maybe a weekpack up and "race" (always running late) to an airport...and start again."

A Life In The Day With Rinpoche....

February 2006

Now we are in Drepung Monastery ...sort of... We are staying in a small hotel in Hubli, one and a half hour's drive from Drepung. The road is very bad, in fact it is a disaster. Rinpoche commutes every day to work...oops I mean teachings, leaves at 6.30am, arrives at 8am for the teachings. During lunch break Rinpoche has some appointments. Then afternoon teachings, and then Rinpoche drives back at night - another hour and half on this crater-filled road. As soon as Rinpoche arrives, Rinpoche jumps into workalways the first thing He says is "Any news!" which is the signal for me to mention all the relevant things

that are happeningInternational Office Maitreya Project.... Centers.... Projects...Students/friends/families requests/problems/deaths/illnesses. While I am talking Rinpoche has the BBC on the TV or the "animal planet" station lions stalking their prey... when they are about to rip the neck out of a deer Rinpoche changes the channelHe can't bear to watch..... the channel is constantly being changed because the animal world seems to be all about eating each other in the most horrific waysyet Rinpoche keeps trying to watch but can't quite do it. After a while Rinpoche starts doing prayers/meditation, you get no warning it just happens and so I know that's the time for me to leave. Later at night, usually quite late I get a call and it's time to start work again. Then late late I start the struggle of trying to appear awake while Rinpoche is discussing or dictating something..... my mind starts automatically calculating how to escape with some dignity... it never seems to work ... I usually end up embarrassed falling asleep in the middle of things. I go to bed exhausted but content, Rinpoche meditates.....then it's breakfast time. another day..... such a variety of issues from all over the place...



March

Monlam has started here at Kopan today.... For the next 4 days. Kopan officially hosts the Gelug Monlam for Nepal each year. There are about 600 monks and 400 nuns attending. Several years ago Kopan started this here in Nepal and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Office appointed Lama Zopa Rinpoche as the Lama to preside. Rinpoche did that the first year but was not able to continue so Dema Locho Rinpoche (one of Rinpoche's Guru's) has been coming for the last several years.

Kopan made a great deal of effort to preserve this great tradition exactly as it was done in Tibet. going back to the time of Lama Tsongkhapa (14th century) who was the one who started the Monlam (Great Prayer Festival). mainly made of special prayers for the preservation of the Dharma ...especially the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, debate sessions and teachings on the 12 deeds of Shakyamuni Buddha. The prayers and chanting are very inspirational Especially when the gompa is full with more than a 1000 sangha.

Yesterday, Rinpoche hosted a lunch after doing 100,000 Maitreya Lama Chopa tsog.... 700 sangha attended as well as His Holiness Chobgyey Trichen Rinpoche (one of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's gurus, he is also the highest lama of the Sakya tradition), Serkong Dorje Chang (the reincarnation of Marpa, Milarepa's guru) and Denma Locho Rinpoche.

Rinpoche in a cave where Milarepa meditated!

A few highlights at lunch Serkong Dorje Chang said directly to Chobgyey Trichen Rinpoche "I actually see you on the throne as Maitreya" Chobgyey Trichen Rinpoche replied "That is your pure view". Then there was a lot of laughter Serkong Dorje Chang is very direct.



Rinpoche with Serkong Dorje Chang

After lunch Lama Zopa Rinpoche took Serkong Dorje Chang (he is about 24 yrs old) shopping to buy a monastery they looked at a nearly finished one that was running into financial problemsso it looks like Lama Zopa Rinpoche will buy that for Serkong Dorje Chang.....not the normal thing you have on your shopping list!

January, Sera Je

Rinpoche went suddenly to Sera because Ribur Rinpoche passed away..... Rinpoche took responsibility for organizing the pujas and cremation etc. Oser Rinpoche helped and Lama Zopa Rinpoche asked Thubten Rinpoche to come from Ganden as he was very familiar with the building of the cremation place. Also Rinpoche called an elderly monk, Lozang Chopel who was the secretary of the previous HH Trijang Rinpoche, he received instructions directly from Trijang Rinpoche on how to prepare the Holy bodies of high lamas. He prepared the Holy bodies of HH Trijang Rinpoche, Tsong Rinpoche and others. In between taking care of the cremation, the Sera Je Abbot requested Rinpoche to give advice to the great assembly of monks as well as the initiation of Hayagriva.... the special protector of Sera Je Monastery. (*See the last LZR News for a fuller story on this*).

BENEFITS OF THE SANGHATA AND VAJRACUTTER SUTRAS

Rinpoche has given us advice about the benefits of these two sutras, which as you know, Rinpoche regularly recommends.

Excerpts from the full advice...

"The very minute you hear it, the five uninterrupted negative karmas - the extremely heavy negative karmas that right after death, immediately without interruption of another life, you get born into hell; you get reborn in the lowest hot hell, which has the heaviest suffering of the lower realms, of which the life span lasts for one intermediate eon - those get completely purified. This happens even for the sentient beings who hear the sutra, the minute they hear the sutra. Therefore, in the past, when I was in Washington, I played the CD in the car going on the way to go shopping, which is a 40-minute drive away. I was sitting in the front of the car, so I kept the window down. Sitting behind me there were two nuns, Holly and Chosang. It was not sunshine weather; it was a bit foggy and cold. The cold wind was going back through the window and making them cold. But if I had cared only for them, then all those people living in the houses along the road and all the cows and animals, they could not hear. There is a big difference. So, I kept the window down and played the CD very loud, like young people playing their music in the car - those young people, teenagers who have that strange hair that goes straight up onto their head or who have a lot of rings on their ears or on their face, around the eyes or whatever...just to be descriptive. "

<http://www.fpmt.org/teachers/zopa/advice/pdf/BensofSanghatastraapr06.pdf>

The *Vajra Cutter Sutra* is unbelievable. It is one of the most profitable practices, because the root of all sufferings, yours and others, is the ignorance holding "I" as truly existent - even though it is empty of that; and the ignorance holding the aggregates as truly existent, even though they are empty of that. The only antidote to cut that, to get rid of that and through which to achieve liberation, the total cessation of the suffering causes - delusions and karma - is the wisdom realizing emptiness. This is the subject of the *Vajra Cutter Sutra*, emptiness. So, each time you read it, it leaves such a positive imprint. Without taking much time, without much difficulty, it is easy to actualize wisdom.

<http://www.fpmt.org/teachers/zopa/advice/pdf/BensofVajractrsapr06.pdf>

LAMA ZOPA RINPOCHE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DHARMA CENTERS

In the belief that this could be very helpful for us all to help students/visitors understand the benefit offered by your center or study group, I have condensed key advice from Rinpoche on the importance of centers, and kind translators have translated it into Chinese, German, Spanish and French.

Excerpt...

'The Dharma center is an emergency rescue operation, like when police go in with all that noise - sirens blaring, red and blue lights flashing, helicopters whirling - to rescue people in distress! Like that, the meditation center plays a very important role in the emergency rescue of people, human beings, using the seat belt and life jacket of the lam-rim. Meditation on refuge and karma immediately saves you from falling into the lower realms again.'

'...I would like to mention how urgent it is especially nowadays in this world to have meditation centers, Dharma study groups. Actually that's the most important thing in the world.

Why do I say it's the most important service to sentient beings?.....'

These will be available next week at www.fpmt.org

RINPOCHE WAKES MANI UP

Recently Mani (Rinpoche's dog, who lives at Rinpoche's house in California) was awoken at 1.30 am by Ven Anet holding a phone to her ears - Rinpoche had phoned wanting to talk to Mani, and to recite various mantras and prayers to her!

SNIPPETS OF ADVICE FROM RINPOCHE

Seeing Holy Images In A Book

When you see art books of deities, lineage lamas of lam rim and so forth, rejoice. Rejoice in all the benefits to sentient beings. Putting the palms together, make the prayer: "May I become like you".

You can also do the prayer [as described below] in Seeing holy images - statues to become like that, with the same holy surroundings etc.] This creates the cause to become like that. This creates so much merit.

Comments made August 14, 2003 at Khachoe Dechen Ling in California. Scribed by Lhundup Damchö.

Seeing Holy Images In The Form Of Statues

When seeing the statues, make charity of a khata to all sentient beings, and then offer it on their behalf, thinking [that one is making the offering to] all the ten directions Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

'To the indestructible holy body, with indestructible faith, I offer this soft and light garment. Due to this offering, may I become only like the glorified holy guru, with the same holy surroundings, holy field and holy name.'

Rejoice, to create the cause to become like that.

Comments made August 14, 2003 at Khachoe Dechen Ling in California. Scribed by Lhundup Damchö.

Ants.....

"Dear Rinpoche and kind Guru

This is confession:



Last year, on my balcony, I have killed around 50 little ants, to my immediate regret afterwards. The regret is still there each time I hear the word confession or do confession and purification as in this retreat. So, in a way, they have become guidance for me, because I can feel what regret means. I will do a day of precepts for every ant in the next time, if you do not advise me otherwise."

Rinpoche's answer:

My very dear student,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. It is amazing what you want to offer back to those ants, it is incredible! Even to myself the thought to take precepts for each ant would not have come to my head. I am sure all the ants will jump up and down and clap their hands and make party for you when you finish, wishing for you to get all the happiness (ha ha ha...) I put my hands together at my heart thanking you very very much on behalf of all the ants.

Then in addition read the Diamond Cutter Sutra 4 times and then read the long Namgyelma Mantra and recite the long Namgyelma Mantra if possible 21 times or else 7 times and dedicate the merit for their (the ants) quick enlightenment. They might become your disciples and do everything you say...

Big love and prayers,

Zopa

May 2003

with love,

Claire

FPMT International Office