

Spiritual Director and Resident Teacher
The Venerable Geshe Damcho Yonten

LAM RIM BUDDHIST CENTRE

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USK,

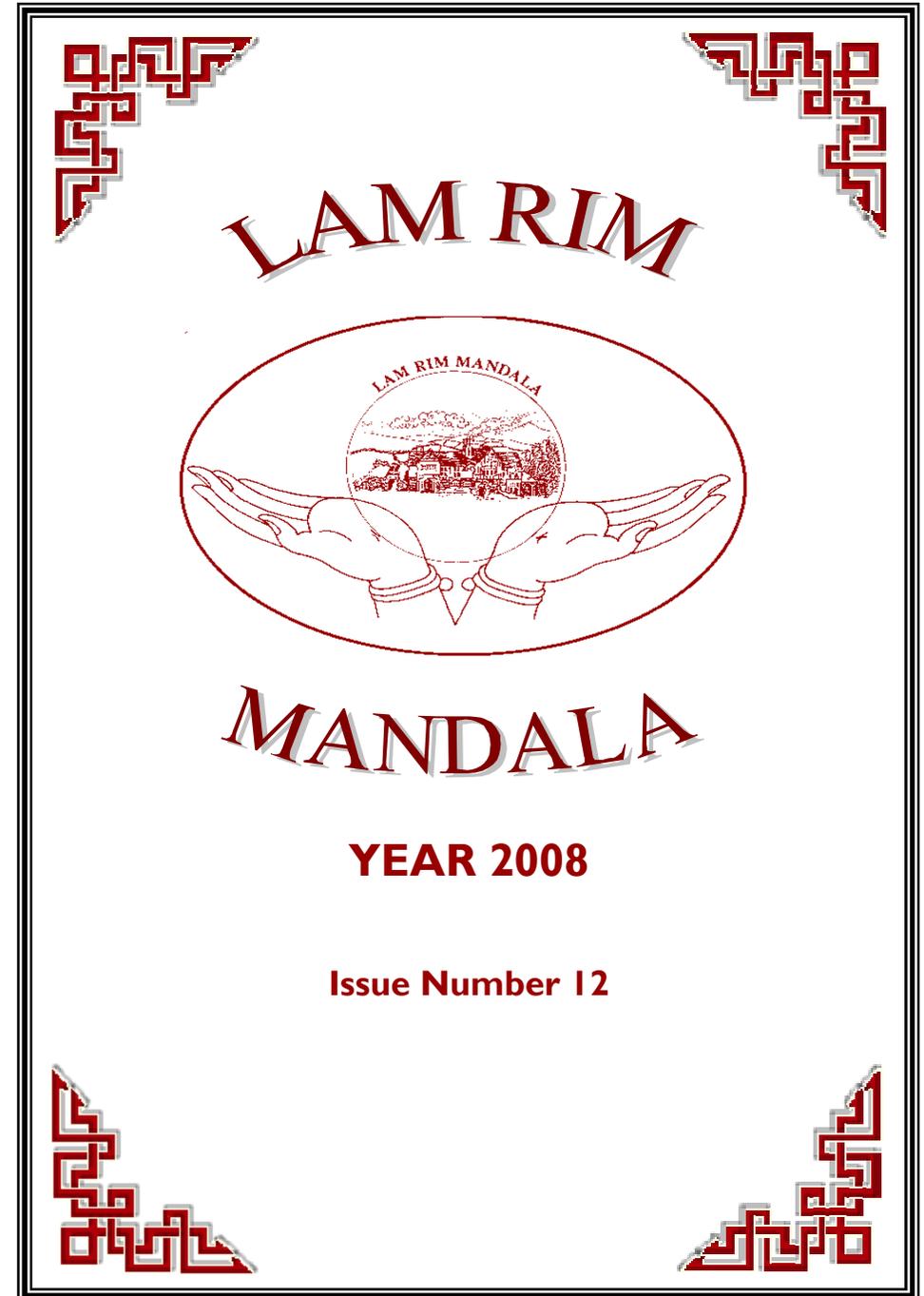
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A Happy New Year to Everyone!

Having just taken up the reins of the Lam Rim Mandala last week I understand its been absent for a few years, so its nice to get it restarted at the beginning of a new year. Despite the attempts of the 'universe' to thwart us before Margaret's departure for India! Notwithstanding changes in the 'production crew' and my inconvenient bout of flu right now, hopefully you will enjoy reading the articles inside.

Thank you to everyone who has sent in items for inclusion. There hasn't been room for all in this edition (due to much thwarting of the universe) but happily I have items to work on for the next issue later in the year. If you have anything you would like to include in future Mandala Newsletters or have any ideas/suggestions to put forward for the newsletter, I will be pleased to hear from you. Is there a meditation guru out there who would like to develop 'Meditation Corner' perhaps? Maybe there is a question you'd like answered about Buddhism?

Don't be shy , I'll be waiting to hear from you. Contact me by;

email: jbowden@waitrose.com or mobile: 07913 922063

Look out for the new Programme of Events in the post and on the Lam Rim website with details of the visit to Lam Rim in February of Kyabje Rinzong Rinpoche.

Best Wishes,

Jan



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Gut Soother



Ingredients

- 2 Pears
- 2 Carrots
- ½ Pineapple
- ½ inch (1cm) ginger root

Blend the pears, carrots and pineapple along with the ginger to make a great tasting smoothy which is good for the digestive tract too.

Nutrients:

Beta-Carotene, Folic Acid, Vitamin C, Calcium, Manganese, Phosphorus, potassium, Sodium, Sulphur.

Plum Traybake with almonds

Makes 12 squares. Preparation time: 15 minutes. Cooking time: 40-45 minutes.

356 calories. 20.4g. fat. 10g saturated fat. 0.5g salt.. 23g sugar.

200g softened butter	Con't
200g golden caster sugar	2 tbsp milk
3 large eggs, lightly beaten	6 plums, halved & stoned
250g self-raising flour	25g flaked almonds
50g ground almonds	2 tsp icing sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 180 deg C, gas mark 4. Line a rectangle brownie tray measuring about 30cm x 20cm x 3 cm with baking parchment snipping the corners to make a good fit.
2. Cream the butter and sugar together with a wooden spoon or electric hand whisk until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg a little at a time.
3. Sieve the flour into the mixture and, using a large metal spoon, fold in the ground almonds. Add the milk and mix gently until it is thoroughly combined and of a dropping consistency. Spoon the mixture into the tin and level with a round-bladed knife.
4. Press the plums into the top of the cake mix in rows of 3, cut-side up. Scatter the flaked almonds over and bake for 40-45 minutes, until risen and lightly golden, and the skewer comes out clean when inserted into the cake.
5. Leave in the tin for 10 minutes before placing the cake on a cooling rack. Sift the icing sugar over to finish.



A Story for
the Children

THE PATIENT BUFFALO

A giant-like buffalo with mighty horns lay under a tree asleep.

Two mischievous eyes peeped through the branches, and a little monkey said: "I know a good old buffalo, who's sleeping beneath the tree, but I am not afraid of him, nor is he afraid of me."

And he leaped from the branch on to the buffalo's back.

The buffalo opened his eyes, and seeing the monkey dancing on his hip, he closed them again, as if only a butterfly were upon his back.



Then rascal monkey tried another trick. Jumping on the buffalo's head between his two large horns, he held the ends and swung, as on a tree. But Buffalo did not even wink

"What can I do to make my good friend angry?" he thought. And while buffalo was eating in the field, he trampled on the grass wherever he wished to graze. And the buffalo merely walked away.

Another day the mischievous monkey took a stick and knocked the buffalo's ears with it, then while he was taking a walk he sat on his back like a hero, holding the stick in his hand.

And to all of this the buffalo made never a murmur, though his horns were strong and mighty.

But one day, while the monkey sat on his back, a kind spirit appeared.

"A great being you are, O buffalo" she said; "but little do you know your strength. Your horns can break down trees, and your feet could crush rocks. Lions and tigers fear to approach you. Your strength and beauty are known to the whole world, and yet you walk about with a foolish monkey on your back. One blow of your horns would pierce him and a stroke of your foot would crush him. Why do you not throw him to the ground and finish with this play?"

"This monkey is small," replied the buffalo, "and Nature has not given him much brain. Why then should I punish him? Moreover, why should I make him suffer in order that I may be happy?"

At this the kind spirit smiled, and with her magic wand she drove the monkey away. And she gave the great buffalo a charm by which no one could cause him to suffer again, and he then lived happy ever after.

From the Jataka Tales



LETTER FROM GESHE DAMCHO-LA

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the pages of Lam Rim Mandala again. I would like to thank Neale initially and now Jan, for taking on the responsibility of the Editor. Without their kindnesses to give some of their time to develop and produce the newsletter, you would not be holding this copy in your hands.

Lam Rim Buddhist Centre has been developing for nearly 30 years and this has come about by the generosity of many people for financial, spiritual and physical efforts. This is how Spiritual Centres flourish – through the willingness and serious commitment of people who feel a connection with a spiritual base.

I believe Lam Rim Buddhist Centre is a very special place – we have received so many blessings from the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and many other eminent spiritual teachers. Soon, we are having the honour of receiving one of our Patrons, Kyabje Rizong Rinpoche, who has visited us in 1990, 1997, 2002, 2005 and is now due to visit the Lam Rim Centres in February 2008. He will arrive on the 6th February, the day before Losar celebrations. Such a wonderful opportunity for the start of the New Year to receive such blessings.

We, therefore, need to recognise we have a responsibility to ensure that we nurture those blessings by dedicating our efforts of practice, whether it be cleaning, gardening, or sitting on our cushion, for the benefit of all beings continually. Sometimes we lose sight of that motivation through our rising discontent and indifference to others. So, we need to try and practice patience and tolerance with each other, for that too is part of our spiritual practice. Sometimes we are unable to engage with these positive attributes, but that is not a reason to stop trying. Maybe it helps if we try to practice, starting with ourselves, by reducing the levels of judgemental mind that are a familiar pattern of our internal dialogue.

My health is now fully recovered and I look forward to being able to fulfil my teaching programme and seeing you again over the next few months.

Thank you for your kindnesses, and Greetings for the New Year.

Thank You.

Venerable Geshe Damcho Yonten



THE STORY OF LOSAR (New Year)

Happy New Year (Tibetan New Year)! Tibetans all over the world will celebrate Tibetan New Year in February. The word *Losar* is a Tibetan word for New Year. *LO* means year and *SAR* means new..

The celebration of Losar can be traced back to the pre-Buddhist period in Tibet. During the period when Tibetans practiced the Bon religion, every winter a spiritual ceremony was held in which people offered large quantities of incense to appease the local spirits, deities and protectors. This religious festival later evolved into an annual Buddhist festival which is believed to have originated during the reign of Pude Gungyal, the ninth King of Tibet. The festival is said to have begun when an old woman named Belma introduced the measurement of time based on the phases of the moon. This festival took place during the flowering of the apricot trees of the Llokha Yaria Shampo region in autumn, and it may have been the first celebration of what has become the traditional farmers' festival. It was during this period that the arts of cultivation, irrigation, refining iron from ore and building bridges were first introduced in Tibet. The ceremonies which were instituted to celebrate these new capabilities can be recognised as precursors of the Losar festival. Later when the rudiments of the science of astrology, based on the five elements, were introduced in Tibet, this farmers' festival became what we now call the Losar or New Year's festival.

The calendar is made up of twelve lunar months and Losar begins on the first day of the first month. In the monasteries the celebrations for the Losar begin on the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month. That is the day before the Tibetan New Year's Eve. On that day the monasteries do a protector deities' puja (a special kind of ritual) and begin preparations for the Losar celebrations. The custom that day is to make special noodle called guthuk. It is made of nine different ingredients including dried cheese and various grains. Also, dough balls are given out with various ingredients hidden in them such as chillies, salt, wool, rice and coal. The ingredients one finds hidden in one's dough ball are supposed to be a light-hearted comment on one's character. If a person finds chillies in their dough, it means they are talkative. If white-coloured ingredients, like salt, wool, or rice are inside the dough it is considered a good sign. If a person finds coal in the dough it has much the same meaning as finding coal in one's Christmas stocking, it means you have a "black heart".

The last day of the year is a time to clean and prepare for the approaching New

Continued.....



Hamburg 21-27 July2007— Part I continues.....

Monday, Tuesday

We were in decent time and were lucky to get earphones, which happened to be in short supply. With this in mind, we arrived earlier and earlier every day.

I felt work, or rather, study was starting in earnest. The 400 verses of the Indian master Aryadeva seemed quite a daunting subject. But in fact, H.H. the Dalai Lama eased us in with a session on the Basic Tenets of Buddhism since the title of the 5 day event was "Buddhism: a Philosophy and a Practice. He started quite late in the afternoon with the text proper, after placing it in its historical and religious context. It was then I noticed how often he concentrated his gaze on the large community of monks coming from many countries and representing many of the different schools of Buddhism. Some were gathered around him while the rest were seated nearest to the front of the stage.

Then very precisely for the first 3 days, H.H. the Dalai Lama commented on the first part of the "Practices concerning Method". From the start H.H. the Dalai Lama had admitted it was a difficult text which he did not know himself totally and declared that he would be less thorough for the second part while still reading all the verses. Someone told me that if a text is read to one, even if one does not understand it all, it will leave an imprint for further acquaintance with it later on, even in a future life. Knowing this helped me to stay there with it, even when not a single atom of concentration was left in my brain cells. H.H. the Dalai Lama with always the right anecdote and quotation to rally round our attention, was sitting there, so full of energy and motivation to share. Once, suddenly coughing, he guffawed then apologised for waking up those who were having a siesta. Personally, I was astonished by the number of people getting up, then, coming back with coffees, ice creams or having visited the deserted loos. The Bristolians riveted to their seats, ploughed on. Towards the end, I understood that people did what they could. Due to the depth and nature of the text and their level on the path, may be, their episodic absences were necessary and not minded in the least by H.H. the Dalai Lama who carried on enthusiastically.

This diary is not about what I understood from the teaching. I can't put those things in writing. I took copious notes to keep myself concentrated. Some are hardly readable but I am working on them and will elucidate more when I get the DVDs of the teaching later. However I can say that it has enhanced my desire and ability to read and study more every day on specific points.

Whatever our level, His Holiness had encouraging words, exhorting us to persevere, never despair. To read and study again and again the three main Canon texts while reassessing the purity of our motivation. To aspire to Bodhicitta, and thus keep to a steady practice saying that a difficult task can be broken into small ones and lead to progress.

By Liz Threadgall

Next Issue - Part 2



Hamburg 21-27 July 2007 – Part 1

Teachings with H.H. the Dalai Lama

After Bruxelles this was to be our second teaching week from H.H. the Dalai Lama.

We arrived Friday with plenty of time at the Bristol airport to recover from the sudden blackening of our carbon footprint. I enjoyed the flight very much. The amazing bright light and the fluffy clouds of all shapes and forms were an enormous surprise after the recent endless rainy weather. Now, that I think back, I drank in the whole vista and it's going to be most useful for the visualisation of the Merit Field and its great gatherings of clouds, thrones to the lineage Gurus of Wisdom and Bodhicitta. It was also very exhilarating and good for the soul to see one's land from up high where Time and Space took another dimension too. Already we could see that Hamburg was very clean, prosperous and also green with allotments about 15 minutes away from the centre.

Saturday

Our nice comfortable hotel was only 15 minutes away from the venue of the teachings. At 8.15 am we were actively looking for people selling unwanted tickets for the first 3 sessions on "Learning Peace – The Practice of Non-Violence". By 8.45, the proud owners of passes dangling on nice long pillar-box red straps around our neck, we entered the vast Tennis Stadium grounds with its many marquees for food, drinks, earphones and information. Despite all that, we missed His Holiness's arrival because of the long queuing at the security points.

During the weekend, His Holiness spoke in English which was a relief at the start as we had forgotten to get the earphones for translations. I was quite near the group of people with hearing impairment and was fascinated by the two young women translating for them in sign language. They did a fantastic job of explaining the psychological notions and at times, abstract concepts, that a talk on non-violence and peaceful living in the light of Buddhism, entails.

Sunday

The public talk on "Compassion in a globalised world" was attended by totally a different crowd. Lots of younger couples in their mid 20's and 30's often accompanied by their very well behaved kids and toddlers listened to a very political and thought provoking Dalai Lama. I learnt afterwards that the full 2 hours had been broadcasted on the Hamburg regional Channel. The media cover of HH Dalai Lama has been quite extraordinary and everywhere one looked, shops had made a special display to acknowledge his fourth visit to the town. Hamburg was serene, peaceful, welcoming and totally under H.H. the Dalai Lama's spell and good wishes.

Continued.....



The Story of Losar continues.....

Year. In the monasteries it is a day of preparations. The finest decorations are put up and elaborate offerings are made and called "Lama Losar". In the early dawn of this day, the monks of Namgyal Monastery offer a sacrificial cake (Tsetor) on top of the main temple (Potala in Tibet) to the supreme hierarchy of Dharma protectors, the glorious goddess Palden Lhamo. Led by the Dalai Lama, the abbots of three great monasteries, lamas, reincarnated monks, government officials and dignitaries join the ceremony and offer their contemplative prayers, while the monks of Namgyal Monastery recite the invocation of Palden Lhamo. After the completion of this ceremony all assemble in the hall called Excellence of Samsara and Nirvana for a formal greeting ceremony. Seated on his or her respective cushions, everyone exchanges the traditional greeting "Tashi delek".

In order to wish His Holiness the Dalai Lama good luck for the coming year, consecrated long-life pills (tse-ril) made out of roasted barley dough are offered to him by the representatives of the three great monasteries, the two Tantric Colleges, etc. Then entertainers (garma) perform a dance of good wishes. The two senior monks stage a debate on Buddhist Philosophy, and conclude their debate with an auspicious recitation composed especially for the event, in which the whole spectrum of Buddhist teaching is first briefly reviewed. A request is made to His Holiness and to all holders of the doctrine to remain for a long time amongst beings in samsara in order to serve them through their enlightened activities. The official ceremony of the day then concludes with a ceremonial farewell to His Holiness, who then retires to his palace.

The second day of Losar is known as King's Losar (gyal-po lo-sar) because officially the day is reserved for a secular gathering in the hall of Excellence of Samsara and Nirvana. His Holiness and his government exchange greetings with both monastic and lay dignitaries, such as representatives of China, India, Butan, Nepal, Mongolia and other foreign visitors.

Continued.....



The Story of Losar continues.....

Then from the third day onwards, the people and monks begin to celebrate and enjoy the festive season in Tibet. Before the Chinese came, Losar had been celebrated for fifteen days or more. In India today we celebrate for three days, and in America we have minimized it to one day. In this way three days of the New Year celebration officially concludes.

Ven. Salden, Namgyal Monastery
(Personal Monastery of H.H. the Dalai Lama)

SWEET RICE – Deysi

This is a food for special times. It is served on the Losar morning, at weddings and for returns from distant places.

INGREDIENTS - Serves 8

4 cups white basmati rice

1 cup golden raisins

½ cup butter

½ cup sugar

one pinch of saffron

Cook the rice with just enough water so that it retains its shape (slightly less than 2 cups of cold water for each cup of raw rice)

Melt the butter and add the sugar, raisins, and saffron threads to the melted butter.

When rice has cooled, pour this mixture into the rice and mix thoroughly. Sometimes a little yellow food colouring is added for effect.

Serve neatly rounded in small bowls, just warm or at room temperature.



Journey to Rizong Continues.....



locals and Tibetan community inside and outside of Tibet. Rinpoche warmly greeted us and a special offering was made to invite him to South Africa to give Teachings. Rinpoche accepted the invitation and more details regarding his visit in 2007 will be forthcoming. We were asked to stay for lunch (a delicious selection of veggie dishes) and a wonderful tour of the monastery which dates back to 1833; an amazing place.....

Another highlight of our Ladakh visit was the trip to Lake Pangong. It took 5 hours to get there through the [Changla Pass](#) (17,800 ft) and it was snowing quite heavily when we arrived at the top (icicles ... brrrrrrr). On the way to the lake we saw a number of Himalayan marmot; a really cute creature, like a huge dassie, with a thick yellow-brown coat and they burrowed in the ground.



Lake Pangong is in a very remote area, in fact very close to Tibet and we had to employ the services of a special guide! It is crystal clear and a beautiful turquoise colour. It is 40miles long and 2 miles wide and is salt water! A truly amazing place to see. (see pic).

Whilst in Leh there was an unfortunate incident which created an unpleasant atmosphere. Apparently a muslim boy had 'raped' an under-age Buddhist girl and when the word got out every single shop, restaurant, business closed down (no tel calls, no emails... nothing); it was to show the severity of the situation and also to curb any subsequent problems which could have flared up. We walked through a ghost-town on our way home that afternoon and there was a large military/police presence which helped diffuse any discontent.

We met up with some of our UK friends at Rizong Monastery and later in Leh, and unfortunately they all had fallen ill with altitude sickness. In fact Janine had to be hospitalised on arrival for the evening. However, they seemed in good spirits when we saw them last and we were grateful that we had made our way slowly to Ladakh.

Dharamsala was our next stop-over and we were very happy with the accommodation at PemaThang Guest house, which is situated a little off the main road, hence it is much quieter. Gosh Dharamsala was busy.... So much traffic, so much pollution and so many people milling around. However, we met up with Pulchung (the day before he left 'sala) and Dawa and Tashi, who escorted us around 'sala for 2-days.... They were very kind and arranged the Nechung vehicle, plus monk-driver to take us to Nor-bulingka and surrounding places the second day.... We are very thankful for their company and their great kindness.

When we left Delhi on Thursday evening that day the temperature had been 38 deg. in the shade! and reached a cold 4 deg in Jobg !

We would also like to thank Dorje, from Senge Travels in Delhi for arranging the majority of the trip; hotel, jeep, tours etc.... we would recommend him and as a reliable source/contact in India and he also arranged our Buddhist Pilgrimage in 2003.

We had a rewarding & meaningful adventure and recommend a visit to experience the majesty of the Himalayas to each of you.

Liz Gaywood



JOURNEY TO RIZONG

Heather & Alan Wilson, Chris and I left South Africa on 3rd June and our first stop was Srinagar; it took 4 flights to get there from Durban, so we were happy to see a bed on the 4th when we arrived at our house boat on Lake Dahl. We all enjoyed the houseboat; very different and it was really like a floating hotel; it had a small verandah; a sitting and separate dining rooms, two very large bedrooms, ensuite and it was very clean & comfortable (except for the hard beds; but hard beds were standard throughout our journey!). The houseboat was situated in a very quiet part of the Lake, away from the hustle and bustle of the main areas. To get to any of the houseboats you need the services of a boatman, who paddles a Shikara, which is reasonably comfortable, the only downside is that you get 'attacked' from all sides by the local tradesmen (also paddling their shikaras) and they came to be known as 'the pirates'. The Kashmir people are quite heavy-duty tradesmen and are very persistent with their continual and unrelenting bargaining; after many 'no s' and 'not interested'; they eventually got the message, only to be followed up by other tradesmen.



We ate on the houseboat; it was the most convenient, but not the best price. However, we were all happy with what they served us, except the one day we ended up with four different versions of potato and rice (with no veg..... oh dear!).

The surrounding country is lovely and it was a perfect place to start acclimatising before our 2-day trip to Leh.

Heather & Alan were 'awarded' many sights of Himalayan bird-life and they were happy to tick off a number of species to add to their collection.

The road to Leh from Srinagar takes 2-days with a night-stop at Kargil. The scenery en route is magical; nothing can compare with the Himalayas; every corner (and there were many many hair-pin bends) presented a different awe-inspiring sight; sometimes lush green valleys; others, high, snow-capped peaks; moon-scape landscapes and valleys of pure white valleys sand; the colours in the rock varied from pink, red, various shades of green & brown, huge boulders, tiny rocks and the magnificent mountain peaks; +/- 15 foot glaciers feeding huge fast-flowing rivers..... a feast for the eyes!

Kargil is a pretty non-descript place, but we were happy to eat a nicely prepared dinner and enjoy a reasonably comfortable bed.

The next day took us through similar landscape and we came across the presence of the military, which were also very much a part of Kashmir too.

Our hotel in Leh was situated in a quieter part of town, although not the prettiest area, but since most of our time was spent travelling around the monasteries and countryside it wasn't a problem; it was clean and comfortable and we had access to a lovely sun-roof where we could hang our washing and bask in the sun, which disappeared at about 7.30 pm. The days were sunny and the evenings comfortable; after all it was their summer! We only had cold weather on the last day when we were to fly to Jammu and the flight was cancelled due to bad weather (typical!), so we had to get back to our hotel and re-tread our steps from the previous day, but by that time we were quite familiar with the local Indian Air staff who knowingly smiled & greeted us on our arrival.

We visited most of the well-known monasteries; Hemis, Thiksay, Shey, Lama Yuru, Shanti Stupa, Sangar Gumpa, the local Mahabodhi Society, who were doing some excellent outreach work (very impressive); and the highlight of our visit was our audience with Rinzong Rinpoche at his monastery in a fairly remote area of the country. Rinpoche's monastery is well-known for instilling a strict code of discipline and his roots in Ladakh also include a royal lineage, hence he is well respected amongst the

Continued.....



Memories of Losar 2007



A wonderful day was spent at Lam Rim celebrating Losar. Losar is a time for a 'spring clean', out with the old and in with the new. Volunteers had sewn together the new

brightly coloured prayer flags and the day was spent in the garden taking down the windswept faded ones and replacing them with the vibrant new garlands. Chhimed lowered the victory flag pole, a skilled task, having 'all hands on deck' to negotiate the trees and hedges, and the pole was scrubbed clean and the year old windswept flags replaced with the brightly coloured new ones.

Edita provided a lovely communal lunch which offered a welcomed opportunity to catch up with old and new friends. The day was topped of by a Teaching from Geshe Damcho La who kindly explained the meaning of Losar. A fantastic day was had by all. **Neale Fox**



Photographs by Chhimed



Ladakh Part I.

A story of a visit to Ladakh. By Caroline McCookweir.

Stepping out of the plane at Kushok Bakula Airport, I wobble on unsteady legs, eyes blinking in the clear, bright light, dwarfed and unsettled by the towering mountains. It is like standing in the bottom of a bowl. The airport is in the valley of the river Indus, the "floor" of Ladakh, a mere 12,000 ft above sea-level. From here the land rushes upwards to weird, craggy ridges and distant snows. Our skilled pilot apparently just missed these ridges on the heart-stopping final descent of our flight from Delhi. Inside the airport building there are beautifully decorated Tibetan-style pillars, and pictures of the saintly Bakula Rinpoche and, in spite of feeling most peculiar, we know we have arrived somewhere very special.

The effects of altitude, in my case a strange feeling of heightened awareness, as if too much light is entering my eyes, and the unnerving sensation that my legs are not my own, last about a week. At first, Paul and I stay in old Leh, a jumble of traditional white-washed stone and mud-brick dwellings, threaded through with narrow pot-holed lanes.



The lane below our window is home to a cow, in one of those strange juxtapositions commonplace in India. The view from the roof of the Old Ladakhi Guest House is extraordinary. There is a sea of flat roofs bearing prayer flags, bizarre plumbing and mud-bricks drying in the sun. Looking to the south, across the Indus valley, the main range of the Himalaya rises impossibly, as far along the horizon as the eye can see. To the north, a sheer rock mountain side is adorned with a painted Buddha and also bears the crumbling old fort, a many-storeyed building a bit like an unpainted Potala palace. There is also the red-painted Lha-Khang (Deities residence) of old Leh Gompa, which houses a lovely Maitreya statue and the scree slopes to the north-east are traversed by a line of white stupas. Everywhere are signs of the long-established Buddhist culture of this part of Ladakh. Gingerly negotiating the lanes, we pass under arches crowned with votive stupas, and by the roadside huge mani wheels in stone shelters ring out their turning. We are here in Ladakh, Paul Kirby, John and Janine Allman and myself, on a pilgrimage, to visit the places where our precious teacher, Ven. Geshe Damcho Yonten lived and taught for 6 years. He was invited to Ladakh by Ven. Rinzong Rinpoche, after they had escaped from Tibet together in 1959. Rinpoche also gave sanctuary to their mutual teacher Ven. Gyalrong Khentru Rinpoche, who had crossed the Himalayas at around the same time. We are also here to see and pay our respects to Ven. Rinzong Rinpoche, and with this in mind, after a few days acclimatising, Paul and I set off on the 4 hour taxi-ride to Rinzong.

The first part of the journey follows the course of the Indus, over dry, dusty plains and past big army encampments. There is a big army presence here due to Ladakh

Continued.....



Lam Rim Buddhist Centre Nature Reserve

This simple nature guide gives an outline of some of the grasses, sedges/rushes, herbs trees, birds and animals living in the grounds of Lam Rim.

The Lam Rim Nature Reserve offers a safe place for birds, animals and insects, as Buddhists do not kill any living being. One can see that the birds and animals have little fear-watch the birds and squirrels on the bird table!

Some birds for example are only here for the summer and then others come for the winter. There is a lot to see so when you turn over a stone or log, please do so carefully and then replace it. Move about quietly watching and listening so as not to



Botanical Species List for the Lam Rim Buddhist Centre Meadow



Please note that this is not a comprehensive list.

Grasses:

Alopecurus pratensis (meadow foxtail)

Anthoxanthum odoratum (sweet vernal grass)

Briza media (quaking grass)

Holcus lanatus (Yorkshire fog)

Sedges and Rushes:

Luzula campestris (field wood rush)

Herbs

Achillea millefolium (yarrow)

Ajuga reptans (bugle)

Cardamine pratensis (cuckoo flower)

Centaurea nigra (common knapweed)

Herbs:

Cerastium holosteoides (common mouse-ear)

Heracleum sphondylium (hogweed)

Hyacinthoides non-scripta (bluebell)

Hypochoeris radicata (common cats ear)

Leontodon saxatilis (lesser hawkbit)

Leucanthemum vulgare (oxeye daisy)

Lotus corniculatus (birds-foot trefoil)

Plantago lanceolata (ribwort plantain)

Primula veris (cowslip)

Ranunculus bulbosus (bulbous buttercup)

Rumex acetosa (common sorrel)

Stellaria graminea (lesser stitchwort)

Taxacum officinale (dandelion)

Trifolium pratense (red clover)

Vicia cracca (tufted vetch)

Additionally the following were recorded on the edge of the second smaller meadow that had been recently cut:

Pimpinella saxifraga (burnet saxifrage)

Silaum silaus (pepper-saxifrage)



COME AND JOIN OUR

HELPING HAND REGISTER



Name :

Address:

.....

.....

Tel: Email:

<i>Tick Areas of Interest</i>			
Garden	Maintenance	Cooking	Administration
<i>Tick Areas of Skills</i>			
Garden	Maintenance	Cooking	Administration
Regular Help	Full Day	Half Day	Hours
Occasional Help	Full Day	Half Day	Hours



Ladakh Part I continues.....

having 2 “live” borders, one with Pakistan and one with China. We climb to a barren plateau, randomly strewn with huge boulders, then wind through mountains, the hairpinned bends officially “graffittied” with warning signs. “Better man late than late man” and others praising the prowess of the road builders, and this is truly an amazing feat. Sometimes we are close to the rushing Indus, sometimes high above it looking down steep-sided gorges. At the confluence of the Zaskar and Indus, the two rivers can be seen quite distinctly, the milky Zaskar water apparently stopping the turquoise Indus in its tracks. We stop in a village for a chai*. Here there are delicate poplar trees, small fields of bright green barley and apricot orchards. Then on, winding up and down, sometimes hemmed in by steep scree slopes, then crossing wild plateaux from where we catch glimpses down deep corridors of mountains, cloud-shadowed and mysterious, to distant snows. Most of the mountains are rock and scree with very little vegetation. And yet there is colour here, beautiful greens and purples in the rock itself.

Finally we turn off the main road and, following a stream at first, start the climb up to Rizong gompa. In Geshe-las day there was no road here, just a winding path and several hours between roadhead and monastery. Gradually leaving behind the apricot orchards, rose bushes, poplar trees, then even the river, we enter a harsh, rocky landscape, until, rounding a hairpin bend, there is Rizong, clinging to the mountain wall, its many-storeyed jumble of white-washed rooms built directly onto the rock. It is very exciting to be here. Ever since Ven. Rizong Rinpoche gave us all a postcard of his monastery after teachings in 1997, I have wanted to come here.

Caroline McCookweir

* Chai - Indian sweet tea which is boiled with the milk, sugar and cardamom added.



**May all sentient beings
be happy
and at their ease,
May they all
be joyous
and live in
safety!**





Some Personal Reflections

Having spent thirty-plus years on the yogic path, it now seems it was inevitable that in the latter years my interest drifted more seriously into the realms of philosophy. This, along with my work, has given me the opportunity to share the company of eminent and noteworthy people from a cross section of different religions. I would like to share some of my many memories which surface from time to time.

When in India, one of the group leaders quoted Gandhi, "Should the Gita be lost and Chapter Two be saved, and the New Testament be lost and the Beatitudes saved, we would still have all the inspiration needed to reach salvation."

The Gita is a classic in all world literature, and Chapter Two is in itself a ray of brilliance. In paragraph 54, Arjuna asks the question, "How is this man of tranquil wisdom-what are his words, his silence, his work?" Krishna's reply is nothing short of genius and should be studied closely by all. The Beatitudes are 'an attitude of being' and, if learned by heart, offer a daily wealth of wisdom about life.

I have been a member of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre for many years, and on retreat in June 1991 I was invited by Swami Bhavyananda, who was at the time in charge of the Centre, to talk with him in his room. During conversation he impressed upon me how very important faith was to the aspirant, "Once faith comes into our life, Faith sees the INVISIBLE, BELIEVES in the INCREDIBLE and is REWARDED with the IMPOSSIBLE."

Meditation takes many years of preparation and living our lives according to Patanjali's Sutra Yamas and Niyamas. This was never so convincingly put than when on retreat with Myokyo-Ni. The distinguished Zen Master would instil this advice into us, "Put your daily life right! Put your daily life right! Put your daily life right!"

Emerson echoed this sentiment when he wrote, "I believe in the sacredness of the human body, the transient dwelling place of the living soul. I deem it a duty to every man and women to keep his or her body beautiful through right thinking and right living." This is indeed the cornerstone of meditation.

Very close to home and even closer to my heart is the Lam Rim Buddhist Centre, Penrhos, Raglan. When you enter the grounds you immediately sense the peace and tranquillity, brought about by the continuous spiritual practice and dedication of the resident family and the Spiritual Director, Ven Geshe Damcho Yonten. 'Geshe-la' gives regular teachings and shares his wisdom when he is at home and available.

There is also the lovely, peaceful 'meditation walk' set amongst the trees, and the heart of the Centre is the holy Shrine Room. I feel very grateful to have been closely associated with the Centre from its inception and for all the spiritual direction it has given me over the years. A verse comes to mind from the Buddha's teachings, The Dhammapada, "Wisdom is born from meditation, not to meditate is loss. Know the difference between gain and loss, make the choice to walk where wisdom grows." We must not forget the Taoist philosophy and the great sage, Lao Tzu who said of meditation, "Just remain in the centre, watching-and then forget you are there." **OM SHANTI, Aldwyn Jones—Herbalist and Yoga Teacher.**



Ritual of Freedom

Giving up smoking is the hardest thing I have ever had to face. For me it has been more difficult than being a single parent, more difficult than giving up meat (which I did twenty two years ago) more difficult than getting a degree and post graduate qualification in my thirties and more difficult than passing my driving test (after five attempts) in my forties. Now I'm facing my fifties and would like to take Refuge in the Buddha. I feel I must be free from smoking in order to do that. I hope this poem might inspire others to give up and for non-smokers to realise, the difficulty of the task.



A ritual of freedom she devises in her mind

Long thoughts, many years of pondering

Will there come a day? When I can break free

From this insidious addiction I feel residing in me

Slave to the smoke that hangs like a shroud

Clouding out the realities that I have to face

**Frustration within my soul because I cannot
master myself**

Knowing in my heart that I am weak

**Self mastery is the highest level of human attain-
ment.**

**Pondering long, I realise, like a flash, this is my
path**

A discipline, a way of life.

**Bring on the ritual tools, my transformation will
begin**

**Deep within, my ancient past re-surfaces and
tells me to mourn**

The deep monsters of addiction within.

Tell them they are dead and bury them deep

**And may this symbolic funeral, free me from
them forever.**



Gaenor Joseph 2007

MEDITATION CORNER

You are not trying to learn meditation; you are the meditation. Your entire body, breath, thoughts, senses and awareness—your total being are all part of the meditation. Your entire energy field is part of the meditation.

Tarthang Tulka

Physically relax body. It must be still and comfortable so that the entire nervous system calms.

Quiet mind through inner silence.

