

Gaden Relief Projects Board Meeting May 8th, 2014 Minutes

Present: Ven. Zasep Tulku Rinpoche, Conrad Richter, Evan Zaleschuk, Matthew Richards

Regrets: Matt King

Our Gaden Relief Projects (GRP) teleconference meeting began with Conrad expressing his wish to soon withdraw from the GRP Board and its many responsibilities so as to take care of his health, spend more time with family and see to his business. He feels that GRP needs a bit of a change in style and personnel to bring in new energy, ideas and a fresh take on our activities and projects. The Board expressed its deep heart-felt thanks for the decades of devoted, hard work Conrad has done for GRP, having been one of its original members. Conrad feels that this summer is a perfect time to mark this transition. He will stay on as President till the end of Sept. 2014 as to make sure that all the legal fiscal paperwork and such is submitted properly to the Federal government. This will give the GRP Board till the end of December, 2015 to get all the aforementioned relevant paperwork done for the coming fiscal year - more than enough time to find a replacement for his position.

We then talked about how Toronto Sangha member Irene Cortez has expressed interest in redoing the GRP website. She's looking to simplify the interface and bring it in line with current software features. In keeping with this, Conrad says he will transfer the website from his company to a new independent server before he steps down from the Board.

Once again, the Board officially decided that GRP would direct its efforts and focus on Mongolia with its many different projects. While our Ladakh and Tibet Projects are popular, they are for the most part now, non-performing projects. Rinpoche, in his opinion, is very clear that we focus on Mongolia. At this point, the Board has heard nothing from Kim Gutchow for 2-3 years, even though it reached out to her for the GRP 25th Anniversary Celebration. With no connection to either Kim or Lauren, there is very little to be done, in real terms, for our Zangskar Project. We are collecting money for that project but have no means to deliver it to the recipients of our aid. There is more than \$20,000. in this account. GRP will keep it until someone is in a position to deliver it. The Project will be put into a dormant state until then. The Board felt

that it was necessary to ask Kim if she can go, deliver the money and wrap up the work and see that there be a given deadline for this to happen. If the deadline be not met, GRP would then divert the raised funds elsewhere. For instance, we could give the money to the refugee monks at the Nepali Temple we support or the Nunnery in UB. Some members wondered what the protocol regarding this action should be. Conrad said that, from a legal point of view, such an action is entirely up to us as a Board. We are active in Asia with a number of different works and so can use our raised funds for any of them, however, there is an ethical protocol to inform our donors that their earmarked donations will be used for another purpose so they are not surprised, disappointment, upset or disrespected.

Regarding our work in Tibet. The obstacles we face are serious ones. Due to the current political situation and climate in Tibet, we simply can't get official permission to deliver the aid. Our member, Steven, as a citizen of Hong Kong, may be able to do this. As a Board, we'll have to examine this possibility. It's been a long six years since our members last visited Tibet and we have lost a sense of connection and continuity to our community there. From the news we have gathered, many monks have left Tashi Lapug Monastery, there is no Abbot to really provide direction and things seem quite aimless there. Rinpoche feels that we did our best to help but there may not be much we can do for them now given the circumstances. He says we should stop collecting donations for Tashi Lapug. Rinpoche says he will try to deliver the last of the money, \$11,000., for the Monastery when he goes next to visit his brother in Zadoh. He will try to get a Visa and go with Steven. However, they will both see if it is appropriate to go. Eastern Tibet has been in a state of economic and political chaos for several years and it is becoming a dangerous place to visit.

We concluded our meeting with a long talk about our Mongolia Project. Currently, there is about \$16,000. in our General Fund with \$4,000. earmarked for Mongolia. Rinpoche is visiting Mongolia with Irene and Gaby. They plan to leave on July 31st. While there, they will see what kind of support is needed by the Delgeruun Choira Gobi Monastery. There are plans to re-consecrate the large Je Rinpoche (fashioned by the 1st Jetsun Dampa Zanabazar himself) statue recently acquired by the community. Rinpoche will donate relics for the consecration. Gaby will make a movie of the Gobi Monastery and UB Nunnery we support. Rinpoche feels it's important for GRP to continue to support Gerlee's project in giving yurts to single mothers as this is a serious socio-economic problem that besets Mongolia's current culture, as many more poor nomads relocate to urban areas.

After a long discussion, the Board agreed to put money aside for the Mongolia Nunnery and eventually for our Nepali Monastery. Rinpoche said he will check with Ven. Zava Damdin Rinpoche on future plans for the Gobi Monastery and any possible health care projects we could underwrite with funds. Rinpoche will purchase Western and Traditional Chinese medications and herbs for about \$500. to bring to the Mayor of the North West town he visited last year so as to help it's sick and ailing locals. The Mayor has asked Rinpoche to perform a White Tara Tantric Longevity Empowerment while there and hopes to donate land for a monastery there in the future.

We finished our meeting with again calling for a new President of GRP to take over in the Fall, for Irene and Steven to be formally accepted on the Board (which was done unanimously) and Rinpoche saying that he will ask some of his Australian students, such as Antony, if they are interested in joining GRP to help as well, even as advisors or fundraisers.

The next Board meeting was announced for a time in July and perhaps on a new social media like Google Hangout or Skype.

Meeting Concluded