



DIAMOND MOUNTAIN  
RETREAT CENTER

March 28, 2003

From the Three-Year Retreat caretaker staff -

Dear Dharma friends:

Attached please find copies of the letters received so far from Geshe Michael's Lamas who are Tibetan, in response to his request for an endorsement to be used for the upcoming publication *The Tibetan Book of Yoga*. These letters also include personal advice to Geshe Michael about the details of his spiritual life which he included with his request for this endorsement. (If you haven't read Geshe Michael's original letter, you should get a copy from [www.world-view.org](http://www.world-view.org) under the quick link "open letter" before jumping into these responses.)

There are three more Lamas who have not yet sent any response - these are His Holiness the Dalai Lama; Holy Lama Khen Rinpoche in New Jersey; and Geshe Lothar. We'll let you know if anything comes in.

All but one of the letters received was in Tibetan; they were translated by Geshe Michael. We have copies of the originals for anyone who knows or is learning Tibetan; they are quite beautiful and range from calligraphy to computer Tibetan to the shorthand Tibetan correspondence scrawl that looks a little like Arabic. The letters are presented here in the order in which they were received and opened by Geshe la. Geshe Michael says that he really wants to make all this information completely open to anyone who is interested, and encourages everyone to send in their questions or comments (which he'll review and reply to as soon as he can after the retreat boundaries open on June 6.) Geshe Michael says that he is engaging in his practice in precisely the way that - according to the teachings of Lord Buddha and the Lamas of the lineage, and his own heart, experience, and understanding - is the quickest and most powerful method for saving all living beings from suffering and bringing them to ultimate happiness.

This is exactly the path that Naropa himself followed. It is difficult and may seem unusual to many people, and is easily open to misunderstanding. As such, Geshe Michael wants to be very straightforward, to try to help prevent any such misunderstanding. Even in old Tibet, and especially in the monasteries of our tradition, it would seem that people followed this particular path only on very rare and special occasions. And so Geshe Michael feels extremely grateful for the kind understanding and support expressed in the replies received. Given that, he also says that, whatever the responses may have been, his feelings are summarized in the following poem:

All the Teachers that you have  
Are only one person:  
Lord Buddha Vajra Yogini,  
The Holy Angel of Diamond.  
They show themselves in different ways,  
To fit the different needs and levels  
Of vastly different disciples.  
And the things that some, or even one of them,  
Teach to us can often seem  
Different from another;  
Even in contradiction to each other.  
Why would She tell us  
To do opposite things?  
Because She is throwing down the challenge,  
As Lord Tsongkapa would put it:  
"Will you have the courage and wisdom  
To figure out for yourself,  
From all the differing things They say,  
The very fastest way to become  
Herself yourself -  
So you can fly to countless planets  
And save the countless dear sweet mothers  
Living there lives of nothing but torture?"

[The following endorsement, in the form of a poem, is from Geshe Thupten Tenzin, former Vice-Abbot, Director of Monastic Discipline, and Debate Master of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery.]

O monk of America, holder of the title  
Of Geshe, from Tibet's monastery of Sera Mey,  
You with your extraordinary karmic seeds,  
Full of faith, and courage –  
The one they call by the name  
Of Michael Roach; Lobsang Chunzin to us –  
You and your Dharma friends there,  
And all your students as well,  
Were able in your lives to come into contact  
With many masters of the Land of Tibet,  
And have completed extensive studies  
Of many great books of the open  
And secret teachings as well.  
You have gone through these great books  
In the proper, gradual way,  
Thinking out their contents and then  
Meditating and putting them into practice.  
And now you have composed a brief book  
On some unique teachings of the Tibetan way:  
You have written on the subject  
Of how to practice yoga, including especially  
The skill of giving love away to others,  
And taking upon yourself their pain  
Using your breath: that special method  
Of developing within oneself the qualities  
Of kindness and compassion,  
And the wish to become enlightened  
For the sake of every living being.  
And so in this poem I wish to express  
How glad I am, and welcome this effort,  
And rejoice in the good you've done.  
It is my sincere hope and prayer  
That this book will now be of great benefit  
To many people throughout the world.

(These verses have been written by myself, Thupten Tenzin, a geshe of the highest, *hlarampa* rank, from Sera Mey Monastery, on the auspicious day corresponding to February 9, 2003)

(Added note from Geshe Tenzin: I just wanted to express my gladness and greetings and rejoicing in the good of you, courageous yogi, and your disciple, your lady companion in the Dharma. Please give my regards to everyone else there as well. Signed, by the Hlarampa Geshe Thupten Tenzin, on the auspicious day corresponding to February 9, 2003. PS: Please also be advised that I have dispatched to you a small book in Tibetan, and several written in English.)

[Geshe Tenzin also signed and returned a copy of the sample endorsement we provided, in case we preferred using that instead of his poem. That document is attached here.]

[Some background info: Geshe Tenzin was Geshe Michael's first debating and logic instructor at Sera Mey, and has been a mentor ever since. He also served as one of the required Committee of Elders for Geshe Michael's ordination as a monk, 20 years ago this year. Geshe Tenzin now lives and teaches in Australia, where He gave teachings to ACI members during our tour there prior to the 3-year retreat.]

[Endorsement from Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche, Geshe Ngawang Thekchok, Vinaya (Monastic Rule) Master and Former Abbot of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery.]

(Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche's endorsement is a copy of the sample endorsement we provided, except that He has replaced the reference to Geshe Michael with: "the American Lobsang Chunzin, otherwise known as Michael Roach, who is a Geshe of the monastery of Sera Mey, and a great Master of the Two Tongues [a poeticism used for the ancient Lotsawas or Master Translators of Tibet] who has helped spread the teachings of the Buddha throughout the world." His endorsement is dated February 9, 2003.)

(Added note from Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche:)

Dear Geshe Lobsang Chunzin, Great One, [Please note that "Great one" is a standard hyperbole in Tibetan monastic correspondence and shouldn't be taken literally.] Highly Learned Upholder of the Vinaya Monastic Discipline:

This letter do I offer. It was an occasion of great rejoicing and pleasure for me to receive from you recently the news of the retreat that you have done, this effort to discipline ones inner being, and also to hear of the many holy activities you are undertaking with this same practice in order to be of benefit to others; all this, along with your notes about your personal spiritual life and history. I am very grateful.

Here too I remain well, trying in my own small way to perform some spiritual activities. All my efforts to help construct a new main temple for our monastery have borne successful fruit; and of course there are still some odds and ends that we are now finishing up.

I understand fully all the news which you sent to me, and I believe in it. How you conduct yourself, and how you think about things, are something which I am already well acquainted with, over a long period of time. And you know that I will always be praying, as best as I know how, to the Three Jewels, that all these activities which you are all undertaking for the sake of Lord Buddha's teachings may be accomplished exactly as your heart desires.

I have hope that, should you all get the time, you and a big group of your students could come to the monastery; then you'd be able to tour this new main temple that we have completed – both the structure and all its sacred contents. You could meet all the holy beings, and I know you'd really enjoy it. I feel that this temple is such that just to lay eyes upon it imparts spiritual benefit to a person; we mean it to be a testimony to the fact that our Sera Mey Monastery, this Jewel Island of Learning and Contemplation, is itself a force for the peace and happiness of the entire planet.

As you've no doubt seen from the invitation letter, the new reincarnation of Tri Yongdzin Trulku Rinpoche has arrived safely at the monastery, and is being enthroned.

I am enclosing with this letter two other items. The first is a very essential piece of instruction I have composed to urge your students on through the various traditional steps of their lifetime's spiritual practice. The second is the endorsement you requested

for the book that you have all written; I've followed your suggested format.  
That's all for now; I send you all a thousand greetings.

Offered on the 9th day of the month of  
February, from Gyalrong Khensur

[Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche's "Essential Instructions on the Steps of the Buddhist Practice":]

To the Great One, Lobsang Chunzin, a Geshe of the Monastery of Sera Mey, who is a high example of someone who has accepted the heavy burden of trying to spread the teachings of Lord Buddha in these days of darkness:

I offer this up to you.

Certainly there is no need to go outside in broad daylight and turn on a single electric bulb. Nonetheless, I felt that there could possibly be some minute benefit to all of you, sort of a small boost to your practice, if I were to write this brief, essential instruction on how to put into practice the various steps of that highest Dharma. For this is something which is needed for those of us who aspire to being a Buddhist: one who follows in the footsteps of our Teacher, Lord Buddha, the Victorious One, the great Instructor in the ways of peace, and happiness, and of avoiding all harm to others.

It's important to realize that even Lord Buddha, our Teacher, was not someone who was enlightened all along, from the very beginning. Quite the opposite: He was at first just the same as you and me, tyrannized by His own karma and mental afflictions. As a result, He was forced to take a countless number of births here in the cycle of pain, and spent an infinite number of eons undergoing the limitless suffering of this existence in general, as well as the various specific torments of each different type of being.

And then there came a day when He was able to encounter a Spiritual Guide who could show Him the path of the Mahayana: the Greater Way. He listened to the Dharma that this Guide taught, and then He examined it very carefully. When He had thus gained some small understanding of it, the teaching stole His heart away. He contemplated it even further, and suddenly it dawned on Him that taking care of what others need is the main thing - the most important thing. And with this He was able to attain the Wish for Enlightenment: bodhichitta.

Between this moment and the time of the final goal, our Teacher spent three "countless" types of eons trying to collect enough good karma to become a Buddha. And then, in the end, He attained perfect and total enlightenment.

There was only one reason for doing all this, and there could never be any other reason at all. It was to take care of the needs of a totally infinite number of living beings.

Now what does it mean to "take care of the needs of living beings"? It means working to bring about anything which could cause them help and happiness; as well as removing all their pain, and anything which might cause them harm.

We can divide others' needs into two different kinds. First there are their temporary needs - which consist of trying to achieve one of the higher forms of rebirth. Second are their ultimate needs: reaching ultimate happiness.

There is a specific method for fulfilling the temporary needs - for reaching a rebirth in one of the higher realms, as a human or a worldly god. This method requires that one study, and gain an understanding of, those steps of the path to enlightenment which are shared with people of lesser spiritual capacity.

The first of these steps is to develop within oneself a sincere attitude of taking refuge. Until you are able to do this, you are not technically even considered a Buddhist – and neither can any of the spiritual practices which you undertake be considered the practice of Buddhism.

Next you need a belief in the laws of karma and its consequences which is founded upon reasoning and understanding. Without this, you will find it difficult even to begin to do things which are virtuous, and avoid those which are not.

We spoke above about the goal of "ultimate happiness." This itself can be divided into two parts: nirvana and enlightenment. The method of attaining the former – nirvana – requires that one learn, and gain an understanding of, those steps of the path to enlightenment which are shared with people of a medium spiritual capacity.

Here first one must develop a sincere feeling of renunciation, based on the realization that all three forms of suffering [the suffering of pain, the suffering of change, and the general suffering of a mortal mind and body] really *are* suffering. Without this, you will never be able to develop the true wish to escape from this cycle of pain; nor will any spiritual practices you attempt ever actually function to bring you to nirvana.

And without the worldview of emptiness, you will never understand how to cut the very root of this cycle of pain.

Now in order to attain the ultimate happiness of enlightenment, one must learn the steps of the path for those of greatest spiritual capacity. If one lacks an understanding of these steps, and at least some actual inner experience of them, then there is no way that one could ever develop within oneself the Wish for Enlightenment – bodhichitta – characterized as it is by the two aspirations; [that is, aspiring to reach total enlightenment, and wishing to do so in order to help all living beings]. And if one lacks even the form of this Wish which is only trying to *feel* as though one has it, then you could never be counted among those who belong to the Greater Way – the Mahayana. And then no spiritual practice you attempted to do would ever be considered a spiritual practice of the Greater Way.

Therefore it is extremely important that, before you go on to higher practices, you become well-versed in all these steps of the path which are shared by both the open and the secret teachings. If you fail to prepare yourself this way first, then you are not a worthy vessel to receive initiation into the Diamond Way: the Way of the Secret Word. There is no way a person could reach either the ultimate or the worldly types of high spiritual attainments without first having their inner being brought to maturity with this kind of initiation.

Thus there are certain things that are necessary in order to undertake a practice of the Diamond Way, the way of the Secret Word, in its very quickest form: what we call the Unsurpassed Path. One must first find a Lama who is truly qualified, and then make ones inner being mature by receiving at their feet a pure initiation which includes the Four Empowerments – in a form which is certain to impart the seeds for the four holy bodies of an enlightened being.

At the time of initiation, you make a promise to keep certain vows and commitments. One then trains oneself in the Stage of Creation, which itself must include all the essential elements of the practice of transforming mundane experiences

into a path to reach the three holy bodies of an enlightened being. This and everything that follows rely upon your maintaining those vows and commitments properly.

After this, you must try to learn the Stage of Completion – the one which actually frees you. Generally speaking, the high state of enlightenment takes three countless eons to achieve, at the very quickest. If it goes slowly, then *thirty-three* such eons are required. But then, you see, there is within the secret way the sublime path of Unsurpassed Yoga. It possesses a special power to take you to this same goal *within a single human lifetime*: even within the very brief span of life which we have in the present eon of degeneration.

Now you and I, we have a chance to practice this very path. And if we can take this chance, without making any errors, then we are certainly the luckiest people alive. The very most important thing with all of this is that we absolutely must try to develop the Wish for Enlightenment within our hearts. To do this, we must follow the various methods for developing the root that lies at the very bottom of the Wish; that is, compassion. The only way to do this is to develop within ourselves a true sense of renunciation. And the only way to do this, I say to you in parting, is to develop in your heart a belief, in the laws of karma and its consequences, which is based on reasoning and understanding.

[Background info: It was Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche who headed the tremendous task of re-organizing the monks who fled from the original Sera Mey Monastery in Tibet some 40 years ago; He became the first abbot of Sera Mey in India, and is still looked upon as the senior authority at the monastery. (Holy Lama Khen Rinpoche in New Jersey occupies a very similar place of esteem at the monastery; some years ago, the entire assembly of monks unanimously elected Him to a newly-invented position of "Lifetime Director Extraordinaire" of the monastery, regardless of where He might reside.) Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche is also looked upon as the leader of Gyalrong Kangtsen: the college of Sera Mey that Geshe Michael belongs to (again, Holy Lama occupies a similar position of the college, in absentia). Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche is one of the greatest living masters of vinaya – monastic discipline – and was Geshe Michael's teacher for portions of this and the logic curriculum. He was also one of the Committee of Elders for GMR's ordination. Despite his advanced age, in recent years he toured East Asian countries and raised about one million dollars to build the new Sera Mey main temple. The young Lama whose enthronement was mentioned is the highest reincarnated Lama, or Trulku, of Gyalrong College; his former incarnation also taught Geshe Michael.]

[Endorsement from Geshe Thupten Rinchen, head scripture teacher of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery:]

The tradition of yoga, or *neljor* as it is called in Tibet - has in recent times enjoyed an ever-increasing popularity in the various countries of the world. Now in the old days our compassionate teacher, the Buddha, used to devise little tricks - what we call "skillful means" - in order to bring everyone to things that would help them in an ultimate way. That is, He would teach people some practice which they really enjoyed, and which they could see brought them some short-term benefit, when in actuality it was taking them on to a much higher goal. The Buddha himself introduced an infinite number of programs like this.

In modern times now we have somebody doing just the same sort of thing with this new book. It's the American Buddhist monk by the name of Michael Roach, who we Tibetans call Lobsang Chunzin. He has earned the title of Geshe, or Master of Buddhism, from our monastery; he came and spent many years here and threw himself down at the feet of a great number of spiritual masters. They were all greatly learned and highly accomplished guides of the way: beings possessed of awesome wisdom gleaned from a multitude of ancient teachings, in both the open and secret traditions. Geshe Michael thus had some special good karma from his past which allowed him to study here what we call the Five Great Books of ancient times, as well as the various traditions of the Secret Word.

It seems that Geshe Michael and his companions in the quest of the spirit have now had some inspiration into a vision that I feel will be certain to benefit many people of the modern world, especially those living in the western lands. This is because they have now written a book which describes, first of all, how to practice a very special kind of yoga from our country of Tibet. This yoga is called the Machine of the Body and forms part of an ancient system called the Six Practices, passed down a thousand years ago from a wise man named Naropa.

This yoga is presented in their new book as something which is much more than just a temporary health benefit for your current body. And that's because the authors explain it along with a special, ancient method of breathing known as "Giving and Taking." This technique actually helps you develop other good qualities, such as a greater capacity of love and compassion for others.

Given that the new book has this and so many other very special kinds of guidance for personal inner development, I am pleased to express my heart-deep joy in its publication. It is my hope and prayer that it will reach and benefit a limitless number of friends in the lands outside of our Tibet.

Signed by Thupten Rinchen, who some people have stuck with the title of Geshe Spiritual Master, on the third day of February, 2003.

[Added note from Geshe Thupten Rinchen - ]

Dear matchless Geshe Lobsang Chunzin and all his Dharma companions over there:

I was delighted to hear that your Great Retreat on the Angel of Diamond, Vajra Yogini, is coming to a successful conclusion, with everybody healthy and fine. I wanted to say that there are still ahead of all of you a great many very powerful and far-reaching Dharma activities which you are all going to have to work hard on and accomplish.

It is my humble request that you all pitch in together with an even greater effort than before to get all these things done, in any way you possibly can, without ever getting discouraged the slightest bit. From my side of course I will make constant prayers to the Three Jewels, to the very best of my ability, for your success.

As soon as you receive this letter, please send me back a short note to confirm you've received it, so I won't worry about that. I'm planning to leave for Manali again [for retreat] around the beginning of March.

From [Geshe] Thupten Rinchen of the Tsang  
College of Sera Mey, February 2, 2003

[Background info: Geshe Thupten Rinchen is one of the greatest thinkers in all of the Tibetan monasteries, and an extraordinarily gifted teacher. He was Geshe Michael's main teacher at Sera Mey for almost all of the subjects of the Geshe curriculum, as well as for higher studies. He of course taught our group during two visits at the monastery, covering the Art of Interpretation, which is generally considered the most difficult course in the Geshe program.]

[Endorsement from Gyumey Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Trinley Topgyel, Former Abbot, Gyumey Tantric College of Tibet:]

The principal author of this book, the American Buddhist monk Geshe Lobsang Chunzin - otherwise known as Michael Roach - has for many years studied in the major Tibetan monasteries, at the feet of numerous Tibetan sages. He has completed his studies and contemplations of the Buddhist path here in the traditional way, utilizing both the great books of ancient times and the various techniques of reasoning - as well as a range of methods for finding out directly, and himself actually experiencing, the spiritual truths. And in this way he has reached the final end of his spiritual training.

Now Geshe Michael and his companions in the Way have completed a new book, motivated by a noble sense of responsibility for the good of living kind. This book contains instructions and advices for the special breathing and meditation practice known as "Giving and Taking." Among other topics, it also covers the great benefits of trying to develop compassion for the others around us. All this has been put in the context of the practice of yoga, which has begun to spread so much nowadays beyond our own land of Tibet.

I would like to express my appreciation and joy at the publication of this new book, and at the same time offer my hopes and prayers that it will be of benefit to many people in all the countries of the world.

Written by [Geshe] Trinley Topgyal, Former  
Abbot of the Gyumey Tantric College of Tibet,  
from the spiritual fortress of Sera Mey  
Monastery, on the 16th day of February, 2003

[Added note from Gyumey Khensur Rinpoche:]

I offer this letter to the great one, the Buddhist monk and geshe, Lobsang Chunzin, whose knowledge is vast:

I was extremely delighted to receive the letter that you sent me, along with your description of your spiritual life, and to know that the mass of your shining white deeds is increasing ever higher. I have included herewith a letter of endorsement for the new book, as you requested.

I am however sorry to say that up until February 15 I was away from the monastery, and so my reply to your request has been delayed. I hope this didn't cause you any concern that your letter may not have been received, or that things were up in the air.

The main thing that I wanted to say to you was that from my own side I am filled with great and sincere joy over the well thought-out faith which you possess, at your very core, in the teachings of Lord Buddha. Not only that, but you are putting everything into actual practice, and therefore constantly accomplishing great benefit for many living beings.

You should know that I am making fierce prayers that you will continue like this into the future, acting with unshakable faith of the three kinds towards the Three Jewels, working for the Three Wheels. May everything you envision be accomplished.

With best wishes to you and your Dharma companions upon the occasion of the Tibetan New Year,

Signed, [Geshe] Trinley Topgyel, so-called Former Abbot of Gyumey Tantric College [Rinpoche is being modest] on the 16th of February, 2003.

[Background note: Gyumey Khensur Rinpoche is the former head of one of the two greatest tantric monasteries in Tibet. This position makes Him eligible to become the Ganden Tripa: Holder of the Throne of Je Tsongkapa, the head of the Gelukpa Lineage. (This title is never held by the Dalai Lama, who is considered sort of the Super-Leader of Gelukpas and all of Tibet.) Gyumey Khensur Rinpoche instructed Geshe Michael during the winter inter-monastery debates (sort of a debate Olympics), and has also granted him higher teachings. He too was a member of the Committee of Elders that ordained GMR. He is incidentally the Root Lama of Geshe Ngawang Rigdol, the manager of Asian operations for the Asian Classics Input Project, which will come as no surprise to anyone who has met this beautiful monk.]

[Reply from Kongpo Khensur Rinpoche, Geshe Jampa Donyo, Former Abbot of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery:]

I offer this letter to Geshe Lobsang Chunzin, otherwise known as Michael Roach, that westerner who has become a lord among sages:

I have received the recent letter you sent me from over there, including your news and also the detailed description of the stages in the development of your personal spiritual practice.

I know that you began your studies at a very early age, and that even in the kind of education recognized in the world at large you reached the pinnacle. And then you have made the journey to India for these last twenty years or so, and taken studies at the feet of the sages of Tibet. You have received teachings and private instructions from a great number spiritual guides, and you have applied yourself to them with extraordinary, heartfelt efforts.

These efforts, and karmic seeds from your past lives ripening in this one, have enabled you to gain a thorough grasp of everything from the steps of the path concerning the direct perception of ultimate reality up to things like bodhichitta, the Wish for enlightenment, as well as love, compassion, and the two levels of reality.

During your life you have also gone through the three traditional stages of becoming a full Buddhist monk, and whilst properly observing what is allowed and what is prohibited by those vows you have engaged in your practice, performing the retreat of three years, three months, and three days in the profound instructions of the sublime yoga of the holy Angel of Diamond, Vajra Yogini.

And now you are working on these ideas about yoga and the Six Practices of Naropa, which have at their very essence teachings such as compassion, a concern for the welfare of others, and the technique known as "Giving and Taking." I know that you will be able to help many people with these instructions. I also understand that you are working to create an institution where foreigners who have developed faith in the Dharma can come and undertake formal studies. I am pleased with all these efforts; I welcome and give my support to them.

I also laud your undertaking to compose an easily readable book that will cover the various steps of spiritual practice, based upon the teachings of Je Tsongkapa and His spiritual sons, as well as the teachings of the various successions of the Dalai Lamas. It is however a little uncomfortable for me to write a recommendation and personal endorsement for a book that I don't yet have here in front of my own two eyes. Once I can get a copy and review its contents, then I'll agree to your request. [Note: We had written a brief description of the book, in Tibetan, in our letter to each lama living in India – since they do not read English. We had also said we would forward the English manuscript as well, if desired. A manuscript is now being sent to this Rinpoche.]

Now Geshe Lobsang Chunzin, I want to say one thing to you. I remember all the efforts you've made to obtain financial support, both for getting this monastery on its feet and for trying to assure that the teachings of Lord Buddha are not lost in the world, but rather stay forever, among the great Tibetan monasteries. I also know of all the

efforts you are making concerning the three traditional bodies of the Buddhist teachings, in order that these might spread throughout the world. Again I would like to applaud all this, and express my very, very great joy for it.

Signed by myself, [Geshe] Jampa Donyo, Former Abbot of  
Sera Mey, on the 3rd day of January [February?], 2003

[A poem was added here:]

The body of this conch-shell horn  
Is your insight, born from the good deeds  
Of your former lives.  
Your sense of personal responsibility  
For the good of all beings  
Represents the curling of the conch  
To the right, an auspicious sign.  
The song of this Dharma trumpet  
Is itself the helping of others.  
I sing your praises, as you strive to sound  
And awaken every living creature  
From their deep sleep of ignorance.  
- Jampa Donyo

[Background info: Kongpo Khensur Rinpoche was faced with the daunting task of building the new Sera Mey Monastery in South India, after the move from the refugee camps in the early 1970's. At first there were only tents, in a terribly desolate area; due to His efforts, the monastery now looks like a small city. By popular consent He was re-elected as Abbot for an unprecedented three terms, and worked with Geshe Michael on many projects to aid the monks. He has lectured to visiting ACI groups at Sera Mey, and also served as one of the Committee of Elders for GMR's ordination.]

[Endorsement from Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Spiritual Director of the FPMT international network of Buddhist centers (received in English):]

Dear Geshe Michael,

This is something maybe you can use for your book, if you think it is OK.

"May this book cause many non believers and other religious believers to not be born in the lower realms.

May it inspire them to achieve enlightenment and to enlighten numberless obscured sentient beings by realizing that cherishing others is the source of all ones past, present and future happiness.

At least may it inspire oneself to be liberated from samsaric suffering which continuity has no beginning.

At least to inspire .. to not harm others.. including insects.

With much love and prayer,

Lama Zopa"

[Added note from Lama Zopa Rinpoche:]

Dear Geshe Michael,

This is my response to your letter. This is what I think if I can express. If your conduct will be the way you explained in the letter then it will not be normal from the monasteries point of view or according to the monasteries point of view.

Where the need is more important than what is to abandoned (*gagcha le skyang gopa chewa*) along with that one should be able to perform other miracle powers, show control or freedom like Milarepa or like any of those yogi's such as *Dukpa Kunleg* , then in this way people can see the realizations and power and so devotion grows in them.

Even they have mistaken appearance, people see their special qualities of showing control and high realizations, in this way seeing the mistakes does not destroy peoples faith and instead they see only qualities.

An example is Gelongma Palmo – she had leprosy in her left hand and it was about to fall off then she was advised by King Indrabodhi to go to the place where *om mani padme hum* naturally appeared on the rock. After she achieved Chenrezig she had the appearance of a 16 year old girl with a very beautiful body and she stayed close to the

monastery so a lot of people thought she didn't have her vows and she received a lot of criticism from the people in the city.

(It seems this place is in Nepal where there is this naturally appearing mantra on the rock, which is the manifestation of Chenrezig's holy speech (Chenrezig's 6 syllable mantra).

I read her story and I had interest to find this place, where there is this mantra naturally appearing on the rock, for it to be known and for it to be an incredible source of inspiration. This way people collect virtue and especially can generate bodhichitta. It seems generally people now days don't know where the place is. The knowledge of where it is has not been kept from ancient time. The story is there but the knowledge where it is, is lost. I heard that it is one of the high mountains around Katmandu, a place where only sadhus live. Maybe due to pollution the mantra disappeared from the rock, or maybe there is no more purpose for the mantra to be on the rock, it could be either way or it could be both. The mantra disappeared from the rock and manifested on a mushroom that grew nearby. That mushroom was taken to Dharamsala and it was offered to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is in His Holiness's temple today.

Khadroma - the oracle of *Tsering ChenGna* who lives in Dharamsala (*Tsering ChenGna* is part of the 5 long deity sister goddess). Publicly Khadroma is viewed as an oracle; of course she is not just that, she is someone in reality very highly attained or enlightened. When she made pilgrimage to Nepal she visited the very high mountain called *Lhangru LuLungta* and on that mountain there is Nagarjuna's cave. She actually saw red Chenrezig in the cave and from red Chenrezig's heart the syllable (or mantra) in essence red light went from there to Dharamsala and absorbed into the mushroom in His Holiness's temple (which has *om mani padme hum* on it). Later when she returned to Dharamsala she saw the mushroom in His Holiness's temple.

This is just a side story, I am hoping to get this mushroom from His Holiness to put inside the Maitreya statue.

Gelongma Palmo in order to destroy the heresy of the people of the city who believed she had broken her vows and to inspire them and bring them to enlightenment, she cut off her head and put it on a spear and danced in space and said "if it is true that I am not pure, not a fully ordained nun then my head should not come back, if it is true that I am pure then my head should come back". Then her head came back on her body, like before, and that proved to the people in the city, the words of the truth. The head from the spear came back to her body as before, so everybody in the city completely believed that she did not have any mistakes and is pure, destroying all their wrong views and heresy and this caused them to have incredible devotion to her.

She became *Dorje Phagmo* Geshe Lama Konchog said secretly she is *Dorje Phagmo* who has cut off her head and carrying the spear. Outwardly she is Gelongma Palmo.

Just to clarify I don't mean you have to be enlightened to do that kind of conduct, it might seem that way from the story but all it means is having high realizations and showing to others through external miracle powers. Of course I don't mean only external miracle powers, because even Hindus can have that.

By showing miracle powers then other people can generate devotion and non heresy by seeing the miracle power, something external, then they can have faith in high realizations seeing that you have control and are free and whatever conduct you do does not have the stain of samsara.

If one performs those behaviors to develop people's devotion then it is not just an ordinary miracle that is needed, one needs to do a special kind of miracle, for example the 6<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama pee-ed from the top of the Potala and just before the urine hit the ground he drew it back again inside his vajra. Also there is the story of the previous incarnation of Gonsar Rinpoche he pulled in mud through his vajra.

This is just my suggestion I don't know what other Lama's and Guru's will advise.

With much love and prayers,

Lama Zopa

[Background note: Lama Zopa Rinpoche is of course the head of the FPMT, which includes more than 100 Buddhist centers in many countries of the world, as well as numerous other extraordinary undertakings such as Wisdom Publications. He has done more than almost anyone else in the world to bring the authentic teachings of Buddhism to interested people in the West and the East, working tirelessly, devoting his entire life and energy. Geshe Michael has taught courses at some of these centers, and although he has not studied closely with Lama Zopa Rinpoche, has considered himself to be one of Rinpoche's students - especially after Rinpoche's wonderful teachings at ACI New York prior to the 3-year retreat.]