**Meeting with Rinpoche on Deothang Curriculum**

*Deothang Monastery, 4 March, 2010.*

*Present: Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche, Khenpo Sonam Tashi, Pema Lodrol, Ugyen Wangchuk, Tashi Colman*

**Rinpoche:** After 30 years, not so many people want to become monks and nuns. Already Tibetan society is suffering from that, and now it is starting to happen in Bhutan. Materialism is growing and monastic education is not so attractive. While monastic education is geared to wanting enlightenment, it doesn’t help someone get a job by knowing how to make torma. Requests for admissions here are down whereas before we had to turn away people.

Now, everyone wants their kids to go to school. So my plan is to make this monastery have a rigorous normal Bhutanese school curriculum with science, math, English language, and computer science. Fifty percent of the students’ studies should be Dharma, including both philosophy and pujas.

With advice from Drubgyud Tenzin Rinpoche and Khenpo, Pema and Tashi should come up with a plan and curriculum that is suitable for Deothang monastery and that provides a modern education that is consistent with traditional values. Shamatha / vipassana should certainly be introduced from kindergarten level onward.

In the future, the new Deothang monastery school could be affiliated with institutions of higher learning for students to continue their studies.

Rinpoche is thinking of a potential funding grant for this project from UNICEF. (Tashi will also approach The Tributary Fund). He mentions Suzie from Australia (currently teaching in Bir) as a potential teacher.

We should change the ***way*** the curriculum is taught, because the current system wastes too many years. What students learn can be taught and learned much more quickly. In seven years, we should be able to achieve the same outcomes in science, math, computer science, and English language that currently take regular schools 12 years to teach (including ability to perform well at the grades 10 and 12 standardized exams), while at the same time the Deothang students will still keep their regular 17 years of the Chokyi Gyatso curriculum.

In bringing together modern education with traditional values, this monastery will be a laboratory for GNH-based education. It will be the first Bhutanese monastery with a modern education to Grade 12, and it will be the first Green Monastery, with a green school. Rinpoche would like to nurture and foster good relations with Deothang villages, including having them plant vegetables that the monastery will buy.