

Greetings, !

As a new and eventful year begins at KCC, we are honored to feature an in-depth portrait of The Most Venerable Kyabje Bokar Rinpoche. As you will see, in telling his story we are also telling the story of KCC, from its beginnings to its present strength to its hopeful future. This story is longer than most we feature, but we are confident you will be eager to read to its conclusion. Also in this issue, we provide a round-up of the year's events and we continue our series of reflections on practice, this one focused on a moving poem about kindness.

We hope you enjoy and learn from this issue.

Our Great Debt of Gratitude

Recalling Bokar Rinpoche

By Bill Spangle and Rosemarie Sweet

As supporters and members of KCC know, the dharma center is thriving. With a nearly complete rural retreat center and plans to expand into a larger urban center, KCC is bringing the benefits of the dharma to more and more people. In a period such as this, it is more important than ever to reflect on our history and honor those who made it possible for us to arrive at this point. A pivotal influence for KCC has been The Most Venerable Kyabje Bokar Rinpoche. Now, on the tenth anniversary of his passing, with His Holiness Karmapa announcing that a new incarnation could be revealed soon, it seems fitting to recall his kindness to KCC. As you will see, the threads of his life came together with those of the center at a critical time in KCC history.

The story of Bokar Rinpoche's influence on KCC demonstrates the fruitful intersection between two different cultures and ways of life and is testimony to the power of the dharma to transcend these differences. Bokar Rinpoche,

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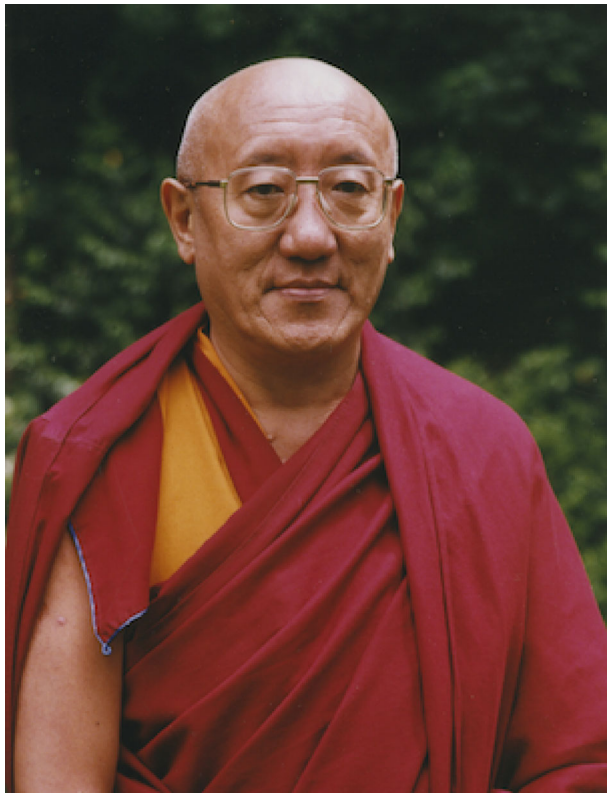
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Bill Spangle, Deborah Brink Wöhrmann, Rosemarie Sweet, Barbara Miller, and Dean Conklin contributed to the production of this newsletter.



a lineage master of both the Shangpa and the Karma Kagyu, was born in Western Tibet in 1940 to a family of nomadic herders. When Rinpoche was four years old, he was recognized as the reincarnation of the previous Bokar Tulku and received an official recognition letter from the Sixteenth Karmapa.

While still a teenager, he assumed full responsibility for the Bokar monastic community. At the age of 20 he had the strong wish to do three-year retreat. But the instability and violence due to the Chinese occupation interrupted this plan and in 1959 he followed

his teachers in the exodus from Tibet, joining the refugees in the Darjeeling area. After several years trying to pursue his studies, he became determined once again to do the three-year retreat and thus became a close disciple of Dorje Chang Kalu Rinpoche since he was renowned as retreat master in Tibet.

Since there was not yet a retreat center, Bokar Rinpoche joined in with Kalu Rinpoche and the other monks to stack stones and do the other labor needed to make a place for retreat. Under Kalu Rinpoche's guidance, he completed two traditional three-year retreats. In total, he spent over 19 years in strict retreat and was considered to be Kalu Rinpoche's spiritual successor and principal holder of the Shangpa Kagyu lineage. Bokar Rinpoche was also one of the main meditation teachers of the Karma Kagyu, appointed by the Sixteenth Karmapa to be the retreat master of a new retreat center at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, a position he fulfilled for 13 years.

In 1986, Rinpoche founded a monastery called Bokar Ngedon Chokor Ling in Mirik, a village in the hills near Darjeeling. While it started small, with facilities for just a handful of practitioners on extended retreat, it steadily grew to accommodate more monks. Along the way a Karma Kagyu three-year retreat center was added, followed by a large new temple which now houses about 300 monks and another retreat center to permit concurrent three-year retreats in the Shangpa Kagyu tradition.

Bokar Rinpoche's connection to KCC began near the end of the tenure of KCC's first resident teacher Lama Thinley Drupa. Asked by Kalu Rinpoche to leave the monastery in India to guide the center's development, Lama Thinley served from 1980 to 1991. During his tenure he taught a wide range of practices, and the center hosted the most esteemed teachers of the lineage. He enthusiastically presented many teachings and is fondly

remembered for the stories he shared. Lama Thinley, who came from a remote village in Bhutan, was an excellent teacher; however, KCC did not have a translator to help bridge the gap in language and culture. In spite of everyone's efforts and good intentions, both Lama Thinley and the small group of practitioners at the center found themselves struggling to make the situation work.

By the time of Bokar Rinpoche's arrival in September 1991, only a handful of people were actively engaged with the center and its future was uncertain. Rinpoche assembled the group and reminded them that, since the center was founded by the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, it was essential that it continue.

The members in attendance were moved by the Rinpoche's openheartedness. After reinforcing the importance and potential of KCC, he asked the group: "what you think needs to happen here?" In this way, he transcended his cultural moorings in which practitioners were expected to simply follow the dictates of their lamas. Rinpoche was extraordinarily astute, quickly sensing the dynamics at play. Since he had had personal interviews with some KCC members, he could sense that there was energy and desire to continue. He expressed respect for and confidence in the people present and in the power of the dharma itself, which would offer solutions if practiced earnestly.

Rinpoche listened carefully to the concerns of the group and their ideas for moving forward, then said "let me think about it." Some days later, he came back to the group and affirmed their suggestions for moving ahead, including greatly simplifying the practice schedule. He stated that, if the sangha did calm abiding and chenrezig practices weekly, along with a study group, it would be an effective approach. He also thanked Lama Thinley and gave him permission to retire as resident lama, suggesting that Lama Tsang Tsing from Eugene visit KCC periodically to provide teachings. He appointed Sanje Elliott, who he had met in India, to be president of KCC since he had confidence in his persistence in getting past obstacles. This is how the sangha proceeded from 1991 until 1993. At that time, the sangha requested that a Western teacher, Michael Conklin, come to serve at KCC. Bokar Rinpoche assented and Lama Michael Conklin moved to Portland to serve as KCC's teacher.

Following his remarkable visit in 1991, Bokar Rinpoche continued to provide needed support and inspiration to KCC. In 1992 he started the Mahamudra Seminar in India, which became an essential opportunity to develop an ongoing relationship with him. Having traveled to centers throughout the west, Rinpoche had become convinced that spending a few days here and there giving empowerments and teachings was not an effective way to make the depth of the dharma truly accessible. There was no way to focus on a core of teachings or to provide ongoing guidance. In response, he started the Mahamudra seminar to provide a path of meditation and contemplation that was accessible to householders—a path that was concise yet still offered a systematic progression of practice that could lead to attaining enlightenment.

Over the years many KCC members went to India to receive the Mahamudra teachings. In addition to having the benefit of engaging in the practices they also had personal interviews with Bokar Rinpoche. People had the experience that a five-minute interview with him changed their practices and their lives.

By 1995, KCC was back on its feet and profiting greatly from Lama Michael's presence. At this time, KCC leaders took the bold step of inviting Bokar Rinpoche to come to Portland to lead a retreat. When they asked Lama Tsang Tsing about it, he replied that there was no harm in asking but it was highly unlikely he would come. Persisting, Bill Spangle and Lama Michael flew to Los Angeles to meet with Bokar Rinpoche. After reviewing everything that had been done to implement the advice he had offered in 1991, they requested that he come to Portland. After thinking it over for the morning, he called them back in and responded "I'll come." The result was an extraordinary 1996 Mahamudra seminar with 200 people at Lewis & Clark College, which opened the dharma to many more Western practitioners.

From that point on, KCC had a very close working relationship with Bokar Rinpoche. Whenever they met with him in India to receive guidance about the center, Rinpoche continued to seek their input on what should happen next. The Rinpoche instilled confidence in sangha members that they could do anything they decided on. Interactions with him always provided them with insight and strength.

In 1999, while a KCC group was in India, they asked Rinpoche whether they should look for a larger urban center or construct a long retreat center first. Noting that we already had an urban center, he strongly encouraged us to build a retreat center, saying that it was important to really make the Dharma our own and that retreat was essential to allow this to happen. He expressed confidence that the sangha could both build the retreat center and lead the retreat in a way that would benefit others.

While Bokar Rinpoche's death in 2004 was extremely saddening to sangha members, it provided further fuel to honor the commitment made to Bokar Rinpoche to develop Ser Cho Osel Ling. With the completion of the recent one-year retreat and a three-year retreat set to begin in April 2015, during a recent audience with His Holiness Karmapa, we were able to report that this commitment has been fulfilled. At that time, we asked him to dedicate the merit of this work so that we may soon meet a new incarnation of Bokar Rinpoche.

Events for the New Year

In a year of change for the KCC community, the Three-Year Retreat begins in April 2015. The retreat center at SCOL will close its gates to all but the cloistered. Until then, keep a watch for opportunities to help out. Work

parties on the retreat land near Goldendale, Washington, are frequent—and all are welcome.

To keep well-informed, check out this page on the KCC website:

<http://kcc.org/form/join-our-e-mail-lists>. Here you can sign up to receive this newsletter and occasional info on KCC happenings. To subscribe to the community list-serve, e-mail **kcc-community-subscribe@kcc.org**, for the every-message-as-soon-as-it's-posted edition, or **kcc-community-digest-subscribe@kcc.org**, for the occasional digest edition. The community list-serve is more informal—a space where people post happenings, work parties, prayer requests, rooms for rent, job search information and more. KCC also has a **Facebook** page!

The 2015 Personal Winter Retreat takes place January 17 through February 13. Take some time out, if you can. This lovely opportunity provides time to deepen practice, contemplate and reflect—while eating three prepared meals a day in quiet company. Please contact Bill Spangle with questions and David McWherter to secure your place. See the KCC website for details.

<http://kcc.org/event/winter-personal-retreat-season>

The Seven Point Mind Training Study Group has begun again, thanks to Tim Campbell's organization and encouragement. The group meets on two Thursdays each month, from 7-8:30 pm at KCC. Please check the website for dates. You can also send questions to Tim, and he can get you on the list for future announcements. He usually sends out reminders and several commentaries on the Point to be discussed. This group is open to all and is not led by a teacher. **<http://www.kcc.org/event/seven-point-mind-training-study-group-Nov14-Jan15>**

A series of classes will be offered by Bill Spangle, beginning in March: The Three Turnings. Over the course of 2015, each is a Saturday event in two parts. Details will soon be available on the KCC website.

For now, if interested, you can mark these dates.

Saturday, March 7

9-noon: Overview of The Three Turnings

1:30-4:30: Refuge & Shamatha

Saturday, July 11

9-noon: Second Turning

1:30-4:30: Four Immeasurables/Four Foundations

Saturday, October 24

9-noon: Third Turning

1:30-4:30: Four Foundations, Third Turning

Another date to consider is Saturday, August 29. A class on The Bodhisattva Vow will be offered by Lama Michael Conklin, beginning at 9 am.

The only currently scheduled residential retreat for 2015 will take at Cloud Mountain in Castle Rock, Washington:

Friday, September 25 - Monday, September 28

Tonglen Retreat—led by Lama Michael Conklin

A Creation and Completion class is scheduled for Saturday, November 14, beginning at 9am, taught by Lama Michael Conklin.

The year will end with the annual New Year's Retreat.

Thoughts on “Kindness”

By Deborah Brink Wöhrmann

“Kindness,” by Naomi Shihab Nye, is a poem I have lived with for many years. A friend read it at my wedding, and another recently confided that she had included it as a part of the funeral plans she recently drew up before undergoing surgery. (Thankfully, the surgery went well!)

In relation to my practice at KCC, the poem arises again as I reflect on a recent Sunday evening conversation led by Lama Michael. Someone asked what the best Buddhist response is to the world in conflict—referring to recent talk of more military action in the Middle East. While Lama Michael did not use the word “kindness,” he spoke of realizing the “victim” in even the perpetrator of the worst atrocities. He invited us to ask ourselves: “How does it happen that a person kills another so ruthlessly?”

He and then others in the sangha shared their thoughts on how to cultivate more deeply our own clarity—to know who we are.

This poem supports my practice as it invites me to realize myself in the other. It reminds me to recognize myself in “the Indian in a white poncho / [who] lies dead by the side of the road.” The poem continues, “You must see how this could be you, / how he too was someone.”

The poem speaks of how joy and sorrow work together—each impermanent and a part of the other. The poet shows us—as does my own practice (at its best)—that when I can see myself in others and realize the real connection between us, I feel more joy, more love, and more hope for each moment. When I can practice taking and sending, angry feelings fade, hurts lose their power and my compassion grows. This is not to say those moments happen often, but rereading “Kindness” is another tool along the path.

Kindness

Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,

what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
How you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
It is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.

Naomi Shihab Nye
from *Words Under the Words*, 1995

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Greetings, !

As you will see in this issue, KCC is bursting with activity these days. Chief among these is preparation for the first Three Year Retreat. We are honored to feature Kathleen Benz, a long-time sangha member, who has generously shared her reflections on entering into long retreat. Also featured is a rich reflection on the journey to India that many sangha members made this winter. You will also want to read about the important internal changes KCC is undergoing to meet the challenges that come with growth.

Please enjoy this issue and let us know how it can be improved.

Kathleen Benz and SCOL's First Three Year Retreat

By Deborah Brink Wöhrmann



For Kathleen Benz — one of the 11 people who will enter into Three Year Retreat on April 4 at SCOL — finding KCC was sort of like falling in love. She had seen herself as a failed meditator—had tried it back in her 20s. “I did it for a year and then had a baby.”

Her teacher in Berkeley suggested she practice with a mantra instead.

“For 16 hours a day I would quietly repeat this mantra in my mind, but I was not able to sit and meditate,” she says. She cared for her children and went about her daily life, quietly carrying the words

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Kathleen Benz and
Three Year Retreat

Save the Date:

April 4th

Reflections on India

KCC in 2015:
A Giant Leap Forward

Please Help!

KCC seeks use of RVs or campers to house people at SCOL for up to six weeks starting April 4. To donate or rent at a reduced rate, **contact Linda Besant.**

Upcoming Events

SCOL Work Party,
February 20th-21st

New Member
Orientation, Monday,
March 16th

Three Year Retreat
Sealing, April 4th

Overview of the Three
Turnings, Saturday,
April 18th

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—not realizing the impact this habit was having on her life.

She was afraid she would again “fail.” It was 1993, and KCC was on the verge of big changes. Lama Michael Conklin, fresh from his Three Year Retreat, had just moved to Portland from the Bay Area. “I was deep in a full-out midlife crisis, and I needed tools,” Kathleen recalls. “I began with just five minutes a day. I knew I could handle that.”

She experienced her first weekend-long retreat in 1995—on her 50th birthday. Back then it was a full house when ten people gathered on a Sunday, nothing like today’s crowded urban center.

Growing up the oldest of three in a military family that traveled around the world, Kathleen had often been called upon to lead the way. Yet, at this point in her life, she realized she needed to take a break from this habit. “I resisted. I didn’t want to be depended on,” she says.

Sally and Jeff Alworth, Barbara Bell, Linda Besant, Deborah Brink Wöhrmann, Julie Hurlocker, Sally Mead, Barbara Miller, Rosemarie Sweet, and Dean Conklin contributed to the production of this newsletter.

Yet by 2000, when the KCC board visited the land near Goldendale to consider it as the future Three Year Retreat land, Kathleen was serving on the board. “I knew then I wanted to live out there someday,” she says.

She had already brought KCC’s bookkeeping methods into the electronic age, sometimes helped with the children’s program, and led meditation when needed. In other words, she was deep into KCC’s development and held plenty of responsibilities, especially financial (since she ran her own bookkeeping business).

When she first realized she wanted to do a Three Year Retreat, there was no way she could: Her family situation made it impossible, and she had a vital business with clients who counted on her. Nonetheless, in 2001, she and Julia King Tamang were among a number of people who went to India and received empowerments to someday do retreat.

Kathleen—who turns 70 in March—says one reason for aspiring to go on long retreat is curiosity: “Over the years I’ve heard more than one person say, after completing a Three Year Retreat—independent of each other—that after a year they felt they couldn’t go on. But after three years they felt they could go on forever. What could happen given that long time frame?” she wonders. She is also curious how life will be when no one is depending on her. “What would I be if no one depends on me? Who am I?”

Finally, she relates to Alan Wallace who says it takes 10,000 hours to hone a skill—music, medicine, athletics—to become exceptional at something.

“Compassion and insight are skills that can be cultivated in much the same way,” Kathleen says. The retreat is an opportunity.

She began to prepare for this stepping away from lay life years ago. More important than giving away books and pottery or selling her home of thirty years has been spending quality time with people she loves.

For five years, she visited her parents in Texas for a week each month. Her mom—who had been one of Kathleen's biggest supporters—had Parkinson's. Because Kathleen was self-employed, and her children grown, she could make her own schedule. “It was a precious time,” she says. Kathleen's mother passed on three years ago. Her 91-year old father is still driving and well and lives in a senior community in Texas.

Over this past spring, Kathleen spent a week with her sister who was recovering from a mastectomy. This time gave them the chance to visit in a way they hadn't in years.

Her three sons say, “If it's what you want, go for it.” Yet, she has found some resistance from friends who don't understand how she can simply take off—and leave them—for three years. Some worry they won't meet again. Kathleen realizes they feel as if she is abandoning them. She tries to assure them of her care and her own long-time aspiration to spend these years in contemplation and growth.

“For me, it all happened as it needed to happen,” she laughs and then relays the story of Milarepa and how his teacher, Marpa, asked him to build towers.

“Over there,” said Marpa, and so Milarepa built the towers as instructed.

“No—I think they need to be built over here instead,” Marpa responded.

So, Milarepa broke the towers down and rebuilt them again—according to Marpa's instructions.

“Milarepa was being put through experiences he needed to have. He was paying his dues—so he could become who he needed to become to be better prepared for the next part of his journey,” says Kathleen. So it has been for her.

“I like Buddhism because it doesn't tell people how to think. It offers tools. The Dharma teachings come from thousands of years ago—saying the same things that we need to hear today,” she says. “It reminds me that I have the choice of the view I hold. It's not easy—and I must remind myself often.”

“There is a tradition in my family to do further education late in life: The Three Year Retreat will be mine.” She is grateful for the teachers at KCC and for Bokar Rinpoche, Thrangu Rinpoche and Khenpo Rinpoche. “They have all been pivotal on my journey to Three Year Retreat.”

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, April 4th, mid-morning to mid-afternoon, at Ser Chö Ösel Ling
KCC is hosting a Sealing Ceremony for
its first group of Three-Year Retreatants

Reflections on the Journey to India

By Julie Hurlocker

I felt inspired to travel to India this year, enticed by many rich opportunities and offerings. It wasn't only the precious combined Mahamudra and Yidam seminar teachings. There was this year's Kagyu Monlam celebration, with special commemoration of the lives and works of Kalu Rinpoche and Bokar Rinpoche, with such an awesome gallery of pictures and Thangkas, visually capturing some of the wonder of their amazing lives. And how could I miss the opportunity to receive the blessings of the Shangpa empowerments right alongside several of our own Three Year Retreat aspirants? All of this was set on the sacred ground in and around Bodhgaya, a destination for Buddhist pilgrims from all over the world.

There is always something of a shock, I imagine, even for seasoned India travelers, crossing the cultural and economic divide between here and there. I am armed with face masks, water treatment strategies, food precautions, diarrhea remedies, hand sanitizer, flashlights for the frequent, inevitable electrical brown outs, and toilet paper and am foggy from long hours of travel and time changes. We land in a part of the world where the poverty and conditions under which most of the population lives challenge my heart and mind to stay open—to feel and be with what is, without giving in to the tight resistance I feel, not wanting it to be so...



Not only did we enjoy the exuberantly kind and cheerful teachings and presence of Khenpo Lodro Donyo Rinpoche at the Mahamudra and Yidam seminar, but thanks to Rinpoche's own perseverance and trusty Ngodup's tireless effort, His Holiness the 17th Karmapa himself was convinced to generously grace us with the yidam empowerment. It was quite amazing—at barely a moment's notice, he and his entourage pulled together all the necessary accoutrements, objects and rituals. The empowerment itself was a most personal ceremony, so precious intimate compared to the other opportunities to be in His presence. It included some personal reflections in English from His Holiness himself. We were all so grateful for that alone. But I must confess my added

awe and gratitude for the food offering we all received (all 200+)—a generous serving of delicious cheesecake!

The Mahamudra and Yidam seminar was amazing, full to the brim with students at all levels, from beginners to seasoned practitioners of several decades. It was presented by Khenpo Rinpoche eloquently and with great care to include for us all the precious teachings, while thoughtfully condensing those teachings into fewer, richly-filled days, so that participants could attend all of His Holiness the Karmapa's teachings and empowerments that started before the originally planned end of the seminar... another blessing.

The accomplishments of this young being, His Holiness The 17th Karmapa, are truly awe-inspiring. To accommodate the ever-expanding Monlam, he designed and organized the structure and sacred decor of the huge pavilion. Originally built to accommodate 8,000, this year it held more than 12,000 of us. He compiled a 630-page book of prayers, translated into several languages, with liturgies drawn from varied traditions, emphasizing the "words of the Buddha" in his genuine non-sectarian approach. He planned, organized and presided over a vast schedule of ceremonies, offerings, teachings empowerments, and personal interviews. Throughout the events, he remained a serene, compelling and compassionate presence, tirelessly offering his blessings to everyone.

Chanting started early and made one feel immediately a part of something much bigger than the small, often uncomfortable, "me" and "us." The crowds in the pavilion were overwhelming, but heart filling. Fifty countries were represented. Translations in twelve languages were broadcast over FM radio. The pavilion was packed every day, no matter the bone-chilling, unrelenting cold of the long mornings. Despite the close packing together of people, all 12,000 of us were nourished with seemingly endless supplies of hot butter tea and thick bread delivered by monks and nuns in huge baskets and large teapots during morning and afternoon sessions.

Following Monlam, thanks to KCC and our dear Lama Eric Triebelhorn's efforts, His Eminence Gyaltsab Rinpoche agreed to offer the Shangpa empowerments needed for our Three Year Retreatants. Even though it wasn't otherwise formally announced—place and dates were all last-minute decisions—word got out. The temple was packed to overflowing with at least 300 people, many of whom expressed their gratitude to KCC for instigating and organizing such a wonderful occurrence.

With his usual clarity and lightening speed, Lama Eric provided a simultaneous translation of the teachings and descriptions of empowerments. The immediacy of this made possible for us a very rare and rich experience of these precious transmissions.

Thanks to the efforts of several, most importantly, our own Lama Eric, we were able to enjoy small-group interviews with His Holiness the 17th

Karmapa, Khenpo Rinpoche, His Eminence Jamgon Kongtrol (4th incarnation), and His Eminence Gyaltsab Rinpoche. Each, with their unique and inspiring presence, radiated their blessing.

Finally, there were the many blessings of all the interconnections; the dharma friends from different parts of the United States and from around the world, many of whom have been coming more or less annually for decades. Thanks to those who have made this trip regularly over the years, fostering our connections with the lineage as well as these deep friendships across the globe.

May all who feel the inspiration, and have the opportunity, be free of fear, hesitation and interferences and continue these journeys, keeping this annual tradition and these precious connections alive.



KCC in 2015: A Giant Leap Forward

What a time it is for KCC!

In this sangha, we are often packed in like sardines at 73 NE Monroe, poised to burst out into a new Urban Center. The New Urban Center Team is watching the Portland real estate market like hawks; and a visionary donor whose life dream is to serve the Dharma by helping KCC acquire a new space is ready to contribute one million dollars. KCC will take the leap into a new urban center quickly when the right property comes on the market.

Meanwhile, on April 4th, eleven people will enter Three Year Retreat at SCOL. This is a huge accomplishment—the fruition of 15 years of dedication to the Dharma and the Shangpa and Karma Kagyu lineages, and a concrete (pardon the pun) commitment to the value of deep practice, not to mention a testament to the tenacity of this community.

KCC's Board of Directors cannot imagine a time of more exciting opportunity. We also understand that such opportunities generate change, change, change. We the people who find our spiritual home in the Dharma, who love Lama Michael's and Bill's teachings, and who find family in this community, must leap forward to meet the opportunities we have generated.

Sustaining a larger and therefore unavoidably more expensive Urban Center, and supporting the Three Year Retreatants at SCOL, require a substantially larger budget than KCC has ever needed before, and more volunteers. The Board is planning carefully for ways to function as a larger sangha, and to raise the necessary funds. Every month for the next several months, in this newsletter, on the KCC listserv, on the bulletin boards at the urban center, and on Sundays, we will tell you about what's coming next to invite and in fact urgently encourage your participation and financial support. We start this month, with the three announcements that follow. (And wait until you see what's coming in March...)

During teaching and Q and A the last several Sundays, the topic of faith has arisen several times. We have had helpful discussion about the Buddhist perspective that encourages personal examination and experience as a basis for confidence and trust, rather than blind faith. Decades of experience with this sangha give KCC's Board of Directors confidence that we will indeed leap forward to meet 2015's extraordinary opportunities.

KCC Announces A Job Opening For The Position of Administrative Coordinator

20 hours per week, starting at \$16/hour

If you are a person who...

- Is excited about the challenges facing KCC in 2015, and wants to play a major role in helping us meet them
- Enjoys supporting others to organize their work so everyone's responsibilities fit together smoothly
- Loves to set up systems and organize office spaces and computer files
- Can call on the paramita of patience when working in an organization that will still be 90% volunteer-run

Please **contact Linda Besant** right away to talk about submitting an application, résumé and references for this position.

In addition to helping KCC function smoothly and efficiently, KCC's Administrative Coordinator will have strong management, communication,

and computer skills, and basic bookkeeping knowledge.

Lama Michael Appoints A Personal Assistant

With an active Board of Directors and numerous functioning committees in place, Lama Michael has decided to gradually shift the emphasis of his work to focus more on KCC's core spiritual activities and away from day-to-day involvement in most of the administrative work.

At the same time, he wants to be sure that KCC’s Board of Directors and others have the Resident Lama’s explicit support on important decisions. To make this shift, he asked Sally Mead to fill the role of his personal assistant. Sally agreed to do this for the coming months and to train a replacement if that fits.

It is Lama Michael’s wish that the outcomes of this shift will increase his face-to-face time at KCC, specifically the number of hours he can dedicate to teaching and interviews, and to meetings with individuals in key volunteer positions.

He and Sally are developing ways to facilitate this change, like a garden growing naturally. Sangha members will be informed about specific plans as they are worked out.

Announcing New Member Orientation

Join us for our first-ever new member orientation. This 90-minute meeting (and not a minute more!) is designed for people who want to learn more about the opportunities to practice and volunteer at KCC. We will cover the various programs available for practice throughout the year at KCC so you can plan ahead. We will also give an overview of the different kinds of volunteer roles at KCC so you can consider whether one offers a good fit. There will be many opportunities to ask questions and learn how things work. Come if you are relatively new to KCC and would like to learn more, have been attending for awhile but still have questions, or would just like to see other sangha members.

Oh yes, one other thing: we will have cake.

Monday, March 16th, 7 to 8:30 pm, at KCC

P.S. If you’ve been part of KCC for a long time and have friends who want to know about the community, please invite your friends and join us.

Upcoming Events at KCC

To keep current and check in on happenings at KCC's urban center in Portland, go to the homepage www.kcc.org and view the rundown.

Class to be offered:

Overview of The Three Turnings/Refuge & Shamatha

Saturday, April 18th, 9 am -4:30 pm—led by Bill Spangle.

Ongoing:

Seven Point Mind Training Study Group: This group meets every other week at KCC.

If you haven't had a chance to stop by for the Seven Point Mind Training Study Group, mark Thursday evenings (usually the second and forth), 7-8:30 pm on your calendar. Check the website for specifics or contact Tim Campbell.

Newcomer’s Night - monthly

An introductory session for newcomers to Buddhist practice or to KCC, offered the third Thursday evening every month.

All-day Sit: Monthly on the First Sunday

Each first Sunday is an all-day sit, alternating between Zhinay and Chenrezig.

Young Adult Group: Friday, March 6, 7-9 pm.

“Ananda... Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie is actually the whole of the holy life.” - Upaddha Sutta

Join in for a community gathering of practitioners under the age of 35.

[View this message in your web browser.](#)

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Our mailing address is:
73 NE Monroe Street
Portland, OR 97212
United States

Greetings, !

KCC is in the midst of an extraordinary time. Very soon, the first Three Year Retreat begins. At the same time, the sangha is searching for a new urban center and key volunteer roles are shifting. We hope this issue reflects this growth and change, and that you feel fully updated after reading it.

Please enjoy the issue and let us know how it can be improved to better meet your needs for KCC news.

KCC's First Three Year Retreat

By Deborah Brink Wöhrmann

The KCC community began to envision offering a Three Year Retreat on their own retreat land more than 17 years ago. Very soon, this long-term intention becomes reality.

Beginning April 4, Lama Michael Conklin and Lama Tara Goforth will serve as Retreat Masters for the Three Year Retreat at SCOL. On this day, eleven people will enter into cloistered life. Friends, family, the KCC community and visiting Lamas will celebrate and offer blessings at the Sealing Ceremony on the land (see next article for more details).

After months and years of preparation, these dedicated aspirants will take Buddhist precepts and settle into the even rhythm of retreat life. Rising each morning by 3 am, they will remain in silence most of the day, and engage in contemplation and meditation practices handed down through the Shangpa Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. For one hour a day, retreatants will be encouraged to talk to each other—over the midday break when lunch is served and chores completed. The day will end at 9pm.

News and Events

Saturday, April 4th Three Year Retreat Sealing Ceremony

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New Urban Center

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Seven Point Mind
Training Study Group
March 26th

Young Adult Group
April 3rd

Three Year Retreat
Sealing Ceremony
April 4th

All-Day Sit: Chenrezig
April 5th

Seven Point Mind
Training Study Group
April 9th

Eight retreatants come from the KCC community: Kathleen Benz, Julia King Tamang, Hanna Karlin, Lois Beran, Susan Gladstone, Jane Harden, Galen Doucette and Liza Baer. Maggie Snee of Salt Spring, British Columbia, Wendi Wood of the Corvallis area, and Susan Morgan from Bozeman, Montana, will also take part. Retreatants range in age from 31 to 78.

“Long retreat is important for KCC primarily because it adds to the accumulation of our base of practice, increasing the community's collective wisdom and compassion,” says Lama Michael. “Since our community members are interconnected, long retreat benefits the people who do the retreat, and it also benefits those outside the retreat. When people are on long retreat, the community is inspired in new ways and many people will find that the retreat motivates them in their own practice, as well.”

“KCC has already had the benefit of several long retreats,” says Lama Michael. “Without having done a long retreat, it’s unlikely that I would ever have even visited KCC.” He could not have completed his Three Year Retreat without the spiritual leadership of his Retreat Master, Lama Tsang Tsing. Both Lama Tsang Tsing and he benefited from the many long retreats of their teacher, Kyabje Kalu Rinpoche. They also directly benefited from the long retreats of many other teachers, including Venerable Bokar Rinpoche.

Julia King Tamang, Associate Teacher at KCC and SCOL for many years, wrote in an email, “. . . one has to want to do a retreat more than one wants to do anything else with those three short years. For this to be the case for me, I had to reach an accumulated weariness with the ways that I cause suffering for myself and others. I had to tire deeply of my ordinary life, without losing my love for its preciousness. I am 61. It's happened.”

Though Julia and Kathleen received empowerments to do the long retreat over a decade ago, many of the retreatants traveled recently to India and received empowerments in January.

Susan Gladstone says, “I've wanted to be a part of the retreat since I first learned of it, at a work party at SCOL in 2009. . . As soon as I heard about the retreat—I felt a longing to be there.”

Newcomer's Night
April 16th

An Overview of The
Three Turnings and
the Four Foundations
of Mindfulness
April 18th

DONATE

Linda Besant,
Dean Conklin,
John Jennings,
Barbara Miller, Marci Roth,
Bill Spangle,
Rosemarie Sweet, and
Deborah Brink Wöhrmann
contributed to
the production of this
newsletter.

Jane Harden, the only retreatant who also took part in SCOL's first One Year Retreat, says, "I'm going on retreat to learn how not to be self-centered."

Hanna Karlin, who began attending KCC about ten years ago when a friend invited her, says, "I decided to do the retreat after recognizing the value the practices had in my life. I like doing them and feel that being removed from the busy life with all its social obligations for a stretch will be better."

Maggie Snee says it's been "a life dream to do long retreat." She hopes to deepen her practice and "become a better person for myself and other people to live with." For Maggie, as a Canadian, seeking permission from the U.S. government to live for three years at SCOL has been an added challenge.

The preparation for long retreat is significant in itself. Many retreatants have expressed what Lois Beran says: "Some good things are: getting rid of a lot of possessions I don't need; connecting strongly with friends and family; becoming more focused in my practice."

Liza Baer, the youngest, made her decision to go into long retreat in October—after a summer of serving as a member of the Retreat Committee and managing several retreats at SCOL. "Three Year Retreat... will allow me an opportunity to become more familiar with my internal world, my mind, and the way that I relate to occurrences," she writes. "I also welcome the opportunity to be present with the discomforts that arise, and be in a supportive situation where I can stay with them, work with them, and maybe even befriend them."

"The people who return from this 3-year retreat, having had a good retreat, have the potential to bring benefit to KCC and to the world in general," says Lama Michael. "We may find a teacher or two among the three year retreat graduates. The future of the center depends on this. Some of the 3-year retreat graduates will be able to help our more advanced practitioners deepen their practice. Others from the retreat may benefit other centers, or just the world in general. There is a kind of continuum that we are trying to nurture. It's both our privilege and our responsibility to help re-generate the spiritual resources we've used in this life."

"In addition, there's some possibility that our retreat could produce a yogin, or a hermit who dedicates her or his life to continuous practice. Retreat can be a seed for this kind of activity. Someone in continuous retreat at SCOL or under the auspices of KCC could provide inspiration and a living example of a life completely centered in the dharma. This would also be very good."

Sealing Ceremony for Three Year Retreatants

Please join the KCC community in celebrating and “sending off” its first group of Three Year retreatants at the Sealing Ceremony, to be held at Ser Chö Ösel Ling on Saturday, April 4.

There are two potential arrival times: 8:15 – 8:30 am for a 9:00 event, or 9:45 – 10 am for a 10:30 event. From 9 am to 10:30 am, Venerable Lama Tsang Tsing from Eugene will preside over the rituals of Green Tara practice and Fire Puja. These ceremonies are traditionally done to dispel obstacles and encourage auspicious conditions at the beginning of a retreat. The rituals will be chanted in Tibetan and will be accompanied by traditional instruments. While these ceremonies are open to all, they will be mainly of interest to those who are familiar with the practices or those who simply wish to witness the ritual. Since space is limited, close friends and relatives of the retreatants and those taking part in the ritual will be offered chairs; others may have to stand.

The Farewell Wishes begin at 10:30, and will be the final opportunity for interaction and farewell with retreatants. A very simple lunch begins at 11:30 outside. Please bring a large bowl and fork for your meal and something to drink.

Carpooling will be essential since there is very little parking space available at SCOL. To get or offer a ride, please **contact Margaret Janssen**. In your email, let her know whether you need or can offer a ride, the number of people you can transport if driving, your general location, phone number and the day and time you are leaving for SCOL.

The Retreat Sealing Ceremony will occur after lunch, outside on the dock landing before the retreatants circumambulate the compound and are sealed in the gates of their cloister. Cloister gate sealing will be finished by 1:15 pm.

Due to the nature of the event, KCC will not be able to offer use of the facilities inside the cloisters for the ceremony. But every effort will be made to keep our cherished guests warm and comfortable. KCC leaders are hopeful you will consider coming for this precious dharma event.

A Sangha Tale

By Linda Besant
Illustrations by Marci Roth

Long ago (in the 1990s) and far away (in Texas and California), there lived a man who studied and practiced the Dharma all by himself (“No teacher, no personal instruction, no sangha”) for seventeen years.



Then he found KCC, and he met Lama Michael. (“Every word that came out of his mouth was like gold. I was pretty thirsty when I got here, and I drank a lot of KCC’s teachings.”) Now he had a teacher, and a sangha!



Three years went by, and the volunteers who help things work at KCC noticed that the man attended regularly. They had Lama Michael invite him to a leadership retreat. (“They knew I couldn’t say no...”)

They walked and talked with the man, and gradually asked, “Would you be willing to be on the Board of Directors?” (“I told them why I wouldn’t do it

—my deepest reserve is around saving time for my family life—it's utterly non-negotiable. But there was a lot of recognition for that.”) He said yes.



Time passed. Many people who had been leading KCC were preparing to go on Three Year Retreat. It was clear that new leaders would have to step up. He felt completely unqualified, but he could see that KCC needed many people to stretch beyond their



comfort zones. And he had some dreams. (“I had one dream where I was in a room with spiritual teachings all over the floor, piled high, and I was pulling out papers from the Shangpa and Kagyu traditions and saving them.”)

Next thing he knew, he was Board President (“My platform was, I’m not qualified, and if I’m elected the meetings will end on time.”) working in a team with a new Assistant President and a strong Board.



He's a guy who loves to quote wisdom. As KCC's leaders ask all of us to step up and help the sangha, he quotes Eleanor Roosevelt, who said, "Do the thing you think you cannot do." It's working for Tim...

Update on the Search for a New Urban Center

By John Jennings

The New Urban Center Committee has been very active since October. We have reviewed a lot of buildings and were excited to actually make an offer on one building. In the process, we have learned some sobering lessons about the realities of the current market.

So far, over twenty buildings have been identified as being within our broad parameters (size, price, location) and being for sale or potentially for sale. While some were brought to our attention by Sangha members and Team members, most have come through our realtor. We systematically reviewed each against our criteria and filtered down to about eight that appeared to have potential. Many of these only needed a drive by review to determine they would not work. Of all these, four seemed like good candidates that needed more research, including site visits. One of them was a beautiful historic church in downtown Portland near PSU. From the outside, it looked great and the price was unbelievable. Then we went in. We quickly discovered a lack of useable rooms besides the sanctuary and social hall. We found serious weather damage both to the ceiling and windows, bird invasion in the attic, asbestos on ducts in the basement, limited bathrooms, a very difficult handicap access upgrade, and a huge unknown in major repairs. We walked away from it. Several other "hot prospects" were sold or were taken off the market.

One building, a 1929 historic bank right near KCC on Martin Luther King Boulevard, got us excited. Over a one week period we went into high gear

to procure the building. We made numerous site visits, including several with Lama Michael, and attempted to secure additional donations. We made an offer with full Board approval while learning there was also another offer on the table. Offers and counter-offers ensued. But we soon reached a figure that, even before remodel costs for public use were factored in, became far more than we could afford. At the last minute, we were outbid by the other buyer.

As a result of this purchase effort, our team benefited from having an actual live example to negotiate from end to end. Also, the search process has made it clear that prices are rising and that we will need significant resources beyond what we currently have available to acquire a building in this market. We have learned a lot about what additional costs might be incurred to remodel a space. We learned about how fast we have to move to win a sale and that we need some key things in place before we make an offer, just one of those being adequate funding.

We WILL keep looking while at the same time seeking additional funds to make this dream a reality. Send us your good energy and prayers for the perfect center. We are all in this together.

Board Announcements

Your Superfluous Stuff Can Help KCC Leap Forward in 2015

Your surplus stuff—from the jewelry that no longer suits your style, to the tchotchke your Grandma gave you years ago or the musical instrument you no longer play, even the dharma books you just don't have space to house any more and need to pass on to another practitioner—can all be of benefit to KCC. The Board's plan to raise the necessary funds to support KCC's evolving needs includes a whole new source of revenue—our extra possessions.

We're going to expand the bookstore to include used dharma books and more Buddhist art and practice supplies. We're going to begin doing eBay auctions ("Buddha's Attic"?) of small items. And we're going to have a hopping-good Sangha Summer Yard Sale.

So as you get started on your new year's aspiration to unclutter your life, or dive into spring-cleaning, don't give that stuff away to Goodwill. Box it up and save it for a few weeks while we get organized to receive it for KCC. We will let you know where and when to contribute your items in the April e-newsletter and on the announce and community list-serves.

And how are we going to get organized?

KCC Announces a Job Opening for the Position of Sales Manager

Starting at 15 hours per week, at \$12/hour

If you are a person who

- Is excited about the challenges facing KCC in 2015, and wants to play a major role in helping us meet them
- Is well-organized and detail oriented
- Is tech savvy
- Appreciates the service involved in helping sangha members liberate their extra belongings for the benefit of others

Please **contact Linda Besant** right away to talk about this position. We will provide training in on-line sales.

With Three Year Retreat Beginning on April 4th, We Need RVs or Campers at SCOL...

It is now clear that construction of the stipend volunteer residence at SCOL will not quite be complete when Three Year Retreat begins on April 4th. We need help to house the folks who work so hard in support of retreatants until their residence is finished, from the last week of March through April. We're looking for the loan of three RVs, travel vans, Winnebagos, etc. Even if you do not have an RV, please reach out and spread the word. Ask your friends, your neighbors, your Uncle Ralph... This will be good karma for sure, for the person and the vehicle.

Anyone who might be willing to loan KCC an RV or rent it at a reduced rate, please **contact Linda Besant**.

Upcoming KCC Events

The Three Turnings

"The Three Turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma" will be a major theme at KCC this year. These teachings provide a window into our profound intrinsic potential as well as a framework to see how study, contemplation and meditation can be cultivated and applied in the path of our life. The core of this series of teachings will be four Saturday workshops, beginning with an overview of the Three Turnings on April 18. There will also be other classes and retreats to explore special topics and provide opportunities for practice. **View more information about the full program.**

Additional upcoming events...

Newcomer's Night

Thursday, March 19, 2015 - 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Seven Point Mind Training Study Group

Thursday, March 26, 2015 - 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Young Adult Group

Friday, April 3, 2015 - 7:00pm to 9:00pm

Three Year Retreat Sealing Ceremony
Saturday, April 4, 2015 - 9:00am to 2:00pm

All-Day Sit: Chenrezig
Sunday, April 5, 2015 - 9:00am to 4:00pm

Seven Point Mind Training Study Group
Thursday, April 9, 2015 - 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Newcomer's Night
Thursday, April 16, 2015 - 7:30pm to 9:30pm

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SER CHÖ ÖSEL LING **UPDATE**

A Kagyu Changchub Chuling Project

THE SEALING OF SCOL'S FIRST THREE YEAR RETREAT

by Abby Cummings

On April 4th, Kagyu Changchub Chuling celebrated a momentous occasion with the sealing of its first three year retreat at Ser Chö Ösel Ling—The Land of Clear Light Golden Dharma. Seated in the lava rocks and ponderosa pines of Goldendale, Washington, the retreat sealing was an event more than 15 years in the making.

Guests came from as near as Hood River and as far as South America to give farewell wishes to the eleven retreatants: Kathleen Benz, Julia King Tamang, Hanna Karlin, Lois Beran, Susan Gladstone, Jane Harden, Galen Doucette, Liza Baer, Maggie Snee, Wendi Wood, and Susan Morgan.



Green Tara Puja

The day's events began at 9:00a.m. in the shrine room of the south cloister, led by Venerable Lama Tsang Tsing of Kagyu Dakshang Chuling in Eugene, Oregon, who served as retreat master during Lama Michael's three year retreat. Accompanying Lama Tsang Tsing were Lama Sonam, Lama Yangchen, and Ani Kunzang who were all on three year retreat with Lama Michael.

The primary leaders of the the three year retreat will be KCC's Lama Michael Conklin and Lama Tara Goforth of British Columbia. Addressing the audience of visitors, Lama Michael noted the prevalent "sense of joy" filling the air as

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THE SEALING OF SCOL'S FIRST THREE YEAR RETREAT

NEW BEGINNINGS AT SCOL

CONTRIBUTING TO SER CHÖ ÖSEL LING

DONATE

Barbara Bell,
Linda Besant,
Abby Cummings,
Jake Cummings,
John Cusack,
Jessica Dennison,
Barbara Miller,
Marci Roth,
Bill Spangle,
Rosemarie Sweet, and
Peg Swift contributed
to the production of
this update.

the community came together to support retreatants in doing “what they feel so passionate about doing.” He noted the exceptional amount of time, prayers, people-hours, and donations that made possible the creation of SCOL and the three year retreat.



Retreatant Lois Beran receives a kata from Lama Tsang Tsing

Lama Tsang Tsing then guided the audience through the Green Tara Puja. Lama Eric Triebelhorn performed the Fire Puja in the bright sunlight just outside the shrine room. Through the translation of Ani Kunzang, Lama Tsang Tsing observed the “great power and great benefit” in doing the practice together. He said that “real benefit is realized from actual practice,” and encouraged the retreatants to give their “very best.”

Then came farewells. Sangha members, friends, and family filed through the shrine room offering the retreatants katas, hugs, smiles, tears, gifts, gratitude, and blessings. A delicious buffet lunch was then provided by SCOL staff and sangha volunteers, while lamas and retreatants remained inside the cloister.



Following lunch, the sealing ceremony for the retreat began. Lama Tsang Tsing led retreatants in a circumambulation of the north and south cloisters. The appropriate blessings and rituals were offered and white kata given to each retreatant. The retreatants then filed into the cloisters, and the gates were shut—the retreat was sealed.

NEW BEGINNINGS AT SCOL

by Jake and Abby Cummings

The staff quarters at SCOL have reached completion, marking the end of KCC's initial construction goals, and giving way to a time of new beginnings at Ser Chö Ösel Ling. Newly-hung prayer flags flap in the wind. With the turning of spring, the grasses are green, the ground is defrosting, and the three year retreat has begun.



During the months leading up to the retreat sealing, hired contractors and sangha volunteers put in an incredible amount of work. The fruits of these efforts are seen in the great accomplishment of the residence building and in many other details around the cloisters.

In the new building, residents all have separate apartments with kitchen and bath that are well sound-proofed for privacy. On the way to each unit is a communal living room, providing the opportunity for staff

socializing. Down some steps is a shared meditation room. Of the room's placement, sangha volunteer Jef Gunn says, "You don't pass it on the way to somewhere else; you go there to go there." The layout and design of staff quarters is meant to support a contemplative lifestyle and provide a sense of home. Windows in the building regard calming scenes like Mt. Hood, oaks and pines.

In addition to preparing the new quarters, many other projects have been needed around the cloister in recent months. Volunteers organized and deep-cleaned the cabins, touched up paint, and laid down gravel on the cloister paths. Around the perimeter of the cloisters, they worked on the fire break designed to stop or slow the advancement of fires.

Among the final details added to the cloister before the retreat sealing, outside the door of each cabin in both cloisters hangs one of the eight auspicious signs. Sangha member and graphic artist Tara Sullivan designed the plaques several years ago, and, with the help of master woodworker Steve Parker and the painting of Betta Ledbetter, they were finished and installed during SCOL's February work party. In addition, Sullivan watercolored paintings of the Heavenly Kings of the four cardinal directions which are now mounted outside the gates of the cloisters. Images of the Four Kings were traditionally placed on retreat gates to invoke protection from malicious forces. Sullivan's paintings include elements that she came upon while researching 16th century thanka paintings, including rainbows and cloud patterns.



After the many months and years of bustle leading up to this time, resident staff and volunteers now turn their focus to supporting retreat. The road to the center is quieter, the coming and going has slowed. Retreatants are inside practicing with guidance from the retreat lamas. Away from the land, sangha members practice with them, united in a wish to benefit all beings.

CONTRIBUTING TO SER CHÖ ÖSEL LING

This incredible milestone would not have happened without your generous support. As construction wraps up, we are calculating the final cost of all of our building at SCOL. Donations can still be made to the Building Fund to

cover any remainder. Additionally, if you wish to contribute specifically to the upkeep of Ser Chö Ösel Ling, please designate gifts to the Cloister Fund, which go toward retreat expenses not covered by retreat fees and will pay for SCOL maintenance.

Checks can be sent to:

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Or you may donate online

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Greetings, !

Welcome to our first summer issue. We hope you will appreciate the varied offerings. We strive to combine topical updates with background pieces and reflections on practice. In that vein, you will find information about a new KCC initiative, an article on KCC's Young Adult Group and a reflection by one of our sangha members on her time in Nepal and how it has shaped her practice.

We begin with a note of thanks to the staff and volunteers who make the Three Year Retreat possible. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank the contributors to this e-newsletter, a number of whom make a regular commitment to writing stories of interest to our community. My special thanks to Barbara Miller, who lends her indispensable knowledge of on-line publishing to the production of this newsletter.

Thanks Abound In the First Three Months of Three Year Retreat

by Linda Besant

Close to three months into the long-awaited Three Year Retreat at SCOL, it is time to thank the staff at SCOL and the many volunteers who have helped to get retreatants settled in.

First, the staff—Peg Swift, Marie Maretska, and Chuck Murray. These are the people who care 24-7 for the eleven retreatants, the land and facilities at SCOL, and Lama Michael and Lama Tara when they are present. Peg, Chuck and Marie have been working full-tilt for much longer than three months. Preparation for the Sealing In Ceremony that launched Three Year Retreat was multilayered. The cloisters and all the retreat cabins had to be ready for occupancy, and all the retreatants given assistance with moving in their belongings; and the weekend of April 4th was packed with events and guests. Thanks especially to Peg for her unflagging efforts in getting it all done.

News and Events

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July 5

Seven Point Mind
Training Study Group
July 9, July 23

Second Turning and the
Four Immeasurables
July 11

REGISTER

Newcomer's Night
July 16

Board of Directors
Meeting
July 19

All-Day Sit
August 2

Tonglen Retreat
September 25-28



Since April 4th, the staff has been face-to-face with their truth for Three Year Retreat—those eleven people must be fed three times a day, at 8:00, noon and 6:00 on the dot. And it is not like KCC’s winter retreat seasons or a Tonglen retreat, where the attendees help with prep and cleanup. The work in the kitchen is relentless. A steady stream of sangha volunteers has assisted in the kitchen. Linda Logan, Charlotte Kangas, Adele Hilsen, Zopa Heron, and Karen Marks have all done several tours of several days; and Barbara Bell, Tani Biale, Abby and Jake Cummings, Sophie Douglas, Jace Maretska, Sally Mead, Betta Ledbetter, Cathy Neumann, Carolyn Peck and Rachael Simmons have done a tour each. It would not have been possible to keep those retreatants fed without them.

Special thanks also go to Peter Wood for getting the wi-fi hooked up in the new staff residence, to the team that set up the beautiful shrine room in the staff residence, and to Adele Hilsen for all kinds of land stewardship work.

Throughout this three months, we’ve been searching for just the right person to work with Marie in the kitchen, and we think we have succeeded. Stay tuned for the next e-newsletter to hear about SCOL’s newest staff member.

The Liberation of Stuff

KCC’s board understands that our sangha now has larger responsibilities; in particular, caring for people in Three Year Retreat and searching for a new urban center. With growing responsibilities come increasing expenses, thus a need for more revenue. The board thought carefully about new ways to increase revenue, and identified “the liberation of stuff” as a potential source, through eBay sales and a summer sangha yard sale. We see this as an on-going effort for at least a few years. The board’s revenue goal for this project is \$20,000, all of which will be used to support general operating expenses.

REGISTER

DONATE

Linda Besant,
Ryan Fitz,
Deborah Brink Wöhrmann,
Barbara Miller, and
Rosemarie Sweet
contributed to the production
of this newsletter.

We are thrilled that sangha member Ryan Fitz has agreed to take on this project. Below is his invitation to donate to KCC's brand new eBay auction site.

Dream Big, Start Small

In order to develop a reputation as a reliable seller, we will begin by auctioning smaller items of modest value. To this end, we are requesting donations of items that fit in a shoebox (but need not fill a shoebox) and are worth \$50 or less. eBay experts we have consulted with suggest donations such as jewelry, electronics, small statues, artwork, children's toys and kitchen gadgets, among other items.

Once we achieve a seller rating that gives buyers confidence to spend more with us, I will send an announcement that we are ready to accept donations of larger and more expensive items. Eventually, an eBay store will be created.

For now, please do not donate shoes, clothes, books and items that are particularly well-suited to a yard sale

Bookstore

In time—but not yet—we will gladly accept your donations of dharma and other spirituality-related books. I will be working with the Bookstore committee to establish goals and a timeline for expansion of our book sales, a used book sale, and creation of an on-line bookstore. Until further notice, please hold onto your books for donation. Other bookstore items, such as malas and pecha covers, will eventually be sold online, as well.

Yard Sale

An end-of-summer yard sale will be held on August 22, and certain donated items—appliances, patio furniture, for example—will be better suited to the yard sale than the on-line store. I will send a separate announcement about the yard sale.

Please Deliver

You can leave donations on the table in the KCC basement. Please leave detailed information about the items, such as whether they are used, new, what materials they are made of and their age. I will need your contact information in case I have questions about the items. There are donation receipts on the basement table for those wishing to claim tax credits for their donation. Donors should fill out the entire form and I will sign it for you.

I will also welcome deliveries when I am at KCC, on many Sundays, at least as many Wednesdays, and even more frequently in between, by appointment.

Ready, Set...

If you have questions related to donations or sales, **please contact me**. I often prefer to handle complex or lengthy discussions over the phone and can be reached at 503.830.6245, which may also be the most efficient means of getting questions answered.

Thank you all for your contributions to this and other efforts to support KCC. I feel excited and privileged to have the opportunity to work more directly to benefit the center which has supported me so thoroughly. I also appreciate the

patience and understanding of the community during this foray into a new form of fundraising.

With gratitude,
Ryan Fitz

KCC's Young Adult Group

by Deborah Brink Wöhrmann

When Holly Hashimoto, now 30, attended Newcomer's Night at KCC, in the fall of 2013, she asked Bill Spangle if there was any group for young adults in the sangha. This question sprouted what is now a thriving, supportive community of peers that meets on the first Friday of every month. With Bill's support, Holly and a few others began meeting and planning. They decided to choose a theme for each month and created Group Guidelines to uphold a consistent set of precepts for conversation. That was the beginning of what has become the KCC Young Adult Group.

"There is unique value in sharing experiences on a spiritual path with those in a similar life stage. It's not better, only unique," says Holly. "There are questions, social pressures, patterns of education or behavior that we share in a heightened way."

Each month a different member agrees to facilitate the circle and brings a theme. Attendance has ranged from five to fourteen, though the list-serve and several group emails announcing events each month are distributed to 27 members who range in age between 19 and the early 40s.

"Themes are based on questions, struggles and observations from our lives," says Holly. Some of her favorites have included "Resistance is fertile," "The tyranny of the search for the optimal life," and "The universe is a verb." In the beginning, Bill Spangle, who has served as the group's Program Council mentor, helped generate the theme, but now members draw from current issues in their practice lives.

"It's a kind of crucible of dharma ideas, where we wrestle with things together that we're not yet sure how to bring to a more formal dharma conversation," says member Sam Snoek-Brown. "I recall several months ago a particularly interesting conversation where we were addressing some of the racial tensions that had become front-page news. The minute someone brought it up, the rest of the group expressed relief at having broached the subject and we all talked about how to even ask questions about those social tensions in a dharma context."

He says no one is teacher in the group "because none of us is qualified to do that." "We spend plenty of time wrestling with those smaller, personal emotions, too—discussing our workdays and our relationships and our days spent dodging traffic or stuck in it, and then trying to figure out how the dharma might speak to all that and what we might ask of our teachers later."

Member Jordan Hamilton says, “For me, the KCC Young Adults group has become a comfortable space where I can converse with like-minded individuals. I moved to Portland two years ago and hardly knew anyone. It was another ‘young adult’ that introduced me to the greater KCC community.” Jordan does not think she would have stuck around if it was not for his encouragement to give meditation a try in dealing with her daily mental struggles.

She began attending Sunday night Shamata. “My favorite part of sitting on Sunday nights is the Q&A that follows. However, I was quickly made aware that—at 25 years old—most people my age don’t match my curiosity when it comes to exploring a spiritual path or discussing the dharma. “There are lots of grey areas that are intimidating at first, and I think that can scare people away from beginning even a basic relationship with meditation.”

“When meeting with KCC Young Adults, I am met with open minds and true hearts without the typical social pressures, obligations or agendas. Even when we aren’t meeting formally on first Fridays, it is my experience that the relational qualities we’ve developed in the group are carried with us beyond the KCC setting.”

According to Holly, who planted that first seed two years ago, consistency is a challenge for the group. “Many members work or attend school full time and don’t have regular schedules. Often different people attend each meeting; so it can be challenging to make decisions, carry forward a conversation from month to month, or follow through on projects.”

Because she lives and works near KCC, Holly has committed to attending each meeting to greet newcomers and provide regularity.

“When I think of the three prajnas, I consider this group to fit into the ‘contemplation’ aspect of my practice. I receive or ‘hear’ teachings from the Program Council teachers, and I ‘meditate’ with the teachings at KCC on Sundays or privately. The YA Group helps me deeply consider, wrestle with and reflect on the experiences generated by the other activities of KCC. I find that very enriching.”

Reflections on Nepal

by Linda Besant

Linda Besant is a KCC sangha member who trekked in Nepal last December to raise funds for Nepal SEEDS, which works with villagers to provide water systems, biogas composting toilets and cooking systems, assistance with schools, and scholarships.

On the bright, cold morning of December 12, 2014, in Kyanjin village at 12,000 feet in Nepal, I stood in the upstairs window of Hotel Yala Peak looking down on the village square. Three Tibetan toddlers romped around their mother as she scrubbed laundry in a tin washbasin. Gradually I grew aware of the sound of chanting—“ka, k’a, ga, nga; cha, ch’a, ja, nya...” Someone was practicing the

Tibetan alphabet, as I had aspired to do regularly since taking the Tibetan language courses that KCC sponsored last summer.

Just below my window, a grandmother sat on a low stool with an exercise book, reciting her letters. I learned that this was Jangbo Lopchen, who lives up the hillside at Kyanjin Gomba where the villages of the upper Langtang valley have pooled their resources to construct buildings for their elders to live together; and that the lama is teaching the women to read Tibetan, and that the women are thrilled to have this opportunity. Jangbo Lopchen and I sounded out pairs of letters from her exercise book...“ra-na—rang,” “da-ra—dar.”

We were invited to the Gomba. As we arrived, four of the elders were headed down to the forest to gather firewood and haul it 1,000 feet back uphill. This was clearly not an assisted living center.

We visited the room where the elders practice and study, with a simple shrine, the seat where the lama teaches, a pile of exercise books where the students had written the Tibetan alphabet over and over, and materials for mandala offering identical to those we use in KCC’s Mahamudra program. I was flooded with gratitude for the Dharma, for KCC and the authentic teachings we receive, and for the interconnectedness that brings us all together across such vast geographic and cultural distances.



Village of Kyanjin



Jangbo and her grandson

On April 25th, when the 7.8 earthquake hit Nepal, the Langtang valley with its steep walls and glaciated peaks was terrifyingly vulnerable. Kyanjin was hit hard. In a double-whammy of earthquake tremors followed by avalanche debris and shock waves, the Tibetan stacked-stone buildings crumbled. The village of Langtang, where we had also made trekking friends, was completely buried under rock, snow and ice. Only a few people survived out of three or four hundred.



Kyanjin village after the earthquake. Photo by Colin Haley.

I wanted to drop everything in my life and go to Nepal to help. A very unwise compulsion, but nothing else felt worthwhile in the face of such suffering and loss. All right then, get to work raising funds for relief and rebuilding, which I've been doing, but...

In my practice, it's been impressive to observe how much difference it makes when I know the people who are suffering. So much fuel to practice Tonglen, and the Four Thoughts that Turn the Mind just plain vibrate. Precious Human Existence—I keep feeling grateful for mine in a way that's downright embarrassing, with gratitude that I wasn't there during the earthquake, followed by renewed commitment to the Bodhisattva vow. Impermanence—a village of people who cared for me and my friends is GONE. Could the Faults of Samsara be more evident? Karma—why, oh why, did this happen? What complexity of causes and conditions came together here? Yet already, who could have imagined, glimmers of some good outcomes appear. Nepali young people are side-stepping their mired government and planning for better building techniques in the recovery efforts.

So many of us at KCC know and love people in Nepal. Since the earthquake, Sunday Q and A discussions have been helpful to me, with sangha members offering the wisdom that in my practice, feeling close to the suffering of Jangbo Lopchen and all the people of Nepal can be a gateway to feeling compassion for all beings.

KCC Events

Summer has arrived, and the KCC community continues to support its members as many members support the community. Below you will find upcoming events

listed. But here are a few highlights:

Consider attending the Second Turning and the Four Immeasurables day-long retreat on July 11. Bill Spangle leads this opportunity to either review or learn anew more about Tibetan Buddhism.

The Seven Point Mind Training Study Group continues to meet every other Thursday, and all are welcome. No need to arrive well-read: Come join the conversation, and you might find yourself inspired.

The KCC Young Adult Group also continues with monthly, first-Friday meetings. This peer-led community welcomes all ages, though its current members range between the ages of 19 and the early 40s. (see this month's feature article for more on this group).

Young Adult Group

Friday, July 3, 2015 - 7:00pm to 9:00pm

All-Day Sit: Zhinay

Sunday, July 5, 2015 - 9:00am to 4:00pm

Seven Point Mind Training Study Group

Thursday, July 9, 2015 - 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Thursday, July 23, 2015 - 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Second Turning and the Four Immeasurables

Saturday, July 11, 2015 - 9:00am to 4:00pm

REGISTER

Newcomer's Night

Thursday, July 16, 2015 - 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Board of Directors Meeting

Sunday, July 19, 2015 - 1:30pm to 4:30pm

All-Day Sit: Chenrezig

Sunday, August 2, 2015 - 9:00am to 4:00pm

Tonglen Retreat — Taking and Sending

Friday, September 25, 2015 - 4:00pm to

Monday, September 28, 2015 - 1:30pm at Cloud Mountain

REGISTER

[View this message in your web browser.](#)

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KCC's mailing address is:
73 NE Monroe Street
Portland, OR 97212
United States

Greetings, !

In this issue, we are happy to apprise you of two creative and enjoyable fundraising activities taking place this summer. In addition, we begin a series in which we feature exceptional thankgas, curated by our own Sanje Elliott, an esteemed thankga painter and collector.

We begin with gratitude for KCC's board of directors, who make this spiritual community so successful and effective.

With Gratitude

By Jennifer Cox

This month, we want to acknowledge the **Board of Directors**: Tim Campbell, Linda Besant, Holly Hisamoto, John Jennings, Sandy Pollock and Pat Parker. Our thanks also go to Peter Frothingham, minute taker extraordinaire.

The board of directors is always on top of what needs to be done - ready to listen, problem solve and make things happen at KCC! They dedicate a Sunday afternoon every month to thinking about KCC from an administrative side. Thank you to the Board for keeping our foundation and intentions clear and for weaving the administration so beautifully into our Dharma center.

Sit For Mindfulness

By Jennifer Cox

Raise Pledges for KCC by Meditating!

A SIT FOR MINDFULNESS at Grant Park
NE U.S. Grant Place and NE 33rd
12:30pm - 6:00pm

This labor day weekend, KCC is putting on a sit-a-thon!

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Jennifer Cox,
Sanje Elliott,
Rosemarie Sweet, and
Ryan Fitz contributed to
the production of this
newsletter.

LOOK AT ALL THE INTERCONNECTIONS:

We have all contributed to a walk, a ride, and a marathon to support other important causes. Now it is our turn to sit in support of something we believe in.

- We all have friends and family members who are curious to try meditation. This is a great opportunity for them to join us!
- Plus, mindfulness practice contributes to the welfare of all beings
- AND, supporting practice contributes to the welfare of all beings!
- A SIT FOR MINDFULNESS IS JUST RIGHT FOR KCC!

What does a sitter do and how does this work?

Sitters are the heart of this event. We are seeking to recruit at least 51 sitters by July 24th. Each sitter does the following:

- Pledges to sit for mindfulness on Sept. 3rd for any amount of time they choose.
- Raises funds for KCC before the event, by asking family members, neighbors, friends and colleagues to sponsor their sit.
- Defines their own amount of time they will sit, from one to four sessions.

Sitters will receive an instruction packet describing how to ask for contributions, with a donation record sheet, credit card forms, donor receipts for IRS purposes, and collection envelopes. If you want to gather contributions but cannot be there on September 3rd, we will gratefully apply your pledges to another sitter's efforts.

If you wish to sit or otherwise volunteer, please contact jcox@kcc.org. Help will be needed to set up, staff drink and information tables, monitor the meditation area, assist with the snacks and celebration and clean up.

It's not a walk,
It's not a run,
It's a **SIT-A-THON!**

All donations
help sustain KCC

For the benefit
of all beings

A great
opportunity
for friends
& family to
participate

Curious?
contact:
jcox@kcc.org
or go to:
www.kcc.org

Grant Park

NE U.S. Grant Pl & NE 33rd Ave.
NW corner of the park

September 3rd
Saturday, 1-5pm

Gates open at 12:30

Celebration: 5pm-6pm

A Sit for Mindfulness

a
KCC Fundraiser

2016

Sign up to Sit!

Help raise funds for KCC by pledging to sit for any amount
of time on September 3rd
Volunteer to meditate!

Painting At the Land of Retreat

By Jennifer Cox

Beginners Welcome!

Saturday, July 30

9:00am - 5:00pm

Saturday, August 6

9:00am - 5:00pm

With Jef Gunn

There is still room to sign up for the next installment of the summer painting series out at SCOL.

This is a unique opportunity to experience the land in a different way. For those with no painting background, Jef Gunn will guide you through a day of painting the sacred high desert retreat landscape. He will also be teaching an experienced painters workshop the following weekend. If you are a beginner and take the first class, you are welcome to come to the second class as well. There will be a 10% discount for anyone who signs up for two classes.



Jef has been painting in the California, Washington and Oregon countrysides for forty years, and he held residencies in Barcelona and Paris in the 1980s. His work moves between abstraction and spontaneous realism, and he has been teaching for twenty years. Jef currently teaches painting workshops at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, and in his own Portland studio. With a balance of humor, broad knowledge, and helpful insight, Jef is able to draw from each student her or his own natural way to paint. He is also fond of applying historical examples in his teaching, especially those of the Impressionist and Modern periods.

Registration ends soon, so [sign up](#) today.

Featured Thankga: Vajradhara

By Sanje Elliott

Vajradhara (Sanskrit), Dorje Chang (Tibetan), is the first figure in the Kagyu Lineage. Tilopa, the first human in the lineage, received direct teachings from Vajradhara on the qualities of emptiness, and passed them on to the rest of the lineage.

Vajradhara is said to be a "primordial" or "Adi Buddha" and embodies the qualities of emptiness, thus his blue body color. He has essentially the same attributes as the Nyingma deity, Kuntuzangpo, except that Kuntuzangpo is always

shown naked without either Buddha robes or the Sambhogakaya clothing of the Vajradhara.

In addition, Vajradhara is said to be the source of the Buddhas of the five Wisdom Buddha families: Amitabha (red), Ratnasambhava (yellow), Akshobya (blue), Ratnasambhava (green), and Vairocana (white).

This painting was created by Bhutanese painter, Thinley, whom I first met at Rumtek, Sikkim, in 1971. Thinley now lives in Kathmandu, where he continues to paint. This thangka is in my personal collection and will be given to KCC eventually.



July Events

Upcoming events at KCC include some new and some continuing opportunities, but please note the Thursday evening Mind Training Study Group is taking a break. Keep a watch on the website, www.kcc.org, for updates. For now, here is what is happening:

All events are at KCC Urban Center unless otherwise noted.

Young Adult Group

This monthly meeting welcomes the under-40 set to gather and talk about the dharma as it relates to daily life.

Friday, August 5, 2016 - 7:00pm to 9:00pm

All-Day Sit: Zhinay

Resident Lama Michael Conklin provides detailed instruction on the practice of Zhinay, the foundation of spiritual practice at KCC, on

alternating first Sundays from 9:00am to noon. Following a potluck lunch, there is a question-and-answer session from 1:30pm to 2:45pm, and then a last session of meditation ending at 4:00pm.

Sunday, July 3, 2016 - 9:00am to 4:00pm

Newcomers' Night

This is a great opportunity to stop by KCC, ask questions, and get acquainted with the community, as well as the ways of Tibetan Buddhism as practiced at KCC. If you are new or sort of new or just want the chance to be reintroduced to KCC, please stop by.

Thursday, July 21, 2016 - 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Practicing the Four Opponent Powers - Invigorating Your Practice in the Mahamudra Program

The third in a series of four classes, this event will include a prepared teaching on the Four Opponent Powers, Vajrasattva group practice together, an opportunity to share experiences in community (particularly carrying practices aligned with purification and Vajrasattva), and a ngondro and mahamudra question and answer session.

Saturday, July 23 9:00am — 12:00pm
Led by Erik Fromme and Bill Spangle

REGISTER

Painting at the Land of Retreat

The second and third summer painting classes hosted by KCC at SCOL, where participants will spend the day painting high desert prairie, arid brushland, and pine and oak savannah landscapes under the guidance of highly-reputed plein air artists and instructors.

Jef Gunn will lead both classes. Visit the [painting series website](#) for dates and details about subsequent classes.

Saturday, July 30, 2016
Saturday, August 6, 2016
Ser Chö Ösel Ling

REGISTER

Board of Directors Meeting

Sunday, July 17, 2016 - 1:30pm to 4:30pm

For more events, **[view the KCC calendar.](#)**

Streaming

KCC has begun streaming on YouTube, at this URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/kccmedia>

[View this message in your web browser.](#)

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