Patron King Series, Part VIII
King Harshavardhana, The Great King

From a series of discussions with Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche.

King Harshavardhana is famous as India’s greatest Buddhist ruler, second only to King Ashoka in his piety. He was a Rajput, the son of Prabhakaravarman, and held the throne of Kanauj on the banks of the Ganges during the first half of the 7th century AD. He was a relatively peaceful king and a thinking man who enjoyed engaging in philosophical debate, particularly concerning the differences between the different vehicles of Buddhist philosophy, such as Mahayana versus the “sky-flower” school. Much of what we know of this great king, and of Buddhism’s golden era in India, can be attributed to Xiang Tsang (also written Hsüan Tsang and Xuanzang), who played a pivotal part in the cultural exchange between India and China. Xiang Tsang’s incredible journey through India spanned 14 years, including 6 years in Nalanda during the middle of the 7th century. His detailed account of his sometimes harrowing experiences led archeologists to rediscover the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya and many other Buddhist holy sites in India.

According to Chinese and Indian historical records, King Harsha was a patron of Xiang Tsang. He was also a great benefactor of the Nalanda Mahavihara (university). It is believed that he was the sponsor of one of Nalanda’s largest monasteries, and he also funded the construction of a boundary wall enclosing all the buildings of the university. He frequently organized religious assemblies at his home in Kanauj, hosting 20 kingdoms, three thousand Buddhist lamas, three thousand Brahmins, and a thousand scholars from Nalanda, as well as a large number of high officials. These events sometimes lasted for 20 days. Daily offerings of gold, jewels, and fine cloth were made to the Buddha.

At one of these assemblies, in 643 AD, the king met and established a close relationship with Xiang Tsang. The scholar had by then completed years of study and was returning to China to spread the dharma. Xiang Tsang was appointed Lord of the Discussion for the final three weeks of debate. King Harsha sponsored all of the monks and Brahmins who attended the magnificent assembly. He reportedly carried a life-size golden image of the Buddha on his shoulders up a tall tower, where he paid homage to the three jewels with immense offerings gold, jewels, silks, and other precious substances. On the last day of the assembly, heretics, outraged at their king’s devotion to the Buddha and his perceived waste of wealth, attempted to assassinate him. But the king survived, and at the final festival, following the example of King Ashoka, he gave away all the wealth he had accumulated over the past 5 years.

Xiang Tsang stayed for 10 more days with King Harsha and then began his journey back to China. To ensure his safe passage to the border, King Harsha provided him with a military escort led by Kumara-raja. On his long journey home, Xiang Tsang took 657 volumes of sacred texts and translated many of them into Chinese. He introduced Mahayana Buddhism, especially the mind-only school, in China and became a mythical figure in Chinese culture.

Recommended reading: Ten Thousand Miles Without a Cloud’ by Sun Shuyun and Harsha and Buddhism by S.R. Goyal.
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.

**1 Endowment for Monastic Education**
Khyentse Foundation assisted Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute in Chauntra, India. See the special report on page 6.

**2 Publications**
- Fundraising continues for the Bhutan formatting center, an important part of Gene Smith’s Digital Library of Tibetan Archives project. Working together with the Tibetan Buddhist Resources Center, Bodhi Foundation, and Loden Foundation, plans are underway to establish the Bhutan facility in September 2006. View a new informational video about this project on the KF web site.
- Rinpoche has pledged 100% of his profits from his new dharma book to Khyentse Foundation. See the story on page 4.

**3 Scholarship Fund**
- The first round of open applications for Khyentse Foundation scholarships has been received, reviewed, and awarded. Three individuals and a Buddhist organization received scholarships for Buddhist study and retreat. The Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications for the next round of awards. The committee gives special consideration to applicants who have shown initiative to independently earn and save part of the funds necessary to study or practice the Buddhadharma. Application deadline is July 15, 2006.
- After extensive research and planning, KF set up a scholarship program for Cambodian monks by teaming up with the Khmer-Buddhist Education Assistance Project (KEAP). The first two Cambodian monks were selected to receive KF scholarships to further their studies in the Theravadan tradition in Sri Lanka.

**4 Endowment for Chair of Buddhist Studies**
The Foundation has raised all of its US$1 million pledge, and the University of California has formally approved a new faculty position in Tibetan Buddhism at its Berkeley campus. See the story on page 4.

**5 Schools for Children**
Khyentse Foundation is supporting a school for children in Sikkim through a partnership with the White Lotus Charitable Trust of India. See the story on page 8.
Inauguration of Deer Park Institute and Siddhartha’s Intent India

On March 31, 2006, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche inaugurated Deer Park Institute in Bir, India with a 5-day teaching on The Sutra of Recollection of the Noble Three Jewels. In 2004, when Dzongsar Institute moved to nearby Chauntra and was renamed Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute, the old facilities in Bir were left empty but not abandoned. Since then, Rinpoche has realized his vision of turning the old institute in Bir into a space where nonmonastics, especially Indian and western students, can come to study and explore classical Buddhist traditions. Rinpoche named the new school Deer Park Institute, referring to the place in Sarnath where the Buddha first taught.

In keeping with the ecumenical tradition (rimé in Tibetan), which has inspired the original Dzongsar Institute in Tibet throughout the last hundred years, the courses at Deer Park will be taught by masters from all traditions of Buddhism, including the Zen and Shravakayana traditions of Japan, Thailand, Burma, and elsewhere. Rinpoche wishes for Deer Park to become a modern version of the ancient Indian Nalanda University (see the story on page 5), where scholars, monks, and lay people applied themselves to the study of Buddhism. Although the scale of Deer Park is much smaller than that of the original Nalanda, the mission is just as grand—to keep these wisdom traditions alive and accessible to all who are interested. With the proper resources and the already apparent interest, Deer Park has the potential to do just that, in true Nalanda tradition.

Courses will be offered on philosophical texts, commentaries, and other essential teachings, as well as classical languages, culture, aesthetics, literature, history, and poetry, and will vary in length to accommodate the schedules of people from all walks of life. The primary language of instruction will be English.

Deer Park Institute operates under the newly formed Siddhartha’s Intent India (SII). Rinpoche serves as president and chair of the board of directors of SII. Joining him on the board are Vice President Deepak Kumar Thakur and General Secretary Naresh Sahai Mathur, who are both lawyers. Also on the board are Secretary Prashant Varma, a social worker; Treasurer Raji Ramanan, a writer; and executive members Vidya Rao, an Indian classical singer, and Kajoli Khanna, a social worker. Members of the Deer Park advisory board are Professor Prabodh Parikh, a poet and philosopher at Bombay University; filmmaker Suresh Jindal; Professor Wangchuk Negi, a Buddhist scholar at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath; and Professor V.S. Negi, a Buddhist scholar at Himachal Pradesh University.

Please visit the KF website to read Raji Ramanan’s eloquent description of the new institute.

For further information, please contact Prashant Varma at Deer Park School, P.O. Bir, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh - 176 077 India; or email deerparkindia@gmail.com

Rinpoche’s Vision for Deer Park

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche had this to say about the idea behind Deer Park and the rimé tradition:

“Buddha said that at the core of Buddhist practice, there are three things one should avoid—desire, anger, and ignorance. Rimé liberates one from these. The spirit of rimé should not be understood as a sort of new age movement where everything is collected under one roof. Dissolving sectarianism is the quintessence of rimé. Historically, human beings have suffered because of their attachment to their countries, concepts, and especially religions. And they become attached even within their particular sect of that religion. This attachment can be expressed as anger toward others or at least as a sort of disinterest in the activities of others. Such sectarianism has existed with great cost to Christians, Muslims, Jews, and even Buddhists. At least between Buddhist sects there has been no bloodshed, only the loss of many great teachings …. Buddha’s teaching is like simha-nada: the lion’s roar. The only danger to a lion is the decay from within. And to prevent this, it is essential for the authentic teachings of the Buddha to be studied and practiced.”
Rinpoche’s New Book: “What Makes You Not a Buddhist”

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche’s much-anticipated first dharma book written for a broad audience is now available in Chinese and will soon be available in English. The book, titled *Almost Buddhist* in Chinese and *What Makes You Not a Buddhist* in English, cuts right to the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy with a thorough explanation of the Four Seals. Rinpoche explains impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and liberation with refreshing clarity, using a combination of classic and modern examples to illustrate each point. The Chinese version was published in May by Navigator Culture (Taiwan) and is already a bestseller there. The English version, from Shambhala Publications, will be in bookstores in January 2007. Rinpoche’s first book was a collection of his talks transcribed into Chinese, but this is the first that he set out to write with the intention of publishing. Rinpoche has pledged all of his profits from both versions of this book to Khyentse Foundation. The Chinese version will be available soon at the KF Benefits Gallery. ([merchantamerica.com/kfgallery](http://merchantamerica.com/kfgallery)).

Berkeley Approves KF Distinguished Professorship in Tibetan Buddhism

The University of California at Berkeley has approved a new faculty position in Tibetan Buddhism, formalizing Khyentse Foundation’s commitment to establish the Khyentse Foundation Distinguished Professorship in Tibetan Buddhism.

In his letter to Khyentse Foundation confirming the new faculty position, Dean Anthony Cascardi, Interim Dean of Arts and Humanities, College of Letters and Science, UC Berkeley, wrote, “The addition of a faculty expert in Tibetan Buddhism will advance the campus’s programmatic and intellectual vision to promote teaching, research, and a greater understanding of the central significance of Tibet in the history of Asia, and of Tibetan Buddhism in the history of Buddhism, generally.”

This position, jointly held by the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures and the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, is further supported by five additional units in the university: the Department of Linguistics; the Department of Art History; the Group in Buddhist Studies; the Berkeley China Initiative; and the Program in Religious Studies. In all, seven separate units are backing this position, an indication of the university’s multidisciplinary approach to the study of Buddhism.

The university has been authorized to begin the search to hire the faculty member in Tibetan Buddhism in the fall of 2007, with the new professor to start in the fall of 2008.

KF Taiwan Events

Khyentse Foundation held its first Asia planning meeting in Taipei on May 10, 2006. Rinpoche and over 20 invited guests and team members from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, and China spent a full day sharing Rinpoche’s vision for KF. The group looked to the future and laid out plans for the next 5 years of the Foundation’s activities. The meeting was facilitated by Ivy Ang, the Foundation’s consultant in strategic planning. Ivy helped the Asia planning group set specific goals, exchange information and innovative ideas, and engage in much fruitful discussion.

*Continued on page 5*
Vision for a New Nalanda

Over 300 participants from countries across the continents attended the 3-day Heritage of Nalanda Conference held at the historical site of the original Nalanda University in Bihar, India in February, 2006. KF Executive Director Cangioli Che and Lama Sonam Phuntsok of Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute in Chauntra attended the event as invited guests. The conference, organized by the Ashoka Mission, celebrated the achievements and impact of this great Indian university, which flourished between the 3rd century BCE and the 13th century AD. It remains history’s oldest recorded establishment of higher education. Although Nalanda was an Indian institution, its heritage belongs to the world. The university propagated the major lineages of Buddhism and contributed significantly to the study of logic, philosophy, and the sciences. It was at once a model of academic excellence that established and maintained the highest standards of learning and scholarship and a great center of spiritual practice. Looking at the ruins today, it takes a good deal of imagination to picture it in its heyday—which is why this conference was so important.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama officiated at the opening of the conference. In his opening remarks, His Holiness said that he is emotionally connected to Nalanda because he is a student of the great Nalanda masters. His Holiness pointed to the importance of ancient Indian philosophy in the development of Buddhism. In the centuries following the lifetime of Shakyamuni Buddha, great scholars of Nalanda such as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, and many others examined and debated the sutras. From Nalanda, formal Buddhist study spread to China, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and beyond.

His Holiness posed the essential question of the conference: Does Nalanda have any relevance to the reality of the 21st century? If not, he suggested that Nalanda should remain a museum and an archeological site for tourists. But that doesn’t seem to be the case.

Over 30 speakers presented papers on research and study related to this ancient university. Many presentations also described how the Nalanda tradition has reinvented itself in different parts of the world today. The participants generally agreed that the heritage of Nalanda should be preserved and revived, and that study and research should be reintroduced at Nalanda. His Holiness said that human suffering and ignorance can be relieved only through wisdom and knowledge; and for this reason, Nalanda and all that it stood for is still relevant to our world.

Shri Natish Kumar, Honorable Chief Minister of Bihar, made a strong commitment to improving the infrastructure of Bihar, where two of the most important Buddhist sites, Bodhgaya and Nalanda, are located. The Governor of Bihar and West Bengal, His Excellency Gopal Krishna Ghandi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, also addressed the delegates, sharing an inspiring imaginary conversation with Shakyamuni Buddha.

What exactly is the Nalanda tradition? The Nalanda tradition is one of unity in diversification. All Buddhist and other wisdom traditions were respected, evaluated, and studied. It was and is a movement in the spirit of openness and nonconfrontational exploration of the truth. The message of Nalanda is the message of universalism and internationalism at its best. By supporting Deer Park in its quest to establish a similar institution, Khyentse Foundation hopes to be a part of this tradition.

2006 Teaching Schedule and Public Talk

To see Rinpoche’s teaching schedule, go to www.siddharthasintent.org

Public Talk in San Francisco

On Friday, August 11, Rinpoche will give a free public talk on Bodhicitta: The Ultimate Alchemy. This is an opportunity to invite friends and family who have a general interest in Buddhism. This teaching is sponsored by Siddhartha’s Intent Western Door. There is no charge, and no registration is required, but seating is limited to nine hundred and is first come first serve.

WHERE
Herbst Theater, War Memorial Veterans Building,
401 Van Ness Avenue,
San Francisco.

WHEN
Friday, August 11, 7:30 PM.
Doors open at 6:30 PM.
New Management Committee for Dzongsar Institute India

In March 2006, with the guidance and encouragement of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute in Chautra, India, formed a management committee that is responsible for the administration and development of the Institute. This is a significant step toward modern management of the Institute, which follows the century-old heritage of the original Dzongsar Institute in Tibet, established by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö.

Khenpo Kunga Wangchuk, who has been the principal for almost 20 years, has been in one-year retreat since January 2006. Under the present principal, Khenpo Jamyang Lösel, the new management committee consists of ten senior khenpos, whose responsibilities are broadly divided into four primary areas: student union and environment; financial control and future development; receptions and national and international relations; and education and academic development. The Institute also appointed a new secretary, Tashi Wandue, a former Dzongsar Institute student who recently graduated from Varanasi University, to assist Khenpo and the management committee, and to act as liaison with sponsors like Khyentse Foundation.

Several ground-breaking events took place at the Institute during the spring.

- Teachers for the World. During the inauguration of the Institute in November 2004, Khyentse Rinpoche clearly articulated his wish for the Institute “to produce foremost Buddhist scholars and teachers who will make a difference in the world.” The role of Khyentse Foundation is to assist the Institute to reach its goal by enhancing its curriculum to include languages, computers, and short courses on world economy, history, mathematics, and other important subjects. Khyentse Foundation is also committed to establishing the Institute as a world-class center of Buddhist studies that will produce the next generation of Buddhist teachers for the world.

- Globalization. Rinpoche invited Sin-ming Shaw, an economist, banker, and investment adviser, to give a series of lectures on globalization to the khenpos and senior students at the Institute, with Rinpoche himself serving as translator.

- English Program. The Institute has a 13-year study program. Students concentrate on traditional Buddhist philosophy for the first 7 years. English was introduced to the curriculum this year, and a program on Hindi will soon be offered to senior students. Read about Pema Maya’s experience teaching the first class of this new generation of monastic students on page 7.

- Health and Lifestyle. Also during the spring, the Institute opened the on-campus medical clinic to meet the health care and hygiene needs of over 500 students and teachers. (See next story.) Computer skills courses have also been introduced, and Nikhil Kashyap, a computer engineer, will visit the Institute this summer to assess their computer needs and to train a number of monks in computer operations and maintenance.

A Message from the Field, Part 1

Dzongsar Institute ClinicOpens

By Rob and Julie MacLachlan

In 2004, Rinpoche invited Dr. Rob MacLachlan and his wife Julie to visit Dzongsar Institute in Chauntra for a fact-finding mission to determine the health needs of the Institute. They met with local physicians, both Tibetan and allopathic, toured several local clinics, and met with Dr. Tsetan Sadutsang, medical administrator of the Delek Hospital in Dharamsala, to develop a plan of operation. When the MacLachlans returned this year, construction of the clinic building was almost complete and Dr. Pema Yangzom had begun holding twice monthly medical camps. Here is the MacLachlans’ account of the inauguration of the new clinic.

We returned to Chauntra just before Losar (February 2006) to complete the arrangements for staffing and furnishing...
the clinic for operation on a full-time basis. It became clear that the list of requirements prepared in December, 2004 had not been detailed enough to permit completion of furnishing the building, and much more work was

required. We found the principal, Khenpo Jamyang Lösel, and the administrator, Rinchen Namgyal, open to suggestions. They arranged for an enormous amount of work, which was all completed in about three weeks. They also found and hired an experienced health care worker, Tsering Palden, to be the attendant in charge. The formal opening ceremony was held on March 24, the 25th day of the first month of this Tibetan year, an auspicious day.

Tsering’s experience in operating the Tibetan Community Health Clinic for 12 years makes her ideal for this position. With her knowledge and help, we were able to complete the purchasing of equipment, medications, and supplies for the initial operation of the clinic. She will have much work to do in the first months, collecting basic health status information from over 500 monks and teachers, so that a disease prevention program can be developed as the next phase in improving the health of this monastic community. This is, of course, in addition to the work of dealing with the day-to-day illnesses in the community. Tsering has begun to send monthly reports, and we are happy with the progress in the clinic’s development. We hope to be able to institute testing and vaccination for hepatitis and to continue to monitor and treat tuberculosis; both of these diseases are endemic in the Tibetan community. Ongoing goals are improvement and education in the monks’ nutrition and hygiene, both personal and environmental.

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**A Message from the Field, Part 2**

**Pema Maya’s Journal**

Pema Maya, a student of Rinpoche’s from New Zealand, set up the first formal English program at Dzongsar Institute in Chauntra this spring. For the first time, students from year 8 onward are encouraged to study a language of their choice in addition to Tibetan. Seventy students are now studying English intensively. Here are excerpts from Pema Maya’s journal of her experiences in working with the students.

**16th May.** Another storm hit this afternoon just before class. When the rain comes it’s literally like buckets of rain being poured suddenly from the sky. In class we had no power, so moved right over to the window to go over yesterday’s test corrections. The elementary students mostly did well in their first test—quite a big deal for them to understand the whole process, and I think they were happy to get an idea of what they really understand at this stage.

**17th May.** The monks’ study is so focused that they don’t learn about subjects such as maths, science, etc. (unless they’ve attended school before joining the monastery). In class we have discussed a few things, and even did some percentages one day (which I am seriously not the right teacher for!). We are expecting a new English teacher in June, who is also a science major—so hope he will be able to help out a bit there.

**20th May.** The monks invariably argue about the translations of Buddhist terminology—and with 8 or 9 years of debating training (2 hours a day), they know how to argue! Today we basically spent the whole hour discussing four lines—The Four Seals—which come up in the sutra commentary the intermediate students are working through. Gyaltse, who is quite forceful, asks very direct questions: “In English, is emotion in the body or in the mind?!” stabbing at his arm and staring at me. Sonam Lhundrup usually sits with him and sometimes mediates—they argue together while at the same time one will be using the other ones back to lean on. They all amaze me…when I think of Sonam Dorje setting out from Kham on foot, alone, with the equivalent of 70 rupees to come to India; and of Dargye, who escaped from Tibet as a 9 year old and cried nearly every day his first year in Sakya Monastery. Then there is the monk I shared a taxi with this week, who has been trying to get a pass and visa to return to Tibet for the last 3 months. His brothers and sisters have told him to hurry home, as his father is very unwell. His mother has already passed away during his time in India, and he said he is considering sneaking over the border if the embassy doesn’t hurry up.

**21st May.** Sunday today, and I went on an amazing walk down into the valley with Gabriel, the monk from Brazil. We crossed the train track below the monastery and wandered down little paths through trees and past clean brightly painted farmhouses, old stone hay barns, and many beautiful pink flowers which looked like lotuses, but grew straight from the rocky ground. Sometimes the path took us straight over someone’s front garden—the local people were sitting on their verandahs and said “Namaste!” and helped us find the road. We followed the road down for about an hour before turning back and stopping for a cold drink on the way up the hill. We talked about the simple lifestyle of the people we met and walked past, about the Bodhisattvacaryavatara, about the monastery, and how incredible it is to be able to live somewhere like this.

**22nd May.** Today in class the students were in pairs to talk about one line of the Four Seals each. We had a new rule that anyone who tried to debate in Tibetan had to stand up and sing a song—it really worked, and they spoke much more English! In the beginners’ class the students had to bring a photo to describe. The monks laugh at each other easily—and even though the speakers did really well, I had to keep telling the class to be quiet. We clapped for each speaker, then finally Jamyang Phuntsok stood up to talk about a photo of him with his brother in Ladakh. For some reason he wasn’t wearing his monk’s robes, but a leather jacket and baseball cap, which looked quite funny! Some monks laughed and then I started giggling too, which the monks thought was really funny—soon everyone was in fits of laughter.

See more of Pema Maya’s journal at the KF website.
Partnering with White Lotus: A New School in Sikkim

The number of Christian missionary schools in the former Kingdom of Sikkim (Sikkim is now an Indian territory) has sharply increased, and because Buddhist schools are not as readily available or as well-funded as other religious schools, the youth of Sikkim are easily converted. Khyentse Foundation recently approved a grant to support a children’s primary and secondary school with an adjacent Guru Lakhang (temple) in northern Sikkim that is expanding its curriculum to include basic Buddhist principals and history in addition to the sciences and mathematics. English, Hindi, Tibetan, and Nepali classes are also offered. Students are given vocational training in traditional arts and crafts, with an emphasis on Tibetan studies. With the support of the Foundation, headmaster Yap Namgyal is introducing Buddhist studies and philosophy and is exploring new ways to introduce the teachings to children in kindergarten through 12th grade. “I think it can all be done very creatively and yet challenging for the teachers to make Buddha’s life stories and teachings accessible to all levels and ages,” says Yangchen Semo-la, who brought the school to KF’s attention. The school takes in many destitute children from families of cardamom field workers. When crops fail, the parents often withdraw their children from school. Yap Namgyal is diligent in making sure that none of the children are deprived of their education, even if it means having to walk for two or three days to bring students back from their villages. White Lotus Charitable Trust in India facilitated this grant by providing funds to support the needs of children. “Our elders are very happy and encouraged to see the younger generation having the opportunity they missed, and together they can observe Buddhist holidays, Buddha days, Guru Rinpoche days, and Dakini days.” For a slideshow of this remarkable school, visit the KF website.

Ladakh School

In Ladakh, where many children are being converted to Islam, Khyentse Foundation is supporting 37 underprivileged children, aged 7 to 14, through the Monastic Vikramisila Education Society of Ladakh. Most of these children are monastics, but a few are lay students, both boys and girls.