

Byoma Kusuma Newsletter

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“Anything that is created must sooner or later die. Enlightenment is permanent because we have not produced it; we have merely discovered it.”

- Chogyam Trungpa

Tri Ratna Sharanam & Namo Amitabhaya

Dear Sangha Members,

Apologies once again for a late issuance of the newsletter! We will work harder to be more regular in the days ahead.

Several notable events have happened involving the Sangha since we last issued our newsletter in December. But for this issue, we have zeroed in on the more recent ones.

In late May, The Lumbini Development Trust honored Ratnashri with a Letter of Appreciation for His “glorious contribution to world peace and dissemination of Sakya Muni Buddha's teachings”. The letter also said the Trust prayed for Ratnashri's long life and success in His Dharmic activities.

Our main story in this issue is about Sahayak Dharmadhara Narayan Rijal's very successful trip to the U.K in April. This was his second such international trip, the first one being to the Deer Park Institute in Dharmasala, Himachal Pradesh, India. We also have interesting entries in our regular sections: senior Sangha member Mukunda Bista shares his one-and-a-half decade experience in the Sangha, and award-winning Pauwaa artist Sangha member Amrit Dangol sheds light on the ancient form of Newari art.

Meanwhile, Maitri session continues at the Bishalnagar monastery from 2 - 4 pm each Saturday for peace, stability and Dharmic prosperity in the country. Following an advice from H.E. Karma Thinley Rinpoche, Sangha members have also begun chanting and praying for minimizing a major possibility of a massive

earthquake in the Aryawarta region, especially in Nepal.

On Saturday, July 3, His Eminence Sabdrung Rinpoche gave Vajrapani and Vaishravana initiations to about 100 Sangha members at the Bishalnagar monastery. Several Sangha members also took part in a new psychotherapy class using Psyche-K, EFT, and some other techniques with Ratnashri.

That's all for this issue of the newsletter. We invite you to share your realizations, thoughts, articles, poems or any other Dharmic creations with us. Please scroll down to the bottom for submission directions.

Thank you
The Newsletter Team

LETTER OF APPRECIATION



“The Lumbini Development Trust feels privileged to present this certificate of Honor to Mahayogi Acharya Shridhar Rana

Rinpoche for your glorious contribution to world peace and dissemination of Shakya Muni Buddha's teachings. With immense pleasure and humanity, we pray for a long life of your Eminence and pray success in your ecclesiastical works."

Letter signed by:

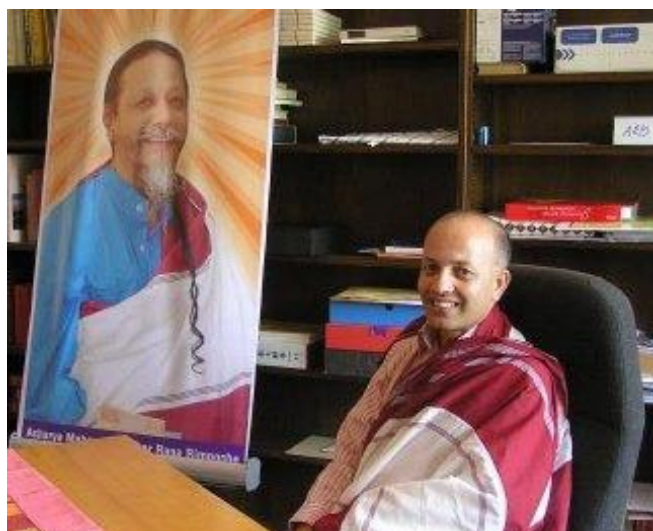
Dr. Minendra Rijal

Chairman and Minister of Culture

Acharya Karma Sangbo Sherpa

Vice-Chairman

S.D. RIJAL' U.K. TRIP A SUCCESS



By Assaji Tanchangya

U.K.

After fighting a week-long battle of the ash clouds, Narayan Prasad Rijal, assistant holder of the Dharma (Sahayak Dharmadhara), finally arrived in London on Tuesday April 22.

It came as a great relief to the BKBDS family in the U.K., as it was an intense moment of waiting. Nobody had any clue when the volcanic eruption in Iceland would cease. Each day, special prayers were held for an immediate resolve of the situation. With the blessings of Guru Ratnashri, the situation improved and all the events that were cancelled the week before were re-scheduled.



S.D. Rijal then gave a series of public talks at Oxford University, Northampton University, University of London and also at a private residence in Reading, a small town near London. The audiences included academicians, practitioners and admirers of the Buddha Dharma, who expressed their deep happiness and gratitude to S.D. Rijal for coming and delivering the precious teachings.

The teachings were about 'Challenges of presenting Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayana) to a Hindu or Nepali-speaking audience', 'How to be Mindful with Buddhist Meditation', and 'Comparative philosophy of Buddhism and Hinduism'. In addition, one-to-one teachings were also delivered to the Sangha members to help them progress in the Kram practice.

Workshops and tours were organized to make S.D. Rijal's stay more comfortable and exciting. The workshops included an introductory Psych-K certification training with Mary Trenfield and an



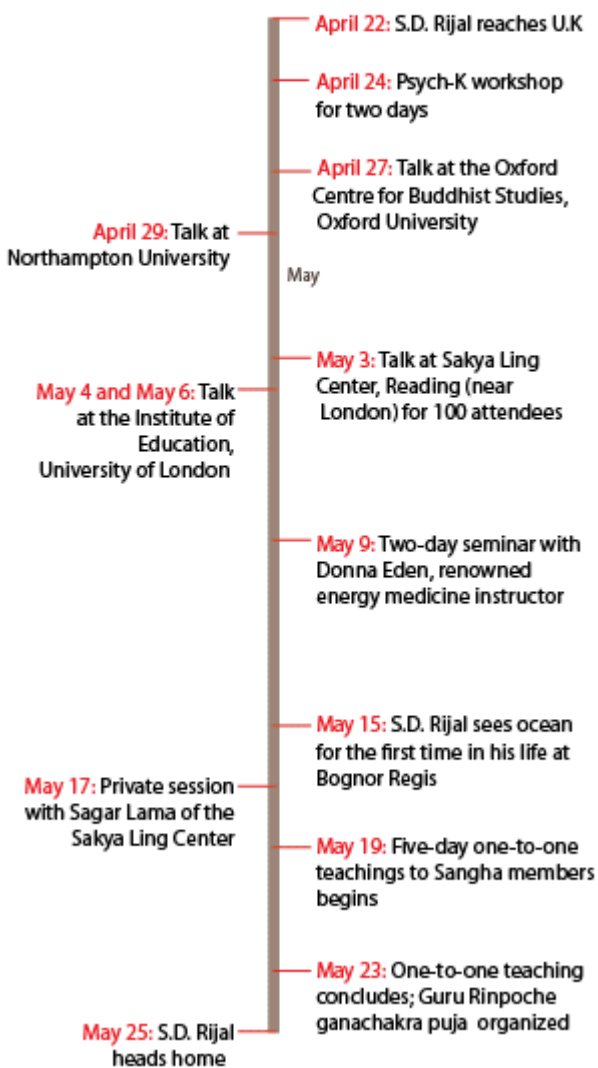
Energy Medicine session with Donna Eden. The tours included places such as the London Eye, Madame Tussauds, and Bognor Regis (seaside). These events also gave ample opportunities to spend some intimate and quality time with S.D. Rijal.



S.D. Rijal left for Kathmandu on May 25. His month-long stay greatly helped the U.K. members and the general public to deepen their spiritual vision and practice. The BKBDS-U.K. plans to invite S.D. Rijal annually to give public teachings in the U.K. for the benefit of sentient beings.

TIMELINE OF S.D. RIJAL'S U.K VISIT

Sahayak Dharmadhara (Assistant holder of the Dharma) Narayan Prasad Rijal's trip to the U.K. lasted for about 35 days, during which he gave a number of talks and teachings, participated in seminars, and had loads of fun.



A PEEK INTO PAUWAA



Sangha artist Amrit Dangol gives a glimpse into the traditional Newari art form

1. What is pauwaa art and what is its significance?

Pauwaa art is a traditional religious painting. It actually is a Newari term for thanka. It depicts different deities with their own philosophies and manifestations. Most pauwaa paintings are expressions of the minds of the Siddhas.

These paintings are very important from the dharmic perspective. They can be a good basis for growing one's faith and devotion. But most importantly they are a huge support for sadhanas and can be considered an integral part of the Vajrayana Buddhism. Also, it's a part of the Newari culture.

2. How long have you been doing this for?

I have been painting for the past 20 years. I started learning from K. K. Karmacharya and Bijay Sarga, and my interest slowly grew after that.

3. What inspired you to paint the murals at the Bishalnagar monastery?

I am taking this as a tremendous opportunity to serve Ratnashri. He does so much for us. I am doing this to help Ratnashri and the Sangha. But ultimately it will benefit me!

4. How is Pauwaa art different from other forms of art, especially from the dharmic perspective?

Pauwaa is very different from other forms of paintings in terms of perspective, colour combination and design. The deities have to look divine. The deities also have to be representative of their philosophy or the dharma. So there needs to be precision in the details. The smallest of details are meaningful and symbolic.

5. What are the challenges?

You need to learn a lot of different painting techniques and it takes years to develop proper skills. The designs itself take years to learn. The minute details, fineness and techniques are also difficult to learn. It's been more than 20 years and I am still learning and improving! Learning pauwaa art is not like getting an academic degree but a continuous learning process.

6. What is your dream for the future?

I hope to become a better artist and make paintings that more precisely depict Buddhist philosophy. But when I become old and my body and eyes start to fail me, I intend to do more didactic paintings. But till then I intend to do fine and detailed paintings and improve on it.

7. How do you apply the dharma practice when painting?

Before painting, I bow down to the deities. Also, painting needs good awareness. I have to be aware and not let my mind wander away. Painting deities also helps to accumulate merits.

Some facts you should know

The first four of the 12 links in Dependent arising:

Ignorance (Avidhya):

Represented by an image of a blind woman who blunders forward, unable to see where she is going. So ignorance is blindness, not seeing. It is a lack of insight into the reality of things.

Volitional formations (Samskar)

Represented by a potter. Just as a potter forms clay into something new, an action begins a sequence that leads to new consequences. Once put into motion, the potter's wheel continues to spin without much effort. Likewise, an action creates a predisposition in the mind.

Consciousness (Vigyan)

The rebirth consciousness or "consciousness that links on", is represented by a monkey going from window to window. This represents a single consciousness perceiving through the various sense organs. The monkey represents the very primitive spark of sense-consciousness which is the first moment in the mental life of the new being.

Mind-Body (Nam-rup)

Depicted by people sitting in a boat with one of them steering. The boat symbolizes form, and its occupants, the mental aggregates.

To be continued...

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SANGHA CORNER

Mukunda Bista, Kathmandu



When did you join the Sangha?

I joined Sangha in 1995.

What inspired you to join the Sangha ?

It was respected Jetsunma who first motivated me to join the Sangha. She once invited me to attend the precious teachings of most respected Ratnashri at Bishalnagar.

I felt calm and blissful the first day I went to attend Ratnashri's regular teachings at the old Bishalnagar house. The smiling face of Ratnashri, seated in a chair in front of us, and his inspiring words were enough for me to decide practicing the Dharma right away.

After my first visit to Bishalnagar, I met Ratnashri personally a couple of times to clear the curiosities and confusions arising as a result of my Hindu background. After the meetings, everything became clear like a crystal and I immediately decided he was my ultimate Guru and the Buddha Dharma was the right path.

Before I met Ratnashri, my life was full of negative activities. Influenced by my close friends, I aspired for material fun and pleasures only. However, I used to think that that was not the correct way to spend life and I needed to change one day.

Another incident expedited my entry into the sangha: a narrow escape from a dangerous situation at the Kagmara pass (5500 m) when on a trek in the remote district of Dolpo in north-western Nepal.

As soon as we reached the top of the pass, it started to snow suddenly. Everything got covered in snow – even the trails. We could not even make out the four directions and could neither return nor go ahead. We had to cram ourselves inside a single tent to spend the night. We did not have any food to eat. The whole night we feared being buried alive by an avalanche, as it was snowing so heavily and we were surrounded by high mountains. The next day was even worse: We had to walk in thigh deep of fresh snow without knowing where we were headed. A small slip could send us thousands of meters down into the river.

I must have survived that incident because of the merits accumulated from paying homage to the Buddha icons at monasteries en route on such treks. But after the incident, I thought how selfish I had been to constantly think about saving my own life without caring about others on the trip. I was especially concerned about my inability to think about the poor porters who were only in slippers and without any gloves or sunglasses to protect themselves. In addition, they were carrying heavy loads on their back. The realization that my mind could be so selfish in extremely hazardous or dangerous situation has been a good lesson for me even to this day.

I joined the sangha may be within the next six months or so of the incident. That experience still motivates me to help someone in a very difficult situation.

What is your daily life like?

I wake up at 3 a.m. and do the sadhanas first. After completing them in two and half hours, I wash myself. Then I do the Kram practice for the next 45 minutes to an hour. After that, I do a 15-minute physical exercise, following which I go out for an hour of walk. After returning home, I do EFT, read newspapers and head to work or meetings. If I find time, I repeat the Kram practice during the day. Hence, I always carry a separate set of sadhana with Kram practice manual in my bag. Most of my day is spent attending meetings with people from different social organizations and villages, as I am involved in more than half a dozen of such organizations.

In the evening, it takes me an hour to finish my sadhanas. I go to bed early to not feel tired the next morning.

How do you incorporate practice into your daily life?

Every day, I try to convert two regular activities into practice. First, during my morning walks I try to be completely mindful and deeply feel that every phenomenon is impermanent and like an illusion, and I should get rid of this *Bhawasagara*.

Second, when I drive my old car on the streets of Kathmandu, I try to be mindful again and bring out the same feelings like in the morning. This time I also test my anger, especially when a taxi driver or a motorcyclist comes from the wrong side of the road or pushes me to the periphery or on many occasions even hit my old car. Although most of the time it is difficult, I still try to keep myself mindful and take it all like an illusion.

Also, while I am walking or driving I watch myself to not step on or run over insects. I also cannot stay without opening the windows for letting trapped insects fly out of the room. I do the same thing when I find insects lying in the middle of a street or in a small water puddle or even in a swimming pool.

Like any other person, I also give money or food to beggars. Sometimes I even give bigger amounts if I find them really suffering because of their sickness or very old age. In addition, I buy biscuits, chocolates, juices for poor, starving children. I have also taken sick children to

hospitals and given them enough money for treatment.

I also feel very sad for the stray dogs. If I find a thin dying puppy or dog in a street, I can not pass by just ignoring them. So I stop and provide them with food. I also offer doughnuts or samosas to hungry cows. I feel like crying when I see innocent goats or chickens being taken to the butcher, especially in the morning hours. I am only able to chant Amitabha mantra for them. I wish I were a very rich man so that I could open an orphanage for these poor creatures.

What does the future hold for you?

I have not thought about it. I will serve Rathanshri and the Sangha until my last breath.

What advice /suggestions do you have to for the Sangha members?

I do not think I have reached to such a level of practice that I can advise my fellow Sangha members, many of whom are already far ahead of me in practice even after joining the sangha much later than me. I can only share my feelings with them.

Although I am practicing the dharma, these days I feel it has already been too late in my case. Sometimes, I strongly feel that I must be a bad example for the Sangha members for being so lazy. Even after 15 years, I have not been able to become a Sahayak Samathacharya. This way I will end my precious life without gaining anything considerable in the dharma aspect. So how can a lazy person like me contribute to the efforts of the most respected Ratnashri to spread Dharma far and wide to liberate all sentient beings from suffering? Fifteen years has passed without even noticing it. I wish all Sangha members would always give their first priority to dharmic activities rather than samsaric ones like me.

Some useful Buddhist Words

C

Chaitya: (Sanskrit) (Pali: Cetiya) A tumulus raised over a burial mound. In Buddhism synonymous with Dagoba, Stupa, Tope or Chorten; sometimes used for a hall (for meditation).

Chenrezig: (Tibetan) Avalokiteshvara. The Buddha of compassion. A male meditational deity embodying fully enlightened compassion.

Compassion: To vibrate in sympathy with others.

Cyclic Existence: The cycle of death and rebirth, fraught with suffering and dissatisfaction, that arises from ignorance of the true nature of reality.

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Contact

We hope you enjoyed reading our Newsletter. Should you be interested to contribute your articles, please contact our editorial team at: bk-uk@byomakusuma.org.

Note:

- Please note that we reserve the rights to edit your article based on the length, content and words used.
- Your article should be no longer than 500 words.

*If you wish to share your views/comments about the articles, please contact the **author** directly. The email address is located at the end of the article.