

# Gaden Notes

Newsletter of Gaden Relief Projects

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## Gaden Relief Tibet Expedition 2004



Gaden Relief Projects is pleased to announce that it will be sending a relief team to Tibet and Mongolia this summer!

The Tibet expedition will include Gaden Relief Spiritual Director Zasep Rinpoche and a team of doctors who will visit Jamseng Health Centre. They plan to deliver medicine, treat patients and assess the future needs of the hospital (a fresh water pipe, herbal medicine machinery and solar panels are already on the agenda). They will also be conducting numerous studies with the people in the area to better understand health and hygiene needs, particularly having to do with children and women's health. The Mongolia portion of the trip will consist of Zasep Rinpoche and Matthew Richards (The Mongolia Project Director) supervising the installation of a Gaden Relief sponsored well at Amarbayasgalant Monastery and assessing future projects in Mongolia.

Inside this issue, Zasep Rinpoche remembers his long time student (and friend of Gaden Relief) Gerard Allan. Rinpoche also explains the particular goals of this summer's Tibet trip and the future of Jamseng Health Centre. Didi Zasep answers questions about the state of the Geywa Seniors Home Project. The Mongolia Project is introduced and particular initiatives detailed. Finally, donor forms and volunteer information are included at the end of this issue

***Thank you for your continued support of Gaden Relief Projects!***

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## Remembering Gerard Allan

*Gerard and his wife Maxine began what is now the Sera Je Health Care Centre, and their activities were part of the inspiration for founding Gaden Relief. Gerard Allan spent the last three decades actively serving relief organization such as Gaden Relief, working as a psychologist in his homeland of Australia and also intensively practicing and teaching Buddhism. Gerard Allan died in 2003 of a brain tumor. Zasep Rinpoche remembers his long time student and friend.*

### ***Rinpoche, how long did you know Gerard?***

I met Gerard first time in 1976 in Australia; I've known him since then.

### ***When you met him at that time, was he already doing relief work with Tibetans?***

No. At that time he was just learning and studying Dharma. He came up to a Tibetan Buddhist centre in Queensland, Australia called Chenresig Institute. I was teaching and translating there, and he came just to study.

***And later on did he begin to do relief work at Sera Mon-***

### ***astery?***

In the early eighties, after I came to Canada, Gerard and his wife went to India, then to Sera Monastery in South India. They set up what they called then the 'Sera Dispensary'. So they were working for the monks and the lay people, especially a lot of young boys had skin problems, scabies and problems like that. They had coughs and also a lot of them had TB. Gerard and his wife Maxine started working to set up the 'Sera Dispensary', and later it became 'Sera Je Health Care Centre'. Now it's a big, very successful health care center there.

## Gerard Memorial continued...

### *Were Gerard and Maxine involved in starting Gaden Relief Projects?*

No, Gaden Relief began here, in Toronto.

### *For those of us who never had the opportunity to meet Gerard, how would you describe him? How would you like Gerard to be remembered?*

Well, I would like to say, as I said earlier, I have known Gerard since 1976, and he was a very spiritual person. Not only a Dharma practitioner, he was a very strong person. He was very devoted to spiritual work, to Dharma practice, devoted to Buddhism. Also, he was very devoted to promoting and teaching Buddhism. And he was also very devoted to his wife and two daughters. He was very charming, extremely kind and hard working, gentle and a good person. I would say he was a good practitioner, a good Dharma person, especially in the area of engaging the Dharma into the world. So, he worked for the Dharma and he was director and teacher at several Dharma centers since the 1980's. And he became a very close student of mine; I was very close to him. I appointed him as a Dharma teacher in the area where he lived, and he had a number of students. So Gerard was a very good man and teacher, and a good friend for so many people. We were very fortunate to have a good friend like Gerard.

### *Now that Gerard is gone, what has been the impact on those left behind and his projects?*

Well, it was very hard and shocking when we found out he had a brain tumor. It was very hard especially for his wife and children and also many, many friends, to lose Gerard. He was a very important person for the Buddhadharma in Australia. And Gerard was also a psychologist, and he had many, many clients. He was a very good psychologist and a good Dharma teacher; I would say a very brilliant and skillful psychologist and Dharma teacher. So, it was sad losing Gerard and I think many people were in shock when he died and I think some people are still grieving and going through the process of recovering from their loss. But also Gerard's sickness and death was a very powerful teaching, very inspiring. Because Gerard was an amazing person, through his sickness he was so calm and peaceful and clear minded, letting go of everything. He was an incredibly good example for us of a good Dharma practitioner, especially when we have to deal with sudden sickness and death. It was very powerful and very inspiring. I was with him for a week in Australia just a week before he died, and I found it very inspiring and very dignified, very peaceful. His death was a very good example for all of us.



### *Are there any specific projects of his that you hope people will continue?*

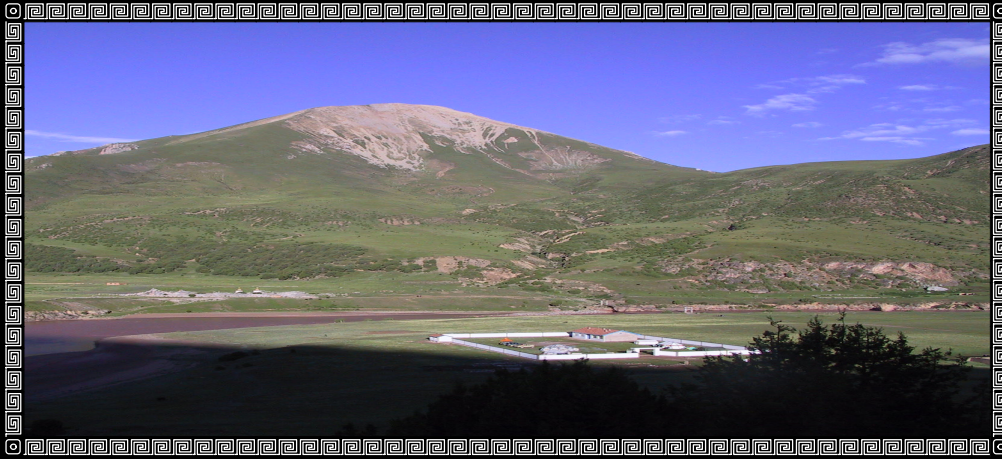
Yes, we do have several projects. One project was a book between Gerard and me, we were going to be co-author of a book. He did a long interview- there are many, many tapes, about lamrim and psychology, about Buddhism and psychology. So, like how to integrate lamrim (gradual path to enlightenment) into everyday life in the West and also how to really study and practice Dharma in this Western world. So, we were going to write this book and he actually had done a lot of the writing and editing, but it is not finished. But now a lot of his friends are finishing the editing, so one day in the near future there will be this book. So that is one project they are working on. Another project Gerard and I were working on was the Jamseng Health Care Centre. Gerard and his wife Maxine raised money, and this is a project we would like to continue. And also, they have a Dharma center where Gerard and Maxine live, called 'Vajra Ling' and they have a community. This was one of Gerard's goals, to continue to have Dharma taught there. His friends and his students are all going to continue to fulfill Gerard's wish.

*Thank you, Rinpoche.*

Thank you.

# Jamseng Health Care Centre

## *Update with Zasep Rinpoche*



### ***Rinpoche, since your last visit to Tibet, has the Jamseng Health Clinic been running?***

Oh, yeah, it's been running. Jamseng Health Care Centre is very active! It's a day clinic. They have an excellent doctor, a Tibetan monk doctor, and he is a very good doctor. They have a day clinic, they have lots of Tibetan and Chinese medicine. Many patients come every day, sometimes up to twenty a day! Most people are local people because there is no other clinic in the area. In the Jamseng area, there is a population of about 9000 people, but this is the only clinic they have. It is running very smoothly, but I couldn't go last year because of the SARS problem, so they need help and funds to buy more medicine and upgrade the facilities, and also we have to pay the stipends for the doctor and stuff. We also would like to buy equipment, for example a machine to grind the herbs and a machine to make Tibetan herbal pills. These machines cost money; I think around 2000-3000 dollars, made in China. That's not a lot here in Canada, but over there it is a lot of money. Anyways, it is running very well, and I'm looking forward to going there in the summer, this July, with two doctors and a nurse. We're going to go there to upgrade and to do a survey about family health care and children's health care and midwifery. We're going to do a specific study on children's health and women's health and hygiene and see what we have to do to increase and expand the clinic.

### ***In the area of the clinic, are there certain main health problems that the people suffer from?***

One of the common problems is high blood pressure. Another common problem is joint problems, aches and pain. Knee pain, shoulder pain, elbow pain, back pain and so forth. Arthritis is mainly caused, I think, by cold

climate, and the high blood pressure may be caused by diet and also altitude. They live, on average, at an altitude of 13,000 feet. Another common problem is stomach problems. They have appendix problems and a lot of people get kidney cist from eating meat from animals that carry cists. Also lack of hygiene. So, those are the common problems.

### ***Are there specific goals for your trip to Tibet this summer?***

Well, one particular goal we are thinking about is that we are trying to find a long-term solution. We realize that we just go there once a year and just take a bunch of medicine and leave it all there, it doesn't really help that much. We are only there for a short time. We do have, as I said, a Tibetan doctor there and it's a traditional Tibetan clinic with Tibetan/Chinese medicine. We wanted that because we want to preserve traditional Tibetan medicine and culture. It's important for the local people to know that their culture, their medicine is valuable. Traditional herbal medicine is healthy, no side effects. And a lot of the medicine can be harvested in the mountains, it's already there. Also, a lot of the medicine is imported from Lhasa (the capital of Tibet) and Nepal. And also, we want to pass on the Tibetan medicinal traditional to the younger generation. I'm going there with a couple of doctors, so we are trying to also introduce Western medicine. Also, we are trying to help people who have diabetes, and those who have TB and people who are injured, who have broken bones. Quite a few young people now-a-days have injuries related to accidents, like children run over by drunk drivers. My sister saw this young boy, he's only nine years old, who was run over by a truck. He was lucky, he survived. Both his legs are broken, his arms are broken and they don't have any money so they couldn't fix it properly and his bones are growing the wrong way. So we are trying to raise money to take him to a big

hospital in China to break the bones and put them back together properly. It can be done, he's only a nine-year-old boy, but that costs money to do. A lot of young people are hurt by motorcycle accidents and things like that. The main thing we want to do is a study about what we can do in the long term about hygiene, clean water, women's health, children's health, midwifery and all those things. We are thinking about training some young Tibetan boys and girls to become midwives and specialist doctors on women and children. So we will do some studies and pick some young people, and then raise some money here to pay for there training.

***For the trip this summer, what is the fund raising goal?***

I don't really have a target goal at this point, I would just say as much as possible (laughing)! Whatever money we can get. People have been very generous and Gaden Relief does have money and we would like to get more money to take over there and buy medicine and set up a permanent water supply. See, when people drink dirty water people get sick no matter

how much medicine you give them, it's like a vicious cycle. So we want to bury a pipeline into the water source. There is a spring about 500-700 feet away and we want to set up a pump and then have a good water system. And also we want to set up solar panels so people can have hot showers. We want to set up a model shower for men and women and say, "This is what we do, it is very important to have clean water for drinking and to have showers". That way people will learn.

***Is that your long-term vision then? That the Jamseng Health Clinic will become a model?***

Yeah. That's what we are trying to do this year.

*Thank you.*

## The Mongolia Project: *announcing a new Gaden Relief initiative*



**G**aden Relief Projects has recently begun a new project to help Mongolians rebuild their rich Buddhist culture. Fifteen years after the fall of communism in Mongolia and the end of Soviet influence in Mongolia's affairs, Buddhism is reappearing as Mongolians rediscover a religious heritage lost since 1937. It has long been a personal wish of GRP's Spiritual Director Zasep Rinpoche to visit Mongolia, as he has many connections with this beautiful country through friends and teachers.

In particular, Rinpoche's connection with the incredible 96 year-old Mongolian Lama Jetsun Rinpoche and Kalka Jetsun Dampa drew him and his student Matthew Richards (now the Mongolia Project coordinator) to visit Mongolia last fall. Following this trip a decision to start a new relief effort to support the reestablishment of Buddhism in Mongolia was taken. It was Rinpoche and Matthew's time at Amarbayasgalant monastery in particular which would inspire the initial effort of what is now Gaden Relief's newest wing; the aptly titled 'Mongolia Project'. This monastery serves an important function for the recovery of Buddhism in Mongolia as it both supports the spiritual needs of inhabitants of nearby Ulaan Bataar (Mongolia's capital) and also offers the

potential for re-establishing the flourishing monastic communities once widespread in Mongolia.

However, the present community (mostly young boys) at Amarbayasgalant monastery suffers from lack of hygiene (and consequently problems with scabies) and lack of access to clean water. The nearest stream is 2km away, and as the monastery is only 120km south of Siberia it is, needless to say, difficult to get good, clean water during the long winter. To remedy this problem, Gaden Relief has already raised funds to drill for a well on the monastery grounds so that fresh water is always available. Heating for the monastery, showers, medical care and many other planned projects for this very vital community of monks is only the beginning of the Mongolia Project's commitment to helping Mongolians rediscover their culture. Visit [www.gadenrelief.org](http://www.gadenrelief.org) for much more info on the Mongolia Project.

## Geywa Project Update

*Didi Zasep is the co-ordinator for this recently added Gaden Relief initiative. The Geywa Project is seeking to raise money in order to provide shelter, food and other necessities for a group of elderly Tibetans currently living out their old age in squalor. Didi Zasep relates the story of how the Geywa Project was begun, how it is progressing and her hopes for the future.*

### ***When did you first become aware of the situation of these seniors?***

I went home to Tibet with Zasep Rinpoche our precious teacher. It was very wonderful to go with Rinpoche because people in that area have many lifetimes relationship with Rinpoche so they came from morning to night to see him to get blessings. Every once in a while these very, very old people came. They were in bad shape, their clothing was in bad shape. So, I followed them when they left and asked them where they lived. They said a nursing home. I asked my cousin and she took me to see the compound where they live and it was in very, very bad shape.

### ***What was their situation like when you first visited them?***

They were living very rough. When I came back having seen this I cannot rest without doing something for them.

### ***Do the local people, or their families, provide any support?***

Local town collected about 1000 Yuan per year (that's about \$200 Can.), and they spend that on medication. For food they go begging or sometimes housewives bring whatever food they can spare. So they don't always have food.

### ***What do you feel is the most urgent thing that these seniors need to be provided with?***

Food, fuel, shelter, caregiver. Especially those who are bedridden and have no one to care for them, feed them, keep them warm. Eventually they die in their own wastes.

### ***How has your early efforts with fundraising for the Geywa Seniors Project been going?***

Its going well! I sell cards with Tibetan pictures to raise money. We have about 20 members of the Geywa Project who are very kind people. I have many slides of the seniors in Tibet and so I do fundraising slide shows in Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia. I am ready to go to other towns to do slide shows too.

### ***Do you feel donors are responding to the plight of these seniors in the same way that you did when you first encountered them?***

Yes, I think so, because we all have the same feelings and are really touched by the situation of these people and we all want to help them.

### ***Will you be returning this summer to Tibet to visit the seniors?***

No, this summer I would like to do more slide shows and raise funds for the Geywa Project and next year take these funds to Tibet for the use of the seniors. I would like 3-5 members of the Geywa Project to accompany me.

### ***What are your short term plans for improving the situation of these seniors?***

Last summer, we went to Zadoh and cleaned up the compound and the buildings and bought beds, clothing and blankets for the seniors. We also supplied one years worth of yak dung for fuel and we left food money for the old people. We also bought bedding for senior monks and nuns in four different monasteries; a nunnery and Dzogchen, Zuru and Tashi Lhapug monasteries

### ***What do you hope Geywa Seniors Project can provide for these people in the future (what is your most ideal vision for their situation ten or twenty years down the road)?***

Our vision is to build a nursing home for 24 old people near a local nunnery This will become a model for others to be built. The nuns can help look after the old people. We will build 25 rooms, a kitchen and a dining room. We will also hire a cook and a build a little clinic. Members will be able to volunteer their time helping with the seniors.

### ***How do you feel personally now that your initial wish to provide for these seniors has blossomed into the Geywa Seniors Project and that you can now do something for them?***

I feel very blessed, very moved. One of the greatest experiences for me through this is that it really enhanced my faith in Dharma and my Dharma practice. I realize that I am not alone; when I truly try to help others, I am a servant of the Buddhas. I see all the kind beings helping them, I see them as bodhisattvas. So, therefore, I am really, really blessed, blown away! Everyday I meet a bodhisattva. I'd like to congratulate all compassionate beings!!!

# !!!APPEAL!!!

Mindful of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's desire to express love and compassion in social action, several students under the direction of Zasep Rinpoche have established and continue to co-ordinate the Gaden Relief Projects as an extension of their Mahayana Buddhist practice.

Because they were moved by the suffering of Tibetans throughout Asia, and recognized the tremendous debt owed to the ordained and lay communities of Tibetan Buddhists for keeping the rich teachings of the Tibetan lineage of Buddhism alive, the Gaden Relief Projects focus has been on alleviating their material needs.

Gaden Relief has been successful, despite its modest size, for its efforts in channeling medicine and funds to the Tibetan refugee community-in-exile and to monasteries, nunneries and hospitals in Tibet. Since 1988, Gaden Relief raised over \$350,000 in donations, of which over 95% reached Tibetans in the form of direct aid. Our very low overhead is possible because we are run 100% by volunteers.

Gaden Relief is non-sectarian in its outlook. Beneficiaries have come from all four major Tibetan Buddhist sects.

If you would like more information on Gaden Relief's various projects, are interested in giving a donation or becoming a volunteer, please visit our website [www.gadenrelief.org](http://www.gadenrelief.org)

## How You Can Help Gaden Relief Projects



Gaden Relief requires donations to provide medical supplies, salaries and other services at the Jamseng Health Care Centre, to continue other ongoing efforts to help Tibetans at home and in exile and to kick start the Mongolia Project. For this summer's Zadoh/Mongolia expedition any donation, no matter how small, will go far to help alleviate the basic problems (medicine, good water etc.) that presently affect thousands of Tibetans and Mongolians. Please visit the Jamseng Health Care Centre web site ([www.jamseng.com](http://www.jamseng.com)) and the Gaden Relief Project's website ([www.gadenrelief.org](http://www.gadenrelief.org)) to find out more and make an online donation. You can rest assured that your donation goes a long way to help Tibetans and Mongolians, as well as providing the infrastructure to maintain their precious culture and traditions. If you are interested in volunteering for Gaden Relief Projects, please visit the web site to find out how you can help.

*Thank you for your interest and ongoing support of Gaden Relief Projects!!!*