



RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2014



SUMMER 2014 IS ON ITS WAY!

Preparations for RYI's eleventh summer program are now well underway with eight high-quality intensive courses scheduled to begin on June 10!

Two of these courses -- Beginning Classical Tibetan and Intermediate Nepali -- were launched in 2013 to strong reviews and so will feature once again alongside three levels of Colloquial Tibetan, Beginning Nepali, Beginning Sanskrit and Buddhist Studies.

In designing RYI's 2014 summer program, faculty members have taken into account lessons learned from those who participated in the 2013 program.

Notable highlights last year included the Buddhist Studies course taught by Constance Kassor and Lama Drupgyud Tendar, Lopon Zopa Sangpo, and Lama Sonam Tsering. Participants enthusiastically explored the *Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva* and several academic readings prior to attending a ten-day meditation retreat in Pharping -- one of Nepal's renowned 'power places' for practice.

The combination of expert instruction and guided meditation practice was reported by many to have helped them gain direct personal experience of the profound nature of Tibetan Buddhism. Several commented

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that the use of modern academic teaching methods in a 'living monastic' environment added real richness to their experiences.

In order to improve this course further, additional faculty support will be made available at the residential retreat to provide personal guidance to students outside of formal meditation sessions.

The 2013 summer language courses also scored highly, with several students expressing pleasant surprise at just how quickly their spoken and written skills improved through the eight-week program.

This can be attributed, in large part, to each language course being co-taught by an internationally trained expert and an experienced local instructor possessing outstanding cultural and contextual knowledge. One-on-one conversation sessions and drill classes with local language partners -- a key feature of all colloquial language classes -- were also viewed as highly effective. The renowned Rassias® method of linguistic pedagogy is used widely in these sessions.

RYI's experience over the years has been that a combination of varied, dynamic and

stimulating language learning inputs, delivered in a 'full cultural immersion' context, helps most students to make excellent progress and increases their appetites for knowledge still further.

Student evaluations from 2013 also spoke highly of the friendly atmosphere at the institute and the value of the four-day orientation program run at the start of the summer program. Many reported forming strong friendships with classmates, home-stay families and others in the wider Boudhanath community. Significantly, a high proportion of students were returnees, of whom many chose to stay with their former home stay families.

RYI encourages all those who wish to explore Buddhist philosophy through a rich combination of study and contemplative practice, or who would like to improve their Himalayan language skills, to join us for this year's summer program. Check out the video link below if you would like to gain a better sense of the RYI summer experience!

All summer courses run between June 10 and August 8, and are eligible for academic credit from Kathmandu University.

Applications are now open via our website: www.ryi.org/summer-intensives.



WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU HERE THIS SUMMER!

NEW SUMMER VIDEO ON THE WEBSITE!

NEW MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM

MA IN TRANSLATION, TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION, AND PHILOLOGY

Despite over forty years of concerted efforts by some of the world's leading Tibetan scholars and textual translators, the vast majority of the Buddha's teachings and later commentaries remain to be translated into English.

Recognizing this shortfall and the increasing opportunities available for skilled translators to find employment with reputed translation groups, CBS is delighted to announce the launch of a new MA degree in Translation, Textual Interpretation, and Philology starting September 2014.

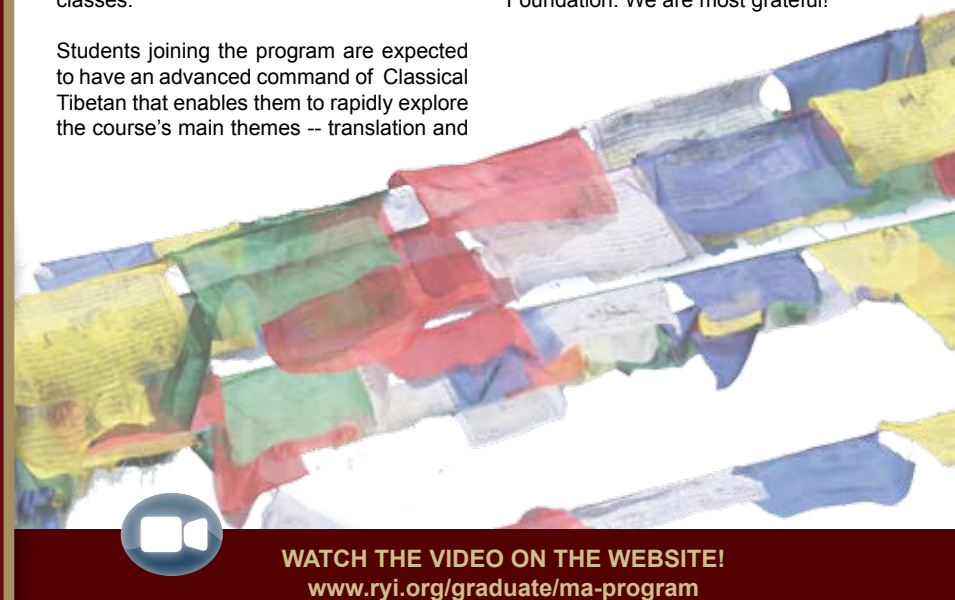
This specialized two-year program focuses on the preparation of English language versions of Tibetan texts, many of which were originally recorded in Sanskrit. Core courses include translation workshops along with Buddhist philosophy, translation methodology and independent reading classes.

Students joining the program are expected to have an advanced command of Classical Tibetan that enables them to rapidly explore the course's main themes -- translation and

interpretation -- including topics such as target language style, audience, cultural context, variant meanings, consistency of usage, and techniques for overcoming translation difficulties.

Translating is a process of questioning the words and meanings, exploring hidden interpretations, and understanding the social and cultural contexts in which the texts were originally prepared. Once understood, effective translation depends on the translator's mastery of the target language. Students have the opportunity to practice their writing skills in the target language, English, through participating in translation workshops and during the preparation of their MA dissertations.

CBS's ability to offer this new program is due to generous support provided by the Khyentse Foundation and the Tsadra Foundation. We are most grateful!



WATCH THE VIDEO ON THE WEBSITE!
www.ryi.org/graduate/ma-program

RYI HOSTS NEPAL PREMIERE OF 'VARA: A BLESSING' IN AID OF 84000

A festive gala event for over 200 fortunate guests and Kathmandu residents took place at the F-Cube Cinema in Boudha on February 17. This was the Nepal premiere of *Vara: A Blessing*, the latest film by Bhutanese film maker Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche who attended the event and kindly answered questions following the screening.



Matthieu Ricard with Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

Selected to open the 2013 Busan International Film Festival, the film tells a timeless story of love and devotion, and a woman's strength in adversity. Set against the lush countryside of an Indian village not yet caught up to the modern world, the movie seamlessly intertwines vivid dreamworlds of Hindu gods, classical bharatanatyam dance, and music. The film proved a huge hit with the audience and received a rousing ovation as the house lights came up.

The premiere, which sold out within a few hours, was held to raise awareness of the 84000 project which was founded by Rinpoche in 2009 in order to translate the



Greg Whiteside, Principal at RYI

words of the Buddha into modern languages. It is said that the Buddha taught more than 84000 methods to attain true freedom from suffering but, prior to the launch of 84000, only 5% of these teachings had been translated into a Western language. Today, almost 10% of the remaining 70,000 pages have been sponsored.

This event was made possible through the generosity and extraordinary hard work of Pema Abrahams. It was hosted by Greg Whiteside, RYI's principal, and featured inspiring talks from Jing Rui, 84000's executive director and Zack Beer, an RYI graduate and 84000 translator. Refreshments were provided by an amazing group of tireless and cheerful RYI volunteers and all audience members left with 84000/RYI "Goodie Bags" courtesy of Ali Williams and Dorjee Gyalpo.

"84000 feels like a big experiment as Buddhism meets modernity. It's a pretty exciting time to have an effort like this!"

Zack Beer

Zack Beer left the audience with a rousing call-to-action: "Please get involved if you can - RYI is a great place to learn to translate if you're in Nepal. If you are Tibetan or Nepalese, this is your tradition, so please help us! If you are not in Nepal, go to the 84000 website and you can see what we're doing. You'll have the good fortune of reading a text transformed into a modern language for the first time!"



Check out Rangjung Yeshe Institute on Facebook for all the photos from the event. Photo Credit: Jordi Roig

CBS SYMPOSIUM 2014

DHARMA AND THE ACADEMY: CRITICAL REASONING ABOUT FAITH, DOCTRINE, AND PRACTICE

How does one reason critically in the presence of faith? Does one reason critically in the presence of faith? How can critical reasoning help us understand doctrine and enhance our practice?



Prof. Roger Jackson

RYI sought to tackle these profound and fundamental questions during its tenth International Symposium of Buddhist Studies which was held at the Hyatt Hotel in Boudhanath on March 15. The presentations threw sharp light on the topic formerly termed "Buddhist Theology" but which is now more commonly known as "Buddhist Critical-Constructive Reflection".

The event was inaugurated by Kathmandu University's Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ram Kantha Makaju Shrestha and chaired by the Dean of the School of Arts Prof. Dr. Mahesh Banskota.

Over 200 people attended the event which was free and open to the public thanks to the generous support provided by Dr. Gregory Sharkey, SJ of Desideri House and the Tsadra Foundation.

DESIDERI HOUSE
Intercultural Learning and Religious Dialogue



CHÖKYI NYIMA RINPOCHE
FOUNDER OF RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE,
ABBOT, KA-NYING SHEDRUB LING MONASTERY



Presentation Title:
"Practice in the Academy"

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
PROF. FRANCIS X. CLOONEY S.J.
HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL, USA



Presentation Title:
"The Collaboration of Critical Reasoning and Faith in a Christian's Study of Hinduism"

PROF. KARIN MEYERS
KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES
AT RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE



Presentation Title:
"On Training Scholar-Practitioners in the 21st Century: Lessons from the Modern Academy and Buddhist Scripture"

DR. THOMAS DOCTOR
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
DHARMACHAKRA TRANSLATION COMMITTEE



Presentation Title:
"Skepticism as the Means of Meaning - Towards Translating Scripture"

PROF. ROGER JACKSON
CARLETON COLLEGE, USA



Presentation Title:
"After Buddhist Theology: Further Reflections on the Path to the Middle"

CONGRATULATIONS ISHWOR

Hearty congratulations are in order for MA student Ishwor Shrestha who, having been awarded a full scholarship from Harvard Divinity School, USA, began studying there last fall.

Ishwor began studying at RYI in 2005 as a BA student following which he completed his MA degree with us in the spring of 2013. In the past few years, Ishwor has also taught Sanskrit at the institute, and both classical and colloquial Tibetan for beginners at Lumbini Academy in Kathmandu, which is affiliated with Lumbini University.

After hearing about a new program running at Harvard Divinity School called the *Buddhist Ministry Initiative*, he was both greatly inspired and encouraged by RYI Professor Dr. Karin Meyers to apply to the program. In mid-April 2013, Ishwor received not only his acceptance letter to the program but was also awarded the *Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Scholarship*.

The *Buddhist Ministry Initiative* program

We congratulate Ishwor on his accomplishment and wish him all the best during his studies this semester!



Ishwor at Harvard Divinity School, 2014



Ishwor at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery, 2013

brings together a diverse body of students from around the world to explore teaching methods from their different cultural backgrounds and Buddhist schools. At the end of the fall semester, Ishwor participated in the "Seasons of Light", an annual event featuring sacred readings and music from each of the traditions represented in Harvard Divinity School. During the event, he chanted prayers representing Buddhist traditions from both Nepal and Tibet.

For more information about the program at Harvard Divinity School, please see this site:
www.hds.harvard.edu/academics/buddhist-ministry-initiative

TRANSLATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

"Believe it or not, you actually develop some basic ability to translate in one year!" shares Miguel Sawaya, RYI Translator Training Program graduate. Miguel currently works as an interpreter at RYI and translates sutras for the Dharmachakra Translation Committee and the 84000 project.

"It's great training; you can't find this opportunity anywhere else. A container is created where you can truly practice interpreting in a space where there are competent guides to help get you back on track when you make mistakes."

Miguel Sawaya

Over the course of one year of intensive training, RYI's Translator Training Program takes students with basic competence in spoken and dharma Tibetan to a point where they are able to interpret dharma teachings from Tibetan into English in front of an audience.

Entry into this program requires one year's prior study of spoken and classical Tibetan, and a basic understanding of Buddhist philosophy. The program begins each June and, by September, students begin practicing their translation skills in class, five days per week. In addition, they study spoken Tibetan, classical Tibetan, Buddhist philosophy, and translation methodology.

Classes are kept intentionally small and several sessions each week involve one-on-one interactions with native Tibetan speakers. Translation practice classes are led by Tibetan lopons, lamas, and khenpos in a setting that replicates the actual work environment for professional translators.

The Translator Training Program is intensive and students are expected to work hard! But the rewards are equal to the efforts. Graduates from the program, like Miguel, are currently translating in many countries around the world including the US, Mexico, Nepal, and India.

If you dream of translating but are completely new to Tibetan, you may be able to study for one year in our undergraduate degree program prior to switching to the Translator Training Program, performance, of course, permitting! Contact us for more information!

APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2014-15 SESSION CLOSE MAY 31, 2014



WATCH THE NEW VIDEO ON THE WEBSITE!
www.ryi.org

ALUMNI SURVEY OUTCOME



One of the most common questions asked by students (and occasionally their parents!) before registering for courses is what does a qualification at RYI lead to, and where have former students ended up? In an attempt to answer these questions we recently asked our alumni to tell us what they are currently up to. Of the 102 former students who took part in the survey:

- Twenty percent are now teaching or translating
- Eleven percent are working in medicine as doctors, therapists or nurses
- Nine percent are working in the field of engineering and IT
- Four percent are working as executives
- Only one former student is currently unemployed

The largest cohort, a full quarter of all respondents, are continuing their studies, with at least five enrolled in PhD programs around the world.

Other occupations making up the whole include graphic designers, executive secretaries, self-employed, service workers and social workers, along with one lama, one monk, one musician and two postmen!

RYI ALUMNI - WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

GEOFF BARSTOW - CLASS OF 2005

RYI Alumnus Geoff Barstow was among the first group of students to undertake the BA program at RYI. After graduating in 2005, he continued to pursue his studies and is now enjoying the rewards of his hard work. Initially a student on Antioch University's Buddhist Studies program in Bodh Gaya, India, Geoff ignited a spark and was intent on deepening his study of Tibetan Buddhism. Although he was ready to drop everything and go to Nepal, he followed the advice of Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and returned to the US to complete his undergraduate studies.



After first arriving in 2002, Geoff remembers the welcome he received: "Once I arrived, I was welcomed by RYI with open arms. This was the first year the BA was being offered, and everyone was humming with excitement. Classes were difficult (particularly language classes), but it was wonderful to be part of a community dedicated to the study and implementation of the dharma. I particularly recall the debates that occurred both during and after Khenpo Sherab Sangpo's class on Chandrakirti.

"We all lived and breathed this material for the better part of a year; clearly, something was going well. Rinpoche's presence was also key. He was busy, but it seemed like he always had time for RYI students. If I had a question about my practice, or even about class, I could just walk up and ask! It was truly an amazing situation."

Three years later, Geoff completed the BA at RYI, and although unclear of how to proceed he knew that he wanted to dedicate his life to the study of Buddhism: "Once again Rinpoche's advice was clear: graduate school, with the ultimate goal of teaching in a college or university," mentions Geoff.

During 2006, after graduating from the program, Geoff stayed on studying informally at RYI while working on his graduate school

applications. Geoff returned to the US and began his graduate career: "As that career has progressed, I have been constantly grateful for my time at RYI. I learned skills -- Tibetan language; a familiarity with many facets of Buddhist philosophy -- that I use every day. Perhaps more importantly, my time at RYI -- and especially my interactions with Rinpoche -- provided the lens through which I look at the world," says Geoff.

"My time at RYI was the one of the most important periods in my life, and I am profoundly grateful for what I learned there, both inside and outside of the classroom."

Geoff Barstow

Geoff has recently accepted a position as an assistant professor at Otterbein University in the US. What a wonderful and inspiring achievement from one of our alumni! RYI wishes Geoff the very best with his new role and hopes that he continues to benefit many students along the way.

STUDENT SNAP SHOT

FROM RANGJUNG YESHE GOMDE TO RANGJUNG YESHE INSTITUTE - THE BIG PICTURE -

There are quite a few dharma centers around the world affiliated with Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery and its masters. Rangjung Yeshe Gomde Denmark is one of them. This is also the place where Kathrine Olldag Mazanti, a former Buddhist Studies student in RYI's summer program, picked up a brochure from RYI. This was four years ago, and since that time, coming to RYI had been, as she called it, "My first priority in life, my dream!" Finally, the auspicious coincidence of having time and money allowed Kathrine to fulfill her dream.

At Gomde, Kathrine had been very fortunate to receive advanced teachings, but felt she needed an academic walk-through of the history and philosophy of Buddhism. She had picked up so many pieces of knowledge, but she wasn't even sure whether all those pieces would add up to one big picture or not. She knew that if she wanted to put this puzzle together, she would need to study, following an intensive program.

"This summer finally assembled the puzzle for me!"

Kathrine Olldag Mazanti

"In addition, although the intensity of the program took quite some energy, this one flow also gave me a lot of energy. In a sense I felt like I was on a constant Dharma 'high', a wonderful joy ride!" says Kathrine.

Kathrine particularly enjoyed the two-week meditation retreat in Pharping, which is part of the Buddhist Studies summer program. When the students visited Pharping on a day-trip, Kathrine had her most outstanding experience at RYI so far. While sitting in a hall, having tea in the oldest temple at Ka-Nying's branch monastery there, she heard stories of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche teaching in the same hall. Rinpoche's books had always

inspired Kathrine, and when she heard about her teacher having taught extensively in the hall where she was now sitting, she was deeply touched. "It felt," she describes, "like having arrived at my own heart!"

A dream fulfilled, the big puzzle picture assembled, and having arrived at her own heart, Kathrine's experience at RYI was, as she put it, beyond her expectations. She therefore recommends to all of those connected to Gomde centers around the world to come to RYI to connect the puzzle pieces and experience the joy ride of the big picture!



GOMDE UPDATE



Denmark (gomde.dk)

How to Open the Heart - Bodhicitta Training for Everyday Life - Khandro Rinpoche
May 31 – June 02, 2014

Meditation: Compassionate Insight - Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche
June 27 – 30, 2014



Germany-Austria (gomde.de)

Teachings on Śāntideva's *Bodhisattva's Way of Life* - Lama Tenzin Sangpo
April 30 – May 4, 2014

Discovering boundless compassion - Avalokiteshvara - Lama Tenzin Sangpo
May 29 – June 1, 2014

Tara's Triple Excellence Retreat: Paramita of Meditation and Wisdom - Lama Tenzin Sangpo
June 19 – 22, 2014



Russia (rangjungyeshe.ru) Moscow

Tubtenling temple opening
June 13, 2014

Chökyi Nyima seminar at Tubten Ling
June 14 – 17, 2014

Regular practices on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30pm



Scotland (gomdescotland.org)

For upcoming events and community gatherings please contact Gomde Scotland at: info@gomdescotland.org



UK (gomde.org.uk)

The Heart of the Path: Becoming the Best We Can Be - Erik Pema Kunsang
May 2 – 5, 2014

Elucidating the View, Meditation, Action and Fruition of the Three Vehicles - Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche
June 19- 25, 2014



USA (gomdeusa.org)

Annual Kurukulle Drupchö
May 23, 2014

Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche
June 13 – 15, 2014

Phakchok Rinpoche
Jun 19 – Jun 22, 2014

Please check the websites of each of the centers for additional activities and teachings.



The Thousand Buddha Temple Envisioned

Lumbini Monastery Construction

Monastery construction continues - the top (third floor) of Pal Thubten Ling Monastery in Lumbini is nearing completion. Supporters are continuing to sponsor the 1,000 golden Shakyamuni statues. We invite you all to get involved in some way with supporting this project. Please visit www.shedrub.org for details.

DID YOU KNOW?



In being part of the RYI community, we are lucky in so many ways. One way in particular is the RYI restaurant run by US-trained chef Asha Lama and her team.

We don't ever have to worry about what to do for lunch because Asha and her team provide healthy, balanced vegetarian meals each day. Situated at the back of the monastery, the restaurant is a sunny and inviting place surrounded by a garden of greenery. It's a place to catch up with fellow

students, study or relax with a cup of tea or coffee. Students are also able to access the Internet to stay in touch with friends and family back home.

The RYI Restaurant is open Monday to Friday serving breakfast and lunch. Taste the delights of Asha's mouthwatering cakes and sweet pies! A selection of hot and cold drinks is available throughout the day.

Visitors are also welcome!



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