



YOUNG LAMAS HAVE THEIR SAY: TENZIN PHUNTSOK RINPOCHE AND KUNDROL RINPOCHE



Tenzin Phuntsok Rinpoche and Kundrol Rinpoche. Photo courtesy of Kopan Monastery.

Ani Fran and Ani Karen conducted separate interviews at Kopan Monastery with both Tenzin Phuntsok Rinpoche and Kundrol Rinpoche respectively.

Tenzin Phuntsok Rinpoche is the recognized reincarnation of Geshe Lama Konchog [*Mandala* eZine December 2009], a renowned meditator who lived at Kopan Monastery. The story of Geshe Lama Konchog and Tenzin Phuntsok Rinpoche is featured in *Unmistaken Child*, a documentary by Nati Baratz. Kundrol Rinpoche is recognized as the former Geshe Lobsang Jamyang [*Mandala* August-September 2008], a student of Kopan and Sera Je, abbot of Shigon Thupten Shedup Ling Monastery, and resident teacher of Heruka Center in Taiwan.

These young lamas, aged seven and six years, are good friends at Kopan Monastery.

What is your favorite subject?

Tenzin Phuntsok Rinpoche: Tibetan, because when I am big I have to do teachings.

Kundrol Rinpoche: English, because I want to teach in English. I would like sometimes to teach in Tibetan and sometimes in English.

Do you have any advice for other Buddhists who are around your age?

TPR: Everyone has to help sick and disabled people! You have to respect your elders, parents, lamas and rinpoches, and your teachers. Never beat your friends, and don't get angry at them. Try to love your friends. If they make you angry, or hit you, don't hit them back.

KR: Don't kill any creature, even ants. If you do, you will become an ant and others will kill you. If you cannot help sentient beings then at least do not harm them.

What do you think is the most important thing about Buddhism? Or what do you think is the most important thing to focus on as a Buddhist?

KR: Once you know Buddhism then even chanting mantras can be helpful for all beings, even creatures like ants. Ants cannot chant mantras, but if they hear the mantra they can become human in the future, so it benefits even them. To benefit others is the most important and to have compassion for others. Being Buddhist also means to learn the teachings of Buddha.

Do you have a message for students from your previous life?

TPR: When my classes are finished then I will meet you all again.

Do you see yourself teaching outside Kopan, in FPMT centers around the world?

TPR: Yes, I think I will teach outside Kopan, also inside Kopan, and also in centers. I will teach in English and Tibetan, to make everybody happy.

KR: I prefer to teach at Kopan. Traveling around makes you tired and you get a headache and sometimes a fever. When I travel by air, I feel like vomiting, and even in a car I get car-sick.

Do you have any memories of your past incarnation?

TPR: I recognized a Western lady who said to Geshe-la (after Geshe-la had the operation for stomach cancer), "What happened to you?" I recognized her when I saw her. I also remember a bit about the operation with the doctors doing something on my chest. And I recognized Ani Dolma! [Geshe Tenzin Zopa's sister.]

KR: I only remember Geshe Losang Sherab, who is a teacher here at Kopan. I remember the good times we had together studying at Sera College.

Do you have any parting words or thoughts about Buddhism?

TPR: Be good. Don't do bad things. Don't worry.

KR: Meditation is good for people.