RYI is pleased to continue its series of international symposia by hosting its 11th Symposium on Buddhist Studies next year, March 25-26, 2017. In honor of its 20th anniversary, RYI will hold a two-day event entitled Transnational Buddhism: Philosophical, Anthropological and Historical Perspectives at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal.

RYI has invited an esteemed group of local and international scholars to share their perspectives on the historical and contemporary forces shaping the development of Buddhism.

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of diverse Buddhist traditions both within and across distinctive social, cultural, and political boundaries, highlighting the dialogue between traditional scholarship and modern academic research. The scholars will present and discuss their topics in the context of two panels with different themes: the first will explore the study of Buddhist philosophy as it is influenced by the encounter between scholars from different cultural constructs, and the second will consider this issue from an anthropological and historical perspective. The symposium will also feature an address by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. We are pleased to announce a partial list of scholars who will be speaking at the symposium:

- **Philosophy Panel** -

  - John Dunne (Keynote Speaker) holds the Distinguished Chair in Contemplative Human- nities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His work focuses on Buddhist philosophy and contemplative practice in dialogue with cognitive science and psychology. He is a fellow of the Mind and Life Institute.
  - Douglas Duckworth is associate professor in the Department of Religion at Temple University. His research involves inquiry into the nature of subjectivity and cognition and the ways in which each is constituted, enacted, and constructed.
  - Jonardon Ganeri is professorial research associate at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) department of religions and philosophies, and teaches the philosophy of self, concepts of rationality, epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language and logic. His particular focus is on bringing the Sanskrit philosophical tradition into dialogue with contemporary international philosophy.
  - Anne MacDonald is a researcher at the Institute for the Cultural and Intellectual History of Asia of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Austria and lectures at the University of Vienna in the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. Her primary focus is the development of Madhyamaka thought in India and Tibet and she is engaged in research on Candrakīrti’s Prasannapadā and Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya based on newly available manuscripts of these works.

- **Anthropology and History Panel** -

  - Klaus-Dieter Mathes is the head of the Department of South Asian, Tibetan, and Buddhist Studies at the University of Vienna. His current research deals with Tibetan Madhyamaka, Yogācāra, and the interpretations of Buddha nature in the 15th and 16th centuries.
  - Karin Meyers is a professor of Buddhist Studies at Kathmandu University Centre for Buddhist Studies, and her research interests include the problem of free will in light of Abhidharma theories of karma and causation, the relation between meditative praxis and the Abhidharma, Yogācāra in India and Tibet, and critical reflection on cross-cultural study of Buddhist thought.

We are pleased to announce a partial list of scholars who will be speaking at the symposium:

- Ana Cristina O. Lopes is currently a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. She specializes in the study of Buddhism, anthropology of expressive forms, and visual anthropology.
- Alexander von Rospatt is professor of Buddhist and South and Southeast Asian Studies, and is director of the Group in Buddhist Studies at University of California, Berkeley. He specializes in the doctrinal history of Indian and Newar Buddhism.
- Jin Park, professor of Philosophy and Religion and Founding Director of the Asian Studies Program at American University, specializes in East Asian Buddhism, postmodernism, deconstruction, Buddhist ethics, Buddhist philosophy of religion, Buddhist-postmodern comparative philosophy, and modern East Asian philosophy.

**For More Information:**

Are you thinking of pursuing a Master’s degree in Buddhist Studies but your Bachelor’s degree doesn’t include the necessary prerequisites? Join us in Nepal at RYI for one year to obtain your Buddhist Studies and language course prerequisites in our unique study environment. Classes taught by Tibetan monastic professors are just down the hall from those taught by western professors, and spoken languages can be practiced by simply stepping out into the surrounding community.

RYI can help you prepare for its two MA programs: the MA in Buddhist Studies and the MA in Translation, Textual Interpretation.

MA Preparatory Program

Applications and inquiries about programs and courses.

Along with the new look of the website, RYI also introduced improvements to its student portal. Current students will find it easier to select and register for courses each semester and can now review unofficial transcripts online. Signing up for online course is also simpler: category browsing and mobile-friendly design make it simpler to find courses of interest, and the new admission process for online courses makes it easier students to start studying right away.

In anticipation of RYI’s upcoming 20th anniversary celebration and symposium on March 25 and 26, 2017, a new page has been added to the website to share the talks from the most recent symposium in 2014. Upcoming website additions include hosting video and audio of guest lectures, topical talks, symposium materials, and short courses. Each of these changes and improvements will help RYI’s programs, courses, and materials to be more accessible over the coming years.

Website launch

After much time, effort, and collaboration with others at RYI, Lee San Cheong and Tjerah Leonardo have released RYI’s new, mobile-responsive website, making connecting with RYI easier and more intuitive. From its inception in 1997, part of RYI’s mission has been to connect those who are interested in the teachings and practices of Tibetan Buddhism with the genuine teachings of that tradition. Over the past twenty years, RYI has grown into a true global community, offering classes on campus for those who can come to Nepal, and online classes for those who live elsewhere. RYI helps to educate genuine scholars of Buddhism, and we hope our new website serves to communicate our mission to anyone who is interested in study and practice.

Aspiring students can now find information more easily about specific courses and programs, both on campus and online. Applications for these programs and courses can be submitted online through a streamlined application process. Using the newly updated database system, RYI’s administration team can more easily receive and respond to applications and inquiries about programs and courses.

Beginning in the Fall of 2017, students will have the opportunity to earn an academic Certificate in Buddhist Studies after spending just two semesters studying on campus at RYI. This new certificate course was developed for interested students wishing to get a taste of studying Buddhist philosophy and learn Tibetan or meditation without committing to a four-year BA program. The new certificate program in Buddhist Studies is also compatible with some gap-year study programs in that students can receive academic credit that can be applied to appropriate BA study programs later. For those who want to take a relatively short period away from work and home life, this is a good option for in-depth, intense study in a short period of time.

Students in the certificate course study for two semesters, from mid-August until the end of April. The course offers a compelling mixture of Buddhist philosophy, historical and cultural studies of Buddhism in Nepal and Asia, Buddhist meditation practices, and language study (students can choose from Nepali, Tibetan or Sanskrit). After successful completion of the course, students are awarded a certificate worth thirty academic credits.

Extra-curricular opportunities to study, practice, and go on pilgrimage during the academic year are easy to find. During fall reading week, students may join the annual one-week excursion to Bodh Gaya, India where Buddha Shakyamuni attained enlightenment. The annual RYI fall seminar in November provides a special chance for students to learn and practice meditation in the Vajrayāna tradition with Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and other masters and lamas.

The certificate program can also be a doorway to continued studies at RYI because upon successful completion of the program, students are prepared to continue into the second year of the BA if they so choose.

This exciting new program launches on August 16, 2017—we invite you to come to be a part of the first group of students to work on their certificates. You can find more information about the course and start your application by visiting www.ryi.org/certificate-course-in-buddhist-studies.

Certificate Course in Buddhist Studies

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<tr>
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<th>Spring Semester</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug - Dec</td>
<td>Jan - Apr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhist Philosophy and Hermeneutics I - 6 Credits</td>
<td>Buddhist Philosophy and Hermeneutics II - 6 Credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhist Traditions: History and Culture I - 3 Credits</td>
<td>Buddhist Traditions: History and Culture II - 3 Credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological Study of Nepalese Religions - 3 Credits</td>
<td>Buddhist Meditation Practices - 3 Credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himalayan Language - 3 Credits</td>
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<td>Choose one: Nepali or Classical or Colloquial Tibetan or Sanskrit</td>
<td>Choose one: Nepali or Classical or Colloquial Tibetan or Sanskrit</td>
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Certificate Course = 30 Credits
Entering Khenpo Tsondru Sangpo’s room, you will see few possessions apart from two imposing bookshelves that have very little in the way of empty space. It goes without saying that a book is rarely far from Khenpo’s hands. Here he shares some of his knowledge and experience with Tibetan literature.

**What are you reading these days?**
I’m currently teaching Daṇḍin’s Kāvyādarśa, so I’m mostly engaged in reading poetry. I’m reading a commentary by the 17th-century scholar Bō Khepa, along with Mipham Rinpoche’s commentary and a work called The Melodious Laughter of Brahma’s Son. I’m not reading much of the other books on poetics; however these days I am reading a bit of the Bodhicaryāvatāra.

**Why is poetry taught to monastics?**
It’s the duty of a monk to uphold the Buddhist teachings by means of both exegesis and personal practice. Giving oral instructions, debating, and composing texts are the most important ways of upholding the Buddhist teaching in terms of their exegesis. Knowledge and proficiency in poetry is helpful in each of these activities—it provides you with the skills to speak in an organized and interesting manner, it helps you discover new ideas and modes of thinking when debating, and most of all it opens the door to eloquent and effective speech. So if a monk is to take up exegesis as his practice, knowledge of poetry is essential.

**In Tibet, all writers were poets in some capacity, but who stands out as particularly eloquent?**
Generally speaking, Sakya Pandita’s work is very famous. Bō Khepa, the Fourth Khamtrul Rinpoche, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, and Mipham Rinpoche are also considered to be some of the best poets. More recently, the author of The Melodious Laughter of Brahma’s Son, Setshang Losang Palden, is also a good poet who was writing around the time of the big upheavals in Tibet. Also Tseden Shabdrung, Dungkar Losang Tinlay, and Dorje Gyalo are other excellent poets from this time.

**Apart from religion, what other topics do Tibetan poets engage with?**
Most Tibetans use the forms and devices demonstrated in the Kāvyādarśa to construct their poems. So the poems are most often very closely related to these prescribed forms. It’s all very classical; it’s not like modern poetry. As for some of the more unique types of poems, Mipham Rinpoche has written using poetic forms in which, for example, one single verse can express ten different meanings. Bō Khepa wrote very close to the original style and spirit of the Kāvyādarśa. The Great Fifth is known for his very sharp use of words.

**Poetry and religious texts are certainly the most common forms of Tibetan literature. What other forms are well known?**
There are also quite a few dramas. In particular, the Mahāsiddha Thangtong Gyalpo was instrumental in popularizing this genre. In the process of constructing a multitude of iron bridges across Tibet, he also composed a series of eight different dramatic operas. After that, the genre really started to flourish. Sakya Paṇḍita is also known for his work on drama. Later, Mipham Rinpoche wrote a drama involving the story of the legendary King Gesar. The eight operas of Thangtong Gyalpo spread across all of Tibet, while the stories of Gesar were most popular in Kham, especially Riwoche.

**If we look at the other contemporary literatures of South Asia, we can see the heavy influence of modern forms such as short stories and realist novels. Why has this yet to take off in modern Tibetan literature?**
There just aren’t very many readers of Tibetan literature. There is also little in the way of publishing houses or channels for distribution. So Tibetans have not developed these forms of national literature that reflect modern influence.

**What is your favorite philosophical text?**
I tend to enjoy all of the philosophical genres equally, but these days I’m particularly interested in Madhyamaka. I used to be more drawn to books on logic, but my tastes are changing!

**Every generation of the monastic sangha produces its own written works to help pass on the teachings to the next generation. What types of works are the current generation producing? What works will prove most beneficial?**
Previously, polemical works that demonstrated the weakness in other’s ideas and established one’s own viewpoint as supreme were the most popular style of texts in Tibet. Polemical works are quite good, but I feel they are less appropriate for the current environment. For example, now it’s better to simply present with clarity the unique points of a philosophical viewpoint rather than engage in extensive refutations of other systems or thinkers. These days a lot of books come out that are transcriptions of the teachings of great masters such as the Dalai Lama. In these we also don’t see him engaging much in polemics, and he is really the one everybody looks to as an example.

In contemporary Tibet, there are a few writers still engaged in the polemical style. The well-known Khenpo Tsultrim Lodrö and the now deceased Khenpo Jigmé Phuntsok have focused their writing on introducing with clarity the basics of Buddha-dharma, discussing ways of improving our organization as a religious community, and explaining the most effective ways of using the dharma to bring about transformation in our minds. For example, there is Khenpo Tsultrim Lodrö’s book Explanation of Past and Future Lives, or his collection of advice for monastic institutions called Timely Rain. These are the kinds of works that will have a big impact these days. [Smiling] Perhaps most of what is to be said about philosophy has already been written!
Meet BA Student: Stefan Mahabir

Stefan, born and raised on the island of Trinidad in the southern Caribbean, has always been intrigued by the culture, art, and philosophy of ancient India. Having been raised in a multireligious family, Stefan had the chance to observe the complicated dynamics of interreligious community interactions growing up. He took an interest in comparative Religious Studies, and pursued a degree in Religion at Florida International University in Miami, Florida, USA. A strong fascination with North Indian Classical music inspired him to pursue sitar and vocal training from eminent contemporary masters of this tradition.

Stefan first attended RYI as a summer Sanskrit student in 2014, at which time he developed a deeper interest in the Indian science of sound and the traditional guru–śiṣya (master-disciple) system in which it is taught. He decided at this point to discontinue his academic studies and pursue training in the art form known as dhrupad, the purest and oldest surviving style of North Indian classical music.

Dhrupad is considered a margi art, meaning its purpose is not mere worldly entertainment but ultimately spiritual realization. It requires mastery of one of the world’s most complex systems of microtones (śrūtis), in which the position of the notes can shift to very subtle degrees depending on the raga (melodic form) being presented. This requires a heightened sense of awareness and focus during practice and performance which is very much akin to a meditative state.

Stefan apprenticed with India’s foremost dhrupad masters, the Gundecha Brothers, who follow the Dagarbani lineage. “At the Gurukul, we would wake up sometimes as early as 3:30 a.m. to begin practice. There was no television or internet access, and no concept of a weekend or holiday. In this environment of almost monastic discipline, the student is made to concentrate on nothing but sound, melody, and rhythm,” explains Stefan.

Within a few humbling months of studying in this way, Stefan realized dhrupad is a deeply profound, spiritual tradition that requires a lifetime of intense devoted practice, and with just two years of serious training in this, one of the world’s most demanding classical music forms, he considered himself only a beginner.

But after two years of study, the atmosphere he encountered in India began to deter him from further study there. Like many performance traditions, there was a fierce environment of competition and rivalry that detracted from the spiritual nature of the music. At the same time, he had developed a fascination with Buddhism and meditation and was intrigued by the possibility of applying Buddhist meditative techniques to his study of music. Stefan returned to RYI for the Buddhist Studies summer course this year to explore this.

“After experiencing both the Western academic tradition and two years living under the master-disciple tradition, I realized RYI offered the best of both worlds. The integrated approach to Buddhism here combines the critical analytical approach of Western academia with the traditional philosophical teachings taught by authentic masters of Tibetan Buddhism. This balance allows students to be immersed in and experience Buddhism as a living tradition while still giving us the freedom to question religious concepts and ideology.”

Stefan Mahabir, BA Student

During the summer program, Stefan developed a desire to expand his understanding of Buddhist philosophy by studying at a pace at which his mind could properly absorb complex and profound teachings, leading him to apply as a full-time student this fall. He is currently continuing his vocal training under Inoue Sou and Vishal Bhattarai, senior students of the Gundecha Brothers, who reside and perform in Kathmandu. Stefan is now in his first semester of the BA program.
2016 Efforts to Reach SAARC, Nepali, and Other Himalayan Students

For the first time in RYI history, students from Nepal are the largest group of students on campus. Of the 129 students on campus this fall, Nepalese students total twenty-seven. Not surprisingly then, when we add our Nepalese students to four students from Tibet, one from India, and three from Bhutan, we find that students from the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) region comprise the highest percentage of students on campus. These statistics confirm that RYI’s efforts to engage youth from Nepal and the Himalayan region have paid off, and that these students are beginning to consider RYI as a viable option for academic degree study.

RYI’s efforts to engage Himalayan students include the addition of a two-month summer academic English preparatory course, two courses during the school year on academic methods, critical thinking, and academic writing, and considerable support and guidance from a dedicated writing coach. These new courses and the individual support provided have helped Himalayan students, along with students of other nationalities, to meet international academic standards.

An important factor behind the increased enrollment of Himalayan students has been the increased outreach in South Asia. RYI’s intrepid marketing assistant, Dorjee Gyalpo, has traveled around the region in the last three years speaking with Tibetan, Himalayan, Ladakhi, and Bhutanese youth at Tibetan Children’s Village schools and other public and private institutions. His recruitment efforts have helped spread the word about RYI’s programs and the opportunities for youth of Himalayan background to study their own religious culture through both traditional and modern academic means. Students emerge from four years of study with an internationally recognized BA degree from Kathmandu University and a deep connection to their heritage through formal study of Tibetan language, Sanskrit, and traditional philosophical texts with Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling’s learned monastics.

Dorjee’s most recent excursion in summer 2016 brought him to Darjeeling and Bhutan. He visited eight schools, meeting individually with interested students to explain the details of RYI’s admissions process, KU affiliation, and scholarship programs. He handed hundreds of brochures to bright, inquisitive students and made important connections with principals and rectors of the various schools. One principal even expressed her own interest in RYI’s programs. When Dorjee greeted her, she asked, “Will your institute accept me as a student? I’m really interested in Buddhism but haven’t gotten much time to study and practice.” Dorjee smiled and assured her that anyone who is qualified (even a school principal!) is welcome to join the BA program, or to study without pursuing a degree.

Efforts continue to encourage students of Himalayan and South Asian origin to study at RYI. The program is especially suited for young Himalayan students who wish to uphold their own religious and cultural tradition while learning from modern scholarship in the field of Buddhist Studies.

Are you interested in helping more of these students in their educational endeavors?

If so, please visit www.ryi.org/get-involved/giving to make a donation.

See full photo album on facebook: Rangjung Yeshe Institute
Studies with a dissertation that compared his doctorate in Theological and Religious Studies. Following his summer at RYI, Jason completed access to such a living tradition. His study at RYI because the program offered paradoxes, and tensions. Jason chose to study at RYI because the program offered access to such a living tradition.

“That summer in Boudha completely changed both my understanding of and personal relationship with Buddhism. My time at RYI allowed me to see Buddhism as a much more tangible and vibrant diversity of practices and traditions of belief, while also dispelling many of my own inclinations to romanticize those traditions.”

Following his summer at RYI, Jason completed his doctorate in Theological and Religious Studies with a dissertation that compared the epistemologies of the Tibetan Buddhist Gendun Chopel and the Catholic theologian and philosopher Edward Schillebeeckx as responses to their own encounters with the modernism of the mid-twentieth century.

He then began teaching at a boarding high school in central New Jersey—The Lawrenceville School—where he is now the co-chair of the school’s Interdisciplinary Studies Program. He also teaches courses in the Religion and Philosophy department, including Introduction to Religious Studies, Buddhist Philosophies, Ethics, and Western Philosophies.

Jason is in the process of planning and organizing educational excursions for Lawrenceville students to Nepal. He hopes these visits will expose his young American students to some of the same tensions and paradoxes that his first visit to Nepal revealed to him, and provide them with opportunities for growth and new understandings.

“RYI made such an impact on my own life and provided me with such a deep passion for both the Kathmandu Valley and all of Nepal that I simply want to share that life-transforming encounter with as many students as I can.”

More than eighty students from twenty-six countries joined us for RYI’s thirteenth summer program between mid-June to mid-August 2016. The program began with an inspiring talk by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, followed by four days of orientation to help students adjust to life in Nepal quickly. During the popular Patan tour led by Father Greg Sharkey, the monsoon showed its vigor by creating rivers in the streets of the ancient city. Wading through the knee-deep water was quite the introduction to Nepal for the summer students! Orientation finished with an entertaining welcome reception complete with live music to usher in the upcoming classes.

Nine intensive courses began after orientation: Beginning and Intermediate Classical Tibetan; Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Colloquial Tibetan; Beginning Nepal; Beginning Sanskrit; Buddhist Studies; and Academic English and Advanced Study Methods.

Several students commented after their first week of classes that it was: “Unbelievable how much I learned in such a short time!” The week of classes that it was: “Unbelievable, it was quite the introduction to Nepal for the summer students!”

“When I showed my notes I took in class to some friends, they asked me how long I’ve been studying Tibetan. They didn’t believe that it was just five days since I began!”

Courses are designed so that students acquire considerable knowledge in a short period of time by being focused and diligent and adopting a light-hearted approach to studies.

What’s New for Summer 2017?
Intermediate Sanskrit & Academic English & Advanced Study Methods

Apply Now!
Building More than Buildings: Progress Continues on Post-Earthquake Reconstruction

More than 500 days have passed since the massive earthquakes in April and May 2015. Progress continues on the reconstruction efforts at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling and efforts to raise funds for the seven-million-dollar project, with numerous donors having now offered their support to the work.

The most significant long-term goal for the monastery is to build a new, large temple to fit 1000 people, which is roughly four times the size of the existing temple. However, various organizational details need to be in place before even considering beginning construction of the physical building and its supporting complex.

Recently, an important organizational step was taken which will support the entire team’s efforts: the monastery board of directors, comprising nine members including lopons and khenpos, was fully reinstated since the passing of the monastery manager, Namdrol Gyatso, in 2014. The support of this group is essential for the fourteen construction projects currently underway in various stages of design, construction, electrical work, and furnishing.

Effective cross-cultural communication is essential for establishing functional Trust and relationship-building are key goals for both the Western construction team and the monastery’s board of directors, but this is not an easy task.

Peter Oudshoorn, the project’s main architect, has been working on the various projects now for a year and a half. “It is not us doing the project, it is us supporting [the monks] with their projects.” The first priority is to gain trust between all stakeholders by showing that collaboration does, indeed, work. For example, recently, there was a bottleneck with the new RYI building: the best way to arrange the toilets was elusive. Peter began drawing the situation in multiple ways, and eventually, the problem solved itself. He showed the drawings to Buchung, the monastery’s general manager, who could also immediately see the solution. Having experienced that the drawing process can be useful, trust for the process developed.

Thus, progress continues steadily. Two and a half months ago, the new RYI building did not have floors or electrical wiring. Now, the floors are in place and discussions about interior design are underway. Peter put together a powerpoint presentation to show at international sangha meetings this summer. The presentation was met with warmth, appreciation, and a clearer understanding of both the interpersonal and organizational dynamics driving the project.

Nuns’ Shedra begins at Nagi Gompa

As post-earthquake repairs continued this past spring at Nagi Gompa, a formal shedra (bshad gwa, scriptural college) began for the nuns in residence. Previously, classes had run informally for eight years: the nuns studied pre-shedra texts such as the Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva and the Words of My Perfect Teacher, and also studied Tibetan, Nepali, and English. Now, the nuns have entered their first year of proper shedra study.

The course content studied by the nuns will mirror the monk’s shedra on campus at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling. The nuns will study four texts in the first year: Mipham Rinpoche’s Gateway to Knowledge, Shantideva’s The Way of the Bodhisattva, and also studied Tibetan, Nepali, and English. Now, the nuns have entered their first year of proper shedra study.
The devastating earthquakes of April 25 and May 12, 2015 altered the lives of the residents of the remote community of Lapa, near the Tibetan border in Dhading district, two days’ walk from the nearest road. Loved ones were lost and ancestral homes destroyed. Given the severity of the damage, remaining in Lapa was impossible. The community members had to leave their lives and history behind to create new opportunities for future generations.

Within months, fifty-five of the poorest families moved onto land in the southern part of Dhading purchased for them by a Canadian donor. They settled there in tents—settled, yet vulnerable to spring heat, monsoon rains, and winter cold. Widows with multiple children, elderly people without support, and families who look after a handicapped member make up most of the population there now. From ground zero, they have begun mobilizing resources in order to rebuild everything: their farms, their homes, their lives.

The villagers themselves are all involved in the construction of their new village. As September came to a close and monsoon rains subsided, they continued to build their own earthquake-resistant homes under the supervision of an engineer, thanks to generous donations from Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche’s worldwide sangha. Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen continues to raise funds and offers the opportunity for others to be part of the project. Already, three donors have sponsored entire homes for $7,500 each! Donors say they feel this project is very meaningful and that making an offering to complete the work has been rewarding for them.

In the past two years, Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling has experienced the biggest intake of young monks it has ever seen—150 to be exact, between the ages of seven and fourteen years. The young monks are mostly of Himalayan origin, from Nubri, Mugum, and Dolpo, although most were born in Kathmandu.

Lopon Shedrub Gyatso is in charge of these monks, last year as an assistant caretaker, and this year as the main caretaker. He attends to their studies, their health, and their behavior. He is also responsible for overseeing the work of their eleven instructors.

The curriculum for young monks consists of memorization of the daily prayers of the monastery and reading and writing in Tibetan, Nepali, and English. After five years of this kind of study, they will go on to “pre-shedra” to study basic philosophical texts—Words of My Perfect Teacher, Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva, Jewel Ornament of Liberation, Nāgārjuna’s Letter to a Friend, and texts about logic. For three years, they will also learn how to play ritual instruments and perform rituals. These young monks all speak Nepali as their first language so despite their broad age range all are beginners in Tibetan and English.

After pre-shedra, each monk can choose whether to pursue formal shedra studies with the aim to become lopons and khenpos or to train in the drupdra (sgrub grwa, practice school) to become ritual masters. When Lopon Shedrub Gyatso joined the monastic shedra, there were only sixteen students in his class. If even half of these 150 young monks decide to join the shedra, the class size will be unprecedented!
Dharma Ratna Shop

A new Dharma Ratna shop opened in Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery just ahead of the start of our fall semester. Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche’s vision for the shop is that students practicing in the Chokling Tersar tradition can obtain authentic, high-quality practice materials and books to support genuine Dharma practice. The products are chosen, approved, and blessed by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche himself and senior lamas from Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery, thereby meeting the precise requirements and standards of the Chokling Tersar practice lineage.

A portion of the proceeds from the sales of these items will help support the reconstruction of Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery following the 2015 earthquakes, and support the further development of the Tara’s Triple Excellence online program. The shop is proving to be a great resource for the Tara’s Triple Excellence community. Practitioners beginning the Third Excellence, Part One, can now acquire all the authentic ritual objects needed for the outer Tara sādhana practice. Rinpoche hopes that by making these resources available to his students, the shop will contribute significantly to the spread of the Dharma.

In the near future, the Dharma Ratna shop will be accessible online.

YOU CAN DOWNLOAD THE SHOP CATALOG HERE: https://files.secureserver.net/0sr9LjJsQeQ6CG

Purchases and preorders can be made by writing to: DharmaRatnaOnline@gmail.com.

Lumbini Monastery Construction

Construction of Pal Thubten Ling Monastery in Lumbini is nearing completion. The roof has been installed and some of the walls are being put up. We invite you all to get involved in some way with supporting this project.

Please visit www.shedrub.org for details.

Gomde Update

Denmark (gomde.dk)

For upcoming events and group practice sessions please refer to the website.

Germany-Austria (gomde.de)

Lama Tenzin Sango
Preparatory seminar for the winter seminar December 30, 2016 - January 1, 2017

Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche
Sphere of Refined Gold - open for all December 31, 2016 - January 4, 2017

Erik Pema Kunsang
The Six Bardos - the art of living and dying April 28 - May 1, 2017

Scotland (gomdescotland.org)

Please send your best wishes and prayers for the planning permission for the retreat hermitage at Gomde Scotland to unfold soon!
For further events please refer to the website.

USA (gomdeusa.org)

Lama Gerry Prindiville
Annual New Year’s Vajrasattva Retreat December 27, 2016 - January 2, 2017

Lama Kunzang Drolma
Calm Abiding Practice Weekend January 27 - 29

Lama Kunzang Drolma
Seven Key Points for Training the Mind March 17 - 19

Russia - Ukraine (rangjungyeshe.ru)

Regular practices on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30pm

For further events please refer to the website.

UK (gomde.org.uk)

Lama Tenzin Sango and Heidi Koppl
Tara’s Triple Excellence Retreat April 28 - May 4, 2017

Please check the websites of each of the centers for additional activities and teachings.
As the thirty-sixth annual seminar in Kathmandu concludes this November, our international community fondly remembers and appreciates Carlos Ramirez. Carlos passed away on March 2, 2016 at the age of 52. He dedicated his life to the Dharma with sincerity and hard work, and, most visibly, with his contributions to the direction of these annual seminars, which he organized for eleven years, as well as his involvement at Gomde California and Gomde Denmark, and most recently, at the new center in Colima, Mexico. Through supporting Rinpoche’s activities, Carlos developed a close relationship with Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche which became a significant focus of his life.

At the seminars, he easily captured everyone’s attention and made participants laugh. His talent for language and oral interpretation allowed him to speak with people in their own languages, helping to make them feel welcome and included.

He approached people with a pure heart, listening to them, hearing what they needed to express, and then putting their minds at ease. He had a talent for calming others, encouraging them to go with the flow, and at the same time astutely keeping things on course. These skills were developed in his work in the hotel management industry and the flower business, and benefitted all of us during large sangha events and seminars.

Carlos first came to live in Boudhanath as a student at RYI in 1998. Friends remember him saying after one month: “I hate Tibetan. I am dropping out of RYI.” He went to Rinpoche to say he was quitting. Rinpoche responded, “No, you’re not!” Carlos continued to study full-time at RYI for five more years.

Carlos continued to express his unconditional devotion to Rinpoche’s vision in his work in Colima, Mexico. He was a steady presence during the process of establishing the center there. When things became complicated, he would remind people that “To put money into the mandala of Rinpoche is never a waste.” His involvement in Colima was the seed for the Dharma Houses now in Oaxaca, Guadalajara, and Mexico City.

Fun and funny, he sustained a sense of lightness and humor. He was also a serious practitioner who wished to spend more and more time in retreat, which he had been doing during the last years of his life. During his last days in the hospital, he said that he very much wanted to get well so he could attend the inauguration of the Dharma House in Mexico City, his home town.

Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche remembers Carlos: “He worked nonstop for the dharma, wholeheartedly, without any thought for reward. He grew to know the value of the Buddha’s teachings more and more and to deeply respect them.”