



Nyingma Trust

Our mission: To sustain and protect the health and safety of our community of Dharma practitioners, in honor and support of their commitment to the vision of Tarthang Rinpoche and the Nyingma lineage.

2210 Harold Way, Berkeley CA 94704

www.nyingmatrust.org

510-809-1550

FALL NEWSLETTER 2010



Sail for Serenity

“Prayer is deeply nourishing to the human heart and mind; it awakens aspiration for beauty and truth, and opens inner pathways through which knowledge can manifest in our lives.”

- Tarthang Tulku



Descent from Heaven Trust Walk

EVENTS

Upcoming: Meet the Author of Mountain Dragon on Dec. 10, 2010 at 7pm and Dec. 11, 2010 at 10am

Meet Bradley Clemmons, author of *Mountain Dragon: Aspiration* and *Mountain Dragon: Fulfillment*. Sponsored by Nyingma Trust and Dharma Publishing’s Bookstore, Bradley Clemmons will read from his first volume subtitled, *A New Myth of the Enlightened Feminine*, for both an evening event with wine and appetizers and a Saturday morning reading.

This charming and spiritually engaging story tells of Jor-mo, a young child on the Tibetan-Mongolian plateau, who loses her parents at the tender age of five. Adopted by a compassionate leader of an endearing troupe of bandits, she learns martial arts and opens the doors to wisdom and talents that seem to virtually burst from her being. Courage, skill, magic and spiritual talent play a strong role in how she matures into a powerful and insightful young woman whose charisma and reputation draws people, spirits and animals alike.

Bradley will tell us the story of his inspiration for writing the books and the many layers and threads of symbolism he has woven into his epic tale. Being true to his personal commitment to our Nyingma community, Bradley has donated half of his personal royalties to Nyingma Trust.

October 29th Recap: Descent from Heaven, one of The Four Great Celebrations

Odiyan’s community performed prayers and circumambulations for wishes offered toward people around the world. The

ceremony began with heavy rain, often considered a shower of blessings, in the first hours of the morning. The profound responsibility of carrying another’s personal wish for a loved one is taken as an honor and privilege by the practitioners at the Enlightenment Stupa. As one chants, prays and walks, this energy of caring and offering emanates as a quiet stream of kindness flowing around and through the environment. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity and for the show of support and confidence that is placed in our hands by hundreds of Dharma brothers, sisters and friends.

October 29th Recap: Sail for Serenity

Sail for Serenity was a wonderful event. Thirty-five people sailed the San Francisco Bay on Seaward for three hours on an over-cast afternoon. All attendees bundled up and were ready to meet threatening rain, which fortunately never developed. The feel of the brisk salt air and the company of friends was truly a spirit-lifting experience. We ate tasty Mediterranean fare in the galley and spent time on the deck chatting and laughing. The infectious good feeling of the open air and free-spirited environment put smiles on everyone’s faces. One of the highlights of the afternoon was a meditation led by Alan Olson, Seaward’s captain, who urged us into silence and to listen to the sea and the wind, observing the play of light on the water. This deepened everyone’s experience beyond measure and truly became a highlight of the day. A small raffle and gift-giving closed the sail as we disembarked. Join us next year when we set sail again!

A GENERATIONAL CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

CAROLINE POKROP INTERVIEWS HALI NURNBERG



The Nurnberg family has a long-standing involvement with the Nyingma community. Hali Nurnberg, daughter of Doug and Toni Nurnberg, currently volunteers with the Tibetan Aid Project as the Event Coordinator. I have been working with Nyingma Trust for the past nine months, and wished to interview Hali in order to gain a more personal understanding of the organization as a whole, and particularly that of the Trust's role in caring for the sangha's long-term members.

How long have your parents been a part of the Nyingma community?

They have been involved since the early 70s. At that time there were Nyingma Institutes in both Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. They were headed by a man named Larry Simmons who developed quite a strong following in those communities. Larry suggested to my dad, who was part of the Phoenix branch at the time, that he move to Odiyan to help Rinpoche. A few years later, before my parents met, my mom found the Tucson community.

What projects have they been involved with over the years?

My dad's involvement at Odiyan was during the building of the Main Temple. He tells stories of sleeping in a barn, taming wild mustangs and capturing and removing wild boars on a regular basis. After the Main Temple was finished, my parents (who met at Odiyan) moved to Colorado to raise a family. In the 90s my dad made several trips to India to help with the World Peace Ceremony. In 2004 he moved back to Northern California to work on the development of the Ratna Ling Retreat Center where he oversaw the construction of the center, the press, and other projects such as a reservoir that

sustainably supplies the entire property with water. Two years later my mother joined him. While there she helped with the volunteer coordination and running the first retreats at Ratna Ling.

In addition to my parents, my sister joined the organization in 2004 to help on the Yeshe De press project. After three years in Berkeley she followed the press to Ratna Ling. While there she also helped with additional projects such as sewing the meditation cushions that Dharma Publishing sells. Just this year she has moved back to Berkeley to help sew prayer flags for the Tibetan Aid Project.

What is it about this organization that has inspired such dedication from your parents?

I think that, as with anyone, my parents have encountered challenges in life and I think that this community has given them the power to ride that wave of adversity. Being part of this organization has provided such a sense of purpose within their life. I remember one conversation in particular with my dad where we were talking about his future. As a response he asked me about the importance of con-

tributing positively to the world. I realized that this desire to give in a peaceful way is the foundation of our family. For my sister, it provided a sense of balance and generosity. For my mom, it gave her the ability to pursue healing on a deeper level. For my dad, it gave a strong purpose and a value of selflessness. For me, it has taught me to recognize and share the beauty and laughter that is ever present.

How is Nyingma Trust personally relevant to you and your family?

This organization and its teachings have, for my entire life, been such a defining part of my family and our relationship with the world that it would be almost impossible to separate our lives from this place. I do not attempt to capture the extent to which TNMC has given to my family, but I do know that this is where they feel they belong. And I know that my family is not the only one who feels such a deep connection. There are many individuals and families who have dedicated their lives to bettering themselves through this pursuit of the alleviation of suffering and restoration of Tibetan culture. Often this means that their only insurance for the future is the strength of our community. The work of Nyingma Trust allows families like mine and people like my parents to continue their work and the work of Tarthang Tulku with piece of mind and assurance.

What do you most hope for in your parents' future?

It is interesting to contemplate my parents' future. There is so much fear of the aging process and of the child becoming responsible for the parent that most people tend to avoid thinking about this. My parents have always been strong individuals and I can't imagine them being anything else. However, we know the body must fade. I guess my wish is that they retain strength of mind, a feeling of peace, and a sense of purpose that will nourish them to the end of this life and into the next. There is no doubt in my mind that they will live this life with every ounce of energy, love, and compassion that they possess. I cannot be anymore grateful for the example they have set for me. It is largely because of them that I am here at the Tibetan Aid Project not only to gain nonprofit experience, but with the hope of contributing positively to the world and living a life founded on the values of wisdom and compassion.

Wheel of Dharma: Planned Giving

Wheel of Dharma Society members have included Nyingma in their estate plans.

We have an Estate Planning Organizer to help you collect your important documents in one place and to clarify your distributions to loved ones and favorite causes.

Call us if you would like one sent to you.

No obligation. (510) 809-1550



I just got off the phone with my dad. He was all choked up and I could sense a great deal of trepidation in his voice. He and my mom are consoling my Nana in her hospital bed, uncertain which contrived breath may be her last. Considering the untimely passing of both my Nana's husband and daughter within the same year about a decade ago, she has understandably done all she could to avoid the personal inevitability of death, despite her many chronic ailments. Now consciously aware that she is hooked up to breathing machines and organ monitors to sustain her fragile body, she is being forced to come to terms with death's indifference and its complete infiltration of every imaginable thing that defines her.

I am scared for her too. Not for what lies on the other side but for the inner agitation and fear that is afflicting her mind. Fear caused by attachment to what is known and cherished, especially in those seemingly final moments...the tender warmth of my mother's hand, the reassuring tone of my father's words. How can one ever have enough faith to fully open the heart and just let go of it all?

What can be done to prepare for this, knowing that death often comes without warning?

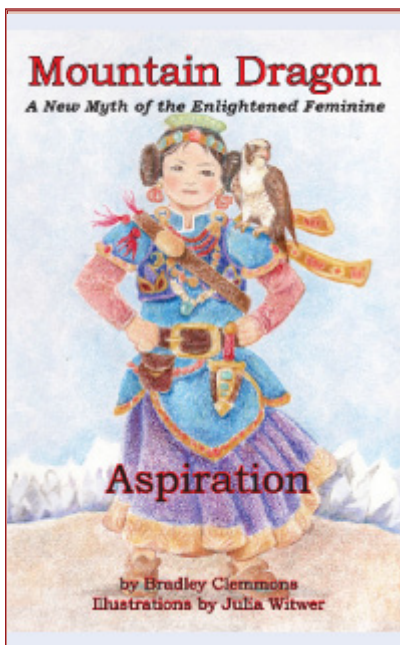
I am reminded of a recent article I read in *The New Yorker* concerning the technology of modern medicine and how we now use it to fight illness to the bitter end, often oblivious of embracing or even acknowledging the short number of days a patient may have left. It often seems as though last words aren't even as revered as they used to be, as machines now keep the body alive long after consciousness has faded. We are terrified of death, and therefore keep our distance, inventing theories of immortality or regarding it as some foreign illness that only plagues the ill-fated.

Living in a culture that incessantly emphasizes beauty and youth, we keep ourselves occupied with the 'harder, better, faster, stronger' mentality in order to distract ourselves from thinking about this all-consuming shadow that follows us from the moment we are born into this world. What is the remedy and how should it be applied within this fleeting life? This is where I am whole-heartedly sure that the Dharma comes in.

The most fundamental purpose of meditation is to prepare us to be able to consciously surrender within that very moment of death. Not only death in the final sense, but the lesser deaths that we die daily, camouflaged as shifting emotions and as the natural course of change with the passing of time. A daily meditative practice can ease our attachments to all that we experience, and

therefore make life more fulfilling since death and change are basically the only guarantees in life. Just as we do not understand what health is until we have the experience of being ill, we cannot know life without accepting death, for they are merely two sides of the same coin. I can only imagine that a life-long practice to soften these dichotomies would make the tumultuous changes within our lives not only easier to endure but also to genuinely surrender to, especially in those final moments.

While working for over a year now within the Nyingma Community, one particular thing that I have observed and greatly respect is everyone's ability to cope well with change, both within the external work environment as well as with internal personal growth. This has demonstrated to me that Dharma practices truly are a means to ease transitions, in and of themselves. It has also given me a deeper understanding of why it is so important to sustain this type of community, as Nyingma Trust strives to continuously achieve by raising money to support the health and wellness of its members. And yet, what is most striking is that the vast majority of wellbeing here is being sustained not by medical procedures and medications, although sometimes necessary, but by lifelong commitments to developing an open heart through work and practice. I can only hope that the increased acceptance and sensitivity developed here will continue to extend past community boundaries and into the hearts and minds of not only our loved ones, but all sentient beings.



HOLIDAY GIFTS

Consider shopping at the Nyingma Trust Store or coming in to Dharma Publishing's Bookstore for your holiday gift-giving needs. All of the items on our website contribute to our mission to support the community's health and safety, and all books in the Harold Way store contribute to the production of more Dharma books here and overseas.

Books, pendants, khatak-scarves, prayer flags, malas, prayer wheels and wind chimes are amongst our best sellers. You can also send a beautiful prayer card with an Odiyan scene pictured, or subscribe to our \$10 monthly offering and be included in the Four Great Celebration Prayers.

Visit <http://www.nyingmatrust.org/Store/store.html>

PERSONAL MEMOIR BY RAJEEV AGRAWAL



I close my eyes and try to look back, there is certainly a sense of nostalgia, however, accompanying it at the same time is this very discomfoting feeling of disconnect and non-recognition. My mind asks the question, “Who is he?” Although some distraction can sure be fabricated to keep this nagging question at bay for the time being, I have realized over the years that walking in this direction for too long just leads to a dead end.

Everything arises because of causes and conditions. Nothing ever exists on its own. “There has to be some higher purpose of “I”, and I will not sit idle until I find it”. This was one of the many causes that led me to the Nyingma Institute. One of the conditions that made it happen was the fact that I lost my job, which was like a fresh gust of breeze inviting me with her arms open. Even though there was considerable resistance from my family and friends as well as my own craving and insecurities regarding my career, I gravitated toward it.

I wanted to balance my spiritual and material pursuits. I made a full-fledged plan, and hoped that everything would fall into place in 6 months, the time that I intended to work as a work-study volunteer. Time is not static, is it? The plan, the calculations all made sense, but the premise on which it was standing, the basic assumption was flawed. I failed to guess correctly the extent to which living at the Tibetan Nyingma Institute as a work-study volunteer would change me and my goals in life.

The Buddha’s words describe this feeling very aptly. Suppose someone were to ask, “When the flame of a candle gets extinguished where does it go; in the east direction, west, north or the south?” Wouldn’t that be an inappropriate question to ask? It was as if all my life, all the previous rebirths were taken in account then since begin-less time. I was trying to solve a problem but the problem only existed because of my crooked view of reality. Only when we begin to rid ourselves of the self-view and try to see things as they are, an enormous lightness and peace is experienced.

Nyingma Institute – it is here that I discovered myself. It is here that the seed of Dharma took root in me and it is where I found the Noble Eightfold Path. Interaction with other community members helped me understand the meaning of compassion and how anger is a reflection of one’s own weakness and not strength. I learned that Dharma is not a short-cut formula which can be practiced by playing an intellectual game and wallowing in it. Instead, it is about forgiveness and gaining the courage to look within oneself with brute honesty. Is there a way to repay the debt that I owe to this place?

This one of a kind work-study program, and the Nyingma Institute in general, offers a conducive environment where people interested in Dharma can gather

and begin to walk on the path that leads in one direction – toward beauty and happiness. This is not to say that this is a perfect place by any standards. In my early days I was startled and disgusted to find that the very rites, rituals and superstitions that Shakyamuni Buddha was so against is practiced with brazen and almost foolish alacrity. In the name of teaching Dharma, when teachers in the evening classes shared their uninformed views or showed scanty respect to other traditions, my blood boiled. Politics, ego issues, and behavior which did not conform to my high expectations for the senior members of the Nyingma community was not a very happy situation either.

Yet, having said that, there is no doubt in my mind that the Nyingma Institute, together with the whole of Nyingma Mandala is a very sincere, precious and effective attempt to bring Dharma to the West, which is one of its many goals. Working to preserve and perpetuate the Tibetan culture, not just with the Nyingma school but within all of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Also, helping the Theravadin Mahasangha come together under the sacred Bodhi tree for the first time in 700 years and attempting to revive Buddhism in the heartland of India. Where else in the world can such a vast vision be encountered all under the same umbrella.

This is a very rare and precious opportunity that has presented itself because of our good fortune and past wholesome karmas. We must not squander it at any cost. “Pursuit of happiness” which was listed as one of the unalienable rights in the United States Declaration of Independence, may its true potential be realized. Let the Dharma spread like wildfire not just in America but in all the ten directions.

The community members of our sister organizations and projects are offered health insurance supported by Nyingma Trust activities:

Nyingma Centers (www.nyingmacenters.org)

Nyingma Institute (www.nyingmainstitute.com)

Tibetan Aid Project (www.tibetanaidproject.org)

Dharma Publishing (www.dharmapublishing.com)

Yeshe De Text Project (www.yeshede.org)

Ratna Ling (www.ratnaling.org)

Odiyan Retreat (www.odiyan.org)

Odiyan Stupa (www.odiyan.org/stupa.html)

Guna Foundation (www.gunafoundation.org)

Mangalam Centers (www.mangalamcenters.org)