



Berkshire Country Day School

**WHAT:** Namhkha Rinpoche to speak to BCD's Amnesty International Club

**WHEN:** Wednesday October 1, 2008 - 11:25a.m. - 12:00p.m.

**WHERE:** Berkshire Country Day School, Ryan 23

**BCD CONTACT:** Maxine Carter-Lome, Director of Communications (413-637-0755)

### **NAMHKHA RINPOCHE, AID TO HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA, TO SPEAK TO BCD'S AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CLUB**

**Berkshire Country Day School**, an independent school located in Lenox, MA for students in pre-kindergarten through ninth grade, is proud to announce that Namhkha Rinpoche, who is closely associated with the Dalai Lama, will be visiting Berkshire Country Day School on Wednesday, October 1, 2008 to speak to the school's Amnesty International Club as part of a rare U.S. tour. Rinpoche, an 18th generation lama, is here in the U.S. to speak about the humanitarian projects that are underway in Tibet: schools for the children being built; hospitals under construction, care for the elderly and the necessity for rebuilding several Tibetan monasteries.

BCD's Amnesty International Club was founded three years ago by BCD students Rody Lipson, Malcolm Drentell, and Dylan Cole-Kink, with the help of Karen Cole, a member of BCD's faculty who is the advisor to the Amnesty International Club. The Club's mission is two-fold: to educate members and others about human rights issues, and to write letters on behalf of political prisoners. In past years, club members have written letters on behalf of prisoners in China, Myanmar, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among others. They have also learned about many issues including the use of child soldiers in Africa, about the cyclone devastation in Myanmar, and about abject poverty in Haiti. Last year, Club members wrote letters on behalf of imprisoned Tibetan monks arrested for protesting against the Chinese government.

"Our members are eager to learn about the greater world around them and how to affect change," says Karen Cole. "We could not be more excited to have Nampka Rinpoche speak to our students and give them a first-hand account of what is happening in Tibet and what we can do to help the Tibetan people."

### **About Berkshire Country Day School**

Founded in 1946, BCD is an independent school for students in pre-kindergarten through ninth grade. BCD is an academically rigorous school with a caring community in which students and teachers share in the process of learning. Steadfast in its commitment to learning in the spirit of inquiry and discovery, the school community is dedicated to encouraging academic excellence at the highest level, advancing each student's unique potential for well-rounded development, and fostering responsive and responsible citizenship. More information can be found at [www.berkshirecountryday.org](http://www.berkshirecountryday.org).

### **About Namhkha Rinpoche**

Namhkha Rinpoche was born in Kham in 1968, in one of the most remote areas of Tibet. At a very young age, he showed signs of being a reincarnated Buddhist teacher (tulku). Despite the very strong Chinese repression against any religious activity, Rinpoche's father –he an experienced and respected lama– managed to secretly provide him with the deep Buddhist and yogic education a reincarnated lama is supposed to receive. Thus he studied texts, learnt the art of Tibetan rituals, reflected and meditated on compassion and on the nature of mind. As a teenager, Rinpoche studied with the wisest lamas of Eastern Tibet at the time. He also spent seven years in solitary retreat, the first part in a monastery, the second in a cave, completely isolated.

In 1991, as the Chinese oppression against Buddhist had slightly weakened, Rinpoche was recognised by H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (foremost lama of the 20's century and teacher of H.H. the Dalai Lama himself). Rinpoche was also recognised in 2001 by Domang Yangthang Rinpoche and Pema Norbu Rinpoche (highest authority of the Ancient Tibetan Buddhist tradition at the time).

Then, in 1998, as Namhkha Rinpoche was quite renowned a Buddhist teacher nearby Lhasa, he organised prayer festivals for the longevity of H.H. the Dalai Lama, despite the dangers of Chinese suppression that any religious manifestation in favour of HH the Dalai Lama entails. At some point, Rinpoche was informed by one of his relatives who worked for the Chinese police, that he was about to be imprisoned. Therefore, he had no choice but to flee to Nepal, crossing the Himalayas by foot.

Since his exile, Rinpoche has mainly dedicated himself to teach Westerners. He now lives in Switzerland where he has founded 3 dharma centres. So far, he has opened centres in Holland, Spain, Lithuania and Sweden. Rinpoche is greatly appreciated by his students for the way he tirelessly makes himself available for them and helps them realise qualities of wisdom, peace of mind and compassion through Buddhism. Rinpoche is the head of numerous humanitarian and cultural preservation projects in Tibet, India and Nepal.

Since Rinpoche left Tibet, he has always worked closely with H.H. the Dalai Lama and his government. Rinpoche is an old friend of Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, special envoy of H.H. the Dalai Lama in Washington D.C. and representative of His Holiness in the current negotiations with the highest Chinese authorities. Rinpoche has always wanted to follow His Holiness' advice and to serve the main goals set up by His Holiness, among which the improvement of the living conditions of the Tibetan people and the development of world peace through peace of mind and mutual respect between religions. This loyalty to His Holiness' work and view is now rewarded as His Holiness has accepted Rinpoche's invitation to teach in Switzerland in 2009.

Rinpoche's main visions and projects are of two kinds. The first is to work for the preservation of Tibetan culture and religious tradition. In brief, it is to help Tibetans survive the massive

oppression they have endured for 50 years. The troubles endured by Tibetan people are some of the toughest in the history of mankind. The Chinese Cultural Revolution wanted to annihilate Tibetan culture and religion and as a result about one million out of the six million Tibetans have lost their lives since the Chinese invasion. It is only thanks to Tibetan people's willpower, and thanks to the depth and power of the thousand years old Tibetan Buddhist tradition, with His Holiness the Dalai Lama natural charisma and compassion shining all over the world, that Tibetans can still exist as a nation, although it is still deeply endangered.

Rinpoche's other project is to create an International Buddhist institute in Switzerland. As many lamas, Rinpoche recognises westerners' strong interest in the study and practice of Buddhism. This makes them the possible missing link in passing on the so endangered Tibetan tradition. He therefore wishes to create a centre of study, practice and retreat that will be a stronghold of Tibetan wisdom in the very centre of Europe, based on the idea, so dear to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that world peace can only come through the development of inner peace and compassion.