



# Nyingma Trust

Our mission: To sustain and protect the health and safety of our community of Dharma practitioners, in honor and support of their commitment to the vision of Tarthang Rinpoche and the Nyingma lineage.

2425 Hillside Ave, Berkeley CA 94704

www.nyingmatrust.org

510-809-1550

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Odiyan Enlightenment Stupa

*“Prayer is deeply nourishing to the human heart and mind; it awakens aspiration for beauty and truth, and opens inner pathways through which knowledge can manifest in our lives.”*

- TARTHANG TULKU



Nyingma Community Members Praying

## NYINGMA TRUST WALKS: SPONSOR A PRAYER

Nyingma Trust Walks are held next on the Celebration of Buddha’s Enlightenment Day, May 27, 2010 and on Losar, the Tibetan New Year, March 5, 2011.

On the morning of a Trust Walk, the Odiyan community completes a full and traditional ceremony at the Enlightenment Stupa. The energy on these days seems to have a profound clarity and purpose, allowing the purity of a quiet retreat setting to nurture spiritual practice. Tibetan tradition says that Enlightenment Day carries a magnification of energy of 10,000,000 times.

Upon completion of the traditional ceremony, we begin the Trust Walk. Everyone circumambulates the stupa clockwise with the requests of donors in their hands. Alive with the sounds of horns and conch shells, the air is punctuated by the rich tones of the Odiyan Stupa bell. The practitioners pray for the positive fulfillment of these sponsored wishes.

### The Meaning and Power of the Stupa

The Enlightenment Stupa is one of eight forms of stupas described by Nagarjuna as representing major events in the life of the Buddha and the formation of the Sangha, the Buddha’s direct disciples. All stupas represent the Buddha sitting in meditation, a symbol of enlightened mind.

The Buddha demonstrated the stupa’s form by folding his robe four times for the base, inverting his almsbowl and placing it upon the robe for the dome, and placing his staff upon the bowl for the pinnacle. With Buddha relics placed within, the field of enlightenment is thus expanded, transforming mundane earth into the ground of realization.

### Why We Walk

In Buddhism, especially in the Tibetan Nyingma tradition, circumambulating a sacred stupa is a meritorious action viewed as having powerful healing qualities.

Many Buddhist traditions believe that stupas radiate oceans of blessings and positive energy. The Odiyan Enlightenment Stupa is empowered by sacred art, texts, prayer wheels and relics of an enlightened lineage. These blessings are evoked through sponsoring prayers.

We believe that the Odiyan Stupa has the power to answer prayers and heal all manner of negativity. Sponsoring a stupa prayer offering on Buddha’s Enlightenment Day is a precious opportunity for all of us to participate in the profound power of this sacred form.

Buddha’s Enlightenment Day and our next Trust Walk is May 27th. Buddhists worldwide hold this day as an especially auspicious one for prayer. We invite you to join us through your sponsorship.

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*May 15th 3-5pm  
Learn more about  
Stupas when Nyingma  
Institute re-dedicates  
its garden Stupa to the  
Longevity of Tarthang  
Rinpoche*

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Nyingma Trust has made a significant contribution toward the health and safety of our community of Dharma practitioners since its inception in 2008.

We have succeeded in maintaining basic health insurance for over sixty of our long-term, full-time Nyingma volunteers, and are motivated by this initial success to reach beyond the basic health care needs of our community, into enhanced medical services and health care savings for the future.

We have put great faith in the Dharma as a vehicle for deep spiritual healing, but this last year has shown us with the loss of three friends, that we indeed are very human and cannot avoid sickness and old age. We need to protect the cadre of practitioners who have been personally trained by Tarthang Tulku in a very realistic and grounded fashion. As we continue to be a part of Rinpoche's expanded vision to protect all schools of Buddhism and its vari-

ous regional and cultural traditions, we need people who have a deep and experienced sense of what that means and how to go about it.

The more we stay healthy and strong, the more we can all play a vital role in these cross-cultural processes that have developed over the last few decades. The Dharma is steadily moving into the Western world, not just in casual experimental fashion, but also with strong values and

evident changes in the ways people are living and acting towards our planet and all sentient creatures within it. We want to be ready for what these next decades bring and hope that you will join us.

Sincerest Best Wishes in the Dharma to all our friends and supporters,

Judy Rasmussen  
Nyingma Trust Director

*Ways to Offer a Prayer on*

**BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT DAY**

**May 27, 2010**

**To celebrate Buddha's Enlightenment, do something truly special by offering the gift of prayer.**

**Buddha's Enlightenment Day carries a special power believed to magnify all energy ten million times.**

Visit our website to hear some of the sounds of the ceremony and to view the feedback from last year's participants.

Donate by using the business reply envelope or go online at [www.nyingmatrust.org/Participate/donate.html](http://www.nyingmatrust.org/Participate/donate.html), or call (510) 809-1550.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ELIZABETH COOK, NYINGMA VOLUNTEER SINCE 1977



Elizabeth (Betty) Cook, M.A. has worked within the Nyingma centers for 33 years, serving on the faculty of the Nyingma Institute from 1977-1995. Since 1978, she has worked with Tarthang Tulku as an editor for Dharma Publishing, and continues to participate in research supporting the work of the wider mandala of the Nyingma Centers.

*What attracted you to work at the Nyingma Centers?*

When Tarthang Rinpoche arrived in America, he spoke little English and had almost no financial resources. Even so, he was able to establish several centers, mak-

ing it possible for his students to have a comfortable place to live and work. Even though he hailed from an entirely different culture, he recognized the need to provide for his students, not luxuriously, but adequately, by living cooperatively. He taught that the spiritual path had more to offer than preoccupation with material gain. This appealed to me.

*What are some of the things you have learned in your 35 years as a student here?*

I have learned to live simply without many possessions. This can pose a difficult challenge. We are not comfortable giving up our autonomy or our things. It takes a period of adjustment. There is a higher purpose for what we do and it offers more satisfaction than simply seeking my own enjoyment. I've changed.

*What do you find most meaningful within this unusual lifestyle?*

When I work honestly, seeing my problems and moving past them, I find my life becomes more interesting, more pleasant. I'm actually happier. I've realized there is a lighter, freer way of being, a way that is more rewarding. Working and living closely with others can be difficult, but I learn from engaging situations directly,

thinking things through, and coming to conclusions that I can support in light of the teachings.

I feel privileged to work on projects that transcend "me". Work that doesn't stretch you, doesn't have much value – it's flat, not alive; there is no discovery. Offering my energy freely, without focusing on myself, changing from a self-centered orientation to a larger, more generous way actually feels better. The way we work keeps the ego in balance; its value depends on how it benefits others.

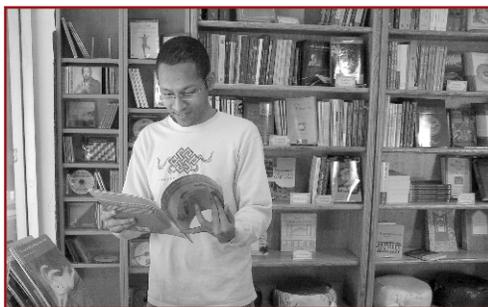
*What have you done recently that was particularly rewarding?*

I recently took a teaching trip to Brazil. So many people who attended the talks appreciate wholeheartedly what Rinpoche is doing. I was fortunate to be a bridge - nurturing seeds sewn by others. Through projects developed out of Tarthang Tulku's wisdom and vision, new horizons stretch out for people's use of their minds and energy. If we had not been here to help translate, print and manifest by building temples and sacred images, these new perspectives and ways of seeing may not come into being.

## NEW OFFICE AT 2210 HAROLD WAY, BERKELEY

Nyingma Trust shares office space with the Tibetan Aid Project, and Dharma Publishing's bookstore. More than twenty volunteers work together on projects that range from the Prayer Flags for Peace sewing team, the Guna Film Project, TAP events and Nyingma Trust activities. We are within close proximity to the Berkeley Main Library, the YMCA, and three short blocks from UC Berkeley campus bringing a constant stream of foot-traffic thus encouraging access to those interested in Dharma projects.

The bookstore provides Buddhist practice items both from Nyingma Trust's on-line gift catalog and those from TAP's website. All income from books and items



is dedicated to the creation and production of sacred Tibetan texts, art, prayer flags, prayer wheels and the furtherance of Dharma projects such as the distribution of literature to Tibetan refugees in the vast Himalayan region. Please stop by when you are in downtown Berkeley.

## TIBETAN PRAYER FLAGS: A TESTAMENT TO OUR INTERDEPENDENCE BY KELLY DREW

It is quite remarkable to witness the life cycle of a prayer flag. Bold and vibrant for a time, a prayer flag becomes almost unrecognizable after years of exposure to wind and rain. Sturdy, resilient material is transformed into a delicate web of thread, as the last remaining fibers barely cling to the printed letters of the mantra. Upon seeing these weatherworn flags, many of us are instilled with a deep sense of serenity, knowing that every gust of wind, even the slightest breeze, brings prayers for peace and compassion to every being upon the earth.

The winds are the ultimate carriers of these blessings. However, this natural force is last among a long line of more intentional processes for manifesting these prayers. As a work-study volunteer for the Nyingma Trust, I have been fortunate enough to be a part of the creation of these flags. My daily sewing contributions continually remind me that this great process is sustained by patience, teamwork, meditative concentration and an overall sense of benevolence.

The prayer flag's journey begins as the elaborate layouts of the flags for the upcoming year are inspired and designed by Tarthang Tulku. Images of deities are carefully matched with specific mantras or sutras to develop the type of blessings that will be transmitted. The final flag designs are then made into large, intricate stencils and screen-printed onto sturdy nylon fabric. Just this past October, complete with a multifaceted equipment setup, a daily commencement chant, and a sacred blessing of holy water, our team

of volunteers successfully printed 3,000 flags in the backyard of the Nyingma Institute in Berkeley. While the printing only happens once a year, the next step of sewing the flags is a daily activity. Full-time, part-time and periodic volunteers dedicate a great deal of meticulous effort to the completion of these offerings.

The final step generally takes place at Odiyan in Sonoma County. This is where the majority of our largest flags are hung, at high altitude in a most stunning sacred setting. Worned flags that



have spent their days basking in hundreds of sunrises and wrestling with their fair share of torrential downpours are retired and replaced with their successors. It is quite remarkable to note the cycle of these flags as a reflection of our own experience as human beings: both are only manifested through our interdependence upon this earth, and endure through the winds of change.

*If you would like to join us in our goal to sew 2000 flags each year, we always welcome volunteers at our Berkeley center to assist. Find our handmade prayer flags for purchase on our website catalog at [www.nyingmatrust.org](http://www.nyingmatrust.org).*

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS FROM DON CIRLIN

As a 50-something American man I visited the Nyingma Institute for a Sunday Dharma talk. I wanted to become involved with Tibetans; as a man of Jewish heritage, I feel empathy for Tibetans. When I entered the Nyingma Institute, I was in awe of the beauty, elegance, peace and order. In the meditation room I saw and heard the life-size prayer wheels and was moved by the ever-present energy of prayer for peace and higher consciousness filling the earth.

The talk was inspiring and very down to earth. So I contacted the Nyingma Trust to see if I could be of service. I decided to come to work as a volunteer, intending to learn how to trim the prayer flags. In the first 10 minutes, I was asked if I knew how to write a press release. I have a degree in communications and have done publicity work so I immediately went to work on a press release for the Valentine's Day - Tibetan New Year prayer walk. Soon we were recording a 15-second PSA for Clear Channel Radio, sending out announcements, and developing a media guidebook for the future.

It is a pleasure to work alongside people who are devoted to a purpose beyond their individual success. I am so thankful to Tarthang Tulku for bringing the Nyingma tradition to Berkeley and making it possible to contribute to this meritorious activity.

It is still hard for me to believe that it took this long for me to find out about it, but that's one of the great things about life - there is always something new to learn.

Oh, and by the way, the lunch that is served is pretty much the best food I have all week. The kinship that I felt when I first arrived at Nyingma continues to grow.

### Wheel of Dharma: Planned Giving

Wheel of Dharma Society members have included Nyingma in their estate plans.

We have an Estate Planning Organizer to help you collect your important documents in one place and to clarify your distributions to loved ones and favorite causes.

Call us if you would like one sent to you.

No obligation. (510) 809-1550

*"When our organization began, almost no one had real knowledge of the Dharma. Over the years we have learned by doing, by making a contribution, learning that behind each manifestation of the Buddha-dharma stands a long lineage and a rich, deeply significant history. Even for students who leave the community, the connection with the lineage, and the opportunity to share in its blessings, endures."* TARTHANG TULKU

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW CAMPAIGN TOUCHING GRATITUDE

It is a rare privilege to devote oneself to full-time Dharma work, fulfilling the vision of Tarthang Tulku and his lineage of Nyingma teachers: preserving the Dharma in Asia and introducing Buddhist wisdom to the West. Our community is grateful for the opportunity to work on sacred projects, participate in the translation of Buddhist teachings, engage in activities benefiting all beings on our planet, and to have the opportunity to work so closely with an authentic and visionary teacher and guide.

Reading the websites of our sister organizations focuses our goals for Nyingma Trust to help sustain and preserve our community of like-minded individuals who have trained with and offered help to Rinpoche's projects.

Our small yet effective group is expanding and also aging, and we will need a lot of support to help some of us into old age and to keep the health and vitality of our younger members strong. We hope you will join Nyingma Trust in a new campaign that wholeheartedly seeks to express the gratitude for all that has been built and for all who have worked so hard over the past forty years.

By participating in Touching Gratitude, you can express your own appreciation towards this vital work - not only by offering funds for support, but by accepting our patron gifts of sacred art, practice aids, literature and workshops, offered to help deepen your meditation and understanding of this tradition.

If you wish to learn more about exciting options for larger offerings or estate planning gifts, please contact our office by calling (510) 809-1550.

### The Nyingma Trust Touching Gratitude Campaign - Patron Benefits\*

All of our donors will be gifted with prayers for good health at the Odiyan Stupa on May 27, 2010, Buddha's Enlightenment Day, with its magnification power of x10,000,000. In appreciation of your generous patronage, we offer these special benefits and gifts for donations of the following amounts: *Donors may make a one-time lump-sum gift or schedule monthly account withdrawals. See our Reply Card or visit [www.nyingmatrust.org](http://www.nyingmatrust.org).*

- \$300 Prayer Bead Patron: \$25/mo**  
A 27" string of 5 Prayer Flags and a Rosewood Mala
- \$500 Jeweled Mala Patron: \$42/mo**  
Metta Buddha replica statue of the Buddha in the Bodh Gaya Stupa, India  
A Healing Mala, bone inset with turquoise and coral  
A Copy of *Padmasambhava Comes to Tibet* by Yeshe Tsogyal
- \$1000 Copper Patron: \$84/mo**  
A string of 15 Prayer Flags and a Metta Buddha replica statue  
An Avalokitesvara Series of 5 Saffron Prayer Flags  
A Gourmet vegetarian lunch hosted by the Mangalam Center  
Participation in a Center for Creative Inquiry Event  
An 18" x 24" Thanka Giclee
- \$2500 Bronze Patron: \$209/mo**  
A Metta Buddha replica statue  
Any 3 Saturday workshops of your choice (pre-requisites filled)  
A complimentary ticket to the annual *San Francisco Taste and Tribute Dinner*  
A Retreat on Death & Dying given at Ratna Ling Retreat Center
- \$5000 Silver Patron: \$417/mo**  
A Metta Buddha replica statue  
Any one 3-day Seminar at the Tibetan Nyingma Institute, including  
A Thanka that embodies the seminar's meditation practices, and  
Registration in the following workshops:  
Medicine Buddha--Healing Workshop  
Avalokitesvara ---Compassion Workshop  
Manjusri---Buddhist Studies Workshop.  
A complimentary ticket to the annual *San Francisco Taste and Tribute Dinner*
- \$10,000 Gold Patron: \$834/mo**  
A Metta Buddha replica statue  
A full week-long retreat with private instruction  
A 5 day Retreat at Ratna Ling, focused on Developing Questioning Minds  
Complimentary tickets to *San Francisco Taste and Tribute Dinner* and the  
*New York Taste and Tribute Dinner*

\*Items listed are generously gifted by these organizations: Nyingma Institute, Dharma Publishing, Tibetan Aid Project, Ratna Ling, Mangalam Center and Light of Buddhadharma Foundation International.

The community members of our sister organizations and projects are offered health insurance supported by Nyingma Trust activities:

Nyingma Centers ([www.nyingmacenters.org](http://www.nyingmacenters.org))  
Nyingma Institute ([www.nyingmainstitute.com](http://www.nyingmainstitute.com))  
Tibetan Aid Project ([www.tibetanaidproject.org](http://www.tibetanaidproject.org))  
Dharma Publishing ([www.dharmapublishing.com](http://www.dharmapublishing.com))  
Yeshe De Text Project ([www.yeshede.org](http://www.yeshede.org))

Ratna Ling ([www.ratnaling.org](http://www.ratnaling.org))  
Odiyan Retreat ([www.odiyen.org](http://www.odiyen.org))  
Odiyan Stupa ([www.odiyen.org/stupa.html](http://www.odiyen.org/stupa.html))  
Guna Foundation ([www.gunafoundation.org](http://www.gunafoundation.org))  
Mangalam Centers ([www.mangalamcenters.org](http://www.mangalamcenters.org))