

## KHENRINPOCHE LAMA LHUNDRUP, ABBOT OF KOPAN MONASTERY, NEPAL

**K**henrinpoche Lama Lhundrup Rigsal was born in Tibet in 1941 to a poor peasant family. He joined Sera Monastery while still a boy, and in 1959 fled from the Chinese invasion of Tibet to India. In Buxa Duar, the refugee camp in North India where many of the monks were sent by the Indian government, he met Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and studied with great masters such as Geshe Rabten and others.

In 1972, he was called to Kopan by Lama Yeshe to teach philosophy to the Kopan monks for a period of three months. Ha!

Lama Lhundrup has been abbot of Kopan Monastery since then, taking care of the ever-growing group of monks and nuns and keeping alive Lama Zopa Rinpoche's and Lama Yeshe's vision of Kopan. Lama Lhundrup still teaches classes every day, gives advice to visitors and foreigners and is entirely available to all.

Rabjam Geshe Tashi Dondrup has been a monk at Kopan for the past 16 years, becoming a geshe there in 2004. He has subsequently taught philosophy and is now the school principal at Kopan Monastery. He had the following to say about Lama Lhundrup:

"Khenrinpoche is really a bodhisattva. He is never too tired to look after the monks and nuns here, just as a



mother would, with strong love for them all. His special quality is real compassion. He doesn't want to make anyone unhappy."

Another resident of Kopan added the following: "Perhaps Khenrinpoche's favorite activity is debate. It seems he is always having the last and best laugh in the debate courtyard and has been known to quickly leave for one of his guru's teachings. While noting that the debate is not yet over, he'll rush downstairs to join the action with the monks. After completion of his geshe exam in 1990, the monks who witnessed it all related that it would be something

they would never forget – the best geshe exam because it was the funniest. Khenrinpoche used examples like rice and dahl, to prove profound philosophical points. I once went to Khenrinpoche to explain why I couldn't accomplish something due to the external conditions not being complete and his reply became a debate, whereby the fault came back to me as a compliment. I remember leaving quite perplexed, wondering how the situation had gotten all turned around. He was laughing!"

Lama Lhundrup is the day-to-day heart of Kopan Monastery and Nunnery, for both residents and guests. As Lama Zopa Rinpoche offered in praise some years ago, Lama Lhundrup is "one lama you can completely trust."

**I** really enjoy staying here at Nalanda Monastery. It is a very nice place with great potential. It has a core group of about 10 Western monks who are dedicated and interested in studying Dharma in great depth. The discipline among the monks is excellent and the whole atmosphere of the place is friendly, welcoming and conducive to serious studies.

GESHE LOBSANG JAMPHEL, ABBOT OF NALANDA MONASTERY, FRANCE