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Boudhanath Stupa, Kathmandu, Nepal

M. FARRINGTON

First Time, Best Time

Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Kathmandu

September, 2000

by Mark Farrington

Surrounded by the most inspiring mountain range in the world and lying at the heart of one of the most beautiful valleys in Asia, the city of Kathmandu can easily be an experience of the "glass half empty, glass half full". It is a noisy and dusty city like many Asia capitals, with a race between infrastructure development and population growth clearly being won by the latter. However, as you look around to the mountain framed edges of the sky and into the smiling eyes of the Nepali people, it is with very little difficulty that one can walk around in a blissful state of wonder.

It was my first trip to the Himalayas and the attraction was very powerful. Wandering around the congested city with the expansive space of the mountains right there on the horizon was generating a sense of restlessness. I wanted to head off deep into the hills! However, when the Teachings began on Friday afternoon in a beautiful, yet simple hall at the Yak & Yeti Hotel, all seemed well. If you are going to be in the busy center of Kathmandu with all the tranquillity of the Himalayas around you, then being at the Yak & Yeti is a very pleasant concession. Vikki Floyd was a very warm and helpful host for all of the travelers attending the brief weekend Teachings. A special thank you to her and all those that helped to host this very enjoyable event.

As many Community members can appreciate, particularly those that travel a lot, it is not only within the room where Rinpoche is Teaching that many lessons are learned. The whole effort of preparing, traveling to and sitting for the Teachings, becomes part of the lesson, and for many it fits perfectly for where they are on the Path. The obstacles we encounter to get there, the condition of our body and mind when we arrive, and every experience we have during the trip, can often be a symbolic teaching that registers deeply. This defines the historical pilgrimage experience. It is nice to know that in the days of modern travel and material wealth that these experiences are still possible, if you remain open and aware to their existence.

The room full of students and interested new parties that came to hear Chögyal Namkhai Norbu speak over this September weekend in Kathmandu were all in the middle of one kind of journey or another. There were some permanent residents and some Nepalese, but it was mostly a room full of global citizens intersecting at this one beautiful hotel in the middle of the Himalayas. I did not speak to many people so I do not know their exact stories, but it seemed to me that all were on a journey either spiritual or actual and the presence of this incredible Teacher was an important (and

continued on page 3

NAMKHAIR NORBU RINPOCHE'S SCHEDULE 2000-2002

2000

SOUTH AMERICA, TASHIGAR

December 26th - January 1st
New Year Retreat, Tashigar

2001

SOUTH AMERICA, CHILE, PERU & MARGARITA ISLAND

CHILE

February 1st
Public Conference, Santiago de Chile
February 2nd, 3rd and 4th
Retreat of Dzogchen Teachings
Santiago de Chile
February 5th
Public Conference, Vina del Mar

PERU

February 9th, 10th & 11th
Chod Retreat, Peru

MARGARITA ISLAND

March 30th - April 3rd
Easter Retreat

USA, WEST COAST

May 1st
Public Talk: Introduction to Dzogchen
May 2nd - 6th
West Coast Retreat
May 8th
Leave for Seattle
May 9th
Public talk: Introduction to Dzogchen, Seattle
May 10th
Leave for Portland
May 13th-16th
H.H. the Dalai Lama's teaching, Portland
May 18th-20th
Portland Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

RUSSIA, KUNSANGAR

Santi Maha Sangha
May 27th-29th
SMS Base Level Exam
May 30th-June 5th
SMS I Level Training

continued on page 3

Between Thailand and South Africa

by Elisa Copello

Between Thailand and South Africa, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu made a brief, yet intense and important, stopover in Rome. It was an extra exertion in a climate not particularly suitable for Rinpoche's health with a full program of engagements, from the inauguration of the exhibition and talks at the conference on Tibetan medicine to the public talk held on November 20th at the great hall of a prestigious religious institute where he presented the Dzogchen teaching. However, for us practitioners, it was an immense joy to be able to have him with us once again and to share the experience of the direct transmission which he gave on the occasion of Adzam Drugpa's anniversary on November 21st. This was held at the Ghioni theater which had been hired for the occasion by the Gakyil of Rome.

Smiling, witty and at times even cutting, Rinpoche once again introduced the crowds gathered in the enormous hall at the San Leone Magno Institute to knowledge of Ati Yoga. He spoke at length on the difference between the mind and the nature of the mind, on the various types of transmission through which a practitioner may enter authentic knowledge of his original condition, on various types of experience which permit one to discover the state of Dzogchen. Besides this, in a gesture which was quite unusual for us, Rinpoche invited the participation of the public. At first people were timid with their questions some of which were exacting and interesting, others simply strange. This question/answer session confirmed how sometimes questions arise more from the wish to be heard and seen rather than a real desire to satisfy one's curiosity or clarify a doubt.

To the question about how to recognize a real Master in a world where so many lamas come to the West to teach Rinpoche jokingly replied, "There are even lamas in Peru!". Then he added that it is important to use one's own awareness and observe well the attitude, behavior and teaching of a Master before deciding to follow him.

The talk concluded with an invitation to those with a real interest to know the Dzogchen teaching to come the following day to the Ghioni theater to receive the transmission. Several "new" people took up this invitation while a great number of us "old" practitioners from all over Italy and even abroad participated in the event which was one more opportunity to see Rinpoche and refresh the energy of the transmission.

Early in the morning we met in front of the closed gates of the theater under the pouring rain to get our tickets. We were worried about not being able to get in because we had been told by the Gakyil of

Rome that there were only 600 places and that the tickets would start being given out at 9:30, about two and a half hours before Rinpoche was due to arrive. However in the end everyone found a place, even those who arrived at the last minute by car or train from far off places to receive the transmission.

The organization of the event was really commendable: the place chosen for the event was excellent, queuing was orderly and fast and there was a discreet but efficient control of the situation. The stage was decorated in a simple and elegant way with an enormous black and white photograph of Adzam Drugpa behind Rinpoche's chair with two very large thankas hanging from the wings.

Punctually, at midday, Rinpoche mounted the stage and immediately began to explain the practice. Then after a short break, at the exact stroke of one o'clock, he led the practice perfectly synchronized with the video being shown on a television behind him.

I was very moved at the idea that for about half an hour the entire Community in every part of the world was reunited in perfect synchronicity with us practitioners in Rome who had the great fortune to be able to follow the practice with the Master live and receive the transmission from him. Even though the event had been announced for several months and the videos and practice books for the transmission had been prepared and sent around the world some time ago, to find ourselves with the Master on the occasion of the anniversary of Adzam Drugpa in the unusual context of a theater and with the awareness of this link between those present and all the practitioners in the world united by the strength of the transmission was for me and, I believe, many others a

continued on page 3

CONTENTS

- 2 TEACHINGS
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 5 INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS
- 6 TIBETAN MEDICINE
- 7 BOOK REVIEW
- 9 SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE
- 10-17 COMMUNITY NEWS
- 21 INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY CONTACTS
- 24 INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL NEWS

SPECIAL

PAGES 18-19
2 PAGE BOOKLIST
FROM
SHANG-SHUNG
EDIZIONI



The True Function of the Teachings

(An excerpt from Chapter One, *The Individual: Body, Voice and Mind of Dzogchen, The Self Perfected State*)
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York

Someone who begins to develop an interest in the teachings can tend to distance themselves from the reality of material things, as if the teachings were something completely apart from daily life. Often, at the bottom of this, there is an attitude of giving up and running away from one's own problems, with the illusion that one will be able to find something that will miraculously help one to transcend all that. But the teachings are based on the principle of our actual human condition. We have a physical body with all its various limits; each day we have to eat, work, rest, and so on. This is our reality, and we can't ignore it.

The Dzogchen teachings are neither a philosophy, nor religious doctrine, nor cultural tradition. Understanding the message of the teachings means discovering one's own true condition, stripped of all the self-deceptions and falsifications which the mind creates. The very meaning of the Tibetan term Dzogchen, "Great Perfection", refers to the true primordial state of every individual and not to any transcendent reality.

Many spiritual paths have as their basis the principle of compassion, of benefiting others. In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, for example, compassion is one of the most fundamental points of the practice, together with the knowledge of the true nature of phenomena, or "voidness." Sometimes, however, compassion can become something constructed and provisional, because we don't understand the real principle of it. A genuine, not artificial, compassion, can only arise after we have discovered our own condition. Observing our own limits, our conditioning, our conflicts and so on, we can become truly conscious of the suffering of others, and then our own experience becomes the basis or model for being able to better understand and help those around us.

The only source of every kind of benefit for others is awareness of our own condition. When we know how to help ourselves and how to work with our situation we can really benefit others, and our feeling of compassion will arise spontaneously, without the need for us to hold ourselves to the rules of behavior of any given religious doctrine.

What do we mean when we say, "becoming aware of our own true condition"? It means observing ourselves, discovering who we are, who we believe we are, and what our attitude is towards others and to life. It means observing ourselves, discovering who we are, who we believe we are, and what our attitude is towards others and to life. If we just observe the limits, mental

judgments, the passions, the pride, the jealousy, and the attachments with which we close ourselves up in the course of one single day, where do they arise from, what are they rooted in? Their source is our dualistic vision, and our conditioning. To be able to help both ourselves and others we need to overcome all the limits in which we are enclosed. This is the true function of the teachings.

to decide what his capacity is, not the teacher. Let's say I lack clarity. I can ask the advice of the Master about this, and what kind of practice I can do to get rid of this lack of clarity. But the teacher is not deciding that I have a certain capacity, high or low. What we have to understand is what's lacking. What is our weak point?

Let's say I'm someone who likes to drink. And if I drink every day and am a bit drunk, and the Master says, "You have a low capacity", that doesn't resolve anything. But what one has to understand is that if I'm getting drunk and I'm not doing anything, then I'm wasting time. And when one is able to discover this, one is then able to work with oneself. So one ought not to wait around to receive this capacity somehow.

very important point. Because it happens that many people wait around passively to get the capacity that they want. And many people say, "Oh, this teaching is much too high. It's not for me. I've got to go for the more elementary stuff." But they're also thinking that suddenly, one day, that superior capacity will come to them. But that capacity never comes though they wait and wait. And they finally become old and they die. And one doesn't even know in the future lives if that capacity is going to come along.

That is, the person doesn't know how to work with himself and his capacity. And therefore this way of looking at things is not right. You have to understand that there are different paths which are low, middle and high, and that it's human beings following these

teaching which is regarded as not acceptable, or something to be feared. Because in this teaching what one searches for is a state beyond acceptance and rejection. Therefore they say this is a higher teaching.

Now if one knows how to understand this principle, in this case one also knows how to work on one's weak points. And one also knows in regard to the teaching what it really means. When I was with my Master Changchub Dorje, I was fresh out of college. I had a very precise idea of what lineage was and what different types of transmission were. I knew the way in which they existed in every school and in every tradition. When I received the teaching, the first thing I asked was, "what tradition is this? What lineage? And what is the title, the name of this teaching?"

Now when I received these teachings and transmissions from Changchub Dorje, he said, "this is the transmission of Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha, and Anuyoga", for example. I couldn't understand what he meant, because I remained within that limitation. But later I understood what he intended, what he was communicating. It's true. Dzogchen teaching is like that. That is, it's not conditioned by a particular name or lineage. So, the teaching is not important externally, but what's important is our own understanding.

In the Dzogchen teachings I had twelve or thirteen different masters. For me, these teachers were not the same. That is, each of these masters made me understand either more or less of the teaching. But when I say this I don't mean that some teachers were better, some were middling and some were less. But what it was, it depended on my condition. It depended on the rapport between me and the teachers. It depended on my knowledge, on my secondary conditions and on my circumstances.

But what they all taught me was the same principle. And when I understood for the first time, then it all had its value. Thus all the complications disappeared. One teacher gave this, and the other teacher gave something else. Thus in the state of realization one has to unify everything into what is called the Great Thigle or the Great Mahamudra, the Great Dzogchen. In this case, how can there be different teachers, different lineages, different heads of schools, etc.?

And it's very important for each of us to understand this well. And this is a very important point for getting rid of our confusion. And if we don't get this understanding, we always find ourselves in limitations. And in this case the teaching becomes like a crystal cage.

How does one construct this kind of cage? It's like when one says, "I am a Kagyupa and I just can't take the Gelugpas." This is an example of a beautiful crystalline cage. The best thing to do in this case, is to understand that the different types of teachings are methods to help us realize ourselves. ■



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche teaching in Nepal

The Capacity of the Individual

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Oz, California, 1982

From the Blue Book
Talks in Oz, California
1982

Translated by Barrie Simmons
Transcribed by Jim Valby

One lives according to one's circumstances. One has to be aware of what one's condition is. That is, one knows how to work with oneself and how to develop one's capacity. Many people say usually, "Master, what kind of capacity do I have?" And if the Master is not a very nice person, he'll say, "You don't have very much capacity". And that Master will say, "What you have to do is ten different ngöndros".

And in this case the person will never get to the main practice. It's not that the Master is making an error, but the person himself is making an error in this case. And why is this a mistake on the part of the individual? The individual has

This is very important, because a lot of people talk in that way. They say that the teaching is something that is like a stairway that has to be ascended, and they say, "You with the small amount of good fortune you have, need a teaching like Tantrism." And let's say that you follow this teaching but you don't succeed in being able to practice it.

And then you meet someone who's very much into the Sutras, and that person will say, "Oh, you can't do that Tantric practice. That practice is much too high for you. What you've got to do first is the Hinayana level, let's say for ten years. At least you have to become a monk for a few years. Then you do some purification and then when you've realized yourself at that level, then you can go to Tantra." And a person says, "That sounds good. That's right." And they go and make a kind of school based on that. This makes sense because it is necessary to go to elementary school before going to the middle school. And in this way one has wasted the good opportunity in which one has met the Tantra teaching.

If this happens, it is not an ideal way of going about things. It's much better to know how to work within the framework of Tantrism. And why? Because Tantrism is complete. If you lack capacity, then in the Tantric teaching there is a way to work on oneself to make up for that deficiency.

So it's not necessary for you to make up that deficiency. This is a

paths, and that those who are following the lower path have lesser capacity. And this means that someone who's following the lower path has more limitations. And someone with more limits doesn't want to understand something else. It's very easy to understand this.

For example, there are a lot of Theravadins. And they just do not accept Mahayana. They say right from the beginning that Mahayana is not authentic and doesn't even exist as a Buddhist teaching. And what's more, they don't even read any Mahayana books. They even have a fear of reading this, because maybe it will convince them that there is something to it. This means that there is self-limitation there and that these people have closed themselves. This is the characteristic of what is called the lesser capacity.

As we go up to the teachings that are higher and higher, what we have is people who are more and more open. One has to understand that this is the natural condition. This doesn't mean there's any defect in the teaching since the teaching has no defect whatsoever. But the teaching is followed by human beings, and it's the human beings who are limited.

Now when we're talking about the Dzogchen teaching, for example, this is a teaching that is called very high. Why is it considered so elevated? Because there is nothing that's strictly defined, neither in its way of looking at things, nor in its practice, nor in its mode of behavior. There is nothing in this

Activities in Tashigar

2000 - 2001

December 26th-January 1st

Christmas Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Cost: \$200 (30% discount for ordinary members)

January 3rd-7th, 2001

Yantra Yoga Advanced Course with Fabio Andrico
Cost: \$80

January 15th-20th, 2001

Dance of the Vajra - First Part with Adriana dal Borgo

January 21st-23rd, 2001

Intensive Practice
Cost: \$80

January 24th-29th, 2001

Dance of the Vajra - Second Part with Adriana dal Borgo

January 30th-February 1st

Intensive Practice
Cost: \$80

Entire course: \$150

Further information contact the Secretary at Tashigar

Tel and fax : (54) 03541-998356

Email: tashigar@datacoopcordoba.com.ar

or Blue Gakyil

Tel : (54) 11 4582-4865

Email: griseal@hotmail.com

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's schedule continued from page 1

June 6th-8th

SMS I Level Exam
June 9th-13th
SMS Level II Training

June 15th-21st
Kunsangar Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

June 22nd-23rd
SMS II Level Exam
June 24th-28th
SMS III Level Training

ITALY, MERIGAR

July 6th-10th
Merigar Retreat
July 17th-August 6th
Personal retreat of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
August 10th-19th
Merigar Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

August 21st-23rd
SMS Base Level Exam
August 24th-28th
SMS I Level Training

September 7th-17th
Vacation in Sardegna

Santi Maha Sangha

September 23rd-25th
SMS II level Exam
September 26th-30th
SMS III Level Training

October 7th
Leave for Margarita Island

VENEZUELA, MARGARITA ISLAND

December 26th-January 1st
Margarita Island Retreat

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February 15th-24th
Margarita Island Teacher's Training
March 29th-April 2nd
Margarita Island Easter Retreat
April 9th-23rd
Margarita Island Longsel Teaching

USA, TSEGYALGAR

May 3rd-7th
Dzogchen Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

May 10th-14th
SMS Base Level Exam
May 15th-19th
SMS I Level Training
May 21st-23rd
SMS I Level Exam
May 24th-28th
SMS II Level Training
May 30th-31st
SMS II Level Exam
June 1st-5th

SMS III Level Training

June 14th-28th
Personal Retreat of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

July 5th-14th
Dzogchen Retreat

ITALY, MERIGAR

July 18th
Leave for Merigar

Santi Maha Sangha

July 23rd-25th
SMS Base Level Exam
July 26th-30th
SMS I Level Training

August 10th-18th
Dzogchen Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

August 22nd-23rd
SMS III Level Exam
August 24th-28th
SMS IV Level Training
August 30th-31st
SMS IV Level Exam
September 1st-5th
SMS V Level Training
September 8th-22nd
Vacation in Sardegna

AUSTRIA, KALACHAKRA

October 10th
Leave for Austria
October 11th
H.H. the Dalai Lama arrives
October 23rd
H.H. the Dalai Lama departs

ITALY, MERIGAR

October 28th
Return to Merigar

THAILAND

November 4th
Leave for Thailand
November 15th-17th
Thailand Dzogchen Retreat

SINGAPORE

November 22nd-24th
Singapore Retreat

AUSTRALIA, NAMGYALGAR

November 25th
Leave for Brisbane
December 26th-January 1st
Namgyalgar Retreat

The Celestial Treasure: the Tibetan Art of Medicine

by Andrea del'Angelo

On November 17th the exhibition entitled "The Celestial Treasure: the Tibetan Art of Medicine" opened at the Pigorini Museum in Rome.

The event was organized and coordinated by A.S.I.A. (Associazione per la Solidarietà Internazionale in Asia) with the collaboration of the Pigorini Museum and the International Shang-Shung Institute of Tibetan Studies. It was financed by the Department of Cooperation and Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with its program of education and development.

ASIA had presented the project to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in February, 2000 and after it had been appraised by the Technical Commission it was approved by the Managing Committee of the DGCS on July 24th.

The exhibition was inaugurated in the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Special Service of the L. Pigorini National Prehistoric Museum, Prof. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and the curator of the exhibition and author of the catalogue, Prof. Giacomella Orefino, who spoke about the material on display and explained the origins of the event. About four hundred people participated in the evening inauguration.

Fifty-eight Tibetan paintings from Lhasa were displayed at the exhibition along with one hundred and eighty three surgical instruments. Besides these exhibits, a tent was set up within which mannequins represented a Tibetan doctor visiting a patient. Numerous showcases and the interior of the tent were decorated with ritual objects, antique books and furniture generously lent by private collectors. In order to give a fuller picture of the geographical, cultural and historical context, the exhibition was enriched with gigantic photographs from the photographic archive of A.S.I.A.

The first part of the conference, November 18th and 19th, covered the history of Tibetan medicine and the relationship between body and mind. There were several participants in this cycle of the conference including a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Fernand Meyer professor of Tibetan sciences and civilization at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes de Paris, Dr. Jamyang Lhundrub from the Tsetang Traditional Hospital at Loka who comes from a family of more than four generations of doctors in which this ancient knowledge is transmitted from father to son, Dr. Kojo Sangdu, director of the Department of Traditional Medicine at Lhasa University who spoke about the surgical tradition in Tibet and diagnosis in traditional medicine and Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo, expert in traditional medicine and astrology who spoke about the importance of using astrology in traditional medicine.

Several Westerners participated in the sessions on the relationship between body and mind in traditional medicine, in particular Prof. Barrie Simmons' talk on the relationship between mind and body in Tibetan medicine as well as those of Dr. Gino Vitiello and Prof. Marirosa di Stefano.

On November 19th the session on spiritual practice and Tibetan medicine opened with Chögyal Namkhai

Norbu's relation to an audience of several hundred people.

On November 22nd a workshop on the treatment of psychosomatic illnesses in Tibetan medicine was held by Drs. Wangdu, Jamyang and Nyda Chenagtsang at the S. Lucia hospital.

The cycle of conferences resumed the weekend of November 25th and 26th and covered the topics of the role of the traditional doctor in Tibetan society, the problems of traditional medicine in present day modern society and surgery. Although the seminars were less crowded than those of the first weekend, an average of fifty people per day attended. The participants posed a great number of questions and in particular there was a discussion on how to maintain the Tibetan medical tradition as well as the possibility of developing cooperation projects in Tibet.

On the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition, A.S.I.A. in collaboration with the Roman section of the Dzogchen Community organized a conference with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "Introduction to the Dzogchen teaching". This was attended by around 400 people at the S. Leone Magno hall.

The exhibition receives tens of visitors each day as well as visits from schools in Rome and will remain open until the end of January, 2001.

The seminars at the Pigorini Museum continued through December 2nd and 3rd with a workshop on "Dreams and medicine" held by Dr. Nyda. On December 16th and 17th there will be a second workshop on Tibetan massage.

The exhibition will remain open over the Christmas period while the seminars will start again on January 13th and 14th, 2001, with a cycle of conferences on pharmacopoeia, on the use and possible development and commercialization in the West of Tibetan medicine, on women and birth in traditional medicine and on the therapeutic approach to serious illnesses.

The seminars will end on January 20th with a cycle of conferences on projects of cooperation in the field of health set up by the Italian ONG in Tibet and Bhutan.

In conjunction with this initiative, a color catalogue with photos of all the thangka on display has been published along with explanations and some of the talks given during the various seminars. The catalogue is on sale at the A.S.I.A. office. Posters, greeting cards and calendars have also been printed to support A.S.I.A.'s development projects in Tibet.

Considering the enormous financial output by ASIA to organize this event, we hope that everyone interested in maintaining and developing knowledge of this ancient culture will help by buying calendars, catalogues and greeting cards as gifts during the upcoming holiday season.

Further information:

A.S.I.A. (Associazione per la Solidarietà Internazionale in Asia)

Via S. Martino della Battaglia 31, 00185 Roma, Italy

Telephone: 06-44340034

Fax: 06-44702620

Email: Mc8125@mcclink.it

First Time, continued from page 1

for many, unexpected) stop a long the way. As a consequence, for those who remained open and aware all events before and after that weekend in Kathmandu became a stream of insights from which to build their base of knowledge and continue along the path.

Rinpoche gave a perfectly customised message to the students in the room, as he always does. The first day he discovers where the doors and windows to their minds lie and by the second day he is busy filling them with jewels of wisdom that will reside forever. He is always careful to prevent easy misconceptions from arising, as he deftly anticipates and corrects often misunderstood points even before the students have time to register what they have learned. In no time at all this room full of people who may have very little in common are practicing together and bonding at a level few can even fathom. This ensures that the seeds of knowledge

lie protected in fertile ground even while the mind struggles to comprehend. By the third day he has summarized the length of the Buddhist spiritual path and then reduced it to a practical guide for daily life before one can even grow intimidated by the vastness of the final goal. How he does this consistently in every country around the world in the course of three short days is a miracle I will never grow tired of watching. Thank you again, Dear Master, for an invaluable lesson and an unforgettable weekend. ■

Between, continued from page 1

new and amazing experience.

In the afternoon after an interval of about two hours Rinpoche returned and once more with great generosity transmitted the precious teachings and gave advice for daily life. We took it to heart when he said that even though our samsaric existence is marked by suffering we should have space to enjoy ourselves. But then he warned us about tension which arises from attach-

ment and poisons our lives. Once more he explained how we should work with our emotions according to the path of renunciation, the Tantric path of transformation or the path of self-liberation. Just like a kind father he warned us how difficult it is to transform, for example, an emotion such as anger into the energy of wisdom. He told us not to get discouraged if we do not manage to because this method requires lengthy training in the transformation practice of a wrathful divinity.

Then he gave us further advice: to understand the dimension of each person is to learn and respect it in order to create more harmonious and equilibrated relationships not only between a couple or within a family but in general among us all. Finally he invited us to "be Masters of ourselves" and through the practice acquire awareness and clarity in order to guide our decisions.

From the beginning to the end, Rinpoche's words were illuminating - simple, clear pearls of wisdom

cont'd on page 20

Around the World

Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Kyu at Mandala at Toga

W. NIELA

Coming Home with the Master The Summer Retreat with Rinpoche in Japan by Kyu

It has been more than eighteen years since I met Rinpoche in OZ California in 1982, and I am native Japanese, yet the retreat last summer with Rinpoche was my first one in my own country. I enjoyed immensely meeting with my Vajra sisters and brothers who speak my native language. The retreat was held in Toga Village (central Japan), famous for soba (buckwheat) noodles. The village is located in a remote area far from any train stations, accessible only by bus once a day. Toga is a special village in a shallow valley along a river. As you drive up the river which spread out into stunningly beautiful blue green color, it is calm as a mirror reflecting mountains on both sides.

The Forest Stars, where the retreat was held, used to be the public school, now remodeled to be a seminar center. They laid tatami mats (Japanese straw matting) into the classrooms which were turned into dorms. Each participant was provided with a futon set, towel, and green tea bags with hot water in a thermos. I was quite impressed by how my native people neatly and orderly display everything, including our slippers placed outside of the teaching hall.

There were two furo (public bath houses) separated for men and women. Furo, whether a natural hot spring or not, is a necessary facility for a Japanese Inn, as the custom for Japanese is to soak in the bathtub and wash and scrub oneself well before going to bed. As hot springs are spread all over Japan as similar to Italy, I was able to soak in some hot springs as well as visiting Shinto (native Japanese religion) shrines and Buddhist temples before the retreat.

Some years ago, the mayor and other village officials from Toga were sent to Nepal, in search for the buckwheat which is specially cultivated in Nepal. Those officials were fascinated by the beauty of mandala paintings, and they could not help but invite the Nepalese artists to create a mandala house in Toga. The Mandala Park, which is located on top of the hill, has an outside flower mandala and two houses full of art objects and paintings adjacent to the Japanese style Inn where Rinpoche stayed.

There were about sixty people attending the retreat. For many of them it was the first time to meet Rinpoche, and a few Japanese Buddhist priests from different sects such as Zen to Shingon, etc., attended. They were easily recognized by shaved hair and priestly attire. Rinpoche taught "Direct Introduction to the State of Atiyoga" which was already translated by Tetsu Nagasawa into Japanese before the retreat. Rinpoche was as radiant as ever, wearing his favorite Hawaiian shirts everyday.

On the last day, Ven. Nyiching Khentrel Rinpoche was sitting next to Norbu Rinpoche on the stage. Khentrel Rinpoche was wearing a kimono (Japanese style clothes), and as I have never met him before, I mistook him for a Japanese Buddhist priest. Rinpoche encouraged Japanese practitioners to seek guidance from Khentrel Rinpoche who lives in Japan, as he is a great Dzogchen practitioner himself. At the end of the teaching, Rinpoche kindly suggested to do Vajra breathing with our regular breath in our daily life.

The retreat finished with a great variety of Ganapuja offerings from the local produce. As the Ganapuja ended we heard the sound of thunder, which Rinpoche said was an auspicious sign.

I am looking forward meeting my Japanese Vajra brothers and sisters again in Tsegylgar where I live. Please come and visit us soon! ■

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Buenos Aires Conference

Argentina

12/5/2000

by Daniel Lange

It was nice to have Chögyal Namkhai Norbu back in Argentina. On December 5th, he gave an informal talk in Buenos Aires, something he hadn't done in many years. A crowd of roughly one hundred and fifty people attended the conference; many of those present had never heard Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's words before. In his talk, the Master spoke about the need for awareness, and of awareness as being the essence of the teaching. As a way of illustrating his point he cautioned against chasing after different teachers with big reputations; eventually meeting them and becoming disenchanted and then criticizing the different teachers. Criticizing the teachers, in this case, denotes a general lack of awareness, besides being detrimental to the practitioner. These often repeated words we seem to forget easily. For example, when we criticize each other within the Community without first observing our own behavior.

Rinpoche also spoke about how karma is something that we can modify through our awareness. We are left with the belief that it is really up to us to create, in the present moment, the causes for our future karma. We hope to see some of the new faces at the talk at the upcoming retreat at Tashigar!

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in South Africa

by Darryl Van Blerk

It rained the day Rinpoche left, a soft warm rain in gentle contrast to the fierce winds of the preceding days. Michael and Lyneve, who came to help with the luggage, saw rainbows where the mountains meet the sea. The skies wept for us, a sad, joyous, wholesome weeping, the kind that heals.

Rinpoche, Rosa and Fabio arrived nine days before and with the advent of the new moon the following day, the teachings began. Introduction to Dzogchen the poster said. Of those fortunate enough to be in attendance, about ninety in all, perhaps half had only vaguely, if ever, heard the word Dzogchen before let alone wrestled with the concept. It did not matter much. Such was the clarity and ease with which Rinpoche explained and according to our capacity, by the end of the retreat, few were left in doubt. A glimpse of eternity in five days. Not the kind that goes on forever, but the kind that happens all at once and in every direction and is gone - or is it?

The teachings took place in a comfortable hall situated on the grounds of a Catholic Nunnery known as Nazareth House with the generous permission of the Mother Superior. "It can't be worse than the weekly Kung Fu sessions", she murmured in her endearing Irish drawl when I tried to explain what we needed the hall for.

People attended from all around the country and, who knows, maybe some non-people too. The organization went very smoothly, the right help was offered at the appropriate time and discounts offered for no apparent reason on air tickets, etc., gave the impression that something was at work behind the scenes and allowed a reasonable donation to the orphanage for children with AIDS run by the good sisters of Nazareth House.

Rinpoche taught mornings and evenings, after which we would do a short practice, and Fabio completed a course on the Eight Movements of Yantra Yoga in the afternoons; a considerable achievement given the time constraints.

By the end of the retreat the feeling of 'family' was palpable and some managed to join in the fun of picnic afterwards where Rinpoche swam with the penguins and soaked up the African sun while we contemplated our happy circumstance.



Rinpoche in S. Africa

D. VANBLERK

Longde Retreat in Singapore with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by K.C. Ong

Our precious Guru arrived Singapore on 7th August 2000. He was received by a party of some 15 members of the Singapore Community. Tears were shed; some joyous and some worried at the sight of the wheelchair-bound Teacher. We were starkly reminded of the impermanence and unsatisfactory nature of Samsara. Nevertheless, Rinpoche was there, (like he always will be), with his broad smiles to assure us that everything is all right. After some photo-taking, we were off to Mr. Tan Keng Leck's new residence to partake of more "intimate" moments with Rinpoche. This was to be Rinpoche's temporary home for the rest of his stay in Singapore.

August 9th, 2000, coincided with the Anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava which is a worldwide practice day. This day is also the National Day of Singapore. About thirty five members gathered at Keng Leck's house to join the other worldwide members to unify with the State of Guru Rinpoche. Rinpoche was very particular when he stressed the importance of precision in terms of time. We have understood Dzogchen to be a precise state of precision.

Public Teaching August 11th to 13th, 2000

Rinpoche gave an explanation on the fundamentals and principles of Dzogchen within the scope of the Three Statements of Garab Dorje. Rinpoche explained the Three series of Dzogchen as classified by Manjushrimitra into Semde, Longde and Upadesha respectively. The aspects of Base, Path and Fruition were specifically explained according to the unique Dzogchen View. We learned that Longde Teachings had been introduced by Guru Nantsog Gyalpo some five thousand years ago, even before the time of Buddha Shakyamuni. After its disappearance, they were re-introduced by Garab Dorje. Indeed we have here a very precise way to re-connect with the precious transmission that even time presents no obstacle; thanks to the blessings of our Gurus.

We heard the Longde teachings as explained according to the Four Das (symbols), i.e., the Das of Emptiness, Clarity, Sensation and Yerned (Union of Emptiness/Clarity/Sensation).

The last public teaching day concluded with the important oral transmission of lungs for the formal practices and more photo taking with Rinpoche.

After the teaching, we had vegetarian food hosted by Mr. Michael Foo. After dinner, Rinpoche was in a talkative mood, so we all gathered around him for more than an hour listening to his less formal discourse.

We parted the next day with some eager members waiting to join him at the coming Bangkok Retreat, some at the coming Kaohsiung retreat, while the others will probably see the Nirmanakaya only some two years from now. For me, he is always near. ■

BUDDHIST TV & RADIO PERMIT

As initiator and board member of the Buddhist Media Foundation (BOS) in Amsterdam, I would like to inform the International Dzogchen community that we finally have been granted a permit for TV and Radio broadcasting specifically dedicated to Buddhist programming in the Netherlands.

Since by Dutch law all world religions that have major representation in the Netherlands have a right to be represented in the public media, we claimed this right also for a Buddhist channel. After six years of hard work and lobbying, with several rejections and counter-lawsuits, we finally succeeded to prove that Buddhism had become of major importance to Dutch society. The broadcasting will be national and can thus also be received in several other European countries.

With greetings in the Dharma,
Babeth Mondini-Van Loo,
Board Member, Shang Shung Institute, Netherlands

The International Publications Committee

MERIGAR

ESTABLISHING AN IPC CODE

Merigar, April 1999

Dear IPC Members,

Having sought briefly the advice of Rinpoche and the two general advisors, Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby, I think that we can start to print an official acknowledgment on books suitably checked by the International Publications Committee members.

The way of proceeding could be the following: the persons responsible for the publishing houses of the Community (either Shang-Shung or otherwise) must make sure that the books containing teachings or other writings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu published by them or by other external publishers are checked both for style and content by at least one IPC member.

The IPC members must check the literary style of the texts submitted to them and, when they have some doubts about the meaning, they may consult the other members of their same language group but in any event, for the points still not clarified, they have to submit the unclear passages in English to Adriano Clemente or Jim Valby. It is particularly important that all texts written in English or Italian are thoroughly checked by Adriano or Jim because these texts are the basis for further translations into other languages.

When a single text has been suitably checked in this way, the IPC member in charge of it must communicate to me as coordinator the following data: author (always ChNN), title (also translated into English), publishing house which is going to print it, year of checking, name of IPC member (or members) responsible for it, and name of the supervisor (Adriano or Jim). In this way I will register it on a list of books officially checked by IPC and I will give you a code number.

So the IPC members, before giving the file to the publisher, should type on it the following: "IPC -Code number - Approved by the International Publications Committee of the Dzogchen Community founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu." The publisher is advised to print this acknowledgment on the book. This way of proceeding must be applied also to old books at the moment of their reprint, so that the new edition will have an IPC code number and the acknowledgment printed on it. Thus, little by little, we will guarantee that all books published under the name of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu are checked according to Rinpoche's wish. Of course, we are not in a hurry and we must do our best with awareness and patience. The list of registered books will be available at any time. I take advantage of this message to clarify some points.

1. The IPC task is to check both the style and the correct meaning of all the publications containing teachings transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or his writings on Tibetan history, science or culture. It is not an IPC duty to check books containing teachings of other masters or writings of other authors as, for instance, a book on Tibetan medicine written by a physician

and so on. Transcripts of Rinpoche's teachings published in local newsletters as short articles are under the responsibility of their editors who are requested to seek the collaboration of IPC members if needed (for instance when a teaching is taken from transcriptions not yet checked by any IPC member).

2. Where a publishing house of the Community exists, the decision on which books have to be published is up to the staff of the publishing house rather than IPC members because the latter usually are not involved in financial and publishing plans that are very important for book scheduling. On the other hand, the management of the Community publishing houses is placed under the general supervision of the Gakyil of their own Gar or country. Of course a collaboration between IPC and publishers of the Community is warmly recommended where IPC members and publishers are not the same persons.

3. The approval of a text for printing (imprimatur) can be given by a single IPC member, provided that he or she got the indispensable agreement from Adriano Clemente or Jim Valby. The joint approval of all IPC members of a specific language is not needed, but of course all IPC members of each language can collaborate together without any limitation. Since IPC members have a position of great trust, they have to be extremely careful when checking the texts submitted to them. It's better to seek too much advice to avoid printing too many mistakes.

Of course these points are not rules established forever. If something is not working we can change what is wrong. Please don't hesitate to ask me for further information or clarifications.

All the best to you all,
Igor Legati

INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (updated to November 2000)

General Consultants for any publication:

Adriano Clemente
110124.3403@compuserve.com

Jim Valby
JimValby@compuserve.com

Coordinator for translations and transcriptions:

Igor Legati
edizss@tiscalinet.it

CHINESE LANGUAGE

Keng Leck
kalatime@singnet.com.sg

Hung Wen Liang
e2214759@ms10.hinet.net

CZECH LANGUAGE

Margit Martinu
gacurina@tin.it

DANISH LANGUAGE

Erik Meier Carlsen
meier.carlsen@mail.tele.dk

DUTCH LANGUAGE

Florens Van Canstein
florens.raab-van-canstein@db.com

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Julia Lawless (coordinator)
lawless@kunsel.u-net.com

Andy Lukianowicz
73711.255@compuserve.com

Karin Eisenegger
garuda@bluewin.ch

Birgit Gewehr
birgit.gewehr@eplus-online.de

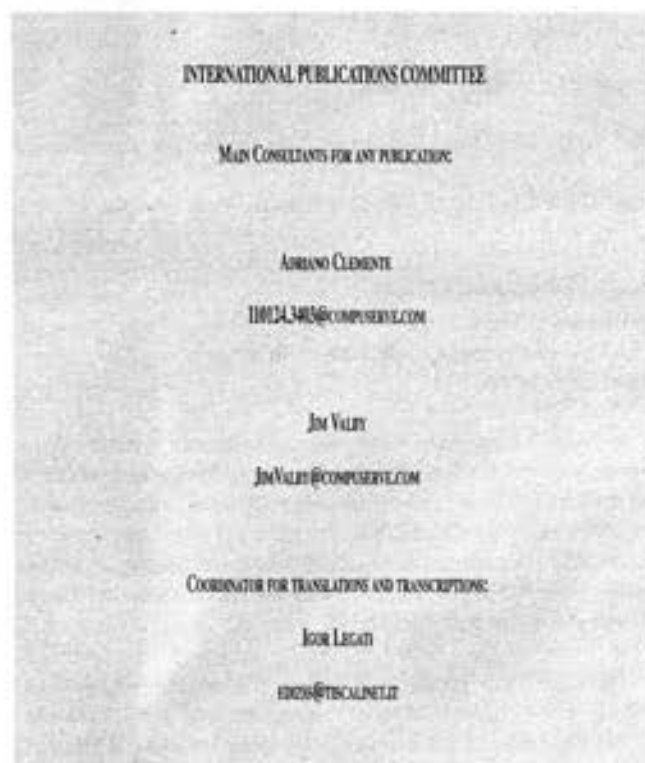
Jakob Winkler
Jakob.Winkler@t-online.de

Matthias Winter

GREEK LANGUAGE

Panayiotis Stambolis
panason2@hotmail.com

ITALIAN LANGUAGE



Nina Robinson
merigar@amiata.net

John Shane
jshane@ibl.bm

Barrie Simmons
maria.simmons@iol.it

Elisabeth Stutchbury
elise@dynamite.com.au

Desmond Barry
desbarry@yahoo.com

Anastasia McGhee
anastasiacghee@hotmail.com

FINNISH LANGUAGE

Tuula Saarikoski
tuulasa@artec.net

Kaisa-Liisa Puonti
Kaisa-Liisa.Puonti@slk.fi

Ilkka Tanner
ilkka.tanner@medivire.fi

FRENCH LANGUAGE

Michele Brunacci
brunacci.lanteri@wanadoo.fr

Francois Calmes
fcalmes@hotmail.com

Bruno Espaze
bespaze@bom8.vsnl.net.in

Marie Neige Lefevre
merigar@amiata.net

Laurent Maurice
100670.200@compuserve.com

GERMAN LANGUAGE

Costantino Albini
c.albini@flashnet.it

Igor Legati
edizss@tiscalinet.it

Maurizio Mingotti
maurizio.mingotti@iol.it

JAPANESE LANGUAGE

Tetsu Nagasawa
BZZ20144@nifty.ne.jp

Edgar M. Cooke
cooke@sra.co.jp

Junichi Chigira
jchigira@xb3.so-net.ne.jp

POLISH LANGUAGE

Cezary Wozniak
cwozniak@bc.krakow.pl

Marek Macko
mmacko@poczta.onet.pl

Artur Skura
arturs@linuxpl.org

Pawel Poniewski
pawelponiewski@yahoo.com

PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

Muriella Colajacomo Malaga
wmalaga@uol.com.br

Sonia Regina Grosso
claudiogi@iol.it

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

Igor Berkhin
dharma@abc.donbass.com

Vladimir Maikov
maikov@df.ru

Farida Malikova
faridam@mail.ru

Gregory Mokhin
mokhin@rain.bog.msu.su

Tanya Naumenko (coordinator)
tnaumenko@mail.ru

Alexander Vyaznikovtsev
yantra@buriatia.ru

SERBIAN LANGUAGE

Zeljka Jovanovich
zeljka@wanadoo.fr

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Oriol Aguilar
oriolaguilar@retemail.es

Marisa Alonso
mar@onenet.com.ar

Elias Capriles
elicap@forest.ula.ve

Ana Maria Humeres (coordinator)
anamari@tin.it

Nelida Saporiti
nsaporiti@interlink.com.ar

Ramon Vazquez
ravalo@wanadoo.es

INTERNET COMMITTEE

Cheh Goh
namkhagazer@netscape.net

Loek Jehee
loekjehe@xs4all.nl

Maurizio Mingotti
maurizio.mingotti@iol.it

Grisha Mokhin
mokhin@rain.bog.msu.su*

PUBLISHERS

Naomi Zeitz - The Mirror
NaomiMirror@compuserve.com

Tiziana Gottardi - Shang Shung
Edizioni, Italy
ssed@amiata.net

Gerd Manus - Oddiyana Shang
Shung Edition, Germany
naldjor@t-online.de

Oliver Leick - Shang Shung Edi-
tion, Austria
oliver.leick@utanet.at

Cheh Goh - Rinchen Editions, Sin-
gapore
namkhagazer@netscape.net

Andrew Wright - Shang Shung
Editions, Moscow
rinchen@online.ru

Kirill Shilov - Shang Shung Edi-
tions, St. Petersburg
urgyen@mail.ru

Sergey Ryabov - Zerkalo
srrib@glasnet.ru

Jiri Rys - Shang Shung Editions,
Czech Republik
jirirys@volny.cz

George Quasha - Station Hill
Openings, USA
gquasha@stationhill.org

JETSUN KUSHO TEACHES AT TSEGYALGAR

November 21st, 2000

Jetsun Kusho was born in Tibet and is the resident lama of Sakya Tsechen Thupten Ling in Vancouver, Canada, where she lives with her family. Jetsun Kusho is the sister of His Holiness Sakya Trizin, the head of the Sakya lineage. It was at his request that she began teaching in the West.

Jetsun Kusho came Tsegyalgar on November, 21st for a short visit, in the middle of a busy teaching schedule near Boston. She joined us for a lunch of momos and then gave a short and essential teaching on "Parting from the Four Attachments". About twenty people attended.

Parting from the Four Attachments
A Teaching by Jetsun Kusho
Translated by Acharya Migmar Tseten
Tsegyalgar 11/21/2000

(An excerpted & edited version of the transcription by Robert Richardson)

This mind training teaching is the essence of all the Buddhist Paths and through this practice one can achieve complete enlightenment.

In a vision, the Bodhisattva Manjushri transmitted the four lines of Freedom from the Four Attachments to Lama Sakyapa Kunga Nyingpo which are:

If you have attachment to this life, then you are not a spiritual practitioner.
If you have attachment to Samsara, then you do not have renunciation.
If you have attachment to the self, you do not have the generation of Bodhicitta.
If grasping arises within you then you do not have the right view.

The fourth line [means] the freedom from all extremes. Abandon the wrong view to realize the wisdom. To realize wisdom, in some traditions, first you do concentration meditation. Then based on this shamatha meditation you practice insight meditation, meditating on the selflessness of the person and the selflessness of phenomena. This practice of shamatha meditation and insight meditation is a general kind of practice. The special practice in the Sakyapa [lineage] is that first you establish all the outer appearances as mind and then the appearance in the mind is again established as illusion. And then the illusion is proved as essenceless. To do this practice, you have to rely on the Guru from whom you have to receive the Upadesha and pith instructions. ■

Tibetan Medicine Merigar

11/28/2000

Behavior in Tibetan Medicine

by Dr. Kojo Sangdu

Translated by

Dr. Nyda Chenagtsang

(an excerpt from a talk given at Merigar on Tibetan medicine)

Behavior and Good Health

Speech & Relaxation

In behavior it is very important to be aware of our speech; if we speak too much our words can sometimes create many problems. If you speak too much and the energies move, this can make an imbalance of energies. In general, for the mind, it's good to forget experiences, especially the bad experiences. If we think about the past bad experiences it is not good. When we think about them we can't change them or make any difference, so the thinking can create much sadness and worry and problems. In this case it's important to try and forget your past and not to make strong desire or a strong wish for the future. It's better to think in a more simple way and then you can relax, and when your mind is relaxed, of course, your body and energies are relaxed. When there is relaxation there is a balance of the energy.

Thought & Speech

Therefore it's also not so good to think too much; to think for your work or study. For example, if you think too much about your work or study and use the voice too much; with the combination of these two things together, lung problems can be created. Also, the bad words people say when they are angry can hurt people and change all the people's emotions and that is not good for you or the other; so it's important to try to not say bad things.

Sleep

Sleep is also important and even Shakyamuni Buddha talked about

sleep. He said, "Oh monks get some sleep, it gives strength to your body". Its important to sleep, but not too much. If you sleep ten hours or more phlegm can increase in your body and can make problems.

Food & Self Training

All chronic disease is from incorrect food and incorrect movement or action or behavior. You should train yourself as the parent trains the child, you say 'don't do this and that'; slowly train yourself, your mind, your actions, your voice, speech and everything. In the beginning its difficult to train everything, but if you try and trust yourself and do in this way, eventually you can do something. In this way you can change your bad behaviors.

Many foods all mixed together, eating too much mixed food, sometimes is not very good. If you eat a certain combination of many foods now, you don't know the effect, but in the long term the side effects will appear in the body.

Long Life - One More Day

We cannot stop disease and death forever. However, we must think of our lives one day at a time and we try to be healthy and good, one day at a time, slowly, slowly. We must try to have a long life, by one day or one second. If, for example, as Dzogchen practitioners, maybe if you have that one day more, in this last day maybe you can attain enlightenment through the practice of Dzogchen. So you used that one day and had a very good result. We should always think of the benefit of a long life, and be careful about diet and behavior.

I give this simple lecture according to my memory and if it helps you, you can take something and if you don't agree you can leave it.

Yuthog Yontan Gonpo, The Father of Tibetan Medicine

If I said something wrong I am sorry for that. I hope in the future all of

you try and understand Tibetan medicine and talk to people and help them understand that this kind of medicine exists. For example, Yuthog Yontan Gonpo, was the father of Tibetan medicine and was also the very great terton. There were, in Tibetan history, 108 great tertons and he was a terton from these 108 tertons and also the father of Tibetan medicine. He wrote a text called "Yuthog Nyingthig" which is a practice for Tibetan doctors which includes mantra healings. There are many different methods, and in this text he wrote a prophecy which said that in the future Tibetan culture and medicine will be destroyed and will lose many parts. But through his wish and the karma of all human beings, the knowledge of Tibetan culture and medicine can spread like fire everywhere, all over the world, like space because space is everywhere, and all beings can have access to this medicine and be saved from suffering and illness. I trust this prophecy and hope it will come true.

Dr. Kojo Sangdu was born in 1949 into a farming family in the village of Alo, Konjo County, East Tibet. He started working at the Konjo hospital in 1980. During that period he wrote a book entitled "Yuthog Nyingthig", a well known text in the medical field in Lhasa. Following this he was sent to work at the hospital of traditional medicine at Lhasa where he has taught since 1985. In 1989 he became a professor there as well as director of the internal hospital of the University. Today he is recognized as one of the foremost scholars of traditional medicine in the Tibetan Autonomous Region.



HH Jetsun Kusho

HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

Dear Dharma Friends,

We are organizing a Kalachakra Initiation to be given by His Holiness The Dalai Lama in Toronto, Canada, sometime in 2002 or 2003 and need an estimate of how many people would attend to see if there is enough interest to put on an event of this size. If you are an individual, please let us know if you are interested in attending. If you are part of a group, or can contact other people who might be interested in such an event, please ask your community how many people would be interested in attending this auspicious event. The Kalachakra would include five days of teachings, and six or seven days for the actual initiation itself. The estimated cost is expected to be around \$500.

We are only looking for a rough estimate of how many people would be interested in attending, to see if there is enough interest to hold this event. No commitment is expected at this time. Please let us know as soon as possible. You can reply to tensherab@hotmail.com and put "HH in Toronto" as the subject.

Yours in the Dharma,
Ven. Tenzin Sherab
Tengye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Temple

For information about H.H. the Dalai Lama's Teachings in Portland, Oregon, USA on May 13-16, 2000:
www.nwtca.org

South American Retreats

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

February through April, 2001

EASTER RETREAT ON MARGARITA ISLAND

March 30th to April 3rd

Details To Be Announced

Contact:
Gilberto Parrella
Email:pragian@telcel.net.ve

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU IN CHILE

February 1st :Public Conference
Santiago de Chile

February 2nd, 3rd and 4th: Retreat of Dzogchen TeachingsS
Santiago de Chile

February 5th: Public ConferenceS
Vina del Mar

Contact:
Centro Budista de Vina del Mar,
Tel: 56-32-973829 or 56-32-952060
Email: sidhartapubs@hotmail.com
Website: www.sidharta.cl

RETREAT WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU IN PERU

The Dzogchen Community of Peru will hold a retreat in Lima with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche on February 9th, 10th and 11th, 2001. Besides a general presentation of Dzogchen, special attention will be given to Chöd. Cost including everything (lodging at the countryside near the mountains) is \$100US. Rinpoche will speak in Italian and will be translated into Spanish.

Reservations and information:
Comunidad Dzogchen del Peru
Dzogchen Community of Peru
Juan Bustamante (Hota)
kunzan@terra.com.pe
Enrique Palacios 1125-C, Miraflores, Lima 18, Peru
Tel 445 5003, Fax 447 2984, cel 946 7542

ERRATA

Page 4 to 23 of issue 54, Sept/Oct 2000

In the September/ October issue of The Mirror, #54, there was an unclear typographic error in the continuation of the article on the International Publications Committee from page 4 to page 23. Here is the clarified and complete quotation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche:

"I think that how the committee works is a very important point. Different committees must remember that and go in that direction. It is very true, because people studied this and that and philosophy and they have an idea and then they explain everything in the way they understand and they are not getting the real sense. This point is something really important."

BOOK REVIEWS



Great Eastern Sun, the Wisdom of Shambhala

by Chögyam Trungpa
Ed. Carolyn Rose Gimian
Shambhala Publications, 1999,
265 pp.

The late Chögyam Trungpa was my first teacher. I think the thing that initially attracted me to him as a teacher was because I read in his "Myth of Freedom," in the late 1970's, that even someone who worked in a factory could get enlightened. Terribly put off by the spiritual 'tripiness' I had encountered among my contemporaries at that time, this statement intrigued me, as I had worked in a factory instead of going to college in my youth. He simply spoke to my reality and working class origins but also expressed the Buddhist teachings in such a clear undogmatic way that I knew I wanted to connect further.

Trungpa once said that having got hold of you, he would never let go—"like a crocodile." Although I had little personal interaction with him during the time I lived in Boulder where I had gone out to study with him several years later, this indeed has come to pass. Much to my surprise, over the years, his crocodile hold on me has increasingly gripped me with a sense of devotion even though I have gone on to other teachers and other communities. There isn't a day that I don't think of him. Once, after I had just been introduced to him, I had an interesting dream, which encapsulates my relationship to him as a master.

So in this dream, I was in an elegant mansion filled with many aristocratic people milling about as though at a cocktail party, holding polite conversations and dressed in beautiful glowing clothing. Everything about this place was very refined. Feeling somewhat an outsider and intimidated, I retreated to the kitchen where I wanted to help with serving the food since I felt that I could not join in with the 'grown-ups.' From within the kitchen, I could see all the magnificent people in the distance enjoying themselves—somewhat longing to join in but not knowing quite how. At that point in my dream, Trungpa Rinpoche entered the kitchen—only he was dressed as a schoolboy, with rosy cheeks and very friendly. He then went to the refrigerator and carefully poured a glass of milk, which he handed to me and said something like, "You should drink this because it would be good for you although I no longer drink this stuff myself."

For me, this journey in relation to his teaching and community very much reflected his "milk" of loving kindness, most particularly, through introduction to his Shambhala world for which I remain deeply indebted. For without it, I don't think I would have hung in there long enough to stick with the

practice. Quite lazy (and this is not a kind of admission of false modesty but a real flaw), my first introductions to shamatha (shine) practice were really very upsetting. Like a caged animal, I found it totally disagreeable and antithetical to my energy. I also was really put off by anything remotely Tibetan i.e., pujas and ritual, the intense vividness of the tradition itself. Although, not entirely, because for many years since childhood I had in my bedroom a magazine photo of a girl milking a yak which I later saw in a Shang-Shung Edizioni publication. However, instead of forcing the situation or rejecting it all together, what I did at that time, was to immerse myself in the culture surrounding his practice community and through a kind of osmosis find my way towards discovering what was useful for my personal development as a practitioner and eventually to my present connection with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Dzogchen teachings which culminated in finding what I had been searching for all my life.

This journey was a rather long and circuitous route. Only later, did I come to realize that I was actually receiving another kind of training, a cultural one. And for this, no words can express my love for Trungpa Rinpoche for having given me this opportunity to ripen and expand my rather limited capacity. This training is very much summarized in his poem on the education of a warrior which I feel embodies his entire path and one which I have personally experienced (perhaps more prosaically) than his own eloquent articulation.

That mind of fearfulness

Should be put in the cradle of loving-kindness

And suckled with the profound and brilliant milk of eternal doubtlessness.

In the cool shade of fearlessness, Fan it with the Fan of joy and happiness.

When it grows older,

With the various displays of phenomena,

Lead it to the self-existing playground.

When it grows older still,

In order to promote the primordial confidence,

Lead it to the archery range of the warriors

When it grows older still,

To awaken primordial self-nature, Let it see the society of men

Which possess beauty and dignity. Thus the fearful mind

Can change into the warrior's mind,

And that eternally youthful confidence

Can expand into space without beginning or end.

At that point it sees the Great Eastern Sun.

from *Shambhala, the Sacred Path of the Warrior*

During the later part of his teaching life, Chögyam Trungpa put great emphasis on presenting what he would call the Shambhala teachings, a tradition distinct, but nevertheless, related to the traditional path he also taught as an esteemed Karma Kagyu master. It is not really so unusual that he would characterize these teachings as the "Sacred Path of the Warrior" since traditionally Buddhism has

coined analogies of heroic attributes for many centuries. Obviously, the path of the warrior referred to in his Shambhala teachings is not one of aggression and conquest in the context of worldly 'military' aspiration (a claim his critics often comment on) but of courage and nobility. In "Great Eastern Sun," he clearly says that the warrior of Shambhala is synonymous with "Pawo." As such, it is totally steeped in the multidimensional world of the higher realms (Rigdzin), imbued as it is, with the Mahayana intent of existing solely for the benefit of others. The idea of the Heroic path is also commonly associated with noble attributes in the great body of Prajnaparamita literature and also the Tantric lineages. In the Heart Sutra, we are called the "noble sons and daughters of the Buddha". So in a sense, by mere association, with these teachings and view, even at the Sutric level, we are the ancestral heirs of a great aristocracy here and in the beyond (to stretch it a bit for those so inclined). Rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, accomplished or not, it doesn't matter, we are aristocrats of another order. On the other hand, the sense of royal ancestry outside of worldly conventions also has deep roots in Tibetan pre Buddhist culture, primarily a nomadic one. A descendent of Tibet's great epic hero, Gesar of Ling, Trungpa had a great appreciation for his own heritage, particularly that of his nomadic cultural roots. The genius of the Shambhala path is that it extracts the essence of that culture and refashions it within a western context and semantics in harmony with the Buddhist teachings. And because of this, it is neither dilute nor corrupt but authentically "alive" and electric in its transmission. It is also useful to note that like many great teachers, Chögyam Trungpa's public writings are but the tip of the iceberg. The Shambhala lineage is considered a series of terms with a substantial body of literature available only for those authorized through transmission to receive them.

In this sequel to his first Shambhala book, "The Sacred Path of the Warrior," "Great Eastern Sun" continues upon that base and presents a variety of teachings Chögyam Trungpa gave at the upper levels of his Shambhala training course. It is not without some sense of poignancy that I read it as I received it around the time, my dear friend Karen Lavin died, rapidly and unexpectedly from brain cancer at the age of 48. A true Shambhalian, Karen represented to me a living link to this magnificent world, as did my friend and teacher, the late poet Allen Ginsberg. Feeling somewhat bereft, I began to think about how deeply the Shambhala culture permeated my sensibility since I was first introduced to them. So in a sense, this review is an homage to those whom I have loved and lost, including this great and marvelous being, Chögyam Trungpa, who had such a profound impact on the development of Buddhism in the West and to me personally, but all of whom survive deathlessly in a common bond. My memory of them is mingled with many instances of Shambhala celebrations and activities fanned "with the fan of joy and happiness."

In my own words, The Shambhala teachings are really about manifesting an enlightened culture from the vantage of non-theistic traditions of mind training and how we can propagate the dig-

nity of this wisdom culture in our daily lives and then beyond that, in human society. I think many people, particularly people already immersed deeply in the practice of meditation and a spiritual journey, can learn much from these teachings—even if only reading from a book, since it is individuals who make a culture. Everything begins at home. The Shambhala teachings address the most basic levels of conduct—how to talk, walk, eat, and perhaps in place of the normal 'fourth moment' of sleep we Dzogchenpas are so familiar with, how to dress. As we know, no matter how lofty the view or deep the meditation, if we can not, as practitioner, integrate them into daily life, it all remains child's play. Most spiritual traditions generally recognize this and this is especially crucial for Dzogchen practitioners. The Shambhala teachings are focused on the integration of presence in one's daily life, particularly Western life and society.

Because of this emphasis, "Great Eastern Sun" addresses many of issues of contemporary life not previously addressed in the primary sources of Asia. It is simply amazing how Trungpa Rinpoche approaches relevant material such as his chapter on "Working with Early Morning Depression," or "Discipline in the Four Seasons." He also has many useful and unconventional ideas about power and hierarchy, so controversial among practitioners, as well as wealth. Always at the heart of his view is the balance between practicality and great vision, what he would call, "joining heaven and earth."

"Great Eastern Sun" is really something of a special event in publication. Through the potency of language, something of the golden atmosphere around Trungpa is transmitted through this work, his playfulness combined with utter earnestness, the sublime with ordinary, and the salty language of American mid-century no-bullshit approach. In pop culture terms, we may be entering the world of Camelot, or Lake Wobegone where "all the men are beautiful and the woman intelligent" (popular radio show called Prairie Home Companion) and we are being invited to join in. But unlike an imagined perfect place, the world of Shambhala is tangible and vividly present in our midst under the most ordinary of circumstances.

Human beings for centuries have been trying to articulate a better way of being in the world, a utopia, or a heaven on earth. What makes the Shambhala teachings so distinct and direct is that they articulate the same yearning but from a non-theistic and non dual view. The mythic kingdom of Shambhala is a vibrant reality for Trungpa Rinpoche, and the teachings of Shambhala are a mission to include all beings in this society of Pawo. He is positively evangelical in this respect. And I must say, that this approach is refreshingly welcome as an alternative to practice communities which feel the necessity to seal themselves off from society, as thought the teachings would become tainted.

After the fact, now nearly twenty years down the line—What I greatly admire in Chögyam Trungpa's life and work is the emphasis he put on creating a culture of appreciation instead of blame and petty rivalries—the 'bete noir' of Tibetan culture and ultimately its ruination. The other

aspect is a sense of duty. Just as the moment one feels like staying in bed and pulling the covers over one's head, finding comfort in a 'cocoon,' the vision to manifest, get dressed, put on one's make-up if you wear it or one's workday persona "on empty space" carries one forth through ever changing life circumstances. That I feel is what he means by the "warrior" quality, the act of daily courage to live like decent human beings and good practitioners. According to Chögyam Trungpa, the big questions are not who we are or why we are here but rather "since we are here, how are we going to live from now onward?" That is Trungpa's primary concern.

Given the trauma many masters in the Tibetan traditions faced in coming to the west, Chögyam Trungpa's consideration of this central question has far-reaching implications. I think that like many teachers of his generation, he observed first hand what happens when spiritual traditions become corrupt due to a waning of authentic practice and the corrupting factors of cultural materialism. This question is really something all practice communities inevitably address in any culture. For us in this moment in time, as the first generation of practitioners in the West, it is really our responsibility to ensure the continuity of the transmissions we have received and to preserve them uncorrupted in a culture, which can adequately contain them. In order to do this, we need to manifest a culture in which they will survive and flourish, not perish or spoil. It doesn't matter what lineage we represent. These are serious concerns all practitioners have, both past and present.

Just as one doesn't need to become a Gelugpa to appreciate the teachings of H.H. the Dalai Lama on compassion, for which he is the embodiment, or to become a member of the Dzogchen Community to derive great inspiration from the work of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, (and I have heard many people tell me how even reading his books totally transformed their practice regardless of their lineage), neither does one have to become a card-carrying Shambhala person to peer into the brilliant world of Chögyam Trungpa. Reading "Great Eastern Sun, the Wisdom of Shambhala" is only one such opportunity (among other references) which I hope many people will explore as we are in the midst of fashioning our own distinct culture.

No one has worked harder or with such unparalleled generosity to present the living root of an authentic Dzogchen lineage to take hold in our hearts than Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. How it bears fruit for untold generations to come is our own responsibility. The value of reading such a book for individuals of other lineages is really an exploration of the principles behind enlightened culture rather than the actual manifestations of that culture which can only radiate out uniquely from a multitude of sources. And we, in our Dzogchen Community, have our own shining source from which to radiate out in human society. That is inevitable. And it is not too soon to start looking closely at the situation while drawing on the great wealth of wisdom so readily available, even a click away, on amazon.com.■

Book reviews can't on next page

BOOK REVIEWS (CON'T. FROM PAGE 5)



poems poesie poesias
ed. Rita Bizzotto

Shang Shung Edizioni, 2000, 321 pp.

Walking one day through the Tsegylgar bookstore, I noticed in a stack of newly arrived books from Shang-Shung Edizioni, a book whose title, "poems poesie poesias" immediately caught my attention. This book is a truly remarkable document of poems collected by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from his students over the years, lovingly saved by Rinpoche and then compiled into a book by Rita Bizzotto. The collection is, as Rita notes in her introduction, a mirror that reflects "the light and shadows, the hopes and regrets, the discomfort and enthusiasm of those practitioners who are traveling in the same Boat along this difficult route, difficult but impossible to give up, towards total enlightenment."

Because these are direct communications to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, reading through the book, one is struck by the overall heart breaking sincerity and disclosure. Even in the poems which experiment with Tibetan-style literary forms, sometimes awkward at other times accomplished, there is

always a tone of devotion and gratitude. The reciprocity between authors and recipient is something so special. Who else do we know would save every scrap of poetry for decades, an act of great generosity on behalf of the recipient of these small treasures.

When I initially began to read the book "on my feet" at the Tsegylgar bookstore, I experienced a moment's sadness mingled with the enthusiasm of reading the book itself because I would not be in the book—part of this great stream of outpouring to our Master but then I saw, there was the small poem I had dashed off in a fax to Rinpoche in Australia for his Birthday last year. Also, thankfully, was NOT another poem I had once sent - written in a rather disturbed state of mind. I do not know whether this act of mercy came from the recipient or the editor, but I am very grateful nonetheless it did not see the light of day in print, and hopefully found its way to the nearest garbage can.

Poetry in the context of the teachings is not so much about form but a reflection of the practitioner's mind. This is probably why over the centuries many practitioners used this method as an expression of Vajra speech and to glorify the lineage masters. It's also a method we are naturally attracted to arising from deep appreciation. One such poet, writes in a manner typical of many similar sentiments expressed throughout the book: "To Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche/In the arms of forgetfulness/I was like a small animal harried by predators./Fear, confusion and doubt consumed me in their fire./I could not be true to myself, let alone others./And as for freedom, O it was far away./But that was yesterday/Before the grace of Guru

Rinpoche/Led me to you, Precious One. (Brett Arledge).

One of the really interesting aspects to reading these poems is that many were sent anonymously and are noted at the end by "senza firma," while some poems just give the first name of the author. Part of the fun is figuring out who is who and reading the innermost thoughts of one's fellow practitioners and friends. (dare I admit this?). Some poems are complex as they interweave autobiographical elements with inner events connected to meeting the mind of the Master. While others are more adventurous and engaged in creative word plays of which the cover art is a wonderful example. Then there are also didactic and formal poems, as well as many by children in the community. Approximately one half the collection is in Italian. There are also extensive collections of poems sent over the years by two of the Community's recognized poets, John Shane and Louise Landes Levi.

My personal favorite, a stanza from one woman, which coincided with my state of mind at that moment and one which we can all relate to. How does one/ remain steeped in Presence/as the ripple, wave, and storm/arise and subside? For others, I think the poems speak for themselves.

by Jacqueline Gens



CELESTIAL GALLERY A book by Romio Shrestha and Ian Baker

*"The world we see is a painting
Born from the brush of discursive
thought,
And within or upon it nothing truly
existent can be found...
Meditate again and again on this
vision
Of Emptiness, the final nature of
being."*
The Second Dalai Lama

Artists from Nepal's Kathmandu Valley contributed prominently to the artistic traditions of Tibet. The earliest Buddhist scroll paintings (thankas) and murals such as those in the Gyantse Kumbum were made under the guidance of Newari masters who traveled north across the Himalayas to give form, through deft hands and ground minerals such as lapis lazuli, cinnabar, and gold, to the luminous realms described in ancient Tantric texts.

Stylistic elements of Newari art and, later, Chinese landscape painting were assimilated and transformed by Tibetan artists into a new and vibrant aesthetic vocabulary. These uniquely Tibetan art forms, in turn, rejuvenated in recent decades the visual arts of the Kathmandu Valley. Newari painters of Nepal continue to create paintings of mesmerizing detail, although their patrons are no longer the monasteries and temples of Tibet, but Westerners less concerned with the paintings iconographic exactitude than with its merits as "art".

The foremost inheritor of this new era of Nepali painting is a Newar named Romio Shrestha who has transformed the art still further by altering traditional color schemes and compositions and creating thankas of unprecedented size and scale. So unique are these works - some of them more than twelve feet high - that Shrestha concedes that they cannot properly be called thankas at all. They resemble more the myriad wall paintings that adorn the corridors of Tibetan monasteries, although in the case of Shrestha's works they

are transportable across continents.

The atmosphere of a Tibetan monastery was invoked during the first ten days of December during an exhibition of Shrestha's paintings at New York's Tibet House, USA where incense, candles and dim lighting suggested a virtual Tibetan shrine room (Lhakhang). The featured paintings were created under Romio Shrestha's directorship in studios in the Kathmandu Valley. As Shrestha says himself no single person could ever create works of this size and detail. True to tradition, the paintings were produced by anonymous artisans who Shrestha orchestrated much as a conductor directs a symphony.

Shrestha's paintings have gained the attention of American celebrities mainly through the attentions of best-selling author Deepak Chopra who praises Shrestha as a "Himalayan visionary". Another prominent patron of Shrestha's works is the singer and song-writer Donovan who refers to him as "the Andy Warhol of the Kathmandu Valley". Following in Warhol's tradition of producing gigantic works for America's rich and famous, Shrestha's paintings have been bought by the likes of super-model Naomi Campbell and New York's fashion diva Diane Von Furstenberg as well as by the city's Museum of Natural History.

Shrestha's works also caught the eye of one of New York's most visionary publishers, Nicholas Callaway, famous for his production of over-sized, lavishly produced "art books". Callaway - who owns one of Shrestha's paintings himself - was inspired by the spirit of collective and anonymous creativity which brought these paintings into being and resolved to share that vision by publishing a two foot high book featuring thirty of Shrestha's paintings - many of them in private collections through the United States.

The paintings which comprise Celestial Gallery begin with images of the historical Buddha and progress through images of female divinities, Bodhisattvas, meditational deities (yidams), Dharma protectors and denizens of

continued on page 9



**Paldenling, Poland
SMS Base Retreat
with Jim Valby**
October 2nd to 13th, 2000
by Marek Macko

We couldn't have ever expected that Paldenling would appear so good for such a group retreat. From the time we'd bought Paldenling in April 1997, it had undergone some very visible changes, though the invisible ones were no less important. Rinpoche visited in 1998 and explained the Longde Cabin. Generally, there is from time to time someone doing a personal retreat, and sometimes a small group does rather short retreats, like for example at Losar.

On the days from October 2nd to 13th, we had the great fortune to participate in the First, (I hope not the last), Paldenling Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat lead by Jim Valby. There were almost forty people (counting those who couldn't participate for more than few days), who had come from other countries like Germany, Czech and Slovak Republics.

The weather was like in the summertime. The wind, famous in this area, wasn't so oppressive as it has been for other winters. The main retreat was taking place in a very special but severe lodging - the crude attic of the house where many people also slept. Some German people preferred to sleep at the

little village of Lysa Gora in the house of our neighbor/friend. Famous inexpensive meals were served to all people by our Geko's wife Kasia. Everyone could eat outside and in the evening someone kept a smaller or bigger fire there.

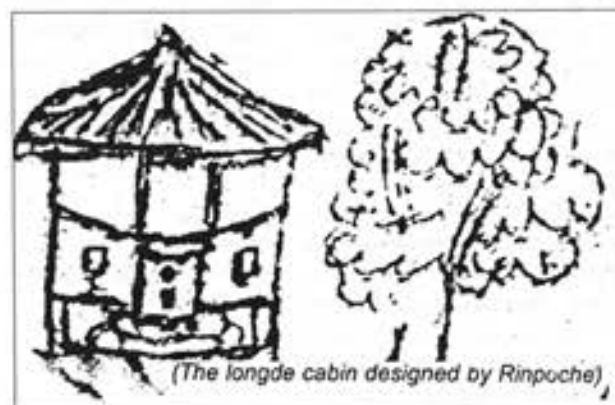
There were four Thuns a day. Jim wanted us to learn how to do the practices from the Base in a simple way like Semdzins, Rushens, *trenpa nyerzhag*, etc., but also we learned how to understand the related points of views of different paths of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. We learned how to do a simple, light breathing of kumbhaka. Because the very essence of all practices is Guruyoga, we did it in different styles like Kriya Tantra,

Yoga Tantra, Anuyoga and Atiyoga style. Certainly, we didn't forget to do it in a very condensed *chöd* style as well.

On Sunday Jim said, "Because it is Sunday and we are in the country of birth of the Pope, this afternoon we can go to Dukla to see the place of Saint John from Dukla". John lived in XV century and there is his hermitage, a century old wooden retreat house, near Dukla. Adam Was, who was the translator and helped very much at the retreat, was the main guide. We started our little pilgrimage at the big palace in Dukla, which is now the historical museum. There are not many memorial objects preserved, except guns, uniforms, caps, etc., of Russian, German, Czech, Slovak and other soldiers. In 1944 about 100,000 of them were killed. Now the people from almost all of these countries gathered again, maybe not so many this time, at the hotel/restaurant to eat some pizza and drink something.

As usual, after the final Ganapuja, we had to disperse into very different and personal directions. In early afternoon, the winds satisfied with so many smells clearly weakened, the weather changed into almost the Italian summer (at the time of Indian summer). Everyone disappeared and, unfortunately, Ziemek and I were left alone in the attic.

About to leave Paldenling, I returned to the very first Thun where Jim elucidated for us the internal meaning of the Invocation to Padmasambhava about "the place where enlightenment arises". ■



(The longde cabin designed by Rinpoche)



SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE
ITALY

The Shang-Shung Institute has decided to set up a small committee whose main concern is to make a list of all the teachings and lectures our precious Master has been giving since the very beginning, even in very remote places, and to check if we have audio and/or video cassettes in our archives of each of these events and in case we haven't got them, to find them and make copies to keep in our archives.

Igor Legati, Adriano Clemente, Maurizio Mingotti and Felice Storgato are members of this committee and we'll try to help them whenever necessary to contact practitioners all over the world to ask for cassettes, videos or even hand-written notes going back to the times of the first teachings when sometimes there was no

recording organized. It is a big task, because this means to work through our archives, make indexing and a precise catalogue of all the documentary materials we have there. So we ask for your help again: Gars and Gakyils all over the world should provide a list of all the retreats and public talks Rinpoche has given in the past years and we'd also like to make an appeal to single practitioners who, in same way in the past, organized some events with Rinpoche we might not be aware of. So, please collaborate in helping us to receive all the information we need for completing the collection of all Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teachings all over the world. Thank you very much in advance for your help
The Shang Shung Institute Managing Board of Italy.

The Medical Program Shang-Shung Institute, Italy Merigar

The third year Tibetan medicine course held in Arcidosso (Merigar), Italy, from the 23rd to 28th of January and from the 23rd to 28th of February, 2001, will include theory teachings in the morning with Doctor Thubten Puntsog and practice sessions on diagnostic techniques in the afternoon with Doctor Nida Chenagtsang. We are pleased to announce that afternoon sessions will be also open to doctors, therapists, Ku Nye, dreams and medicine and mantra healing students to offer them the wonderful opportunity of getting in touch and utilizing in their daily practice the precious diagnostic techniques typical of traditional Tibetan medicine.

Fees: 600.000 lire (12 afternoons) plus 20.000 lire for membership card.

Food and lodging available for a limited number of participants who will be put up in the dorm of Merigar 2. Rate per day is 40.000 lire including breakfast, lunch and supper.

For information and registration contact:
The secretary of the Institute:
Tel: 00390564966941
Emails: ssinst@amiata.net
OR ecop@ats.it

Celestial Gallery con't from previous page

the Bardo - the intermediary realm between death and rebirth. Shrestha's greatest advocate, Deepak Chopra, sets the tone in the books introduction: "Great art", Chopra writes, "is a doorway to the Divine. The paintings in this celestial gallery draw from the ancient wisdom of Buddhist and Hindu traditions which, for centuries, have expressed some of humankind's deepest spiritual insights. At the same time, these sumptuous images totally transcend their place of origin. As archetypal expressions of liberated vision, the paintings ultimately mirror our innermost potential: the possibility of total spiritual freedom, or enlightenment." Invoking the paintings underlying

spirit, Chopra writes that the Buddhist deities and bodhisattvas pictured in the book "are not gods remote from our experience, but reflections of different states of awareness. The Buddhas, Taras, and other peaceful divinities represent sublime states of consciousness, while the wrathful or diabolical forms represent our inner tendencies for resentment, jealousy, greed, and guilt. Similarly, the ecstatic deities, shown in sexual union, represent the transmutation of passion into a force of spiritual awakening, the harmonious reintegration of the male and female energies which shape the entire universe." Those familiar with contemporary painting from the Kathmandu Val-

cont'd on page 23

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, USA

Thanks

The Shang Shung Institute US wishes to thank all its donors and volunteer help over the past year 2000. Without your support, the Institute would not have been able to continue its programs in translation, Tibetan Medicine and art.

Tibetan Medical Program

The Tibetan Medical Program of Shang-Shung Institute US has available for home study an audio cassette course of the first two years of the Three-Year Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine for those who wish to enter the Third Level on Pulse Diagnosis and Urine Analysis scheduled for January and February in Merigar and in late May early/ June in Conway, Massachusetts. Cost for the first two years, approximately 50 (90 minute) audio tapes, is \$1200 for both years or \$800 (24 tapes) for each year. Each year's course comes with a separate text in English based on the ongoing translation of the Four Medical Tantras currently being developed by the Institute and a detailed outline of the entire program. This is the only in depth study in English available of a systematic study of the Four Medical Tantras which is the foundation for the training of an Amchi. The curriculum and roster of visiting faculty to follow the Foundation Course is currently being developed by both Institutes in Italy and in Conway, Massachusetts under the direction of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Light of Kailash Translation Project.

In 2000, the Shang Shung Institute was able to fund the full-time work of Dr. Donatella Rossi for her translation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's three volume history of Tibet. During this time she refined the first draft of Vol. I and is now working on Vol II.

Due to the exceptional generosity of several long-term donors, this project has been able to proceed without interruption. The Institute will shortly begin its 2001 fundraising campaign to continue support of this project.

Golden Vajra Art Guild

This fall, Glen Eddy completed at Tsegylgar his Primordial Masters, a large-scale thanka commissioned by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The next project scheduled by the Golden Vajra Art Guild will be a major painting of Goma Devi and the Vajra Dance lineage under the auspices of the Shang Shung Institute in Conway, Massachusetts beginning in the summer of 2001. This painting will be related to the Vajra Dance, which in its turn is related to the "Longsal Nyingthig" or the "Thigle of the Heart of the Luminous Universe of the Dakini." The painting will show the short lineage from the top central figures of inseparable Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri; then to Guyajana, the joyous dark blue dakini which represents the inner form of Simhamukha; then to Garab Dorje, the master who introduced the knowledge of Dzogchen into our world; then to Laskyi Wangmo, Queen of karma. The main figure will be Princess Goma Devi, who is one of the ancient 21 Semde masters. She sits in royal splendor appearing like a Tara. She is adorned with all of the 13 Sambhogakaya ornaments. She sits on a lotus supported by a jeweled golden throne. Appearing from within her throne shines forth a luminous dance Mandala. Below her throne on either side sit the glorious Padmasambhava and Mandarava. Between them and a little lower sits our own master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who received this wonderful treasure from Goma Devi in a series of dreams while sleeping in the Encampment of the Victorious Peak—Tsegylgar in the summer

of 1990. Also at the bottom of the painting will be the form of the protectress Ekajati.

The Goma Devi painting will be close in size to the other three paintings already in the Gonpa at Tsegylgar produced for the Golden Vajra Art Guild—Guru Rinpoche and the lineage tree, Ekajati, and the newly completed Primordial Masters which are all 3 feet by 5 feet. These paintings are all painted with hand ground mineral pigments taking from a year to three years to complete. The minimal price for a thanka of this size is around \$10,000.

The Shang Shung Institute in Conway, Massachusetts will be fundraising for donations on behalf of Glen Eddy who will be returning from Argentina next summer to commence the painting. This summer he completed the 13 Primordial Masters thanka originally commissioned by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu which is being photographed and will be reproduced in a full color poster.

Other Projects

The Institute also continues to support the work of Jim Valby and the Vairocana Project as well as a variety of other programs and projects. Your tax-deductible donations make it possible for us to continue. They can be made to Shang Shung Institute, PO Box 277, Conway, Massachusetts 01341. For further information, please contact Jacqueline Gens at jgens@sover.net or 802-254-9114.



Gift Offer

Shang-Shung Institute, USA

The Shang-Shung Institute, USA Gift Box of Tibetan Items for the Holidays
Available through Losar by Jacqueline Gens

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT

The Shang Shung Institute's ongoing projects in translation, Tibetan Medicine, and the Golden Vajra Art Guild

Each gift box includes the following items:

*A beautifully packaged 2.37 lbs. bag tsampa, the staple food of Tibet (with recipes)

*Set of five-color lungta prayer flags with hand sewn cords ready for hanging

*Set of facsimile gummed stamps from old Tibet (5 sheets of 20 each), a reprint of Tibet's first issue from J. Crow Co.

*3 boxes of authentic medicinal incense

*An assortment of Deity cards designed by Glen Eddy for the Golden Vajra Art Guild

*A gift card, with description and use of the traditional items enclosed and brochure about Shang-Shung Institute

Please help support the Shang -

Shung Institute US during the holiday season while informing friends and relatives about Tibetan culture!!!

Cost: \$50 plus shipping
Choice of UPS, Fedex, or Priority US/International mail

Please place your order through email (jgens@sover.net) and I will contact you about shipping.



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEWS

Retreats at Merigar 2001

Easter Retreat April 12-16
With Adriano Clemente

The cost will be Lit.210.000 with discounts for paid-up members of the Association.

July 6-10

Short retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The cost of the retreat will be Lit.400.000 with discounts for paid-up members who will be able to pay by installments. More information can be had from Merigar and the Merigar Letter. It is advisable to register for this service as soon as possible.

August 10-19

Long Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The cost of the retreat will be Lit.900.000 with discounts for paid-up members and the possibility of paying in installments as above. Contact the office at Merigar.

August 24-28

SMS First Level Training

The cost of the retreat will be Lit.400.000. No discounts.

September 26-30

SMS Third Level Training

The cost of the retreat will be Lit.400.000. No discounts.

Yantra Yoga

February 3-4, 2001

Yantra Yoga course for those who have participated in at least one beginners course.

Given by Laura Evangelisti

The cost will be Lit.140.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

Reservations should be made before January 15th.

If there is not a minimum of 10 participants the course will be canceled.

The course starts at 10 am on February 3rd.

May 19-20, 2001

Yantra Yoga advanced course

Given by Laura Evangelisti

The cost will be Lit.140.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

Reservations should be made before May 10th.

If there is not a minimum of 10 participants the course will be canceled.

The course starts at 10 am on May 19th.

July 12-16

Beginners course with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

The cost will be Lit.280.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

Reservations should be made before June 30th.

If there are only 10 participants the



Merigar Ganga

N. Zeitz

The cost will be Lit.490.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

August 1-8

Course of Dance of the Song of the Vajra
For those who know the steps

Given by Prima Mai

The cost will be Lit.490.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

For both courses registration and a down payment of Lit.50.000 should be made before July 20th, 2001.

If there are less than 10 participants the course will be canceled.

A maximum of 20 people can participate, 10 for the male part and 10 for the female.

August 30 - September 5

Training Course for instructors of the Vajra Dance 1st level

Given by Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo

The cost will be Lit.600.000 without discounts.

The course is reserved for those who know the whole of both the male and female parts of the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas and the Om A Hum Dance.

Participants must be paid-up members of the Association and send a written application to the secretary at Merigar before August 15th, 2001.

INSTALLMENTS

For next summer there will be the possibility of paying for the retreat of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in three installments. This possibility is reserved to members of the Dzogchen Community who have renewed their membership for 2001.

The first installment is one third of the total amount and has to be paid by the end of April. The second part at the moment of the retreat. The third by the end of October.

For more information contact the Secretary of Merigar.

CHILD CARE

We are trying to organize a baby sitting service for children from 3 to 9 years of age. Since there are no facilities for caring for older children, we advise parents and caregivers not to bring children over this age.

course will be given by only one teacher or they will alternate sessions. If there are 20 participants the course will be given by both teachers.

The course starts at 4 pm on July 12th and finishes on July 16th in the morning.

July 18-22

Advanced course with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

The cost will be Lit.280.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

Reservations should be made before July 10th.

A minimum of 20 participants to cover costs.

The course starts at 4 pm on July 18th and finishes on July 22nd in the morning.

February 9th, 10th and 11th

Course of Dance of the Vajra for advanced given by Prima Mai

The cost will be Lit.210.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

Registration and a down payment of Lit.50.000 should be made before January 30th, 2001.

If there are not enough participants the course will be canceled.

July 28th, 29th and 30th

Course of Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas

To be given by a local teacher

The course will start on July 28th in the afternoon with two daily sessions on July 29th and 30th.

The cost will be Lit.210.000 with a discount of 30% for paid-up members.

Registration and a down payment of Lit.50.000 should be made before July 18th, 2001.

If there are not enough participants the course will be canceled.

August 1-8

Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra part II

For beginners

Given by Adriana Dal Borgo

MERIGAR CALENDAR to April 2001

Mandarava 6-months Practice Cycle

From the 28th of September 2000 until April 2001, on the 1st and the 14th of every lunar month according to the Tibetan calendar (that is to say, the day after the Ganapuja of the last day of the month and the day before the Ganapuja of the 15th day) at 7:00 pm there will be the Long Life practice of Mandarava in the Mandala Hall. If possible learning sessions with the help of video cassettes could also be arranged.

December 28th - January 3rd

Explanation and Practice retreat with Adriano Clemente

The retreat will include sessions open to all on the practice of Vajrasattva and of Shine on the basis of the text "Introduction to Ati" transmitted last summer by the Master, as well as sessions dedicated to the Tawa of the First Level of Santi Maha Sangha based on the Samten Migdron text, followed by an introduction to the practices related to the vehicles of Sutra and Tantra lead by experienced practitioners.

December 31st at 8 pm:

Dinner and party

January 1st at 11 am:

Long Life Practice.

January 5th - 7th

Santi Maha Sangha Base

Explanation and Practice

Prajnaparamita Practices: the Four Applications of Presence (tyer-shag)

Beginning at 4:00 pm on the 5th of January

January 13th - 14th

Vajra Dance Practice Retreat

January 27th - 28th

Explanation and practice related to the First level of Santi Maha Sangha, Kriya, Carya and Yoga Tantra.

February 3rd - 4th

Yantra Yoga course open to those who have already attended at least one beginners course

with Laura Evangelisti

beginning on the 3rd at 10 am

February 9th, 10th & 11th

Advanced Vajra Dance Course

This will be a course for very advanced Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra. There will be no explanations of basic steps. We will work on general questions of the participants, go over details, and clarify points.

Cost: 210,000 Lire for the with discount of 30% for those who register before January 31st, (there is a 50,000 fee at that time and if there are less than 10 people registered the course will be canceled).

Schedule:

Friday evening: 6-8pm

Saturday, twice a day: 10-12 and afternoon: 4-6pm

Sunday twice a day: 10-12 and afternoon: 3-5 pm with Ganapuja right after.

February 23rd - 25th

Santi Maha Sangha Base Explanation and Practice

Feb. 23rd at 4 pm: Purification of the Six Lokas

6:30 pm: Short Ganapuja

February 23rd at 10 am: Karma yoga

4 pm: Purification of the Six Lokas

6:30 pm: Ganapuja

Saturday the 24th of February

Losar - Tibetan New Year

- Practice at Sunrise

- Ganapuja at 12:30 am

- Dinner and party at 8:00 pm

Monday the 26th of February -

Third Day of the Tibetan New Year

Sang practice at 9 am and installation of prayer flags (Lungta)

March 3rd

At 4 pm: Explanation of the Guru Yoga practice of Garab Dorje for the Transmission on March 9th

March 9th

4:00 am: Guru Yoga practice of Garab Dorje for the Transmission

March 17th - 18th

Santi Maha Sangha First Level

Explanation and Practice

Mahayoga and Anuyoga

April 12th - 16th

Easter Retreat with Adriano Clemente

GENERAL NOTES

About Vajra Dance practice retreats:

All Vajra Dance practice retreats begin on Saturday at 10:00 am and end the following Sunday at 5:30 pm.

Each day has the following program (which is flexible and can be adjusted each time according to the preferences and capacities of the participants):

10:00 am: Practice of the Guru Yoga of the White A

11:00 am: Tun of the Dance of the Three Vajras (Om Ah Hum)

12:00 am: Tun of the Complete Vajra Dance

01:00 pm: Lunch break

03:00 pm: Tun of the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas combined with the Dance of the Three Vajras

04:00 pm: Tun of the Complete Vajra Dance

05:00 pm: Short Tun

The Gakyil has been requested to find a way to provide a TV and video cassette deck for the Mandala Hall, so that practitioners of the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga can work with YY and VD tapes during practice retreats, etc. (giving at the same time the possibility to all to study other practice videos).

WHOEVER IS IN A POSITION TO DONATE A TV AND/OR A VC DECK FOR THE MANDALA HALL IS INVITED TO CONTACT THE MERIGAR GAKYIL. Tel. 0564-966837



Accommodation Service of Merigar

The Gakyil of Merigar is reorganizing the work of the secretary and one aspect of that work is the coordination of the accommodations near Merigar during courses and retreats. Christina Geispitzheim presented a detailed project to the Gakyil regarding the handling of accommodation matters. The Gakyil accepted the project in their meeting of November 4th, 2000, and officially delegated Christina to handle all matters regarding accommodations near Merigar (not in Merigar, Merigar Due, or the camping, which remains the responsibility of the Gekoes).

At present, Christina is doing a survey of all available accommodations in the area: lodging with Vajra brothers and sisters, with local people, in residences, in hotels, in agriturismo, apartments to rent, public camping and bungalows. This will eventually include car rental also, if needed.

The Accommodation Service is starting now in order to have things going smoothly for next spring and summer when there will be the big retreats.

A special email address for the accommodation service is already functioning, so all requests regarding accommodation for people coming to Merigar should be made to this new email address:

merigar-reservations@libero.it

The telephone number for the accommodation service is:

Italy 0039-0564-966273

The postal address in case of requests in writing is:

Christina Geispitzheim

Post Office Box 36

I - 58031 Arcidosso (GR)

Italy

Regarding the finances of this new service, a handling charge will be asked on definite reservations for accommodation in order to cover communication expenses. In certain cases, if the landlord or hotel manager ask for a deposit, this will be included in the accommodation service fee. It is agreed that a percentage of the benefits will go to Merigar.

MERIGAR TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

by Giovanna Vulpi

On November 5th, the first meeting of the Technical Committee was held at Merigar on a beautiful autumn day heralded by a great rainbow. The meeting had been called by the Director, Ciccio D'Arista, and the members of the Gakyil with the aim of finding people in the Community who could be in charge of various technical projects.

Firstly on behalf of the Technical Committee I would like to extend an invitation to the numerous and eager experts and engineers in the Community to offer their collaboration for the different works that need to be carried out at Merigar. I would also like to thank Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his continual support for each and every initiative for the development of Merigar.

The Director and Gakyil of Merigar have requested each sector to draw up a set of work plans and in particular to work out the costs of the projects, listing them in order of urgency and priority. The projects are listed below.

A ROCK WALL IN THE RETREAT HUT AREA IN THE WOOD

Person in charge: Gian Paola Imola, geologist

About 1200-1500 meters of the rock wall at the base of the Gonpa is breaking away. Some work on consolidating the wall was undertaken last summer under the direction of Rinpoche. Because of the proximity of the retreat huts, concern about the instability of the rock wall has given rise to the necessity to monitor the rock for a month to estimate the amount of movement and con-

sider the type of work that needs to be done to make the rock wall safe.

Our geologist considers that when monitoring is completed there will probably be two alternatives: cleaning and strengthening the wall with a protective net or breaking off the rock face (making sure that Rinpoche's retreat hut is safe) and putting nets to stop other rock falls.

SERKHANG - THE GOLDEN HOUSE

Person in charge: Patrizia Moscatelli, architect

On the instructions of Rinpoche and his wife, Rosa, Patrizia has drawn up several projects with a priority: next spring the roof will have to be redone. Patrizia has created a detailed work program based on the techniques of bio-architecture as well as an estimate of the costs according to local prices. In the future she would also like to redesign the entrance to the house and to harmonize esthetically and practically the different elements that have been crowded into the original construction. She has drawn up two possible projects that, starting with the entrance, would reorganize the space of Serkhang.

WATER RESOURCES

Person in charge: Mario Apicella, agronomist

Mario has undertaken the difficult task of taking care of the water sources on the land such as springs, fountains and ponds. The drinking water at Merigar is supplied by the Fiora aqueduct which is collected in several cisterns and redistributed to various points, last of which is Gadeling. In order that Rinpoche's house has a good supply of water Mario has considered a series of works that will be necessary and which can no longer be delayed as well as an estimate of costs.

Merigar 2 receives its water supply from a seasonal spring which is collected in cisterns. Chemically the

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Merigar Dzogchen Community,

The new Gakyil at Merigar, elected just two months ago, has started working on a series of problems. As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu indicated, some of these must be prioritized in order to maintain and reach an economic stability at Merigar. In the last ten years many things have been accomplished but if we are to complete our structure more will have to be done.

The economic reality of Merigar

We all are aware that Merigar is sustained exclusively thanks by contributions that we give as members and by the retreats held by Rinpoche. If we take a quick look at the accounts of the Gar we might not be alarmed at the financial state of things. In fact, we might even say that many of the activities and work of various organizations are starting to be fruitful. (By organizations we refer to Shang Shung Edizioni, the Istituto Shang-Shung, the Merishop.) However, in the face of this situation the running costs of the entire structure, the fixed costs, are still very high. The path of financial autonomy undertaken by the different organizations will ease the burden of the Association in the future and even now has already started to do so in comparison to the past years. At present not one of the organizations receives contributions from the Association - a positive step in the direction of becoming financially autonomous.

In the future the organizations may improve their situations in relationship to the Association and be able to participate considerably towards the running costs of the Association but we must give them time. We should consider the success of their activities and not inundate them with premature requests.

Last summer's retreat with Rinpoche brought the Community the amount required to balance the economic situation. And the fact is that this remains the point around which all our reasoning revolves: even if we maintain a spirit of cautious optimism linked to what we discussed earlier, the life of Merigar is founded on the Master's retreats. We are far from financial autonomy and still need to build an economic stability.

What needs to be done and how?

In the first three months of taking office, the Gakyil has had several meetings with those in charge of the different organizations and with people who run various activities at Merigar. Based on these talks we considered three possibilities for the coming years:

1. developing and consolidating the

activities of the Istituto Shang Shung;

2. developing the capacity of Merigar - overnight stays, canteen, etc.;

3. developing the activities of the courses held in the major cities.

The first two points are conditioned by the fact that necessary building work needs to be done such as finishing the Library (ex-capannone) and restructuring Merigar 2. Even the third point implies an economic outlay in the sense that in order to promote the Community externally, the local Gakyil undertaking the promotional activities will keep part of the subscription fees in order to start up the activity, as has been requested in Rome.

To this we can add the activities that Rinpoche is promoting in the International Community such as the new project to open a series of winter Gars to support those already in existence. In this same issue of the Merigar Letter we are publishing the translation of an article which appeared in the last issue of The Mirror which talks about the search for a winter version of Merigar in Spain!!!

Another force which continues to push us and refuses to let us "rest on our laurels" is that famous whip of impermanence which expresses itself in equal kind towards us all, human beings, practitioners of the Community and even in the structure of the Gar which needs constant maintenance.

Going ahead

On Sunday, November 5th, we held a meeting, the first of its kind and a kind of historical event, with the people in charge of various Community activities - technicians, engineers, architects, geologists - and the Red Gakyil with the aim of talking about working priorities and medium and long term planning for work, keeping an eye on costs, estimates and the possibility of funding.

From this meeting we understood that there is an urgent need to complete several projects before next summer:

fix the roof of the central block of the gold house (Serkhang), check the system for collecting rain and spring water and waterproof the two reservoirs and cisterns, check that the rock under the Gonpa doesn't fall, protect the paintings in the Gonpa from the sun by creating a structure that will also serve as protection from the sun for those who participate in the next big summer retreats.

For example the dormitories and lodgings at Merigar 2 need to be put in order so that in the future the Community will have space to hold courses all year round: Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, as well as courses on Tibetan medicine etc. held by the Istituto Shang-Shung.

The lack of space in the Gonpa during retreats has meant using sunshades around the building in order to shelter those seated outside from the sun and rain. Rinpoche has talked about the need to protect the precious paintings inside from the rays of the sun. Considering that the sunshades now need renewing and the railings around the Gonpa require strengthening, Franco is considering the possibility of creating a moveable structure which would go around the Gonpa and be structurally independent.

THE GONPA

Person in charge: Franco Marinelli, engineer and bio-architect

These type of activities would permit us to have an income on top of that coming from the large retreats held by Rinpoche.

Continuing our line of reasoning and realizing the need to put Merigar in a position to carry out its duty as the Gar of the Dzogchen Community in Europe, founded by one of the greatest living Masters of our times, we conclude that the works mentioned above should be realistically taken into serious consideration rather than in a spirit of renunciation as we have always done in the past.

Membership discounts and retreat quotas

Based on this analysis a need has arisen to change things such as the cost of retreats and the discounts normally given to members. Moving towards an overall increase in prices we have tried to study a proportional formula which would guarantee those with difficult economic conditions or students who do not have a proper income the possibility to participate in the retreats held by the Master.

Therefore, for all these reasons this year the costs of retreats with Rinpoche will be increased from Lit.60.000 per day to Lit.100.000.

Ordinary membership which remains at Lit.360.000 will entitle a member to 20% discount on the cost of retreats with Rinpoche.

A special quota has been created for students and pensioners who receive a social pension. Still considered as an ordinary membership, the cost will be Lit.100.000 per year and will entitle the member to 50% discount on retreats.

Sustaining membership will continue to be Lit.750.000 per year but will no longer entitle the member to free retreats but to a discount of 40% on retreats given by the Master.

The latest news is the creation of a third type of membership called "good service membership" for those without economic problems who wish to participate in a considerable way to the activities of the Community. This membership will cost \$2000 and will entitle the holder to free retreats.

In anticipation of the two retreats with Rinpoche next summer the Yellow Gakyil is organizing a system of payment for the retreat quota by installments for those practitioners who request it. Those who are interested in participating can pre-register for the retreat thus avoiding last minute problems. In order to be able to take advantage of this type of pre-payment, one should be an up-to-date member of the Dzogchen Community.

The Gakyil

MERIGAR 2

Person in charge: Giovanni Boni, engineer

There are several ideas for Merigar 2. The new building could be enlarged and intended as a residential and productive space throughout the year. It could be run by the group who look after the land at Merigar who would be responsible for the work to transform the building into a residential area.

The old building could be added to and enlarged on the south side. The pig pen and the last two rooms under the guest-rooms may gradu-

con't on the next page



Merigar Technical Com from previous page

ally be transformed into a workshop and a drying room.

GADELING

Permission from the local authorities has been requested to add a room to the house.

THE LIBRARY

Person in charge: Claudio Galeota, architect

The current "barn" is the focus of a project which will involve first of all transferring the carpentry shop and starting to organize the space for the activities of the Istituto Shang -Shung. Claudio has drawn up a list of the works that need to be done as well as the related costs.

THE LAND

Person in charge: Giovanna Vulpi, forester

In the next weeks an up-to-date survey of the Community land will be done which will indicate the current situation of the vegetation and

will describe in detail the type of cultivation that could be undertaken.

On one hand this will involve a program for improving and consolidating the natural characteristics of the land which is almost completely surrounded by a nature reserve. On the other hand it will mean choosing the areas where cereals and medicinal plants can be cultivated.

WORK COORDINATION

Person in charge: Migmar Mimaciren

Chosen by Rinpoche for this job, Migmar is helping to concretize the work undertaken and offers a competent and helpful point of reference.

As is evident from the long list of works we need a constant flow of human resources, finances and energy in order to bring the works to fruition, solve urgent problems and care for the upkeep of Merigar.



Santi Maha Sangha Practice Weekend with Oliver Leick
Prague, Czech Republic, November 24th-26th, 2000

From November 24th -26th, 2000, Oliver F. Leick visited Prague for a weekend practice retreat on the 7th Lojong, tice retreat. In three Thuns (Saturday morning and afternoon, Sunday morning) Oliver explained the three methods of the 7th Lojong for about

an hour and a half, and then we all practiced them for about an hour and a half, with two short breaks to relax. Oliver followed the instructions and explanations of Rinpoche and also added his own experiences.

It was a very intensive practice weekend and about thirty people from Czechia, Slovakia, Poland and Austria participated. We thank Oliver for coming to our country again!■

Vajra Dance Updates

by Prima Mai

PHOTOS:

To all who have made group photos of the Vajra Dance courses: Please take five minutes and search for a nice photo, group or otherwise, you have made participating of a Vajra Dance course in which you participated. Then either detach and depart from it, sending it in for the Vajra Dance Archive, or invest a little more time and make a copy and send it with the related information about date and origin of the photo to:
Prima Mai
c/o Merigar
58031 Arcidosso (GR)
Italy
Email:
PrimaMai@compuserve.com

WHERE IS YOUR MANDALA.....

and what kind of Mandala do you have and who is the contact person for your Mandala?

This is more about a very practical point; where is your Mandala? You as a Gar, local Community or private person have made a Vajra Dance Mandala (not String Man-

dala). Please be so kind and send me the following information:
1 Material of Mandala (if possible which kind of paint)
2 Size of Mandala (small center or medium or large center)
3 Owner or contact person for your Mandala (address, email, telephone)
4 Photo of Mandala (indicate on the back from where is this Mandala)
Send to:PrimaMai
@compuserve.com

Address for photos:
Prima Mai
Comunita Dzogchen
58031
Arcidosso (GR)
Italy

Time passes quickly and in the last nine years since we first practiced the Vajra Dance, Mandalas - portable and stable - have been made all around the world.

The Mandala is a sacred place and object. The Vajra Dance Mandala is a terra of our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Please be so kind and help me to collect and put together this information of the locations of the Vajra Dance Mandala on our earth. It is

In order to carry out the projects, Giampaolo Imola has suggested asking Fund Raising experts to identify possible sources of financing such as private societies and bodies.

During the next meeting of the Technical Committee at Christmas we hope to be able to have estimates of the costs of the various works mentioned above.

While thanking all those for their suggestions for improvements and changes, I would like to remind everybody to practice patience, kindness, collaboration and mutual respect and to thank Rinpoche and his teaching for the great opportunity that it has offered us.■



something I try to do in all our name for Rinpoche and for us and the future of this precious practice. Please keep me updated and take five minutes to participate, either in sending me the information or reminding your local Gakyil to do so. Not everyone reads this or understands English. Please send me this information in a clear and simple way. You have to do this only for one Mandala, but if information is missing on more than one Mandala, you can imagine what work that means for me. For the future this list will be accessible through your Gar or web site. Thank you so much for your collaboration.■

Clarification of the Requirements for First Level Training in the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga

by Prima Mai

To complete our file of participants in the Level 1 Vajra Dance Trainings, we need the following information: correct address, email address, telephone number, membership number and birth date. All who have not read Norbunet and read this now, please send this information to:

Prima Mai
c/o Merigar
Arcidosso 58031
GR Italy
Email: 76544.2306
@compuserve.com

Since there were questions and misunderstandings about the meaning of Level 1 Training, the following will hopefully clarify.

Below is an article by Rinpoche (see Mirror issue #37, Sept/Oct 1996) which should make it all very clear. Initially there are some points particular for the Vajra Dance.

Practitioners who want to attend a Vajra Dance Level 1 training must:

1. Know both parts (male/female) of the Vajra Dance of Liberation of the Six Lokas and the Three Vajras (OMAHUM).
2. Be a member of the Dzogchen Community
3. If someone is interested in

Authorization Guidelines For Yantra Instructors

Clarification for those who hold local courses of Yantra Yoga.
by Laura Evangelisti

Those who wish to organize annual or weekend courses of Yantra Yoga should coordinate the organization of these courses through the Gakyil of their region, or with the Gakyil of Merigar. Thus a course of Yantra is not presented as a personal initiative, but as an activity of the Dzogchen Community.

The financial aspect should also be coordinated by the Gakyil in collaboration with the instructor, following the guidelines of dividing the income in this manner: 50% to the Community, 30% for the instructor, and 20% for the International Teachers' Fund.

In the last few years Fabio and I have given different courses for teachers (Teacher Training Courses), the first three at Merigar, and the last at Namgyalgar in Australia.

The next TTC's will be in Russia and in the USA in 2001. In all cases, it must be clear that it is not sufficient to participate in only one TTC to be a qualified teacher. It is important to participate in courses for advanced practitioners or in other TTC's to perfect and compare one's own practice with others'.

When you are ready, it's necessary (as Rinpoche has specifically requested) to organize intensive courses during which Fabio or I supervise and offer suggestions and try to clarify any doubts you may have. Only at this point can you ask for authorization from Rinpoche himself to become an official local teacher.

I hope that the local Gakyils and the instructors will work together so that the teaching of Yantra Yoga expands in the right way.

Thank you.■

becoming a local instructor in these two practices and feels him or herself capable to instruct others, then this person must attend a Vajra Dance Level 1 training course at least twice. Still one is not automatically an instructor of these practices. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu must always approve and authorize in collaboration with the primary teacher, [i.e., myself or Adriana], a new instructor.

For someone who only wants to deepen these practices and is not interested in teaching others must still know both parts to attend these courses. There is also possibility to deepen practice in advanced courses, and a teacher or local instructor can be invited to teach. Someone who follows this practice and wants to deepen and integrate it more in his/her life is not obliged to attend these particular teacher training courses or become an instructor.

If someone wants to do this practice in a correct way, and since this practice needs such a precision, also in a collective sense since we are practicing six male and female together, it is advisable to always continue to deepen and correct oneself, for example, through advanced courses and in some dialog with an authorized instructor. It is in our responsibility to keep this practice correct and pure. It is not correct to learn only by following other practitioners or using the video. If one wants to have real function and benefit of this practice, and also be of correct support in the collective meaning of this practice, one must take the commitment to participate in a course of the related Vajra Dance practice and, if needed, correct oneself in this practice. We are always free in whatever we choose to do and how we want to do it, but it all implies different results.

I trust that Rinpoche's decision of how to follow and study Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance in a correct way is based on his experience and clarity. Please take this to heart. For your information, we have the following local instructors for the Vajra Dance of the Level 1 (Liberation of the Six Lokas and Three Vajras).

France: Stoffelina Verdonk (she also teaches the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra and has also taught in England and Holland)
Italy: Margit Martinu (Rome)
Russia: Ludmila (Luda) Kislichenko (Moscow)

USA: Anastasia McGhee (San Francisco, California)
Argentina: Nelida Saporiti (Buenos Aires)
Australia: Jean Mackintosh (Namgyalgar)
Qualifications of the Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Instructors by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Mirror Issue 37, September/October 1996.

TO ALL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY GAKYILS OF THE WORLD

Following is some important communication related with our Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance teaching transmission. I am requesting that everyone please pay close attention and try to apply the teachings of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance in this way:

THE WAY OF GOING AHEAD WITH YANTRA YOGA AND THE VAJRA DANCE TEACHINGS:

Possibly everyone remembers that I have officially appointed four instructors for Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance, two of my students for the Yantra Yoga: Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti, and two of my students for the Vajra Dance: Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo. At the same time, I explained why we need these instructor/teachers for Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance, and why I chose these four persons among all my students. This does not mean that all courses of Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance will always be led by these four instructor/teachers only, but our instructor/teachers should be the source of Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance teachings for all the other teachers of Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance.

In that way we can check that these teachings develop correctly. Their main responsibility is to instruct new teachers of Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance, therefore we need a kind of specific system to enable them to hold open courses and special Training Courses in different countries.

The following are my personal ideas of a system for continuing the teaching of both Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance:

continued on next page



Clarification of Requirements continued from previous page

WHAT IS CONTAINED IN THE TEACHING OF YANTRA YOGA AND VAJRA DANCE:

Yantra Yoga:

With regard to the teaching of Yantra Yoga, there are three levels:

1. Three Body Training's, the Pranayama of four Denyid with their Main Yantras and the Pranayama of Four Applications with their Main Yantras;

2. The Pranayama of Secret Prana with their Main Yantras and the Pranayama of Seven Applications with their Main Yantras;

3. The Pranayama of Six Applications with their Main Yantras, Seven Lotus Positions as well as all of the secondary. Naturally, The Wave of the Vajra related with all sections.

The Vajra Dance:

With regard to the teaching of the Vajra Dance there are three levels:

1. The Dance of the Six Spaces and the Dance of the Three Vajras;

2. The Dance of the Vajra with the Song of the Vajra;

3. The Dance of Space with the Song of the Vajra.

(Our instructors are still learning the last one.)

HOW TO ORGANIZE A COURSE OF YANTRA YOGA OR THE VAJRA DANCE WITH ONE OF OUR FOUR INSTRUCTORS:

When people are interested in organizing a course to learn Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance, first of all, they should consult the local Gakyil of their own countries and collaborate with the responsible persons. In this case, if there is a qualified teacher nearby, the Gakyil can inform them and together they can organize a course. Otherwise, a local Gakyil and those who want to organize a course can ask a Gar to invite one of our four instructor/teachers or communicate directly to the instructor who they wish to invite. The Gar should consult the instructor personally about their availability at that time for a specific place, to hold a course of Yantra Yoga or the Vajra dance courses, and in turn the Gar informs the Gakyils.

If a local Gakyil wants to invite one of our instructor teachers in a specific way to teach a course, then the Gar and instructor should look into all possibilities and try to make the Gakyils as happy as possible.

The intervention of the local Gakyil for taking care of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance courses is not a kind of bureaucratic system, it is just a collaboration with the people who are going to organize the course. And, of course, this is how we make sure the teaching of Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance is going ahead correctly. The local Gakyils always have the responsibility of protecting the Teachings and its Transmission, not only Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance, but all of our precious Dzogchen Teachings and its Transmission as well.

The Gars are always connected with our four instructor/teachers and particularly with the Teacher of the Dzogchen Community, therefore when the Gar indicates a teacher for a course whatever the Gar chooses must be correct.

THE CORRECT WAY OF ATTENDING THE COURSE:

First of all, one must receive the essence of the transmission of the Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance teachings and that is the transmission of the Dzogchen Teaching. This means that those who are interested in Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance must be interested in the Dzogchen Teaching and its transmission. It is necessary for those who would like to follow the Yantra Yoga or Vajra Dance courses to receive some transmission of the essence of the Dzogchen Teaching, otherwise it can become like any kind of physical gymnastics or dance.

In the case of someone who has never received any transmission of the Dzogchen Teaching, what should they do? It is very simple: firstly, new people who are interested in learning Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance should receive some information about Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance from our instructor/teachers or local teachers. The instructors should make it clear that these teachings belong to the Dzogchen Teaching and that the Dzogchen transmission is just like the heart for Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance. If someone is lacking a heart then it is not possible to have a normal life; in the same way that without root transmission of these teachings there cannot be any correct benefit for anyone.

Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance are not at all like any ordinary gymnastics or dance; instead they are how we govern firstly our physical body, then our energy, and finally, and most importantly, our mind. The main mental-level practice is totally related to the Dzogchen transmission. Therefore, to learn Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance correctly, we always need to receive the transmission of the Dzogchen Teaching before taking a course.

If there is no possibility to receive a Dzogchen Transmission before attending a course, the person should themselves take a kind of commitment to receive the transmission when there is the possibility.

If someone indicates that his or her interest is only Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance, then with regard to Yantra Yoga, these people can receive only the following teachings:

Nine Purification Breathings

Tsijong

The Eight Movements

The Rhythmic Breathing up to the Minor Kumbhaka, and some Main Yantras (first and second group) with their related breathing, so as not to harm themselves by doing the breathing in the wrong way.

But they should not at all receive any kind of main Pranayamas and their Yantras, because they all are all linked strictly to the root transmission.

With regard to the Vajra Dance, one can receive only the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas. Of course, this is also strictly linked to the Dzogchen Transmission, but at the same time it is the method of Six Liberations and for that reason, even if someone is not interested in the Dzogchen Teaching and its

Transmission, it can bring them benefit by creating a precise relationship with this precious teaching.

The Dance of the Three Vajras and the Song of the Vajra also have the same qualifications, but in the Dance of the Three Vajras the essence is much too concentrated and in the Song of the Vajra the principles of Dzogchen Teaching are too naked. Therefore the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas is the only one which is suitable for this kind of person.

THE CORRECT WAY OF BEING A TEACHER OF YANTRA YOGA OR VAJRA DANCE:

First of all, a person interested to teach must understand that Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance are spiritual teachings which are connected totally to the Dzogchen Teaching. In other words, these teachings belong to the Dzogchen Teaching and therefore practitioners who are interested in teaching Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance must be interested in receiving the main transmission of the Dzogchen Teaching. When they have that base they can start the first level training. When they have learned the first level well and trained in it well, one of our instructor/teachers can present this new person to the Dzogchen Community's Teacher. This is the correct way of becoming a teacher for both Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance.

THE WAY OF QUALIFYING THROUGH TRAINING:

There are three principles to follow:

1. One should learn well the First Level from courses in general and particularly from the Special Training Courses of Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance held by one of our instructor/teachers;

2. One should lead a complete First Level course of Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance in the presence of one or more of our instructor/teachers;

3. After one or more of our instructor/teachers have completely checked the first level of Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance of the new candidate, they can present him or her to the Teacher of the Dzogchen Community. If the Teacher considers that person can obtain the authorization or permission to teach Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance, then they can go ahead to the second level and the third level by training in the same way. After receiving each of these authorizations, we recognize that the trained person is qualified to lead the local courses of Yantra Yoga or the Vajra Dance.



Membership and Retreat Fee Changes at Merigar A Reply from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Rinpoche has received communications from some Community members regarding recently instituted changes and increases in membership and retreat fees at Merigar, (see letter from Merigar Gakyil, page 11). Rinpoche has asked that The Mirror inform the Community about the communications, and also asked us to print a reply from him stating his reasons for these changes.

Some students in the Dzogchen Community have expressed feelings that these changes are not being initiated in a manner which is acceptable to them. They feel that these initiatives place economic stress on students who don't have a lot of resources, and that Merigar is not acting in an accountable or communicative way. It seems that some students also feel that Merigar and the Community at large need to develop better ways to continue through more active financial planning and activities that generate income. There is also a feeling that the International Gakyil be more involved in the financial future of Merigar and the Dzogchen Community.

A reply from Rinpoche follows:

Thank you for your information regarding "Merigar: Increase of fees and change of membership conditions".

I have taught my precious teachings SERIOUSLY to my students for many, many years.

I also hope that many of my students know the value of my teachings, and how I SERIOUSLY take care for their realization.

For many years, many of my old students have said, "I offer my body, voice and mind." Of course, I can't take them and use these students, and I know these are dry words for paying the price of my precious teachings. But at the same time, I know that my students may have a good intention of generosity.

I also want to see, just by increasing fees and changing the membership conditions a little, how deeply this generosity goes. Relatively these changes can be useful for maintaining the Gar of the European Dzogchen Community, but that is not the main point.

I am not asking Merigar to increase the fees to get money for my pocket. I am not really interested if people pay more money or not; but we know very well that the payment of fees and memberships are relative for maintaining Merigar. I am really interested to know that somehow Merigar will continue, not only for today, but also for tomorrow, whether I am alive or not. And that is something in our common interest.

Of course, I also want to know a little more concretely how deep my students' generosity goes; either they are only saying nice words or they really do feel some responsibility.

I am not comparing my generosity of the teaching and the generosity of my students. There is nothing to compare; but it is better not to go ahead always playing with dry words.

So don't worry at all about it. Merigar is innocent. These changes were made because I have asked them to do it. If you don't like something you can go on in the old way, and that means not to modify anything. ■

With many Tashi Delegs,
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Activities in Switzerland

Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners
with Laura Evangelisti
Zurich
January 19th - 21st, 2001

Collective practice weekend in Swiss Alps
Mid march
Dates to be announced

Practice:
Ganapuja on the four special days a month in Zurich
Monthly study for Santi Maha Sangha Base

Vajra Dance practice weekend
January 13th to 14th
Every Thursday night in Geneva

For any further information please contact:
Monique Leguen 12D, Ch. Maisonneuve, 1219 Chatelaine
Tel: 41 22 797 37 21
Email: leguen@infomaniak.ch

Kunselling Information

Up to date information about Kunselling, the Dzogchen Community Retreat Center in Wales near Hay-on-Wye may be found at:
www.redsandstonehill.net/dzogchen/dzcland.html

Please note that:

Inquiries about personal retreat should be addressed to Julia Lawless:
lawless@kunsel.u-net.com

& inquiries about collective practice weekends & the forthcoming Christmas/New Year season should be sent to Judy Allan:

114225.2575@compuserve.com



SMS Group with Jim Valby in Latvia

SVETLANA KOLLYAKOVA

Santi Maha Sangha in Latvia with Jim Valby

by Irina Pustovit
(translation by Natasha Eddy)

We had our retreat in a little health resort town of Yurmala located on a coast of the Riga's Gulf in the last days of a charming Indian summer and the sun was spoiling us with its tender rays of light. The days stayed warm enough. There were many trees, mostly pine and some with golden leaves. We rented a small private hotel complex which had two two-storied cottages for the participants and a nice little cottage for Jim. We were located one hundred meters away from the beach and a great curving mirror of the sea, infinitely blue and beautiful. From time to time, we allowed ourselves to enjoy walking through the off-white sand and listened to the silent whisper of the surf and admired the flight of seagull.

All these twelve days were like a magical dream filled with numerous practices. Jim Valby, patiently and with his great compassion, explained the correct way of doing different practices. Igor Berkhin translated into Russian with his inimitable sense of humor. Grisha Mokhin got our bodies into shape and our energy balanced during daily Yantra Yoga sessions. There was also the Vajra Dance for those people who are familiar with it.

About fifty people took part in the retreat. It wasn't just local folks from Padmaling; practitioners from Moscow, Estonia, St. Petersburg, Poland and Slovakia joined us. We lived like one big friendly family, practicing and having fun all together. It was an unforgettable time!

We would like to thank everyone for such a wonderful retreat. Dear Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, thank you very much for your transmission and teaching, from whom we were able to receive such incredible experiences and get so deeply into the practice of Dzogchen.

Dear Jim, thank you for your selflessness and kindness, and being so generous to us.

Dear Grisha, thank you for such fruitful Yantra sessions. No doubt, it did help to all of us to get into the knowledge of Yantra Yoga more deeply.

Dear Igor, thank you for your great effort in giving us the best possible translation and for the unique quality of your soul.

That was the first retreat since Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's visit in 1992 where so many people from different countries came together, and we hope that wasn't the last one. Now you know the way here. We hope to see you all, our dear Vajra brothers and sisters, some day here on the coast of Riga's Gulf. ■



Santi Maha Sangha in the Ukraine with Jim Valby

Kunsangar Schedule

Wednesday, December 20th to December 25th
20:30 Ganapuja

December 23rd - 24th
Vajra Dance Retreat

Saturday, December 23rd
Four Tuns at 8:00 - 9:00; 10:00 - 12:00; 15:00 - 17:00; 20:00 - 22:00

Sunday, December 24th
Three Tuns at 8:00 - 9:00; 10:00 - 12:00; 15:00 - 17:00
20:00 - Guru yoga of Garab Dorje

Monday, December 25th, New Moon
7:30 - 9:00 - Purification of Six Lokas practice
20:30 - Ganapuja

Starting from December 28th, 2000 and up to January 9th, 2001 - New Year celebration and practices. Program to be announced.

RETREAT SCHEDULE AT TSEGYALGAR

WINTER HOLIDAY RETREAT

December 28th (eve)-
December 31st, 2000
Mantra Retreat of the
Three Roots
Three Thuns daily
(times TBA*)
Begins the evening of
December 28th and ends
New Year's Eve with a
Ganapuja and party.

On December 29th,
2000, there will be a live
audio broadcast from by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
from Tashigar

FEBRUARY PRESI- DENT'S WEEKEND RETREAT STUPA WEEKEND

February 10th, 11th,
12th, 2001

This retreat will be dedicated to the long-life of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with the emphasis on Long Life practices, Vajrasattva and Tsa Tsa making in preparation for the placement of many treasure objects in the Stupa in the Spring.

This Retreat will be the first part of a two-part series to empower the Stupa and Tsegvalgar invites everyone in the US and international communities to be our guest in making more Tsa Tsas and carving the central post for placement in the Stupa with mantras. We need many individuals to complete this process.

Piero Bonacina is arriving from Italy in February to spend a month carving the central pole for the Stupa, dedicated to the long life of our Master.

APRIL RETREAT

April 21st - 22nd
Shine Practice Retreat

MAY - JUNE MEMORIAL WEEKEND (May 31st, 2001) STUPA WEEKEND #2



This long weekend will again be dedicated to the Long Life of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with the emphasis on Long-life practices, Vajrasattva, and placement of Tsa Tsa and the many offering personally prepared by Rinpoche for placement in the Stupa. We invite all international and US Dzogchen Community to participate and have planned this retreat to occur after Rinpoche's West Coast Retreat in May.

Purification of Six Lokas Practice
Weekend
March 10-11

GREEN TARA PRACTICE
WEEKEND
June 23-24

SUMMER SMS Base Practice
Retreats with Jim Valby
July 14th-21st, 2001
Tsegvalgar SMS Base Level Practice
Retreat
The four daily sessions are: 8:30-10am, 10:30-12, 4:30-6 (Yantra

Yoga), 6:30-8pm. Anybody who has attended a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or participated in one of the three universal transmission practice days may participate in our SMS Base Level Practice Retreat where we will focus on the essential theory and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his book named "The Precious Vase - Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha". Jim Valby, a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982, will lead this retreat.

July 22-29, 2001
Tsegvalgar SMS First Level
Practice Retreat

The four daily sessions are:
8:30-10am, 10:30-12, 4:30-

6 (Yantra Yoga), 6:30-8pm. Anybody who has taken the SMS First Level training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu may participate in our SMS First Level Practice Retreat where we will focus on the essential theory and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the SMS First Level training. Jim Valby, a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982, will lead this retreat.

*TBA indicates To Be Announced

PLEASE NOTIFY THE MAIN
TSEGYALGAR OFFICE TO
RESERVE A SPACE IN THE
DORMITORY:

Tsegvalgar
PO Box 277
Conway, MA 01341, USA
Tel: 413 369 4153 (office)
or 413 369 4312 (geko)
Email:
74404.1141@compuserve.com
Fax: 413 369 4165

New Gakyils

Netherlands

Blue: Doro Franck and Martin Landsman
Red: Ina Schlingemann and Engelen Schutruts
Yellow: Jaap Plugge

Kunsangar, Russia

Blue:
Luda Kislichenko (lalita@rain.bog.msu.ru)
Alexander Poubants (kunsang@gar.dzogchen.art.ru)
Grisha Mokhin (mokhin@bog.msu.ru)
Yellow:
Gosha Kalmikov (gven@ccs.ru)
Misha Kislichenko (has no e-mail yet. But people can write to
kunsang@gar.dzogchen.art.ru)
Red:
Igor Matsibourski (igor@memory.ru)
Andrew Binukov (kunsang@gar.dzogchen.art.ru)
Sergey Rounov (Director as well) (runov@online.ru)

Singapore

Red:
Tan Yan Tee
Email: yantee@singnet.com.sg
Tel: 2270820

K.C. Ong

Email: titad@pacific.net.sg
titadhammo@hotmail.com
Tel: (65)-96789428 (Singapore)
(66)-1-8503490 (Thailand)

Blue:

Goh Jong Tai
Tel: 5624644

Michael Foo
Tel: 94965886

Yellow:

Ang Soon Thian
Tel: 4513398

USA

Tsegvalgar
Two New Members on Tsegvalgar Gakyil:
Blue: Kyu Reiko
Yellow: Jacqueline Gens

California

Red:
Kathy McGrane
Yvon Chausseblanche
Laurie Bauer
Yellow:
Carol Fields - President
Rosanne Welsh - Treasurer
Patrick Tribble
Blue:
Margaret Bradford
Anastasia McGhee
Michael Hass

Secretary: Sean Buckley



1st Annual Autumn Vajra Dance Retreat at Buckland & Tsegialgar
October 12th - 21st, 2000

COXLEY

North America is Pleased to Announce:

Tsegialgarnet

Tsegialgarnet has been established to provide the North American Dzogchen Community with a means to communicate more frequently with each other about local and national Dzogchen Community issues. If you would like to be on our list please send an email to : <tsegialgarnet-subscribe@listbot.com>.

You will receive an email invitation (you must reply with a blank message) and instructions for posting a message. If you have any questions, please write to <tsegialgarnet@hotmail.com>.

TSEGYALGAR BOOKSTORE PLEA

The Tsegialgar bookstore is seeking manufacturers and craft persons for high quality Dharma items such as bells and dorjes, statues, incense or Tibetan clothing from India, Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. Any information would be appreciated.

Please contact Kyu at
kyukhandro@csi.com

NORTH AMERICAN DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY MEETS

January 13th to 15th
Northern California

The North American Dzogchen Community, Tsegialgar, is planning to have a Gar-wide meeting. Tsegialgar East and West, and places in between, plan to meet in the Bay area over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, January 13th to 15th. The agenda topics will include:

- Communicating and collaborating effectively as Tsegialgar
- Gakyil communication with the seat of the Gar in Conway
- How to find and develop Tsegialgar-West
- The continuation of our lineage of Transmission
- Tsegialgar in relationship with the other Gars

*Please send other agenda topics to Paula Barry at paulades@javanet.com. Also we will discuss five items identified by the International Financial Gar Platform as issues to be addressed by all of the Gars.

1. Legal structure of the Gars/Gakyils.
2. Liability issues and insurance.
3. Ownership and maintenance of the property - income situation of the Gar/Gaykils.
4. Sharing of common expenses by the Gars/Gakyils.
5. International Fundraising for International Programs/North America Fundraising.

We hope to have plenty of time for discussions as well as relaxation. Joan Casey has contacted the Audubon Club regarding renting out their facility on Mt. Tamalpais which has lots of rooms and beds. It looks as though we will be able to work it out for under twenty five people on the 12th, 13th, 14th, and the cost will be between \$10 and \$20 per person per night.

We hope that every Gakyil of North America will be able to send at least one representative to this meeting. We also hope to have representatives from the Mexican community.

If you are planning to come please contact Paula Barry at <paulades@javanet.com> or Jey Clark at <4winds@4windsmusic.com> so we can plan well.

See you there!

DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY WEST COAST Looking for Tsegialgar West

The Garland Project

(Retreat Center) Brief Update:

On December 1st - 4th, Patrick Tribble, Carol Fields, Kathy McGrane, Jey Clark, Marcia Fields, and Ann Casey traveled to San Diego, where we met Joan Casey from Bellingham in Washington State, and then went to a small conference center on the Santa Rosa Plateau between San Diego and Los Angeles, where we were joined by Michael Hass and Gene Kim of the Los Angeles area. We spent our time practicing; looking at the conference center land and environs and discussing possible purchase with its owner, Ray Kelly; and exploring other potential sites in Valley Center. We hiked in the area, but didn't have time to get to the beach.

Though we loved the idea of acquiring the conference center, completely set up and ready to go with eight or nine bedrooms and great kitchen, a meeting room, plus cottage, and we also really liked Ray's land—there were infinite possibilities for retreat cabins, etc., and lots of quiet, solitude, and fabulous mountain views—we could not quite fathom how to make the purchase for \$800,000. The conference center, plus the twenty-three acres that go with it, has great potential for renting out and bringing in income—it is in perfect shape. There are many nice lots and properties all

around this location also which could be bought by Community members—it is a great area, with huge amounts of open space and wildlife preserved by the Nature Conservancy.

There is a five-acre minimum on lots, so it is not filled with subdivisions and there is considerable peace and quiet. We agreed to continue talking with Ray about what might develop. Meanwhile, the conference center is a great place to rent on weekends—it costs \$2,000 per weekend, which comes to \$100 per person, if twenty people attend. (<http://www.hrisas.com>) We saw three properties in Valley Center, where a Thai Buddhist monastery has been established, and near where Thich Nhat Hanh's group has purchased four hundred acres. Though most properties which we saw had potential, and were affordable for us, there was not unanimity about any one of them.

Result: We feel we must keep exploring. There is no question that it is WARM in Southern California at this time of year—we kept shedding our layers and putting on sun glasses. We may put an ad in the LA Times to see if someone is interested in donating property. We were pleased that we found some areas along Highway 15 between Lake Elsinore and San Diego which we liked.■

West Coast of America

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, 2001

California

May 1st

Public Talk, Introduction to Dzogchen
Northbrae Community Church
Berkeley, California

May 2nd - 6th

Scottish Rite Temple
Oakland, California

Contacts:

Tel: 510 559 9753

Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

Note: This is a non residential retreat. We will have a listing of local accommodations available after the first of the year.

Seattle, Washington

Public Talk by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Seattle

An Introduction to Dzogchen

Wednesday, 7 pm, May 9th, 2001

Kane Hall, 210, at the Campus of University of Washington
Seattle

Contact:

Heidi and Daniel Winkler

7840 126th Ave. NE

Kirkland, WA. 98033

USA

Tel: 425 822 5080

Email: DzogchenSeattle@cs.com

Portland, Oregon

The retreat will be held from May 18th to May 20th at the World Forestry Center, Miller Hall, 4033 SW Canyon Road, Portland.

Registration fees:

\$148 by March 15th

\$165 by April 15th

\$180 after April 15th

Retreat schedule:

Friday May 18 7:00 - 9:00 pm Dzogchen Teachings

Saturday May 19 8:30 - 10:00 am Yantra Yoga

10:30 - 12:30 am Dzogchen Teachings

2:00 - 3:30 pm Yantra Yoga

4:00 - 6:00 pm Dzogchen Teachings

Sunday May 20 8:30 - 10:00 am Yantra Yoga

10:30 - 1:00 pm Dzogchen

Teachings and Ganapuja

Email: CHNNPDX@TELEPORT.COM

Tel: 503-240-8707.

Please write checks to:

Namkhai Norbu Portland Retreat

Upcoming Activities in Santa Fe and California 2000- 2001

Vajra Dance Practice

Thursday, Dec. 28th

Location: The Glenview Performing Arts Studio

7:30-9:30 p.m.

1318 Glenfield Ave, Oakland

Contact: LaurieCPB@aol.com

Liberation of the Six Lokas, Dance Retreat

January 19th, 20th, 21st

Taught by Anastasia McGhee

Fairfax, CA

Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

Yantra Yoga in Santa Fe, New Mexico & Northern California, USA

April 13th - 20th, 2001

Santa Fe, New Mexico

This is a First Level Yantra Yoga led by Anne Dankoff and Paula Barry for Yantra Yoga teacher authorization, and overseen by Fabio Andrico.

Contact:

Anne Dankoff

Tel: 505-466-4280.

Email: adankoff@nets.com

April 25th to 29th, 2001 in the San Francisco Bay Area

Location: TBA

This is a First Level Yantra Yoga course in from Wednesday to Sunday

There will be two sessions per day : 10am - noon & 4pm - 6pm.

The course will be led by Lynn Sutherland and Jey Clark for Yantra Yoga teacher authorization, and overseen by Fabio Andrico.

Contact:

Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

Tel: Jey Clark 510-665-1710



DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

WEEKEND RETREAT WITH JIM VALBY

by John LaFrance

On the weekend of November 10th to November 12th, a group of about thirty practitioners gathered at the school in Conway to participate in a training led by Jim Valby. Jim explained a practice which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted during the last retreat here in August 1999, a *terma* teaching on Purification of the Six Lokas from Rinpoche's teacher, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje.

As always, Jim Valby's explanations were very clear and direct, mixed with a large dose of common sense and humor. I love the way he describes his inner voice and what it says to him about various things. It's always nice to know one isn't alone in one's delusions and confusions.

These training weekends with Jim are so valuable, for us as individuals and as a Community; it brings us together through the transmission we share with Rinpoche. And, we get to practice Yantra Yoga with Paula and the Vajra Dance with Kyu. What could be better! I'm so grateful for everyone at Conway who makes these events possible and I highly recommend them to all practitioners.■

WITH OTHER EYES

NEWS FROM TASHIGAR

by Juan Chiarella and Griselda Galmeiz

The Year 2000 is called a year of change and in this way we have been preparing for the arrival of the Master to Argentina. It hasn't been very easy. Argentina is suffering from a bad economy, so we must work very hard when we have a job. If we don't, there is no money. This situation affects our Dzogchen Community. Some people cannot pay their fees; some cannot travel to Tashigar. In spite of this, Tashigar has been functioning all year. With our Community funds we've paid the salary of our Secretary and Gekoes and provided them with good housing and facilities which they need. Moreover, Tashigar has been open for all people who wanted to stay for some days; practicing and collaborating.

There have been some material changes. The Gar has a complete infrastructure which has developed over many years. The most important thing is to keep Tashigar in good condition, and for this reason the red Gakyil has made general arrangements in the houses, such as new plumbing installations, the cleaning of the area near the Gonpa and camping, and the care of Rinpoche's garden. The roof of the Gonpa has just been changed and though some of us might wish a more elegant Gonpa, the Gakyil chose to do what is possible according to circumstances. Now we are asking for all people of good will to help us to repair the external wooden mandala Rinpoche helped to construct. The estimated budget for that is \$1300.

We place our hope in inner change. Much effort has been directed to collect and organize the teachings that our Master has given us in Tashigar. We are translating and making digital recordings to help us practice and follow the precious teachings.

We are working to organize the activities of everything we have mentioned in the Gar and for the retreat. We also want to examine our Gakyil meetings and communication style. To sum it up: there has been an increasing awareness of the need to change since 1999 and we are trying to change together. This is difficult to achieve because each person has a different time of understanding. It happens that they eyes of the ego wish to defend and see in a confused way; sometimes people think they are helping while they are really blocking, or looking outside and criticizing another person for something they themselves do, or feeling too busy with their own problems so that they don't see that someone needs help. That is to say, sometimes our egos are stronger than our good intentions. To overcome this, we took refuge in the teachings and the blue Gakyil organized many retreats in Tashigar: The Seventh Lojong, Dance of the Three Vajras, Guru Draggur, Inner Rushen, Zengpa, Purification of Six Lokas and Karma Yoga. The objective was always the same; to purify both our own samaya and our shared samaya. They also functioned as retreats for new practitioners to prepare for the Christmas retreat.

In the Gar some people made marmalade from the fruit, candles and the famous Black Fire, a nut liquor from of recipe which Rinpoche and Rosa left us. These little enterprises help contribute to the Gar's finances. Meanwhile, the people of Buenos Aires organized two courses - one of the Vajra Dance with Nelida Saporiti and one of *thanka* painting with Glen Eddy.

There are still some things waiting to be done, like the outside Mandala. We have confidence that everything will get done because when the practitioners' energy flows, nothing is really difficult and the energy of Tashigar has begun to flow cleaner in this year of 2000.

We did translation into Spanish of Rinpoche's transmission video and received it on November 21st. We are also preparing for the Christmas retreat and invite all our Vajra brothers and sisters in the world to come here on this occasion. We are waiting with great excitement for all the people who wish to enjoy Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teachings.

Argentina is not an easy country. There are not many Dzogchen practitioners here and we may surely do some things in the wrong way. Fortunately, though, on the other hand, our commitment is very strong. And now we are waiting for all the Vajra brothers and sisters with an open heart. So, come and see with your own eyes!■



Venezuela News

Margarita Update - North Tashigar
To all members of the Dzogchen Community:

We would like to share our activities and experiences regarding the collecting of funds to acquire a piece of land dedicated to build the Gar in Venezuela. The Gar will be on Margarita Island in the Caribbean and all the international Communities will be entitled to buy pieces of land. Our dear master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, will have a house on this land. Thirty pieces have been provisionally projected to be allocated to either Communities or individuals, with the priority being given to the Communities. The proposed name is North Tashigar.

In this regard, we in Venezuela

came to the agreement to organize ourselves to be able to buy a piece for our Community. Accordingly, we decided to run a small lottery with a prize of approximately \$1,000; considering it very practical since everyone enjoys the possibility of having some extra money and there would be no need to show any prize articles. We intended to sell a minimum of twenty-five tickets per person, with a commitment for a whole book of tickets; those who didn't like the idea of selling had the option of buying all or part of the tickets. The beauty in this was the commitment to and sharing in the common aim of selling everything and collecting the projected amount. The experience was a success, showing that when we all unite and work together there is less

effort per person and bigger and better results, with more cheer and happiness.

We also ran an auction with many beautiful *thankas*, yet nobody bought any, probably due to the hard times we have undergone. Nonetheless, it was a good opportunity to enjoy time together, make plans and lend support to each other.

With the arrival of Rinpoche in Margarita Island in February 2001 to visit the land and rest, we have planned a gathering with our brothers and sisters of the international Community who might be interested in sightseeing the surroundings of the future Gar. We would like to know those interested in advance with the object of being able to provide lodging at convenient rates, depending on the number of people that might come. Also it would be a good opportunity for sightseeing since the island is beautiful. Interested persons can contact Jesus Ortol at the following address: jortoll@worldwidetravel.com.ve

Yours in the Dharma,
Eglee Barros and Walter Perez



A CALL TO COLLABORATE WITH THE REPAIRING OF THE MANDALA OF TASHIGAR

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

All those who know our land at Tashigar know about the existence of the Mandala built under the pine wood, around the main house. Before Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had the dream in which he received the complete form of the Three Vajra Dance (OM A HUM), the Master dreamed himself building a Mandala together with some of his disciples in the place where it is now.

As soon as he arrived to Tashigar, a couple of months later in 1990, he himself gave the money for its building which started right away. The older practitioners may remember the happy days in which we shared songs, laughs and work with Rinpoche when building this mandala.

Therefore this Mandala is something precious for all the members of the Community since it was made by Rinpoche's own hands. Unfortunately, being in the outdoors, there are serious problems for preserving it: wet, rain, pine sap and birds harm it seriously.

At present we are concentrated on repairing it, for which we need to collect the amount of \$1,000US. This amount includes the purchase of the following materials:

- new phenolic cover (a kind of wood)
- specific products for its protection in the outdoors (resin, etc.)
- painting and other expenses needed for the repair.

Those members who would like to collaborate can send their money through the Yellow Gakyil (from Buenos Aires or Cordoba) or make a deposit to Tashigar's bank account (BBV- Banco Frances Saving Account No 291-528/5 or Current Account No 291-053/2). Those who would like to send money from abroad can also do this through Western Union to: Adriana Battisti, ID 11.189.359. It would be necessary to have the money during the month of October to be able to start mending it in November. The donations are for the repairing of the Mandala and any amount is important. Thanks a lot for your contribution.

Gakyil of Tashigar



New Singapore Gakyil

(left to right)
Ang Soon Thian, Tan Yan Tee, KC Ong, Goh Jong Tai and Michael Foo

PASSAGES

Died:

Our Polish Vajra sister Idalia Zagroba, 33 years old, died on December 8th at 1pm after a long illness. Idalia was a very intelligent practitioner and a famous artist.



SANTI MAHA SANGHA PRACTICE AND STUDY RETREATS WITH JIM VALBY JANUARY 2001, NAMGYALGAR, AUSTRALIA.

The Retreat Program:

January 6th - 12th Santi Maha Sangha Base level Practice Retreat

January 14th - 20th Santi Maha Sangha First Level Practice Retreat

January 22nd - 28th Santi Maha Sangha Second Level Practice Retreat

January 6th -28th: During the retreats there will be evening sessions devoted to the study of Dzogchen Semde texts.

COST

The retreat prices include food (3 meals per day prepared by retreatants on a roster basis)

No self catering available at the Gar.

If not eating at the Gar, cost is \$50 less per week

BASE LEVEL RETREAT

Members - Aus\$260.

Non Members - Aus\$ 330.

(less \$50 if not eating at the Gar)

FIRST LEVEL RETREAT

Members Only - Aus\$260

2 weeks - Base plus First level = Aus \$360

SECOND LEVEL

Members Only - Aus\$260

3 weeks - Base plus First and Second level retreats = \$460

EVENING STUDY SESSIONS of Semde Texts

Non members: Aus\$35 per session /\$150 per week

Members: \$25 per session /\$100 per week

(Additional cost if eating meals at Gar)

CHILD CARE will be provided for the Base Level retreat (first week) only. Donations and help appreciated.

ACCOMMODATION costs are not included.

Camping will be available at the Gar.

To book a camping spot, send Aus \$25 to the Secretary. (see below)

Camping Fees are \$5 per day or \$20 per week.

(Namgyalgar Visitors Information available from Secretary)

Rental accommodation near the Gar is available, but must be booked early, because January is summer holiday time. Accommodation Information is available from the Secretary. (see below)

REGISTRATION

To insure your place at this retreat and to insure the retreat will go ahead, we must receive a \$75 deposit per person (which entitles you to a 25% discount on the total retreat cost) by the 25th of September, 2000. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity and book now!

All bookings and requests for brochure and more information can be made to:

The Secretary,
Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar
PO Box 14,
Central Tilba,
NSW, 2546
Australia
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au
Tel/fax : 61 2 44737668

Namgyalgar News

November 19th, 2000.

Here at Namgyalgar it has been raining for the last week and now the dry earth has finally been watered, the grass is growing, the weir is overflowing and the tanks are full for the summer. The long grass down to the creek and across the creek in the Vajra Halls proposed position has recently been slashed by a local farmer, so that now we can walk there and sit by the creek and plan the Dance Hall in comfort, without the snakes creeping up on us unseen in the long grass. Work is slowly but surely happening around the Gonpa. Alan Gilbert and friends are building two toilets of a composting type close to the Gonpa and that edifice is steadily rising and should be completed soon.

Jonathan Schaeffer, our Gekos, and Max Hand, a regular practitioner at Namgyalgar this year, and a qualified builder, are both working on the inside of the Gonpa finishing paneling that may one day be painted by artists in the Tibetan tradition. Plans have been made for the two ends of the Gonpa to be filled in to form three extra rooms for the office, book shop and store room. We are hoping that work on these will proceed soon.

Our loyal electrician Luciano Limonta spent a week down here recently updating all the electrical work for this extension. Tony Laurent, our Sydney based Vajra brother architect, is overseeing all the work and has also spent much time here in the last month making sure all is proceeding as planned. A local joinery is preparing the beautiful windows and doors and the walls

will be filled in with mud. While Tony was here he and a number of us locals, Kerrie, Jean and Alathe(Sydney), made a valiant effort to eradicate the ubiquitous lantana from below Rinpoche's house and to open up the beautiful area under the old fig tree. This area is just below the house containing huge rocks and an ancient fig tree. It's just a wonderful shady place to sit and contemplate. Tony was stung by a dangerous giant stinging tree, but we quickly cured his pain by using the sap from the bark of the branches and proved this local remedy to be effective. We trimmed back the stinging tree so that it does not block the path any more and people can move freely into the area.

While Tony was here we looked at sites for a retreat cabin and also the Vajra Hall where we can dance the Dances of the Vajra. This was a very profitable time and hopefully other people will also look at these sites soon and we can begin to organize the construction of these important additions to the Gar.

This year at the Gar we have had a very dedicated Practice Group of about fourteen regulars, half of which are new people learning the practices. This has been very inspiring for us and also very enjoyable to share practices and company with this group. For the next five weeks we are having a Dance Course in which we are learning the Dance of the Three Vajras, the OMA Hum Dance. Jean Mackintosh, our local instructor of the Vajra Dance in Australia, is teaching the course and everyone is very enthusiastic. On the first night after everyone learned the first steps and we were able to dance to the music, the atmosphere in the Gonpa was very special and magical. We are very pleased to finish the year with this practice.

We arranged the special transmission practice which in Australia occurred at 11pm on Tuesday, November 21st. A number of new people attended and along with our regular practice group. Because there are new people constantly inquiring, we are starting a second practice night during the week with explanations for beginners on a Monday night with Angie Gilbert. Our popular Gekos Jonathon Schaeffer was in Cairns for a holiday and we had the company of Emily Coleing for two weeks who filled in as Gekos. Emily is very interested and knowledgeable about land management and gardens. We welcome her input and hope she returns soon. We also welcome our international members, Ron and Angela Goettinger from the USA, who are back with us for some time and also Marcia from Italy.

We are looking forward to Santi Maha Sangha retreats with Jim Valby in January. He will give three week long retreats for each level of the Base, First Level, and Second Level. We are very fortunate to have this opportunity and many people are planning to come to the Gar for this retreat.

Best wishes to everyone from Namgyalgar. The rain has finally stopped and the water has warmed up, people have started swimming and we are planning to enjoy the immanent summertime.

by Jean Mackintosh

Namgyalgar Gakyil Development Seminar

by Eleanor Loudon and Joy Dahl

This Seminar, originally suggested by Rinpoche, was held with the purpose of introducing and establishing procedures for effective communication and for creating a solid basis of collaboration and trust between members of the recently formed Gakyil and associated positions. We called it a Formation Seminar, however the sessions could be valuable for any working group including already established Gakyils. The gathering was held at a Gakyil member's home. Being in a location different than the Gar gave us undistracted time and a valuable perspective. All the Gakyil, the Office Bearers and the Gekos were invited to attend.

We were fortunate in having two members of the community who were experienced in this work. One was an organizational consultant specializing in collaboration and process improvement and the other, a Gakyil member who was working on a degree in Managing Community Organizations.

The objectives of the weekend were clearly defined in consultation with all participants and the seminar program for reaching these objectives was researched and developed for some weeks prior to the weekend.

The objectives were to learn how to:

1. Develop a strong trust in one another.
2. Better communicate our feelings and give feedback (both positive and constructively critical) thus alleviating gossip, frustration and resentment.
3. Understand each other's dimension and thus develop respect and compassion for each other
4. Hold efficient meetings which imbued energy rather than depleting it.
5. Improve how we function, both individually and in the group by applying process improvement skills and methods

It was reassuring to discover that the principles of effective organizational functioning were completely compatible with Dzogchen principles and not some foreign and rigid system to be imposed on our Community style. For example, the five capacities required to create a learning culture within organizations were consistent with the Five Capacities Necessary for the Practice of Dzogchen introduced by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in *The Crystal and the Way of the Light*.

Our gathering began after lunch on Saturday and finished at dinnertime on Sunday. We practiced Chöd together every morning. This practice was chosen because some sessions were designed to push our limits and Chöd is a good practice for overcoming the fear of opening up, for extending beyond limitations.

Saturday evening we dressed up and ate a special dinner together. It was important to incorporate play into the weekend. Many of the methods and skills were introduced and practiced in the form of games. Playtime and a playful approach bonds people, builds trust, and enhances the integration of learning, as Rinpoche often delights in reminding us by his own example.

Topics covered were: Developing a Learning Culture; Me, My Life and the Gakyil; Trust Circles; Feedback; Win/Win Communication and Blockers; Meetings Model; Brainstorming; Learning Cycles; Roles, Responsibilities and Boundaries; Vision & Mission.

During the weekend we held a real one-hour Gakyil meeting to immediately apply the methods introduced. It was a chance to test our learning with really important items on the agenda. Then there was a half-hour "time out" to reflect on our progress and plan improvements before continuing with another hour of meeting followed by another half an hour reflection period. This proved to be very effective.

At the end of the weekend we had a Ganapuja with other members of the Community.

This is an on-going process. It could well be forgotten in a few rough meetings if not continually revisited. We now include in the agenda of each Gakyil meeting a half-hour review of our process so far. This is always very helpful. It has been agreed to hold such a development weekend bi-annually. The next one will be different. It is scheduled for the first weekend in December and will address issues that have arisen in these last six months and carry on where the last seminar left off.

The weekend was successful due to a number of factors, but principally due to the 100% commitment received from each person prior to their attendance. In the final debrief a deep sense of connection and support resounded. As Gakyil members have noted, Rinpoche set a high goal for us when he pointed out that our lengthy meetings were disrespectful of each other's time. He suggested that two hours would be more appropriate than the two days which was our past custom. So far we've gotten that time down to one day with a process that is both efficient and fair. When we stick to it, the meetings are both faster and more relaxed. It is fantastic that ongoing improvement in efficiency and respectful communication is becoming the basis for our work. ■

POSITION OF GEKO OPEN AT NAMGYALGAR

A new Geko will be required for Namgyalgar in the coming Year of the Metal Snake for the period of March, 2001 to March, 2002.

If you are interested in applying for the position of Geko, please notify the Secretary and detailed information about the position and conditions will then be forwarded to you. Please include an address for reply.

Best Wishes,
Vicki Forscutt

Secretary
PO Box 14 Central Tilba,
NSW 2546
Tel. and Fax: 61 02 4473 7668
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au



Shang - Shung Edizioni Italy



PUBLIC BOOKS

The following books are available also for those who do not have received the transmission of the teachings from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

TEACHINGS BY CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU

Translated from Tibetan

Three Songs for the Disciples of Chang Chub Dorje

Translated and edited by A. Clemente

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

The three songs which have been translated in this collection were written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the summer of 1988 during a visit to Khamdo Gar in east Tibet, one time residence of Changchub Dorje, his principal Dzogchen master.

In co-production with Station Hill Openings:

The Mirror, Advice on the Presence of Awareness

Translated from Tibetan into Italian and edited by A. Clemente

Translated from Italian into English by A. Lukianowicz

L. 15.000 US\$ 10

The Mirror aims to precisely explain the principle of presence and awareness whose continuous practice is the only real alternative to the rules and limitations characteristic of most religious traditions.

Transcripts from Oral Teachings

The Four Awarenesses

Lire 5.000 US\$ 3.50

The four awarenesses that change one's mental attitude: the precious human body, impermanence, karma, and the suffering of samsara. Teachings given in Milan (Italy) in 1989.

The Three Sacred Principles

Lire 8.000 US\$ 5.50

Refuge and Bodhicitta, the contemplation, and the dedication of merits are the three fundamental aspects of the teaching. From a retreat held at Tsegylgar (USA) in 1994.

Bodhicitta

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gives a detailed explanation of the real meaning of Bodhicitta and how to apply it in practice. From a retreat held in Merigar (Italy) October 1991.

Buddhism and Psychology

L. 5.000 US\$ 3.50

This book is, rather than a comparison between Buddhist philosophy and psychological theory, a frank talk about seeing oneself, conditioning, western minds and eastern minds, and the possible place of psychology in the life of a practitioner.

Articles

L. 6.000 US\$ 4

This booklet is a collection of articles by Chögyal Namkhai published in "The Mirror", the newspaper of the Dzogchen Community,

and contains advice on various themes such as daily practice, the relationship between 'old' and 'new' students, educating children and includes a talk explaining why the Dzogchen Community in different countries has been buying land and buildings in recent years.

WORKS BY OTHER AUTHORS

Nyagla Pema Dundul

The Song of Energy

Translated and edited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with the collaboration of E. Dell'Angelo

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

The Song of Energy of the Nature of the Mind is a spiritual song, written as advice for two of the Author's disciples. It is particularly meaningful in order to have a direct understanding of Dzogchen.

Nyagla Pema Dundul

Songs of experience

Translated and edited by A. Clemente

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

This brief collection aims to give a 'taste' of the spontaneous wisdom of Nyagla Pema Dundul, master of Adzam Drugpa, Ayu Khandro, Changchub Dorje and other important Dzogchen masters.

Buddhagupta

The Little Hidden Harvest

Translated by E. Dell'Angelo

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

The Little Hidden Harvest is a version of the sBas pa'i rgum chung, an ancient original Dzogchen text found in the Tun-huang documents.

Namchö Minjyur Dorje

The Interpretation of Dreams in a 17th Century Tibetan Text

Translated by E. Dell'Angelo

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

This short text belongs to a series of thirteen volumes transmitted by the tertön Master Minjyur Dorje called Namchö, "The Teaching of the Sky". This brief text is not sufficient as an exhaustive study on dreams, but does provide a wide perspective enabling the reader to have a general idea of a way of interpreting dreams.

His Holiness Sakya Trizin

Parting from the Four Attachments

Edited by E. Copello with the collaboration of A. Lukianowicz

L. 20.000 US\$ 14

H.H. Sakya Trizin delivered these teachings in Merigar during his visit on June 1998. At the beginning he explained: "This teaching, the path of all Buddhas of the past and of the future that contains all the deep meanings of all the Sutras combined in a practical way, is known as the Mind Training or Pith Instructions, presented by the great masters in the most practical way through their own experience." This book is particularly useful for deepening the knowledge of the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha.

Shense Lhaje

Visionary Encounters with Knowledge-Holders and Dakinis

Translated and edited by A. Clemente

8.000 US\$ 5.50

The Golden Advice of the Dran pa

is a collection of Dzogchen teachings in the form of aphorisms, revealed by the tertön Shense Lhaje, a bönpö living in the 13th century.

Lhundrup Tso

A Brief Biography of Adzam Drugpa

Translated and edited by A. Clemente

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

This is a brief biography of Adzam Drugpa written in the form of an invocation by his disciple, Lhundrup Tso, paternal grandmother of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It may be the only biography in existence or at least the only one found up to now.

Dugu Chögyal Rinpoche

The Layers of the Onion

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

Presented in Dugu Chögyal Rinpoche's usual informal style, these teachings combine a freshness of spontaneity with the directness and depth arising from his vast experience of practice.

Poems poesie poesias

Edited by Rita Bizzotto

Lire 35.000 20 US\$

The Master collected and kept the poems that children and grown-up practitioners sent to him in the course of years and finally decided to publish them. As a result this book is reporting these poems in full as they were written, with their drawings and illustrations. "These poems like a mirror reflect light and shadows, the hopes and regrets, the discomfort and enthusiasm of those practitioners who are travelling in the same boat along this difficult route, difficult but impossible to give up, towards total enlightenment", (from the Preface by Rita Bizzotto).

TIBETAN CULTURE

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Origins of Tibetan Thought and Culture

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

"The origins of Tibetan history and culture are important not only from a strictly historical standpoint, but also to deepen our understanding of the Tibetan teachings and traditions..." From a lecture delivered in Barcelona (Spain) on June 14th, 1987.

Adriano Clemente

The Sgra Bla, Gods of the Ancestors of Gshen-Rab Mi-Bo

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

A brief analysis of the fifth chapter of the gZi brjid, the biography of gShen-rab mi-bo containing a Sang rite dedicated to various classes of Sgra Bla. Although the gZi brjid only dates back to the fourteenth century, it is considered characteristic of the pre-Buddhist Tibetan culture.

TIBETAN ASTROLOGY

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar

Edited by M.R. Leti

L. 15.000 US\$ 10

Much information on Tibetan astrology and on its application to daily life. A practical and complete manual, indispensable for the consultation of the annual astrological calendar.

Calendar-agenda for the Metal Dragon Year (2000-2001)

Lire 15.000 US\$ 10

Pocket agenda containing concise indications of the practices recommended by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for special days, positive and negative days for the Nagas Practice, astrological data of the Tibetan Calendar and the individual aspects for those born between 1912 and 2000. Indispensable for finding out favorable and unfavorable days for daily activities and to remember special practice days.

RESTRICTED BOOKS

The following books are restricted to those who have received the transmission of the teachings directly from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

WORKS BY CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU

Translated from Tibetan

Santi Maha Sangha

Translated from Tibetan and edited by G. Orofino

L. 15.000 US\$ 10

The original root-text of the Santi Maha Sangha Training.

The Precious Vase - Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha

Translated from the Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente

Translated from Italian into English by A. Lukianowicz

L. 35.000 US\$ 25

This book is the new revised and increased Base text of the Santi Maha Sangha. Expanded on notes and quotations, it is the essential text for the study and practice of the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha training.

Santi Maha Sangha Training for Boys and Girls - Base Level

Translated from Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente

L. 10.000 US\$ 6.50

A short text aimed at giving boys and girls the opportunity to step into the path through a very simple base of the teaching.

The Direct Introduction to the State of Atiyoga

Translated from Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente

L. 25.000 US\$ 17

The Direct Introduction to the State of Atiyoga (A ti'i d'gongs pa ngo sprod) is an extraordinary Upadesha belonging to the cycle of The Innermost Essence of the Dakinis of the Radiant Clarity of the Universe (Klong chen 'öd gsal mkhai 'egrofi snying thig). Chögyal Namkhai Norbu received this teaching through his dreams. The stories of his dreams and visions are also translated here. This teaching was transmitted in Merigar in July, 1999.

From the Depth of my Heart to my Mother (out of stock)

Translated and edited by A. Clemente

L. 25.000 US\$ 17

Written in Lhasa at the age of 19 for his mother, this text is a clear and essential introduction to the fundamental practice of Dzogchen. Contains a photo of the Master with his family in the late 50's.

Songs from the Hospital and Other Poems

Translated from the Tibetan by A. Clemente

L. 25.000 US\$ 17

This book contains three poems written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in December, 1994 and January and February, 1995, during his stay at the Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York (In the Space Pure from the Beginning, Samantabhadra and Illusory Body) as well as two songs written in 1985 (The Little Song for Bringing Down the Blessings of the Mahamudra, The Little Song of the Forty Withouts).

The Practice of Long Life of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava (Practice Text)

Translated from Tibetan by I. Gaetani

L. 10.000 US\$ 6.50

The text of the Practice of Long Life and Chudlen with line by line translation and instructions on Chudlen practice.

The Practice of Long Life of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava (Terma Texts and Their Origins)

Translated from Tibetan and edited by I. Gaetani

L. 25.000

The original terma texts on Long Life practice and on Chudlen of Mandarava received by the Master in 1984 and 1985.

Collective Practices

Lire 10.000 US\$ 6.50

New revised edition of the six collective practices for special days: Long Life Practice of Guru Padmasambhava (U.W.U), Long Life Practice of Guru Amitayus (U.P.E.), Long Life Practice of Mandarava (C.L.V.), Guruyoga of Garab Dorje with the white A, Shitro, Purification of the Six Lokas. Some practices were translated from Tibetan by G. Orofino.

Thun

L. 10.000 US\$ 6.50

New updated version of Short, Medium and Long Tun, Chöd, Short and Long Ganapuja, according to the latest indications of the Master. As an appendix Namkhai and Lungta practices and Marne Mönlam invocation.

Purification Practice of Vajrasattva and Mandala Offering

Translated from Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente

L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

A complete purification practice of Vajrasattva originally transmitted by the Master in the 170s.

Santi Maha Sangha Preliminary Practices of the Base

Translated from Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente
L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50
This booklet contains the verses of the Four Awarenesses, Refuge, Bodhicitta and the Four Immeasurables to be used for the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha.

The Practice of Narag Tongtrug
Translated from Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente
Lire 10.000 US\$ 6.50
Instructions compiled by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on the base on the original text of the Narag Tongtrug practice of Lochen Dharmashri according to Anuyoga system.

Forthcoming
Dream Teachings from the Longsal Cycle
Translated from Tibetan and edited by A. Clemente
This book contains four root-texts and the histories of their discovery.

Transcripts from Oral Teachings

Booklets of the Worldwide Transmission Practices for the Anniversaries of Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava and Adzam Drupa. Dzogchen Empowerments:
- Anniversary of Garab Dorje
- Anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava
- Anniversary of Adzam Drupa

Each booklet contains an almost literal transcription of the Rinpoche's explanation, the text of the actual practice and the timetable related to the three different anniversaries.

These booklets are sold together with the videotapes produced by the Shang Shung Institute of Merigar, but they can be bought also separately.

Videotape + booklet Lit. 45.000 (available from the Shang Shung Institute ssinst@amiata.net)
Series of three booklets Lit. 10.000 US\$ 6.50

From a previous presentation of Rinpoche: "On these three special days we will do a kind of worldwide collective practice and in the course of it I will give a transmission, particularly for new people. In the first part of each video I will explain one thing after another what we should do: how to sit, how to visualize, etc. The video will explain how to go ahead with everything... On the second part I am doing this practice, but I am also transmitting Guruyoga... So in these three anniversaries old and new people use this second part of the video during their practice, and in that moment I am doing the practice wherever I am. On that day, in that precise moment, I am transmitting for people. So then transmission is alive because transmission has no distance. This is not only for new people: old practitioners who participate can refresh transmission, be in the transmission and increase their capacity for transmission."

WARNING: New practitioners have to learn the meaning and the way of performing the practice through a training led by old practitioners authorized by the Dzogchen Community. To really receive a transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, seeing the videotapes and reading the booklets is not enough.

Oral Commentary to "The Cycle of Day and Night"
Lire 20.000 US\$ 13

An oral commentary, delivered by Rinpoche at Merigar in July 1998, to his own text *The Cycle of Day and Night* written in 1993. A very

essential Dzogchen teaching linked to the principles of Dzogchen Longde. This book contains both the original text translated by John Reynolds and the commentary.

Commentary on Ngöndro
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Commentary to Stairway to Liberation with explanations on Lojong, Guruyoga and Korde Rushen, given at Merigar in September, 1990. The Phowa Practice
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This book contains the translation of the original text *Transference for Purifying the Three Kayas* according to the terma of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, the deep and extensive oral teachings on Phowa given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during the 1994 retreat in Wales (U.K.), and the text of the actual practice as taught by the Master regarding the three Phowa of Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya.

The Garuda Practice
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A concise but extensive explanation on the origin, meaning and the way of applying the essential Garuda practice, according to a terma of the great Dzogchen master Adzam Drupa, which is specially useful for overcoming negative provocations and diseases like cancer. Besides helping practitioners to stabilize their integration with the transformation practice, it also provides therapists with a means for protecting and strengthening their energy when curing their patients. This booklet includes the drawings of the mudras relating to the short opening invocation of the practice and the Tibetan text of Garuda's mantras.

An Oral Commentary to Longchenpa's "Precious Ship"
Edited by Gina Perini and Jim Valby
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A wonderful and extensive explanation, given in California in 1986, on Longchenpa's *Precious Ship* dealing with all of the major subjects of Dzogchen teachings according to the famous Kunjed Gyalpo root-tantra of Semde. This book, containing also an appendix on Kunjed Gyalpo Guruyoga and a careful Tibetan editing of Tibetan terms made by Jim Valby, is a fundamental text for every practitioner interested in deepening their understanding of contemplation.

The Seventh Lojong
L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

The Seven Mind Trainings belong to the Dzogchen Upadesa tradition and are included in the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level. The Seventh Training includes three methods to bring the practitioner to recognition of the state of contemplation through three specific experiences. To this new revised edition was added a very clear and extended explanation on *parlung*. Teachings given at Tsegylgar (USA) 1994, Kathmandu (Nepal) 1993, Venezuela 1993.

The practice of Rushen
L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

Rushen practice is for entering into knowledge of the real condition through different kinds of experiences related to body, speech and mind. One of the practices for the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level training. Transcript from oral teachings given in Kathmandu (Nepal) 1993.

The External Rushen and the Practice of the Purification of the Six Lokas (Internal Rushen)
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An essential explanation on the way of applying the External and Internal Rushen, two important practices included in the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha. Transcription of teachings given in 1981-82 in Arzachena (Italy), Oz Village and Conway (USA), Glanford Mill (UK).

The Practice of the Seven Semdzins
L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

The explanation of the seven Semdzins in this book is essentially based on a text by Adzam Drupa. The Semdzins are highly effective methods for distinguishing the pure presence of rigpa from the dualistic mind, and for removing doubts which arise during practice. Teachings given at Kathmandu (Nepal) in 1993. The Tibetan text was translated by A. Clemente.

Teachings on Semde by Sogdogpa Lodrö Gyaltsen
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At Christmas, 1991, in Merigar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu commented on a text by the master Sogdogpa Lodrö Gyaltsen entitled *Instructions on the Dzogchen Semde* according to the Nyang system (*rDzogs chen sems sdü khrid yig nyang lugs*). Besides providing methods to discover the state of contemplation, Sogdogpa's text contains interesting references to the meditative experience of Mahamudra according to masters of the Drupa Kagyu tradition.

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This practice from the Upadesha series of Dzogchen allows the practitioner to recognise the state of the dream and to use it for practice thus developing clarity of the state of contemplation. Teachings given at Subiaco (Italy) in July, 1976.

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Zemga
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Guru Dragpur
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Explanation on two Guru Dragpur practices found in a terma of Namchö Mingyur Dorje and in a terma of Heka Lingpa.

The Practice of Sinhamukha
L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

Transcription of the teaching transmitted by Rinpoche at Merigar in 1991. Sinhamukha is a wrathful manifestation of the Dakini Sangwa Yeshe.

Green Tara
L. 8.000 US\$ 5.50

In 1991 at Merigar Chögyal Namkhai Norbu taught a practice of Arya Tara which included the mantra of Green Tara and White Tara as well as invocations of important masters such as Chögyur Lingpa, Atisha and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu himself. The book contains a detailed explanation of the practice and its finality.

Odzer Chenma
L. 5.000 US\$ 3.50

Marise Odzer Chenma (*Od zer can ma*, She who has rays of light), a particular manifestation of Tara, is associated with the light of the sun. This teaching also includes an invocation written by Rinpoche's paternal grandmother, Lhundrub Tso (1864-1945), who was a direct disciple of Adzam Drupa, and a short sadhana.

Thos Grol. The Practice of the Twenty-five Thigles
L. 15.000 US\$ 10

This book contains the Thödröl teaching given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Namgyalgar, Australia, in December, 1995 and Merigar, Italy, September 1995.

The Four Chogshag. The practice of Tregchöd
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A clear explanation of the fundamental practice of Dzogchen Upadesha. Teachings given at Tsegylgar (USA) in 1996.

Puja for the Nagas
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The Nagas, which comprise one of the Eight Classes, while dominating the water element are also associated with the earth and the underground environment. Teachings given at Merigar (Italy) in 1993.

Namkha
Compiled and edited by R. Leti and T. Gottardi
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Besides clarifying the origin and meaning of Namkha, this book describes in detail the basis and the specific method to identify and harmonize the elements of each individual, the construction of a Namkha, and the practice for its authentication. The explanations are made clearer by means of many drawings and tables. In general the Namkha has a very important protective function and, if made and authenticated in a proper way, works in very effective way. This book is a compilation of teachings

transmitted principally in 1983 in Devon (UK) and Merigar (Italy).

Lungta
L. 5.000 US\$ 3.50
Lungta is the protective force of the individual and is symbolised by a horse carrying a jewel. This image together with various mantras are represented on five coloured prayer flags which are put up outside in the wind where their vital energy is developed and reinforced.

Avalokiteshvara Korwa Tongtrug
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This practice is a terma discovered by the master Adzam Drupa belonging to the cycle *The Secret Treasure of the Vajra of Clear Light*. The lineage of this practice goes back to Vairocana, Yeshe Tsogyal and Guru Padmasambhava. Teachings given at Merigar on Easter 1991.

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A short explanation on Dakinis and their different kinds, given at Subiaco (Italy) in 1976.

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How to play the damaru in the Chöd practice

Edited by A. Clemente
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This system of notation on how to play the damaru is according to the instructions transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The practice of Sang
Lire 8.000 US\$ 5.50

In November 1991 at Merigar Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted a teaching on the Sang practice of the great Dzogchen Master, Adzam Drupa Drondul Pawo Dorje (1842-1934). The Sang ritual, based on fumigation using aromatic plants such as cypress, has been used from ancient times to purify all kinds of contamination and pollution that are caused by incorrect behaviour towards various classes of non-human beings on one hand and towards the 'five divinities of the individual' on the other hand. The Sang rite is principally for purification and, in particular, for purifying the energy of the individual.

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continued on next page

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This booklet is an extract from the translation by Adriano Clemente of the original Tibetan text by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

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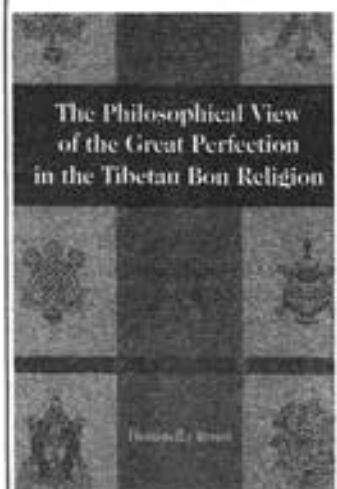
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The Philosophical View of the Great Perfection in the Tibetan Bon Religion
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Dzogchen, or the Great Perfection, is considered by both Bonpos and the followers of the Nyingma school in Tibet to be the culmination of all spiritual teachings. The philosophical view of the Great Perfection introduces the individual to the knowledge of reality, which is one with the enlightened state of all beings. In this book, the Dzogchen view is presented in two Bonpo texts belonging to the revered *terma* (treasure) and oral traditions, here for the first time translated and critically edited in their entirety.

Donatella Rossi has a Ph.D. in History of Religions and Tibetology from the University of Oslo, Norway. She currently lives in Portland, Oregon, where she continues her research on the Great Perfection in the Bon Religion.

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Between, con't from page 3

colored with different shades according to the message he wished to communicate.

Thank you Rinpoche for your help, for infusing us with courage, for reassuring us, but also for criticizing us when it is needed. May your words awaken our state of presence and warm our hearts in our practice!■

New Gekos and Secretary at Tsegylgar

TSEGYALGAR would like to announce the Geko and Secretary positions have been filled by Damien Schwartz and Andrea Nasca who, with their daughter of eight months, Ayana Sophia, will be living in the Conway school building. Bob Richardson will also be acting as an assistant Geko and living at Tsegylgar, where he will replace Kathy Smith in overseeing the Dark Retreat cabin as well as oversee work on the Buckland land.



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AUSTRALIA

Namgyalgar Dzogchen
Community of Australia*
Vicki Forscutt - Secretary
PO Box 14 Central Tilba,
NSW 2546
Tel. and Fax: 61 02 4473
7668
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au

Pamela Oldmeadow

12 Fox Place
Lyneham ACT 2602
Tel: 61(0)2 6257 1177
Fax: 61(0)2 6248 0335
Email: pamela@
dynamite.com.au

Gar
Gekoes of Namgyalgar
Jonathan Schaeffer
Email: garland@acr.net.au
Tel: 61(0)2 4473 7770

Laurence Mills
Bodhi Citta Buddhist Centre
PO Box 8177 Cairns, QLD
4870
Tel: 61(0)7 4039 0470
Email: bodhicitta@iig.com.au

AUSTRIA

Peter Sochor
Dzogchen Community of
Vienna, Austria
Gitzgasse 2/10, A-1100
Wien, Austria
Tel: +43-1-602 91 16
Email:
dzogchen.wien@gmx.at

Oliver F. Leick
Dzogchen Community of
Styria, Austria
Gschmaier 139, A-8265
Gr.Steinbach
Tel&Fax: 03386-8571 or
0676-3221365
Email: dzogchen@utanet.at
Homepage: www.
cadmasters.at/dzogchen

BELGIUM

Katia Lytridou
16, rue Paul Goedert
L-3330 Crauthem
Luxembourg
Tel: 352 366591

BRAZIL

Muriella and Washington
Malaga
Rua Pedro Pedreschi 71
02372-000, Sao Paulo
Tel-fax: 55-11-69536072
Email:
wmalaga@vol.com.br

BYELORUSSIA

Rousland Malakhouski
Ul. Odinstova 29-35
Minsk

CANADA

Peter Dimitrov
305 - 11806 88th St.
Delta, BC V4C 3C5

CZECH REPUBLIC

Centrum Lotus

Komunita dzogchenu
Dlouha 2
11 000 Praha 1
Czech Republic
Tel.: 0042-02-24 81 47 34
Email:
zelenj1.hsp@mail.cez.cz

DENMARK

Anne-Grethe Nyeng
Fax: 45 33 11 32 43
Email: vejviser@post5.tele.dk

ESTONIA

Maret Kark
Sade T 9
EE2400
Tartu
Tel: 372 7 380 038
Email: maret@ut.ee

FINLAND

Kaisa-Liisa Puonti
Visantie 19
05400 Jokela
Tel: +358 9 4172818
Fax: +358 9 140321
Email: puoka@myy.helia.fi

FRANCE

Association Dzogchen,
Dejam Ling, Le Deves
F30570 St Andre de
Majencoules
Tel: 33-(0)467824490
Email: DzogchenFr@
compuserve.com

GERMANY

Dzogchen Gemeinschaft
Helga Betz
Lindemannstr. 12 40237
Dusseldorf
Tel & Fax: 49 211 682657
Email: Dzogdus@aol.com

GREAT BRITAIN

Amely Becker
15A Langdon Park Road
London N6 5PS
Tel: 020 8348 6253
Email:
amely@globalnet.co.uk

GREECE

Panayotis Stambolis
Marinou Antypa 38
14121 N. Iraklio
Athens
Tel: 30 1 2713765
Fax: 30 1 3411856

Nikos Liberopoulos
18-20 Roikou st, 11743
Athens
Tel: (+301) 9215901
Email: libero@otenet.gr

HOLLAND

Ada de Boer (red Gakyil)
J.W. Frisostraat 44
9717 EP Groningen
Tel/fax: 31 503188606 (fax
requires a call prior to send-
ing)
Email: droonnet@bart.nl

ISRAEL

Noa Blass
Biltmore Street 15
62194 Tel Aviv
Tel & Fax: 972 3 605 75 43

ITALY

Merigar* Comunita Dzogchen
Clara Juliano -Secretary
Arcidosso, 58031 GR, Italy
Tel: 39 0 564 966837
Fax: 39 0 564 968110
Email: merigar@amiata.net

JAPAN

Tsugiko Kiyohashi
5-11-23 Shimomeguro
Meguro-Ku
Tokyo
Tel: (office) 81 3 3712 7507
Fax: 81 3 3716 7248

Junichi Chigira
Email:
jchigira@jp.oracle.com

LATVIA

Padmaling
Beljutins Elena
Lepju 5-55
Riga LV 1016
Tel: 371 -2-437343
Fax: 371-7-187233
Email: nirvana@apollo.lv

LITHUANIA

Antanas Danielius
Str. Baltupio, 47-69
Vilnius, 2057
Tel: 37 2 776824
Fax: 37 2 221618

Dorjeling
PO Box 1183
LT-2000 Vilnius
Email: Lithuania@takas.lt

LUXEMBOURG

Katia Lytridou
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MALAYSIA

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MEXICO

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Mexico
Reforma 199, piso 2
Col. Cuauhtemoc
c.p. 06500
Mexico, DF
Tel: 546 32 81
Tel & Fax: 566 83 04
Email:
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Nino Artillero 33
Tepoztilan, Morelos
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NEPAL

Vikki Floyd
GTZ-PAS (UDLE)
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Kathmandu, 1457
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NEW ZEALAND

Rosemary Friend
7 Radnor Street
North East Valley
Dunedin S. Island
Tel: 64 3 4730886
Fax: 64 3 4779463
Email:
rosejeri@earthlight.co.nz

Oni McKinstry
Apt 6B, 182 Federal St.
Auckland, 1001
Tel: 09 307 2717
Email:
oniyogini@yoga.co.nz

NORWAY

Gordon Cranmer
4157 Utstein Kloster
Mosteroy
Tel: 47 4 514705

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PERU

Comunidad Dzogchen del
Peru
Juan Bustamante
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POLAND

Cezary Wozniak
31-510 Krakow
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cwozniak@bc.krakow.pl

PORTUGAL

Vitor Pomar
Fonte Salgada 713-Z
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Portugal
tel 081 323780
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Lydia Ferreira
Rua da Nazare 2
Vila Facaia
2560 Torres Vedras
Portugal
Tel: 351 - 61 - 911235

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Kunsangar address is:
"Sosnovi Bor",
Bolshedvorskoe
Lesnchestvo,
Poselok Bolshie Dvori,
Pavlovo-Posadski raion,
Moscow reg.,
Russian Federation
Tel/fax: (007-096-43)
21156
Ann Rudneva Director
(bluesky@mail.ru
or kunsang@gar.dzogchen.
art.ru)

Moscow Dzogchen
Community, Publishing
group Shang-Shung.
Moscow and Shang-Shung
Institute, Moscow:
Puteysky tupik, dom 4/2,
stroyenie 4.
Moscow, 103064, Russia
Email: Moscow_DC
<crinchen@online.ru>
Member: Andrew Wright
<andw@ipcom.ru>

Lyuda Kislichenko: home
phone/fax: 095-3251378
(Secretary)
Gregory Mokhin: office
phone/fax: 095-2673484.
(SMS contact)
Email: mokhin@niir.msk.ru

Buryatian Community
"Kundrolling"
c/o Maria Fedetova 50 years
of October pres. 44-26
Ulan-Ude 670034
Buryatia
Email: dudka@buriatia.ru

Olga Tsvetkova
Kostromskoi Prospekt 58/31
St. Petersburg 194214
Tel: 7 812 5538121
Fax: 7 812 1307070

Denisova, Tatyana
2-Y Microrain-14 apt.3
Elista, Kalmikiya 358000

Vladivostok
DzogchenCommunity
Kuleshova Natalia
Tobolskay 12, KV.20
Vladivostok, 690066
Email:
putnik@figaro.vtlg.marine.
ru

Russian Email addresses:
VladimirKarpinsky:
vk@azpubl.msk.ru
VladimirMaikov:
maikov@dataforce.net
Updated information about
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SERBIA/EX YUGOSLAVIA

Dzogchen Community of
Yugoslavia
c/o Slavica Voglar
Rudo 1
Sp.23 st.232
11000 Beograd
Tel: 381 11 4881731
Email: voma@eunet.yu

Email of Belgrade Dzogchen
Community:
dakini@EUnet.yu

Jelena Zagorcic
Koste Jovanovica 9
11000 Beograd
Tel: 11- 467437

SINGAPORE

Ian Gan
98 Thomson Green
Singapore 574965
Tel & Fax: 4530387

Keng Leck Tan
110 E. Arthur Rd.
Singapore 1543
Tel: 65 447 2596
Fax: 65 532 6349
Email: kalatime@
singnet.com.sg

Tan Yan Tee
Email:
yantee@singnet.com.sg

SLOVENIA

Changchub Ling
PO Box 19 SL-62250
Poetovio
Tel: 386 62 222523
Fax: 386 62 29874

SOUTH AFRICA

Jerry Smith
10 Dan Pienaar Ave.
Florida North, Gauteng,
South Africa
Tel: 011 672 7250

SPAIN

Dzogchen Community, Spain
Apt. Postal 46220
28028 Madrid

SWEDEN

Alexander & Pernilla
Dobronravoff
Främlingsvägen 45
126 48 Hagersten
Stockholm
Tel: 08 744 27 17
Fax: 08 508 20 134
Email:
dobronravoff@telia.com

SWITZERLAND

Monique Leguen
12 D ch.Maisonneuve
CH-1219 Chateleine
Tel/fax: 0041-22-7973721
Email: leguen@
infomaniak.ch

TAIWAN

Armim Lee
Tel: 886-2-23250697
Fax: 886-2-23258857

Sophia Wu
Email: twinklingstar@hot-
mail.com

THAILAND

Geoffrey Blake & Lynne
Klapeccki
33 Soi Lang Suan - Ploenchit
Rd
Bangkok 10330
Thailand
Tel. 66 -2-2543555 or
Tel. 66-2-2545532 or
Tel. 66-2-2549061 (direct
line)
Email:
gblake@mozart.inet.co.th

UKRAINE

Valery Botsula
Komandarma Korka St.42-59
Kharkov
310186

USA

Tsegylgar*
Andrea Nasca -Secretary
P.O. Box 277
Conway, Mass. 01341
Tel: 413 369 4153
Fax: 413 369 4165
Email: 74404.1141@
compuserve.com

Dzogchen Community of
Alaska
Jim DeVincent
PO Box 22444
Juneau, Alaska
99802
Tel: 907 586 9776
Email: jid@gci.net

Lynn Sutherland
5717 N. Washtenaw Ave.
Chicago, IL 60659
773 784 4168
Email: lynnsuth@aol.com

Dzogchen Community West
Coast
Carol Fields
755 Euclid Ave. Berkeley, CA
94708
Tel: 510 559 9753
Fax: 510 524 0933
Email: aha@dzogchencommuni-
tywest.org
Website: www.dzogchencom-
munitywest.org

Dzogchen Community of New
Mexico
c/o Lidian King
25 B Big Tesaque Canyon
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501
Tel: 505 988 5995
Email: garuda@roadrunner.com

New York Dzogchen
Community
307 Prospect Place
Apt.1C
Brooklyn, NY 11238
Tel: 718.398.0584
Email: ed.goldberg@
thinkinc.com

Susan Indich
129 Kaelepu Dr. Kailua
Hawaii, 96734
Tel: 808 261 3469
Fax: 808 524 4342
Email: indichcoll@aol.com

Jerene
P.O. Box 2181
Kealahou, Hawaii 96750
Tel: 808 323-9714
Email: jerene@aloha.net

VENEZUELA

Pablo Lau Rivera
Lhundurbar Pba. Res.
Pedernales Av.
Paez Montalban II
1021 Caracas
Tel: 58 2 4421434
Fax: 58 2 340643
Email: ablola@hotmail.com

Elias Capriles
Apartado Postal 483
Merida 5101
Tel & Fax: 58 74 440026
Email: elicap@ciens.ula.ve
(most used)
OR eliascapriles@
latinmail.com

Merida Dzogchen Community
Apartado Postal 483
Merida 5101
Fax: 58 74 447550
58 74 440026
Email: guia@
bolivar.funmrd.gov.ve

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SO INTIMATE NOW THE CLOUDY SKY*

by Barbara Paparazzo

*Om Dhare Dhare Bhandhare Svaha Jaya Jaya Siddhi Siddhi
Phala Phala AHAH SHA SA MA Mamakolinsa menta*

For many years whenever I said the dedication of merit after practice I always thought of family, friends, enemies, insects, dogs, cats. It was difficult for me to connect with any realm besides our own human realm; it was difficult even to remember there were other realms. But when my daughter Nina died the world of the dead flared open in my heart. Beautiful Nina was traveling in the bardo and the immensity of this knowledge burned so hot it vaporized all barriers. I was now living in a much larger world, one that included the awareness that beings are dying at every moment. And this awareness made me feel less separate from the other people and beings with whom we share our planet.

This is how, in the first year after Nina's death, I came to a deep connection with nature and feel it still. I watched clouds roll across the horizon and disappear. I listened to the sound of rain beat against the roof, to crickets in early autumn, and to wind blowing through bare branches in winter. I watched goldfinches arrive in April and disappear again in the fall. I was living within the larger presence of Nature where nothing is permanent or constant and to remember this was truly the only way to bear the pain.

Nina's death filled all of my thoughts. The death of a child is like a zen koan; there is no way you can wrap your mind around it. Over and over I tried to process her disappearance from my

life, and over and over it slipped past the noose of logical reasoning.

And I wanted to know where in this vast universe I could find Nina. A mother's instinct to help her child does not necessarily disappear with death. My mind restlessly traveled seeking satisfaction, seeking comfort, seeking certainty in something, anything.

In the first seven weeks after her death we did a great deal of Shitro practice. And I always thought of her and other bardo beings whenever I had occasion to say the dedication of merit.

During this time I told Rinpoche that I included beings of the bardo when dedicating merits. He said he understood what I was saying and that I could always connect with Nina in the primordial state. "Nina was a student of mine too," he said. "You can unite with her in the primordial state whenever you sing the Song of the Vajra."

And very slowly I began to understand that it did not matter where Nina was. Since the entire universe and everything in it is primordial wisdom and since nothing is ever outside of this pure and total presence, there is nothing to change or do or fix. And there is no separation. This is a fierce realization because it means giving up believing our lives and everything in it are real. It is a difficult view to hold but a magnificent means to escape suffering. I am a person of limited capacity but I have been able to see the truth of this on occasion so I know it is possible for anyone to discover. View is everything.

Everyday I think of Nina. I remember her luminous beauty, her dazzling energy, her incomparable companionship. But I can ride my sorrow all the way to emptiness and that brings me closer to her.

* Izumi Shikibu, "The Ink Dark Moon", translated by Jane Hirshfield

After Death

by David Sharp

I found the "Reflections" article in Mirror #54 (When We Die) very informative. I had tended to give little, if any, emphasis to this part of the death process. It is nonetheless important perhaps to re-emphasize the period of sustained meditation (thugs tam) that precedes the disposal of the body. This is the meditation that comes about through the dissolution of elements. I have written about this dissolution process in an earlier Mirror.

At the end of dissolution the pranas have dissolved into the central channel. This is said to give rise to the mind of black appearance, causing unconsciousness. During this time the body should be left in the most optimum of circumstances to enable recognition of the returning prana energies and primordial clear light. These energies arise as movement out of the kunshi, primordial base. If recognized without duality it is known as "co-emergent wisdom awareness". Grasped at, it is misread as the experience of "co-emergent ignorance". It is these latter energies unrecognized that lead us back into the cycle of rebirth. If one has a genuine aspiration toward practice then this phase represents the quintessence of a lifetime's practice. This is where the window of opportunity opens and allows for the possibility of total integration and liberation. In support of this process the body should be left in this state upwards of three days, after which the external signs of pus or blood emerging from the nose and sexual organ occur. This indicates the departure of consciousness. It is safe to remove the body for disposal only after these signs have manifested. Prior to that the consciousness remains in the body and any rough handling will likely interrupt meditation and possibly cause lower rebirth. It is important for any caregiver to know how to protect the body from disturbance and thus support the maintenance of meditation. Fundamental in any such understanding is an appreciation of what is required by the law of a particular country.

In a modern society it is the law that creates both rights and duties. This is no less the case in dealing with a body. In most countries the relevant law will be enshrined in statute. This will to some extent vary from country to country. Law however is rarely original and more often than

not derivative of other countries. General principles therefore are often evident. I am familiar with New Zealand law. It is perhaps helpful to give a brief resume of those principles as a case example. Knowing the law precisely ensures that the caregiver can act with certainty and intelligence protecting the body from being intruded upon. Equally they will know the exact limitations that can be placed upon others such as doctors, police, coroners and so forth who might perceive they have rights where there are none.

In New Zealand the protocols for dealing with bodies is set forth in the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act, 1995. Some interesting juxtapositions there! What I propose to discuss here is the kind of death that comes about through illness. This is the ideal death because it enables both the practitioner and their caregiver to be well prepared.

According to the New Zealand legislation every death in New Zealand must be notified and registered. This requires that a medical certificate be obtained. Where a practitioner is ill and subsequently dies, then the least intrusive way of getting such a certificate is to have a doctor attend in the days prior to the death. This enables that same doctor upon hearing of the death to subsequently execute the required certificate. "Satisfied that death was a natural consequence of the illness concerned." His satisfaction is made a formality by reason of his earlier visit. He must have been the last doctor to have made a visit. If that is not the case then that subsequent doctor must execute the certificate.

The certificate once signed is given "to the person having" charge of the dead person's body. "Person having charge" carries its ordinary meaning.

That person must "within a reasonable time of taking charge of the body dispose of it" and having disposed of it the registrar of deaths must be notified of that fact within three working days.

In terms of a practitioner's preparation it is clearly important for the practitioner to decide as to whom they will give charge of their body. They could, for example, execute some kind of declaration or power of attorney directing who shall be given that authority. It would be important to have someone in charge who is staunch and

steadfast in the face of possible outside influences. They need to be clear as to the rights and duties they have under the law. This will enable them to deal with whatever arises in the way that best protects the interests of the practitioner.

"Reasonable time" for disposal is not defined. My discussions with police would indicate that it is a pretty long piece of elastic. I believe that three days would come nowhere near testing the limits of this ill-defined time frame. In New Zealand we have no judicial pronouncement on that term. The meaning must be interpreted with common sense. In any event "time" could be reasonably extended by keeping the body cool and having support of a sensitive possibly Buddhist funeral manager giving advice.

It is the duty also of the "person in charge" to transfer that charge, where appropriate, for disposal, anatomical examination under the Human Tissue Act or removal from New Zealand. "Disposal" includes burial and cremation.

In summation: the dying person can give charge of his corpse to a specific person. Upon death a medical certificate is executed by a doctor who was the last attending doctor prior to death. The body is then left in meditation for at least three days undisturbed or for such other time frame that is reasonable. At that point the charge can be transferred to a funeral director and the body disposed of. These are the practical constraints. In the event one is able to deal with these issues using the help of like-minded or Buddhist support those constraints can be integrated much more easily. All of the above may seem to have a somewhat over-reaching sense of order. In real time we know that death comes without warning (DC.WOW!!) and will take place in circumstances we never imagined. However it is the moment that gives meaning to a lifetime of practice. By having someone in charge who intelligently understands what can and cannot be done enables a practitioner's environment to be best protected.

In another sense perhaps we can see that the kind of organization spoken of here is really just part and parcel of the preliminary matters that we must clear up before we embark on the great journey. Not such a big deal perhaps.

Confessions of an Avoidance Addict by Jan Cornell

Talking to Tony Laurent when he came back from the international Gakyil meeting at Merigar, he mentioned that Rinpoche gave a short talk about what it means to be a member of the Dzogchen Community. One of things he said was it means TAKING RESPONSIBILITY.

These two words had a great impact on me. I think I only really understood the meaning of them this year after doing the Base Level Santi Maha Sangha Exam at Namgyalgar. As I answered the final question, the tears that I had prayed not to come began to flow down my cheeks, and I sat like a blubbery mess (totally exposed for the fool I really am) in front of my Master. I understood then the meaning of TAKING RESPONSIBILITY.

It seems that the first forty nine years of my life I had seen these words like a rebellious child rejecting the wisdom of a parent or teacher as that boring stuff grown ups would say. "How boring! Who wants to take responsibility. Who wants to be responsible! I just want to have fun and I don't want to be responsible. Those responsible people are just wet blankets."

But as I walked back down the hill that day and sat down under the flame tree still blubbery quietly, I understood differently. I'd been in this Community for nearly twelve years. I'd practiced, I'd been quite involved, but I think I took it all a bit for granted. Rinpoche came and went. Retreats came and went. Someone was running the show but I didn't want to be one of them. That would be asking a bit too much of myself, and that Gakyil stuff, who would want to do that?! And besides I can't. I have kids. I don't have time. I have a career, and it all looks too much like hard work.

But under the flame tree after the exam, I had an epiphany. Taking responsibility doesn't have to be a burden. Now I experienced it as an energy. I had a choice whether I wanted to participate in life or just hang around the edges. You probably already know this, but I'm a bit slow. Now I am one of those Gakyil people.

It's scary and hard work and I make mistakes, but it's also fun. You might consider it for the future, or there might be something else you want to do. Like joining one of the committees or coming to the Gar every so often and doing some karma yoga, or something which you see needs to be done that no one has thought of yet. Don't wait to be asked. Take a risk. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY!

Scary. Fun. Dare to walk on the wild side. Dare to live..



ley may wonder at the merits of publishing so lavish a book on what some have derogatorily referred to as "honky thanks". Throughout the paintings, iconography has yielded to modern aesthetics, often suffusing the works with contemporary meaning. Indeed, Diane von Furstenberg described on CBS's Sunday Morning show how she had incorporated elements of Shrestha's thanks into her spring collection. Scholars and practitioners may decry this commercialization of a sacred artistic tradition but others, such as Robert Thurman, celebrate the paintings "skillful means" in making Buddhism accessible to mainstream Western culture. As the Buddha himself is said to have stated: "Don't be attached to the vehicle you use to reach the other shore, the important thing is to get across."

Buddhism's vehicle for reaching America's rich and famous - or at least those who can afford the \$125 book - may well be the sumptuous, oversized paintings, some of which have already been taken off

the walls of Tibet House to be hung in the penthouses of their new owners. As Deepak Chopra said in his closing of the exhibition: "The paintings bring the viewer into a field of infinite possibility; into the nature of the mind made manifest". As the writer of the text which accompanies Shrestha's paintings, I approached each work as a meditation - one for each day of the month which I had allotted myself to complete the book. I tried to discover words which would invoke each painting's underlying ethos; its iconography as well as its spiritual intent. Celestial Gallery's initial image is that of the Buddha. How could this timeless image be made accessible to those outside the tradition? I tried to find words that would help viewers to see beyond the surface colors of cinnabar and burnished gold:

"The word 'Buddha', in Sanskrit, means waking up to a primordial reality of radiant compassion and self-existing Wisdom. Expressed in art, Buddhas are not objects of worship, but mirrors of

our innermost being, icons of the journey from Ignorance to Illumination. At the moment of enlightenment, the Buddha Shakyamuni invoked the earth as witness, as indicated by the fingers of his right hand which spread downwards in bhumisparshanamudra, the "gesture of touching the earth". As the Buddhist Sutras relate, the sun and moon stood still and all creatures of the world came to offer obeisance to the Supreme One who had broken through the boundaries of ego-centric existence. All Buddhist art celebrates this supreme moment and leads the viewer towards the Buddha's experience of selfless and unsurpassed enlightenment. The earliest forms of Buddhist art were semiabstract: Bodhi-trees, wheels, stupas, and finally the Buddha's stylized footprints, served as supports for contemplating what was ultimately beyond words or form. As the Buddha, himself, continually taught, it was not he who was to be revered but the possibility he presented. "Don't look to me", he said, "but to the enlightened state."

The first anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha are said to have been drawn on canvas from rays of golden light emanating from his body. Later Buddhist art pictured the Buddha in numerous manifestations, but always as an archetype of human potential, never as a historically identifiable person. All forms of the Buddha, however, are commonly shown seated on a lotus throne, a symbol of the mind's transcendent nature. As a lotus rises from the mud to bloom unsullied in open space, so too does the mind rise through the discord of its own experience to blossom in the boundlessness of unconditional awareness.

Buddhism is not a static doctrine, but a creative expression of the interdependent nature of all existence: a means by which we can discover in the heart of experience, not ourselves, but a luminous and unfolding Mystery. Buddhism envisions the universe as a net of jewels, each facet of reality reflecting every other facet. Our calling is not to escape this web of interde-

pendent origination, but to awaken to our indwelling Buddha Nature and to see the world for what it is: to become Buddhas in our own right - beings of infinite Awareness and Compassion.

"Be a light unto yourself", Buddha Shakyamuni declared at the end of his life. Become a Buddha, an awakened being, he urged, but never a blind follower of tradition. The image of the Buddha, transcendent of time and place, centers us in our innermost being. All images in Celestial Gallery lead, ultimately, to the same dynamic serenity in which the light touch of a hand can tame the entire universe." ■

by Ian Baker

The Mirror Reprint Book



The Mirror is pleased to offer the opportunity to have teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu compiled into one beautiful soft bound edition, *Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Reprints from The Mirror*, illustrated by master thanka painter Glen Eddy.

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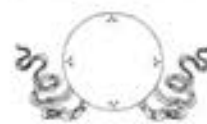
This collection of sacred songs was compiled the Istituto Shang-Shung at Merigar, Italy. The preciousness of this recording is that it contains singing and flute by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The opening piece is the Song Of the Vajra dating back to 1977 and is probably the first time that it was sung by the Community. \$17US



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Main Office:

PO Box 277
Conway, Massachusetts 01341
U.S.A.

Tel 413-369-4208 and
FAX 413-369-4165

Email: NaomiMirror@compuserve.com

European Office:

The Mirror Merigar, 58031
Arcidosso GR Italy
Tel and Fax: 0564-966039
Email: ssed@amiata.net
Email: LizMirror@compuserve.com

EDITORIAL STAFF

Naomi Zeitz, Tsegylgar
Liz Granger, UK
Tiziana Gottardi, Merigar

LITERARY EDITOR

John Shane

ADVISORS

Adriano Clemente
Anna Eid
Barbara Paparazzo
Des Barry
Jim Valby

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

N. Zeitz

ILLUSTRATION

Cartoons
Patrizia Moscatelli (pg.23)

PRINTERS

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INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL NEWS

Attention Members of the Dzogchen Community New Yellow International Gakyil Member Needed!

Loek Jehee, the yIG (yellow International Gakyil) member, resigned in November and therefore the yellow space on the International Gakyil is empty. Whoever is interested to become the new "yellow" IG member should have the following qualifications:

- 1) Membership in the International Dzogchen Community.
- 2) Connected to and qualified in using email and able to dedicate approximately two hours a day of work for the IG.
- 3) Knowledge of international law, non profit organizations and management and fundraising would be best!

We thank Loek for his dedicated work of the last few years!

You can send your application to:

Fabio Andrico: (red IG) <76544.2307@compuserve.com> or

Karin Eisenegger: (blue IG) <garuda@bluewin.ch>

Guidelines about Santi Maha Sangha:

Inviting SMS students to give SMS courses

The Santi Maha Sangha Training was started in 1993 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to help his students to develop a more structured and deeper understanding and experience of Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Mennagde and to ease their way towards total liberation.

By now the first students have reached the fourth level of the SMS training, which is made up of nine levels altogether. While proceeding along the path, the students of SMS have to learn many different practices and study different parts of the teaching.

Regarding the Base Level:

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu always puts very much emphasis on the fact that the study of the Base of Santi Maha Sangha is important for all of his disciples, also for those who decided that they were not proceeding further on with the SMS Studies.

In different countries and places SMS Base study groups have been organized. For some practices a more specific knowledge is needed and some of the students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who have completed at least the first level the SMS training have gone lately to different places to give explanations. As long as SMS study is practiced in informal groups with the help of an older SMS student, there are no further rules to be observed.

As soon as an official SMS base course is prepared in some place and an older SMS student is officially invited to travel to this place to give a kind of SMS study teaching, the procedure becomes a little more official.

Therefore the International Gakyil would like to inform all Gakyils about the following:

The SMS training in itself is not a teacher training. As always in our Community, the more experienced SMS practitioners are supposed to help the newer ones. Until now, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has not appointed any SMS teachers.

Norbu Rinpoche will start a SMS teachers training in the year 2002. Until then all Gakyils and groups are obliged to respect the following procedure:

1) Any Gakyil that wants to invite one of the two SMS specialists, Adriano Clemente or Jim Valby, are requested to first ask one of them whether they agree on coming. Afterwards the Gakyil has to ask permission for this specific SMS course to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu directly. Until the inviting Gakyil has received an answer from Rinpoche, it is not allowed to proceed with the preparation of the course.

2) The same is true regarding any other experienced SMS practitioner. If a Gakyil wants to invite one of these SMS practitioners and he or she has agreed to come to their country and place, the Gakyil still has to ask permission to Norbu Rinpoche.

3) Asking permission to Norbu Rinpoche has to be done by the inviting Gakyil (and not by the invited SMS student).

4) Asking permission to Norbu Rinpoche is not limited to SMS courses. It is always polite if an organizing Gakyil informs Rinpoche before organizing an event. But it is imperative to ask Rinpoche's permission before inviting masters or other teachers to give teachings, courses or retreats.

Please keep this message in your archive for all future blue Gakyil members of your country. If there are any doubts, please contact the SMS coordinator of your Gar.

Many greetings

Karin Eisenegger, Blue International Gakyil

Igor Legati, SMS coordinator (Europe)

Dear Dzogchen Practitioners,

The International Dzogchen Community is constantly growing, therefore Chögyal Namkhai Norbu decided two years ago to found a new structure called the International Gakyil, to help coordinate and communicate better those things that concern the worldwide Dzogchen Community as a whole.

This International Gakyil (IG) was not meant to have any executive power or create new bureaucratic structures. What we found very difficult from the very beginning was the fact that we were just ignored by most Gakyils. Maybe we also should have promoted our work a little more.

If the IG should become a useful instrument for communication and coordination in the future, we are absolutely dependent on your collaboration. Important issues like the discussion of the legal status of all the Gars has been initiated by the yellow IG, but there was hardly any response from the responsible persons at the Gars.

For years Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has been traveling around the world. We need to be informed about changes in practices, organization, new initiatives; also to evolve new, practical ideas inside the Community and then practitioners around the world can only be involved by being informed and thus integrated.

If, for example, Norbu Rinpoche stays for a few months at Merigar and gives advice and new instructions which are important for the whole of the Dzogchen Community, it should be the duty of the Gakyil in Merigar to inform the Gakyils associated to a Gar in a timely manner about important tasks that concern also them. It does not make sense to inform only those who read Italian in Merigar's Bollettino. It is also quite inconsiderate not to inform the Gakyils associated to a Gar about important tasks that concern them.

If the members of the Gakyils of the Gars do not open up to the broader Dzogchen Community by, for example, communicating important issues in time also via the International Gakyil, this new important turntable for the International Community remains without sense - without possibility to fulfill its purpose and therefore without motivation to do all the work it is supposed to do!

We are sure that everybody wants to collaborate and that the above mentioned problems are just problems of the beginning phase of the IG. A plan to improve the communication besides the already very important tools of The Mirror and Norbunet has been worked on by the IG since the IG summer conference at Merigar last summer. Any suggestions for this are welcome!

Sending my heartfelt best wishes to all of you,

Karin Koppensteiner-Eisenegger (bIG)

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