

Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies is a non-profit organization serving as the North American Seat of the Personal Monastery of H.H. The Dalai Lama.

Founded in 1992 by the late Namgyal monk Pema Lobsang Choegyal and some Ithacan friends, under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Namgyal Monastery in India, their mission was fourfold: To offer authentic Tibetan Buddhist teachings in the context of a non-sectarian setting; to provide resident Tibetan teachers with opportunities to learn the English language as well as Western academic, social, and technical skills; to provide facilities and programs supportive of training in and practice of Buddhist Dharma in the Tibetan tradition, and to function as a Tibetan cultural center, with a particular focus of providing cultural support to the local Tibetan community of Ithaca, New York.

Namgyal Monastery offers both a full and part-time curriculum in practical and philosophical Buddhist studies and language with a choice of one or three year tracks, as well as weekend teachings and summer retreats.

Pilgrimage photos by Franck Goldberg.

Please contact franckgoldberg@earthlink.net for prints / info about pilgrimage photos.

Namgyal Monastery
Institute of Buddhist Studies
P.O.Box 127
Ithaca, NY 14851

Namgyal Monastery 2004 Summer Retreats



Geshe Tenzin Sherap, a Lharampa Geshe from the Ganden Jangtse Monastery, will join the resident Namgyal Venerables as the head teacher at this year's retreats.

I. Get Acquainted with Namgyal August 1st-8th, 2004

II. Manjushri Retreat August 8th-15th, 2004

How To Register

To register for retreats, please send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address, along with a deposit of one-half the total cost of the retreat(s) you plan to attend. Please make checks out to Namgyal Monastery.

Both retreats take place at Wisdom's Goldenrod Center for Philosophic Studies, a philosophic study-center on Seneca Lake, in the Finger Lakes Region of Upstate, NY.

To learn more about the site, visit www.wisdomsgoldenrod.org.

Payment Options

Retreat special: Register for both retreats and pay \$1200

Option I Week-long retreat with on-site lodging Total: \$625

Option II On-site camping at either retreat Total: \$515

Option IV: Own accommodation for either retreat: Total: \$475

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NAMGYAL MONASTERY

INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

The North American Seat of the Personal Monastery of H.H. the Dalai Lama

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Summer 2004 - India edition

Splendors Abound on Pilgrimage to India

By Babette Teich-Visco and Beth Ennis

The spring 2004 Pilgrimage to Dharamsala, India was a tremendous success thanks to the hard work of everyone at Namgyal Monastery in Ithaca and India. Led by resident Venerable Tenzin Thutop and Babette Teich-Visco, a group of ten participants set off for a wonderful adventure.

The tour began in the New Tibetan Colony in Delhi where we stayed at the Tibetan owned Wangdon House. We were thrust into an eye-opening tour of Old and New Delhi, visiting Gandhi's cremation site, Indian Soldiers' Memorial Arch, the Hindu Birla Temple, a Muslim mosque, and the beautiful Buddha Jayanti Park with its large gold Buddha statue that was a gift from the Tibetan people to India for offering them safe harbor in exile.

Then it was on to Dharamsala via private bus. The 14-hour ride afforded us the terrific opportunity to see the Indian countryside and small towns. Upon arrival in Dharamsala, some of the group stayed at Chonor House (owned and operated by Norbulingka Institute), while others stayed at Namgyal Guest House located in Namgyal Monastery.

We were very fortunate to have Ven. Kunga Gyatso from the parent monastery in Dharamsala, join us for the rest of the tour. Along with hard-working Babette, our group was very well taken care of – how lucky we were! We had the privilege to tour Namgyal Monastery and got an insider's view of life, which included the Dalai Lama's personal Temple. We were also fortunate to dine twice with the Namgyal monks.

There is also a café at Namgyal called Namgyal Café where Tibetans train in the culinary arts - their pizza was excellent! Surrounding the monastery and His Holiness' residence is the Lingkhör path. Like many of the residents in Dharamsala, we took the opportunity to circumambulate the path that winds through pine trees and Mani rocks and Stupas along the way. Half way around is an area with numerous prayer wheels and stupas overlooking the



beautifully green Kangra valley.

For several days, we woke up to the lyrical sound of monks chanting at Namgyal, their voices and prayers filling the air during the Gelug Monlam Prayer Festival. A sea of burgundy robes was a remarkable sight! Thus began the three weeks of celebrations and His Holiness' teachings. We were privileged to attend a special prayer day at Namgyal Monastery in honor of His Holiness' 50th year as a Geshe. Additionally, we attended the first three days of the teaching, a wonderful treat.

Of the many wonderful surprises of this trip was receiving private teachings from revered teachers. We were privileged to receive teachings from the lovable abbot of Namgyal Monastery, Jhado Tulku Rinpoche, and the famous elder Lama Khamtrul Rinpoche, as well as the venerable hermit Geshe Dhakpa Gelek, a warm and insightful monk who has lived as a hermit in the hills of Dharamsala for 8 years.

One day we were off to upper Dharamsala for lunch at the lively J.J.I Café, followed by a nice aerobic walk up to lovely Bagsunag, the site of sacred pools and waterfalls. It was a chal-

lenging uphill climb, but worth every step as we were rewarded with the breath-taking view of lower Dharamsala.

A few days later we packed up for a trip to Mandi and Rewalsar (Tso Pema) for the festival Ten-Da-Tse-Chu. This festival honors Padmasambava (Guru Rinpoche) and happens only once every 12 years during the Year of the Monkey. In jeeps we traveled for six hours on bumpy roads through the lush green Kulu region with spring flowers blooming. Along the way we stopped at magnificent Sherab Ling Monastery to view the colossal statue of the Buddha Maitreya in the main temple. This is the personal monastery of Tai Situ Rinpoche, teacher to the Karmapa, and was a welcome stop on our little journey.

On arrival at Tso Pema, we found the area around the sacred Lotus Lake to be virtually packed with thousands of pilgrims who came to honor Padmasambava and attend the teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. As a group from Namgyal Monastery we lucked out and got seats at Sahor Ugyan Heruka Phodrang Monastery where we caught a close glimpse of His

Events Calendar

June 21st-July 15th: Four-Week Summer Program of classes. Check our website or call the office for class listings.

July 6th: The Dalai Lama's Birthday. Prayers will take place at the Monastery from 9-10am followed by the annual Tibetan Association picnic at Stewart Park.

July Saturday Teaching Series:

July 10th: 12-4pm: David Patt will present "Interdependence of the Three Principle Paths." Cost \$20.

July 17th: 12-4pm: "Emptiness and Tantra," by Craig Preston. Cost \$20.

July 24th: 12-4pm: Sandy Huntington talking on Chandrakirti and the Prasangka/Svatantrika division. Cost \$20.

August 1-8th: 'Get Acquainted with Namgyal' week-long summer retreat. Call 607.273.0739 for more info.

August 8-15th: Manjushri is the topic of this year's intermediate retreat.

September 6th: Fall Classes begin.

September 13th-26th: The resident Venerables construct the Mind of Kalachakra Mandala in Costa Rica as part of the Dalai Lama's visit.

Sept 24th-26th: Geshe Lobsang Tenzin will give a weekend seminar "Meditation for Health and Stress Reduction." Cost \$155.

Sept 27th-Oct 8th: The resident Venerables construct an Avalokiteshvara Mandala at the Corning Community College.

October 19-21st: Jim Blumenthal will give a weekend seminar on "Santaraksita and His Place in Tibetan Buddhist Thought."

December 18th and 19th: Lama Pema Wangdak will give 2-day teaching on "Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltzen's text: Parting from the Four Attachments with Commentary by HE Chogye Rinpoche." Cost \$85.

Study at Namgyal Fall Semester 2004

Geshe Khunken, a Lharampa Geshe from the Drepung Loseling Monastery and resident teacher of the Jefferson Tibetan Society in Charlottesville, VA, will join the resident Venerables to serve as senior teacher during the fall semester.



By Tenzin Gephel, Namgyal Monk

Today I would like to share with you some of my experiences on my Fall 2003 trip to India, which pertain to interdependence, contentment and peace. This was my first trip out of the country since 1997. On the plane I met two Tibetans, a mother and her adult daughter. We chatted in Tibetan. Before I left Ithaca, I kept thinking, regretfully, that I haven't been back to India for so long to see my kind parents and my beloved parent monastery. The mother gave me an odd look when I told her that I haven't been back to India for nearly seven long years. The mother said to me that they haven't been back to see their relatives in India for 13 years. She must have been wondering why on earth I looked at seven years as a very long time. Seeing the years from the mother's perspective relieved me of some of the regret and guilt I had been experiencing.

Soon after that conversation I was able to reflect upon one of the Buddha's core teachings on interdependence. Why? Because one thing seemed like a long time, but, compared with 13 years seven is perhaps not so long. Compared with two or three years, seven years is a relatively long time to go without a visit. There is no long or short time that is always merely a short or long time. It is only by imputation that we say a period of time is short or long. Teachings on interdependence ultimately help to dispel our fears and increase our hope for a better future. But in order for me to help you understand this, I would have to resort to many technical details, which I fear would put you all to sleep.

After two days of rest in Delhi I took a bus to Dharamsala in Northern India. The trip takes 12 hours. I stayed at Namgyal Monastery, located in a suburb called Mcloed Ganj, which is higher up in the mountains. I grew up in Mcloed Ganj, and this is the place where my parents live. The village is approximately 1,800 feet above sea level. It is close to a gigantic snow-covered mountain range. There are lots of trees, most of which are evergreens. The Dalai Lama has lived here since the 1960's.

After my seven-year absence, I saw that the small town has changed a lot. When I left in 1997 there was only one place from which to send e-mails, and the majority of people hardly knew about it. Now there are computer stations everywhere, and everyone uses them and sends e-mail. Also, there were almost no mobile phones when I left; now a great many people use them. Dharamsala and Mcloed Ganj are quite

My Trip to India



Venerable hermit Geshe Dhakpa Gelek

crowded. A lot of tourists come from many different countries.

There are some Tibetan hermits, dedicated meditators, who live in the forested mountains above Mcloed Ganj. I visited them and learnt about them. Such great teachers remind us of the importance of the simple life and being content. These hermits live modestly, content with modest housing and very simple food. They do not go to extremes. The Buddha himself, based on his own experience, urged people not to go to extremes. As the Dalai Lama has said, contentment in relation to material concerns is necessary and useful for everybody, otherwise, our wanting will never cease and we will experience tremendous disappointment. Regarding inner good qualities, one should not rest content, but try to make progress infinitely.

Most of the hermits I met have been living without indoor toilets. One hermit, called Dhakpa, built a hut with indoor plumbing. Another, called Sherap, told Dhakpa that hermits do not need toilets in their houses because one can go anywhere in this forest. One day the hermit who did not have a toilet went up into the forest to do his business. He heard the sound of a wild animal. As soon as he realized the sound was made by a leopard that was very close to him, he became terrified, and ran back to his house. He was so scared that he did not come out to pee even after it became light the next morning.

When Dhakpa went to see the hermit who was frightened by the leopard, he saw the man demolishing one side of his house and asked, "What are you doing?" The hermit replied, meekly, "It is very dangerous living in the forest without a toilet attached to the house. I want

a toilet, so I am making room for it."

Dhakpa, the toilet owner, told me that a leopard actually passes by his house quite often. "How do you know when a leopard is near you?" I asked. "And what does a leopard sound like?" He said that a leopard often makes a noise from its throat that sounds like someone cutting into a tree with a saw. He also said that when a leopard is far away from us, its voice is louder. When the leopard is near, then its sound is very low. It is then that we must be very careful.

I also asked, "As a Tibetan Buddhist meditator, what do you think are the chances of achieving world peace?" He replied, "If we cannot tame and discipline our minds from within, I think peace will be a very difficult thing to achieve. If we respect others and regard others as just as important as ourselves, this will help us achieve peace in the world. We persist in holding 'I' as most important and persist in always thinking and saying 'I', 'Me', and 'Mine.' The troubles humans experience in life are linked with this. In our mind, whenever we compare ourselves with another person, we should consider the other person to be at least slightly important and therefore worth respecting."

These are some of the experiences I had during my two-month trip to Dharamsala. Let me conclude with two passages from a book called *In My Own Words*, by the Dalai Lama. He says, and I quote: "Within the context of our inter-dependence, self interest clearly lies in considering the interest of others." The Dalai Lama also points out - and again I quote - "The true antidote to greed is contentment." According to Buddha, "Those who are free of resentful thoughts surely find peace."

Spring 2005: Pilgrimage to India/Nepal. Check back for details later this summer...

Continued from front page

Holiness circumambulating the temple

Our tour of the city of Mandi the next day included Kumari Rani (Yang Queen's well). Now a Hindu Temple, this was once the site of captivity for the famous Princess Mandarava, whose father the King of Mandi had her imprisoned after hearing news that she was to become the consort of Padmasambava. The hustle and bustle of this ancient city was amazing.

Back in Dharamsala we stayed at Hotel Tibet while others stayed back at Namgyal Guest

House. A terrific day of touring included Norbulingka - a beautiful compound of Tibetan artisans and schools. Behind the compound is Domaling, a nunnery that has raised funds as the Tibetan Nuns Projects. Co-founder Betsy Napper was there to give us the history and a personalized tour. Across the valley we toured Thosamling - where western nuns and lay women live and meditate - a remote and peaceful location to study Dharma.

The next day we visited Nechung Monastery (Temple of the Oracle) and toured the Tibetan Library and Archives where preservation efforts

are underway for hundreds of old Tibetan texts from all traditions. A wonderful museum filled with statues, thangkhas, and ritual objects. On to Gadong Monastery - home to two oracles - a fabulously ornate temple. After, we toured the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute (Men Tse Khang) where we got a first hand look at the process of making Tibetan medicines and products such as lotions and tea.

One of our favorite places we visited was the Tibetan Children's Village School. Located next to Dahl Lake, it is a warm and loving place that is home to hundreds of children of all ages.

Although we did not want it to end, it was time to start our journey home. The bus ride back to Delhi was eventful as we made our way to the New Tibetan Colony and Wangdon House. We toured the beautiful Lotus Temple, built by Baha'i House of Worship in New Delhi, shaped like a large lotus flower and surrounded by nine pools of water. A final day of shopping for last minute gifts and lunch at McDonald's (yes, we had to try it) where we enjoyed good veggie burgers and fries. As we said our good-byes, we knew that we had experienced something special. We headed home with wonderful memories and, in the process, expanded our circle of friends in the Dharma.

