

BY MEERAH POWELL

SPIRITUAL LEARNING

A top spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism comes to Eugene

It's been five years now since the Dalai Lama visited Eugene. This weekend, Eugene will be host to another Tibetan spiritual leader — His Holiness the Sakya Trichen. Like the Dalai Lama, the Sakya Trichen (also spelled as Sakya Trizin) comes to Eugene through the Palmo Center, a local center focused on peace and education.

The Sakya Trichen will be in Eugene Saturday, Aug. 11, and Sunday, Aug. 12, for three events over the weekend.

"Everyone is longing for happiness and wants to avoid suffering," the Sakya Trichen tells *EW* via email. "It is quite clear that outer material progress alone could not accomplish the peace and happiness we are seeking; therefore, it has to be balance with inner training of the heart and mind."

He adds: "With this two together, I think we can certainly make this world more peaceful, harmonious and a happier place to live."

The particular Sakya Trichen visiting Eugene is the 41st in a long lineage of spiritual leaders. He retired in 2017, passing the title to his son. As the Dalai Lama is the manifestation of the Buddha's compassion, the Sakya Trichen is the manifestation of the Buddha's wisdom, according to the Sakya Trichen's website.

Tulku Jigme Rinpoche is the co-founder and director of the Palmo Center. He says he's known the Sakya Trichen his whole life and refers to him as a "champion of peace."

"He's a scholar, author, humanitarian," Rinpoche says. "He's established and founded over 30 hospitals, schools, universities and thereby serves and benefits many people in the world, so it's really no exaggeration to say that he has transformed the lives of millions."

"His Holiness the Dalai Lama refers to Sakya Trichen as 'The king of yogis,'" Rinpoche says. But not a yogi in the Western interpretation of child's poses and downward facing dogs, he explains.

"The real meaning of the word yogi comes from a Tibetan word '*naljor*,'" Rinpoche says. "'*Nal*' means natural, being natural; '*jor*' means wealth or richness, so we're talking about a richness or a wealth of being natural."

During his two-day visit to Eugene, the Sakya Trichen will give in-depth lectures on "Medicine Buddha Empowerment & Teachings," "Freedom from Four



Attachments" and a more general public talk, "Finding Peace in A Complex World."

All of these events, Rinpoche says, are about the idea of releasing ourselves from negative emotions and situations like ignorance, self-degradation, jealousy and anger and finding the power within ourselves to live peacefully.

Medicine Buddha Empowerment is an all-day event 10 am to 4 pm Saturday, Aug. 11. Rinpoche says it's about "the discovery of our true nature."

"So it is being empowered to receive something, not from outside but something that's already within that has gone unrecognized," he says. "So it's about activating that recognition, that's what is meant by the word empowerment."

That event takes place at the Downtown Athletic Club and costs \$100.

The Sakya Trichen's talk on Freedom from Four Attachments is 10 am to noon Sunday, Aug. 12. It also takes place at the Downtown Athletic Club and is \$50.

The freedom from the four attachments is a well-known teaching in Buddhism and focuses on freeing oneself from a variety of attachments — physical, emotional or intellectual.

"This freedom from the four attachments really goes to the root of why we suffer. So he'll be addressing how to unhook ourselves from that," Rinpoche says.

Finally, the Sakya Trichen's public talk will take place 7-8:30 pm also on Sunday, Aug. 12. It will be in the Ragozzino Performance Hall on Lane Community College's main campus. Tickets are \$20. It will be a general talk on finding peace within oneself and in the world.

Rinpoche says the public talk will be the best event for the general public, but, "all the events are open and anyone with or without belief can come and explore because Buddhism is not necessarily a religion. It's more a science of mind. It's about understanding the nature of mind; the function of mind."

He stresses that this is a very special event for Eugene.

"I think it's very great that we have this opportunity because in Tibet people would walk weeks and months to be in his presence and here he's coming to our doorstep," Rinpoche says. "There are many great teachers, philosophers and scholars but there are very few that actually walk the walk and talk the talk, who actually embody it, and he's one of them." ■

SLANT

• You asked for it; you got it. **Our online calendar listings are back as a list for your browsing pleasure.** Find them at eugeneweekly.com (along with that other calendar you all apparently don't like so much).

• Sister Helen Prejean, a frequent visitor to Eugene and the University of Oregon, must be thrilled with Pope Francis' decree that the **death penalty is "inadmissible" in all cases.** A leading American advocate for getting rid of the death penalty, Prejean became famous after her 1993 book about being a spiritual advisor to men on death row was made into the movie *Dead Man Walking*. Now it will be fascinating to see what politicians do with the pope's decision. Thirty-one states allow the death penalty, including Oregon, though we have not used

it since 1997. Pope Francis and Sister Helen Prejean are right. The death penalty should be abolished.

• Our new favorite bumper-sticker is "**Hurry Up, Mueller**" — and we still like the old one from the Cottage Grove Blackberry Pie Society, "Bring Back Facts."

• On Aug. 5, the entire *New York Times Magazine* carried Nathaniel Rich's article, "Losing Earth," about the decade from 1979 to 1989 when, as the editor's note put it, "**humankind first came to a broad understanding of the causes and dangers of climate change.**" It is exciting that the *NYT* is giving this dire subject this attention, but many of the insiders struggling to combat climate change are not so thrilled. Naomi Klein already has written that Rich does not lay enough blame on raw capitalism. Others have said that Big Oil is ecstatic because Rich is so easy on them. The article and backlash bring us back to Our Children's Trust case on climate change to be argued in Eugene in late October. It's a long fight we cannot lose.

• **Sponsors, Eugene's inspiring transitional program for ex-prisoners,** is diving into another ambitious project. Called the Tiny Homes Project, it will create ten tiny homes "designed to be compact, simple and minimal" designed by Nir Pearlson Architect. Steve Christiansen is the new chair of the Sponsors executive board, succeeding Margaret Hallock. Somehow, these houses will happen on his watch in the best tradition of Sponsors.

• We love those little **corners of Lane County filled with unexpected pleasures.** You don't expect a shopping plaza in Pleasant Hill, whose main draw as you drive down Highway 58 seems to be a Dari Mart, to be a mecca of good eats. But between Hilltop Bar and Grill and Cioppino House for dinner, Sunrise Café for breakfast and the coffee box newly owned by Creswell Coffee for caffeine, you are in for culinary happiness. What other corners of the county should we know about?