



Thank you for a wonderful evening!

Jurme Wangda, President, Ottawa Friends of Tibet

The Ottawa Friends of Tibet 7th Annual Dinner was a great success! Our warmest thanks to all those who helped with the planning and the dinner itself. It is not possible here to name everyone, but every single effort is important to the success of this event and we do have you all in our heart and mind. We were delighted to have Lucy van Oldenbarneveld of CBC Radio with us this year. As our MC, Lucy brought a special energy to the evening, and many individuals came and thanked us for a very lovely evening and mentioned how much they enjoyed her spirited participation.

My special thanks to Robin Berry who did a wonderful job soliciting the donation of beautiful items for the silent auction from various organizations around the globe. Robin also arranged for the Gaden Jangtse monks to perform at the dinner and earlier at the Ottawa Public Library. Their performances gave us a great opportunity to see a part of their daily activities, and made our annual dinner very special this year.

Thank you to all our guests, who give us a great sense of hope and joy. Without your eager participation, we wouldn't have this successful result. For us, raising funds is the primary purpose of our work, but connecting with people who are more concerned about our world and the future of our children is even more important. We believe that positive change can be brought about only by sincere actions, not by eloquent speeches.

Hope itself is joy. Those who give hope to people are the ones who give joy as well. Rich people are not necessarily the kindest people. But I believe that kind people are rich. Fortunately, many kind people come to our annual events, year after year. This is very encouraging and inspires us to keep our passion for and commitment to helping those who live in desperation.

Finally, please mark your calendar now for our 2004 Annual Dinner on **Saturday, November 13th at Tudor Hall**. We look forward to seeing you there with your friends and family, and sharing your joy, commitment and generosity again.



Photos courtesy of Barb Haddad.



The Celebration of Losar

J. Wangda

LO-SAR in Tibetan means New Year: LO, year, and SAR, new. There is nothing mysterious about it. Sometimes we jokingly say it is not LO-SAR, but LE-SAR, which means new work! LO-SAR is a very happy occasion for the children since they don't have to do the extra work. Besides, they get lots of gifts and are allowed to be a little naughty.

Although the Tibetan Losar, like any New Year, starts on the first day of the first month of the year, ritually the Tibetan New Year begins on the 29th day of the 12th month of the year. Those who are familiar with Buddhist ritual ceremonies, special offerings or practices, know that they always start with purification. Whatever precious objects we have, whether material or non-material, we wish to keep in a clean and safe place, and we ourselves must create that place.

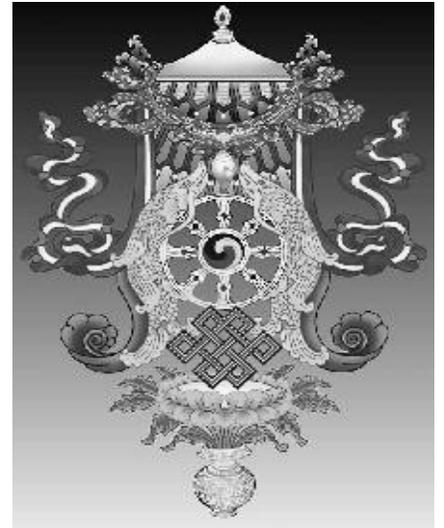
So the 29th is the day to get rid of all evil and negative things, and this cleansing ritual is done in every family. There are three important rituals to be performed at the family level:

1. To thoroughly clean every corner of one's house.
2. To prepare a special *thug-pa* (dumpling soup), called *gu-thug*, where various objects, such as coal, hot chilies, peas, wool, salt, etc., symbolizing traits such as greed, stinginess, gentleness, patience or a hot tongue, are hidden inside the dumplings. At supper time, everyone discovers what's in their dumpling. This serves a dual purpose: first, to see what trait each person gets and whether it fits them or not, and the other to have a good laugh. At the end, every one leaves a portion of the *gu-thug* in their bowls.
3. Later, families collect the leftover *gu-thug* along with other ritual objects, money, cloth, and other items, and send them away from the house to a T-junction. The person who leaves them there must return without looking back. This is the purification ceremony for a common household. Now, one is ready to welcome LO-SAR.

We wish to have a happy, healthy and prosperous new year, and that is why we utter *Tashi Deleg*, or good luck and well wishes, to everyone we see on Losar.

In the monasteries, the monks perform a fire puja, burning various offerings. In any village, town or city, this is one of the most important ritual ceremonies for both spiritual and lay communities. As well, a special puja based mostly on a wrathful deity such as mahakala, haryagriva, yamentaka, etc. is performed. All negativities of any kind are gathered up and finally burned; thus everything is cleansed and the people are ready to celebrate Losar! This particular puja takes a month or so.

Losar is not only a celebration of the New Year, but an opportunity to remind ourselves of the importance of spiritual development. The Losar itself is mainly based on spiritual development, which is much harder to achieve than material gain. Then, of course the real Losar celebration begins and continues for weeks or months. But now, even we Tibetans are catching up to the "developed" nations, so we enjoy the luxury of celebrating Losar for perhaps a few hours or a day.



*Please Join us for a celebration on Tibetan New Year's Eve
Friday, February 20 at the National Library Auditorium.
See insert for details!*

**Enjoy the Year of the Wood Monkey (2004) Shambhala Losar Soiree
Saturday, February 21 at the Britannia Yacht Club, 8—12 PM
Call Marta de Hughes at 232-3648 for tickets before February 17.**



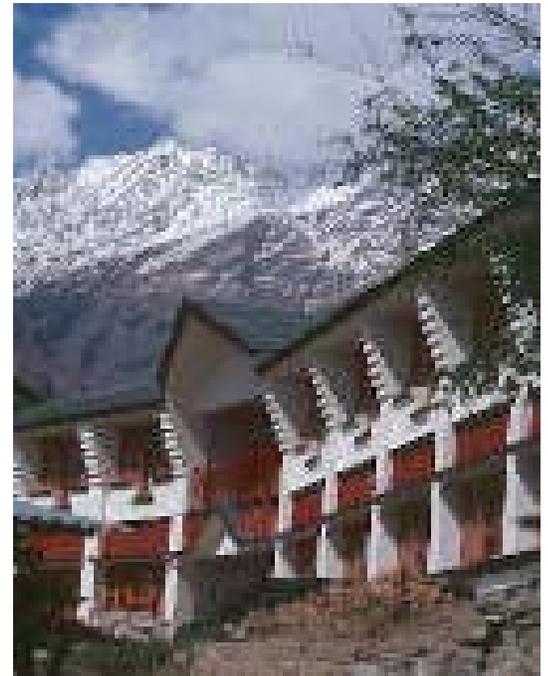
Designing Tibetan Spaces—An Architect's Journey Friday, April 16 at the National Library Auditorium

Those of you who enjoyed Bill Semple's presentation on Tibetan architecture last summer will be delighted to know that he is giving another presentation on April 16 at the National Library Auditorium. We hope you will join us for this architectural journey ! Please see insert for details.

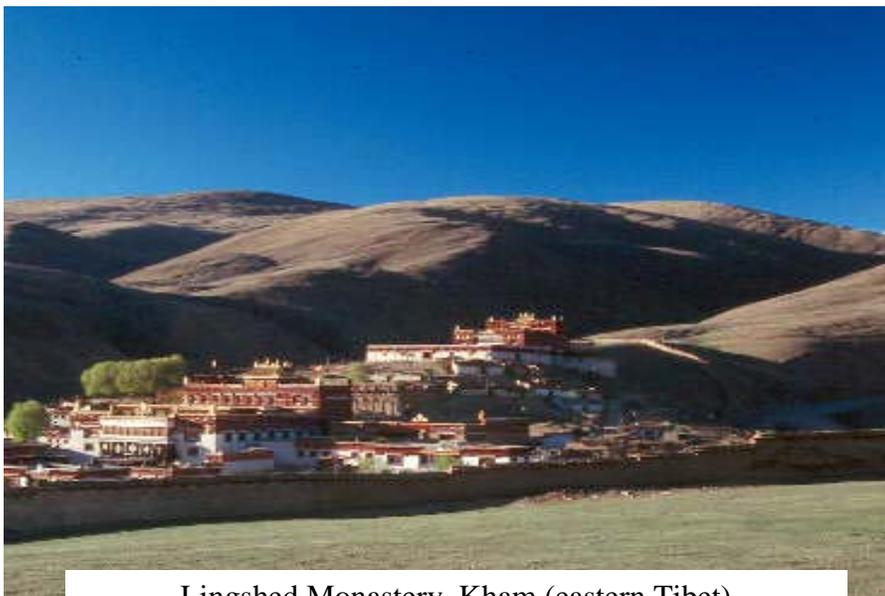
Designing Tibetan Spaces – An Architect's Journey

Bill Semple

Reflecting on aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, the Tibetan building tradition and the Tibetan landscape, Bill Semple will take us on a journey through traditional Tibetan architecture and the challenges of designing buildings for a rich culture with a strong architectural tradition. Including images of buildings, people and landscapes, the presentation will provide an introduction to some of the important religious and cultural aspects of Tibetan architecture that Bill has drawn upon in the design work he has carried out for Tibetan communities. In this work Bill has been influenced by the mystical nature of Tibetan society, and their sense of the profound that exists in the environment they inhabit. The enormity of the cultural and environmental issues they face has been influential in heightening his awareness of the inherent existence of the interconnection between environmental and cultural sustainability, and the important role that architects can play in addressing these issues. Reflecting on these challenges, the presentation will include a look at several of his previous projects in Tibet and India, the local issues addressed in these projects and the aspects of Tibetan tradition emulated in his architectural design work.



Dolma Ling Nunnery, Dharamsala, India
Courtesy of Bill Semple



Lingshed Monastery, Kham (eastern Tibet)
Courtesy of Bill Semple



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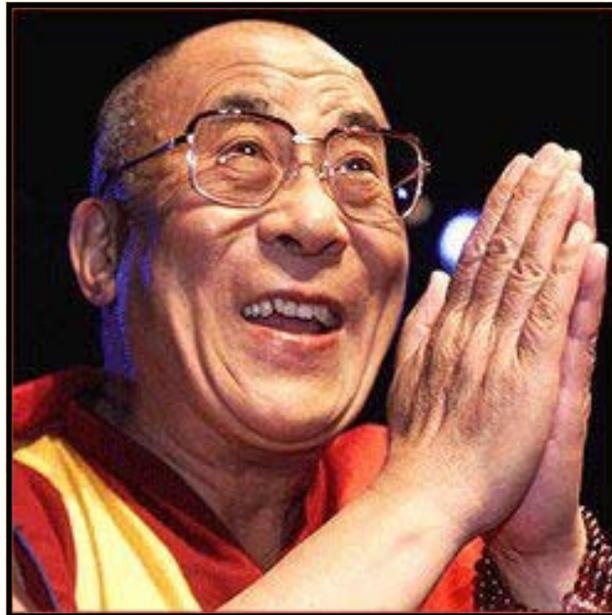
His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Visit Ottawa in April 2004

We are very excited that His Holiness the Dalai Lama is coming to visit Ottawa this April. On April 24, 2004, His Holiness will give a public talk, and during the week preceding his visit, many special events will be taking place to celebrate Tibetan life and culture. The following is a preliminary schedule. Please check the Canada Tibet Committee website for updates: www.tibet.ca/en/dalailamaottawa2004.ca. Information on His Holiness' Toronto visit can also be found here. For detailed information on the **2004 Kalachakra for World Peace**, please visit www.kalachakra2004.com.

March 12, Carleton University, Theatre B, Southam Hall, 8:00 p.m., Dr. Thupten Jinpa, personal translator to the Dalai Lama, free public lecture on "Philosophy of Mind and Transformation of Consciousness in Tibetan Buddhism."

March 12 – 16, ByTowne Cinema, "Words of my Perfect Teacher"

April 16 - 20, ByTowne Cinema, "Cry of the Snow Lion"



April 16, National Library Auditorium, 6:00 p.m., "Designing Tibetan Spaces-An Architect's Journey", slide presentation and talk by Bill Semple. M.C. James Hendricks of The New RO. Music by Galitcha. Sales, silent auction, Indian snacks and tea.

April 17, St. Matthew's Church, 217 First Ave., Tibetan Bazaar, folk dances, Tibetan food, clothing, jewelry, books and more.

April 18 – 20 Arts Court, 2 Daly Ave. 2:00 p.m., Tibetan Photographic Exhibition, with Martin Beaulieu. www.martinbeaulieu.ca

April 18, Arts Court, 3:30 p.m., "A Long Look Homeward," travelling Tibet Museum of photographs, text and video clips. www.thetibetmuseum.org

April 18 - 19, Arts Court, 7:00 p.m., Venerable Lopsang Phuntsok will talk on "The Buddhism of His Holiness the Dalai Lama."

April 20th, Arts Court, 7:00 p.m., "The Tibet Travelling Museum" presentation followed by talk with Venerable Lopsang Phuntsok.

April 21, His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrives in Ottawa.

April 22, Carleton University, Alumni Theater A in Southam Hall, 7:00 p.m., talk by His Excellency Samdhong Rinpoche, Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile.

April 24, Lansdowne Park, 12:00 noon, His Holiness the Dalai Lama to give public talk at Lansdowne Park. Introduction, songs and readings by Alanis Morrisette.

Many thanks to Jurme Wangda, Bill Semple, Alys Muckart, Barb Haddad, and Elizabeth Dwivedi (editing and layout) for their contributions to this issue of the OFT Newsletter.