

Tashi Choling Sangha News

October 2019



Reversing the Clouds

As a child, Gyatrul Rinpoche's ways of playing were sometimes a bit different from those of other children in his village. He had unusual capabilities that made the local people nervous. He could run surprisingly fast, and sometimes he seemed free of gravity, leaping over big areas in a way that seemed impossible. Because of these and other special qualities, the locals began to call him Demon Boy.

Rinpoche shared one of his favorite games: "There was a time when I was still just a young boy that I knew the entire White Umbrella mantra by heart. I used to play and go out and shout those mantras and point my finger in the threatening mudra and blow in the direction of approaching hailstorms or snowstorms. And the clouds would reverse, or go back. Many people saw this because I would play a lot. I had a lot of fun doing that, and I thought that I was really good at it. Again, they kept on calling me the Demon Boy because

of that, too. I was really happy playing that way."

Sangha Profile: David Gelfand



David Gelfand

To begin, let's say "a genial, caring artist." Not that a human being can be consolidated into such a few words, but it's a good start for this profile of David Gelfand. Music and art have been important elements in David's life for many years. Raised on the East coast, he received a scholarship for the Berklee College of Music while he was in high school. In the process, he realized he wasn't interested in studying jazz and decided to get a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire.

After college, David moved to Boulder, Colorado, where he lived next door to Karma Dzong, Trungpa Rinpoche's center. He received meditation instruction there in a small group from Reggie Ray, one of Trungpa's senior students, and continued participating in that group for years. David also studied with another senior Trungpa student, Bruce Cressman, known to many in the sangha community as Dr. Death because of the help he offered to those who were ill and dying.

During those years in Boulder, David started a rock band named Water, in which he played lead guitar. They began performing at small parties in the mountains outside of Boulder, then started playing clubs in town. Soon they went to Denver and hit the ski mountain circuit and beyond, touring in the Midwest and on the East coast. Water began when David was 22 and folded when he was 29.

After the band dissolved, he began to explore making sacred geometric sculptures in a metal shop. Soon, he met some glass blowers at a nearby shop and began to study and work with them. This began another period of intense learning and creativity, as he combined metal and glass sculpture for art installations that found homes at festivals, restaurants, and nightclubs.

In 2001, David moved to Ashland and began working as a volunteer at Asante hospice. He was 30 years younger than most of the other volunteers, and perhaps that is why he was often sent to help dying people who lived in edgier places,

where drugs and gang-related activity were present. "I did that for one year, then I became a hospice caregiver," he said. He worked with clients through Earthsong Caregiving and also at Skylark's Alzheimer's Unit. David was fascinated by the topic of death as a rite of passage. "I read a lot of Trungpa's writing, and there was always something about looking at impermanence and death," he noted.



A few of David's recent art installations

Although he met many teachers during the years he lived in Colorado, there was never a real match. After he moved to Ashland, still on a spiritual search, he went to check out Tashi Choling. As it happened, the day he visited, things were very quiet. He didn't connect with anyone at all because there was nobody to connect with. But the karma to connect was there.



Paul Gauguin, By the Stream

In 2014, David met Samantha Cheney, and she introduced him to Gyatrul Rinpoche. David's relationship with Gyatrul Rinpoche developed in a low key, natural way. They had tea together and talked. "We really checked each other out," David recalled. Soon, he began cooking for Gyatrul Rinpoche and Lingtrul Rinpoche during retreats. Sitting in the statue garden, listening to Gyatrul Rinpoche's teachings, he knew he wanted to take refuge with Rinpoche. Then one day it happened, a sweet refuge ceremony

in the statue garden, with Ila Reitz, Mike Osugi, and Samantha Cheney present. "It was lighthearted and fun, with lots of jokes," David said. His connection with Rinpoche deepened.

"Rinpoche spreads the authentic dharma. The way he's attracted some of the finest teachers in Nyingma is a reflection of who Rinpoche is as a teacher. It's part of his magic that I'm meeting teachers like Getse Rinpoche, Lingtrul Rinpoche, and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal," he said. When asked what he most admires about Rinpoche, David didn't hesitate: "He's a living Buddha! And his sense of humor."

The year after David appeared at Tashi Choling in 2014, Rinpoche moved, making his residence at Half Moon Bay his fulltime home. This was a time of transition, and David was very aware of some of what it involved. He was especially aware that Rinpoche wanted Westerners to run his centers in a cooperative way. "Rinpoche has really empowered the sangha to be a democracy, a shift from the lama running the whole thing. Rinpoche supports everyone stepping into their roles so that the center will blossom," David said.

David, as we've already mentioned, is quite a genial guy, something you can confirm for yourself if you take time to get to know him. He is fortunate in the naturalness of his relationship with Rinpoche, which includes spending time as Rinpoche's attendant at least twice a year in Half Moon Bay.

In the More Good News department, David married Samantha Cheney (now Gelfand) this summer at Tashi Choling with Lingtrul Rinpoche officiating. It was a glorious gathering with many of the bride and groom's family members and sangha mingling.

David wanted me to make sure that this article included his thanks to all those who helped at the wedding, especially Kay and Chris, Sonam and Thubrig, Ani Yeshe, Keith, and Lisbeth.

The newlyweds continue to live in and manage the Tashi Choling guest house (historically known as the Mouse House) in the meadow to the south of the temple.



Books

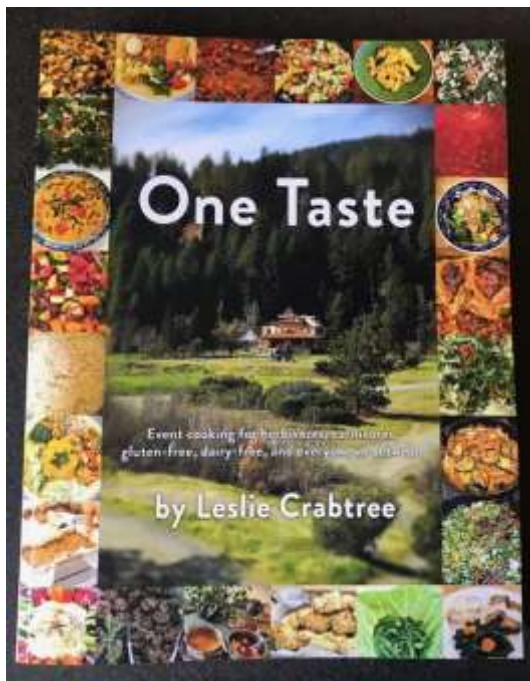
One Taste **By Leslie Crabtree**



Leslie Crabtree

Leslie Crabtree's new cookbook, *One Taste*, is designed to make it easy for cooks to provide tasty meals at retreats and other large gatherings. Some of us find event cooking a bit scary; this book is designed to help everyone feel comfortable about cooking for large groups.

"I come from a family of cooks and food lovers, and one of my earliest memories is helping cook on the six-burner Wedgewood range in our kitchen," she said. Leslie's interest in food and cooking continued as she worked in various restaurants. When she moved to Ashland at the age of 23, she owned a little Mexican restaurant, which operated downtown on the premises of the memorable Lithia Grocery.



“May cooks everywhere serve with joy and compassion, and may all beings benefit.”

Leslie met Chagdud Tulku in the 1990s, became his student, and started attending retreats at Rigdzin Ling, Chagdud Rinpoche’s retreat center near Weaverville, California. There, she was drawn to work in the kitchen. She began cooking under the mentorship of Renee McClain, who ran the kitchen at the center. Leslie cooked at three 10-day retreats each year for the next 10 years, sometimes for groups of 100 people.

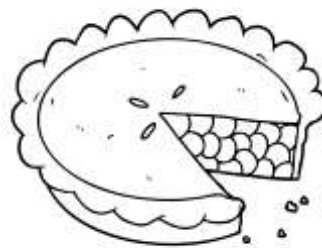
“You’re on a high wire. The first time I was terrified. They say an army moves on its stomach. Retreatants are like that, too. I always wanted to nourish them so that they felt restored and happy, to respect the effort it took them to get to the retreat.”

One Taste contains recipes for 150 meals for 50 people for 10 days. Mexican, Ethiopian, Indian, and Thai cuisines are among those included. Meals are designed to accommodate various dietary needs. Color photographs enhance many recipes.

The book is well-organized and easy to read, and it really provides a thorough orientation to cooking for large groups. Recipes are demystified with prep lists and timelines for each meal. Leslie suggests and provides an example of how using a spreadsheet can simplify the task of shopping, which is a big deal when cooking for large groups. Sections on kitchen equipment, measurements, spices, and adjusting recipes provide other useful information.

Sangye Khandro’s blurb on the book’s back cover notes, “*One Taste* is a must-read manual for all of us who like to do retreat and also like to eat good food while we are engaged in extensive practice. Retreat centers around the globe have waited a long time for this book!”

You can connect with Leslie to order a copy of *One Taste* for \$30 at www.onetastekitchen.com.



About Sangha News

Sangha New is published bi-monthly and sent out to Tashi Choling's email news subscribers. Gaea Yudron is the editor. If you have stories, photos, cartoons, poetry, or news you would like to share, please contact Gaea at gaea.laughing@gmail.com Deadline for the December issue is November 10th.



Halloween Cartoon Corner

Death flashed before my eyes

