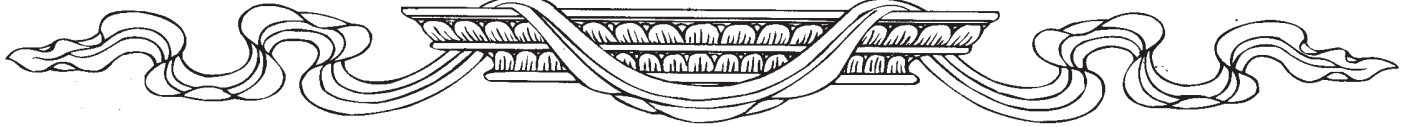




Chokling Tersar Times

SPRING 2006 - ISSUE # 9



Rangjung Yeshe Gomde USA Programs 2006

The Summer Seminar Season for 2006 will be exceptionally rich this year. Registration for the June-September seminars has already begun. Please check the website over the next few months for further updated details.

Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche

will continue his teachings on the final chapters of the Way of the Bodhisattva **June 16-25**

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

will be giving a two-part seminar at Gomde **July 14-16 and 16-23**. The first teachings will focus on lojong or mind training, while the second, longer set will be on a Dzogchen text by Khenpo Gangshar.

Phakchok Rinpoche

will give three days of 'advice for yogis and yoginis', **August 4-6**.

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

is returning to Gomde **August 15-19** following his final seminar on the Madhyamakavatara in San Francisco. While at Gomde, he will give a Manjushri empowerment.

Tsikey Chokling Rinpoche

will return to Gomde to give empowerments and teachings, **August 25-27**. The specific empowerments will be announced soon.

Khandro Rinpoche

will teach at Gomde **September 29-October 1**.

Topic to be announced.



The newly recognized reincarnation of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, Urgyen Jigme Rabsel

IN THIS ISSUE

The Announcement of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's Reincarnation

An Interview with Venerable Khandro Rinpoche

An Interview with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

The Kumara Internship Program

Gomde Wish List 2006

A Look Back at 2005: Summer Seminars

Other News from 2005



The Announcement of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's Reincarnation

The long-awaited announcement has finally come. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche has taken rebirth in the family of Neten Chokling Rinpoche and his beautiful wife, Tenzin Choyang Gyari.

Urgyen Jigme Rabsel was born in the Year of the Snake & is 4 1/2 years old (6 Tibetan). He was born in the U.S. and has an American passport.

Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche undeniably recognized him as the reincarnation of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, after carefully investigating his experience while in strict retreat in the holy pilgrimage place in Maritika, Nepal.

Included in his recognition letter was the following poetry:

*By the blessings of Orgyen Padma
A sublime Tulku, intentionally,
As the fruit of long and repeated prayers
To the gurus and deities, on the world's stage,
To a knowledge-maiden, with blazing element,
And fourth precious drum of summer, (Year of
the Iron Dragon)
A snake-child, born with noble signs and marks.
When enthroned, a great boon will be bestowed
upon beings.*

[Details of supportive ceremonies were also included here]

This was written by Dharma Mati's hand (Trülshik Rinpoche)

The child is currently in Bir, India with his parents and will be given a new name at the time of the hair-cutting ceremony.

As an auspicious coincidence, Tulkus Chokyi Nyima, Tsikey Chokling, Tsoknyi & Phakchok Rinpoches as well as Tenpa Yaphel traveled to Bir and met the child and his parents. There was a ceremony with the Neten Chokling Gonpa in Bir and with the sons of the former Neten Chokling Rinpoche, Urgyen Topgyal, Khyentse Yeshe, Jamyang Gyalsen and Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoches.



Urgyen Jigme Rabsel with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

After paying respect to the family of the tulku, there will be more news as to any other ceremonies.

As soon as we have the tulku's long-life prayer, we will send it around.

This is a very happy time for all of the students of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche. Please join together to pray for the further unfolding of auspicious circumstances in regards to this joyous event.



The parents, Neten Chokling Rinpoche and his wife, Tenzin Choyang Gyari

Advice to Students of the Chokling Tersar, from an Interview with Venerable Khandro Rinpoche

Q: Rinpoche, could you give a few words of encouragement and advice for the students of the Chokling Tersar?

VKR: A remarkable area of work of Chökyi Nyima and Chokling Rinpoches in following Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche's vision is that there is a spacious view regarding all lineages. This is something that I have been very impressed and encouraged with: their openness towards all the traditions, but particularly the bridge between the Nyingma and the Kagyu relationship. This vision is absolutely of great importance in today's times, especially as the Dharma grows and becomes more widespread and practiced in the West. I think that this will create the potential to establish a strong foundation for community members from both the Kagyu and the Nyingma traditions to practice in harmony. This very significant activity needs to be fully encouraged.

Students studying with Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and the other teachers in the family have the possibility of being examples in terms of creating a harmonious environment for practice, and a deepened study that is not sporadic but sequential. This is also one of the things happening at Gomde: this sequential progression of practitioners into understanding the different stages of meditation practice. At Gomde, practitioners going along the path have a variety of teachers coming in and imparting the same teachings in different ways.

This is an advantage that most people in the different communities don't have.

This should be nurtured and cared for. Students need to work hard to further the vision of their teachers - especially Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. At this time, his vision and the vastness of its view need to be kept in place by everyone. The Sangha needs to trust the teacher's vision, adopt it themselves and work in harmony towards furthering that. Such a pursuit is going to be the strongest foundation of Buddhism in the West.

Then, with land centers, I think this is a wonderful advancement that the West has made. It's remarkable progress whenever a land center comes up, especially with the vision of not only practicing dharma whenever you can, but also dedicating a large part of your life to the practice of dharma. Keep in mind that eventually, Buddhism in the West is going to have a large group of people who are going to retire or who even now are at retirement age. Having the possibility of going to a community center where they can spend the rest of their life furthering and deepening their practices, while seeing the land center as their home base, is going to be the backbone of Buddhism in the Western world.



The Rinpoches have that vision. Now, it becomes the responsibility of the students to recognize that it is going to happen in the future, and that it is going to require exerting efforts towards building. Just having that vision without it being actively supported doesn't help very much.

Venerable Khandro Rinpoche was hosted by the Chokling Tersar Foundation and taught on "Mingling Practice With Daily Life" at Orgyen Dorje Den in Alameda, October 24-26, 2003. These excerpts are from an interview with her conducted by Karen Shimada and Michael Sheehy, who later transcribed and edited it.

Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's Dream

An Interview with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

Q: You've said before that Gomde is the plan of your late father Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche. What did he want to create? What was his dream?

CNR: Urgyen Rinpoche really wanted to serve and help whoever was interested in the buddhadharma, because that's what ultimately relieves suffering. People were beginning to understand that, to become more awake and more intelligent, and the world was becoming smaller and smaller. So many American students were coming to Nepal that Rinpoche said, "It would be good to have a dharma center in America." Because many people were interested, we needed to make a place available for them to study and practice.

Of course, having a dharma center is not the most important thing—even if we don't have one, people can practice and study well. But we knew if we had a proper center, then we could do those things more easily and freely. Especially if the center was in a remote, quiet place.

I chose the land in California in quite a short time. With the help of everybody's good wishes, we got a beautiful dharma center. There are meadows, forests, hills, a river, and it's in a remote place. On top of that there's positive energy here, however you like to phrase it: feng shui, blessings, a good environment. What's especially nice is that there's only one way to enter, and if that road is blocked, inside it feels completely remote. And there are a few different levels on the land. So my idea is: on one level to build a beautiful Buddha Hall, where everyone can go and meditate, receive teachings, and do puja. On another level, where it is open and spacious, it would be good to make a retreat area, with houses for those who want to do retreat. On a third level, we would make a shedra, a place for study. These three things are the most important for me.

Q: How do you think Gomde has progressed since the early years?

CNR: Every year I've been there, something has changed. This year, students' mentality, behavior, even their way of talking, was totally positive. That touched me so much, made me so happy. We've progressed a lot. Dharma students are becoming more and more serious and their knowledge of the dharma is becoming more and more genuine. They're becoming naturally softer, kinder, and wiser. I watch them really loving each other, caring for each other, and respecting each other. The sangha's inner qualities have developed a lot—I appreciate and respect that. But at the same time we shouldn't just sleep—we need to

make goals and to travel the path. Right now, this means a new temple, a retreat area, and a shedra. We need to make a plan, and we need to keep this plan in each of our minds, to pray and work toward putting it into effect. If we do this, then definitely, sooner or later, our wishes will be fulfilled. Of course, we don't need to push too hard, to think only of these projects, but we need to have some kind of proper plan, a proper goal. That's common sense.

It's not only my plan, of course; it's our plan, and we all need to discuss this more. I want to get everyone's opinion, so together we can go on the path and awaken. To do that, we first need to do the preliminary practices, which means to have more functions at Gomde. To have more lamas come, for our sangha members to come and do retreat and study. We need to make use of our land more and more for the sake of the dharma. Right now we need to invite different teachers and monks—they can teach and guide us, and the collective energy that results from this will bring very rapid progress.

Q: For practitioners who are living in the West most of the year, it's difficult to not be around the dharma all the time, and not be around their teachers all the time. What benefits do we have from being in the West?

CNR: The 'Thirty-seven Practices of a Bodhisattva' spells out how important it is to have a spiritual friend. Our minds are sort of childish, and they're influenced a great deal by teachers, friends and family. So the community of the sangha, through the lama's power and through its own power, makes the human mind become more positive. Because of that strong influence, it's very important to live near sangha members. What does the dharma advise? "Do good, don't do bad. Think helpful things, don't think hurtful things. Say helpful things, don't say harmful things." This refers even to your physical gestures: behave kindly, softly and gently. Hearing that kind of advice makes people become gentler, kinder, calmer, and wiser. This is why it's good to have a dharma center. But even when we're not around the center, dharma students need to meet once in a while to discuss the dharma openly and practice together. I call this a study and meditation group.

This interview was conducted by Zack Beer at Ka Nying Shedrup Ling Monastery in Boudhanath, Nepal in October, 2005.



Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche teaching at Gomde, July, 2005

THE KUMARA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM SPEND SUMMER 2006 AT GOMDE



h Laura and Kaia in front of Sangha House, 2005
aving been sparked last spring by a conversa-

tion at Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche's monastery in Nepal, and being tested in a trial session by two hard-working guys last summer, our now full-fledged internship program is set to take off in May, 2006. We are now taking applications from interested students among our extended sangha to participate in the inaugural year of our Kumara Internship Program. This program is a combination of meditation, study, and work.

We are delighted to offer young Dharma students the opportunity to spend the summer on Gomde's land in an atmosphere of practice and learning. Interns will be able to attend our annual teaching programs, which this summer will include courses with Chökyi Nyima, Dzongsar Khyentse, Dzigar Kongtrul and Khandro Rinpoches. In between formal seminars, students will receive instructions in other Buddhist disciplines - including philosophy, meditation training, and Tibetan language -- under the guidance of a resident lama and senior students. Over the course of the summer, they will be guided through the basics of Mahayana and Vajrayana practice. In exchange, interns will spend four hours each day in service towards the upkeep of Gomde's 250 acres. With this we hope to add a vibrant, youthful element to our blossoming community.

QUALIFICATIONS

Age 18-25

Student in a certified academic institution

Must have taken refuge

Possess skills to facilitate the running of Gomde and its programs (including physical labor)

TIME PERIOD: May 19 - August 28, 2006

REQUESTED DONATION: \$500-\$1000

Please see our website at www.gomdeusa.org or email Zack Beer at kumara@gomdeusa.org for more information.

POSSIBLE KUMARA INTERNSHIP DAILY SCHEDULE

- 6:30-7:30 Morning group practice with Lama Tsultrim or personal practice
- 7:30-8:30 Breakfast
- 8:30-12:30 Work period
- 12:30-2:00 Lunch
- 2:00-3:30 Free time
- 3:30-4:30 Meditation instruction/group meditation
- 4:45-5:45 Discussion group on The 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva
- 6:00-7:00 Dinner
- 7:30-8:30 Optional evening group practice with Lama Tsultrim. Occasional Vajrayana practice instructions by Lama Tsultrim.



Gomde's Wish List 2006

Please consider donating to the following Gomde improvements and program:

Campground

- Additional lights
- Showers
- Small roofs over the sink areas.
- Tent cabins

Kitchen

- Running water and a water filter at the dining tent
- A side kitchen on the far side of the house
- Air-conditioning for the Sangha House.
- A new dishwashing station.

Lama House

- An improved outside area for tea service
- A small refrigerator, rice cookers, etc.
- A washer and dryer

The Kumara Internship Program

A Look Back at 2005

The Summer Seminars

Highlights of last year's programs at Rangjung Yeshe Gomde included:

The inauguration of the Rangjung Yeshe Gomde Shedra Program for our Western sangha.

Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche inaugurated this extended program series in June 2005, teaching on the first six chapters of the classic text *Entering the Way of the Bodhisattva*, composed by the great eighth century Indian master, Shantideva. The *Bodhicaryavatara* is a masterwork of Buddhist thought, and one of the foremost texts in which compassion and knowledge are taught in combination. It is a philosophical treatise, as well as a training manual for those students interested in developing the mind of enlightenment in order to help others.

Gomde Shedra will focus on creating an educational program centered around the various subjects included within a traditional Mahayana Buddhist education. Courses on different classical texts will be offered over a period of years. These topics are intended to guide the student through the various views of the four philosophical schools and the Nine Vehicles of Buddhism. Since many students in the West are unable to devote a great amount of time to study, we will offer a variety of ways to access teachings given at the Shedra, including providing materials in DVD and Mp3 formats.

This mind of ours is like a house. The house needs to be cleaned and then decorated well. But before we decorate the house, we need to clean it, otherwise we will be decorating the mess that's inside the house. Once the house has been well cleaned, then if we decorate it, the beauty of the house comes through and shines. There's always the need to work with one's mind in relation to cleaning and decorating. Now, what do we clean? Basically we clean our ignorant mind, and whatever has sprung forth from ignorance. In the mind of ordinary sentient beings, there's a sense of self, and this sense of self is constantly struggling with its habits, how it operates out of ignorance. There's a pattern here, and these patterns need to be studied and understood. And the root of it all, the sense of clinging to self, has to be managed - transformed into something totally different. In this way, we can penetrate to the core of the ignorance. --Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche, from his teachings at Gomde in June '05

Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche has explained the importance of formal studies in the Buddhist tradition:

It rarely happens that someone achieves the exact and unmistakable knowledge resulting from meditation training without some basis of learning and reflection. Therefore it is my deep-felt wish and aspiration to create a learning center in which study, reflection, and meditation training are practiced hand in hand. A learning center is the support for the teachings of Lord Buddha and for the happiness and welfare of sentient beings. For people who wish to do in-depth studies of both the sutra and tantric systems, the most conducive environment is that of a center for Buddhist studies. Without such a facility, in-depth studies rarely happen.



Group meditation in the meadow with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, July, 2006

"The Dharma that Belongs in Everyone's Heart"

- A pragmatic approach to cultivating spiritual qualities, by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche

Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche spoke for three days on how to enrich the lives of ourselves and others by cultivating five noble qualities that are within realistic reach of everyone:

- ◆ Forgiveness heals the resentment, buried anger and old grudges that, when allowed to fester, are barriers for getting along with family, friends, and colleagues.
- ◆ Contentment gives life the sense of richness and wealth we all need, lessening frustration and softening rigidity and negativity.
- ◆ Rejoicing opens the way for harmony with our companions in life, overcoming enmity and jealousy.
- ◆ The good heart is the most essential virtue. The cure for selfishness lies in generating a true compassion that is wise and insightful.
- ◆ Mindfulness lets us move forward on the path to liberation to discover the awakened state that is the very nature of our minds.



Rinpoche expanded on the last two to give more details on loving-kindness and compassion, as well as meditation instructions in shamatha and vipashyana.

The dharma is that which can improve, which can help to change the wild, the untamed, the hardened character of us humans -- the wild emotions: the conceit, the pride, the jealousy, the selfishness. Such emotions make people savage and unkind. They make ourselves unhappy, and they make others unhappy. But when we can change and improve ourselves, our own minds, our own hearts, we can make both ourselves and also others at ease. So the real



View from future temple site

question is, Wouldn't it be a better idea to tame and soften our hardened hearts? If one has made it into a habit to be wild and hard-hearted, it won't go well to just stay that way and not change. It gives no chance for peace of mind for oneself, gives no sense of personal joy in life, it gives no peace, happiness, and joy for others to be that way.

The purpose of dharma is to change, to improve our wild, savage, and hardened hearts, and make them more tame, more soft, more noble. It is true that our hearts, our minds, can be improved. They can be changed, they can be made better, our attitudes can be improved. They can also be worsened, of course. But we must understand that basically we are good. From the moment we are born, there is something basically good in us. Without being taught, without having learned anything, there is naturally a sense of warmth, and there is also intelligence.

--Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, from his teachings at Gomde in July '05

Dzogchen Seminar

In this eight-day Dzogchen intensive, Rinpoche taught a special concise text, *A Lamp to Dispel Darkness*, by Ju Mipham Jampal Dorje, a great Nyingma master of the 19th and early 20th centuries. This text is also known informally as "Advice for Town Yogis" because it is meant especially for city dwellers who do not wish to exert themselves in extensive studies and reflections, yet still desire to practice mind essence in accordance with the experience of all the old realized masters. This approach is particularly appropriate for Westerners who do not often have the opportunity to do long retreats in solitary places.

One of the special qualities that characterizes a spiritual teacher is an ability to tune in to the audience rather than giving a "canned speech" from a pre-packaged repertoire. In the tradition of his father, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche is very much in tune with the recipients. Having interpreted for both of them for several decades I can honestly say I just never knew what would be coming next, in the lecture, or as the reply to a question. It has therefore always been, and continues to be, a source of constant inspiration and delight to be present, even for an old, stone-hearted, heard-it-all practitioner such as myself.

-Erik Pema Kunsang

Chokling Rinpoche: Ripening and Liberation

Tsikey Chokling Rinpoche gave three special empowerments from the Chokling Tersar: Sangtik Phurba (Vajrakilaya), Sangtik Dorsem (Vajrasattva), and Sangtik Drolma (Tara). In addition, he gave teachings on *The Essential Instruction on the Threefold Excellence*, a text on Tara practice from the Chokling Tersar that constitutes an entire path.

The Sanskrit word for empowerment has a double meaning. First, 'to disperse' or 'to scatter,' in the sense that something is first destroyed. The second meaning is 'pouring' or 'anointing' -- something is being bestowed or anointed. So, for example, with the first empowerment -- the vase empowerment for the body -- the normal clinging to the ordinary physical body we have is being destroyed, and instead we are being empowered or blessed with seeing our body as the deity. It is the same way with the subsequent empowerments. With the second, we purify attachment to sound and our voice, so that we can realize vajra sound. With the third, we purify the obscurations that lie in our mind: our attitude and our habitual tendencies. Finally, with the fourth empowerment we are made ready to realize the primordial purity and spontaneous presence, so that in this very lifetime, if we practice with perseverance, we can attain full realization. In this way, the four empowerments are extremely important.

--Tsikey Chokling Rinpoche, from his teachings at Gomde, August '05



Other News from 2005

Ratna Shop added teachings from the Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery including Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's Nepal seminars on the Bardos, Meditation and Lojong and Lama



Cooling off in Cedar Creek, Summer, 2005

Tsultrim's explanation of the Ngondro. Supports for the Barchey Kunsel Tsok, Daily Practice and Ngondro are currently on the website. The Shakyamuni and Vajra Kilaya Practices will be up shortly. Ratna Shop is now accepting online payment through PayPal. Please visit www.gomdeusa.org to see the offerings.

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche has asked the Sangha to study The Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva. Practice and Study Groups under Hilda Goldman have begun to explore this important Lojong training. The principle text is *Uniting Wisdom and Compassion: a Commentary on the Thirty-Seven Practices*, translated by Heidi Koppel and available through Amazon. For more information, please see the website.

The Rinchen Terdzo, a collection of terma texts and a gift from Erik Pema Kunsang, found a home in a lovely cabinet custom-built by David Brannam. It is a fitting house for these special and precious volumes. Thank you, David.



Chokling Tersar Foundation
Ranjung Yeshe Gomde USA
66000 Drive Thru Tree Road
P.O. Box 162,
Leggett, CA 95585-0162

This year the Gomde library doubled in size, thanks to the generous contributions of Louis Braun, Marcia Schmidt, Charlotta Carlsen, Jan Eldridge, Joy and Reece Clark and several others. If you would like to donate any Buddhist or Buddha-philic texts to Gomde you may receive an in-kind tax donation receipt.

The May Work Week Crew built a huge and sturdy floor for the dining tent which made us all more comfortable. The same group under the direction of Nick Ostepeck and Scott Updegrade also built a beautiful Tibetan-style entry way for the Buddha Hall.

Last summer, thanks to everyone's contributions, four people received scholarships to Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's seminar. In the interest of expanding this program, Ratna Shop is offering the hardbound edition of the *Tibetan Buddhist Companion*, a collection of prayers, instructions and sayings from the Nyingma masters compiled by Erik Pema Kunsang for any donation over \$50 to the 2006 Scholarship Fund. Please contact ratnashop@gomdeusa.org if you can contribute. Donations in lieu of performing the traditional yogi jobs during seminars will also support this program.



Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche bids farewell on his way to the airport, Summer 2005

