

Centre Stories

Stories about the centre's history and events that have taken place – written to shared and inspire others. If anyone has a personal story they would like to share – please email this to us for consideration.

Snippets of our history – by Kaari Schlebach

Jam Tse Dhargyey Ling was established by the late great teacher Thupten Tulku Rinpoche during his first visit to Whangarei in April 1997. Rinpoche visited Whangarei after a casual invitation was made when we were all together in Sydney in 1996 attending the Kalachakra Initiation with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A few of us dharma friends from Dunedin and other countries were wondering around Sydney with Rinpoche and ended up having afternoon tea up the Sydney Tower. It was there that I casually asked Rinpoche if he would like to come and visit Paul and I in Whangarei sometime. Yes, he said – that would be nice. Over the next few months the casual visit transformed into a week of teachings and the bestowing of the Chenrezig Empowerment – all to take place in our very humble villa in Pipiwai Rd. Fortunately the 'lounge' is quiet large – which was a good thing, as we were quite blown away by the number of people attending the teachings and empowerment – the lounge was completely packed. As new arrivals to Whangarei, and not knowing anyone in the community – the response was a pleasant surprise to both of us and Rinpoche too. Rinpoche told us that when he flew over Whangarei – he could see that it was a spiritual place. This was also a surprise to us, but years later can see that he was so right.

One morning during Rinpoche's first visit, I was having a cup of tea sitting in the sunshine by the window reflecting on how amazing Rinpoche's visit had been so far. Just as I was thinking this, Rinpoche came in through the door with a very big grin on his face. He came over to me and handed me a piece of paper – about 30cm long and 10cm deep. On the paper were large Tibetan syllables carefully and beautifully written out. I looked up at Rinpoche's beaming face – as I had no idea what was going on or what this meant. He grinned at me and said "this is the name of your new centre."

Whaaaaaat?! I thought, totally taken by surprise. "New centre Rinpoche?" sounding really confused and probably slightly horrified. "Yes, new centre," he said. At this stage Sonam Tenzin a western Tibetan Buddhist monk came into the room and laughed at my confused expression... all whilst Rinpoche was standing, grinning and nodding his head at me while I was trying to absorb this information. Sonam Tenzin gently took the paper from my hands and put it on the table – and carefully explained the meaning:

The first few syllables say 'Jam' – this he explained, means 'love.'

The second set of syllables say 'Tse' - this means 'compassion.'

The third set say 'Dhargyey' – not only does this mean 'to flourish' – but it is also the name of our great teacher the late Ven. Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey.

And the fourth set 'Ling' – means 'centre.' So basically these Tibetan hand-written syllables on this bit of paper translated means 'Centre from which love and compassion flourishes.'

Wow I thought. We hadn't ever thought about starting a centre.... But what an inspiring name. Wow – WHAT A NAME! Wow!!!

Ok Rinpoche – lets do it.

Many many amazing and truly incredible and sometimes very challenging events took place over the coming months and years. Our home became a centre, people came and went, lamas came and taught – and soon it became clear that to us, that to be an authentic dharma centre and truly be able to benefit others – a centre and land would need to be acquired and an authentic lama engaged to teach.

The process of acquiring the land is a story in itself – perhaps that will be in the next newsletter...

And then finding the right lama – again, another story to be told. I can say this though – Jam Tse Dhargyey Ling is incredibly and unbelievably fortunate to be in the care of such an incredible lama as Ven. Geshe Sangey Thinley. We seriously hit the jackpot! A day does not go by without my heart bursting with joy and wonder and our immeasurably good fortune and gratitude to Rinpoche for his kindness and wisdom in finding Ven. Geshe Sangey Thinley for us, and for Geshe-la to have accepted our invitation to come all the way to this wacky place in this faraway island to a very small group of people and little house on a hill....