

“Pema Drawa is an amazing retreat land, preserving the very tradition of our precious lineage. The tradition stays very much alive at Pema Drawa and it is also to honor and help to come true the dreams and visions of our most precious teacher, Lama Chödak Gyatso Rinpoche. For the benefit of all sentient beings, without exception. Pema Drawa has actually been my home, whenever I visited my precious teacher and also after his passing. **PEMA DRAWA CERTAINLY IS WHAT IS KNOWN AS “A REMOTE RETREAT LAND” AND THEREFORE ONE OF THE GREATEST PLACES FOR A PRACTITIONER SEEKING A PLACE TO ENHANCE HIS/HER PRACTICE.** Great teachers have set their foot on that land and the blessings there are inconceivable.” —BIRGIT GERBER (ZURICH)

“As an environmental science teacher, I have come to learn over the years that the only solution to our problems in the environment is a shift in our worldview. The worldview that will bring solutions to our environmental issues is the teaching of Mahayana Buddhism. **ARI BHÖD PRESERVES THIS PRECIOUS TEACHING THAT COULD BRING FORTH A BETTER WORLD.** Unfortunately, I have never met Lama Gyatso Rinpoche, yet I know the support of Ari Bhöd through the annual Lama Gyatso Memorial Fund is the support of a better world.”

—LING YUET (PASADENA)

“Every time I was in Lama Gyatso’s presence, upon making eye contact, we would exchange broad smiles, sometimes spilling into outright laughter. **HE WAS A MASTER OF BRIGHTENING THE MOMENT AND OFFERING PRECISELY WHAT EACH OF US NEEDED IN THE FORM OF GUIDANCE, ENCOURAGEMENT AND WISDOM.** Attending the Ögyen Dzambhala Retreat, Lama Gyatso invited each of us to present our offerings, exchange ceremonial khatas and receive his tailored advice. Placing the scarf over my head, he leaned forward and whispered, “Frank, don’t worry. You worry too much. Don’t worry. **DON’T WORRY.**” I am forever grateful that Lama Gyatso touched my life.”

—FRANK CODY (ALBUQUERQUE)

“IN THE HISTORY OF WESTERN CULTURE, THE EXISTENCE OF THE BUDDHA-DHARMA IN A FORM, WHICH CAN FLOURISH AND BE PRACTICED AUTHENTICALLY IS TRULY UNIQUE. I FEEL THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT IS HAPPENING AT PEMA DRAWA, LAMA GYATSO RINPOCHE’S LEGACY TO ALL. At Pema Drawa, whatever wisdom Lama imparted is woven into the way visitors and residents meditate, think, work, and form the organization in general. In this way Lama’s qualities live on, as they are the mold in which the Ari Bhöd/Pema Drawa mandala is set. At this early stage there is no telling how profound an impact Ari Bhöd could have if we all continue our support.”

—JOEY DICK (GANGTOK, SIKKIM)

“I NEVER MET LAMA GYATSO RINPOCHE, YET HE WAS MY CONNECTION TO THE DHARMA. Without Lama Gyatso I would have never come to Pema Drawa. No matter that he had left his body behind, I have always felt his strong presence and guidance particularly at Ari Bhöd’s retreat land, Pema Drawa.

Through this connection I developed the understanding that Dharma includes every sentient being, so the importance of a retreat land like Pema Drawa that has been blessed and protected by many exalted beings existing in this fragile world becomes really important. Think about it, to know there is a place that is being kept in accordance with the Dharma, where anyone can go to practice. What a blessing!”

—CHRISTANE FRIESS (MT. WASHINGTON)

“It isn’t easy for me to write about Lama Gyatso and Ari Bhöd as it is a deeply personal connection. What I can say about Pema Drawa, which is a kind of home to me, is **THERE IS A WONDERFUL HAPPINESS AND FREEDOM THERE. I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE FEEL IT, IT’S SORT OF INTANGIBLE BUT YOU’RE SO LUCKY IF YOU GET TO HAVE SOME OF THAT IN YOUR LIFE.** I wish I could put into words the actual benefits one gets from going to a place like Pema Drawa including the smooth and quick advance in practice and understanding of meditation and spirituality.”

—MISHAL AZERAH (AMSTERDAM)



“This annual memorial fund time reminds me to take a moment to touch Lama Gyatso Rinpoche deep in my heart, and remember and redouble my commitments to my lama and all beings. **THERE IS NO QUESTION LAMA GYATSO RINPOCHE IMPACTED THE CHARITABLE WORK I DID WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, AND CONTINUES TO PROVIDE REFUGE FOR ME TO FEEL ‘SAFE’ IN VERY DIFFICULT TIMES.** I have always, and will always love bringing people to Pema Drawa. I have great faith in knowing they will benefit from the experience and blessings in ways they may never understand. I give and encourage others to support the Lama Gyatso memorial fund with the aspiration for the flourishing of Ari Bhöd/Pema Drawa and for all of Lama Gyatso’s enlightened activities. May it benefit all beings, just as he aspired.”

—LINDA MAXWELL (TEHACHAPI)