



# LOTUS ARROW

*Newsletter of the Kurukulla Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies*

NUMBER 29, APRIL 2006

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## From the Director

AS MOST OF YOU already know, Venerable Ribur Rinpoche, whose Boston visit in 2000 greatly inspired us to get the house on Magoun Avenue for the Center, passed away in India in January, and we all pray for his swift return. Venerable Ribur Rinpoche's advice and support encouraged us to purchase the property; and thanks to his vision we now have an established center, a significant achievement that's helped us move forward from our early "altar in a box" days. Keeping the center going hasn't been without its challenges, the most recent of which was, of course, the mortgage drive.

The last time I wrote this column for the *Lotus Arrow* the looming task of raising funds to pay down the mortgage was on the horizon. It is now a pleasure to present the mortgaging refinancing report—please see page 2. Geshe-la is always reminding us that we will not be around for long, that our lives are fleeting, and we always need to be thinking about establishing the Center for future generations. I feel that we have made a huge step toward that goal. An enormous thank you to all who contributed, especially the kind donors who offered the \$50,000 matching grant.

We welcome Geshe-la back to Boston from his travels, first to India for the Kalachakra with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to Sera Je to see and teach his students, and then to Mexico, where he taught at four different FPMT study groups—please see page 3. We are so fortunate to have Geshe-la in our midst and the precious opportunity to study the



Geshe-la on the radio, talking about the Dharma, on his recent trip to Mexico. See inside for more photos.

Buddha's profound teachings with him. It is as rare as seeing stars at noon...not to be taken for granted.

And now we can turn our attention to the maintenance and development projects that are next in line. The most urgent is to repair the carriage house. Situated at the end of the driveway, it is a beautiful, old structure that the squirrels have made home these past years. Now that winter's gone it's time for the humans to reassert their (compassionate) authority. We've had a quote to fix the roof and gaping holes that so many of you have commented on: \$10,000. We hope to do it this spring. If you can contribute to this project please earmark your gift "carriage house."

Another way to give to the Center is through your time, skills and passion. Thus I am delighted to let you know that Sean González has kindly agreed to help Kurukulla (and me!) by becoming assistant director and we are so happy that he has joined the management committee (see box on page 2). However, we still need many more volunteers to help us run

the Center, so if you would like to contribute your time and skills, let Sean know at [sean@kurukulla.org](mailto:sean@kurukulla.org). Billions of thanks to all who already volunteer whether occasionally or many hours a week.

Other reasons to be cheerful: His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be teaching in Los Angeles and New York next September. We have invited our spiritual director and head of the FPMT, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and other lamas to visit us this year—we await their kind replies. We just had a wonderful visit from Venerable Robina Courtin; scores of people enjoyed her dynamic teachings. Our own Helen Lee went to India at the end of last year to be ordained and is now Venerable Yeshe Chodron. Center member Brian Roiter also recently took ordination in Dharamsala with His Holiness.

Thank you all so much for everything you do to make Kurukulla Center as beneficial for all sentient beings as it can possibly be.

Much love,

# Mortgage Refinancing Report

In the last newsletter we let you know that Kurukulla Center would need to refinance the mortgage this coming June. However, last November conditions changed and we had the opportunity to refinance early. We took the opportunity because interest rates were low and we were able to lock in a rate lower than the one we had before. As well, our bank offered to waive the pre-payment penalty fee for refinancing before our five year term was up.

Our outstanding principal at the time was \$280,000, and our monthly payment was \$2,285. Each month we paid nearly \$2,000 in interest, money that we otherwise could have used for other more beneficial activities.

Therefore, we decided to appeal to the community through email and personal contacts to raise funds to pay down our principal at the time of refinancing. We started with \$25,000 which we had in savings and which included money received from a recent large donation. Soon after we announced the appeal, a matching donor stepped forward, offering to match up to \$50,000 in donations, if we could raise the money before the

**KURUKULLA CENTER  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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*TREASURER*

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*FACILITY & RESIDENTIAL COORDINATOR*



Center volunteers recently converted the guest room into a bookstore and lounge. The old library is now the new guestroom, and what had been Geshe-la's livingroom is now the library.

end of the year. This meant that we could possibly pay down a total of \$125,000 against our principal, if the fundraising drive was successful.

The community responded in astounding and incredible fashion. By the end of November we raised over \$40,000 in gifts and pledges towards the match, and by mid-December the challenge was met. In late December we paid \$66,000 to the bank, and when the remaining funds were received we paid an additional \$59,000 against the principal at the end of January. The result? Our monthly mortgage payment is now \$1,120, roughly half of what it used to be.

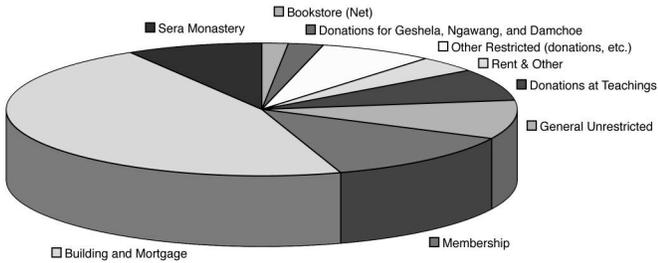
It should be mentioned that our

bank, Cambridge Savings Bank, made numerous accommodations to enable us to refinance, pay down our principal, and lower our monthly payment over the period of three months, and there were virtually no fees involved.

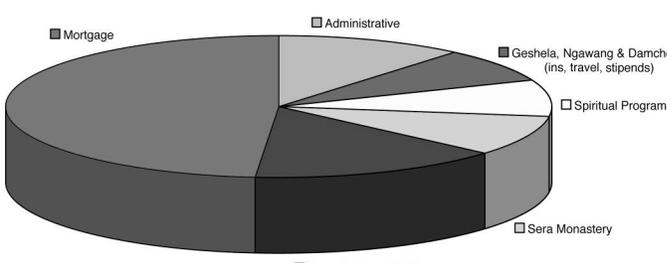
Our sincere and heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who contributed, large and small, to this effort. Your donations have made such a significant impact on the financial health of the Center, and have undoubtedly established the Center firmly for many years to come.

Jennifer Barlow  
Treasurer

## KURUKULLA OPERATING INCOME AND EXPENSES 2005 (DRAFT)



Bookstore (Net)	\$3,900
Donations for Geshela, Ngawang, and Damchoe	5,100
Other Restricted (donations, etc.)	16,700
Rent & Other	8,700
Donations at Teachings	17,600
General Unrestricted	22,000
Membership	28,600
Building and Mortgage	106,700
Sera Monastery	19,400
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$228,700</b>



Administrative	\$21,500
Geshela, Ngawang & Damchoe (ins, travel, stipends)	15,000
Spiritual Program	16,100
Sera Monastery	17,500
Household and Utilities	28,700
Mortgage	93,900
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$192,700</b>

The \$36,000 surplus represents Building Fund/Mortgage donations that we carried over into 2006 and was paid to the bank in January 2006. If we consider Operating Funds only (exclusive of Building Fund/Mortgage and Sera Monastery funds) we actually posted a deficit of about \$5,000 for 2005. This is not bad, given that our Operating budget was about \$100,000, but it does underscore

the importance of the mortgage refinancing that took place in December 2005, which cut our monthly mortgage payment in half. We still struggle at times to pay all our operating bills each month, and we continue to rely heavily on our membership donations and donations collected at teachings and events. We are so grateful for your generous support.

## Geshe-la's Visit "South of the Border"

As most of you are aware, Geshe-la and Tsunma-la visited Mexico most of the month of March. They arrived in Guadalajara on February 21st for a four-city, one-month tour of most of the FPMT centers in Mexico, where Geshe-la gave teachings and initiations to our Dharma brothers and sisters. Through their stay they were accompanied by Venerable Lobsang Tonden, who in June of this year we'll have an opportunity to make as welcome in the U.S. as he made Geshe-la and Tsunma-la welcome in Mexico.

In Aguascalientes Geshe-la gave the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* and the *Heart Sutra* teachings. In Uruapan he gave the *Transforming Problems* teaching and a public *Tara Initiation* in The National Park, a wonderful sanctuary in the middle of the city. From there Geshe-la went to Guadalajara to teach "The Three Principal Aspects of the Path" retreat and then to give *Medicine Buddha*



Geshe-la giving a public *Tara Initiation* in The National Park in Uruapan.

*Initiation.* Geshe-la concluded his trip in Durango with the *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* teaching again.

From the moment of their arrival, Mexico proved to be warm and extremely welcoming. Fifteen students were at the airport to greet Geshe-la and Tsunma-la with flowers and *khatak* scarves. And Geshe-la's teachings, initiations, and

retreats were extremely well attended, drawing 180 students on average!

We thank our Dharma brothers and sisters in Mexico for their kindness, hospitality and generosity to our beloved teacher!

For more pictures of Geshe-la's trip, go to [photos.kurukulla.org/mojoGallery.cgi](http://photos.kurukulla.org/mojoGallery.cgi).

Sean González,  
Assistant Director



Ven. Tsunma-la, Geshe-la, and Ven. Tonden-la tour the Church of San Antonio, in Aguascalientes.

### continued from back page

In 2006 we would like to have at least five Elderhostel events, the minimum that will allow us to have printed advertising in Elderhostel's brochures, which reach a broader audience than their e-mail advertising. The first event will be on Saturday, June 24th. We will have two more events in Q3 and the remaining two in Q4. In advance, I thank you for your continued support for this project!

Elderhostel is only one of many exciting projects in our backlog. From developing new programs for children to expanding our current projects, we need your continued help and support to make Geshe-la's and the FPMT's vision a thriving reality in our community. If you're interested in volunteering at Kurukulla Center, please visit [kurukulla.org/involve/volunteering.html](http://kurukulla.org/involve/volunteering.html) or contact us at [volunteer@kurukulla.org](mailto:volunteer@kurukulla.org). Thank you!

Sean González



**Be sure to sign up for the first-ever  
Discovering Buddhism Lamrim Retreat  
in North America!**

*Location:* Milarepa Center

*Dates:* May 12–27, 2006

*Retreat Leader:* Thubten Yeshe

*Type of Retreat:* Silent two-week lamrim retreat including meditation, discussion, and Dharma talks. Also interviews with retreat leader.

*For teacher bio and additional info, go to [www.milarepacenter.org](http://www.milarepacenter.org).*



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## A Community Success Story: Elderhostel Project

**E**lderhostel ([www.elderhostel.com](http://www.elderhostel.com)) is the nation's first and the world's largest educational and travel organization for older adults. The organization coordinates "learning adventures" for people fifty-five and over.

Elderhostel approached us to participate in their Day of Discovery program, a one-day introductory event—in our case about Buddhism. We signed up to host two events, and the response from Elderhostel's members was overwhelming. Over sixty people—30 per event—signed up within days of opening registration; and the waiting list kept growing! We agreed to do a third event. Many participants came from out of state.

We received close to ninety completed questionnaires from our guests. Geshe-la's

teachings—which were the most lively discussions I have ever witnessed at Kurukulla—got consistent "highlight of the day" marks, as did Tsunma-la's teaching and guided meditation, Wendy's yoga, and our Tibetan meals. Catering was provided by *House of Tibet Kitchen*, *Martsa*, and *Rangzen*—we thank them for their support of this project!

Our community response matched Elderhostel's enthusiastic interest. With an average of fourteen volunteers per event, we had the volunteering force we needed to succeed. In addition to all the praises about Geshe-la's wonderful teachings, two questionnaire responses were particularly moving to me, "Total involvement of volunteers and members of the Center," and "The friendliness of the staff and volunteers." I am extremely grateful to all of our volunteers who put so much love and caring into the tasks they performed; we couldn't have done it without your support!

**continued on page 3**

KURUKULLA CENTER  
is a member of the  
Foundation for the  
Preservation of the  
Mahayana Tradition



(FPMT), a worldwide community of Buddhist centers dedicated to preserving the pure teachings of the Buddha as found in Tibetan Buddhism.

Founded by Lama Yeshe in 1975 and currently under the spiritual direction of his main disciple, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, the FPMT provides teachings, retreats, literature, hospice care, and social services in thirty countries. Kurukulla Center was founded by Lama Zopa Rinpoche in 1989 and is named for a wrathful emanation of Red Tara who manifests the buddhas' compassionate activity in the world.