

Speaking from the Heart By Lama Yeshe Jinpa

Dear Friends of the Dharma,

I'm starting a monthly letter in order to share Dharma teachings, events at UCC and progress on the Dalai Lama's visit in 2009. I'd also like to share any relevant personal information about me so that people know about my teaching activities, my health and what's new.

Dharma

All of our Dharma practice is so that we can return to and manifest our actual lived experience. People are always wondering: Should I change my experience or should I accept my experience as it is? Simply put, if we're aware and present with our lived experience, we just rest there. However, if we're lost and not living from our present Awareness, we need to change and cultivate enlightened qualities. Knowing how to accept and knowing how to reject is the essence of the Path. In order to cultivate the Path, we need some guidance. In the Buddhist tradition it takes the form of the Three Jewels which are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

When we fully take our direction from the Three Jewels, we can say that we have taken Refuge in the Three Jewels. This is not a one-time event or some ceremony, but rather an ongoing path of taking Refuge in our guides, in our Buddha nature and in a supportive community. Because people have expressed the need for this practice, we have manifested the Universal Compassion Center.

Universal Compassion Center

Since October 2006 when the Sangha moved to our new location, we've hosted several outstanding teachers. These have included our Abbot Geshe Thupten Phelgye, the Abbot of Sera Je, Khen Rinpoche and Geshe Gendun Gyatso. The end of this month we will be hosting the Ven. Tenzin Chogyi from Land of Medicine Buddha in Soquel, CA.

Myself, I have led three Middle Way Trainings held at the Sacramento Convention Center. I continue to offer Buddhism for Beginners Classes and conduct the Saturday Pandita Class.

A large part of my time now is spent in creating the structure to bring His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Sacramento in 2009. I've been meeting with business leaders, religious leaders, City government and the media in order to create a non-profit organization so that His Holiness' visit can happen smoothly. I'm hoping that the visit will also be a catalyst in order to create a Dalai Lama Peace Center here in Sacramento. This Peace

Center will have land and buildings with space for a whole community to meet and manifest the energy and wisdom that is our birthright.

Management Team

Along with our name change and expanding vision, we have created a Management Team. The members of the Team are:

- ◆ David Lake, Membership Administration
- ◆ Kristen Yee, Practice Coordinator
- ◆ Dana Grimes, Volunteer Coordinator
- ◆ Linda Thorell, Public Relations
- ◆ Judy Taylor, Secretary/Accounting.

The new Team's job is to run the center and to help support and fulfill the vision of Geshe Thupten Phelgye and myself. This creates a stable structure and allows Geshela and me the time to coordinate the Dalai Lama's visit and to travel and teach.

Personal

As many of you already know, in March of this year, I gave back my monastic vows and returned to householder status in life. The benefits of being monastic were and are very great; however, my health and my increased responsibilities in the community led me to take this step. I am still teaching fulltime as Lama Yeshe Jinpa and have the full support of my teacher Geshe Thupten Phelgye and Sera Je Monastic University.

Recently I have moved out of the Gompa and am living privately. My hope is that when Geshe Phelgye receives his green card that he will be able to live fulltime at the Gompa. Until then we will have visiting teachers and monastics staying there. I would like to thank everyone for their support during this transition and for their on-going support of Universal Compassion Center. There have been articles about my changes and personal life in the media so this is public knowledge. I'm happy to talk with anyone about my personal situation as well as my vision for Universal Compassion Center and the Dalai Lama's visit.

I look forward to hearing from you.

In Dharma,

Lama Yeshe Jinpa