

Friends of Nityananda Institute

2006
Year End
Report

LAMA WANGDU RINPOCHE VISIT

As 2006 began, we were in the midst of an extended stay by Lama Wangdu, who presided over the Marchungma initiation with Swami Chetanananda at the winter retreat. Marchungma is the inner form of Vajravarahi, the red goddess who represents the kundalini energy. The initiation was powerful and the attendance was unprecedented—about 200 people received it.

Monica O'Neal oversaw the preparations and the very elaborate set up in the meditation hall, including the Marchungma initiation mandala inside a tent and canopy, a three dimensional Mount Meru mandala, a Mount Meru mandala of flowers, and an elaborate offering of the five senses in front of the Marchungma mandala tent. In both Hindu and Buddhist cosmology, Mount Meru is the center of the universe.

Laura Modena designed and masterminded the construction of the main Mount Meru mandala, complete with rings of surrounding mountains and lakes. The central mountain was constructed from six layers of paper mache topped by a hand-beaded tree of long life. The base of the mountain was a large circular



chocolate cake (delicious!) decorated in gold leaf, painstakingly rendered by Lani Baker. The mandala, representing the outer offering of the entire universe, was placed in the center of the room in front of the teaching stand.

During his visit, Lama Wangdu also finished giving Swamiji important transmissions and initiations from the Padampa Sangye lineage, including Nairatma, Chakrasamvara, and Aghora Mahakala. Swami Chetanananda now holds the complete cycle of initiations from Pacification of Suffering lineage as well as other significant practices, such as Vajrakila, from Lama Wangdu.

LAMA WANGDU cont.

Lama Wangdu and Swamiji joined together for a Vaishravana puja in January with the intention of attracting prosperity for our community. Vaishravana is the protector of the north and one of the primary wealth deities of Tibetan Buddhism. For that puja, Lama Wangdu made fifty kalashans (wealth vases) that were consecrated during the ceremony, including a special kalashan for the Institute that is now on the Tibetan altar. Institute students who had kalashans were invited to bring them for “recharging,” so there was a large collection of vases at the front of the room. The puja was light and very sweet.

In April, we had a special fundraising weekend for Lama Wangdu’s monastery. On Saturday there was a gathering in the living room at which we showed the video of the consecration ceremony that occurred in November, 2004. Lama Wangdu greatly enjoyed sharing the film with everyone and the darshan afterward. At dinner that night we celebrated Lama Wangdu’s birthday, which occurs around the beginning of the Tibetan New Year.

On Sunday night, there was a public performance of the Chöd and a short talk on Chöd by Lama Wangdu. Thanks to the generosity of Institute students, he returned to Kathmandu with sponsors for all the monthly tsok pujas at his monastery and funds needed to buy texts and clothes for each of the ten monks then in residence there.



During his visit, Lama Wangdu practiced with us all the sadhanas we have learned from him: Chöd, Kusali Tsok, the Queen of Great Bliss, Troma Nagmo, Vajravarahi, and Marchungma. He spent time every day he was here doing pujas at his house for the benefit of the ashram and for all of us. We were disappointed that Rinpoche was unable to return to Portland this fall, but look forward to seeing him here sometime in the spring.

