

CKHYENTSE FOUNDATION / COMMUNIQUE

The Great Patrons of Buddhism

PART IV: KING TRAN NHAN TONG OF VIETNAM

From a series of discussions with Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

The annual festival of the Truc Lam or Bamboo Forest Buddhist tradition in Vietnam's Yen Tu Mountain attracts over 150,000 pilgrims. They climb steep paths, passing ten pagodas and hundreds of shrines and stupas, up to the cloud-capped peak at 1,068 meters (3,500 feet) above sea level. With each passing landmark, a story unfolds of a triumphant warrior and a devout Buddhist—Vietnam's first patriarch, King Tran Nhan Tong (1258 to 1308).

The eldest son of King Tran Thanh Tong, Tran Nhan Tong began studying Buddhism at a young age. Inspired by the teachings, he escaped the palace to Yen Tu Mountain on foot, alone. Arriving at a temple, he sought out the abbot, who took the young prince in until the palace guards arrived. Eventually he became a student of a respected Zen teacher, Tue Trung Tu, and visited the Phuoc temple every day. Although he resisted the royal life, he finally married the eldest daughter of Queen Nguyen Tu and became king at the age of 21. He maintained his Zen practice even as his duties mounted. It is said that one day he dreamed that a large lotus flower emerged from his naval with a golden Buddha statue on the top. In the dream, a passerby asked, "Do you know this Buddha? He's the Buddha Vairocana."¹

King Tran Nhan Tong was a great poet and philosopher who was known for the equanimity with which he treated serfs, aristocrats, and even animals alike. The harmony of his life was broken and his pacifism put to the test when Mongol invasions in 1285 and 1288 brought war to his kingdom. He proved to be a consummate strategist and a brave general on the battlefield. When the wars ended in victory, he abdicated the throne to his son Anh Tong. Finally he could return to the practice of Buddhism. He took ordination and founded the Truc Lam Chan sect, which left an enduring imprint on the ideological history of Vietnam. He became an ascetic, earning the name "Huong Van Dai Dau Da" (The Great Ascetic Monk), and established temples, meditation centers, and a lecture hall at Pho Minh temple. He taught both monks and the general public.

On the night of November 1, 1308, Tran Nhan Tong showed signs of his passing. He called a novice, Bao Sat, to see him at Ngoa Van pagoda in Yen Tu. It was near the midnight hour. Tran Nhan Tong lifted the curtain to look at the sky and said, "It's time for me to go." Bao Sat asked, "Where are you going?" He replied:

*Nothing was created
Nothing was terminated
If that is understood
The Buddha will always be present
Where should there be the coming and returning?*

Bao Sat asked, "What does it mean by no birth and no termination?" The First Patriarch slapped Bao Sat in the face and scolded, "Stop speaking nonsense!" With that, Tran Nhan Tong passed away, in the posture of lion. He was 51 years old.

¹ In the Vietnamese tradition the Buddha Vairochana is known as the Great Sun Buddha. In the Vajrayana he is known as the embodiment of dharmadhatu wisdom.

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The core purpose of Khyentse Foundation is to establish a system of patronage that supports individuals and institutions engaged in the study and practice of the Buddha's vision of wisdom and compassion. Khyentse Rinpoche has identified and prioritized five projects as the means to achieve this goal. The funds raised by Khyentse Foundation are used to support these five projects.

Endowment for Monastic Education

The Endowment Fund is very close to reaching its goal of US\$2.8 million. We hope to close the \$250,000 gap before the end of 2004. The healthy income from investments secured by the KF Investment committee has made it possible for the Foundation to make significant disbursements to Dzongsar Monastery Tibet. At this time, over 95% of all donations received have gone to establish this endowment.

Scholarships

The Foundation continued to award scholarships to students who came from around the world to attend Rinpoche's teachings on Madhyamika in San Francisco in June. A scholarship was also given to a Tibetan language and translation student at Chokyi Nyima's Rangjung Institute in Boudanath, Nepal, with a long-term goal of this student possibly becoming one of the translators of future Khyentse Foundation publications. The Foundation is also pleased to have the resources to support a number of three-year retreatants beginning in 2005.

Publications

Several exciting meetings have taken place in the United States between the Foundation and Gene Smith of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC). Much synergy was found between Khyentse Foundation, the Bodhi Foundation, Palri Parkhang, and TBRC, and momentum is building to establish print-on-demand digital libraries in Bhutan and India in the near future. KF also partially sponsored the development of a standalone search engine that allows searches by author, text, teaching cycle, and other criteria.

As for our own publications, hundreds of students continue to download Rinpoche's Madhyamika Commentary and the new Ngöndro manual: *Advice on How To Practice*, both available free of charge at the KF web site. To request the texts, please send a formal request to publications@khyentsefoundation.org stating your name, city, and country. For the Ngöndro manual, include the name of the lama who gave you instruction to do the practice.

Schools for Children

The Children's Days at Siddhartha's School in Northern Australia continue to attract students with their creative programs. Although no immediate plans are in place for the KF Children's Schools, we are constantly gathering materials and networking with like-minded institutions.

Endowment for Chair of Buddhist Studies

At the June meeting, research data gathered by the selection committee was shared with Rinpoche and the Khyentse Foundation Board of Directors. A vote was taken and the University of California at Berkeley was chosen as the institution for the Khyentse Foundation Chair of Buddhist Studies. Berkeley offers an attractive combination of an established Buddhist studies program, an extensive low cost commitment. The Foundation is now seeking funding from an individual donor, family trust, memorial fund, corporation, or other body. The donor would have the option of adding their name to the title of the endowed chair.



MATCHING FUNDS PROGRAM UPDATE

Twenty new donors have joined the matching funds program, which is supported by an anonymous group of sponsors. The sponsor group matches scheduled, recurring donations that are made to the Khyentse Foundation, dollar for dollar. A contribution of \$50 per month, when matched by our sponsors, becomes a \$1,200 contribution to the Foundation per year. To double the effect of your support, please consider setting up regular donations.

The generosity of donors to the Foundation has a ripple effect, helping the monks and nuns, freeing up Rinpoche's schedule, and ripening conditions for more people to study the dharma. For example, Rinpoche recently offered second-year Madhyamika students in San Francisco a complete waiver of the fee for the third year.

Scheduled, automatic donations can be made by credit card or by direct withdrawal from a US-based bank account. For information, contact info@khyentsefoundation.org.



KHYENTSE FOUNDATION GRANTS COMMITTEES TAKE SHAPE

Khyentse Foundation has two grants committees, one to develop grants and the other to review them.

The Grants Development Committee, headed by Sydney Jay, applies for public and private grants to raise money for the Foundation. Sydney has a Ph.D. in Social Welfare, has been funded for projects in the public sector, and is an expert in the field of business psychology and communication.

The newly formed Grants Review Committee considers applications for support from the Foundation. At the time of the June board meeting, Rinpoche appointed a three-member team to take on the Review Committee duties. We are very grateful to Professor Steven Goodman, Luc Dierckx, and Ron Stewart who, along with Committee Chair Khyentse Rinpoche, have accepted this responsibility. Professor Goodman is a core faculty member and co-director of the Asian and Comparative Studies program in the Philosophy and Religion Department at the Center for Integral Studies in San Francisco, where he teaches Buddhism and comparative philosophy. Luc lives in Vancouver and works at the University of British Columbia. Ron recently retired from his job in the aerospace industry to become part of Rinpoche's team full time. Until the Endowment for Monastic Education is fully funded, grants are very limited, and the application process is informal. Phase two of the Foundation's development plan is to endow a US\$1 million Scholarship Fund and a US\$1 million Publication Fund, at which time we expect the committee to become quite active.



Benefits
Gallery

THE TALE OF A CHINESE PAINTING TRAVELING TO AMERICA

Throughout Anna Chan's childhood in Hong Kong, two paintings hung on the wall of her father's office. Her father, a traditional Chinese herbalist and healer, had established a dispensary with his brother in the early 1950s in Causeway Bay. The paintings were a gift from his patients in appreciation of his healing work, because they knew that he was a lover of music, poetry, painting, and calligraphy. Created by Rong Zuchun, a Cantonese artist, one painting featured a doctor treating his patient by a river and the other depicted two women fishing.

When Anna's father passed away, the paintings were put in storage and forgotten for many years. Anna rediscovered them during a clean up. She had them appraised by Christie's auction house, which found them to be authentic. Anna decided to donate them to Khyentse Foundation to help support Rinpoche's work. Anna's timing coincided perfectly with the launch last year of Khyentse Foundation Benefits Gallery, an on-line store of donated items including practice items, accessories, services, textiles, jewelry, and art. The paintings

were the very first items to be listed on the site. While the Bhutanese incense, malas, and lovely Jesse Klein purses flew out of the stock room, the paintings waited patiently for the right buyer. Finally a query arrived from a man in New York who had found the paintings while searching on line for Chinese art. He was interested in the painting of two women fishing. "The detail of the painting and the subject struck me the most," he says. At first he considered negotiating the price, as any savvy shopper would, but when he looked more carefully at the Foundation web site, he was inspired to pay full price. "I felt even better about the purchase, knowing that the proceeds will go to a nonprofit organization."

Anna said a final goodbye to her father's painting, packed it carefully, and sent it to America. The money raised from this sale will support one student in Tibet or India for over three years.

If you have any such hidden treasures or services that you would like to donate to the Benefits Gallery, please contact bg@khyentsefoundation.org. Also consider browsing here when you are looking for gifts or practice materials. Items are constantly updated—and as of this writing, the painting of the doctor and his patient is still awaiting its new home.



prayer flag pictures

TRAVELLERS & MAGICIANS AT THEATERS AROUND THE WORLD

Travellers & Magicians has found distributors in Taiwan, Israel, the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Australia, Mexico, and other territories. Rinpoche recently won an award as best emerging director at the Asian Film Festival in New York City, adding to the Best of

Festival award earned at Telluride and the Audience Award at Deauville. Zeitgeist Films has licensed the film and plans to open in theaters in the United States during the first week of January, 2005. Enjoy Films in the UK and Capri Films in Canada are releasing the film at the same time. Plans for Khyentse Foundation benefit screenings and events are underway worldwide. Be sure to order a Travellers & Magicians book from the Benefits Gallery and enjoy the special predistribution rate.

Visit www.travellersandmagicians.com for more information.

BUY BOOKS FROM AMAZON
AND HELP THE FOUNDATION



Khyentse Foundation has enrolled in the Amazon.com Associates program, which awards a cash bonus to the Foundation for every book purchased via the KF web site. Whenever you are planning to order a book online, first go to khyentsefoundation.org, click the amazon.com icon, and then place your order. A percentage of each sale is directly deposited into KF's bank account.

CALENDAR

DZONGSAR INSTITUTE
INAUGURATION

Led by H.H. The Dalai Lama
Bir, India: November 19-21, 2004

DZONGSAR KHYENTSE RINPOCHE
TEACHING SCHEDULE:

Vajrakilaya

Taiwan
December 8-17, 2004

Diamond Sutra

Taiwan
December 17-19, 2004

Madhyamakavatara

Sydney, Australia
January 7-16, 2005

Vajrakilaya

Halifax, Canada
Jan. 28 – Feb 2, 2005

Seminar

(topic to be announced)

Vancouver, Canada
February 4-6, 2005

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The Communiqué is a quarterly publication of Khyentse Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche in 2001 to establish a system of patronage that supports institutions and individuals engaged in the study and practice of the Buddha's vision of wisdom and compassion.

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