

JEWEL HEART MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Vol. I Issue 3

Ways to learn, study, practice and connect

May 2026

TEACHINGS

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times

Sundays in April, Demo Rinpoche taught on belief in karma as a Buddhist faith, and on the distinction between believers and non-believers.

He explained that the word belief itself carries different meanings, depending on each person's perspective. When someone says, "I am a non-believer," it does not mean they believe in nothing. Rather, it often means they do not believe in something that does not make sense to them. But even this is personal; for some, it does make sense, and for others, it does not. The point is that whatever you do, if you are doing something that does not make sense to you, then in a way, you are a believer.

In this sense, Buddhism can appear to be a non-believer's practice. Yet within it, belief in karma remains, and it may be the clearest and most accessible principle for all types of practitioners to hold. It makes sense. But why do we need to believe in something like karma? As Demo Rinpoche says, "because it is reliable." In this life, in our regular lives, we need something that moves us, motivates us, and guides us toward right action. Karma does that.

Because of this, whether it is your spiritual path or your regular life, you should hold your ground. You should have determination. When you decide to do something, do it until you fail; until you know for yourself that it is wrong.

That determination, that ability to hold your ground, is a quality within you. It is not something you are born with; it is something you build within yourself by doing, by learning, and by changing. In this way, the mind becomes more steady, more stable, and more capable of seeing clearly.

In Buddhist practice, this stability of mind is not separate from belief; it is supported by it. Without some grounding principle, the mind easily becomes uncertain and scattered. Belief in karma offers that ground. It is a simple principle: virtue brings positive results; non-virtue brings suffering. When this is understood and held consistently, it begins to shape how we act, how we respond, and how we make decisions in daily life. Over time, this becomes a form of training; the mind learns where to rest, and how to return.

The most important thing, then, is to have your own principle in your heart, and to stand on your own ground. At the same time, we should remain capable of change; but not in a way that simply reflects whatever is around us. The practice is to become steady without becoming rigid; to change when it is right to change, and to hold firm when it is right to hold.

In this way, belief is not blind. It becomes something lived; something tested; something that gradually stabilizes the mind and guides one's path.



NEWS & UPDATES

Programs & Events

Lam Rim Teaching, Season 3—The Mahayana Path with Demo Rinpoche began on March 3 and will continue through mid-July. The summer retreat will conclude the Lam Rim teachings with the Six Preliminaries. Thursday evening teachings on Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland concluded on April 23.

Regularly scheduled **Sunday morning White Tara meditations**, along with both online and Ann Arbor onsite **facilitated discussions**, continued with strong participation.

On **April 4**, guest speaker Guy Newland, Professor of Religion at Central Michigan University, presented "Brokenhearted Buddha." Onsite participants shared a brown bag lunch and enjoyed time with the speaker.

On **April 13**, Demo Rinpoche gave an inspiring talk on meditation and mindfulness at Myomassology Institute in Southfield, Michigan.

An onsite **Tsogh offering** was held at the center on **April 26**.

Chapter News

April 24: Free Library of Philadelphia — Jataka Tales. Discussion with Rabbi Adam Zeff and guided meditation by Demo Rinpoche at Germantown Jewish Center.

April 25: Chenrezig Buddhist Center — Demo Rinpoche gave a talk on Kindness, Clarity, and Insight. 954 N Marshall St, Philadelphia, PA 19123

GOM: Day of Meditation

Saturday, **April 25**, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. On site Ann Arbor.

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Special News: Earth Day Panel



Jewel Heart celebrated Earth Day on April 19, 2026, with a panel discussion addressing our care for, and relationship to, the environment.

Demo Rinpoche shared the story of **King Ashoka**, who successfully conquered the state of Kalinga, but at great cost to human life. Upon becoming mindful of the harm caused by his actions, he adopted a practice of non-violence in both his conduct and his kingdom. As he came to understand the interdependence of all things, he protected animals from hunting and slaughter and planted many trees.

Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe spoke about our connection to the **external world** as the basis of our survival and sustenance. He reflected on the Buddha's guidance to monks not to destroy green, living things that give rise to life. In Tibet, there was traditionally a strong emphasis on caring for the environment, in part to avoid angering the nagas, understood as non-human beings who protect the natural world. Animals were protected from hunting, and migrating birds were welcomed in the spring. He recommended cleaning and purifying the environment for its many benefits; it supports a clean, clear mind, a healthy body, and creates conditions that are pleasing to others.

Addressing technology and A.I., **Gala Rinpoche** noted the significant amount of CO₂ produced in the manufacture of a single cell phone, as well as in the training of large A.I. models. He emphasized the importance of being mindful in how we use technology and its environmental impact. When its use is necessary, he encouraged generating the motivation to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings.

In closing, **Demo Rinpoche** spoke about the importance of **protecting the environment** for our children and future generations, and the value of undertaking even the smallest actions to benefit all beings.



From April 17 to April 19, special guest teacher Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe taught Vasubandhu's Thirty Verses on Consciousness, both onsite and online. It was a meaningful opportunity to gather with sangha members from across the state and receive clear, profound teachings from our beloved Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe.

His teachings will serve as an ongoing source of reflection and meditation on consciousness and mental faculties, both for individual practice and for our Tuesday meditation sessions at 6:00 PM.

Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe also shared how happy he was to see Jewel Heart thriving as a Dharma center, and how encouraged he felt by the strength of our community under the guidance of Demo Rinpoche.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Ujjen and Namgyal Bhusepa for hosting Geshe Yeshe Thabkhe, to Katrina Brooks for translating, and to Gala Rinpoche for taking the time to accompany him. It is always a joy to welcome them to Ann Arbor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vesak Day is celebrated across all Buddhist traditions as the occasion commemorating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and parinirvana.

To mark this day, **Demo Rinpoche will give a public talk on "Dharma in the City,"** referring to the Buddha's first teaching on the Four Noble Truths. **The talk will be held at Tibet House US on Friday May 1 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM,** and is **free** and open to the public.

Over the following weekend, **Demo Rinpoche will offer a spring seminar at the same location from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.** During this seminar, he will present his commentary on *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

On **May 14,** Demo Rinpoche will resume his **Thursday night teaching series on Bodhisattva's Way of Life,** continuing through July 16. This session will focus on enthusiasm and concentration. Teachings will be offered both online and onsite in Ann Arbor.

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ANN ARBOR SANGHA SNAPSHOT

The **Earth Day celebration** began with a **Smoke Puja** in the morning. It was a joyful gathering of the sangha community, including both new faces and old friends from out of town. With the guidance of Demo and Gala Rinpoches, participants set a peaceful motivation and made offerings to the local natural forces.

Prayers were offered with the intention of purifying karma and generating virtuous motivation. Umze Karla Velikan led the prayers, while Bob Rickman and Duncan Tyler managed the fire and offerings. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the Smoke Puja.



Another joyful and memorable part of the Earth Day celebration was the **sangha talent show**, hosted by Victoria Sturt. We are very grateful for her gracious and thoughtful facilitation. Her beautiful songs, accompanied by her father on guitar and shared in the presence of her mother, brought warmth to everyone in attendance.

We deeply appreciate all who contributed their instruments, voices, and joy, as well as our wonderful audience for their presence and appreciation of this lively musical gathering.



The **Ann Arbor Sangha Council** met on April 1, and the **next meeting is scheduled for May 6**, with guidance from Wendy Weiner and Sheilan Khailany. All are welcome to join and bring their enthusiasm, ideas, and presence to hear what is happening in our community.

These meetings provide time to review and discuss social outreach, including events such as the Earth Day lunch and music gatherings.

We extend our sincere thanks to Susan Cooley, Arthur Wang, Gloria Boyajian, Debbie Burr, and Rachel Sherman for organizing a wonderful potluck, and to Duncan Tyler for capturing photos. We also thank everyone who contributed, participated, and made the day so enjoyable.



ART WINDOW



This month's **art window** features drawings by our talented **Rebecca Seidemann**. In addition to her work supporting emotional healing, she enjoys expressing how she sees the world through her artwork. **Thank you, Rebecca, for sharing these beautiful drawings!**

Going forward, we welcome others to share their work in the art window. Please feel free to reach out; we would be delighted to feature your artwork in our monthly newsletter.

VOLUNTEER EDITORIAL TEAM

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Photos: Figen Lacin, Kathy Laritz provided the first photo of the second page

