Almost every autumn since 1984, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche has visited Bodhgaya, India to teach approximately thirty American students enrolled in the Carleton (formerly Antioch) College Study Abroad Program. These students come to Bodhgaya and live at the Burmese Vihar, where they devote themselves to a semester of intensive study about the history, philosophy, and practice of Buddhism in all its forms. Although the primary audience for Rinpoche’s teachings are these study abroad students, the public is welcome to attend. Every year, some of Rinpoche’s students based both in Kathmandu and abroad join the pilgrimage and teachings, as do some RYI students if their schedule allows. This year a small group of Rinpoche’s students joined the pilgrimage in October.

Congratulations to all RYI students who graduated at the end of 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts or Master of Arts degree.
Bodhgaya, where Śākyamuni Buddha accomplished full awakening, is a profoundly beautiful and peaceful site for all who visit—whether devout Buddhists, those with a new interest in the Buddhadharma, practitioners of other traditions or curious sightseers. The peaceful atmosphere of the temple grounds is in marked contrast to the colorful chaos and cacophony of the surrounding town and provides a true refuge for all visitors. The Mahabodi Temple soars 55 meters into the air and is crowned with 289 kilograms of gold, an offering given by the King of Thailand and the Thai people in 2013. Behind the temple grows a large, old bodhi tree descended from the original tree under which Śākyamuni Buddha meditated some 2,600 years ago until the true nature of reality was fully unveiled for him. The temple is surrounded by many acres of gardens, studded with smaller stupas and sacred sites, many marking different locations where the Buddha continued to meditate after complete awakening. Pilgrims from around the world circumambulate the stupa, make offerings, chant, pray, and practice meditation individually and in groups, according to their own traditions. It is at this sacred site that Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche offers refuge at the end of his annual teaching to the Antioch/Carleton students.

The Antioch study abroad program was started in 1979 by Tara Doyle and Robert Pryor, two long-time Buddhist practitioners and scholars. In 1984, Tara Doyle traveled to Kathmandu and asked Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche to come to Bodhgaya and give teachings. Since then Rinpoche has kept up his commitment to the program and taught almost every year, unless urgent circumstances prevented him from doing so. In those years, Rinpoche sent a lama or a khenpo to teach in his stead. Rinpoche's long-term connection to this program has created lasting relationships between the program’s alumni, Rinpoche, and the larger mandala of Rinpoche’s activities. Many Antioch/Carleton alumni have come to study at RYI; some have even become textual translators and oral interpreters. At least one Antioch Bodhgaya alum has ordained at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery. Other alumni continue to receive teachings from Rinpoche, either here in Kathmandu or abroad at one of the gomdes.

Whether or not you consider yourself a Buddhist, traveling to Bodhgaya could be one of the most memorable occasions of your life. In order to keep up to date with Rinpoche’s schedule of teachings, please visit: www.shedrub.org
RYI offers a range of financial aid opportunities to support both new and current students in their studies. The Merit-Based Scholarship, South Asia & Himalaya Scholarship, Ordained Sangha Scholarship, Translator Training Scholarship, Horst Koch Memorial Scholarship, and the Work-Study Scholarship make it possible for many students to study at RYI. Full scholarships for the MA Buddhist Studies Program are provided by the Tsadra Foundation, and financial aid is generously provided by matching programs with the Khyentse Foundation, and many private donors. Here are some brief accounts of how these scholarships have helped RYI students.

Laxmi Bajracharya from Nepal is currently in her seventh semester of the BA program at RYI. She comes from a Newar family in Bhaktapur, currently resides in Kathmandu, and has been a practicing Buddhist all her life. Growing up, she observed the monthly and annual prayers performed at home in the presence of monks and nuns. Laxmi decided that she wanted to learn more and more about Buddhism to gain in-depth understanding and practice Dharma genuinely. Laxmi was also an active member of RYI’s student society last year.

Laxmi and her classmate, Birat Bajracharya, recently received the wonderful opportunity to translate teachings by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, Phakchok Rinpoche, and Lama Tenzin Sangpo during the annual Fall seminar for the Himalayan community, and on some occasions for the international community as well. Laxmi’s aspirations are:

...to become a written translator and perhaps an oral interpreter in the near future so that I can be of some help to Rinpoche and lamas in order to transmit the Buddha Dharma from Tibetan to both Nepali and Newari. I want to do so as authentically as possible. Therefore, I really need to continue with the B.A. in Buddhist Studies. If causes and conditions come together, I would also like to do the Translator Training Program or MA Textual Translation and Interpretation Program (MA TTIP) to achieve my goal.

Champa Lhundrup from Lhoka was born into a semi-nomadic family and studied law in Chengdu before going to Lhasa to study English. Foreigners learning Tibetan with him recommended studying at RYI. His former English tutor says,

I used to be his English tutor in Lhasa a few years back. Nowadays, he explains to me how Western academia has been constructing a particular type of Buddhist history, often not in line with Buddhist traditions. He quotes key works of relevant authors in order to use their arguments to develop his own ideas on how Buddhism could come to terms with Western science.
Champa has now graduated from the BA program and started the MA in Buddhist Studies program. He comments:

*Studying at RYI has been the greatest time of my life. I’ve acquired ample Buddhist textual knowledge and also practical knowledge of how to view the world optimistically and be a beneficial person for others. Thanks to the Khyentse Foundation and RYI’s generosity, I successfully completed my BA studies at RYI this year. Yet, considering the immense suffering of humanity and destruction of nature due to a lack of care, I feel obliged to continue my studies for an extended time. My aim is to complete higher MA studies, and then serve in the area of Buddhist education in our society. I truly believe that with the Buddhist teachings about love and compassion we will be able to save society from extreme fear, hatred, and distrust, and with the teaching of conditional arising we will be able to find the thing that we all search for every day.*

The scholarship has been very beneficial; being born in a remote semi-nomadic family with five older brothers who have never been to any school, and having no close siblings or relatives with a good source of income to help me to study abroad meant that financial support was limited. I also gave up my job as a tour guide when I enrolled in the BA program four years ago. I credit my dedication to the Buddhist teachings to my old and devoted Buddhist parents living far away in our village of Dakpo and to the generous kindness of Khyentse Rinpoche. I know I am one of the most fortunate Tibetans of my generation and feel a duty to dedicate my life to service through the preservation of ancient Buddhist cultural heritage, which I believe is the greatest potential source of peace and joy for our society.

Inka Wolf from Germany graduated with a BA in Buddhist Studies from Rangjung Yeshe Institute in 2016. During her undergraduate studies she spent one year at the Karmapa International Buddhist Institute (KIBI) in Delhi. Last year, Inka started the MA in Translation, Textual Interpretation and Philology at RYI. She is supporting her MA studies through the work-study program, where she is a research assistant to one of our PhD faculty members. Inka says:

*I enjoy the unique study environment at Rangjung Yeshe Institute, which goes far beyond the classes. In my experience, the immersion in Tibetan culture, the presence of high masters in Boudha, the openness of the international students and teachers, the intellectual exchange across cultures, the support of so many who follow a path similar to mine and the kindness of all those who make it all possible, combine to create a place which is truly extraordinary. It is an environment where intellectual learning meets inspiration for practice. It is a place where new scholars and translators are fostered and spiritual development is nurtured. I feel honored to be given the chance offered by the work-study scholarship. I would love to make my contribution to RYI. I have received much kindness and love while being at RYI, and it is more of a family and a home to me than merely a place to study.*

---

**Sample a Class**

Embarking on a degree program is a big decision. To help you decide, RYI offers the option of sampling classes for up to five days, as an observer, free of charge. For more information, please visit: [www.ryi.org/programs/sample-a-class](http://www.ryi.org/programs/sample-a-class)

**For more information on scholarship programs at RYI please visit:**

[www.ryi.org/students/financial-aid](http://www.ryi.org/students/financial-aid)
What made you choose the TTP Program?
I really wanted to improve my Tibetan and take it to the next level. And I wanted to be fluent and to understand the khenpos and rinpoches. So it seemed to be a good program for me.

How did you prepare for this program?
I took two years of colloquial Tibetan, and two years of classical Tibetan in the BA at RYI, and I lived with a Tibetan homestay family for four semesters.

How have you found the program so far?
It’s very good but it’s a lot of work; we have to prepare and we have to study a lot. Our whole day is filled with classes and self-study, but it’s great! We made such big improvements. It is incredible! When I think back to how I spoke Tibetan a year ago, there is an immense difference.

What are the most challenging parts of the program?
It’s quite long, twelve months. Every day there are eight hours of school and then after you have to study by yourself, so you need quite a bit of stamina to go through twelve months of this program. The most challenging part of learning Tibetan is that the language is not similar to English, German or French or any other language I know, so it’s quite hard to wrap one’s mind around the structure of Tibetan. At the beginning it was quite tiring, but we got used to it and we can now translate for forty-five minutes non-stop.

What do you want to do with the skills you’ve acquired?
I’m already translating a biography of one of my lineage’s rinpoches. And it’s going to be published once I’m done, so definitely that’s as a result of what I learned during the TTP. In Germany some sanghas need help with translation; I’ve already received some job proposals there. As well, with the skills I’ve acquired, I now understand my practice, and I can understand the Tibetan lamas and rinpoches when they teach the Dharma.

What is your favorite part of the TTP?
My favorite part of the TTP is seeing how much we improve week by week. It’s amazing! And speaking Tibetan with the language partners; every week we get better and better. Sitting with a khenpo and realizing that every week we understand a bit more and we can translate a bit more is really great.

What do you like about studying in a monastery in Boudha?
I like studying at the monastery because it has a very Dharmic atmosphere. We can hear the monks doing puja. It’s a very quiet, relaxed atmosphere, and also we have khenpos and lopons available to teach us. They are very knowledgeable and if we have questions we can go and ask them. It’s very beneficial not only for our Tibetan language, but also for our own Dharma practice.

I would definitely recommend the TTP for everyone who wants to improve their Tibetan and who wants to acquire translation skills. It’s intense but you go through so much and after a year you will be very fluent and will be able to understand the Khenpos. It’s good to learn Tibetan even if one doesn’t want to become a translator just because it increases your Tibetan knowledge and that’s definitely worthwhile. In addition to improving my translation skills, my English improved a lot. It’s just overall a very nice program.
Master of Arts (MA) in Translation, Textual Interpretation, and Philology

Application for fall 2019 for the MA TTIP is now open. The MA program is a 2-year (4 semester/60 credit) program that combines graduate-level philosophy studies with translation seminars in which students work with primary source literature. The aim of the program is to introduce students to the methods and skills involved in translation, textual interpretation, and philology and to develop their ability to undertake independent translation projects and translation research within the field of Buddhist Studies. Here is what some past students say of the course:

It is a lot of hard work, but I would also say that it is not a lot of hard work because when you really enjoy and love Tibetan and translation, and love what you are doing, then there is a joyful diligence that arises. No matter how much work there is you are able to do it without feeling like it’s a lot of hard work.  
Lowell Cook

I was interested in translating when I entered the program, and that is what I’m now doing. I’m currently doing both oral and written translation—oral translation at RYI last year, and also for other teachers, as well as written translation for the 84000 project and for Lhasey Lotsawa Translations.  
Oriane Lavolé

The course exceeded my expectations! Actually we learned not just translation methods and Tibetan practice, but also bigger picture ideas about translation theory and how translation affects the world and how the translation of Tibetan texts into English is a really important project that has much larger implications than I first thought.  
Ben Ewing

For more information and to apply for fall 2019, please visit:

www.ryi.org/graduate/master-of-arts

New Library Opened at RYI

On October 4, 2018, RYI celebrated the inauguration of its beautiful new library. RYI was happy to host guests from Kathmandu University, and many students and staff joined the celebration. Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, Ram K. M. Shrestha who is the Vice-Chancellor of KU, and some teachers and students shared their vision for RYI. Please feel welcome to come and visit this treasure at RYI.

Alumni Dinner

More than 50 RYI alumni and staff celebrated their annual get-together in Boudhanath. Attending were alumni who were founding directors of RYI 21 years ago, as well as alumni who recently graduated. Some who attended hadn’t been in Nepal for many years, while others whose home is Nepal also joined the group.
What is the purpose of teaching Buddhist philosophy at RYI and what is the outcome for the students?

First, the general goal of teaching the Buddha Dharma is so sentient beings can be happy. Temporarily and ultimately it can remove the problems that many sentient beings experience. Rangjung Yeshe Institute was established so that we can offer the Dharma in an open way without making any discrimination among people, and in a way that they will benefit not only in this life but in future lives as well. Specifically, due to technological advances there is a lot of progress with regard to what is available to us in our outer world. At the same time there has been a decline in the inner happiness of the mind. For improving inner happiness the Dharma is of great benefit, and that’s why we offer the Dharma; as a method to lay the foundation for inner happiness.

Can you say something to people who want to study at RYI?

To develop inner happiness, which depends on the mind, we need a Dharmic education. The Dharma provides explanations on how to remove inner mental hardships and offers a lot of methods to do so. Therefore, irrespective of whether one is a Buddhist or not, I think that it’s helpful to study the Dharma in order to remove such inner mental hardships. In order to study the Dharma there is no need to actually become a Buddhist. If one has the option to study the Dharma, inner hardships can be removed, and this human life can become a happy one. Here at RYI, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche makes it possible for everyone to study.
Every fall for the past 38 years, students from around the world have gathered at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery to receive profound Buddhist teachings and meditation instruction. This annual event began when Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and his son Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche gave teachings to a small group of international students. Originally the relatively small number of participants made it possible for the seminar to take place in the Rinpoches’ receiving room at the monastery. Over the years, as it grew in size, the seminar was moved to the main shrine hall. After the catastrophic earthquake of April 2015, when the temple was no longer deemed safe for regular use, the seminar moved to its new location in the temporary shrine hall on the first floor of the new RYI building. Although this shrine hall has only been in use for a few short years, it has already been the site of numerous precious teachings, empowerments and rituals, and the temple is filled with the blessings of the root and lineage masters.

Beginning two years ago, Rinpoche opened the seminar to all students, near and far, and for the first time Nepali language translation was made available. At that time, Rinpoche also requested that the seminar and accompanying weekend retreat be made free of charge, so that all students with a genuine interest could receive the teachings without any financial barriers. Students make donations to support the seminar and other activities of the monastery. During the seminar, the monastery offers a daily tea break and lunch to all participants. This year, about 700 students from 48 countries attended the seminar. Practicing meditation and receiving teachings together, enjoying tea and eating lunch together, even with such a large group, one felt right at home—a real family feeling. We even enjoyed tea and lunch together at the new RYI restaurant, an open-air, spacious, beautifully designed area suitable for dining, studying, and socializing.

On the first day of the seminar, devoted practitioners and sponsors of the Tara’s Triple Excellence online program offered the monastery a beautiful and huge new gong (made in Thailand, but bought in Thamel!) to replace the old gong, which was cracked and no longer had its former far-reaching and resonant tone. Rinpoche received and blessed the gong at the opening of the seminar, and as Rinpoche struck the gong over and over again, the temple hall resounded with a rich Dharma sound, and all of the gathered participants were bathed in the gong’s deep tones. The gong will now invite the
the monks daily to morning and afternoon puja and other ritual practices.

Each morning, the seminar began with a meditation session, usually the Śākyamuni Buddha sadhana, “The Treasury of Blessings.” This year we were very fortunate that Rinpoche joined every morning meditation session, giving teachings and instruction each step of the way. After a tea break, we gathered again for teachings. Each year, in a relatively short period of time—a week to ten days—Rinpoche manages to teach the entirety of the Buddhist path, from “A to Zed,” as Rinpoche likes to say, sometimes teaching from a text, sometimes teaching directly from study and practice experience. This year, Rinpoche taught Khenpo Gangshar’s profound pith instructions “Naturally Liberating Whatever You Meet.”

As Rinpoche explained, this text, written in a direct, colloquial manner, straight from the heart of Khen Rinpoche’s experience, gives devoted practitioners everything they need to accomplish the path for the benefit of all beings. Rinpoche taught in a style referred to as “guidance through experience” and urged us all to apply the teachings to our experience immediately, as soon as we hear them. Thus the teachings, which contain all of the profound points of Buddhist philosophy and logic, were immediately brought to life, fresh and vital, in the day-to-day, moment-by-moment experience of the seminar participants.

In the afternoons, Lama Tenzin Sangpo, with characteristic warmth and humility, taught us how to structure a meditation practice, focusing on the meaning of the three excellences—the excellent preparation, main part, and conclusion—and kindly answered our questions. With Lama-la’s instruction, we practiced meditation and contemplation together. In two one-hour lectures, Thomas Doctor also managed to teach us complex “mind-only” and “middle way” philosophy, in a fresh, investigative style that provoked thought and understanding in new and long-time students alike. Rinpoche requested Dr. Doctor to teach us these views, explaining that the middle way view is the most important and profound, and the mind-only view, a close second in importance, is extremely beneficial for understanding Tantric practice.

Because we are such an international community, teachings were translated into Chinese, English, Nepali, Russian and Spanish. Rinpoche taught us about the importance of reciting sacred texts daily, and on successive mornings, we were all treated to the inspiring chanting of the Heart Sutra in Sanskrit (by a group of RYI Sanskrit students), Chinese, English and Tibetan.

After lunch on the last day of the seminar, Phakchok Rinpoche was kind enough to give us teachings, even though he had just returned from abroad a few days earlier. Emphasizing the importance of dignity and devotion, Phakchok Rinpoche gave us some
Seminar Participants enjoy lunch at the new RYI restaurant.

Key points on how to make sure we keep up the continuity of practice that we had begun during the seminar.

In past years, Rinpoche typically offered a three-day retreat in order to allow students to focus on further meditation instructions and more intense practice. In years previous, this retreat took place at Nagi Gompa or Asura Cave where attendance had been limited to about 100 participants. Two years ago, Rinpoche requested that this limit be removed, musing, “Maybe not that many more people will want to come.” Predictably enough, however, the roster of registered retreatants rose to about 175, but somehow everyone was accommodated at Asura Cave. It was very cozy, to say the least!

Beginning last year, Rinpoche decided the retreat should be held at the monastery in Boudhanath so that more people could participate. This year, approximately 400 students attended the weekend retreat. Although we weren’t tucked away in a remote location, the sincere practice and warm, family feeling made for a wonderful, beneficial retreat.

Receiving teachings in the heart of the mandala, with hundreds of Rinpoche’s students from near and far, is an unforgettable experience. Some participants had attended dozens of seminars, some were meeting Rinpoche for the first time, or even attending a Buddhist teaching for the first time, but all were sincerely touched and interested. One participant from the west coast of America hadn’t attended a seminar since 1989, when it was still just a fairly small group of students. Although Boudhanath and the monastery have vastly changed since that time, and the seminar size has grown, this particular student remarked that the profundity of the teachings and the warm support of the community of practitioners hadn’t changed even one little bit.

The RYI Annual Fall Seminar is a major event at our monastery—it takes the loving care and hard work of the monastery and teams of dedicated volunteers to provide a suitable place to receive Rinpoche’s profound teachings. It is heartwarming and inspiring to see people from around the world come together as a community of practitioners. If you haven’t had a chance to attend the seminar yet, maybe you’ll be inspired to attend next year. It’s also an ideal time for family and friends to come visit you in Nepal!

For information about the Annual Fall Seminar, please visit www.ryi.org
Kaleb Yaniger
Kaleb Yaniger, a recipient of the Tsadra Foundation scholarship from the USA, talked to us about his study experience.

Prior to applying for the Tsadra scholarship what interested me most about the Buddhist Studies Master’s program was its emphasis on engaging with Buddhist philosophy and the living tradition. Knowing the incredible opportunity provided by Tsadra, I was encouraged to learn the language as best I could, hoping that by entering into an intensive setting of Tibetan study, my basic understanding of the language would progress to a finer degree. Having spent four years in Tibetan language courses, I was gratified at Tsadra’s appreciation and insistence on a working level of Tibetan language for their scholarship. It was a welcome surprise to find that my still rudimentary level of Tibetan helped immensely in my understanding and retention of some handy philosophical points. Learning philosophy in Tibetan has, at times, been an incredible struggle, where the material seems endless and out of reach to me. At other times, thankfully, the pieces seemed to fall into place, opening up new avenues of understanding that while still too abstract in current English translation, are elegant and simple in Tibetan. The nuances of a single Tibetan word can, given the deep undercurrent of external and internal Buddhist debate and refinement, hold within it a world of meaning. I cannot say that I have put my all into my studies, and I cannot say that I am any more knowledgeable or qualified to speak about Buddhism, but I do feel now, more than before, more equipped to learn at a deeper, more meaningful level.

The greatest challenges in researching and writing my Master’s thesis has been narrowing down my interests and focusing on a single topic. I blame such struggles on my lack of comprehensive knowledge of Buddhism and the current landscape of contemporary Buddhist studies. This made it difficult to place myself within the setting of the discipline. However, the more I asked myself why I was here and what was meaningful for me, the scenery began to appear, and I eventually found my own topic within the academic conversation.

The Tsadra scholarship has been an unparalleled kindness to us, the students they have put so much trust in. I am astonished by the Tsadra Foundation’s appreciation for the study and practice of Buddhism in times when such faith is rare. I feel humbled in the light of their faith in us but at the same time just as encouraged to continue with my studies as a way to repay such kindness.

- To check your eligibility for the scholarship please contact studyscholarships@tsadra.org
- For information on the MA Buddhist Studies program that is funded by the Tsadra Foundation visit www.ryi.org/graduate/master-of-arts/ma-in-buddhist-studies
New for Summer 2019

Buddhist Literary Chinese
The course is for beginning students with no prior knowledge of Buddhist Literary Chinese. This program provides a thorough grounding in the basics of Buddhist Literary Chinese, and uses readings from sūtra passages right from the beginning of the course to introduce grammar and vocabulary. The course also includes discussions of how to interpret Buddhist Literary Chinese, providing students with an important foundation for the reading of Buddhist Literary Chinese literature.

Pāli
The course is designed for beginning students with no prior knowledge of Pāli. Students will also learn to chant in Pāli to get a feel for how the living language is used. The program provides a thorough grounding in the basics of Pāli, including a complete introduction to grammar. The course provides a strong foundation for the reading of Buddhist Pāli literature.

Both courses leads students through basic texts in a detailed and gradual manner so that even complete beginners will be able to access their meaning while building their vocabulary and gaining familiarity with the intricacies of grammar.

Course syllabi at:
www.ryi.org/programs/summer-intensives

Online Learning

RYI is pleased to announce the launch of our new online learning website.

RYI now has three Tibetan language courses. The two semester-long courses can be taken with a moderator, either for-credit or not:

- Tibetan Alphabet
- Introduction to Classical Tibetan
- Classical Tibetan II

Courses are delivered via Moodle, an open source e-learning environment. Depending on the chosen format, class sessions will include a short video lecture, visual lectures illustrating grammar points, and various web-based practice materials for vocabulary drilling and memorization.

In the moderated formats (For-credit and Interactive), students complete homework assignments and quizzes each week that are graded by a course moderator. The course moderator and the online discussion forums encourage you and your fellow students to ask questions of the moderator and discuss issues among yourselves.

For more information please visit www.ryi.org/programs/online-learning