


Share This: *at the Ngakso Puja*

## Gomde E-News

### September 2010

Phakchok Rinpoche's teachings September 24-26 will conclude a busy summer season at Gomde. This year included programs with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, Ani Dekyi, and Elizabeth Mattis-Namgyel, along with an Urban Retreat in Oakland with Khenpo Sherab. This issue of the newsletter includes a report on 2009 finances, a message from Gomde president David Shlim,

and a look at a new book by Marcia Dechen Wangmo. The final article gathers some of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's words on Gomde. Rinpoche's message is clear -- come practice at Gomde!

### A Note From the President

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's retreats at Gomde this summer were marked by harmony—the people, the teachings, even the weather were all mild and pleasant. On the night before the Ngakso Puja, we held a special dinner in the dining tent. Gomde board members served a delicious donated feast of prime rib to the rest of the Sangha, and I made a short speech about our financial situation. Running a retreat center like Gomde means that we have to both maintain the existing facilities, continually strive to make the center more comfortable, and plan for a future that involves a much larger infrastructure, including a beautiful Tibetan-style temple at the top of the meadow. The previous year was marked by a lot of concern about our financial situation, as we entered a second year of spending from our reserves. In my message, I said that I wanted to raise money for “peace of mind,” to be able to run Gomde without the fear that it will somehow deteriorate and fail.

*Rinpoche with Gomde board members and managers*

The outpouring of pledges that night that was truly heartwarming. Thirty thousand dollars was raised in about ten minutes, and all of the money has since been collected. Another \$10,000 was pledged later in the

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to take a deep sigh of relief. However, at a board meeting that was held on September 1<sup>st</sup> we could see that our ongoing expenses and monthly income still do not match. In other words, we lose money every month, apart from the special fundraising that we do. At the board meeting, we apportioned \$20,000 of the donated money to projects through the end of this year. We will spend \$5,000 on needed maintenance, \$5,000 to start the planning process for our future building plans, and \$10,000 to keep work going on the Glass House by the river, with the goal of finishing that project by next summer. When we receive the \$10,000 that was pledged for retreat cabins, we will start that work as well.

So, while there are reasons to celebrate our harmony and generous fundraising, we still need to focus on increasing our monthly giving, so that we can stay even each year, and utilize special fundraising for new projects. We have decreased our annual spending by more than \$100,000 per year in the past two years. We continue to work on ways to save money, both large and small, by looking at our phone bills, insurance payments, and so on.

Debbie Weinberger, a Gomde board member, has generously agreed to take on the role of fundraising manager. In the coming year, she will be in touch with many of you to discuss our fundraising needs, and what you can offer. Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche met with the board at the end of the retreat last summer, and told us that he would like to build a beautiful teaching temple to make the land sacred, and to attract the interest of tourists and people in the local community. He said that even a tourist who has no interest in the Dharma at present can plant a seed towards future interest in the Dharma by visiting a beautiful temple. The money for the temple is likely to come from a large outside donor at some point in the future. Our job at present is to make sure that we have the infrastructure, the legal permits and the internal harmony that will allow us to move forward when the time comes.

I hope that all of you can continue to offer your support and your prayers for the future of the retreat center at Gomde, so that we can fulfill the wishes of the great masters who have visited and taught there. It's a beautiful dream, and we are all in a key position to make it come true.

With love,  
David R. Shlim MD



*at the river*

## Gomde Practice Activities

The Wednesday night Lojong class at Gomde will resume

## Annual Financial Report for 2009

It is with great joy we present this annual report to the board and officers of Rangjung Yeshe Gomde California. Gomde hosted only two programs in 2009, and thus revenues were lower than the past several years by about 40%. Balancing out the lower revenues, Gomde volunteers as a group made a huge and very successful effort to reduce costs and operating expenses. We reduced expenses by almost \$109,000 or 39% in 2009, while revenues were down by slightly more than that amount, or \$112,000. Thus, we had a slight operating shortfall of \$7,000 for 2009, consistent with the

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October 6 at 6:30 pm. We will be attending to Point 6: Commitments to the Practice of the Seven-Point Mind Training. The first few sessions will be a review of the previous material. Newcomers are welcome. Ani Marcia will help everyone get caught up.

Morning and evening practices at Gomde are open to the public. At 8 am (Sundays at 9 am) we do the Shakyamuni *Treasury of Blessings* liturgy; at 5 pm the Concise Daily Guru Rinpoche Practice. On Sundays (with the exception of the monthly weekend retreat) 10-12 am, we have an extended practice session of shamata meditation and discussion.

There are no charges for these events. Please contact the office at 707-925-0201 or Ani Marcia at 707-925-6024 to check for schedule changes.

Ratna Shop – Jeri Petersen (as of July 2010)

while expenses totaled \$173,000. This represents a 4% operating shortfall, covered by drawing on reserves.

Gomde activities and budget are overseen by the following volunteer managers:

Communication - Kerry Moran

Fundraising – Steve Estelle (now Debbie Weinberger)

Gomde – Shabad Khalsa

Education – Claude Herail

Programs – Rhonda LoPresti

Hospitality – Ani Marcia Hansen

Finance & Administration – Joanne Brion

In 2009, Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche appointed a new Board of Directors, with David Shlim as president and Claude Herail vice-president. Current board members are as follows (some are managers, as noted above):

[To continue reading the report, click here](#)

## New Book from RYP

Marcia Schmidt's new book, *Confessions of a Gypsy Yogini*, will be released by Rangjung Yeshe Publications October 5th. Bay Area events are as follows:

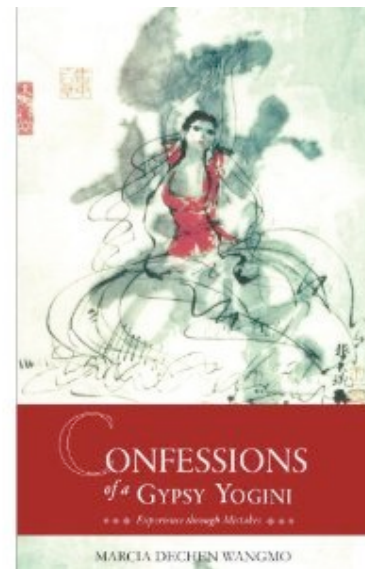
**September 27:** Radio interview with Danielle Orr on "Through the Eyes of Women," KHSU-FM 90.5 from Humboldt State University

**October 7:** Reading and Q&A session at Rigpa, 111 New Montgomery St. #403, San Francisco

**October 9, 9-10 am:** Radio interview with Vicki Leeds on KWMR, 90.5 & 89.5 FM

From the back cover:

*Confessions of a Gypsy Yogini* is a tale of experience through mistakes, learning the hard way. It is a guidebook to help find ourselves, offering a fresh approach to traditional teachings in a non-adulterated way, adapted to modern characters. Presented within the Buddhist framework, it will draw the reader closer to seeing things as they truly are, assisting in ascertaining and validating our inherent beauty and combating any feeling of worthlessness while acknowledging anxiety as a part of



## On Graham's Retreat

Dear Sangha members,  
On behalf of Graham, I want to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the Gomde sangha. Since Graham has been in retreat, I've had the pleasure to witness individuals' caring for him and supporting him in various ways - schlepping supplements, dried fruit, DVDs of teachings, and laptop batteries from the States, arranging visas,

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the path. To overcome negative perceptions, we need to study our confusion and find tools to clear some of it away. Learning how to meditate begins the road to healing and training in various simple formulas directs us to becoming better people. We can meet life's challenges with humor and triumph over them.

*"Confessions of a Gypsy Yogini is a vivifying account of the ambrosia-like Buddhist path with brilliant imagery and clear voices of many renowned masters recorded by the author, who lived at the feet of one of the greatest Tibetan masters of meditation for 17 years at the epicenter of unfolding events of Dharma that crossed many oceans. May this volume reach many to ignite the light of love and wisdom - the true meaning of Dharma - in their hearts."*  
-- Tulku Thondup Rinpoche

*"Marcia [Dechen Wangmo] has followed many great lamas, some of the best of this century. Her account of her experience as an American amidst this older generation of lamas is quite important for Dharma students from the West."* -- Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche



*Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, August 2010*

## Weekend Retreat Dates

Upcoming Study & Practice weekends at Gomde:

**October 8-10**

**November 5-7**

**December 3-5**

**January (dates tba)**

**February 25-27**

Kathmandu, and contributing funds that help pay for all this stuff.

But mid-August, when I was given an envelope filled with money donated during Rinpoche's recent retreat and was able to deposit money to Graham's account that would cover more than six months' expenses, I was moved to tears. That was a quantifiable gift, truly an expression of love and support made visible.

I am dearly touched by the Sangha's generosity. And I know that Graham is humbled, surprised, and elated by all the financial support you are giving.

In appreciation,  
Sara Sunstein (Graham's sister)

P.S. If you'd yet like to contribute to Graham's retreat - he's just begun his second year - please send a check made out to him, to me at 1800 Stromberg Ave. Arcata CA 95521. Thank you.

## Rinpoche on Gomde

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche spoke about Gomde several times during the summer teachings. Here are some excerpts:

"Students need to come here to Gomde to practice. Driving two, three, four, five hours to get here – stay Friday night, practice all day Saturday, part of the day on Sunday .... If you come here to meditate, driving time is virtuous. Money spent is virtue. Even *thinking* to meditate is virtue!

"(This is) such beautiful land to study and practice. We need to use it. Some of you say, I'm going to India, Nepal to do retreat. Of course, if you have the money.

"Thomas, Heidi, Lama Sherab (who came to Gomde for the first time this year) -- all are surprised it is so beautiful here – so much potential – so vast, so quiet – such good energy. We really need to appreciate this beautiful land.

*We need (to be) practical. We need to keep this*

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If Rinpoche's words inspire you, Gomde offers a wonderful retreat setting for your personal practice and exploration. The River House is a 3-bedroom , 2-bath house with a full kitchen and deck. Situated on the river at the bottom of the property, it is quiet and remote. The rental fee is \$65 a day for two, with an additional \$10 per extra person. There is a 15% discount for Gomde members, as well as discounts for extended stays. Staff will run shopping errands as as their schedule permits. Retreatants have use of the Gomde library and Shrine Room, and are welcome to join daily practice activities. To arrange a retreat, email [adminassist@gomdeusa.org](mailto:adminassist@gomdeusa.org)

"I am spiritual father, but mundanely (I am) the child of all of you, all my students. Without you I cannot survive. I need someone to help me ... I really appreciate (that) you all come here and practice."

land safely, nicely, make it livable. A few things we need to do to make it livable, and people can come practice. I want more people to come here and do practice. *Anyone* can come here and do practice.

"We are very fortunate we got this land, nice meditation land. This is definitely not just my superpower. All of your love, care, aspiration ... the power of that. In this area, this is the *most* beautiful land. Not only beautiful, but remote. For study and practice, need remote.

Rangjung Yeshe Gomde | 66000 Drive Thru Tree Road | P.O. Box 162 | Leggett, CA 95585  
tel: 707-925-0201 | [information@gomdeusa.org](mailto:information@gomdeusa.org) | [www.gomdeusa.org](http://www.gomdeusa.org)

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