



*"Tushita is
wonderful, wonderful.*

*There is wonderful
work being done here,
so many students,
more than any other
centre, it's amazing,
wonderful.
Amazing,
amazing work".*

**Lama Zopa Rinpoche
at Tushita,
December 2011**

TUSHITA

Meditation Centre

McLeod Ganj, India; Home-in-Exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Director's Message

Dear Friends of Tushita,

As the 2011 season comes to a close, it is both a time of reflection over the past year and a time of connection and preparation for the forthcoming year.

I am reminded of a brief meeting with Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Delhi in January 2011. Rinpoche said that through service to Tushita, all those offering service would become more and more like wish-granting jewels.

Since then it has been a tremendous year throughout. This has only been made possible through a consistent community effort, thanks to Tushita Sangha, Teachers, staff & volunteers.

Since Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche manifested a stroke, the Tibetan Sangha have performed nightly pujas for Rinpoche. They have made a remarkably tireless and focused effort throughout. This has been alongside fulfilling all their regular commitments to the Centre.

With the vast growth in student numbers, the Teachers have been very much in demand and have given so much in response to so many students interested in studying & experiencing the Dharma.

The staff & volunteers have given continuously throughout the year, often above and beyond their regular duties, to constantly provide a good service to students & visitors alike.

I can only marvel and rejoice in such a community effort and envisage as Rinpoche had so kindly predicted, each member of the community with their bright, sparkling wish-granting jewel of service at the heart.

Then as November began, we were unexpectedly blessed by a visit from our most precious Guru, Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche... *(to find out more, see pages 11 and 12)*

Soon 2012 will get underway. With hearts full of anticipation we welcome the new season in honour of Tushita's 40th anniversary year. Our motivation for the year is "to make Tushita more beautiful"; to honour this precious holy ground and all that has been realised since its very beginning in 1972. Plus, we hope to plant many positive seeds for the future.

With warm wishes from Tushita community, please read on...

Linda

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Linda is pictured above with
Jetsun Pema
(for 42 years the President of the
Tibetan Children's Villages
(TCV), and the sister of
His Holiness the Dalai Lama!)
who just popped in to say hello
one day in October 2011!

Everything DHARMA

Q & A
with
Jimi Neal



*These Q & A's
took place
as part of an
"Introduction
to Buddhism"
course that Jimi led
here at Tushita from
November 11 - 18, 2011*

you wanted to know about but were afraid to ask...

*Part of a series of excerpted Question and Answer Sessions held here at
Tushita, between our amazing Teachers and our amazing Students!*

Q. Why do you prostrate, bow down to the Buddha Statue?

A. It may seem kind of strange, I come in here and prostrate to all these *idols*, y'know, all these statues, say these prayers. Nobody needs to participate if they don't wish, in fact now most teachers don't even bother with them. But although I'm kind of wild from one point of view, I'm kind of conventional, traditional from another point of view. I think that those things can be included and they might touch something inside with the people that are here. Maybe, maybe not. If you're not interested in it, don't worry, let it go by.

'Cause prostrations can be very strange for people who are coming from Western cultures where the idea of religion is founded on the *idiocy* of bowing down to statues or idols or things like that, so a little explanation is important, then again not trying to talk you into *doing* it, just to explain what goes on.

Prostrating... One of the best examples I like is from a Zen teaching. It says: *the dipper; if you don't lower it down into the water it can never fill up*. So it's kind of a gesture of opening up. And it's certainly not bowing down to *Brass Statues*, it's a way of opening up, a general opening up to other beings, opening up to a teaching, it's a very deep tradition in the East.

I have lived in India most of my life and it's very, very deep in the cultures of the East. In India, there's this expression *Namaste* y'know? *Namaste, Namaskar*, everybody says it like "Hello". What that *means* is, "*I honour that place within you where we are one*", it's a prostrating to that being's heart. Now, of course it gets used just as an everyday word and it's not always thought of in that kind of depth, but it really has a very deep meaning, which is prostrating, opening to others: *Pranam*. It's a wonderful tradition I think.

When one is going to a teaching, by say the Dalai Lama, everybody will prostrate. Most people think they're prostrating to the Dalai Lama but what you're really prostrating to is, you're lowering yourself, about to receive something, and so you're respecting it. You're setting up a situation where (you have the attitude) "*This is something precious*" – And anyone like the Dalai Lama, certainly someone like a nobody like myself, knows that any Dharma that I pass on doesn't come from *me*, it comes from my teacher, and their teacher and their teacher, it is passed down.

There should be very little place, if one is honest, to think "*this is my Dharma, I have a lot of knowledge*". We don't *have* knowledge, we *receive* knowledge, from a lineage. This is a very important part of Buddhist teachings, that they go back and back and have been tested over time.

Different traditions bow at different times, many people do it each time they enter a Gompa or when the teacher sits down, to show respect to that place or person. After all, statues aren't just statues, they are representations of the enlightened mind, so some people do it every time they enter a Gompa.

There are various different traditions, different methods of prostrating. But all of them have this element of showing respect. Even in the martial arts of Japan they bow to each other before they tear each other up, some respect is shown before the show begins!

It's an aspect of life that we've lost out on in Western Cultures.

Q. What does Buddhism say about meat eating?

A. Ah, this always brings up a big controversy...

How many people here are vegetarian? And how many of you are fascist vegetarian? *(laughter)*

Of course it is better to be a vegetarian, by far. But in terms of harming animals then you get into these other things like the number of animals, beings, that are killed in the harvesting of rice etc. When you look at it like this, it's best *not* to be a vegetarian! *(laughter)* I'm *almost* a vegetarian. I have lived fifteen years in one house and I've never cooked meat there.

According to the Dharma, what the Buddha said is: to kill something, to ask specifically for something to be killed, or for someone to kill specifically for you, like, "*Jimi, we just took the head off this goat specially for your dinner tonight...*". In those three cases it is considered to be heavy karma, it's negative. But if *you* didn't do it and if you *wouldn't* do it, which is more important, then there's not *heavy* negative karma in eating meat.

OK! Before the explosion comes...! "*Well if you're buying a steak in a supermarket, you're ordering it to be killed*", that's probably the first objection that comes up!

Yeah, it's true. I'm not defending it. There's still negative karma in eating meat. If you buy lamb chops at the grocery store, then of course they are going to replace it and you can say you didn't order it, but everything is like that. You know, it's like paying taxes, some people don't like to pay taxes because they're paying for more napalm to be made, or whatever they use now. But as long as we have this human body, which is a magnet for suffering, we create negativity all the time.

At the time of the Buddha, there weren't any rules of the order, it's just as incidents came up then they created a rule for this and that. Monks would go out and beg for food and whatever was put in your begging bowl, you ate it, without discrimination.

There's even the story of the leper's thumb that fell in the begging bowl and the good monk ate it – that's an example of an extreme! But in Thailand for example, most of the time, people put meat in the begging bowl because that's considered to be the best food and they want to give the best food to the Sangha (*monks & nuns*).

*In India,
there's this expression
Namaste, y'know?
Everybody says it like
"Hello".*

*What that **means** is,*

*"I honour that place
within you where
we are one".*

*It's a prostrating to that
being's heart.*

*It really has a very deep
meaning, which is
prostrating, opening to
others: Pranam.*

*It's a wonderful tradition,
I think.*



*I was once with the
former Karmapa...*

*These two people asked
him what he thought
about meat eating
and he said:*

*“It's better to be a
humble meat eater
than an arrogant
vegetarian”.*

*What are the two
biggest, most time and
psychic consuming
things that we have
in our lives?*

*Jobs and relationships,
huh?*

*If you take away
jobs and relationships,
man,
it's a big vacation!*



You could even look at it from the three vehicles of Buddhism. With Hinayana Buddhism, you just eat what is put in the bowl, what is given. In Mahayana Buddhism we are trying to work to enlighten all beings, who have been our mother countless times, so it's a little weird eating the flesh of your mother! And the idea of Vajrayana and Tantra, the energy of meat can be transformed into the path. So, it's not a black and white issue, but it's best to be a vegetarian.

I was once with the former Karmapa, I was eating with him at the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi and there were a couple of people there. These two people asked him what he thought about meat eating and he said *“it's better to be a humble meat eater than an arrogant vegetarian”*. And the Dalai Lama, who eats meat in moderation on the advice of his Doctors, he was on a plane eating a meat dish and a Time Magazine reporter, who was also travelling, came up to him and said *“I thought good Buddhists don't eat meat?”* and the Dalai Lama replied *“I never said I was a good Buddhist”*.

Honesty is so powerful, when you go about having airs you're always going to crash, but the truth is so good in that respect.

Q. Do I really have to become a Monk or a Nun to practice Buddhism? Do I have to be celibate, do I have to give up wine to practice Buddhism?

A. No, you don't actually. We're not renouncing sex, drugs and rock 'n'roll, don't worry - We're renouncing cyclic existence, meaning that we want to emerge from it, we're renouncing suffering and it's cause y'know, we wanna transcend *that*, we wanna renounce *that*.

You might find that if you take it any spiritual path very seriously that you want to practice it all the time, if you become one of those rare beings who just *goes for it*, they really want to get out.

All a monk is for is... it's like, what are the two biggest, most time and psychic consuming things that we have in our lives? Jobs and relationships, huh? If you take away jobs and relationships, man! It's a big vacation! You have a lot of time to practice and cultivate a spiritual path.

That's all it's for. It's kinda like a full-time job, y'know? But there are enlightened beings who are lay, you know, it's not a problem. But y'know, they're good at handling the other things!

***Born in 1948, Jimi has been in and out of Tushita since 1975,
starting as a self-professed “neophyte Dharma student”,
and later becoming the Director.***

***Jimi was ordained by Lama Yeshe at Tushita in 1980.
A monk for 15 years, since disrobing he has lived permanently in
the Dharamsala area .***

***He began teaching in 1992 and has taught many times at Tushita and
elsewhere, over the years. You can expect to find Jimi teaching at
Tushita at some point in 2012, and infinitely beyond!***

Current Lama Yeshe's Stupa *transforms...*

Lama Yeshe's Stupa has done well to withstand more than 25 years of all weathers. However, the 2010 Monsoon was particularly heavy and really took its toll on the Stupa. The monsoon damage was heart-wrenching. The metal design features were dilapidated and all but falling off (*pictured below left*). The paintwork looked so weathered. The Stupa looked in a truly sorry state.

In Autumn 2010, Ven. Robina Courtin, together with a friend who was attending the Green Tara retreat, felt moved to initiate a fundraising project to help us restore, repair and make the Stupa more precious/beautiful than ever.



And in June 2011, Stage 1 of the restoration commenced. One of Tushita's resident monks, Ven Jampa, a trained thangka painter, bravely undertook the project and has put many careful hours into the restoration and repainting (*pictured above right*). At first, he was helped by a team of volunteer students to prepare the Stupa (*pictured above*) and in the later stages by a local painter who helped restore the lower sections and the statue boxes; whilst Ven Jampa completed all the finer, more intricate painting work in truly beautiful fashion.

The statue boxes housing 4 of the 5 Dhyani Buddhas had become completely rusted and worn. The transformation they have undergone is wonderful to behold: We are eagerly awaiting the rooftop metal design work to be installed at the end of December 2011 to fully complete the new statue boxes.



Currently in progress at Tushita...

Further transformations are afoot at Tushita. The area surrounding the Stupa is undergoing significant changes. The uneven walkway around the base (*pictured above right*) is being replaced by a riverstone path and a new, improved railing is being installed, enabling people to circumnambulate more safely, day and night.

The Project Vision

Thanks to Ven Robina's encouragement to *think big*, the project does not stop here. There are 3 aspects which will be further developed:

- 1. To replace one of the 5 Dhyani Buddha statues, *Ratnasambhava*, as the original was stolen 2 years ago.**
- 2. Newly improved and abundant lighting.**
- 3. The building of a bigger, more elaborate butterlamp house.**

We send billions and billions of thanks to all those who have contributed to this great transformation of such a precious holy relic. It is truly amazing all that has been made possible and all that is still manifesting now.

Projects

The Gompa Painting Project *laying the foundations*

Since the completion of the building of the new Gompa in March 2008, Tushita has seen a great expansion in many areas. On the fundraising front, the Gompa project has been our main focus with fundraising efforts to develop the new Gompa in several aspects, from statue projects to new teaching thrones. Since an unexpected visit by Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche in March 2009, Rinpoche has given extensive advice regarding the painting of the new Gompa inside & out. It is a spectacular array of advice which includes the 12 Deeds of Shakyamuni Buddha, 5 aspects of Lama Tsongkhapa, 3 long life deities, the 5 Powerful mantras and much, much more.



Now the conditions have finally come together for us to fully launch this project.

This year Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche has really emphasized the importance of making the space as meaningful as possible. In the case of the background features, instead of an emphasis on flowers and beautiful ornamentation, Rinpoche has advised that we replace these details with images such as the 35 Buddhas, 21 Taras and mantras, as a means for students to create more merit (*images above left*).

The last few months have been a time to lay firm foundations for the Gompa Painting Project to be inaugurated next year, in summer 2012. The first task has been to gather all the advice and develop a way to unify all the elements. Secondly, to find the right group of Gompa painters to undertake the project.

News came earlier this year of the great painting being done at Dongyu Gatsal Ling (the nunnery established and run by Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, *pictures of DGL's painters above right*), just a couple of hours drive away from Tushita. On further investigation, we discovered that the Gompa painters were a group of young Tibetans who grew up at TCV school (the Tibetan Children's Village), studied as thangka painters and gained extensive experience working on many painting projects in the Himachal Pradesh region. They were not only highly recommended for their work and conduct, but were also due to finish the DGL painting project in spring 2012. Thus we met them at a time when they were looking for their next project. So, step by step, the pieces have been falling into place almost miraculously.

To our sheer delight, the head painter, Pema Dawa, was able to meet with Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche recently at Tushita and receive direct advice on the project. Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche was impressed by Pema Dawa and his team's work. Stay tuned as details are finalised in accordance with Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche's most recent advice given in December 2011.

For further details visit www.tushita.info/projects/gompa-painting-project or see our future newsletters for further developments... If you would like more information about either of these projects, please do not hesitate to contact director@tushita.info

The 2011 Report

A big, busy, beautiful, beneficial year!

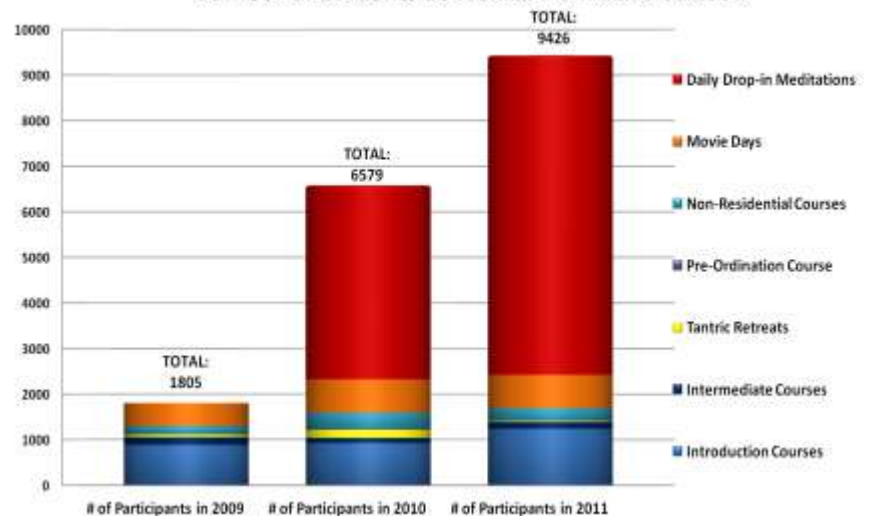


Our biggest courses ever, special guests and events galore, enormous amounts of productive work being done behind the scenes - Tushita continues to thrive.

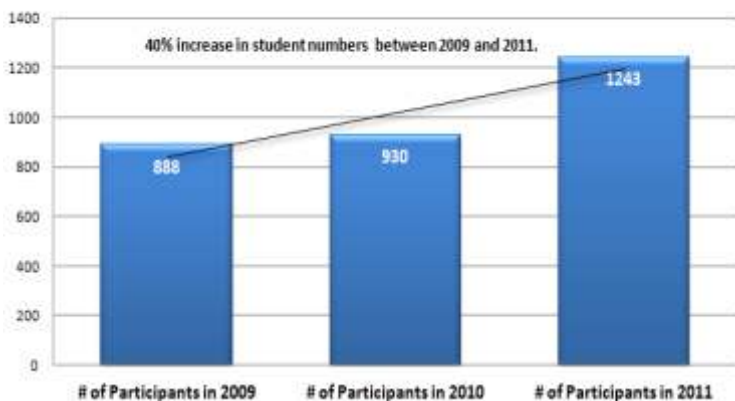
You can see that since we started keeping records in 2009, Tushita has grown a lot, particularly since we began to offer our daily guided meditation sessions in April 2010 (the jump in 2011 partly reflects the fact that these sessions ran throughout the full 2011 season, 2 months more than in 2010).

These records show a **420%** increase in people coming here to learn about Buddhism in the last 3 years!

Number of Students at Tushita from 2009 to 2011



Introduction to Buddhism Courses



Logistically though, it's the rise in student numbers on our residential courses that have made the biggest impact on us; participation on our Introduction to Buddhism courses has seen a 40% increase since 2009!



But who are the people who join our courses?

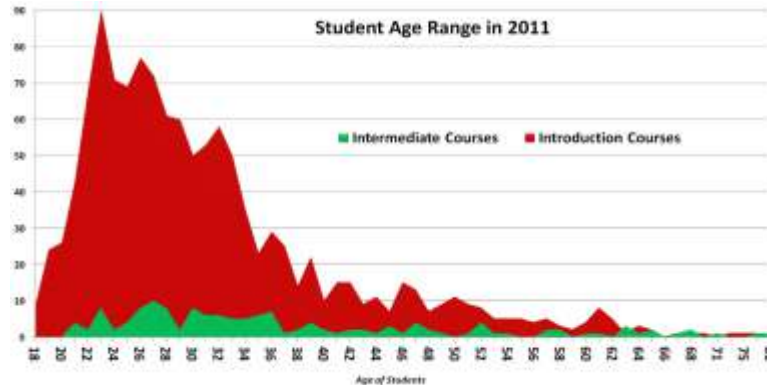
The 2011 Report

Who Are Our Students?

Our students are a very diverse group of people!

In 2011, our students were aged between 18 and 81!

This has been almost exactly the same age range in each year we've looked at, as is the pattern of the age range; while our Intermediate Level students (those who have taken one of our Introduction courses, or equivalent, before) have a very even spread of age groups (from 20 - 81), on



our Introduction to Buddhism courses there is a huge peak in students in their 20s and 30s, the highest being age 23 - just around about the time of University graduation.

Overall however, 59% of students on our Introduction to Buddhism courses were under 30 years of age, while 26% were aged between 31 - 40 and 15% were aged over 40. It's an important consideration for us, as most of our accommodation is dormitory-style and we have very few of the single-occupancy rooms that most people (and almost *everyone* over 30!) wants. The gender balance has also remained steady in the past 3 years, **59% female and 41% male**.

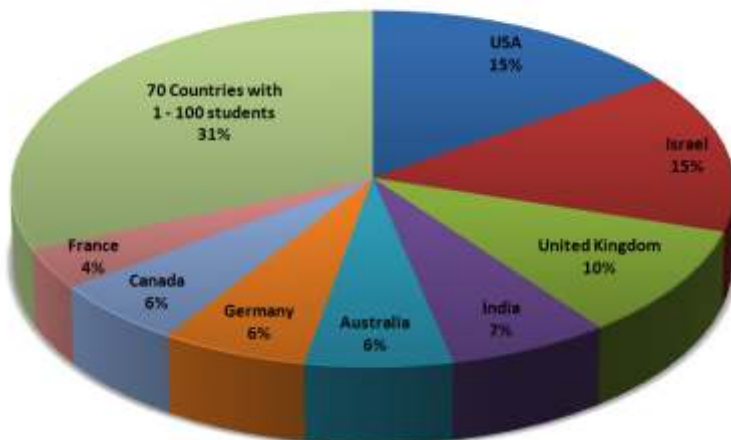


And then we get to Tushita's incredible International diversity...!

Question: How many different Nationalities have taken one of our residential courses since 2009? **Answer:** 78!

We can't list these 78 Nationalities here, but you can see a pie chart of the percentage of people from countries with more than 100 students on our courses in 2011 to the left. Students from the U.S.A. and Israel top the chart, with the U.K. and India just behind.

Percentage of Nationalities on Tushita Residential Courses
2009 - 2011

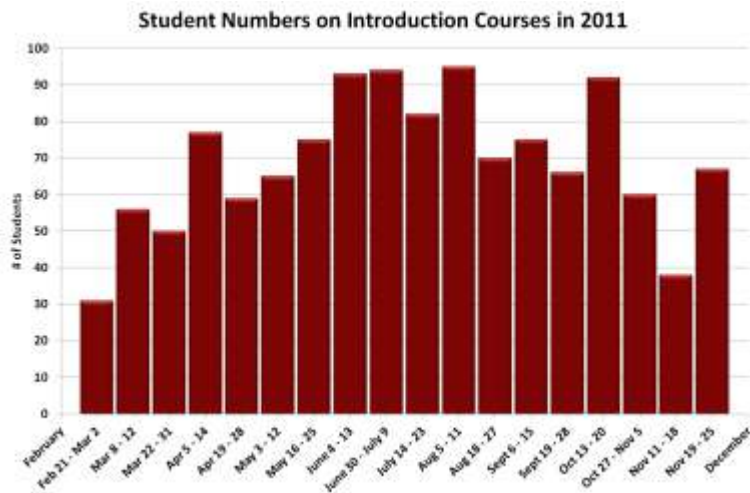


You can see all this information in full at
www.tushita.info/news/the-2011-report



The 2011 Report

A Year Full of Surprises!



And 2011 was busy in ways that we've never experienced before, and don't what to make of yet!

Until 2011, we had a fairly predictable seasonal pattern. In 2011, however, we began fairly normally and then had the most *astounding* Monsoon season! Before this year, our largest ever recorded course was in 2010, when 85 students joined a course in May, which is usually our peak month. May 2011 passed without breaking that record, however, and then from June to September - traditionally our quiet season - we had 3 courses of over 90 people, each one breaking the previous course's record!

So, our low season became our high season... it will be interesting to see what 2012 brings!

Events in Images



*The Pre-Ordination Course
with Sister Jotika & Ani Rita
February - March*



*Khandro-la and Dagri Rinpoche
hold an Incense Puja
March*



*Dagri Rinpoche Teachings
March*



*Geshe Pema Dorjee
June*



*Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo
July*



*Review Sessions
October*

A Taste Of Tushita

Apacked programme!

You can see from the 2011 report that most of Tushita's schedule is filled up with ongoing courses, and the end of 2011 was no exception. We had 3 teachers here during this time, and each on double, sometimes triple, duty!



Glen Svensson taught more than half the students in 2011, he continued at the end of this year with Introduction courses and a 2-day non-residential Shamatha retreat, which he will run again at the start of next season. On top of this, Glen also led evening Review Sessions of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings in October. Jimi Neal led 2 Introduction courses (see pages 3-5), as well as a Chenrezig retreat and Ven Robina Courtin came home to lead the Green Tara retreat and our final Introduction course of the year. We also had a guest teacher, Lee Purser, lead a 3-day

non residential course that attracted over 100 students! (*pictured above*) Bearing in mind that we had all these courses AND daily guided meditation sessions throughout, you might imagine that we were making very good use of our 3 meditation halls!



Lama Zopa Rinpoche in residence!

On the 2nd of November, we were blessed by the arrival of our Spiritual Director, Lama Zopa Rinpoche (and not to forget Ven's Roger, Holly, Sangpo and Khedrup!).



Since Rinpoche's stroke in April, attempts have been made to encourage him to cut down on public teachings and events. To this end, the main purpose of Rinpoche's stay was to spend more time on rehabilitation, but as most students of Rinpoche's will know, wherever Rinpoche sees greater benefit in teaching, he will! And so in the 2 months of his stay, Rinpoche led Lama Chopa Puja's (both here and at the amazing Hindu temple in Kangra, *pictured above right*)), Incense Puja's, hosted many special guests (including Khandro-la, Dagri Rinpoche, Pari Rinpoche, Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche and Jhado Rinpoche) and conferred a Green Tara initiation. Rinpoche even found time to take Khandro-la Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche on a guided tour of Tushita, offices, dining hall and kitchen included! (*they are pictured left with our cook, Chunno*).



These activities culminated in the Long Life Puja held in honour of Lama Zopa, here on the 16th of December. You can see many photos of these events on this page, on our facebook profile and website. And for news of Rinpoche's visit from a different perspective, see page 12!

And finally, sad news...

Our beloved doggy Jangsem Kalu (more widely known as Kalu before he was renamed Jangsem - "*Enlightened Mind*" - by Lama Zopa Rinpoche in 2009) very peacefully departed this life on the morning of Sunday the 9th of October 2011. He was 13 years old and had been sick for about 2 months. He had an incredibly blessed life, filled with love and friends and snacks. He met and was blessed by many high-level practitioners and was constantly surrounded by Dharma. He was cremated next to Lama Yeshe's stupa. He is very much missed by all of us here at Tushita.



Lama Zopa at Tushita

by Venerable Roger Kunsang

Now we are in Dharamsala and the weather is perfect (to me). Rinpoche is starting a retreat with time for exercise. There are lots of monkeys around, many of them are bold, the smaller ones cute. They play in the little swimming pool Rinpoche asked to be built on the roof of his house. Rinpoche watches them with great interest and amusement.

There have been lots of self-initiations and pujas with Khandro-la, Dagri Rinpoche and a few other lamas. In between these exercises and walks there is tea and then more tea and after that another cup of tea. Rinpoche goes regularly to a natural hot spring in an isolated place below Kangra which is hard to get to. Roads are bad and you have drive through a river. The story is that this hot spring was created hundreds of years ago by three great yogis who prayed for it to happen to help heal people. The interesting thing is that when Ven. Holly takes Rinpoche's blood pressure after getting out of the hot pool it is always low, which is very good. Then after being out of the water, slowly the blood pressure increases. This happens every time, so there is something measurably good about this place. After the pool Rinpoche does some chanting, sometimes Lama Chöpa, sometimes The Diamond Cutter Sutra, the difficult chanting becomes speech therapy.

It is hard to get Rinpoche to exercise. Khandro-la is very good at it and knows exactly what is needed (which part of the body and what specific exercise is best). It is quite spontaneous and she is very innovative. It has been amazing to watch her. Since the time she flew to Australia, as soon as she heard Rinpoche had the stroke, Khandro-la has made an incredible effort to help Rinpoche, it is always her priority. In between sessions there is the "story telling," and the stories are not about this world as we know it. If you listen long enough, this concrete world we believe in starts to feel a little dreamy and slowly the world of dakinis, pure lands and spirits becomes a little more real. The stories can go on for hours. Rinpoche and Khandro-la especially like talking about things we read about but may not necessarily believe in.

Khandro-la explained to me that it is very difficult for Rinpoche to think of looking after his own body. This is something I can really relate to. I see it all the time, but much more so since the stroke. In the hospital after the stroke, Rinpoche, at the most difficult and most critical times, seemed to have not the slightest interest in his body.

He wasn't at all interested in what the doctors or nurses did to his body. Never asked any questions of the doctors or nurses about his condition. He seemed to just accept everything, getting better/not getting better didn't seem to make a difference. What was always foremost on his mind was commitments: prayers and practice, and that is the same now. All else can be left behind. Focusing on getting his body healthy isn't easy! Khandro-la says Rinpoche is always "in practice." It is rare to see someone like this even amongst high lamas, someone who's mind is never separate from tong-len, bodhichitta and emptiness. Outwardly we can see and comment on Rinpoche's great generosity with so many projects to benefit others, but it is difficult to see the real practice.

During Rinpoche's stay here, he went to visit an old friend who lives down the hill! (pictured left). This was the first time Rinpoche had met His Holiness since his stroke earlier in the year.



*This piece was written
in December 2011
by Ven Roger for his
"Life on the Road with
Lama Zopa Rinpoche"
blog, located at
www.mandalamagazine.org*

*Used with
very kind permission.*



Meet the People of Tushita



*At 72, the oldest
member of staff
is our Gardener,
Mr Singh.*

*Mr Singh speaks
only a little English,
so through an interpreter
he was so kind as to tell us
something about his life.*

*A series of interviews
with members
of our
community*

Our Mandala

Chattar Singh (a.k.a. "Mr Singh")

I ask Mr Singh to tell me something about his life, and he laughs and replies *"What to say? just working, working, working!"*. His official job title here is Gardener, but Mr Singh has many other small tasks around the centre, for example attending to the dish-washing area, co-ordinating the set-up for the Picnic Lunch we have at the end of each course (*weather permitting*) and bravely preventing the monkeys from eating the flowers! Mr Singh also has a rather unique gardening style, and does like Extreme Pruning, meaning that Tushita's shrubbery is often slightly more bonsai than bushy!

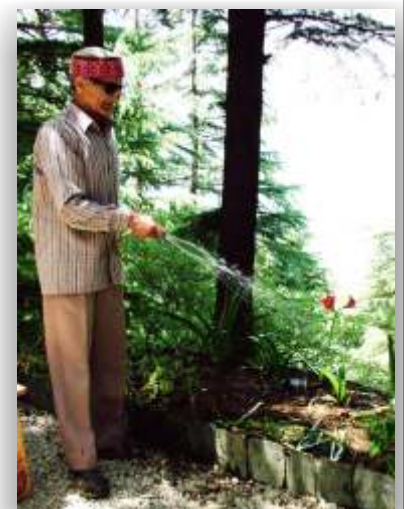
As is not uncommon here, Mr Singh isn't exactly sure when he was born, but he is confident that he's about 72 years old, making his year of birth 1939. He was born into a Hindu family in the local village of Dharamkot, where he lives today. He hasn't lived here all his life, however. His family moved to the neighbouring state of Punjab when he was a child, and he spent much of his early life in the cities of Pathankot and Amritsar, where he was a shop worker and also drove a rickshaw.

His 22nd year was a memorable one – he both got married to Misro (making this their 50th year of marriage) and joined the Indian Army. During his time in the Army, his job was in Munitions dispatch, delivering "rifles and bullets" to Army bases throughout the India-Pakistan border region. In this capacity, Mr Singh was also involved in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War. According to Wikipedia, *"although this war lasted only 13 days, it saw the highest number of casualties in any of the India-Pakistan conflicts and directly led to the formation of the independent state of Bangladesh"*. I ask Mr Singh if he has any particular memories of this time, but he dismisses the question with a chuckle and a head wobble, *"no memories"*.

Shortly after the 1971 war, he began to have some problems with his leg and he retired from the Army for medical reasons. After a period of once more becoming a Rickshaw-Wallah in Amritsar, he and Misro returned to Dharamkot to raise their family. Mr Singh continued to drive a Rickshaw and work in shops in the local area until a friend recommended him for a job at Tushita in 1999, making him the second-longest serving employee currently at Tushita. Mr & Mrs Singh now have 8 children (5 daughters and 3 sons), 11 grandchildren and 1 great-grandson and live in a lovely house nearby with 2 of their sons, one granddaughter and a dog called "Naughty"!

Last year Mr Singh had surgery to remove cataracts from both eyes, which was very successful, and he is still in excellent general health, with no plans to retire. At the time of our interview we are in our winter break and there are no students here; Mr Singh tells me *"I like it when there are courses running, but I don't like it when it's quiet"*. I ask him why and he answers that in the Army there were always lots of people around and in this sense *"Tushita is just like the Army"*.

A few memories after all...



Life Begins at 40!



HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY!

In 2012 Tushita will be celebrating 40 Years of Spreading the Dharma

Our 2012 program includes Courses on
Introduction to Buddhism, Kalachakra, Mahamudra, Mind Training, The Heart Sutra and Peaceful Living & Dying with
Ven. Tony Beaumont, Ven. Nangyel, Andy Witreich and Glen Svenson
 and Group Retreats on
Kalachakra, Nyung Nays, Medicine Buddha, Green Tara & a 3-Month Vajrasattva Retreat
 Join our year of celebration!

TUSHITA
 Meditation Centre

McLeod Ganj, India: Home-in-Exile of HH the Dalai Lama

www.tushita.info

On October 9th 1972, Lama Yeshe bought the house and property that were to become Tushita.

In October 2012, we plan a series of special events to mark our 40th birthday.

Join us as we celebrate and dedicate the merit of Tushita's *unbelievable* work in the past 40 years

and plant seeds of future Dharma practice together!

See our website for news and updates as they are confirmed, and keep October free in your diary!



What's

IN SPRING/SUMMER 2012

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM COURSES

February 29 - March 7

(8-day course)

*His Holiness the Dalai Lama will teach locally
on the morning of March 8th!!*

March 13 - 22

March 27 - April 5

April 10 - 19

April 24 - May 3

May 7 - 16

May 22 - 31

June 11 - 20

July 3 - 12

During the teaching days of our Introduction to Buddhism courses, experienced teachers explain Buddhist philosophy and meditation from a modern perspective.

Topics include: the mind and emotions, karma, rebirth, love and compassion, and the nature of reality. The daily schedule combines teachings with various styles of meditation and discussion groups.

10-day courses end with a two-day intensive meditation retreat to give you the chance to familiarize yourself with and gain insight into the topics that were covered in the teachings. Most importantly, you will learn how to apply these Buddhist techniques to increase peace and happiness in your daily life!

PLEASE NOTE:

*All phenomena
are subject to change!!*

On this Season?

WE ARE HAPPY TO OFFER THE FOLLOWING COURSES AND RETREATS

Intermediate Level Courses

For those who have already taken our 10-day Introduction course (or equivalent)

HARMONY IN KALACHAKRA

FEBRUARY 6 – 13

with Andy Wistreich

Introduction to Kalachakra Tantra: How to harmonise the outer & inner elements and develop universal responsibility.

THE GELUG TRADITION OF

MAHAMUDRA

MARCH 14 – 22

with Glen Svensson

Study and meditation on the conventional and ultimate natures of the mind.

THE EIGHT VERSES OF

MIND-TRAINING

MARCH 28 – APRIL 5

with Ven. Tony Beaumont

A means for directing the mind to constructive patterns of thinking.

PEACEFUL LIVING,

PEACEFUL DYING

APRIL 11 – 19

with Ven. Lobsang Namgyel

When we meditate & think about death, the preciousness of life becomes sharper.

WISDOM & COMPASSION

The Seven Point Mind Training

APRIL 25 – MAY 3

with Glen Svensson

The practice of *lojong* enables us to fully awaken our mind and to open our heart.

THE HEART SUTRA

MAY 8 – 16

with Glen Svensson

The essence of the Perfection of Wisdom teachings, describing the nature of reality and how to cultivate this wisdom.

Short, Non-Residential Courses

Two-day Meditation courses held in silence. The schedule runs from 9am to 5pm.

SHAMATHA RETREAT

with the Four Immeasurables

Led by Glen Svensson

MARCH 24 - 25

APRIL 21 - 22

JUNE 2 - 3

Annual Tantric Retreats For Established Buddhist Practitioners
(Those who have Taken Refuge & have a firm grounding in Lam Rim teachings)

KALACHAKRA SIX SESSION GURU YOGA RETREAT

FEBRUARY 16 – 27

Led By Andy Wistreich

Open only to Buddhist practitioners who have received the Kalachakra initiation.

INTENSIVE SEMINAR FOR PRACTITIONERS OF HIGHEST YOGA TANTRA

MARCH 1 – 7

Led By Andy Wistreich

Open only to Buddhist practitioners who have received an H.Y.T. initiation (any deity)

A SERIES OF 8 NYUNG NAYS

MAY 19 – JUNE 5

Led By Venerable Tony Beaumont

OUR ANNUAL 3-MONTH VAJRASATTVA RETREAT

JUNE 23 – SEPTEMBER 25

www.tushita.info

Ongoing Drop-In Events

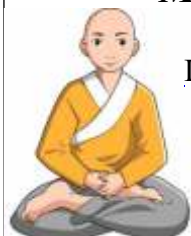
From February to November

DAILY GUIDED MEDITATION

Monday - Saturday

9:15 - 10:15am

Led by an experienced student, followed by an optional Q & A. All welcome, no need to register!



OUR EXCELLENT LIBRARY

Monday - Saturday

(Office Hours)

We welcome you to our excellent library, with books and items for loan and sale.



MOVIE DAYS

Mondays & Fridays at 2pm

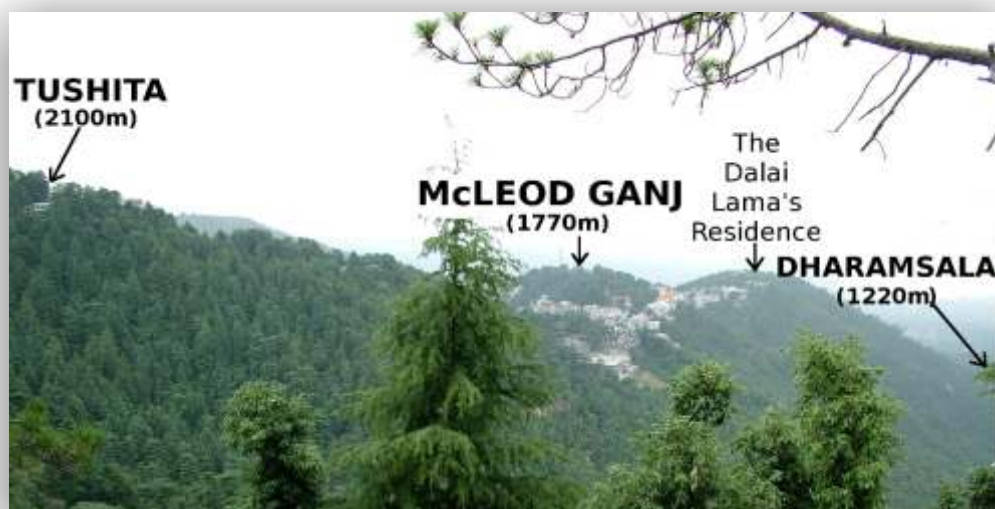
On Mondays & Fridays at 2pm we screen movies and documentaries of Buddhist interest, followed by chai and optional discussion.

You don't have to register, just come and enjoy!

On Mondays, we show 2 titles from the FPMT's "*Discovering Buddhism*" series, while on Fridays we show a variety of Dharma movies.

Titles we often show include: "*The Unmistaken Child*", the documentary tracking the discovery of Geshe Lama Konchog's reincarnation; "*Kundun*", Martin Scorsese's bio-pic of the early life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; "*Brilliant Moon*", a beautiful documentary about Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche; "*Cave in the Snow*", a documentary about the 12-year Himalayan retreat of British Nun, Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, and many more.

See our online calendar of events for specific schedule information.



We hope you can join us soon on the blessed hill!

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Himachal Pradesh,
India 176219

Tel: (01892) 221866 /
8988160988

**Office & Library
Opening Hours:**

9:30 - 11:30am

a break for lunch, then...

12:30 - 4pm

(Closed Sundays)

Or visit our very
informative website:

www.tushita.info

