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## **Manjushri Dharma Center**

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A 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization

Incorporated in the State of California

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Ven. Khenpo Karten Rinpoche

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June 22, 2026

Dear Sangha,

Thank you to all who attended the annual MDC All-Sangha meeting on Saturday, June 6, 2026. We re-elected our board members for another year, heard about Rinpoche's plans to move next year to Portland, Oregon, and took in feedback about ways we can keep our sangha connected in the years to come.

There was a strong desire to keep the sangha connected to a physical location, and a suggestion to see this move not as a loss, but as an opportunity. One suggestion was to grow the Manjushri Dharma Center by keeping the Pacific Grove house while fundraising for a new property in Oregon. As Board members, we listened intently and with open hearts and minds. We discussed the ideas with Rinpoche at our meeting on June 9, and Rinpoche let us know his thoughts, which we share with you here.

Rinpoche shared that before he talked to the board or any of his sangha about the move, he talked first to his Dharma brothers, trusted Lamas, and consulted a respected oracle in Tibet for a divination. Rinpoche had considered this exact idea--leaving the MDC property here while acquiring a new one in Oregon. However, he determined, and his consultations affirmed, that it is not good to leave a Dharma Center without a resident Lama. Having a trusted Lama in physical location is far more important than the location itself. Rinpoche expressed that he resonated with the beautiful wish to spread Dharma Centers all over the world, however, he has no young monks as disciples who could be trusted with such a responsibility. Neither would it be good to trust lay practitioners with this sacred task.

Rinpoche expressed that it remains his wish to sell the property in Pacific Grove, so generously donated to him, in order to continue the Manjushri Dharma Center in the Portland area where he can continue to serve as resident Lama and spiritual director. This was not a decision driven by financial considerations, rather Rinpoche determined that this is best for his Dharma center, his lineage, and his students.

The teacher-student relationship is central in Vajrayana Buddhism. While one can have many teachers over the course of a lifetime, it is considered important to connect with one root-Lama, one heart-teacher. For many of us, Khenpo Karten Rinpoche is our root guru. No matter how much we've studied, contemplated, and meditated on impermanence, it is hard that he will be moving. We are grieving. But we want what is best for our Lama, and we know that we can maintain a connection with him even from afar.

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Ultimately, just as Rinpoche teaches us that the Buddhas are within us, so is the Guru, Rinpoche has taught. If you look at the lives of the Great Masters, Milarepa, Gampopa, and even our own Rinpoche, many times students were forced to part from their Lamas. We have Rinpoche's example of his faith and devotion to Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, to whom Rinpoche remains deeply connected, and from whom Rinpoche continues to receive blessings, even though his Guru has left the physical plane. There's a story in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* that speaks to this. As Lama Tseten was dying, his student Khandro Tsering Chödrön wanted to summon their master Jamyang Khyentse. Lama Tseten stopped her, saying, "There's no need. With the master, there's no such thing as distance." When we visualize the Guru, when we put his teachings into practice, the Guru is always with us.

The California Sangha has been incredibly blessed to spend almost 20 years together with Rinpoche. And we are so fortunate that Rinpoche is alive, healthy, and not going too far! We can continue to learn and grow our practice with him in years to come, just as his students in Portland, Boston, New York, Taiwan, and India are doing now. Rinpoche has committed to coming to the Monterey Bay several times a year for the new year retreat and solstices. Portland is not too far! We have freedom of religion, freedom to travel, and technology to connect us across the distance—we have all the conditions to maintain our practice with Rinpoche.

This board is committed to maintaining our connection with Rinpoche and to maintaining our connection as sangha. We will find alternate physical locations where we can meet in person, and we will facilitate Rinpoche's visits each year. We are committed to supporting our Guru in his wishes and easing his transition to Portland with as little stress as possible. We are committed to reestablishing the physical Manjushri Dharma Center in the Pacific Northwest, while maintaining our connection to Rinpoche and the practices via Zoom, Rinpoche's blogs, and annual retreats.

Yes, our sangha will change. But as one sangha member mentioned, perhaps by meeting in each other's homes or the beautiful Wave Street Studios, as we go through this transition together, a deeper connection can arise. I am confident that we can in fact transform a perceived loss into an opportunity to better support each other as a spiritual community and to grow our practice with Rinpoche. As Rinpoche wrote in "Heartfelt Advice of Dharma Nectar,"

*"In brief, disciples, wherever you live  
Always remember and never forget  
All the advice I have given you;  
Then we will meet again in joy.  
That is my heart advice."*

With love and compassion for all,  
Rachel Christopherson



MDC Board President  
on behalf of Rinpoche and the MDC Board of Directors