

## **CHOELA DR. KARMA TASHI CHOEDRON**

### ***Biodata***



Choela (honorific title for nun in Tibetan) Dr. Karma Tashi Choedron is a Malaysian nun in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Choela Karma holds a Ph.D. in Environment and Resource Studies from Mahidol University, Thailand. Choela was ordained in Nepal by the Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche at Thrangu Tashi Choling Monastery in Namobuddha, Nepal in June 2009.

Choela Karma was born in Ipoh, Malaysia in 1975 and is of non-Buddhist origin. She started practicing the Buddhadharma after attending a 10-day meditation retreat in Suan Mokkh, Southern Thailand where she learnt the dharma for the very first time. At that time, she was working as a civil engineer in a very competitive and materialistic world. Choela Karma began her dharma practice in the Theravada Buddhist tradition, practicing Anapanasati (Mindfulness of Breathing) in the tradition of Ajahn Buddhadasa Bhikkhu of Thailand. Choela also took meditation instructions in Anapanasati from meditation masters such as Pa-Auk Sayadaw and his disciple, Sayalay Dipankara from Myanmar, who conduct regular meditation retreats in Malaysia. Choela has also practiced in the Plum Village tradition of Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh. Choela Karma owes much of her initial dharma knowledge to the late Venerable K. Sri Dhammananda Nayaka Maha Thera, of the Buddhist Maha Vihara in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur and to various Buddhist organisations in Malaysia and Singapore for their generosity in propagating the dharma through publications for free distribution. She became deeply interested in Tibetan Buddhism after reading Sogyal Rinpoche's bestseller, *The Tibetan Book of the Living and Dying*.

Prior to becoming a nun, she was actively involved in the Buddhist Institute Sunday Dharma School (BISDS) as a volunteer Sunday School teacher. Choela also worked as an environmental sociologist, having coordinated several conservation/social development/sustainable livelihood projects for indigenous communities, i.e. the Orang Asli under the Small Grants Programme by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other indigenous groups in Malaysia and Indonesia. Choela Karma has authored two books and several articles pertaining to community-based conservation in South-East Pahang, Malaysia.

Choela is also a seasoned speaker, having delivered lectures on the environment, animal welfare and Buddhism in Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand. In recognition of her contribution to environment conservation and Buddhism, she received the Outstanding Women in Buddhism Award by the Association for the Promotion of Status of Women in Bangkok, Thailand on 5 March 2010. Choela Karma is currently pursuing an M.A in Buddhist Studies at the International Buddhist College. Choela is also deeply interested in animal welfare and is part of an independent animal rescue team, called the Metta Karuna Animal Rescuers, assisting in promoting animal welfare.