

TIMES OF NALANDRA

ISSUE 13 - DECEMBER 2025



*From His
Excellence
Zimwock
Rinpoche*



GRATITUDE IN GLORY

My heartfelt address begins with a deep, reverent salute to the world's volunteers, singling out the extraordinary commitment shown by the volunteers of the Quang Minh Temple (Vietnamese Buddhist Temple, Victoria) and Nalandra Healesville, Victoria. It is the light of their service that anchors the peace and stability of our planet. I wish to offer a most sincere bow, appreciating the generous gifts of

their time, devoted energy, precious resources, and boundless love for all beings.

This year holds an exceptional constellation of events, as noted previously: the 80th natal year of my guru, His Holiness the Sakya Gongma; the 90th natal year of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama; and the centennial celebration of World Animal Day.

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Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting for the Nalandra Buddhist Institute was held on Saturday 13th September 2025 at Serkhang Nalandra. The meeting was attended by Board members with some mandala members present as observers. The minutes, activity and finance statements were presented and passed by the board. Current Board members and Office bearers will continue for the next year. All Nalandra statements are freely available on the ACNC website.

From the Editors

A heartfelt thank you to HEZR for his inspiration and substantial contributions to this journal, and to our Sangha members for sharing their experiences, reflections and editorial input. Please keep writing as inspirations come and send your articles, poetry, quotes from teachings and photographs. These all show how the Dharma is a living breathing companion to our daily lives.
Steve and Michelle

In the great spirit of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and Dakinis, the Abbot Thay, the Abbess Venerable Chi Kwang, and I, as their representatives, witnessed this gathering flourish into an overwhelming success. The true miracle of virtue is that it is not bound by circumstances; time and place are ever-present for its expression. It is always prepared to illuminate our path, regardless of the chaos in our minds or external stress. Put simply: even in the greatest calamity, the path of righteousness remains clear. This is a profound state—a supreme samsara where the timing is perpetually perfect.

Great compassion calls us to honour all beings. We must turn our minds to the animals of the sea, the wilderness, and all those inhabiting Earth. They are beings without powerful advocates and often without justice. They are treated as mere commodities for human consumption, from the boots we wear to the hats on our heads. They are often regarded with the indifference one reserves for rock or dust, their inherent livelihood and value never appropriately appreciated. Tragically, they are slaughtered in massive numbers every moment. Their bodies are served on our plates, used for our jackets, and crafted into our handbags. The only solace and action we can take is to offer a powerful wish: May the suffering they endure in this life be the complete purification of their negative karma.

May they be swiftly reborn in higher realms—as humans or gods—or achieve rebirth in the Pure Land of Sukhavati. We pray, in particular, for our beloved pets: May they never fall back into lower realms but instead enjoy the happiness of human and celestial existence.

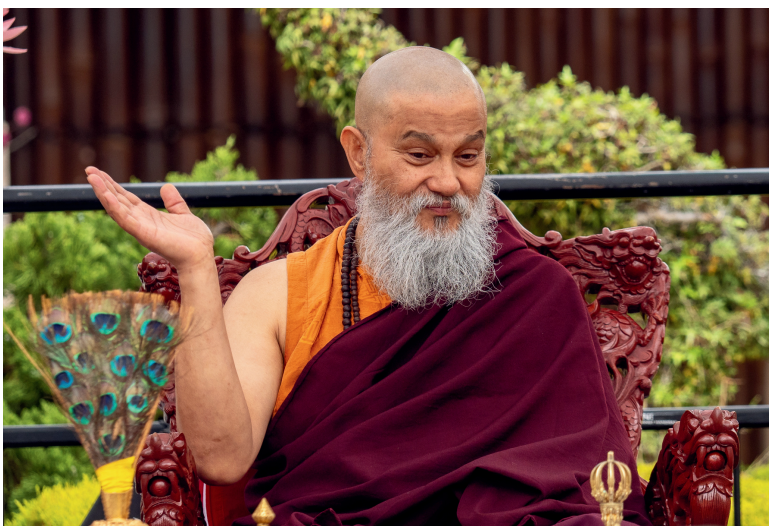
HEZR MOONDROP

How do you question the question?
Why not, how not, when not, where
not & what not in easing the mind.

Finally, we offer this aspiration: May all pet owners be inspired to transition toward a more vegetarian lifestyle. And for those already walking the vegetarian path, may they find excellent health, deepened compassion, and swiftly achieve the glorious state of Buddhahood.

The sacred instruments we employed were significant methods to call upon the higher spirits and duties of the divine beings. The distinct sounds of the bell, rolmo (cymbals), drum, and conch are designed to speak their language, much like the calls of birds or the sounds of the jackals of wilderness etc. The very vocals of our prayers emit the pure stream of their sacred vowel language, consisting of syllables such as OM AH HŪM and the fundamental mantric sounds. These vibrations are stainlessly pure, acting to magnetize the will and power of the divine, ultimately bringing forth greater prosperity and a more harmless nature to our world.

Zr



14th Annual Animal Blessing

Nalandra's 14th Annual Animal Blessing was held on Sunday 5th October and hosted by the Vietnamese Buddhist community at their marvellous Quang Minh (Bright Light) Temple in Braybrook. Previously, the animal blessing had been held in parklands and this was the first held at QMT. It was my first experience of an Animal Blessing Day and to me, the inclusion of the Vietnamese Buddhist community made it a very festive and bustling occasion.

This year's event was especially auspicious as it coincided with the 100th anniversary of World Animal Day. Planning of the event was coordinated between Nalandra and Quang Ming Temple over several months, with much merit accumulated by all the volunteers who made the day possible.

It commenced with registration of pets attending, those unable to attend, and those no longer with us but whom still take a special place in our hearts. For the memories of those passed away, ill or injured, prayers were made to help minimise their samsaric cycle, shield them from harm and empower them to overcome challenges. Rinpoche led these prayers (Waxing Moon of Life and Glory) accompanied by the sounds of

the tingsha, the deep drone of a dungchen, bass drum and Tibetan bells.

The recitation was clearly auspicious as the sun came out immediately, for the first time of the day, at the end of the prayers. Buddha had smiled upon both human and animal. The prayers had warmed the air and the syllables of the mantras settled the winds and cleared the clouds of obsuration.



Venerable Phuoc Tan offers blessing cords to dogs during the blessing of individual animals. Animal food gifts, along with a delicious vegetarian lunch for the humans, was kindly donated by the Vietnamese community of Quang Minh Temple. Our deepest appreciation for their inspirational generosity!

The main event of the day was the blessing of animals in attendance. Interestingly, Venerable Phuoc Tan observed that in Vietnam, they would solely focus on saving and releasing animals from captivity. In Australia he saw that we also bless domestic animals that provide social support to humans. The Vietnamese community have incorporated this new practice with great enthusiasm.

The blessing of each individual animal was conducted by the Buddhist masters from three traditions. Animals of all species were in our thoughts, including those that have passed. In attendance were many dogs, some cats and a chicken. The chicken even made an offering of an egg prior to being blessed. Both the animals and the three masters showed great love and engagement during the blessing of the individual animals.

Although the main objective was to care for the spiritual wellbeing of animals, their physical and mental needs also needed to be considered. All three masters were vocal about the need to support, through donations, animals in distress or harmed in some way. A total of \$6,000 was raised by this not-for-profit event, with \$2,000 donated to each of three charities: Animal Aid Coldstream, Macclesfield CFA Large Animal Rescue and the World Wildlife Fund.

Nalandra gives heartfelt thanks to the Vietnamese Buddhist community for being such wonderful hosts, the VIPs, charity representatives, and to all who participated and donated towards the wellbeing of animals & sentient beings.

Three Masters from three traditions bless the animals: His Eminence Zimo'g Rinpoche (Tibetan, Nalandra), Venerable Phuoc Tan (Vietnamese, Quang Ming Temple) & Venerable Chi Kwang (Korean Zen, Seon Temple, Kinglake)



Saturday Dharma Chakra

Over the month of September on alternate Saturdays, HEZR conducted a Green Tara Puja or discussions on chosen verses from the Wisdom chapter of Shantideva's treatise "The Way of the Bodhisattva". This was followed by a guided meditation.

The wisdom chapter of Shantideva's "The Way of the Bodhisattva" explores the profound concept of ultimate truth through the lens of Madhyamaka philosophy emphasizing the realization of emptiness (shunyata) as essential for attaining enlightenment. Shantideva argues that all phenomena, including self and external objects, lack inherent existence and arise dependently. By understanding emptiness, the Bodhisattva transcends dualistic thinking cultivating wisdom. During Dharma Chakra, discourses are given on these concepts.

The Green Tara Puja is particularly exhilarating as the Tibetan text is accompanied by the power of the conch shell, the clashing of cymbals, the mystical gyaling and the ringing of many bells. The intent is to invoke blessings, protection and guidance from Green Tara (21st of 21 emanations of Tara). It is a ritual offering and practice that helps with overcoming obstacles (such as fear, illnesses, negative karma), cultivating compassion, spiritual progress (evoking courage, confidence and devotion to advance on the path) and merit accumulation dedicated to the welfare of all sentient beings.

HEZR MOONDROP

How can you be reachable?
Make yourself teachable.

Mahakala Puja for World Peace

Serkhang Nalandra welcomed practitioners to the 17th Annual Mahakala Puja for World Peace during the long weekend in June of 2025. H.E. Zimo'g Rinpoche performs this practice annually prior to the turning of the New Year to bring prosperity for the year ahead. This year this auspicious event was held prior to the new financial year.

In times of great troubles across the globe such as the Middle East, Ukraine and Africa, the world desperately needs the King of the Dharmapalas, Mahakala to bring peace and help individual Vajrayana practitioners on the path to Buddhahood.

Mahakala is considered a wrathful emanation of Chenrezig (Avalokiteshvara), the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Despite his fierce appearance, Mahakala embodies compassionate action in its most forceful form, aimed at destroying ignorance and protecting the Dharma. Rinpoche explained several purposes of the Mahakala Puja:

Protection of the Dharma and

Practitioners: Mahakala is invoked to safeguard the teachings of the Buddha and those who practice them, especially during times of spiritual or worldly turmoil.

Removal of Obstacles: The puja clears away internal and external hindrances—such as negative karma, afflictive emotions, and harmful influences—that block spiritual progress.

Empowerment and Inner Strength:

The ritual channels Mahakala's fierce compassion to empower practitioners with courage, discipline, and clarity, helping them face adversity with wisdom and resolve.

Sitting in the Gompa with my Sangha, I experienced a vibrant cacophony of colour and sounds of chanting, drumming, the roar of many wind instruments and Tibetan bells, all aimed at aligning with Mahakala's energy.

For me, the puja is like a spiritual armor invoking Mahakala's energy to face inner and outer challenges. Rinpoche explained that it is also a cleansing ritual, aligning collective karma toward harmony and renewal.



Participants of the 2025 Mahakala Puja

Wednesday Evening Study Classes

In Terms 2 and 3, Rinpoche introduced the Sangha to the meanings embodied within the Bardo Thodrol (Tibetan Book of the Dead). This is a terma text (hidden teaching -i.e. for a select few) from a larger corpus of teachings, the "Profound Dharma of Self-Liberation through the Intention of the Peaceful and Wrathful Ones". According to Tibetan tradition, the Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State was composed in the 8th century by Padmasambhava, written down by his primary student, Yeshe Tsogyal, buried in the Gampo Hills in central Tibet and subsequently discovered by a Tibetan tertön, Karma Lingpa, in the 14th century.

This book was written to serve as a guide for navigating the intermediate states (bardo) between death and rebirth, offering instructions to the deceased to achieve liberation or a favourable rebirth. Although there are eight separate Bardo states, as explained by Rinpoche, the book highlights the three main Bardos: Chikhai Bardo, the moment of death where one may recognise the clear light of ultimate reality; Chonyid Bardo, the visionary state where peaceful and wrathful deities appear as projections of the mind, and Sidpa Bardo, the rebirth process where karmic tendencies drive reincarnation unless liberation is attained. The Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State also mentions three other bardos: "Life", or ordinary waking consciousness; "Dhyana" (meditation) and "Dream", the state during normal sleep.

Rinpoche covered the common practices related to the period of 49 days after death, including the profound practice of phowa (transference of consciousness) and especially highlighted the preciousness of having a fortunate human rebirth. The aim of the book is to help guide the deceased through these stages with rituals, recitations and meditations, to transcend samsaric suffering, awaken their enlightened mind or secure a positive rebirth. Rinpoche emphasised the power of this Phowa and explained that it also serves as a reminder to the living to cultivate mindfulness and spiritual practice in preparation for death.

HEZR MOONDROP

What is Karma in one word?
Mind - All mind.

Losar Celebration - Welcoming the Year of the Wood Snake



HEZR and Venerable Phuoc Tan, Abbot, Quang Ming Temple recite prayers during Nalandra's Losar Celebration.

On March 1st, Nalandra celebrated Losar, the first day of the Tibetan lunar calendar. Losar, meaning "New Year" in Tibetan ("Lo"= year, "Sar"=new), is the most significant festival in Tibetan Buddhism. The festival is a vibrant blend of ancient pre-Buddhist customs and Buddhist rituals, symbolizing purification, renewal, and the welcoming of auspicious blessings for the year ahead.

This year was particularly auspicious as we were blessed with the opportunity to share our celebrations with the Vietnamese Buddhist community and Venerable Chi Kwang from the Seon Temple in Kinglake. In the words of Sonja Sherpa, "the air was filled with such kindness and compassion, peace and tranquility. Gratitude, happiness and blessings surrounded us all".

Losar is a time for purification, renewal, and spiritual offerings. In the major centres, monasteries are adorned, and rituals are performed to drive away negativity.

Smoke offerings are made to elemental spirits like Nagas, reflecting Tibetan Buddhism's reverence for life. Families clean their homes, wear new clothes, and prepare special foods to welcome the new year.

There are many traditional and signature dishes eaten at the time of Losar. At the Nalandra celebration we enjoyed Khapse, crispy deep-fried pastries in various shapes and sizes. They're offered to guests and deities, symbolizing abundance and joy.



Another highlight of the food offered at Nalandra was Droma Dresil (Sticky rice), a sweet rice dish made with dried fruits, butter, and sugar. It is considered auspicious and typically served during reunion meals. These among other traditional Tibetan foods are not just culinary delights—they're ritual offerings and tools for purification and renewal. The act of cooking and sharing them reflects community, generosity, and spiritual cleansing

Our gratitude to the Vietnamese Buddhist Community from Quang Minh Temple for their generous offerings to Nalandra's shrine.





Enjoying traditional Tibetan food for lunch

This aligns with Losar's themes of banishing negativity and welcoming auspiciousness. Losar is more than just a New Year celebration; it is a profound expression of Tibetan culture, spirituality, and community. Through its rich tapestry of rituals, dances, prayers, and feasts, Losar embodies the values of purification, renewal, and gratitude, ensuring that the traditions and identity of Tibetan Buddhism are passed down through generations.

THANK YOU

TO OUR MANDALA MEMBERS

Your ongoing support of Nalandra is greatly appreciated. Thank you for supporting Rinpoche's teachings and making this newsletter possible. May the glorious merit field expand continuously through your generosity!



Coming up in 2026

LOSAR (TIBETAN NEW YEAR)

2153 Year of the Fire Horse

18 February 2026



13 - 15 March 2026



June 6- 8

SATURDAY DHARMA CHAKRA & MEDITATION

Saturdays during School Terms
10:30 - 15:00

Term 1 commences 31 January 2026