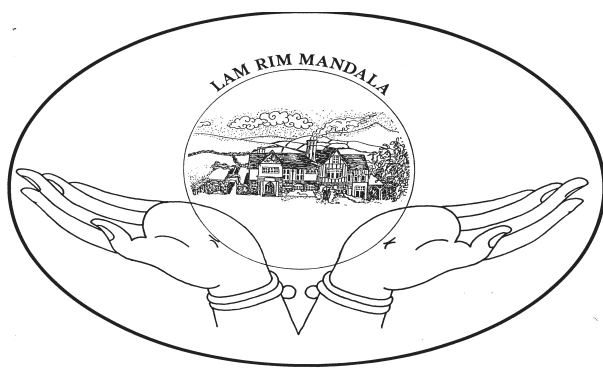


LAM RIM



MANDALA

**YEAR 2009**

**Issue Number 14**



Hello everyone.

In the gloom of Recession and negative news it is good to remember that we are all connected, part of a single entity like cells in a body. Our actions and words, individually and collectively, create our reality. So if we stay positive and act from a good heart, supporting, sharing and helping each other as a whole, we can turn the gloom to light. *'We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make our world'.* We hope you enjoy this issue of the Newsletter and welcome any stories, poems, articles etc you would like to send for inclusion in the next issue newsletter, all will be gratefully received (by December 1st 2009 please to jbowden@waitrose.com). Best Wishes,

Jan

07913 922063



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## LETTER FROM GESHE DAMCHO-LA

April, 2009

Dear Friends,

Spring is here. The gardens at Lam Rim Buddhist Centre have been looking splendid, with the fullness of daffodils, primroses, wood anemones and violets. The birds are singing, busy collecting materials to build their new homes or replenish their old ones.

Spring is my favourite season, it brings a surge of young fresh energy, full of promise as the buds and shoots burst into the sunshine. It motivates me to go in the garden and make tidy – snip, snip, planting and feeding the flowers and feeding the birds. Such a busy time, so much to do.

This is also the time to feed and nurture our spiritual energies – to make effort as we do in the garden, but with spiritual practices we need to make more effort because there are more demands for all the other jobs to be attended to.

Spring is the time for more spiritual practices as it is not too cold and not too hot to be a distraction. When sitting outside in contemplation we can experience the freshness in the air and our mental energy experiences change. We can observe that on people's faces – they smile more, or by the way people move – their walking is more relaxed. Each day we need mental effort to establish continuity with our spiritual practice – just like brushing our teeth each morning – it becomes a habitual pattern of behaviour. In the same way, continuity of spiritual practice brings about changes in our mental attitudes. It is not an easy option, but it is of great benefit for this and future lifetimes.

Last November, our dear friend, Chris Jarney, suddenly passed away. We have known Chris and his family for many years and Lam Rim Buddhist Centre received much benefit from Chris and his students – we all enjoyed being in each others company and experienced the joy of community. When walking around the Prayer Path, Chris and his students would notice things and he was always there with cheerful encouragement to lead the 'Helping Hour' sessions. Chris sincerely practiced meditation and on two previous occasions his meditation practice saved his life. In November it was not so, however I am confident Chris will continue meditating next life because his sincerity and effort brought about changes during this life-time. I was very moved to see so many people pay their last respects to Chris. He touched many peoples' hearts. As we have received donations from Chris's friends and students of £500 we are developing a Woodland Flower Garden under the guidance of Jan Bowden, a friend and student of Chris's.

None of us know when our time will come to depart this life-time – however we do know that each day we have the opportunity to feed and nurture our spiritual energies so that we are prepared.

Thank you for your kindnesses,

Ven. Geshe Damcho Yonten



## The Buddha's Words on Kindness (Metta Sutta)

This is what should be done  
By one who is skilled in goodness,  
And who knows the path of peace:  
Let them be able and upright,  
Straightforward and gentle in speech.  
Humble and not conceited,  
Contented and easily satisfied.  
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.  
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skillful,  
Not proud and demanding in nature.  
Let them not do the slightest thing  
That the wise would later reprove.  
Wishing: In gladness and in safety,  
May all beings be at ease.  
Whatever living beings there may be;  
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,  
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,  
The seen and the unseen,  
Those living near and far away,  
Those born and to-be-born,  
May all beings be at ease!  
Let none deceive another,  
Or despise any being in any state.  
Let none through anger or ill-will  
Wish harm upon another.  
Even as a mother protects with her life  
Her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart  
Should one cherish all living beings:  
Radiating kindness over the entire world  
Spreading upwards to the skies,  
And downwards to the depths;  
Outwards and unbounded,  
Freed from hatred and ill-will.  
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down  
Free from drowsiness,  
One should sustain this recollection.  
This is said to be the sublime abiding.  
By not holding to fixed views,  
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,  
Being freed from all sense desires,  
Is not born again into this world.



# SAD LOSS

A dear friend of Lam Rim, Chris Jarney, died suddenly in November 2008. The following letter was written by an old friend of his, to advise the Shiatsu Society of Chris's death. She has kindly given permission to publish it here.

Dear Shiatsu Society Member

A very, very dear friend, Chris Jarney, died suddenly on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008 of a heart attack at his home in Wiltshire.

He was one of the pioneers of Shiatsu in the UK, founder of the European Shiatsu School, an inspirational teacher and prolific and successful writer of books on shiatsu, meditation, qigong and anatomy.

I last saw Chris in August, and spent a wonderful weekend at his house. It was carnival weekend and I wanted to escape. I knew I could always call him up and invite myself down to Lock-eridge, where he lived, when I needed a break from London. He was one of the most generous people I've known. He was running a Qigong course but said I could come and either join in or just hang out. I joined in, his courses were always fun and popular. He was a very talented teacher, had a penchant (he liked that word) for the unusual and a very good sense of humour with a clever ear for puns, which sometimes flowed almost too thick and fast. He took us out onto the Wiltshire downs and into the crop circles to do the Qigong. He loved the whole crop circle phenomenon and had even camped out to try to catch them being made, but they seemed to appear in the brief moments when he was asleep or looking the other way. An avid Star Trek fan he liked to think it was all messages from aliens (I think he did wonder how come they shared our calendar when an 8 appeared on 8/8/98!).

I knew him for half my life, first as a fellow yogi

and an inspirational teacher of shiatsu, then as a boyfriend and a mentor, then a generous employer and a colleague and always, always as a dear and wonderful friend. I cannot tell you how much I will miss him.

He would have been 54 on the 23rd of November 2008. He leaves 4 children, the youngest of whom is 9. A bright and leading light has gone out in the Shiatsu world and a big light in mine.

This is a reminder to me of how important it is to let people know we love and care about them because we never know when one of us might suddenly and unexpectedly leave forever, giving us no chance to say good bye. I ask that you tell those you care about that you love them and suggest they pass it on to the people they care for.

Anna Blackmore

Chris regularly held Shiatsu courses and workshops at Lam Rim during the last 20 years and some will have known him through his recent Spring into Action and Autumn Rejuvenation weekends at



Lam Rim where he delivered, in his usual relaxed and humorous way, Shiatsu and Qigong. He was also part of a regular working party; a group of friends visiting Lam Rim to work in the grounds for a few days at a time. He touched so many people's lives and leaves a wonderful legacy through the students he taught, who became and will become teachers and practitioners; vehicles of compassion and healing. A very special man.



# Some Personal Reflections

## Some Personal Reflections

### LOG BLOG

There I was, my day planned, I arrived at Lam Rim for a few days of helping out. My main intention was to haul logs from the woodland, following the felling of some trees a few weeks prior. After the felling I'd sent Margaret a photo of our log store at home and the suggestion one of the chaps visiting might build one ready for when I came to bring up the logs from the damp woodland floor. Things didn't turn out as planned you might say and I found myself needing to build the log store first. Margaret keenly showed me the wood I could use. She took me round the back of the Coach House where I was met by a huge pile of 'builder's rubbish' (or recycler's pot of gold!). Margaret enthused about all the bits of wood available to reuse. I was with her there but part of me just groaned and my head wanted to explode. In the pile I couldn't see how I was going to be able to build a log store. It wasn't the right wood, the right size, not long enough lengths. Our log store at home was made of all new wood of suitable, appropriate size and lengths to cut to size. I wasn't ready for such a challenge; I was still feeling wobbly with grief and the challenge just felt like too much for my poor, emotional head to deal with. However.....divine intervention brought forth Eric who was helping at Lam Rim that day! Over lunch I scribbled some drawings of the log store, hoping for a surge of energy, inspiration and clear head to think out the measurements. I slid the piece of paper over to Eric to peruse and I explained the construction, minus any measurements. Thankfully he was up for the challenge and we headed out to the builders pile to extricate likely bits of wood. With no measurements laid out in a nice clear diagram, or pristine clean wood from the Builders Merchants shop, and using basic tools and human ingenuity we set forth for some creative DIY. Edita dutifully produced some long nails and screws which we were short of while she was out shopping and we set about building the base and framework. By the time the winter sun had set we'd only managed to build the base and part of the framework but still a good days sawing and hammering. It was beginning to take shape.

The next day I was Eric-less but that was alright, 'his work was done'. I set about getting the sides and roof on the structure. It went fairly well. Being honest, had a cameraman been hiding in the bushes it might have turned into a comedy film because if I put the roof on once I put in on three times! Got it right (ish) in the end; in actual fact I had it right pretty much the first time, but ya know how it is...I had a bright idea...!! At the point of what was the final attempt, I was joined by my 'beautiful assistant' Gilly who unwittingly was about to hone her girlie hammering and sawing skills into Construction Goddess skills! We put the rest of the slats on the roof and cut and nailed the side panels on, and even had time for a tea break with cake served up by Margaret al fresco to maximise efficiency – we were after all on a mission – for 2-3 hour job – now day two! Over tea and cake we discussed the necessity of weather proofing the roof as the wood used wasn't sufficient on its own. So Margaret popped out for roofing felt. By sundown we'd done as much as we could to finish what had now become known as 'Chateau Log'. Roof felting was a job for Day Three!



Early evening that day Gilly and I were joined by another friend, 'beautiful assistant' Luke, who was also on a mission - to haul those patiently awaiting logs from the woodland to their new home... 'Chateau Log'. So after breakfast, Day 3, Luke was introduced to 'Chateau Log' and he started his many journeys to and fro the woodland pushing barrow-fuls of logs to me to stack into the log store, while Gilly was on a higher priority mission to assist with the cooking. After lunch Luke and I carefully married up the delicate felt with the roof; nailing in plenty of tacks to keep the wind from getting in underneath it. A few logs more and our job was done.

I'll be honest and say I felt that the construction was too Heath Robinson but there was a bit of a perfectionist lurking in me at the time that I didn't realise so it was an interesting journey in the building of it. By the time I left Lam Rim, 'Chateau Log' had grown on me, it may not have been pristine but it was 'pucker rustic' and an example of recycled creativity and teamwork; as is 'Chateau Log' Deux' and 'Chateau Log Trois'!!!!..... and.... Chateau Log Quaa... four 'double-wammy'... that have subsequently 'sprouted' around the grounds!!!!

Loving thanks to Gilly, Luke, Eric, Margaret, Edita, and Geshe who all contributed to the inaugural, 'Chateau Log'.

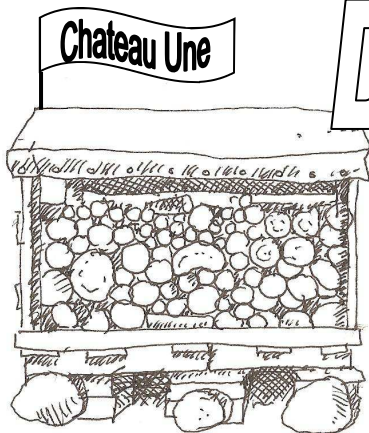
When I went to look at the log store in the early morning on Day 3 something rather lovely greeted me. Already sat on a couple of logs placed in the base was a Ladybird making herself at home! A new tenant already! It made me smile - a 'Des-Res' for insect life at 'Chateau Log'. (Sketches of Chateau Log 1-2-3 see page 8).

#### Post-Construction Reflection:

- Never plan on anything going according to your plan. Going with the flow, takes you to places you don't expect.
- The impermanence of 'builder's rubbish'. It finds a new role for itself in the limitlessness of the human imagination. Bless you Margaret!
- When you think you 'cant', the 'Universe' provides you with the means to 'do'. You just have to give it a try.
- Kindness is contagious; pass it along by example.

Jan Bowden

Eric has since been busy building several log stores during his visits to Lam Rim. There are now five, two of which are 'double wammies' which are extra wide to incorporate a section for storing thinner logs. The whole tree is being made use of, not just the trunks and thick branches. Even the twigs are being dried to use for kindling and branches kept to use for poles in the garden etc. That leaves the leaves which fell to the ground in the Autumn, so they are now a mulch! If you have a log burner/fire and would like to build a log store, see page 6.



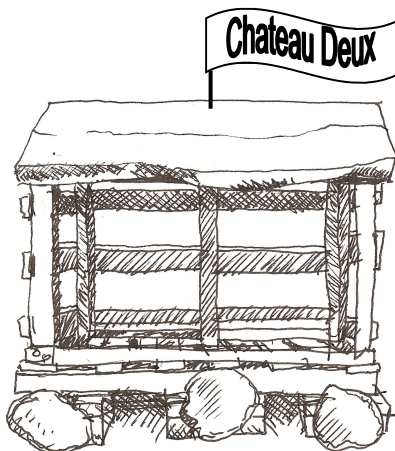
HIGHLY DESIRABLE  
RESIDENCE AT MUCH SOUGHT  
AFTER RETREAT LOCATION.  
LUXURY ACCOMMODATION  
FOR ALL APPROPRIATE  
INSECT LIFE.  
SO WHY NOT BEATLE ON  
DOWN TO LAM RIM, WALES.



Pictures kindly drawn by Paul Aston

# DES-RES

NEW  
ON THE  
MARKET



NO APPOINTMENT  
NECESSARY TO VIEW  
CHATEAU LOG UNE, DEUX  
OR TOIS.  
PLENTY OF LOGDORMS  
AVAILABLE RENT FREE. SO  
COME AND JOIN LADY  
BIRD AND HER FRIEND  
DAMSEL FLY WHO HAVE  
ALREADY LANDED THEIR  
LOGDORMS.





“Many people who visit Lam Rim Buddhist Centre comment on how peaceful it is. This tranquillity is not brought about by living in the country, otherwise all country houses would be peaceful. That is not so. This tranquillity is brought about by constant practice. People do not realise that. The more effort one puts into spiritual practice, the more peaceful one’s mind becomes and then one generates calmness.”

Ven. Geshe Damcho Yonten



## Simply Allow

### MEDITATION CORNER

We need to train in this thought-free wakefulness, but not by meditating on it or imagining it. It is primordially present already. Yet this present wakefulness gets caught up in thinking. To get free of thought, simply recognise; recognise your present wakefulness. Don’t forget; don’t get distracted. That doesn’t mean to sit and force oneself to be undistracted and unforgetting. Trying like that only fouls it up. Simply allow your basic state to be undistracted non-meditation. When all the activities of dualistic mind dissolve, when we are utterly stable in the unconfined empty cognisance, there is no longer any basis for remaining in the three realms of samsara.

Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

(A natural wakefulness without effort or forced attention.)





**Teachings by The Venerable Geshe Damcho Yonten  
on the Commentary of the  
Eight Verses of Thought Transformation**

**Written by the eleventh-century meditator Geshe Langri Thangpa**

From the commentary by His Holiness, the XIVth Dalai Lama, 2007.

This is an abridged and edited version of teaching in Johannesburg, Lam Rim Centre, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2008. Any benefit I dedicate to Geshe-la and his compassion. I take any errors on myself and welcome any discussion which arises. I'm sorry the style has turned out to be so serious, but Geshe-la's affectionate joking, laughter and enjoyment in the moment is impossible to convey in writing. I sincerely hope that if you have heard him teach, you can vividly imagine this as you read this.

Our subject today is Thought Transformation. Dharma means developing the mind and this text is intended to help mentally. It is intended to help the mind change, and is not meant to apply directly to physical conditions. From beginning-less lives we have been suffering. This text is intended as a guide to develop a positive mind and free us from this endless suffering.

So what creates suffering? What creates happiness?

In Tantra we have a powerful method of transformation. However, our level of development is like being in kindergarten. We need to learn slowly, and so gradually move on to higher levels. When we build a home, we first lay firm foundations, and then you can build any number of storeys onto this. Similarly in Tantra, which is a profound subject, if we have solid foundations, we can reach our highest aspirations. Otherwise, mentally things look the same and this is meaningless. It is best to have a secure mental development, and this is possible with the Thought Transformation practice.

I am teaching from a new commentary by His Holiness.

The lineage of the teachings of thought transformation is from Buddha Shakymuni through the Nalanda tradition. Atisha then brought the teachings of Thought Transformation to Tibet, teaching it to Lama Dromtonpa and Geshe Langri Thangpa. Geshe Langri Thangpa is the author of the Eight Verses of Thought Transformation. His subject was developing Bodhicitta – the urge to altruistic enlightenment and his root text was the Bodhicaryavatara. This is not only a general Dharma Thought Transformation root text, but also teaches 'self-other' exchange; an antidote to one's habitual self-cherishing mind which dominates ones everyday life. We need to subdue it as it is a cause of a lot of trouble.

Continued ...../



## Verse 1

“With a strong determination to accomplish the highest welfare of sentient beings, I will learn to hold them supremely dear.” In Tibetan, this verse begins with “I” and this refers to the self-cherishing mind. It also refers to the practice of exchanging self and others. In the beginning, the practice is to regard oneself and others as equal in the sense of both desiring happiness and not wanting suffering. From then, practice taking suffering from yourself and others, and giving to yourself and others every good condition. The practice then emphasises cherishing others more. Then practice the full exchange of yourself with others.

In cherishing self, this mind is very foolish, causing much suffering. Benefiting self alone comes from a very ignorant mind. Both you and others want happiness and you can gradually achieve this by cherishing others. Self cherishing mind is the creator of problems, a faulty mind, stupid and beginning-less. Compare how faulty this mind is with how much benefit comes from cherishing others. Then you can see self-cherishing for what it is. Think about both minds equally. The mind that cherishes others is happier, more intelligent, whereas the self-cherishing mind is the cause of a lot of problems. The mind that cherishes others is more beneficial now and in future lives. It’s by-product is the benefit of self even in this life.

So, compare intelligent and ignorant minds. Intelligent minds have fewer problems and can benefit other beings, whereas ignorant, self-grasping mind has kept us in suffering for eons. So cherish others and claim your happiness. Use your own judgement here. See your own mind clearly in that self-cherishing leads to anger, pride, and greed and the hurtful delusions that arise from them. When practicing Tantra how much do your practices reflect clarity rather than delusion? Thought transformation is clearly beneficial. So it is worthwhile to make this your daily meditation practice. Give up self-cherishing mind! Identify self-cherishing mind. You can recognise it in thoughts like “I’m perfect”, and then gradually knock it down.

We want happiness and have the means for this now, in this lifetime. We have human potential, we have access to religious and spiritual teaching, we are intelligent, we have met a qualified teacher and we have met with the Dharma which can set us all free. With the knocking down of the self-cherishing mind we can achieve hope for this life and the next lives. Buddha Shakamuni gave up self-cherishing mind and developed Buddhahood. First he learned Samadhi, calm mind, but his self-cherishing mind hid there and there was little benefit. He then established his own practice, achieved liberation and was able to give his happiness to others.

So in the first place, knock down ego-grasping and then learn more profound practices. Lessen your self-cherishing mind, and benefit others.

So verse 1 is about knocking down harsh words and selfish mind. This selfish “I” is a demon mind, a wrong view. Verse 1 talks of the mere ‘I’ holding sentient beings dear. This is a reference to the two Bodhicittas – conventional and absolute.

Emptiness mind is the opposite of this demon, self-cherishing mind. In thinking “I”, “me”, “mine”, where is this “I”? Investigate your mind thoroughly. You can look for it in the five aggregates for example. Consider this body, your feelings, your ability to discriminate, your thoughts or your consciousness. I know I am here, but I can’t locate this sense of “I”. So

Continued...../



the sense arises that the mind does not exist as I assume – this is the negation “I”. So I don’t exist? Physically check. Mentally check. I can’t find this “I”- therefore empty. I am empty of inherent existence. Not nihilist empty, and to go that way is another mistaken view; but empty of inherent existence. “I” is designated as name only. Take a car for example. Without its parts it does not exist. So these parts make a car. So, where is the car? If you analyse you won’t find a car independent of it’s parts. The car is there; you just won’t find the independent, inherently existent car. The car is there; but you can’t find it.

So where is “I” if this body and the other five aggregates is not the “I”? It is nominally designated, it exists as a name! With realisation of this, self-cherishing mind does not arise. “I” comes from causes and conditions. It is dependent. An unsubdued, undisciplined mind cannot understand this. A subdued mind creates happiness and with compassion, comes this wisdom about “I”. Subdue self-cherishing mind so that suffering can all disappear with tamed mind. So practice recognising delusions which cause unsubdued mind and recognise unsubdued mind. Investigation is very important, therefore. Delusions cannot arise if you cut the branches of “I”, self-cherishing mind.

We should learn these things in order to understand a little.

Having compassion for sentient beings is very important. Compared to human beings insects and animals can’t learn very much and tend to be simple and ignorant, whereas we are endowed with intelligence. However, they do not lie or cheat and in this they have no choice. Yet we lie and cheat and so on...How stupid!

This nominally dependent “I” can be a wish-fulfilling gem for other beings and can achieve happiness for them.

Sentient beings are endless – dear and precious. Even food and clothing come from sentient beings. Beings that are famous are famous only with support from other sentient beings. All is dependent on sentient beings, especially you. Father’s bone marrow gives rise to your physical body, while flesh and skin is from mother. You are dependent on them. You are heavily dependent on your mother to bring you up. So many sentient beings benefit us; so many sentient beings get and receive benefit dependently. Consider these and many other reasons and in gradually identifying “I”, then you can progress.

What is this progress?

To begin, ethics are useful for all sentient beings. Achieving morality means no harm to other sentient beings. In addition, morality leads to high rebirth, even in the God-realms. Hence, the Ten Virtues are very important. Mahayana ethics involves helping others, whereas the Hinayana refrains from harming.

Then there is the Liberation revolution which comprises three trainings – ethics, concentration and wisdom. This leads to the achievement of Bodhicitta, the achievement of compassion, and the practice of loving kindness. First understand the suffering of samsara, then develop renunciation and then compassion.

Continued.../



Compassion is thinking of other sentient beings first: from the thought 'I wish to help sentient beings' up to the thought of great compassion 'I am responsible, and I will liberate them'. Understanding the way things arise from causes and conditions will lead to a sense of responsibility for them and then a strong desire for Enlightenment for their sakes. Their suffering is great, so one needs to take the quickest path to enlightenment of your own self and other sentient beings. This is the Mahayana way.

**Dan Buys**

## THE EIGHT VERSES ON TRANSFORMING THE MIND

With a determination to achieve the highest aim  
For the benefit of all sentient beings  
Which surpasses even the wish-fulfilling gem,  
May I hold them dear at all times.

Whenever I interact with someone,  
May I view myself as the lowest amongst all,  
And, from the very depths of my heart,  
Respectfully hold others as superior.

In all my deeds may I probe into my mind,  
And as soon as mental and emotional afflictions  
arise-  
As they endanger myself and others-  
May I strongly confront them and avert them.

When I see beings of unpleasant character  
Oppressed by strong negativity and suffering,  
May I hold them dear – for they are rare to find-  
As if I have discovered a jewel treasure!

When others, out of jealousy,  
Treat me wrongly with abuse, slander, and scorn,  
May I take upon myself the defeat  
And offer to others the victory.

When someone whom I have helped,  
Or in whom I have placed great hopes,  
Mistreats me in extremely hurtful ways,  
May I regard him still as my precious teacher.

In brief, may I offer benefit and joy  
To all my mothers, both directly and indirectly,  
May I quietly take upon myself;  
All hurts and pains of my mothers.

May all this remain undefiled  
By the stains of the eight mundane concerns;  
And may I, recognizing all things as illusion,  
Devoid of clinging, be released from bondage.

**Written by the eleventh-century meditator  
Geshe Langri Thangka**



## LAM RIM WALES

By Mary Finnigan

It is rare to encounter perfection in whatever form it might manifest, but that was my pleasure when I visited a retreat centre within easy reach of Bristol. Lam Rim, near Raglan, was founded in 1978 so it has had plenty of time to establish its personality. It has done this slowly over the years and has remained true to its founding principles.

Lam Rim is a Tibetan phrase which means 'Steps on the Path', which indicates that the centre has its roots in the graduated (rather than direct) tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. It looks and feels like a mélange of rural Britain and Tibetan monastic life but unlike most other Tibetan retreat facilities, Lam Rim is non-sectarian. The only criteria for people who use the place is that they should be serious about their retreat, that it should be compatible with Buddhist ethics and spirituality driven. So, people of most religious persuasions are welcome at Lam Rim. That welcome is dispensed with an enviable lightness of touch by Margaret Travis, one of the founders, who runs the place with Edita in relaxed efficiency.

The Spiritual Director at Lam Rim is Geshe Damcho Yonten, now an elderly Lama who has introduced several generations of meditators to Tibetan Buddhism. He materialises in a very 'lamish' manner in the garden or the main house, then disappears again until the next gentle encounter, which always comes with a wide smile. He is *present* but entirely unobtrusive.

The centre is situated in beautiful South Wales countryside. It stands in eight and a half acres of field, garden and coppice, amid rolling farmland close to the Black Mountains. This delightful setting provides a peaceful atmosphere which is highly conducive to meditative reflection. The Prayer Path (*kora* in Tibetan) that circles the estate is a most attractive feature. You can run round it, walk briskly or step by slow step in meditation. All of this is useful in the overall context of a retreat. Usually I went for the cardio-vascular option as a counterpoint to time on the cushion.

A few years ago Lam Rim decided to upgrade their retreat facilities, so they converted their Coach House into four very comfortable appointed self-catering apartments. The apartments have their own entrance, bathroom, well equipped kitchen, spacious living area and pleasant bedroom. Everything, including hot water and central heating worked without glitches. They're not cheap but would award a five star rating for the one I stayed in compared with retreat environments I've experienced elsewhere.

For a more subtle perspective, there is a *quality* at Lam Rim that defies rational description. It has something to do with the energy generated by many years of consistent contemplative endeavour. It has to do with the mind set of the people who live there. The surrounding countryside and distant mountains also contribute. It is an ambiance that gives access to both tranquility and power. It is very close to perfection.

There is also Lam Rim Bristol—the Centre's city offshoot. It combines a Buddhist meditation teaching and sitting programme with holistic health facilities. (0117 923 1138).

### The Coach House at Lam Rim

4 Light and spacious self-contained apartments (self catering) for retreat periods of quiet reflection

Formal Retreat £150 per week.



## House Makeover Beats Global Warming



According to an article in The Independent (7 Apr 09 'A Word in Your Shell-like') scientists are recruiting the public to help them to find out whether global warming is changing our snails habits. The project is called Evolution Megalab. Our remarkable Banded Snails, of various colours and banding patterns, wear their genes on their backs from which scientists can tell their genetic characteristics. A snails shell colour affects how the snail warms up inside. A yellow shell is more reflective helping the snail keep cool in sunny conditions. A darker colour shell like brown would warm up too much and therefore the snail would better suit cooler climates such as Northern Europe where they are more common. So the project wants to find out whether warming has shifted the distribution of shell colours which would indicate that climate change is having an affect on the evolution of snails. If you would like to take part in this project go to [www.evolutionmegalab.org](http://www.evolutionmegalab.org).



### Tantra? Its not all about sex!

There's whole lot more to it! It's a Sanskrit word, the sacred language of Hinduism. The root word 'Tan' translated means 'to extend, expand, spread, continue, spin out, weave; to put forth, show, or manifest', 'like a "cosmic weave" of differing energies; all life, us now and in the past, all energy and matter, both physical and rarefied like our thoughts and what we do. Scholars have been trying to define it and have trouble! It has a multifaceted nature. some definitions are: it's a framework doctrine, theory, model, rule, authority, means, mystic works, medicine, mystical teaching. Sacred Buddhist and Hindu scriptures are known as Tantras, containing instructions on many subjects of spiritual knowledge, technology and science. .

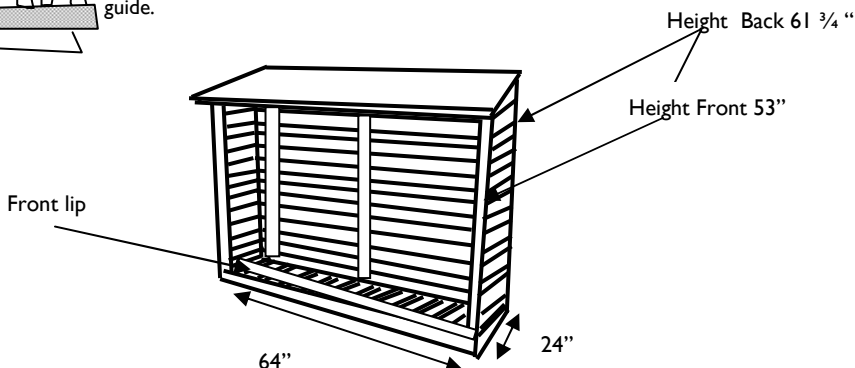
Tantra ...'an holistic wisdom link between ourselves and the universe we inhabit'....

Brief summary taken from 'The Many Meanings of Tantra' by Nik Douglas—[www.tantraworks.com/bionik.html](http://www.tantraworks.com/bionik.html)



## Making a Log Store

Wood burning stoves have become popular so if you have one or enjoy a hearth fire and are in need of a log store, you might feel inspired to build one of your own. Here is a brief guide.



The log store is a simple timber frame secured to a slatted base construction (or secured pallets), with slatted sides and a water tight roof. This construction allows air to circulate beneath and around the log store in order to help dry out the freshly felled logs. This diagram is to give you an idea of how it is constructed.

The slats on the sides and back are 4"x1" timbers nailed or screwed onto the frame: the back slats being approx 64" long; the side slats being approx 24" long. All the slats should be fixed approx 2" apart to allow air to circulate.

The front and back supports of the frame are different sizes in order to make a sloping roof. The roof can be made of fence laps, overlapped to keep out rain, roof felting or another material that will keep out rain.

The frame needs to be sturdy and the slats well secured to take the weight of logs inside. Use pressure treated wood if you can but if using any other wood you might want to paint the log store when constructed.

Position the log store where wind can circulate around it and where it will have a maximum amount of sunshine. Your log store can be any size to fit in with your garden. These measurements are just a rough example, so use your own measurements for accuracy.

As you can see from the sketches of the three 'Chateau Logs' made recently at Lam Rim, you can add your own variations to your log store construction to make it unique (see page 8).





## **'I C E'** **In Case of Emergency**

*You may have already seen this in an email or received an email saying it's a hoax. It is not a hoax but is a campaign being promoted by all Emergency services across the UK and Europe.*

We all carry our mobile phones with names & numbers stored in its memory. If we were to be involved in an accident or were taken ill, the people attending us would have our mobile phone but wouldn't know who to call. Yes, there are hundreds of numbers stored but which one is the contact person in case of an emergency? Hence this 'ICE' (In Case of Emergency) Campaign.

The concept of 'ICE' is catching on quickly. It is a method of contact during emergency situations. As mobile phones are carried by the majority of the population, all you need to do is store the number of a contact person or persons who should be contacted during emergency under the name 'ICE' ( In Case Of Emergency). The idea was thought up by a paramedic who found that when he went to the scenes of accidents there were always mobile phones with patients but they didn't know which number to call.

He therefore thought that it would be a good idea if there was a nationally recognised name for this purpose.

In an emergency situation, Emergency Service personnel and hospital Staff would be able to quickly contact the right person by simply dialling the number you have stored as 'ICE'.

Please help to spread the word it wont be too long before everybody will know about this. It really could save your life, or put a loved one's mind at rest.

For more than one contact name simply enter ICE1, ICE2 and ICE3 etc.

**PLEASE PASS THIS AROUND AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE AS THIS CAN HELP IN AN EMERGENCY**

CHECK BBC NEWS ICE CAMPAIGN - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/4746789.stm>

ICE Campaign website (currently under development ) <http://www.icecontact.com/>

### **What's Coming up at Lam Rim this summer**

**Calm Down, Developing Patience Practice— June 26-28th  
weekend course with Ven. Geshe Damcho Yongten**

**Developing an Open Joyful Heart—July 10-12th  
weekend yoga course with Carol Young**

**Further details see Lam Rim Programme of Events [www.lamrim.org.uk](http://www.lamrim.org.uk)**



♪ If you go down in the woods today..... you'll be sure to

**see some changes.** As you wend your way along the Prayer Path, past the Prayer Wheels to the woodland, you'll notice areas here and there of new planting and tiny plants and seedlings growing. If you have been a frequent visitor on the Lam Rim Prayer Path over the past 18 months you will have also noticed signs of much activity within the woodland. Piles of branches strewn around and neatly cut logs in tidy piles have been appearing since the Autumn of 2007, which saw the start of general pruning and the felling of certain trees there (unintentional pun!!). This lumbering activity started after seeking some advice from a friendly retired Forester who kindly came at Lam Rim's request. After an initial visit he returned bringing his wife, daughter Fran and her children, Oli and Emily, who met up with Jan for an enlightening prune of the woodland. Harold instructed on the essentials of pruning and it didn't take long before the woodland dim changed into a gentle lightening, like dawn breaking. What a difference a bit of pruning can do!!

In order to bring more light into the wood, certain trees were carefully picked for felling. To that end, in the Autumn/Winter of 2008/9, felling got underway when David Morgan-Jones and his heavily pregnant partner and diligent log stacker, Amber arrived from London. Steve Jarvis also shared in the task of felling through the season. Both David, Amber and Steve's skills are very much appreciated.

As you will have previously read, our friend Chris Jarney died. We are planting wild flowers in the woodland in his memory. So the little patches of cleared ground you see just passed the Prayer Wheels, as you walk into the woodland, are a prelude to larger areas within. Pockets of light, created by the felled trees are now nursery flower glades; where unidentifiable mixed seeds lay slowly revealing their secret beauty as the weeks pass by. (It's a bit like Rolf Harris ... "can ya see what it is yet?!") Care has been taken in the planning, to chose plants and seeds that are specifically woodland wild flowers and suitable for the soil type at Lam Rim. This task was assisted by Kathy Kalafat from the online Wildflower Shop ([www.wildflowershop.co.uk](http://www.wildflowershop.co.uk)) at Ipswich who helped confirm suitability and later provided the plants and seeds. She pulled out all the stops to get the consignment to Lam Rim, for what turned out to be a 'sooner than later' situation, so that advantage could be taken of some much needed help in clearing the glades of 'competition' and appropriate planting time. The 'help' came from the Annie, Val, Andrew, Pete/Pedro and Big Pete who were attending the Step into Spring weekend that Chris had previously booked. They were fab and spent the whole weekend working in the woodland in memory of Chris rather than do any of the Shiatsu or Qigong etc that had been advertised. With their enthusiasm, camaraderie and hard work, all the areas were cleared ready for planting! And just in time for a delicious Sunday nut roast lunch! To mark the occasion, after lunch, there was an 'inaugural planting ceremony' when Annie, Val, Andrew, Pete, and Pete each dug in a plantlet of Red Campion. Next to each Red Campion a candle was lit and a smouldering stick of incense pushed in, after which they stood together in silence in memory of Chris. A plantlet of Red Campion was planted by Jan on behalf of all absent friends and students of Chris and a candle and incense lit also.

Through the course of the next week plantlets and seeds were given their new homes in the

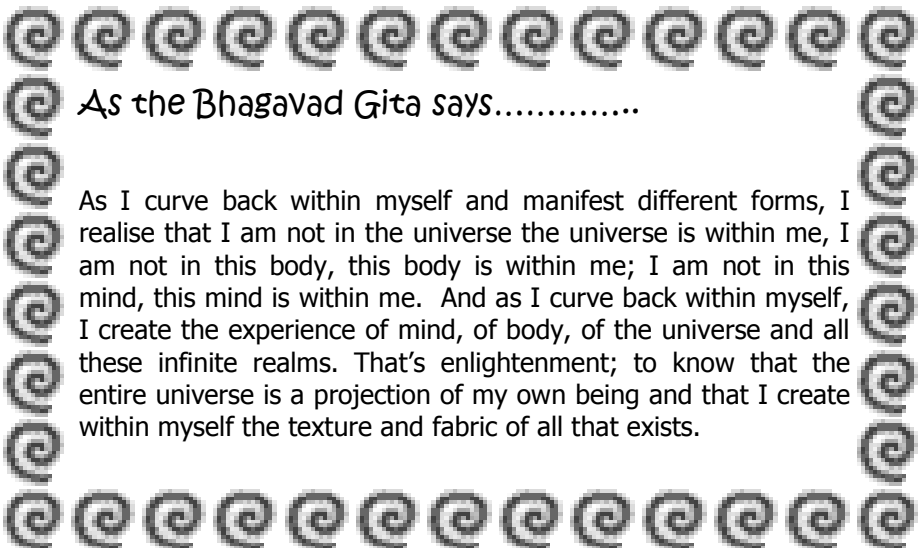


glades and nursery flower beds. Old rotten tree stumps were turned into flower beds in true Chelsea Flower Show style. The weather during planting was very helpful and rained at convenient times to keep the hand watering to a minimum. There was only about a days planting lost to too much rain but turned out to be fortuitous for planning ahead.

How lovely it was to spend the time in the woodland, getting to know it 'up close and personal'; on hands and knees, finger nails encrusted with red earth. Taking time to study the flora already established; the little yellow Lesser Celandine forging its cheerful way into the woodland. White Wood Anemones, wind dancing in the breeze is also spreading there. Blue bells are restraining themselves and haven't spread too far, but give them time and they'll provide carpets of blue in later years (at the moment it's the odd rug). Through the winter tiny fern plants were starting to emerge and as the months have gone by they have grown more prominent. There appears to be quite a few popping up here and there it seems. The woodland is developing! Though one plant trying for 'total wood domination' is General Ivy!! No tree is safe from General Ivy's green coat of domination. However some curtailing of his master plan has been achieved in the area of the picnic bench where it has been cleared. Where it once climbed the tree there is now clematis with its dainty lasso's feeling their way round its trunk. Thanks to all for getting the ivy clearing started!

When next at Lam Rim, take some time to sit on a bench along the Prayer Path and just 'be'. Listening to the ocean sounds as the wind moves through the trees; the twittering of birds, the bleating of sheep. Here comes the bottom of the page, so will have to 'leaf' it there and log off !!

Belle Fleur





# A Childrens Story



# OUTFOXED



• Lucy ran into the house sobbing. “Dad, Dad,” she cried through her tears, “the chickens.....the chickens are all.....It’s horrible.....They are all.....” Her voice trailed off as she sobbed against her father who was now holding her tightly. “Come on now Lucy. Take a deep breath and tell me what you have seen.” “They are all .. all...They are....all.... DEAD!” she wailed and buried her head in her fathers arms again. “ok, ok. Have a drink of water and a sit down and then we will go out and see what has happened.

A few minutes later Lucy and her father walked across the garden to the hen house and chicken run that was in the field next door. Six dead chickens and a large hole in the fence of the chicken run told the story of how the predator got in and what happened next. Lucy hung back from her father while he inspected the hole. “Ah, here we are. It was a fox that got in. Look here is some of his fur caught on the fence.” Lucy backed away in horror, not wanting to confront something that had killed her pet chickens. “It looks like the join I did for the fence wasn’t good enough to keep him out. I will have to re-think how to do it.” He said. “How could a stupid fox know that? And why did he kill all my chickens? He just killed them all and hasn’t eaten any of them. We should find him and kill him.” She snorted. “But he is not a stupid fox my love.” said her father. “He is a clever old fox. He knew there was free food here and he tested every way to see if he could get it. And he did get it. That was my mistake, not making the fence strong enough.” “As for not eating any - how many chickens do you see?” Lucy counted and said “Six.” Then, excitedly “That means one got away. Oh dad, quick, let us go and look for her.” She started to look along the hedgerow making clucking noises and calling for the chicken.

Her father picked her up gently and propped her on his arm. “Lucy my dear, I am afraid we shall not find that chicken as the fox has killed her and carried her off to its home. The cubs will have eaten her by now.” Lucy pounded her fist on her fathers arm. “Don’t say that. Don’t say that!” she sobbed. “My poor chicken has not been eaten by a fox” Her father kissed her cheek and said “But that is the way life is Lucy. All living things need food. We eat cows, pigs, chickens and sheep. Foxes eat mice, rats, rabbits and chickens.”

“But why did he have to kill them all?” “Well he would come back and taken them off one by one to bury for the winter. He is making sure that there is food for his family through the cold weather when a lot of his usual food is scarce. This was an opportunity to make sure that his children will live until the spring.” “Oh.” said Lucy. “He didn’t kill them just for fun or out of spite then?” “No, foxes don’t do that. If you watch them in the fields they will walk right past a rabbit if they are well fed and are stocked up for the winter. They just kill what they need. As it is now late September they are looking for food to store. The only reason he has not come back for another one is because we are about. If we leave the chickens out tonight he will come and take as many as he can bury while it is dark.” “But I don’t want him to eat my chickens. I want my chickens back.” Lucy sulked. “Well, you knew that if a chicken died it was going to become Sunday dinner didn’t you? Remember we talked about that? When they are dead they are better used as food than thrown away.”

Continued...../



“Yes. I suppose I do. But this is different.” “Yes, it is. We don’t have enough room in our freezer for six chickens; we can only put three in there.” “So what will we do with the others?” asked Lucy.

Her father put her down on the ground and took her hand. “How about this idea. And think before you answer me Lucy. Don’t let your anger make you say something you don’t mean. How about us having three chickens and the fox having three chickens?” Lucy’s face widened in astonishment. “What? You mean let the cruel fox that killed my chickens have three free dinners?” she asked. “Now, now. Think about it a bit more Lucy. We don’t have room for all the chickens and the fox cubs need to make it through the winter. The chickens were rescue ones from the battery farm and were only one pound each. So we will be able to get more chickens for seven pounds. That is one week’s pocket money for you and one week’s pocket money for me. It doesn’t seem much to help a fox family and ourselves does it?” “I am not sure.” said Lucy, slightly confused with the sense of the proposal fighting against her anger. “Lets go and have a drink and think about it then.” said her father.

The chickens were loaded in a sack and they went back to the house for a drink. Lucy asked her mother what she thought and her mother said that it seemed a plan that would make everyone happy. Her dad said they could watch the fox that night if Lucy was to agree. Lucy needed more time to think and so went off to watch some cartoons on the TV. A short while later she came back and said “Dad do you think there is one fox cub or two?” “There are usually two at this time of year, but in spring it is common to find there is only one cub though. One sometimes dies in winter through lack of food.” “Ummm.” Lucy said and returned to the lounge.

Later Lucy came into the kitchen and shouted “Mum, Dad. I have made a decision.” They all gathered in the kitchen and Lucy said “I have made a decision. I would like the foxes to have three chickens and we have three chickens.” Lucy’s mother and father looked at each other and smiled. Lucy continued “I know the fox killed my chickens, but he did not mean to be bad. I am sad my chickens have gone but I would be sad to see a fox cub die as well. It is only one week’s pocket money between us out of the year, which is not very much to pay for the foxes to live until spring. So I would like to do it.” Lucy’s mother and father were very happy with her decision and the plan was put into action. Just before sunset one of the chickens was put out near the chicken run. Lucy’s father built a little hide for them so they could watch the fox come and get it.

Not long after dark they saw the fox come across the field and they made their way to the hide and waited for the fox to come nearer. The fox picked the chicken up and made off the way it had come. Lucy was very excited at having been so close to a real fox. When they returned to the house she said “Dad, can we help the fox every year at this time please?” Her father smiled and said “Of course we can dear. Now off to bed and make sure you brush your teeth properly”. The End.



### **Ladakh Part 3**

## **A story of a visit to Ladakh.**

**By Caroline McCookweir.**

Paul and I have arrived at the tiny monastery of Timusgang in a remote area of Ladakh, after a breathless charge up a steep scree slope. It is Saka Dawa, a special festival day, and crowds of people are everywhere on the precipitous site. We have lost our companions and are rather bewildered and overwhelmed. We leave the folk-dancing arena and the school children we mistook for monks, and wander towards a building – and there – miraculously, we see Rizong Rinpoche emerging from a doorway, John and Janine close behind him. We are spotted by an aide and spend the rest of the afternoon tucked away in a Gompa which Rinpoche and his senior monks fill with beautiful deep chanting as they recite Lama Choepa. There is a 2-storey statue of Maitreya, whose head and upper torso emerge through a gap in the floor we are sitting on and whose peaceful, blissful gaze anoints the proceedings. People come in and out as the puja continues, bearing offerings and receiving blessings. Many wear traditional Ladakhi dress, a sort of half inside out sheepskin worn slung low down the back or beautiful brocades. The Tsog we are offered includes spectacular Tormas whose tips are filled with honey and pistachios, and bottles

of apricot kernel oil.

That night we stay in a local guesthouse with Rinpoche and party. A new wing is under construction and rows of grey mud bricks are lined up in contrast to the vibrant green barley fields which surround the house. The mountains rise sharply all around and I walk up the now quiet road in the lovely evening light to an ornate wooden arch sheltering another giant prayer drum. After the hubbub of the day just a few people are quietly walking, counting their mala beads and turning the wheel as they pass.

The next day we accompany Rinpoche as he blesses a local nunnery and then a school. At the latter, a crocodile of excited, neatly turned out children in little blue caps and maroon sweaters, forms a corridor leading to the school gates. Inside Rinpoche gives a short teaching and then everyone comes forward for a blessing. It is lovely to be in the midst of a culture where spirituality is so highly valued and we are so privileged to be able to see Rinpoche “at work”. Our extraordinary good fortune is bought home to us as we travel on to Rizong Gompa, where Rinpoche is to spend only one night before heading back to Leh and then Dharamsala. The monks and nuns of his own monastery and nunnery will have barely seen him. As our motorcade climbs past the nunnery, nestling amongst the apricot trees, the nuns line the road, and as we pass the school at the foot of Rizong Monastery, there is a line of monks, and amongst



them some oddly familiar westerners. in the corner in which the curd is  
They include Elizabeth and friends from wrapped to set.  
Lam Rim

South Africa. Once again we are graciously attended and royally fed, and then Janine and I sit outside and gaze through the thin air, towards unimaginable distances.

Paul and I stay for a few more nights with the nuns at Chulichan. One night we hear stories of life there, including a hair-raising account of one of the little ones being taken in the night by a ghost. She wasn't found until the next day, out on the mountainside, despite the nuns searching all night. Then there was a night when the nuns were disturbed by an odd clattering and clanking sound. On cautiously investigating, they found one of their cows who had slipped her pen and discovered something tasty to eat in a bucket, then got her head stuck in it!

One day, the water channel which feeds the "shower" and washhouse simply stopped, so the Geshe who lives and teaches at the nunnery along with some of the nuns, disappeared up the scree slope. When next I noticed the water was flowing again. A fallen tree had blocked it. We do experience some fierce wind here. One lunchtime, as we sit outside under the parachute, the wind suddenly strengthens, blowing dust into eyes, ears and noses and we retreat into the "dining room" – a room basically devoid of any furniture, save 2 or 3 small wooden boxes and a sleeping bag

The weather is changing in Ladakh – as everywhere – and after saying goodbye to our kind hostesses we wend back through the mountains, lashed by a summer storm, unheard of until recent years. There is thunder, lightening, and heavy rain, most dramatic in the mountains where somehow the weather is closer. Too close perhaps, as the vehicle we have hitched a paying ride in, breaks down on a particularly nail-biting bend high above the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar rivers. The driver twiddles, we pray, the engine starts and off we go, safely reaching Leh before nightfall.

Next ..... and final.....instalment  
...Samstenling – the Nubra Valley.

Footnote: Since the visit described here, both Rizong Monastery and Julichan Nunnery have been severely hit by landslides and flooding due to heavy rain. We are waiting to hear if we can help in any way, and will let people know if that should be the case.





## Sam Keen





*Neither fire nor wind, birth nor death can erase our good deeds.*

Buddhist quote



## HELPING HANDS

THANK YOU! ALL OUR HELPING HANDS volunteers who continue to help share the workload at Lam Rim.

Thanks to the Helping Hands Register Lam Rim now experiences a regular 5 day team that come one day a week to help share the workload with Edita and Margaret. They have also enjoyed Working Party Intensives, where a group of people stay and bring their own bedding and food – (so that Edita and Margaret have no extra work), and then have targeted particular projects that need to be done.

Lam Rim have also enjoyed Helping Hands coming for the day, again to concentrate on a particular task. It really does lighten their load and is a great help, It also brings fresh energy through the door, which is most welcome.

Help is needed on the Prayer Path, so if you have some free time and would like to help and spend some time in lovely peaceful surroundings then please make contact.

**Tel: 01600 780383**

**Email: [margaret@lamrim.org.uk](mailto:margaret@lamrim.org.uk)**



# RECIPE PAGE

## SPICED RED LENTIL & COCONUT SOUP



4 red onions – sliced and small diced

2 birds-eye Chilli (use discretion)

2 pieces of fresh lemon grass or a couple of teaspoons from jar

400 g red lentils (rinsed with water)

2 tsp ground coriander

2 tsp paprika

2 cans coconut milk

2 pints water

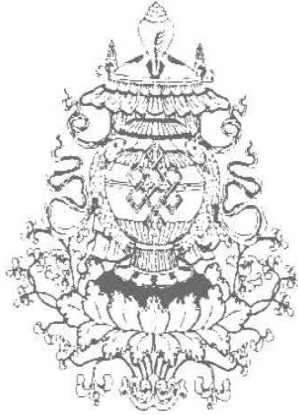
Juice and zest of 1 lime

4 spring onions - chopped

1 cup fresh coriander - chopped

Use a little oil and cook the onions chilli and lemon grass together until onions soft. Add the lentils, ground coriander and paprika and cook the spices. Then add coconut milk and water. Bring to the boil and simmer 40-45 mins. (Check the amount of fluid as you may need to add a little more). Once the lentils are cooked add the lime juice, spring onions and fresh coriander. Serves 8.





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The Venerable Geshe Damcho Yonten

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