

# HAYAGRIVA NEWS



The Newsletter of Hayagriva Buddhist Centre

Hayagriva Buddhist Centre ~ 64 Banksia Terrace, Kensington, Western Australia 6151 ~ Telephone (office) - (08) 9367 4817 ~ welcome@hayagriva.org.au

August - September 2012

## Geshe Sonam arrives in Perth

On the 2 June 2012, Geshe Ngawang Sonam touched down in Perth and was met at the international airport by HBC and HMT sangha and students.

Geshe-la made his way straight to Gompa where he was escorted in with traditional incense and smoke. Excited students lined the way. Geshe-la spent some time looking at the altar before doing prostrations and seating himself. There were many warm smiles to all.

After Body, Speech and Mind were offered by John Waite, John welcomed Geshe Sonam and Matt Whiston (Geshe-la's translator) to Hayagriva Buddhist Centre. Geshe Sonam gave a short talk to the audience. Sweet auspicious rice and masala chai were offered to all (thanks to Chandra and Cindy). Students were then able to offer khatas.

Although not looking in the least tired after a very long journey from India, Geshe Sonam joined the students in circumambulating the centre before making his way to his new residence at number 62, where he rested.



Later that day, Geshe-la and Matt went for a walk and were not home by dark - I believe the lure of good coffee shop had proven too strong.

The SPC in particular, would like to thank Ven Dondrub for all his guidance, time and energy that ensured the long-awaited arrival ceremony was done in the correct traditional manner. All went very well.

On the next day, Sunday, a dinner was held at the centre for Geshe Sonam. This was well attended and many students talked with Geshe-la.

Please find an interview with Geshe-la further on in the newsletter.

Welcome ceremony for Geshe Sonam. Photo by John Goldsmith

## Venerable Dondrub to take up Residence at Buddha House in Adelaide

We have just received advice from Kyabje Thubten Zopa Rinpoche that it would be beneficial for Ven Dondrub to teach at Buddha House in Adelaide. This is a good lesson in impermanence for us all; we have been very blessed to have Ven Dondrub teaching here for so long.

Ven Dondrub will obviously carry out Rinpoche's advice but he will also have mixed feelings about leaving Perth where he has many friends and students.

Buddha House has had several obstacles arising over the last few years and we would certainly welcome any action that can help them turn things around for that centre. Ven Dondrub's presence will mark a turn of good fortune for them and he will no doubt be greatly appreciated.

We are very grateful for his long and enthusiastic support for the centre and will miss his presence here greatly...



Venerable Dondrub offering rice jewels to Swayambhunath stupa

## PROGRAM - AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER

### Discovering Buddhism - How to Develop Bodhicitta with Venerable Dondrub

7:30pm, 8 August - 19 September 2012



Bring your family and friends to this course on Bodhicitta – the wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others. It is at the heart of Buddhist Mahayana Practice. Experience the Buddhist meditations and instructions that enable us to develop our good heart, innate qualities of loving kindness and compassion. His Holiness the Dalai Lama said: ‘There is no more virtuous mind than Bodhicitta, there is no more powerful mind than Bodhicitta, there is no more joyous mind than Bodhicitta.’

Teaching mudra - photo by John Goldsmith

This course will be presented by our resident teacher, Venerable

Thubten Dondrub, a senior Australian Buddhist monk, who has taught at FPMT centres around the world. Venerable Dondrub is known for his powerful and explicit teachings.

Discovering Buddhism is an effective combination of teachings, readings, homework and meditation designed to give a thorough understanding of the topic. Student participants are required to make a serious commitment to the program.

This program is not designed as an academic study of Buddhism but is intended to change your life.

Retreat day 23 September 10am - 4:30pm

Cost: \$100 (Members \$90), Day Retreat \$40 (memb \$30)

### Loving Kindness and Compassion in Daily Life with Geshe Sonam

2-3:30pm Sunday 9 and 16 September

‘We need the help of loving kindness and compassion for the purpose of actualizing wisdom and eradicating suffering within oneself by renouncing the suffering of lower realm, and the suffering in this very rebirth and the experience of the tremendous suffering within the cyclic existence, only by then one is able to obtain the purpose of love and compassion, which is the wisdom eradicating suffering and causes of suffering.’ by Geshe Tenzin Zopa of Losang Dragpa Center on the occasion of 1st year anniversary of Chief Reverend Damananda, Brickfield, 22nd August 2007

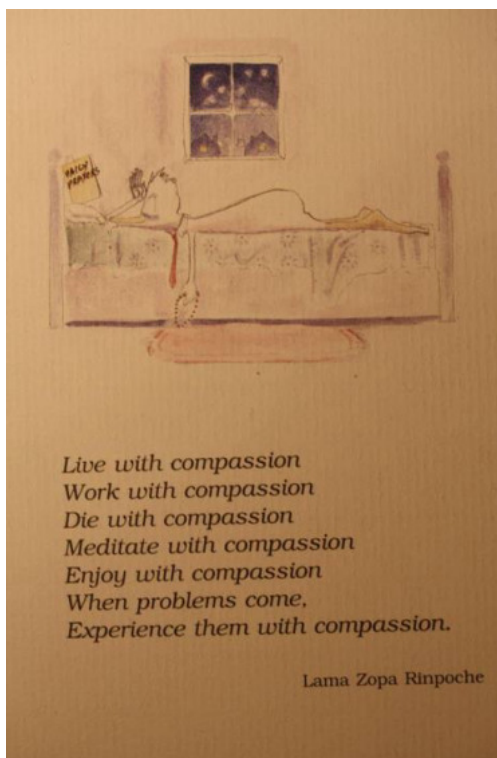


“Maitreya Buddha is the embodiment of loving-kindness. Throughout the entire universe, peace comes from the good heart, from loving-kindness. - Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Photo by John Goldsmith

### Four Noble Truths with Geshe Sonam

2-3:30pm Sunday 5 August - 2 September

‘Shakyamuni Buddha taught four noble truths: the truths of suffering and the cause of suffering, and the truths of cessation of suffering and the path to the cessation of suffering. We must recognize and remove the first two and realize through practice the second two. We can understand this deep subject by considering the simple example of physical illness. When we are sick, we suffer, and look for the underlying cause - a disease or other disorder. When we realize that the illness is curable we see that our suffering can cease and seek treatment - the path to the cessation of this suffering.’ Excerpt from The Graduated Path to Liberation by Geshe Rabten Rinpoche.



from Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Facebook page

### FPMT Australia 5th National 10 Day Lam Rim Meditation Retreat

7-17 October 2012 Kangaroo Island, SA

A monk for over 30 years, Venerable Dondrub is one of FPMT's senior western teachers. He has led many of the famous one month Lam-rim courses at Kopan in Nepal. His guided meditations on the Lam-rim over ten days are powerful catalysts to bring about deep, effective change in our hearts and lives.

De-Tong Ling is a developing retreat centre on Kangaroo Island in South Australia. On 1300 hectares of remote wilderness, its natural setting offers abundant silence, pure air and water, with long views out to sea. October is a time of spring wildflowers and mild weather. Accommodation ranges from camping to four stars.

NB – this 10 day retreat fulfills the retreat requirement of the ‘Discovering Buddhism’ course.

See [www.detongling.org](http://www.detongling.org) or contact [info@detongling.org](mailto:info@detongling.org) for details

**Film night 17 August 7:30pm** - pencil it in your diary or electronic device! More details to come via ‘e-news’. If you would like to sign up, send an email to [welcome@hayagriva.org.au](mailto:welcome@hayagriva.org.au) requesting to be added to the e-news mailout.

## Wheel of Life - Palliative Care Support Group

### Ven Chodron's Vision to Become a Reality

The Wheel of Life Palliative Care Support Group is a social outreach initiative of Hayagriva Buddhist Centre. The Founder of Wheel of Life is Venerable Losang Chodron, who is now based at our sister Centre, the Hospice of Mother Tara in Bunbury, WA. However, Ven Chodron retains close links with Wheel of Life, and is our Spiritual Advisor.

Over the last eight years, we have found that our most useful role is to provide training in various aspects related to dying, such as preparing for our own death, caring for the dying, the death process, loss and grief. Some of the key aspects of the program are collected together on our website, [http://hayagriva.org.au/?page\\_id=9](http://hayagriva.org.au/?page_id=9) The service we offer is designed to be suitable and acceptable to all, although the principles we follow are the Buddhist values of loving-kindness, compassion and wisdom.

Following Ven Chodron's vision, it has always been our intention to also create a hospice, and the following points summarize the current version of our model for the Wheel of Life Hospice, which would operate under the auspices of the Hayagriva Buddhist Centre:

#### Model for a Buddhist Hospice

1. The Hospice would provide a peaceful and supportive environment that allows Buddhists of all traditions to maintain their spiritual practice (or have it done on their behalf) in the period leading up to their death.
2. The Hospice would initially have one bed for patients.
3. The Hospice would have self-contained 'units' for (a) the Resident Carer and (b) for family and/or spiritual friends of the patient.
4. The Hospice would not be responsible for the medical and nursing care of the patient; that would be the responsibility of the patient's family.
5. The Hospice would be located in the Perth metropolitan area, to allow easy access to hospitals, and to be easily accessible by in-house palliative nursing groups such as Silver Chain, and/or doctors.
6. The Hospice would be managed by a Board (long-term governance), a Management Team (short to medium term operations), and a Resident Carer (daily activities at the Hospice) and would rely on a team of Volunteers for hands-on support.

#### How the Model Was Developed

The current model for a hospice has been developed over a year or so, and has had input from the fifty people on our mailing list, from our Resident Teacher Ven Thubten Dondrub, from the Director of our Centre, Mr John Waite, and other senior students. We have studied the models used at several other FPMT centres, especially Karuna Hospice Service and Amitahba Hospice Service, also Tara Home and Cittamani Hospice Service.

We have spoken with Ecie Hursthouse. We have visited community hospices, the Murdoch Community Hospice and the Busselton Hospice. Two Wheel of Life members have volunteered at Murdoch Community Hospice.

However, as you will see from our proposed model, we would like to try something different, in an attempt to provide the conditions for dying people to maintain their practices or have them done on their behalf, to the end. Our intention is to make the facility open primarily to Buddhists of all traditions, and to non-Buddhists if appropriate.



Venerable Losang Chodron

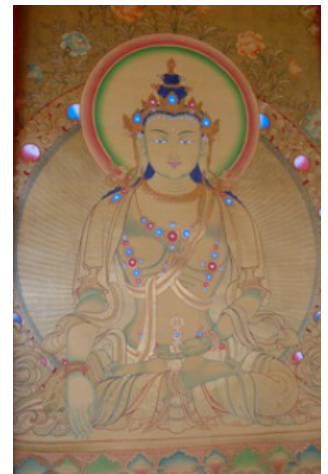
Len Warren, on behalf of the Wheel of Life Management Team Rinpoche Gives Green Light for Hospice Project. Buddha Mitrugpa Volunteers from the Wheel of Life Palliative Care Support Group currently offer companionship, emotional and spiritual support for the very sick and dying and their carers. Members of the group run seminars, discussion groups and training courses, and make home visits. Also, following Venerable Chodron's vision, it has always

been our intention to create a hospice. Recently, we approached Kyabje Thubten Zopa Rinpoche for his advice on our plans, and in late April, we received some good news. In relaying Rinpoche's reply, Claire Isitt, Centre Services Director at FPMT International, said that "Rinpoche is happy to do prayers for the success of the Hospice Project." Rinpoche has also suggested that we have the name of a buddha in the name of the hospice so that "people dying at the hospice (or under the care of the hospice service) can think that they are in this Buddha's pure land, and think: I am being taken care of in Buddha Mitrugpa's Pure Land - as having this thought is very good when you die!"

"Therefore," says Rinpoche, "the name of the hospice should be Pure Land of the Indestructible Buddha."

#### Pure Land of the Indestructible Buddha "The Pure Land Hospice"

Mitrugpa, also spelt Mitugpa, is a form of the buddha Akshobhya, who is one of the five Dyani buddhas. Mitrugpa is known as the "Indestructible Buddha" or the "Unshakable One" or the "Unmoving Diamond Buddha." Mitrugpa transforms ignorance and stupidity into the wisdom of the all pervading awareness. Meditation upon him purifies mainly karmic imprints left by harmful actions in this and previous lives. The vajra or dorje in his right hand represents the knowledge of conventional and ultimate reality. According to one scripture, a monk wished to practice the Dharma in the eastern world of delight and made a vow to think no anger or malice towards any being until he attained enlightenment. He duly proved "immovable" and when he succeeded, he became the Buddha Akshobhya.



Buddha Mitrugpa

Rinpoche said in Teachings from the Vajrasattva Retreat that Mitrugpa is "very powerful in degenerate times for purifying negative karma, particularly the negative karma of having broken vows, such as the Eight Mahayana Precepts, lay vows or the vows of nuns and monks."

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During Rinpoche's Teachings and Mitukpa Initiation in Taiwan in 2007, he said: "Doing Mitukpa practice is unbelievably powerful. If you merely see the Mitukpa mantra at the time of death, you will purify the very heavy negative karmas of the five uninterrupted negative karmas (having killed father, mother or an arhat, harmed Buddha, caused disunity among the Sangha). You also purify the very heavy negative karma of having abandoned the holy Dharma."

Len Warren, on behalf of the Wheel of Life Management Team

# August 2012

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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		<b>1</b> <i>Gentle Hatha yoga</i> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <i>Yin Yoga and Meditation</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>4 Close Placement</b> 7:30pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>2</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <i>Vinyasa Yoga 2</i> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman <i>Medicine Buddha Puja</i> 7:30pm - 8:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>3</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <i>Vinyasa Yoga 2</i> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman <i>Medicine Buddha Puja</i> 7:30pm - 8:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>4</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Busy Bee</b> - 9:00am - 11:00am Wheel of Life: <i>Prayers for the Deceased</i> 2:00pm - 3:00pm	<b>5</b> <i>Sunday Meditation</i> 10:00am - 11:00am - Ven Dondrub <b>4 Noble Truths 1</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam
<b>6</b> <i>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</i> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Lewanna Newman <i>Meditation</i> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>7</b> (Venerable Drolma on retreat) <i>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>8</b> <i>Gentle Hatha yoga</i> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <i>Yin Yoga and Meditation</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 1</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>9</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <i>Vinyasa Yoga 2</i> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman	<b>10</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> (beginner / general) - 8am-9am <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter <b>Dharma and Cake with Geshe-la - discussion group</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm	<b>11</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> (beginner / general) - 8am-9am <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter <b>Dharma and Cake with Geshe-la - discussion group</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm	<b>12</b> <i>Sunday Meditation</i> 10:00am - 11:00am - Ven Dondrub <b>4 Noble Truths 2</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam <b>Guru Puja</b> 4:30pm - 6:30pm - Ven Dondrub
<b>13</b> <i>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</i> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Lewanna Newman <i>Meditation</i> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>14</b> (Venerable Drolma on retreat) <i>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>15</b> <i>Gentle Hatha yoga</i> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <i>Yin Yoga and Meditation</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 2</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>16</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <i>Vinyasa Yoga 2</i> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman	<b>17</b> <b>Film Night</b> 7:30pm	<b>18</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter Wheel of Life Study Group: <i>Everything comes from the Ming through Labelling</i> 2:00pm - 4:00pm	<b>19</b> <i>Sunday Meditation</i> 10:00am - 11:00am - Ven Dondrub <b>Ganden Lha Gyama</b> 11:30am - 1:00pm - Ven Dondrub <b>4 Noble Truths 3</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam
<b>20</b> <i>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</i> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Lewanna Newman <i>Meditation</i> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>21</b> (Venerable Drolma on retreat) <i>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>22</b> <i>Gentle Hatha yoga</i> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <i>Yin Yoga and Meditation</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 3</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>23</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <i>Vinyasa Yoga 2</i> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter	<b>26</b> <i>Sunday Meditation</i> 10:00am - 11:00am - Ven Dondrub <b>4 Noble Truths 4</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam <b>Guru Puja</b> 4:30pm - 6:30pm - Ven Dondrub
<b>27</b> <i>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</i> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm - 7:00pm Lewanna Newman <i>Meditation</i> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>28</b> (Venerable Drolma on retreat) <i>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>29</b> <i>Gentle Hatha yoga</i> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <i>Yin Yoga and Meditation</i> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 4</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>30</b> <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <i>Vinyasa Yoga 2</i> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman	<b>31</b> <i>Medicine Buddha Puja</i> 7:30pm - 8:30pm Ven Dondrub	<b>1/9</b> (Big Busy Bee for Council Pickup) <i>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</i> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter Wheel of Life: <i>Prayers for the Deceased</i> 2:00pm - 3:00pm	<b>2/9</b> <i>Sunday Meditation</i> 10:00am - 11:00am - Ven Dondrub <b>4 Noble Truths 5</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam

# September 2012

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<b>3</b> <b>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</b> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman <b>Meditation</b> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>4</b> <b>Meditation</b> resumes 10:00am - 11:00am Venerable Drolma <b>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>5</b> <b>Gentle Hatha yoga</b> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <b>Yin Yoga and Meditation</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 5</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>6</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>7</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>8</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter <b>Yamantaka Self-Initiation</b> 2:00pm - 7:00pm - Ven Dondrub (initiates only)	<b>9</b> <b>Sunday Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Ven Dondrub <b>Loving Kindness and Compassion in daily Life 1</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam
<b>10</b> <b>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</b> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman <b>Guru Puja</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm Owen Cole	<b>11</b> <b>Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Venerable Drolma <b>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>12</b> <b>Gentle Hatha yoga</b> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <b>Yin Yoga and Meditation</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 6</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>13</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>14</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>15</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter <b>Wheel of Life Study Group: Disease is Just a Label</b> 2:00pm - 4:00pm	<b>16</b> <b>Sunday Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Ven Dondrub <b>Loving Kindness and Compassion in daily Life 2</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm - Geshe Sonam
<b>17</b> <b>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</b> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman <b>Meditation</b> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>18</b> <b>Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Venerable Drolma <b>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Lam-Rim</b> 7:30pm - 9:00pm - Geshe Sonam	<b>19</b> <b>Gentle Hatha yoga</b> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <b>Yin Yoga and Meditation</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Discovering Buddhism: Developing Bodhicitta 7</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>20</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>21</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>22</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter <b>Dharma and Cake with Gesheha - discussion group</b> 2:30pm - 4:00pm <b>Medicine Buddha Puja</b> 4:30pm - 6:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>23</b> <b>Sunday Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Ven Dondrub <b>DB Retreat: Developing Bodhicitta 7</b> 10:00am - 4:30pm Ven Dondrub
<b>24</b> <b>Beginner Vinyasa Yoga</b> (Beginner/General) 6:00pm-7:00pm - Lewanna Newman <b>Meditation</b> Suitable for all 7:15pm - 8:15pm	<b>25</b> <b>Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Venerable Drolma <b>Vinyasa Yoga 1 (beg/gen)</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Guru Puja</b> 7:30pm - 9:30pm - Ven Dondrub	<b>26</b> <b>Gentle Hatha yoga</b> 10:00am-11:00am - Jude Carter <b>Yin Yoga and Meditation</b> 6:00pm-7:00pm - Jude Carter <b>Teaching - TBA</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>28</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> 9:00am-10:00am - Jude Carter <b>Vinyasa Yoga 2</b> (general/experienced) 6:00pm-7:00pm Lewanna Newman	<b>29</b> <b>Hatha Vinyasa Yoga</b> (beginner / general) 8:00am-9:00am - Jude Carter <b>Beginner Yoga</b> 9:15am-10:15am - Jude Carter	<b>30</b> <b>Sunday Meditation</b> 10:00am - 11:00am Ven Dondrub <b>Geshela Teaching - TBA</b>

## **An Interview with Geshe Sonam - translation by Matt Whiston**

Jude and Rob had the pleasure of interviewing Geshe Sonam on a sunny day in June with the help of translator, Matt Whiston. Here are some of the questions we asked:

### **Geshe-la, can you tell us a little bit about your journey from Tibet to India?**

Geshe-la was born in part of Tibet called Tur, near a place called Nyenam. This was a place where Milarepa stayed and practiced. In accordance with Geshe-la's IC (passport) he was born in 1963 in this place. The Tur part means that it is the upper part of Tibet, high ground. So it is within the higher part of Tibet and the province is called Nyenam. There is a place on the border of Tibet and Nepal called Lapchi where there are caves in which Milarepa stayed and that is quite close to where Geshe-la is from. Milarepa mostly practiced near Mount Kailash and Lapchi. He spent time between those two places, being an accomplished ascetic as it were.

When Geshe-la was 5 years old he escaped from Nyenam, with his family, to Nepal. Sometimes he walked and sometimes his mother carried him. It took two weeks to get to Nepal.

They stayed at a place in Solokhumbu called Rongsa for one year as refugees waiting to enter Nepal officially. Then they stayed for another year in Rongsa, which is a sherpa district, because Geshe-la's father was a Nyingma yogi and he knew medicine quite well. The people of the sherpa district in this area are quite poor so Geshe-la's father was able to help them with divinations, pujas and medicines for their health. It is unlike this time and this area (Perth) where there are hospitals, they were quite poor. For the sick Geshe-la's father would perform pujas. After two years, they went to Kathmandu.

### **How did you become a monk?**

Geshe-la can't remember the exact year but he is pretty sure he went from Kathmandu to south India to become a monk when he was 14 years old. This was really his mother's intention and wish, to send him to Sera to be a monk.

### **How long did you study for to become a Geshe?**

Geshe-la studied from the time he entered the monastery at the age of 14, in 1977 until 1995, the year he took his Geshe examination (18 years!). That is how long it took to gain his Geshe degree. So due to the poor economic situation of Sera in the 70's, unlike today where they have a school system, there was no English, no science, there was only Buddhist philosophy. From the time he entered the monastery, for three years, there was a class of learning Tibetan, how to write, grammar and so on, and this went with the study of philosophy. Similar to today where there is like a school first, then philosophy study. Then after that 3 years he put aside the learning of the Tibetan language because the philosophy study became full-on and took up all his time, around 1980.

### **Do all monks study to become Geshes?**

Geshe-la thinks that amongst the monks they all have that kind of goal to become a Geshe. Of course the bigger goal is liberation and enlightenment! They say to become a Geshe is a special, worthwhile thing, according to the monks at Sera, Drepung and Ganden. It is a special achievement. These days at Sera, Drepung and Ganden they have a system that they enter school first, before entering the intensive study. It is difficult to say of course, that all those pupils at a young age have the goal of being a Geshe. Wouldn't be able to say that because they are very young, seven or eight years old.

### **The study of Tibetan in the first few years, was that the classical Tibetan?**

That is primarily how to write one of the Tibetan scripts called ume, grammar and some poetry.

### **From your experience in Germany and a short time in Australia, with which points do you see Westerners having difficulty?**

From Geshe-la's experience observing the Western countries - Germany, Switzerland, England etc, there tends to be a lot of people living alone. This seems to cause problems for themselves. Geshe-la heard and knew that in the forties and fifties there were a lot more families living together in the west. Before 1944, 1920, 1930s, extended family, grandfather, grandmother, aunty, uncle living together very happy, happy family and after less, less, less. So even when Geshe-la was living in Germany, the Germans would say that. That prior to the war there was much more extended family with the grandparents and sometimes even the uncles and so forth living together and slowly it went to the nuclear family.

Apart from the eastern people having dark hair and the western people having fairer hair, there is not much difference from the point of view of us wanting to be mentally content and to have happiness and not want to experience problems. He thinks that if you live with an extended family you can also experience happiness and he thinks that previously that westerners also had a tradition of living with an extended family. He thinks that this is not a cultural thing, that only easterners now live with an extended family. That is not a cultural issue.

He thinks that certainly from the perspective of the young Tibetans of society, if they met someone they would check each other out and think, can we live together, do we have some feeling. Whether they marry or not is not the case, but they try to make that commitment that works for a lifetime. In dependence on those two parties checking each other out and knowing a little bit about the history, then they seem to make some kind of inner resolve or commitment to each other, to make that work. Like a pledge, it makes a stable resolve to make it work. The reason is that if one makes this commitment with other, then they are looking at from the perspective of having happiness together in this life. If they have that mutual kind of commitment and understanding, it is more likely to foster long term commitment in relationship and it extends out. Lets say the two stay together for a 100 years, then from time to time anger comes. The spouse gets angry and the partner has to practice patience. And it can be reversed. Sometimes the woman gets angry and the man has to bear that, to practice patience. Geshe-la has seen even in Tibetan community those times of difficulty arising in the relationship, but underlying that is the inner sense of commitment in the heart that has been made that is important. In the Tibetan community one or two will break up or divorce but most tend to go the distance in the relationship.

Geshe-la thinks that this may cause some kind of controversy amongst westerners but this is just his idea, his feeling. Perhaps the people who in Europe end up living alone, it is a sign that have engaged less in forgiving other, practicing patience. Perhaps that is the case. Therefore, they are quicker to anger, less easy going, that is his feeling. Anger is the same for all of us. It is going to disturb the emotion, whether we are eastern or western. I see this as the biggest trouble maker.

We are human being and we need to feel affection from others. We need to know we are loved by others. So if you spend too much time alone, it can make mental tension and in dependence of the mental tension, you can get physical problems like heart disease and so on. So the difference would seem to be that if I have tension for whatever reason if I am able to say that to you, it will release that tension because I have expressed it. That is very important because there is a big

*(Continued on page 7)*



### Director's Column - John Waite

There's a feeling of energy around, somewhere under the pile of emails needing attention, it's coming from our members, seeping through casual statements, and obvious in how much the gampa is being used, seeing the relics' tour building up. Keep it up and build on our efforts to carry out Rinpoche's advice, remember harmony and as this energy builds, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Karl Matacz, Hayagriva's new Assistant Director. He brings with him a wealth of expertise that will be keenly embraced by the centre.



John Waite -  
Director

Geshe Sonam has started teaching; good clear and detailed explanations. He's already making an effort to use English phrases here and there. It's good to see your attendance and interest.

The retreat was great; we should all do retreat more often. I'm not sure what I was retreating from most but I think it might have been mobile phones and computers. Really though; to me the purpose of retreat is to make whatever gains we can then come out charged up and ready to apply those gains to benefit others in whatever it is we have chosen to do. A big thank you has to go to Susan and Ven Dondrub for organising this retreat.

Now we have surveys to put out, policies to implement and plans to build. If you have ideas for the centre drop me a line. It's by our collective energy that we'll build the centre. To carry out those ideas we have to be able to implement them so they need to be grounded in what we are able to take on. When people step forward to work together a lot can be achieved.

### Reflections from a Retreater's Mind - Owen Cole



Owen Cole

Retreat allows us to deeply explore something we are most fascinated by – ourselves. At Hayagriva's recent annual residential retreat at Mt Helena we had the rare opportunity to sit on a cushion for up to more than a week and watch our minds and actions through the prism of the Buddhist teachings.

Ven Dondrub led guided meditations on the Lam Rim (the precise summary of the entire Buddhist path) for the first three days. Over the next four days we did our own Lam Rim meditations, with the final part consisting of the Nyung Nay purification retreat on the weekend.

Coming face to face with the rawness of our minds is probably more effective than months on an analyst's couch. It's not

always easy and it's sometimes very uncomfortable when you see things you may have done in the past; but it is mesmerising.

It is only by removing ourselves from the everyday intrusion of family, friends, work, mobiles, the internet and electricity bills that our minds can settle enough to cut through the haze of busyness that clouds our daily lives. Sure meditating every day is useful but it is too often rushed and distracted to be really penetrative. Retreat allowed us to cut ourselves off from physical distractions and to do some serious mind work.

All we had to do was turn up for each session and sit on our cushion or chair. The food was lovingly cooked by Vajra, the rooms were comfortable, the bush setting beautiful and the atmosphere was totally conducive to mental activity.

The retreat gave us something everyone craves – a peaceful and contented mind. It would not have been possible without the work of Ven Dondrub and our Program Coordinator, Susan di Bona. Thanks guys!

### New Assistant Director - Karl Matacz

We would like to welcome Karl as our new Assistant Director. He has a wealth of business experience that is sure to benefit the centre. Just as a brief example he is a Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) currently Chief Financial Officer of Synergy, and previously Chief Executive Officer of Electricity Holding Company in Oman (3 yrs). We are very fortunate indeed.

### Hayagriva Development Day

In early August, a Development Day will be held to plan the future of Hayagriva over the next 1, 5 and 10 years. Your contributions and ideas are most welcome. When writing down your thoughts, ideas and aspirations for the future of Hayagriva, please include how your ideas can be measurable and achievable. Place your written submission in John Waite's pigeon hole before the first weekend in August.

### Membership

Hayagriva would like to extend a warm welcome to new and renewing members: Dion Marney, Terrie Ivanhoe, Zetta Traill, Richard Lai, Felicity Westcott, Terry Hutchinson, Tuong Nguyen, Sau Chee Chiew, Oi Loon Lee, Paola Barraza, Yuen Ling Loke, Greg Carr and Noel Smith.

Members of HBC are eligible for discounts on some courses and merchandise and can borrow books from the library.

## Hayagriva Buddhist Centre

**Spiritual Director:** Kyabje Thubten Zopa Rinpoche.

**Resident Teacher:** Geshe Sonam and Ven. Dondrub

**Sangha:** Ven. Losang Chodron & Ven. Thubten Drolma.

**Director:** John Waite. **Assistance Director:** Karl Matacz

**Spiritual Program Coordinator:** Susan di Bona.

**Meditation & Puja Leaders:** Ven. Thubten Dondrub, Ven. Thubten Drolma, Greg Carr, Owen Cole, Dave Webb, Christine Turley, Jude Carter, Rob & Kirsty

**Secretary:** Cindy Armstrong. **Office Manager:** Pat Moss.

**Treasurer:** Ling Lee. **Librarian, PR:** Marlene Robins

**Executive Committee:** John Waite, Susan di Bona, Cindy Armstrong, Ling Lee, Pat Moss, Marlene Robins & Karl Matacz.

**Wheel of Life Hospice Service:** Len Warren.

**Building and Grounds Coordinator:** Paul Turner.

**Gompa Care:** Lorna Carroll.

**Teacher Care:** Felicity Westcott & Sandy Willoughby.

**Welcome Volunteers Roster:** Pat Moss (Acting)

**IT and Website:** Mike Glance & Geoff Hitchmough.

**Membership Coordinator:** Heike Behrbohm.

**Hayagriva Shop:** Lewanna Newman.

**Newsletter:** Jude Carter (Editor) & Wee Kee Ng (Layout).

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