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DECEMBER-JANUARY, 2000-2001

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU makes an Historic Visit to Chile



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with Retreat Organizers in Chile

N.Zeit

An historic visit was made to our country during the first week of February by our beloved Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It was the first time that a large and lucky group of Chileans could benefit from the extraordinary Dzogchen teachings given by the most outstanding teacher of Dzogchen of modern times.

The point of contact for the Teacher and the Chileans, who had waited for years for his presence in our country, was the capital, Santiago. Luckily, Santiago was less congested than normal due to vacation time.

The first public activity was on January 31st; Rinpoche gave a talk entitled "Introduction to the Dzogchen", and spoke to a very respectful group of two hundred people.

On the 3rd, 4th and 5th of February, the retreat took place in the Center of Exercises of the Jesuit Order of the Catholic Church on the edge of Santiago. Eighty people - including some visitors from New Zealand, North America, Austria, Argentina, Italy and Germany - attended the teachings in a large hall in the middle of the nature and in an atmosphere of respect and admiration.

The retreat was complemented with the practice of Yantra Yoga taught by Fabio Andrico where we focused on the Nine Purification Breathings and The Eight Movements.

Recently we received an invitation from Tashigar to celebrate Losar. This brought much joy to the Chilean group managing the birth of the Dzogchen Community in Chile!

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU - INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM 2001-2002

2001

MARGARITA ISLAND

Easter Retreat
March 30th - April 3rd

USA, WEST COAST

April 27th
Leave for San Francisco
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

RUSSIA, KUNSANGAR

SANTI MAHA SANGHA
May 27th-29th
SMS Base Level Exam
May 30th-June 5th
SMS I Level Training
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

THE MANY FRUITS OF ONE TASTE, MEETING THE ELEMENTS : TASHIGAR CHRISTMAS RETREAT

by Jacqueline Gens



Argentina seems a compelling country filled with magical beauty and gigantic contradictions. Its natural treasures have been extolled as among the world's finest - places like Terra del Fuego, Patagonia. Then there are the haunting cultural images - Evita, the legacy of the los Disparades, from the all too recent military juntas of 1977-1983, tango, the world monetary market in the international news. Once last year, I read in the New York Times that Argentina has the world's highest concentration of psychologists per capita. But walking down the street, it seems most everyone looks like a movie star. With such beauty what need is there for therapy. For me, one of the great cultural revelations in visiting Argentina for the first time, was the experience of summer in winter, not just weather-wise but seasonally. For until then, it never occurred to me that half the world lives in a different seasonal reality south of the equator. One thinks of the seasons as indelible and fixed but apparently that is not the case.

All of these somewhat superficial observations melted quickly away once in the tangible embrace of our Tashigar Community with their genuine hospitality and endless overtures of friendliness with much kissing at every opportunity - this I noticed, a universal custom in Argentina. So ubiquitous is this custom, it amused me, when even at airline counters, all business stopped as girls returning from a lunch break went around to everyone down the line behind the counter for kisses and more kisses. Argentina seems the ultimate Padma energy in terms of national styles. Tashigar is nestled in the hills outside Tanti, a small town which some of us jokingly referred to as the town time forgot. Everything about this place reminded me of my rural California childhood in the 1950's with its dusty roads and small rancheros surrounding its outskirts, early model Big American made cars, with scattered horse, cattle and crowing roosters wandering about without boundaries or from the vantage of Tashigar itself higher up - the American South West region of the Four Corners with vast unpopulated vistas. Artistically, this area too seemed rich in stories, as yet unwritten, magnificent paintings of sky - for here on the higher ground of Tashigar, all is space.

The land itself is a spectacular bio-region of wild life; exotic plants and startlingly vivid elements where wind is wind, hail and lightning can flash in a heartbeat. Hand carved into a rock is the word Zergna made by Rinpoche. A story was told one day, as we passed the rock on our way up the hill, that Rinpoche while carving it sat on an anthill. When people pointed this out to him, he said that was all right because they would someday be his students. This is a place, no doubt, empowered for realization and one in which the elements seem to manifest so dramatically. It is also a slightly dangerous environment with spiders, poisonous snakes, iguanas and abundant insect life. Terrified of snakes, I must say, I had unusually greater presence of mind than usual in regard to where I put my feet and hands - just as the Tashigar retreat guidelines recommended. During the actual retreat, I shared a house with an Argentine man and his Spanish wife, Anita, down the road from Tashigar. A native from Cordoba, this man, Ruben, was particularly concerned that Tashigar did not have an anti-

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CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU
NEW YEAR'S DAY TEACHINGAWARENESS
AS PRACTICE IN DAILY LIFE

TASHIGAR, ARGENTINA, JANUARY 1ST 2001

In a lifetime, most important is how we do daily practice, so the most important thing I can do is to inform you how to do daily practices. Even if we have learned different methods of practice, we can't apply everything daily. Since this is the case, it's very important that we integrate practice into our lives. Integrating practice into daily life doesn't mean we dedicate one hour or a few hours of practice into a day. That is good, but still we have many hours. We know that in one day we have twenty-four hours, so to integrate means we integrate in the practice for twenty-four hours. If we don't understand that principle then we can't have realization.

Because we are living with dualistic vision and we are always distracted, we make many kinds of actions and produce negative karma. Even if we do four or five hours of practice a day, it can't compare to how distracted we are and how many negative actions we make. Already we have so much negative karma; to purify is not so easy. Therefore it's most important that we know how to integrate practice into daily life.

First of all, when you are thinking of what practice means, you need to have a precise idea. Many people consider practice chanting mantras or sitting; doing some rituals, etc. This is practice, but not the main practice. The main practice is that, first of all, we discover our instant presence and then we integrate in that state in any moment. It is not so easy for us to always be in instant presence, but when we have the possibility we try. We try to be aware and not distracted and try to be aware of our life and circumstance.

So these are the most important practices; if we are aware and we know how the circumstance is, we have less problems. Our practices become more concrete. To be aware means we also know what our possibilities are. Some people have a very nice idea and they say, "Oh I want to dedicate all my life to practice". This is a good idea, but not so easy, particularly for people who have the idea to escape from our society or ordinary condition. That means they are not learning or training how to integrate life into practice. They are always thinking, "This situation is samsara, very heavy, I want to escape." But that is not the solution, you can escape from this situation but when you arrive somewhere else you create the same situation. Maybe you have the idea, "I don't want to create this situation anymore. I want only to be a practitioner on a mountain, living in a cave, etc." First of all, that is not so easy in our modern society because you have a physical body and you are dependent on food and your situation, and even if there are some possibilities and you think, "Now I have peace", it's not true. If you do not find peace inside, you can't find peace outside. Maybe you have no problems where you are, but you arrive in a cave on a mountain, and maybe you have a problem there.

I remember once when I was thirteen years old, I received a very important teaching from one of my Dzogchen teachers. When I finished this teaching I went to do a retreat of *Nalindzog Gyalpo* of Dzogchen Longde, and I was in a very isolated retreat place; a very nice place in the forest under a rock. It was really a very nice house that belonged to one of my relations, and it is a very sacred place. They wanted me to live there and do service for me. 'Doing service' didn't mean someone lived there and always cooked and did service everyday; someone came and brought food every three days or so. So I lived there, and on the first day I felt fantastic and it was really very silent and very nice, but when night time started I felt afraid. This house was under rock and on top of the rock ten or fifteen wolves gathered and howled and made noise. When I was small I already felt afraid of this sound; and this time I also felt a little afraid and didn't feel really peaceful. The next day when I did practice there was not as much noise as at night, but then hundreds of monkeys arrived. When I did practice silently the monkeys came in the window and tried to open the window. The whole time I couldn't find peace. In the day and night time, there were always some problems and, of course, then I didn't know very much about integrating. I always felt distracted with this practice. Later I met my teacher Changchub Dorje and the Dzogchen teaching, and then I understood the solution is not escape but integration.

When we are disturbed it is mainly related to our tensions. For example, if I am sitting here trying to do practice and someone comes from outside and makes noise, then I feel, "Oh, there is someone here making noise and I am here peacefully doing practice and that person is not paying respect to me and my practice and now I feel disturbed". If I feel that, that is my tension. If I have this tension today, tomorrow I feel more than yesterday and I think, "Still this person is there making noise". Day after day tensions develop. Then, in the end, I decide to escape from this place. So you see, where the root of the problem is and to what the tensions are related. If we are integrating and we are really in instant presence and integrated; if we are on a mountain in a cave in silence or we are in a railway station, for example, there is not much difference because noise and movement, everything, is part of our energy. We do not remain in a dualistic way and we integrate and integration means in a non dual way. Our tensions disappear; this is the method of how we integrate in daily life. It is something very,

very important in the Dzogchen teaching. Our life is movement, not peaceful, but we know that movement is part of our energy. We do not think, "I am here and there is movement, and movement creates problems for me"; we do not fall into a dualistic view and movement does not create problems.

For example, when we fly in an airplane, sometimes we feel the airplane is making a lot of noise. If you have that idea, "There is noise and I am disturbed", you always feel more disturbed. But if you integrate you don't feel disturbed at all. You see, for example, the airplane sounds like Ah. Sometimes the airplane is singing Hum. When you are inside you are in the sound of Hum and Ah; you don't always need to say Ah and Hum, the airplane helps you. So you are in that state in an integrated way instead of creating problems; you really have benefit. That is an example of how we can integrate everything into our lives. For that reason we don't need to change anything, we don't need to change our dress, our attitude, our way of being; how it is, we remain that way and we accept how life is.

Some people, for example, have a business or a shop, they spend many years working to earn money and then they feel more interested in practice and teaching. They don't feel to do that work anymore. The work becomes negative or an obstacle for their practice. That is not true. You must live in society. You have done this work until now and are earning money; you are living. Of course if you find a better way to earn money, you can change. Otherwise, that is your condition and that is not negative at all. So you can integrate your job and work in the practice. You think, "How can I integrate working in a shop?", but it can be any kind of work which we can integrate. Even if we have no possibility to chant or work with mantras, we can always work with awareness. We can always be present instead of distracted; that is the practice of integration. If we have a business or work in a shop, if we use awareness and are not distracted, then our work goes better. When you have tensions you notice them and don't give too much importance to them; then also your work doesn't become very heavy. That's an example; there is always the possibility to integrate.

So we must know how our condition in life is, first of all. For example, we live in society and in society everyone does something. If we don't, we can't earn money and live. We know we can integrate any kind of practice in that job. For example, what do we do early in the morning? We wake up and immediately think of breakfast, we go in the shop, in the school, or work in the office, etc. Look at what we do, we work continuously, at mid day we eat, maybe there is a little space of time and we work again, then we return home and feel tired, we look at a little TV to know what the news is, even if we don't have very much energy to look at television, etc., everyday we

work and feel tired, so what do we do? We go to bed. And tomorrow what do we do? The same. We do the same as we did today, and the day after tomorrow, the same, and in that way we go ahead and that is called samsara. Then we go ahead and think, "Oh, here comes the weekend!", and we wait for the weekend. When the weekend arrives we are happy, but in the real sense it means we have already spent seven days in our life, seven days are already finished; seven days less in our life. This is not really a happy circumstance, but we are happy because we think we have more free time and we should do something, we think, "Oh now I do practice, I have the idea to do some practice or training, etc.", and we think the weekend is free, but next weekend is also not free, for example, there is the birthday of parents, of friends, someone is getting married, or there are important things to do, people to meet or we must go somewhere. Most of the time, the weekend is also occupied, so our idea of doing practice is very difficult. When we finish the weekend what do we do? The same. We repeat another weekend, we are waiting for the weekend. Then we wait for another weekend and have passed fourteen days of our life, and in that way we are going on for months, years and then we finish our life. It is not sufficient to only have a good idea, but it is important that we deal concretely with practice in a life time.

So, how do we start to do practice? When we wake up we immediately remember Guruyoga. We remember the white A and thigle. It is also possible if we sleep alone we can also sound Ah. If we sound Ah we can have more of that presence of visualization. If we sleep with our friend, husband, wife, etc., then we can't make sound, because when you wake up your friend might still be asleep and you must respect your friend. You can't sing, but it's also enough when you exhale and are in the presence of Ah. In this presence you relax and try to be in instant presence, even if you are only in that state for a few seconds. This is Guruyoga. After that you go to the toilet, the bathroom, you wash and have contact with the water element, and then you can use the mantra of purification: "Eho Shudde Shudde" and if you do purification of the water element in a very short way you do "Om Bamho Shudde Shodanaye Svaha". If you chant this mantra and use water or have contact with water, then it becomes purification. So you don't need preparation with a ceremony or ritual. Naturally, when you have contact with elements you always use which element corresponds with that mantra. When you go outside and there is wind, air element, you go "Om Yamho Shudde Shodanaye Svaha". With the heat of sunshine or with fire, etc., you use Om Bamho Shudde Shodanaye Svaha. When you chant this mantra, of course, you must also be aware that if you are with many people, particularly if they are not practitioners and you chant mantras, or you do something among people you don't know, it is not good. You must keep mantra secret. If you keep it secret it has

more function. If you do not keep the mantra secret, then the mantra has no function for YOU, it doesn't mean the mantra loses function in general. So it's very important to keep secret. Of course, it is not necessary to keep secret among practitioners. Sometimes when we use mantra of prayer or something publicly in front of people who are not practitioners, then it becomes a kind of exhibition. The first thing is that it is not good for our samaya, and the second thing is that the mantra can lose its function. The third reason is that people will consider that you are a strange person. If you say something, for example, in a restaurant, and you think, "I am eating. I should do a Ganapuja", and you say "Ram Yam Kam, Om Ah Hum", etc., at your table and people look at you and think you are abnormal. If you are a practitioner you must not show anything outside. Showing too much outside means there is nothing inside. It is not necessary that we show anything, but we keep it in ourselves and do practice. We integrate.

Also it is very important in daily life to try and be aware and not distracted. I already told you that that is not instant presence; being in presence means we have a kind of attention. Instant presence has no attention, it is beyond attention; but if you are present with attention in general then it is very easy to integrate in instant presence. You should learn this in daily life. Sometimes, for example, you are living alone in your house and there is no one and there is nothing very much to do and you observe what you are thinking, for example you think, "Oh, I want to go in the kitchen and take a bottle of beer or wine, and sit in the sunshine and I drink". That is a way to relax. But then you are not doing this in a distracted way; you notice you are thinking to go in the kitchen, then you take a kind of commitment, "I don't want to be distracted until I arrive in the sunshine with a beer". Then you notice, now I am going in the kitchen and then you get up and you notice, I am walking and now I am looking where the beer is and where the glass is, now I am taking the beer, now I'm returning, and you arrive there in the sunshine, now I am sitting, now I drink, now I'm enjoying, so you always have presence. You can learn this, it is not so difficult at all. Of course if people haven't learned this it can be difficult, but everything, once you have learned, becomes very easy.

For example, when you started to drive a car, was it easy or not? It was not easy at all! But once we learn how, we develop presence for driving a car and in the end, we can learn to be present while driving. We drive the car, we talk with friends, we look to the right and left side, but we are always present and we drive the car on the road. If we are distracted, then we have an accident. But this presence is only for driving a car; there are many things in our life to learn, so we can learn. This is a very important practice. To do this practice you don't need a specific place, time or condition. If you go in a shop, you think, "I am going in a shop, now I open the door, I have arrived inside, someone is coming, I am talking with that person"; you don't need to be distracted and there is always the possibility of having presence.

In a lifetime if you are not distracted and have presence, you won't have any problems. You see, when we do many things in daily life we make many mistakes. We have so many problems, particularly when we are charged, and we create more problems. That means we are totally distracted or charged; otherwise if we are present there is no reason why we would be charged that way. When we are cutting meat or vegetables to prepare food, instead of cutting food we cut our finger. That is an aspect of distraction and that is created by our tensions. So, that is why it is very important we learn presence and in our lifetime we deal with this.

This is presence and practice. We can't say, "I can't do practice". When we finish the retreat, some people write letters and email to me and say, "I was very happy with this retreat, I learned some practice, etc., but now I can't do any practice. There is no possibility, no time, etc." So, I am not saying you should always do practice by sitting and chanting and doing visualizations. How can you say, "I can't do practice of being aware"? You can be aware in any moment, it is better for you. If you don't want to do this practice, or you don't consider that it is a practice, that is another question. But if you consider this is practice, then you can do it in any moment, any circumstance. When you are walking, sitting or working; in any moment when you try to be aware, this is practice. Being aware is something like a key, also to discovering your tensions, your attachments and all these problems. Of course, if you have tensions and all these kinds of problems, then you know what the root of the problem is and you liberate.

venom kit on hand in the event of snakebite. So was I. This was all the more unsettling since a few weeks previous to the retreat, I had heard from Melissa, in great detail about a viper, which had found its way into the main dorm space and her capture of it. I hesitated to say anything lest people think I was being problematical and 'typically' an American but given the amount of children around, it seemed prudent not to wait until someone one day is actually bitten. But Ruben carefully instructed me to keep the doors to the little casa closed, which I did diligently, lest one of these snakes (by now looming large in my imagination) make its way into our house. On the other hand, not being particularly afraid of spiders, they were ever-present and interesting to watch. Little baby scorpions scuttled briskly across our kitchen floor each morning with their little pinchers held open as in an embrace as they rushed toward one. Thinking of the association between Padmasambhava and scorpions, I was slightly more accommodating to their presence than say the hairy tarantulas and brown recluse creeping along the roof rafters outside and simply swept them gently out the door each morning.

Summer being at its height, each night there were flashes of what we call here, 'June Bugs', whose phosphorescent lights danced to sounds of night creatures and sometimes a background of lightening flashes. The night sky, too, was incandescent with marvelous constellations I had never before observed first hand from south of the Equator. Fruit trees heaved with abundant fruits - plums, peaches, figs from which every morning for breakfast there were a variety of homemade jams - to go with toasted bread. Several species of birds sounded continuously - especially one bird who over and over sounded three distinct syllables - a real Vajra cuckoo. A grape arbor loaded with clusters of still unripened grapes lent a charming rustic quality to the little casitas, which I was told, was built by an elderly couple - each married to others, as their romantic hideaway. I was intrigued one day by Glen Eddy's story (my neighbor in this compound), of rescuing an old iguana of about four feet long whom we affectionately called "Pepe" from the intent Tashigar dogs and the heart-breaking story of Pepe's cries - so human sounding - as the dogs were tormenting him. After telling me that iguana feed on fallen fruit at twilight, I waited and watched but never got a glimpse of old "Pepe" at dusk among the fruit orchard or any other iguana.

After a dream on the night before my departure for Tashigar, I was not surprised when my trip began with a series of major mishaps and minor annoyances - lost luggage for five days, a flu with a delirium lasting three days, endless bought and borrowed flashlights which did not work long enough down the long treacherous dirt path to "my" house - no matter how many batteries I fed it, a canceled departure flight and a missed flight between Cordoba and Buenos Aires when cab driver got lost in Cordoba, an airport robbery initiated by a moment's lapse in my attention and, last but not least - infected spider bites whose scabs I could only weeks later remove. And yet, my "enforced vacation" as Fabio called it, resulted in a rich experience of inner connections, meaningful insights and perhaps some ripening of karma. It was also a wake up experience to meet Rinpoche one day in the lower orchard near the vegetable garden of Tashigar, walking alone from the dance mandala to the Gonpa, as I walked up the path unaware of his

presence - my mind distracted in a junkyard of petty resentments just at that moment - an all too depressing recognition that after twenty years of following the teachings this is what it comes down to - meeting one's teacher while in a highly distracted state.

For five days, Rinpoche taught on a terma received from his master, Changchub Dorje, in a dream called "Opening the Gate of Ati Yoga." As always his teaching proved to be clear, essential and powerful. We also did collective practice of the Purification of Six Lokas during the retreat which Rinpoche gave an extended commentary on. As with every retreat, there were many opportunities to learn and refresh the different collected practices, the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga. As everyone already knows, one can not hear enough of Rinpoche teaching over and over again these essential teachings on the meaning of Guru Yoga. Hearing with new ears and a fresh mind, one can only try and keep alive the heightened retreat experience upon returning to one's everyday patterns and hectic schedule. Meeting one's teacher again is always like drawing from the deep well of refreshment. As they say, with a great master, the well never runs dry and all may take what they need. So it is, with our dear Rinpoche, who continuously gives over and over to us whether he is feeling well or not.

One of the highlights associated with this retreat was the first ever live Internet audio broadcast by Rinpoche. Because this live audio broadcast was conducted via telephone, some people thought it was another teleconference such as the one last year from Namgyalgar, unaware that it was broadcasted around the world on the Internet. Behind the scenes for several months, a number of people labored to coordinate this effort internationally - Loek Jehee, Fabio Andrico, Ed Goldberg, Diane Sievers, Sergio Olivia, and myself. And everything went smoothly! Initially, it seemed Rinpoche was going to give a public talk but then he launched energetically into the teachings on the three statements of Garab Dorje with the pointing out transmission. He seemed so very happy to give this teaching - the first ever cyberspace transmission. At the conclusion, as Ricky moved to disconnect the phone, Rinpoche brushed him aside to continue with a few words of well wishes for all of us around the world in the New Year. Thus bringing us back to the cyberspace itself and the amazing opportunity to connect altogether in the moment.

Several days later, after the Internet broadcast and during my three day delirium with gripe, I tried to practice continuous presence with OM AH HUM using this opportunity for purification practice. Being able to recognize just how difficult it is to maintain one's presence in the midst of sickness was extremely valuable. And it was VERY difficult. As a dress rehearsal for perhaps more serious situations, this inspired me to make some long awaited changes in my daily priorities because, for the moment, I failed miserably and instead found myself locked in the same weird nightmare over and over, in an airless room keeping everything closed from the intrusion of imagined snakes and bats. I was especially thankful for the kindness of my neighbor and old friend, Glen Eddy, who checked up on me during this time and kept me supplied with drinking water and other necessities for the few days I was sick.

A true focus or distraction (depending on your view) for many people during the retreat was Tashi Bar. It

A MESSAGE TO ALL GARS, GAKYILS AND PRACTITIONERS OF DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF THE WORLD

Santi Maha Sangha and Karma Yoga

from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

According to the Santi Maha Sangha Base examination, for people who are interested and participate in Santi Maha Sangha, first of all they must be interested in the Dzogchen Community. The training of Santi Maha Sangha is not only something learned in an intellectual way, but this knowledge should be totally integrated into one's condition. If someone is not interested in the Dzogchen Community, there is no way they can be totally integrated. The Dzogchen Community is like a boat; we are traveling by boat in order to arrive beyond a very big river and until we arrive beyond the very big river we should be interested in that boat. Therefore, we can understand how important the Dzogchen Community is for the trainee.

If people are interested in any kind of Karma Yoga activity related to the Dzogchen Community it means those people are interested in the Dzogchen Community. For example, if someone is a member of a family then that person is interested in everything related to that family. In the same way, if there is something to do for the Dzogchen Community, one who is interested in the Dzogchen Community is always ready to participate.

The main subject of the examination for the Santi Maha Sangha Base is not only the ten questions; they are only one of the Three Main Subjects. As we know very well, we have Three Gates and these Gates are body, voice and mind; so we also have Three Main Subjects of the examination related with these Three Gates.

Relative to the body, we should contribute physically to any kind of Karma Yoga activities for the Dzogchen Community. One who participates in Karma Yoga for the Dzogchen Community indicates or shows clearly one's interest in the Dzogchen Community in a concrete way. According to the voice, one should learn the book of Santi Maha Sangha Base, and during the examination one should reply correctly to the ten questions. According to the mind, one should apply all practices which are indicated in the book of Santi Maha Sangha Base.

Regarding the first Main Subject of Santi Maha Sangha Base training, since the beginning of Merigar we started developing Karma Yoga there. Merigar is the number one or primordial Gar of the Dzogchen Community, and recently we also started to register the names of people, how they contribute Karma Yoga activities in the Dzogchen Community, how many hours they have contributed, and so on.

Many people ask me how many hours of Karma Yoga they should contribute for the Santi Maha

Sangha Base examination and for the second level and so on. Registering how many hours people dedicate for Karma Yoga is not to realize limited hours in order to take the examination of Santi Maha Sangha Base; the registration of how many times and how many hours someone dedicated to Karma Yoga is relative, it is not the main point. The registration of the number of hours dedicated to Karma Yoga is in order to know who and how they have dedicated Karma Yoga to the Dzogchen Community and if we didn't register the Karma Yoga we couldn't know that. The registration of Karma Yoga is very useful in general for the Dzogchen Community to know who is seriously involved, and particularly it is very important to know how it is related to those people who participate in the Santi Maha Sangha Examinations.

Some people feel that it is enough that we ask people to do their best for dedicating Karma Yoga, that it is not necessary to do a registration of it. I think it is only enough for a few honest people, but not for most people. If you ask people during the examination no one will say, "I am not interested in the Dzogchen Community" or "I didn't dedicate Karma Yoga". They will say, "I am interested in the Dzogchen Community", and "I did my best for dedicating Karma Yoga". These are the common replies we could receive. In general, these words become a kind of ritual thing, not something serious. We don't really need any ritualized words; we need something concrete. Therefore we need a registration book of Karma Yoga in order to see who has seriously dedicated to Karma Yoga. Of course, the intention is not that Karma Yoga is only work like cleaning the bush, etc. There are many forms of Karma Yoga. For example, when guests of Dzogchen Community arrive and someone voluntarily goes to take these guests and accompany them when and where it is necessary at the request of Dzogchen Community responsible, that is collaboration with the Dzogchen Community and is valid Karma Yoga.

I am using the example of the first Gar of Dzogchen Community [Merigar], but we know very well that the situation of the Gars is not the same - we can find many different situations in the Gars and Gakyils of different countries - but even though, in any part of the world, if someone contributes voluntarily some good and useful things for the Dzogchen Community, the Gakyil of that place shouldn't view that participation with indifference. The Gakyil should register all the good things contributed by that person and when they go to do the examination of

Santi Maha Sangha the Gakyil can present his or her situation of conduct with the list of all the good things they have contributed to the Dzogchen Community. When we have this kind of presentation from the local Gakyils, we can finally understand how the conduct of that person is, and his or her first of the Three Main Subjects for the examination can be seriously applied.

We also know there are many people living in isolated places and in those places there is no Gakyil. For whoever has this kind of situation, if they have some possibility, they should try to connect to a Gakyil which is close to their place. Otherwise, they try to make contact with a Gar to receive more information about the Santi Maha Sangha examination, training and so on. For people who are in this kind of situation, we will try to help somehow and directly check their possibilities.

Please do not come to the examination of Santi Maha Sangha without having the preparations of Three Main Subjects for the Santi Maha Sangha examinations. Santi Maha Sangha training is a very important thing in our Dzogchen Community and therefore it is very important that we participate seriously, not only running to get to the higher levels. If you don't participate seriously, even if you arrive at a higher level you won't have any benefit. If you are going calmly ahead and seriously, even if you arrive at the first level, you can really get great benefit and at the same time you are getting qualified to be a Dzogchenpa.

With many greetings to all our Dzogchen practitioners,

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

RESPECTING OTHERS

Knowing how to respect the value and character of each thing is part of our awareness. First of all, a practitioner should know how to respect the individual and, above all, other practitioners, because each individual has his or her dimension. We have a great many problems with this. We are constantly forgetting to respect the dimension of others, particularly people who are couples.

When both people in the couple are young and lovely then everything goes wonderfully. They are blinded by their passion and think they are like one individual and see all aspects of things in the same way. A year later it's a little less like that, and after a few more years they are a little disillusioned and discover that they don't exactly see eye to eye. At the beginning [of their relationship] they want to be seated on the same chair when they are eating even if they break the chair! After two or three years they definitely want two different chairs, and after a few more years they want two different beds. After a while one house isn't big enough and they want two.

After all this time, all they have really discovered is that they are two individuals, each with their own dimension. If, from the beginning, they had acknowledged that they were two individuals with their own dimensions, their own ways of seeing and being but wanted to collaborate and be together, then they would have respected each other - especially if they are people who are following a spiritual path and have some sense of these values. In this way if they live long enough to become old people, then they will be two old people who will be sweet to each other and respect each other. But today that's very hard to do.

Even if it's not in that way, it's very important that we understand that each person is an individual with his or her own dimension and way of seeing and being.

INDIVIDUAL EVOLUTION

Today when people want to show themselves to be a bit spiritual they talk about peace; peace in the world. But peace does not come if there is no evolution of the individual. Evolution of the individual means understanding that other people have their dimensions and needs just like I do. As the Buddha said, "Take your own example and don't create problems for other people." Certainly if one works radically in this way then, yes, peace can come about. Every day you see appeals for peace; a General or President invites another President in order to try to make contact. But peace doesn't come about from these meetings. If we really want and need peace, we need to work individual by individual. One may think, "Well, how is that possible? When will we ever have peace?" But we live in time. Even if we live a long time, a hundred years, we are going to die. But our whole generation will not die together. There are younger people, there are children, there are people who, in the future,

First of all,
a practitioner
should know
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individual has
his or her
dimension.

will continue this civilization. If I have an evolution, a development, and I have understood something, I can help others who come after to understand. Thus, even if it doesn't multiply instantly, after centuries a real development can come about. So evolution is truly possible.

SOCIETY

When I arrived in Italy for the first time I had a little suitcase. I had no notion of teaching Dzogchen here or anything of the kind. But afterwards, having contact with people, talking to them, communicating with them, gradually something developed and grew.

Today we have something called the Dzogchen Community in all parts of the world and great numbers of people who have actually understood something. Moreover, I am one part, one person in society. I'm not something special. All people are the same in this regard. So if each of us understands, develops, has an evolution, then that has an impact and we can gradually have an effect on society in general. This is part of our awareness.

This is important because each individual counts, it's like a number. When we say society it's like saying numbers and numbers can be infinite. But if you go to the concrete level, numbers must always start with number one. If number one doesn't exist then there's no hundred, there's no thousand, there's nothing.

For me the first number in society is me. Every individual is number one for society so if we want to do something significant and real, we have to start with ourselves. If we have difficulty in observing ourselves then we have to resolve that difficulty. But our habitual system is not that, it's just the opposite. When some problem arises we always say, "Who's guilty? Who did it?" In some sense we're always part of the problem, we're always guilty but instead we are always looking for someone else who is the guilty one. And this is how tensions develop and problems arise. So we have to observe ourselves, we have to try to understand and become aware of ourselves and what we do.

MASTER OF ONESELF

So the Dzogchen teaching has to be more or less learned like this. I have

talked and also given a transmission today to connect us with the practice of Dzogchen. Those who have received this transmission and are interested in the Dzogchen teaching should read something and get some notions about how to practice it, how to apply it. But those people who are interested can't just think that they always have to have a master beside them. They have to become their own teachers, their own masters. So you read a few books, you begin to understand something about how this is applied, and if you don't understand, yes, there are other practitioners, you can collaborate with them.

COMPLETELY FREE

You can participate in the collective practices with other practitioners. Many people have a limitation thinking that if they go and practice with a group, people will judge how spiritual they are. In modern society you may not want to be identified as somebody who follows religion or is involved with a spiritual teaching. This means that in practice you are limiting yourself. Why should we limit ourselves? Better we should always be completely free. If we want to practice with a group of people, if we want to follow religion, why not? Why should we be slaves of the ideology of modern society? But if you like it, you can apply the whole modern outlook.

WORKING WITH CIRCUMSTANCES

I'm not a person who was born in this modern society. When I was born in my country, there was no such thing as an automobile. When I studied at college when I was young, we didn't even have a match! So I am, so to speak, like a primitive. But it's not true. I like a lot of modern things, above all computers. For example, computers have only been around for a little while - I remember very well when they started. What emerges in circumstances must be accepted and made use of without limits. When one becomes the slave of limitations then whatever limits is negative. But neither do you struggle against and fight with these limits. You are free to choose what you like and you enjoy it.

ENJOY YOURSELF

One of my teachings is, 'enjoy yourself'. We know that samsara is full of suffering, that is its nature and we are immersed in it, but at the same time there are many things to enjoy and we should enjoy them. We have no idea how many more years we will live. For these years that we will live why not do our best enjoying ourselves, not only suffering. This is how you live and integrate yourself into society. And that way you have fewer problems. My hope is that you will all try to do a bit like this.

Immediately spoken translation by
Barrie Simmons
Transcription by Liz Granger

2001 WEST COAST RETREATS

May 2-6, 2001

DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

2001 CALIFORNIA RETREAT WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU MAY 2-6, 2001

SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE
1547 LAKESIDE DRIVE, OAKLAND CA

A FIVE DAY, NON RESIDENTIAL RETREAT WILL BE HELD AT THE SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE IN OAKLAND CALIFORNIA IN MAY. CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE WILL INTRODUCE THE DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS AND GIVE TRANSMISSION FOR VARIOUS PRACTICES. THERE WILL ALSO BE INSTRUCTION FOR THE PRACTICE OF YANTRA YOGA BY FABIO ANDRICO AND THE VAJRA DANCE WITH ANASTASIA MCGHEE. THERE WILL BE PRACTICE SESSIONS LED BY OLDER STUDENTS DURING THE RETREAT. THE SCOTTISH RITE TEMPLE IS CENTRALLY LOCATED BY LAKE MERRITT NEAR DOWNTOWN OAKLAND. IT IS WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE FROM THE LAKE MERRITT BART STATION (BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT). THERE ARE SEVERAL PARKING GARAGES AND LOTS IN THE AREA. THE OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS 15 MINUTES BY CAR.

510/559-9753

CONTACT FOR RETREAT & PUBLIC TALK

Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

Website: www.dzogchencommunitywest.org

REGISTRATION FEES FOR CALIFORNIA RETREAT:

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FULL RETREAT: \$245.00

PARTIAL: \$60.00 PER DAY

AFTER APRIL 3:

FULL RETREAT: \$275.00

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ON THE WEST COAST - CALIFORNIA

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CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

MAY 1, 2001 TUESDAY 7:30PM

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

NORTHBRAE COMMUNITY CHURCH, 941 THE ALAMEDA,
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

SEATTLE PUBLIC TALK MAY 9, 2001

CONTACT: TEL: 425/822-5080 // Email: dzogchenseattle@cs.com

PORTLAND, OREGON

PORTLAND RETREAT (SEE DETAILS PAGE 7)

MAY 18-20, 2001

CONTACT: TEL: 503/240-8707 // Email: chnnpdx@teleport.com

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MILAREPA

The Great Magician

by Julia Lawless and Judy Allen



I come from the village of Tsa in southern Tibet. My father was a great landowner from a rich and noble family. As an only son, I was spoiled and my early childhood was happy and carefree. Sadly though, when I was only seven years old, my father died.

From that point on, everything changed. In his will, my father had entrusted the care of his estate to my uncle and aunt until I reached the age of fifteen. Yet in spite of his best intentions, my relations seized our property for themselves. While they enjoyed a life of luxury, we were forced to live like servants in our own home!

When I reached the age of fifteen, my mother reminded my uncle and aunt of her late husband's will. But over the years they had become accustomed to their position of power and my mother's pleas were hopeless. The villagers felt sorry for us but were afraid to help. And we, of course, had no means to challenge our relatives.

When my mother realized that her family was now destitute, she was poisoned with bitterness. "Now our only hope of avenging our enemies" she wailed, "is through magic. I want you, my beloved son, to learn the art of sorcery. Apprentice yourself to the magician Yungton. If you are not successful, I will kill myself."

I therefore had no choice but to leave our village and study magic with Yungton of Ngak, the 'Great and Terrifying Magician of Evil Spells'. Unfortunately although I spent a whole year with him, I learnt nothing. Knowing I could not return home without having mastered the art of black magic, in desperation I sought the help of another sorcerer. This time, as an apprentice to Khulungpa, the 'Ocean of Virtue', my perseverance was rewarded and I made rapid progress in mastery over the spell of death.

Once I was truly confident of my capacity, I set out to avenge my family. My magic was indeed powerful! After only fourteen days of practice, my teacher told me that I would see signs of success. Sure enough, that night the guardian spirits that I had invoked, appeared before me, bringing with them the bleeding heads and hearts of thirty five corpses which they piled upon my altar.

I later found out that my magical ritual had coincided with the death of thirty

five guests at my cousin's wedding feast. During the meal, strange things had happened. The courtyard of our house was filled with a writhing mass of snakes, lizards, spiders and frogs. The horses tethered in the stables went wild with panic. Rearing up they kicked down the stable walls, causing the whole building to collapse. All the guests inside were killed ... but unfortunately my uncle and aunt escaped.

My mother was overjoyed when she heard of the disaster. Tying a rag to the end of a long stick, she paraded it through the village shouting, "How happy I am to see this day! Through my son's power we have at last taken our revenge." The villagers were furious at her display of heartlessness and plotted to murder our whole family. Knowing this, my mother craftily sent me a message with a pilgrim, warning me of the danger. Even death threats had not restrained my mother's wish for revenge for in her letter she now asked me to destroy the entire village!

Once again, I had no choice but to return to my previous teacher, Yungton of Ngak. I begged him to teach me how to gain power over hailstorms for in this way I could ruin the villagers' crops. When the harvest was almost ripe I set off for my village. Once in the hills above the valley, I began to perform the magical rite. At first a cloud no bigger than a sparrow drifted by. Nothing seemed to be working. Suddenly a huge, menacing black cloud began to overshadow the valley. Giant hailstones smothered the houses and completely destroyed the crops, the very livelihood of the village.

On my return to Nyak, my teacher Yungton congratulated me on my success, but I felt no joy. Instead I was filled with a deep sense of remorse. My mind was tormented with guilt and I longed for a way in which I could find relief from my suffering. Seeing my distress, Yungton also felt deep regret for his life of black magic. As I was still young, he offered to help me in my search for redemption.

He sent me to a famous Dzogchen master, whose teachings could give instant liberation. But I was too arrogant and lazy to realize what a valuable opportunity this was and spent most of my time sleeping! In a matter of days, the Dzogchen master was fed up with me, "I see that there is

nothing I can do to help you," he said. "You should go to the great master Marpa, with whom you have a natural connection through past lives."

As soon as I heard the name "Marpa", a shiver went through my spine and my hair stood on end. I was filled with a sudden longing to meet him face-to-face. Unable to think of anything else, I immediately set off for the southern Wheat Valley where he lived, taking only a few provisions and my book of spells.

As I entered the valley, I asked everyone I passed whether they knew where I could find Marpa the translator. Nobody seemed to have heard of him until I met an attractive young boy who said, "You must mean my father. Usually he doesn't work on the farm but today he is out plowing the field by the roadside."

This struck me as strange for I could not believe that such a renowned master would need to be out plowing his fields. Just then I caught sight of a tall, well-built man in a nearby field. As I approached, I could see that he had penetrating eyes and a fearsome expression. Hesitantly I asked him where Marpa lived.

For what seemed like a long time he just glared at me. Then he asked, "And who are you?" I replied, "I am a deeply troubled man who has come to beg Marpa for help." "Very well", he said, "I will arrange an introduction. In the meantime, plow this field."

After a while the young boy whom I had met on the road, came to show me the way to Marpa's home. I had not yet finished plowing, however, and resolved to complete my work before I went with him.

When we finally reached the master's house, I was shocked to see the same man I had met earlier in the fields. Although he was seated high on a pile of cushions like a teacher, he still had traces of soil in his hair and dust in his beard. I quickly glanced around the room to make sure there was no other master present. Then the man spoke, "Don't you recognize me? I am the translator Marpa. You may present yourself!"

I bowed down at once and, placing his feet upon my head in respect, I cried, "I offer you my body, speech and mind in exchange for food, clothing and instructions by which I can gain redemption for my evil deeds." "I cannot offer you both teachings and provisions" Marpa replied, "and I warn you that if you should choose the teachings, your success will depend entirely on your own effort."

Having agreed to find my own provisions, I was accepted into Marpa's household where I began sorting out my meager possessions. I was about to place my treasured book of magical spells in his shrine room when he belittled at me, "Take your filthy book away from my sacred altar. I don't want it defiled with such rubbish!" I removed it at once and

quietly withdrew to my own room. Since I had undertaken to feed myself, I took to begging. In the course of a few days I had collected enough to buy a large copper cooking pot with four handles, as well as beer, meat and barley to offer as gifts to Marpa. I was so exhausted when I arrived home that I dropped my heavy load on the doorstep. Marpa was startled by the noise and shouted angrily, "You're already getting on my nerves! Get out!" With that he strode over and shoved me outside.

THREE DAYS OF PEACE, MUSIC AND LOVE WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU IN PERU

by Juan Bustamante

Peace, for sure. Rinpoche is a good provider; of course you should take it with your bare hands or an open heart. The music for our ears was many people chanting the Song of the Vajra and many for the first time. Love was an interactive flow, circulating freely. All this happened in "El Remanso" (smooth water), west of Lima, Peru, from February 9th to the 11th, 2001, among mountains, in the middle of a beautiful park which was an ideal environment for retreat. Some one hundred sixty of us gathered with the idea of learning how to integrate contemplation with daily life. Rinpoche gave us transmission and how to get the experience. After all, the way of knowing the true nature of the mirror is through its own reflections.



Rinpoche and friends in Peru

F. Guerrero

I realized now my master was very short-tempered but I was not put off. Picking up the empty cooking pot, I offered it to him again. For a moment Marpa just looked at me, then tears welled up in his eyes and he took the pot, saying, "Your gift is auspicious. I in turn, offer it to my teacher Naropa." He lifted the pot above his head and shook it so that its handles rang out across the valley. Then he carried it into his shrine room where he filled it with melted butter from the lamps. I was so overcome with emotion that I begged him to give me teachings.

"Passing on meditation instruction is very slow work," Marpa explained. "First I want you to build a round tower on the eastern ridge of the nearby mountain. Once you've finished it, then I'll give you teachings."

Immediately, with raised spirits, I set about building the round tower. When the structure was only half-complete Marpa suddenly changed his mind! "Hold on!" he said. "Since I instructed you to build this round tower, I have had second thoughts. Now I want you to pull it down! Instead I would like you to build a tower shaped like a crescent moon on the mountain's western ridge."

Once again, just before the work was completed, he came to see me. "I must have been completely drunk when I gave you the instructions for building this tower!" he said. "Demolish it at once." Next he took me to the northern ridge of the mountain where he ordered me to build a triangular house. This time I asked him if he was sure that this was what he wanted. I was now utterly dejected and exhausted.

When I had scarcely completed one third of the building, Marpa paid me a visit. He shouted at me, "Great Magician, who told you to build this house?" He always called me by this name to remind me of my terrible past. Totally bewildered now, I replied, "You ordered it and swore that it would not be torn down." "Are you challenging me?" Marpa growled. "Tear the walls down at once." I felt completely disheartened and had no choice except to do as he bid. By now I had developed running sores

on my back. Persuaded by his compassionate wife Dagmema who felt sorry for me, Marpa finally consented to give me the most basic instructions. He then told me about his own ordeals under his teacher Naropa and how, he too, had to show unceasing perseverance. As he spoke of his struggles, I inwardly vowed to do anything in order to understand the real nature of existence.

The next morning Marpa told me to start building a square tower. I was beyond knowing what to believe. Despite my resolution to endure anything, I was close to suicide. I was still working on the tower when he sent for me. "Do you hate me for refusing to teach you?" he asked. "No. I have complete faith in you," I replied. "I alone am responsible for my misery." Waves of sadness suddenly welled up inside me and I broke down in tears. Marpa's reaction was to rebuke me harshly yet again. Something inside me broke and I could not take it any more. Without telling anyone, I left.

When Dagmema discovered that I was missing, she chastised Marpa, "The Great Magician has gone. Now are you satisfied?" At this news, Marpa's eyes filled with tears. "Oh please bring me back my destined spiritual son," he prayed.

I, meanwhile, had realized that I had no option but to return to Marpa. When I arrived home, he was furious with me for having left. "If you are so impatient for the truth," he admonished then you must be ready to give your very life for it." I was in total despair.

Just as I had given up all hope, Marpa summoned me to be the principal guest at a ceremony. Fearfully, I took my seat among the other disciples. "Although I may have appeared unreasonable," Marpa began, "I am not to blame for the Great Magician's suffering. I actually used my rage as a skillful tool to test him thoroughly and purify him of his past ill-deeds."

Turning to me he continued, "Now I will give you the essential teachings that are as dear to me as my own heart. I will also provide you with everything that you need. Let us be happy!" As he spoke, I couldn't help wondering, "Am

continued on page 6

SUMMER AT MERIGAR

2001

RETREATS WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

JULY 6-10
SHORT DZOGCHEN TEACHING RETREAT
 WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

The retreat starts on July 6 at 4 pm.
 The cost of the retreat will be Lit.400.000 with discounts for paid-up members.
 Payment can be made by installments (see below).
 It is advisable to book early since many people are expected.

AUGUST 10-19
LONG DZOGCHEN TEACHING RETREAT
 WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

The retreat starts on August 10 at 4 pm.
 The cost of the retreat will be Lit.900.000 with discounts for paid-up members.
 Payment can be made by installments (see below).
 It is advisable to book early since many people are expected.

SANTI MAHA SANGHA

AUGUST 21-23
BASE EXAM
 Booking required at Merigar

AUGUST 24-28
FIRST LEVEL TRAINING
 with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
 starts August 24 at 4 pm.
 Cost Lit.400.000 without discounts

SEPTEMBER 23-25
SECOND LEVEL EXAM
 Booking required at Merigar

SEPTEMBER 26-30
THIRD LEVEL TRAINING
 with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
 starts September 26 at 4 pm.
 Cost Lit.400.000 without discounts

Milarepa

continued from page 5

I awake or am I dreaming? If it's just a dream, I hope I never wake up."

That very evening Marpa cut off a lock of my hair as a sign of my commitment. He offered me a cup of consecrated wine, which I drained in one draught. Finally, dressing me in robes, he gave me my new name "Milarepa" meaning the Cotton-Clad One. The next day, Marpa explained the theory and practice of meditation. Placing his hand on my head, he said, "My spiritual son, I knew from the very beginning that you would be a most worthy disciple. Both Dagmema and I had prophetic dreams the night before your arrival."

"I dreamt that my teacher Naropa gave me a five-pronged Vajra of lapis lazuli, symbolizing diamond-like indestructibility. He told me to cleanse it with nectar from a golden vase and mount it on top of a magnificent Banner of Victory. Its radiance blazed forth and lit up the whole universe, subduing all negative forces." "Dagmema also had an auspicious dream, in which two beautiful women appeared before her holding a crystal container, which I cleansed with nectar before placing it on a mountain top. It shone with a brilliant light, more dazzling than the sun and moon."

"This was why I set out to meet you disguised as a farm laborer. When you drank all the beer I offered and finished plowing the field, I knew for certain that you would be able to take in and understand the full meaning of the teaching and transmission." He continued, "The copper pot with its four handles which you offered me foretold the coming of my four greatest disciples. Its smooth surface meant that your mind will become completely pure but its emptiness signified that you will be close to starvation while you are in retreat. For this reason I filled it with melted butter to provide for you in later years and made its handles ring out to announce your future acclaim. I put

you through a series of grueling ordeals yet you never lost faith or had ill thoughts about me. This means that your own disciples will be able to endure terrible hardships. Through you, the precious teachings will grow and flourish like the waxing moon. Let us all rejoice!"

This was the beginning of my happiness. Now that I had been accepted by Marpa, he was very kind and provided me with everything I needed. He asked me to remain near him and sent me to practice meditation in an isolated cave, known as the Tiger Cave. Later that year Marpa's son, Dharma Dhoday, unexpectedly died. Marpa was devastated. Looking for signs to indicate the future of his lineage, he instructed his followers to watch their dreams closely. That night all Marpa's foremost disciples had outstanding dreams but none of them related to the lineage. I, however, had a dream of a huge mountain like Mount Meru. It was at the center of the world and was encircled by four great pillars. "Upon the Eastern pillar crouched a great snow lion with a flowing mane of turquoise; From the southern pillar a tigress roared spreading her claws through the dense forests; Above the western pillar a giant eagle soared gazing upward toward heaven; While in the north a vulture spread its wings above a nest and fledgling, while the sky became full of little birds." When I had finished relating the dream in full, Marpa was overjoyed. He sang a song which interpreted my dream and revealed the future of the lineage.

"Mila is like the vulture whose outspread wings signify his realization of the secret instruction.

Its eyrie in the steep cliff means that his life will be as hard as a rock. The vulture's fledgling shows that he will have a peerless spiritual son, and the small birds scattered in space represent his many disciples and the spread of

his teachings far and wide.

His gaze and flight towards heaven shows he will leave the world of birth and death and arrive in the realm of perfect freedom. If the words of this old man are prophetic it is a most favorable dream for us all." It was all as my dream had predicted. Meditating on the fire of 'Inner Heat' in solitary places became my main practice, the one best suited to my nature. Marpa also conferred on me the hat of Maitripa and the garments of Naropa. My life as a yogi was very tough and my path not without obstacles for I was challenged both by non-human and human adversaries. Through my master's blessings, however, I eventually gained full realization. Later I had many disciples. My first, the wayward Rechungpa always remained close to my heart, while my female disciple, the beautiful young girl Paldarborn, embodied all the qualities of a living Dakini and became enlightened. Towards the end of my life, I had another dream about the future of the lineage: I dreamt that an eagle flew to Central Tibet landing upon a precious jewel. Many geese flocked around it. After a while they dispersed and then returned, each bringing five hundred more companions. Soon all the surrounding plains and valleys were filled with geese. This dream indicated that although I was a lay yogi, many of my followers would become monks. Foremost amongst these would be my spiritual successor, the physician-monk Gampopa.

I was happy beyond words for the continuation of the tradition was now ensured. My own service to the Dharma was completed.

MEETING THE ELEMENTS

continued from page 3

is hard to imagine such a place at, say Tsegylgar, or any ordinary Buddhist retreat, but in Tashigar where dinner was routinely served as late as 10:30 PM, Tashi Bar appeared so perfectly natural where it offered an earlier hour serving the traditional Argentine sandwich. I myself was partial to a vodka tonic, a rare treat I indulge in during the summer, but there was also wine, beer, and soda and cafe con leche. For us clandestine smokers, it was also a place to relax somewhat guilt free with our addiction. Young and not so young danced away. And naturally our own Michael Katz unabashedly sang his repertoire of folk and popular tunes while others presented their own cultural talents. Meeting many people from around the world is really a very special part of attending retreats and Tashi Bar was host to many stimulating conversations. I can't say much about the New Year's festivities except that the dinner must have been wonderful, but by 11:00 PM, I found myself falling asleep at the table so I returned home leaving the festivities to the younger and more awake to ring in the New Year.

During the course of my stay at Tashigar, I was very happy at last to visit the remaining lots of Tashigar Mandala, including the New York lot purchased a couple of years ago which I participated in. One afternoon, Kathy O'Connor, Adolpho from Cordoba, Glen, Michael Katz and I set out for a tour of the land and to visit Glen's house. It seemed to me after we have worked out the roughly designated boundaries of the New York land that this piece is indeed quite beautiful with spectacular views to the North and West. At the highest point near a makeshift sputa of piled rocks, it seemed to be a place which might

be nice to have a practice retreat cabin rather than a large house - something which can be used by practitioners, although there is already a portion of the land set aside for retreat cabins on the East slope of Tashigar's land. At Glen's behest, I spent a couple of days sketching out different possibilities. Although the Tashigar Mandala seems a bit disorganized without any over all plans, fundamentally the idea to make a community of international practitioners has great appeal. It was also a pleasure to see Naomi's house rise like Georgia O'Keefe's looming church in Taos, hugging the land, as it were, and also Anne Dankoff's little cottage down below nestled among a lush meadow at the river's edge. Glen gave us a walking tour of his house, brick walls now raised which he designed and built himself. As usually the case in Community projects, its jump in feet first with out much forethought. But the result of seeing so many houses and their distinct character was delightful. Each one reflecting something of the energy of its inhabitant. Now, it seems things are developing further in a more organized fashion as Tashigar Mandala begins to implement issues around electricity, water, and roads.

In the Principles of the Dzogchen Community, Rinpoche writes about agricultural cooperatives. This place, Tashigar, is so rich and abundant - an island of sanity and protection for all beings to enjoy for many generations. I sincerely wish all our Vajra brothers and sisters can visit and restore their energy while they relax in this lovely paradise and, if even temporarily, live off the fruits of the land which fall upon one with such bounty.

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU SCHEDULE continued from page 1

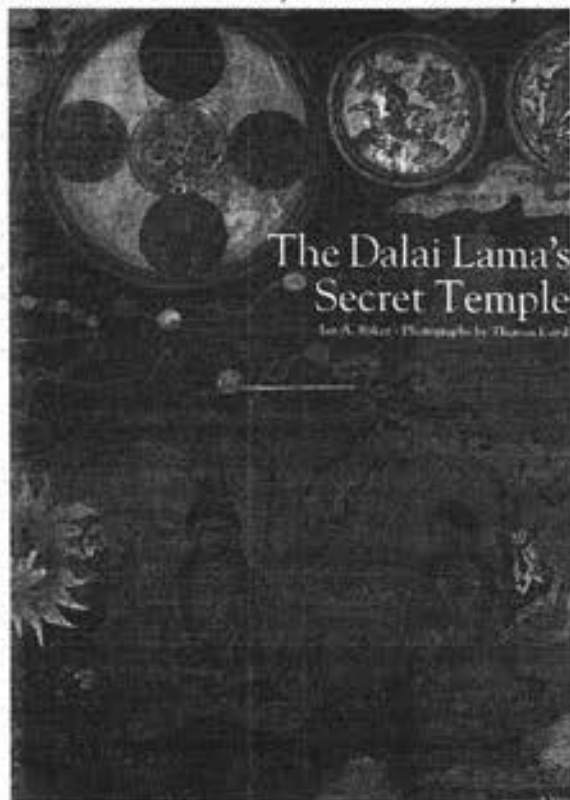
VENEZUELA, MARGARITA ISLAND December 26th-January 1st Margarita Island Retreat	August 22nd-23rd SMS III Level Exam August 24th-28th SMS IV Level Training August 30th-31st SMS IV Level Exam September 1st-5th SMS V Level Training September 8th-22nd Vacation in Sardegna
2002 Feb. 15th-24th MARGARITA ISLAND Teacher's Training March 30th-April 3rd Margarita Island Easter Retreat April 9th-23rd Margarita Island Longsel Teaching	AUSTRIA, KALACHAKRA October 10th Leave for Austria October 11th H.H. the Dalai Lama arrives October 23rd H.H. the Dalai Lama departs
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 October 28th Return to Merigar
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	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

SEE CONTACTS IN COMMUNITY NEWS page 13

THE DALAI LAMA'S SECRET TEMPLE:

Tantric Wall Paintings from Tibet,

BY IAN BAKER & THOMAS LAIRD, THAMES & HUDSON, LONDON 2000.



BOOK REVIEW BY JAKOB WINKLER

The Lukhang is a three-storied temple or on a romantic island in the lake behind the Potala; this is indicated by its longer name Dzong Gyab Lukhang (*rDzong rgyab klu khang*) literally the "Water-Spirit House Behind The Fortress". Following the construction of the Potala in the second half of the 17th century, a lake was left behind due to the extraction of building material. For pacifying the disturbed nagas the Fifth Dalai Lama promised to satisfy them by building a temple as a place for regular pujas. It is said that the small artificial island in the lake was frequented as a retreat by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama. Later a temple dedicated to the nagas was built on this island. The Lukhang was a personal retreat place of the various Dalai Lamas.

Not many of the murals of the ground floor are preserved. The first floor contains beautiful narrative paintings, mainly of the life of the bodhisattva Pema Öbar and of the Indian King Gyalpo Legkye. In the top floor one finds in a small room of six by six meters extraordinary murals of Tantric and Dzogchen related topics. The Eastern wall shows forty-two Mahasiddha and Padmasambhava and his twenty-five close students. The Western wall is decorated with Dzogchen practices and the northern wall shows various Tantric and Dzogchen themes: the contents of Dzogchen tantras, the complete one hundred Shitro deities, Yantra yoga and Tsalung practices, and scenes of Guru Rinpoche subduing hostile forces. Besides these three big wall paintings in the corners we can find biographical episodes of masters (SE); protective deities (NE) and scenes showing various ways of introducing the student to the natural state (NW).

Unfortunately, not all the murals are in such a good shape as appear in the book, mainly due to continual leaking water through the roof since the mid eighties,

caused by "renovation". This ongoing damage threatens this unique artistic and spiritual heritage.

Since I saw the magnificent murals of the Lukhang in *The Crystal And The Way Of Light* (plate 12 - 17 and 27) in 1986, the wish to see them in real haunted me. Ten years later I made it to Lhasa and while initiating an ad hoc roof repair job of the Lukhang with an active NGO under consultation of an ASIA architect, we had the chance of taking some pictures as a by-product. This was the starting point for my research on the Lukhang and its Dzogchen paintings. A year later I returned, this time I was not even allowed to write down the words of the inscriptions, not to mention the making of photos. So I spelled the captions into my walkman recorder and wrote them down at night in the hotel. The next day I compared my notes with the words on the wall. Since I am working on these murals myself, I might be more critical than many other readers about this beautiful book.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was the first to publish pictures of the murals in 1986. Now a copiously illustrated book is published. The work gave birth to a book of inspiration and beauty rather than of academic research. The wonderful pictures were taken by Thomas Laird and the text was written by Ian Baker. The quality of the pictures are incredible and of outstanding quality, whoever tried to take pictures in the Lukhang knows how difficult it is. The book contains 136 color images in large format and 80 pages of text and beautiful drawings. It starts with an introduction by the Dalai Lama. Ian Baker presents the history of the Lukhang, the connection of it to the Dalai Lamas and the interesting section on the relationship of the Dalai Lamas and the Dzogchen teachings. Ian made use of his good fortune to

be able to consult His Holiness the Dalai Lama about these topics. In connection with the depictions, background information to the paintings are presented - for example the Buddhist vision of art, the path of Tantra, the world of the Mahasiddhas and the Dzogchen teachings. In the introduction the author investigates the history of the building and its context, but without getting real historical evidence on the origination of the Lukhang and its murals (a difficult research topic not solved yet which I am actually working on).

The author followed in preparing the book the advice of the Dalai Lama. The murals disclose very openly the innermost Dzogchen instructions by illustrating all the practices like Rushen, Tregchöd and Thögal. Baker's commentary describe the principles of the illustrated practices without giving practical instruction in a way that an "uninitiated" practitioner could use it as "how to do it book". For somebody familiar with these teachings there is a lot to discover between the lines and especially in the pictures. When I asked Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for advice for my plans on carrying out an academic study and/or writing a book about the Dzogchen paintings of the Lukhang, he said, "It would be O.K. to make a coffee table book with more general explanations. Even a translation of the inscription would be acceptable, but a precise explanation of the contents of the pictures relating the Dzogchen practice should not be undertaken." This Rinpoche stressed especially because the Western wall shows the complete Dzogchen path with its Thögal practices and the resulting visions.

I would like to see a book showing pictures of the complete paintings, even if it would be in small scale only. Probably the authors decided to reproduce only pictures of excellent quality.

continued on page 8

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU RINPOCHE

IN PORTLAND, OREGON, USA

PUBLIC LECTURE

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will lecture on:

"What is Spirituality in the Tibetan Great Perfection Tradition"

Wednesday, May 16th, 2001

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
PUBLIC LECTURE
7-9 pm- MARYLHURST UNIVERSITY,
St. Anne's Chapel
Portland, Oregon
Pre-registration: \$10
Onsite Registration: \$15
Please send and make checks payable to:
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Religious Studies and Philosophy
Department
P.O. Box 261 Marylhurst,
OR 97036-0261

Registration fees:
\$148 by March 15th
\$165 by April 15th
\$180 after April 15th

DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS
Friday May 18th, 7:00 - 9:00 pm,
Saturday May 19th,
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
WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU
May 18th, 19th & 20th - Portland, Oregon
WORLD FORESTRY CENTER, MILLER HALL
4033 SW Canyon Road - Portland, Oregon

This beautiful facility is near downtown, on a MAX light rail stop, and there is plenty of easy parking.

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10:30 - 1:00 pm
Dzogchen Teachings and Ganapuja
Retreat phone number: 503-240-8707
Email: chnnpdx@teleport.com

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Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Have you ever attended a teaching by Rinpoche? Yes _____ No _____

Child care is requested for _____ children of the following ages: _____

Make check payable to: "Namkhai Norbu Portland Retreat"

Mail with copy of registration to:
DIANE HYDE, 2725 NE 17TH, 97212
PORTLAND, OR. 97212, USA

Please use this link to print a map to the World Forestry Center:
<http://maps.yahoo.com/py/maps.py?BFCat=&Pyt=Tmap&addr=4033+SW+Canyon+Road&city=Portland&state=OR&sl=45.510400&sln=122.717800&zip=972212760&country=us&mag=9&cs=9&BFCClient=&poi=&poititle=&map.x=46&map.y=6>

Accommodation List:

Lodging near the World Forestry Center
MALLORY HOTEL
729 SW 15th Ave., Portland, OR 97205
Tel: (503)223-6311 or (800)228-8657
Large, traditional downtown hotel with light rail passing in front, about 3 stops from the Washington Park Forestry Center.
Restaurant on premises
Rates: \$85 - \$140.
THE MARK SPENCER HOTEL
409 SW 11th Ave., Portland, OR 97205-2633
Tel: (503) 224-3293 or (800)548-3934.
Complementary breakfast.
Rates \$89 - \$109.
THE IMPERIAL HOTEL
400 SW Broadway, Portland, OR 97205-3579
Tel: (503)228-7221 or (800)452-2323.
Restaurant on premises, close to light rail.
Rates \$75 - \$90.
AMERICAN HOSPITALITY INNS
2221 SW Sixth Ave., Portland, OR 97201
Tel: (503)226-2979.
Rates \$50 - \$70.
CARAVAN MOTOR HOTEL
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Tel: (503)226-1121 or (800)992-2401.
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Rates \$60 - \$70.
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Rates \$99 - \$125.
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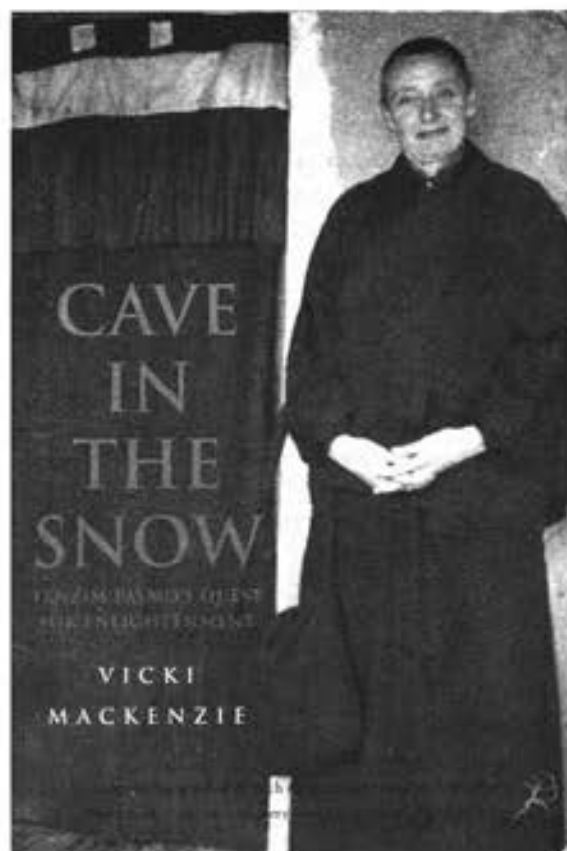
1818 NW Glisan
Tel: (503)241-2783.
Rates: \$20 - \$48/ member vs. non-member
AYH Hosteling International/Portland
INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL
3031 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, OR
Tel: (503)236-3380.
Located on Portland's East side.
Rates \$20 - \$46/member vs. non-member
There is a restaurant at the entry plaza for the Oregon Zoo, which lies across the parking lot from the World Forestry Center. There is no zoo entry costs for the restaurant. Menu prices are reasonable. Cafeteria style, children's menu, appetizers, and beverages. It is the only eating establishment within walking distance.

Directions to the zoo:
From Washington: Take I-5 south to I-405 south. Take I-405 south to Hwy 26 west. Take Hwy 26 west to the zoo exit #72.
From the South (Salem, Eugene, Corvallis): Take I-5 north to I-405 north. Take I-405 north to Hwy 26 west. Take Hwy 26 west to the zoo exit #72.
From the East (The Dalles, Hood River, Pendleton): Take I-84 west to I-5 south. Take I-5 south to I-405 north. Take I-405 north to Hwy 26 west. Take Hwy 26 west to the zoo exit #72.
From the South coast: Take Hwy 101 north to Hwy 6 east. Take Hwy 6 east to Hwy 26 east. Take Hwy 26 east to the zoo exit #72.
From the North coast: Take Hwy 101 south to Hwy 26 east. Take Hwy 26 east to the zoo exit #72.

CAVE IN THE SNOW

BLOOMSBURY PRESS, 1998

by Vicki Mackenzie



I first met Tenzin Palmo in 1980 on a dusty roadside at Tashi Jong, India where she made a deep impression on me. She was already a legend in the Himalayas and acknowledged as a woman who had gone more deeply into her spiritual practice than any other Westerner. It was not until 1989, however, that I was able to spend many long and memorable hours with her when she stayed with me as my guest in London.

An outstanding Englishwoman in the tradition of hardy and intrepid early explorers, she had lived in retreat for over twelve years in a cave in the mountains in Lahoul, northern India. Years of living in a cold cave and enduring snowy winters at 13,200 feet had taken their toll: she suffered seriously from arthritis, to the point where it was extremely painful for her to walk even a few hundred yards. Her English name was Diane Perry; her adopted Tibetan name on becoming a mendicant nun was Tenzin Palmo. Despite her pain, she never complained.

Cave in the Snow is the account of her spiritual journey starting from her early beginnings in the East End of London. Her father was a Cockney fishmonger, a Pearly King who liked to gamble on horses and dogs and her mother Lee was a lively young woman who liked dancing as well as being interested in spiritual matters. Weekly spiritualist seances were conducted at their home. This colorful beginning was marked by a very early wish to be a nun and being drawn inextricably to all things Eastern coupled with a sense of being out of place in England. Common to many healers or highly developed spiritual beings, she suffered mysterious illnesses as a child which left her physically frail but did give her out-of-the-body experiences.

Tenzin Palmo's story, from childhood to her first realization of being Buddhist, her early grasp of the self-perfected nature of beings and her wish to go beyond notions of duality; her time with Chögyam Trungpa as his first disciple, subsequent travel to India, meetings with Freda Bedi (Sister Palmo), John Blofeld and the crucial meeting with her 'root' guru Khamtrul Rinpoche when she took robes, followed by her years in solitary retreat, is a most inspiring tale. Tenzin Palmo is closest to being a female practitioner in the mold of the great tradition of yogis such as Milarepa and will surely serve as a model for many female and male practitioners.

While the book is written by Vicki Mackenzie in an accessible journalistic style that doubtless has a wide appeal, in many ways I felt it lacked a lyrical poetry that could have done more justice to its subject. At times the journalistic prose positively jars and the language is exaggerated and overdramatized. Mixed metaphors such as the mind first being compared to a wild horse then to a laser beam "digging" into the mind are irritating while Enlightenment defined as a "mind blown wide open to encompass universal reality" is more akin to drug-induced experiences! Deities are described graphically in an unnecessary attempt to shock and in some cases are misrepresented: Vajrayogini is NOT depicted without a consort (her secret consort is depicted in the form of a khatvanga) nor is her consort depicted as a ritual implement, worn like a

handbag to be transformed into a "living man whenever the divine occasion demanded". By contrast with the author, Tenzin Palmo's language is very direct, ordinary, unadorned and down to earth.

Although Tenzin Palmo has spoken out vividly against the lack of support for nuns in the Tibetan tradition, and while she may have become an icon for feminists and women practitioners, Vicki Mackenzie exaggerates the emphasis on the feminine and sometimes makes distorted statements. For example when Tenzin Palmo gets permission from her guru Khamtrul Rinpoche to do retreat in the cave in Lahoul, the claim that "Tenzin Palmo overturned centuries of tradition, which decreed that women were not capable of doing extensive retreats in totally isolated places in order to advance themselves to higher spiritual levels" is patently untrue. It is disconcerting to read that there were "no living examples of female spiritual excellence for her to emulate, no woman guru who had trodden the path before her" only to have that argument overturned in subsequent pages with examples such as Yeshe Tsogyal, Ayu Khandro and the very recently deceased Sufi sage, Irina Tweedie (albeit a woman from another tradition).

Nonetheless there are countless jewels coming from Tenzin Palmo herself. On the key questions of the guru and mindfulness, she is succinct and clear. Vicki Mackenzie mistakenly suggests that a meeting with a true guru is rare which denies the authenticity of most lama/practitioner relationships. For Tenzin Palmo, Khamtrul Rinpoche's name reverberated immediately with her. In a period when the notion of guru is in disrepute, particularly in America, it is refreshing to read how down to earth and understated is the account of their meeting: "The feeling was two things at the same time. One was seeing somebody you knew extremely well whom you haven't seen for a very long time. A feeling of 'Oh, how nice to see you again!', and at the same time it was as though an innermost part of my being had taken form in front of me." And for her a genuine guru is "there to help people to grow up as well as wake up. The real function of a guru is to introduce you to the unborn nature of your mind and the relationship is one of mutual commitment." Her classical views are refreshing and clear in the context of endless western debate on this key issue. On the question of lama/disciple sexual relationships, equally it is a relief to read her healthy comment "I sometimes feel we women have to get away from this victim mentality".

On mindfulness: "At the moment we've got the habit of being unaware. We have to develop the habit of being present. Once we start to be present in the moment everything opens up. When we are mindful there is no commentary - it's a very naked experience, wakeful, vivid.....Meditation is not just about sitting in a cave for twelve years...It's everyday life. Where else do you practice generosity, patience, ethics?.....The fact is that a genuine practice should be able to be carried out in all circumstances."

It was a pity that not more was written about the three Bonpo lamas in England, one of whom was Tenzin Namdak. On a transcendental level, it would have been interesting to read more about Tenzin Palmo's experiences in the cave. I know that there were other stories not documented in this book.

In conclusion, this a book that is well worth reading about a remarkable, single minded and courageous contemporary female practitioner who has already served as a beacon of light to many western practitioners. Her ordinariness, sense of humor and her integration with the Western spiritual and artistic tradition make her even more accessible.

Tenzin Palmo is currently traveling the world and raising funds for her nunnery of 21 nuns at Tashi Jong, Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery. This nunnery will reintroduce and train a lineage of *togdenmas* (yoginis).

If you would like to know more about her work, she can be contacted on eliz_palmo@hotmail.com.

Website: www.tenzinpalmo.com

by Judith Allan
London, January 2001

I would also prefer more pictures showing larger pieces of the wall paintings, instead of too many enlarged details of scenes already shown and too many repetition of the same paintings (e.g. 6/142 or 138/139), but that doesn't do any harm to the quality of this beautiful pictures.

The commentaries of the photos draw a lot from writings of the previous Dalai Lamas and in addition from explanations of the present one. In this way, Ian Baker underlines the connection of the Dalai Lamas with the depicted material. Besides quoting from these sources he uses other translated works. One would prefer to have these unique pictures be commented more in their own right, since 80 percent of the murals have inscriptions explaining the scenes. In the inscriptions one finds hints to the various texts on which the pictures are based. Unfortunately, Ian Baker didn't follow up this track.

When I informed Ian Baker, that the illustrated teachings are based on Pema Lingpas (1445/50-1521) Dzogchen cycle "Dzogchen Kunzang Gongdü" (*rDzogs chen kun bzang dgongs 'dus*) the book was already on the way to the printer. Would he have consulted the texts, the translations of the inscriptions and conclusions would be more precise and much more enlightening. He used a manuscript of the inscriptions made a couple years ago by a caretaker of the Lukhang. Firstly, this text varies often to the inscriptions on the wall, and secondly - by comparing the actual inscription with the root texts - they gave the impression, that the inscriber wrote what another read out aloud, because there are often mistakes and differences in spelling. In a way that the words on the wall sounds alike or close to the words in the text, but they are different in spelling and meaning, eg.: the inscription reads *nyenpo* (antidote or friend *gyen po*; p.60 line 19) while the text reads in exactly the same sentence *nyingpo* (essence, *mying po*; p.151/1 *rDzogs chen kun bzang dgongs 'dus*).

Also in some places the translations of the inscription manuscript are a little awkward. On page 62 it states:

"The Wisdom of Dharmadhatu (the Realm of Ultimate Reality) abides as dark blue (space). The white mirror like wisdom (appears as) yellow. The wisdom of equanimity is red. The discriminating wisdom is green. The all-accomplishing wisdom abides in the center like the (white light of the) sun."

My translation reads:

"The wisdom of dharmadhatu, abides as dark-blue, the mirror-like wisdom as white, the wisdom of equanimity as yellow, the discriminating wisdom as red and the all-accomplishing wisdom as green. All five appear as the friend (essence) of the sun in the center."

I point these shortcomings out to make the reader a little cautious about the contents. The subject matter is not an easy one. The murals show in a narrative and symbolic way the Dzogchen teachings. Since these pictures are quite unique the author had no real references for comparison the depictions.

Even so, we now have the first book on the Dzogchen murals of the Lukhang, but there is a lot more work and research to be done. This is the first step. Another will be the web page of Prof. David Germano with his pictures of the Lukhang murals. So far, one can look at a few pictures, more should come at:

http://faculty.virginia.edu/tibet-initiative/library/culture/cultural_geography/hsua_tour/luhang/images.html

The book was simultaneously printed in various languages. I compared the German translation to the original English and I came to the conclusion to recommend every German speaking person who is capable of reading English well enough, to get the original text version, since the German translator is obviously not familiar enough with the topic. I hope the other translations are done better.

CONCLUSION

The Dalai Lama's Secret Temple: Tantric Wall Paintings from Tibet is a beautiful and a very inspiring book. It is done with much love and contains unique pictures of high quality. The author Ian Baker is familiar with the Dzogchen teachings. His explanations and commentaries are useful and very interesting. It is a book one likes to look through again and again, discovering over and over again the beauty and uniqueness of the magnificent illustrations of the Dzogchen teachings.

NOTE: If anybody who reads this article has access to pictures of the murals I would be very, very grateful to receive copies of their pictures for my research. I look especially for pictures which have been taken in the eighties, before a lot of the present day water damages appeared.

Jakob Winkler, Alpenstr.12a, 82269 Geltendorf, Germany,

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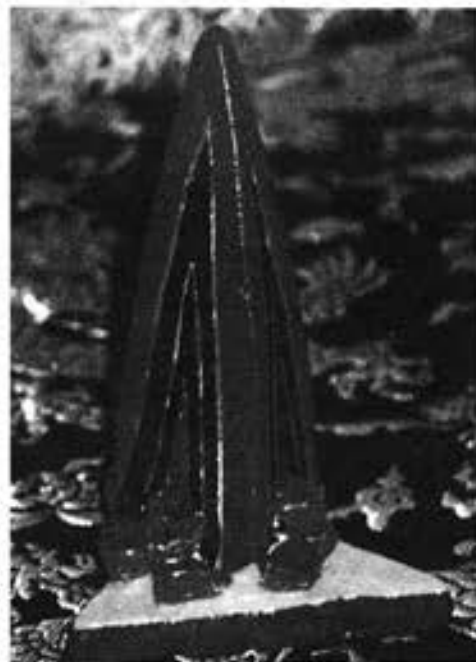
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TORMAS AT TASHIGAR

by Rita Bizzotto



Tsegyalgar Torma

N. Zeitz

One morning, after having finished his work on the computer that had kept him busy since days from early morning till late evening, Rinpoche announced that he would make tormas. In the presence of Fabio, who was filming everything with his video-camera and some of us who, taken by curiosity to not lose any of Rinpoche's skill, watched as Rinpoche began to cut the clay. After some energetic strokes on the clay slammed with strength on a wooden tile the tormas were taking their forms. Skillful carvings with a knife completed the opera. Then Rinpoche put the five tormas -one for each Gar- on a tile in front of Rahula's statue in his small sitting room and let them dry for several days.

One morning a rumor: "Today he is going to paint!" And we were again there, observing Rinpoche at work; how carefully he was putting the color, as if painting had always been his only occupation! All this, even though he had not an adequate brush and had to work on such a low table that made me think "Poor Rinpoche, his back!" Once finished with a color, he let it dry and began to work again the day after. So he did for several days till all the colors had been completed: red, dark brown, violet, yellow, orange and brown were the colors mainly used. The tormas were gorgeous; they stand up in their triangular forms like flames and we could almost touch the energy that sprung from them: Dorje Legpa, Ekajati and Rahula were effectively there ready to help. Dorje Judenma, smaller and more round in shape, was shining instead with turquoise light.

At the end Rinpoche put inside each torma a small paper roll with mantras written in red color with his elegant and perfectly linear calligraphy. At that very moment, a strong wind blew all of a sudden for just a few minutes and the door slammed. Calmly Rinpoche commented, "See, the guardians are making themselves present!" I thought that the work was finished when one morning I showed up to say hello to Rinpoche I found him busy cutting a big carton. Rosa, inside the kitchen, was preparing a

big quantity of glue mixing water and flour on the fire. "He is certainly thinking about the transportation of the tormas to the various Gar!", I thought. I stayed there to observe how patiently Rinpoche was bending, cutting and gluing until he obtained a box of a size in which a torma could fit properly. Then, cutting several sheets of white paper, he was folding the box and gluing them with a lot of glue in order to make the carton harder. "This is how you make a box arrive to its destination without breaking on the way!", Rinpoche explained. I was looking in admiration but at the same time feeling sorry for the amount of work he had to do; five hand-made boxes! It was his last day at Tashigar and I was wishing that he would spend it swimming in the swimming pool or resting a little.

Sad at the idea of not having organized it before, I ran to the Gekoes, who was always ready to find some solution. I came back carrying empty boxes of tea and ice-cream. "Certainly these have nothing to do with his boxes!", I thought fully aware, but it seemed to me that the good intention of sparing Rinpoche a lot of work would compensate the inadequacy of the boxes. I immediately had to change my mind; Rinpoche's gaze made me understand clearly that he would never put the tormas in such boxes! Therefore, feeling ashamed, slowly, slowly I made them disappear though I kept thinking that whoever will open Rinpoche's boxes, perhaps breaking them distractedly or brutally, will never realize neither the amount of work and time it took to make them, nor the care he used in following something precious till the end.

Now one torma has already found its place in the warm little Gonpa at Tashigar; may it protect the Gar and favor its development with the same love with which it has been molded! And the others, closed inside beautiful hand-made boxes and protected with cotton will soon reach, for sure unbroken, their destinations.

Thank you Rinpoche for this gift of the 3rd millennium!



G. Horner

Rigpa and the Red-Bellied Black Snake

By Madeleine Fogarty and Andrew Palmer

Everything that manifests in the state of Rigpa may well be a manifestation of primordial wisdom, but what do you do when the manifestation turns out to be a highly venomous Australian snake? One of the features of the recent retreat with Jim Valby at Namgyalgar was a daily session of Semde study, based on the King of Space Tantra (*Namkhai Gyalpo*), chosen perhaps because a translation of Namgyalgar is Place of the King of Space. Jim recounted how he had been translating this Tantra in a house near Namgyalgar in 1996, when he had a "strong experience of clarity followed by big pride". While in this state he turned to the side to find himself face to face with a red-bellied black snake. Not surprisingly, he became distracted! Over the next few days, Jim saw the snake in various places around the house: in the hall, on the kitchen floor, and even felt it brush past him as he slept. But when he called the Parks Department to remove the snake, no trace of the snake could be found. Was the snake illusory or real? (The distinction might be meaningless in theory but it probably makes a difference to how one deals with such manifestations.) Thankfully, fourteen year old Karuna arrived both to confirm the phenomenological reality of the snake, and, with broom, to sweep it from the house and thus ensure that Jim would live to come to Namgyalgar again.

Summer of the metal dragon year brought Jim back to Namgyalgar. We were among seventy Sangha members fortunate to participate in a week of base level teaching offered. Jim's teachings focused on the principles of the Santi Maha Sangha Base as described in Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's text, *The Precious Vase*. Jim shared stories of his own struggles and experiences, bringing the teachings into the human realm and assisting us to feel compassion for our humble human condition. Humor and practical application were the flavor of the teachings. With patience and joyfulness we were reminded that the key obstacle to our practice and our experience of the state of Rigpa is ego: "We have egos and our egos will never be enlightened. We are human, we will always have egos but we can work to make our egos smaller and more flexible." Jim guided us through some of the Sutra and Tantric practices explained by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in *The Precious Vase*. Throughout the week various Sutra practices were explained with great clarity. Each explanation was followed by practice enabling us to immediately apply the concepts imparted. This technique of exposition of method, then practice of method, was

fundamental to the concreteness of the teachings.

Jim alternated between Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen style practices, emphasizing that the purpose of all of the practices is to develop the capacity to experience and remain in the state of Rigpa. He also reminded us that it is important not to become addicted to the experiences we may have as a result of those practices. Jim's generosity in sharing tales of his own distractions and the limits of his concentration (2 or 3 seconds in an undistracted state) encouraged us all to relax into a shared community of humble practitioners rather than a competitive arena of Dharma egos.

The essence of this teaching was reflected in the organization of the retreat, which was superb. Meal after fabulous meal emerged from the co-operative kitchen offering opportunities for Sangha members to get to know one another whilst preparing a meal for the community. Excellent child care, provided by Claire and Nina, gave parents a precious chance to practice and receive the teachings. Karma yoga tasks were also assigned to all participants and this gave another wonderful opportunity to contribute to the gar and apply practices at the same time. The practice schedule was divided into four daily sessions of 90 minutes each, starting at 8.30 in the morning and finishing at 7.30 at night. This allowed for a long break in the afternoon, time to enjoy the natural beauty of the forests and beaches around Namgyalgar and time also to oil the feathers of the fears and obstacles that arise on group retreat, with lots of people and lots of practice.

Other highlights of the retreat were Jim sharing with us three of Rinpoche's dreams (to be published in the next edition of *Dream Yoga*); reading us the first chapter of his translation of Rinpoche's unpublished autobiography, "Story of the Tibetan Master Who Wandered the World"; giving us the three statements of Jim Valby on how to be a bad Dzogchen practitioner ("1. Introduce oneself to any distraction; 2. Increase doubts and confusion as much as possible; 3. Continue in that state by pretending enlightenment or by giving up"); and the usual fun and exuberance of a retreat at Namgyalgar, which on this occasion included a birthday party on the saddle for Vito and Wayne. Outstanding though was the marvelous clarity, patience, humility and generosity of Jim's teaching. Our precious teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has blessed Namgyalgar in recent years with long visits. Now as other Gars call Rinpoche, we are incredibly fortunate at this time to receive the inspiration of a teacher from Western culture, familiar with our particular pitfalls and egoistic delusions, to cut through the little traps of samsara in the West. We are truly thankful that the snake did not bite!

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SHAMBHALA SUN



PRACTICE CALENDAR

FOR THE METAL SNAKE YEAR

2001-2002



2001

1st MONTH, 30th DAY-SAT. 24th MARCH

DARK MOON. This day is suitable for purification practice so try to do purification with the Namcho Shitroi Nalor, the practice of the peaceful and wrathful manifestations, either collectively or alone.

2nd MONTH, 6th DAY - FRI. 30th MARCH

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

2nd MONTH, 10th DAY - TUE. 3rd APRIL

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the day on which the King Sahora tried to burn him alive and when he transformed the fire into a lake, so try to perform a Ganapuja collectively, but if that is not possible do the Long-life practice Universal Wisdom Union.

2nd MONTH, 12th DAY - THU. 5th APRIL

This is the anniversary of Jetsun Trappa Gyaltsen (1147-1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakya tradition, so try to do the Guruyoga of Guru Padmasambhava, the Guruyoga of the White A.

2nd MONTH, 15th DAY - SUN. 8th APRIL

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for doing the long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, with a Ganapuja if possible. Try to do it collectively or, if that is not possible, alone.

2nd MONTH, 20th DAY - THU. 12th APRIL

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dordrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Dandul. It is therefore a good day to do the Guruyoga of Guru Padmasambhava, the Guruyoga with the White A.

2nd MONTH, 25th DAY - WED. 18th APRIL

This is a Dakini day so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters or if that is not possible, a Medium Thun, either collectively or alone.

2nd MONTH, 30th DAY-MON. 23rd APRIL

DARK MOON. On this day, which is the birthday of the great Tertön Loter Wangpo, try to do the Agar Lamai Nalor, Guruyoga of the White A either collectively or alone, with a Ganapuja if possible.

3rd MONTH, 4th DAY - FRI. 27th APRIL

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

3rd MONTH, 11th DAY - THU. 3rd MAY

This month there is no 10th day so the 11th is Guru Padmasambhava day. This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava so try to do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union" early in the morning or at sunset. If you have the possibility it is beneficial to combine this with a practice of Ganapuja collectively.

3rd MONTH, 15th DAY - MON. 7th MAY

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for Long-life practices, and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning if you can. This is also the anniversary of the day when Buddha Shakyamuni first gave the teaching of Kalachakra so it is good to do a Ganapuja or long Thun in the

evening.

3rd MONTH, 25th DAY - THU. 17th MAY

This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great Tertön and practitioner of Dzogchen, so it is a good day to practice Agar Lamai Nalor, Guru Yoga with White A in the morning and Ganapuja with an intensive practice of Ekajati in the evening.

3rd MONTH, 30th DAY-WED. 23rd MAY

DARK MOON. This is a particularly good day for practicing the Purification of the Six Lokas. As it is also the anniversary of the great Tertön and Dzogchen Master Sangye Lingpa, try to do the Agar Lamai Nalor.

4th MONTH, 6th AND 8th DAYS, -28th AND 30th MAY

These are important days for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

4th MONTH, 7th DAY - TUE. 29th MAY

This is the anniversary of the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni, an important day for all Buddhists, so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

4th MONTH, 10th DAY - FRI. 1st JUNE

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you can, try to do a Ganapuja, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

4th MONTH, 15th DAY - WED. 6th JUNE

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Buddha Shakyamuni, as well as an important day for the Long-life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Therefore try to do this practice early in the morning, and in the afternoon or evening do a Ganapuja.

4th MONTH, 25th DAY - SAT. 16th JUNE

Dakini day. This is the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga of Guru Padmasambhava, the Guruyoga of the White A either collectively or otherwise alone.

4th MONTH, 30th DAY THU. 21st JUNE

DARK MOON. This day is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Dandul (1816-1872). He was one of the Masters of Changchub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "Tsedrub Gongdus" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khandro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Therefore you should try to do this Long-life practice, "Tsedrub Gongdus", "Union of Primordial Essences". The time to do it is the early morning. Later in the day or in the evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, Agar Lamai Nalor.

5th MONTH, 1st DAY - FRI. 22nd JUNE

This is the anniversary of Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the most important Rimed masters of the XIX Century. Try to do a practice of Agar Lamai Nalor.

5th MONTH, 10th DAY - SAT. 30th JUNE

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you can, try to do a Ganapuja, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

5th MONTH, 14th DAY - WED. 4th JULY

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th MONTH, 15th DAY - THU. 5th JULY

FULL MOON. This is a special day for the Long-life practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Long-life practice "Union of Primordial Essences" early in the morning. If you cannot do it at that time, it is still good to do it later in the day. It is also the Dzamling Chisang (Lit. smoke puja of the world in general) so if you know how to do it, you can do the Sangod (bsang-mchod) in the morning.

5th MONTH, 25th DAY - MON. 16th JULY

This is Dakini day as well as an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. If you have the possibility it is beneficial to add the Ganapuja.

5th MONTH, 30th DAY - FRI. 20th JULY

DARK MOON. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a medium or short Thun.

6th MONTH, 4th DAY - TUE. 24th JULY

This is the anniversary of the Dharmachakra (the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma): the first time that Buddha Shakyamuni gave the teaching of the Four Noble Truths to his disciples at Sarnath, after his illumination. To honor the Lord Buddha on this special day you can do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

6th MONTH, 11th DAY - MON. 30th JULY

This year the 6th month has no 10th day hence today is the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava. On this day when it is 8 am in Oddiyana Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Padmasambhava. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 5 am.)

It is also the anniversary of Yeshe Tsogyal, the main consort and disciple of Padmasambhava so it will be beneficial to do a Guruyoga of Padmasambhava with the long life mantra and a Ganapuja as we usually do, otherwise you can do the long life practice "Union of Universal Wisdom". (SEE THE GLOBAL TIMETABLE.)

6th MONTH, 14th DAY - FRI. 3rd AUGUST

This is the anniversary of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), a famous master of Dzogchen Upadesa. On this day it is good to do the Guruyoga of the White A, Agar Lamai Nalor, Guruyoga with the White A.

6th MONTH, 15th DAY - SAT. 4th AUGUST

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Gampopa, the main disciple of Milarepa. Therefore it is an excellent day to do the Guruyoga of the White A, Agar Lamai Nalor, Guruyoga with the White A. It is also a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus,

"Union of Primordial Essences".

6th MONTH, 25th DAY - TUE. 14th AUGUST

This is a Dakini day, so it is a positive day for reinforcing the function of our energy and creating a vital contact with the energy of the universe by doing a Ganapuja with our Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do a medium Thun on your own. In either case, when you transform into the Dakini Simhamukha, recite her heart mantra as many times as possible.

6th MONTH, 30th DAY-SUN. 19th AUGUST

DARK MOON. This is a very important day to do purification practices, especially the "Purification of the Six Lokas". If you have the chance, you can also do a short, medium or long Thun.

7th MONTH, 9th DAY - MON. 27th AUGUST

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

7th MONTH, 10th DAY-TUE. 28th AUGUST

This is the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248-1283), a very famous woman Tertön, reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal. She was the consort of the great Tertön Guru Chöwang. It is also a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Therefore it is an ideal day to do the Agar Lamai Nalor in the morning and a Ganapuja and Long-life practice associated with Padmasambhava, "Universal Wisdom Union" later in the day.

7th MONTH, 15th DAY - SUN. 2nd SEPT.

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso and Padma Karpo, a famous 17th century Drupa Kargyupa Master. Therefore it is an excellent day to practice the Guruyoga of the White A, the Guruyoga with the White A early in the morning if possible, or later in the evening when you are free. It is also an excellent day for the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava, with a Ganapuja if you have the possibility.

7th MONTH, 19th DAY - THU. 6th SEPT.

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

7th MONTH, 25th DAY - WED. 12th SEPT.

This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of Phagmo Drupa (1110-1170), the chief disciple of Gampopa. Try to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby, you can do a medium Thun on your own. In either case, when you transform yourself into the Dakini Simhamukha, recite her heart mantra as much as possible and then do an intensive practice of Ekajati.

7th MONTH, 30th DAY - MON. 17th SEPT.

DARK MOON. This day is ideal for purification practices. Try to do either the "Purification of the Six Lokas" or the "Namcho Shitroi Nalor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or on your own.

8th MONTH, 27th DAY - SUN. 14th OCT.

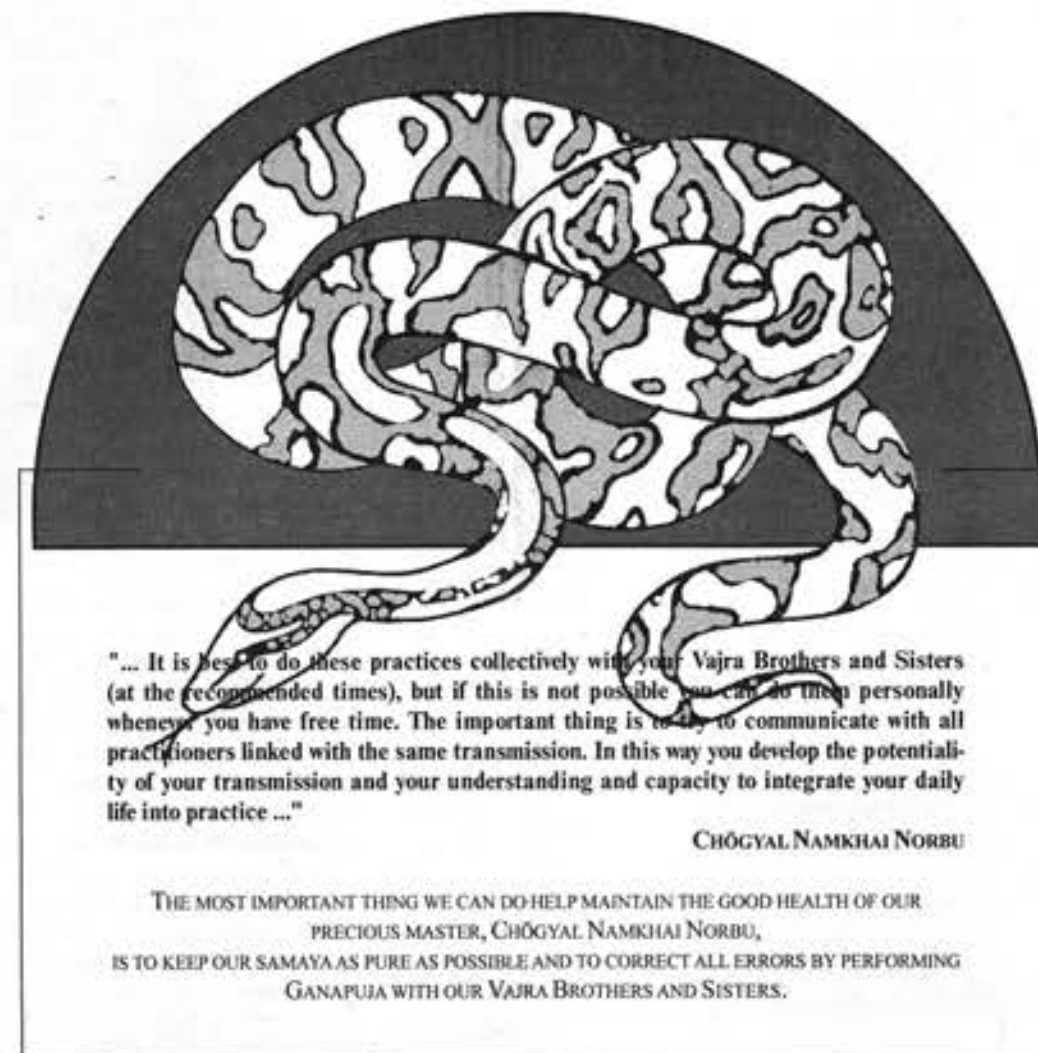
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th MONTH, 30th DAY - TUE. 16th OCT.

DARK MOON. This day is excellent for practicing the "Purification of the Six Lokas". Otherwise you can do the medium or long Thun or a Ganapuja.

9th MONTH, 3rd DAY - FRI. 19th OCT.

This is the anniversary of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa (1729-1798), a great



Union" collectively. Otherwise you can do a medium Thun on your own.

8th MONTH, 15th DAY - TUE. 2nd OCT.

FULL MOON. This is an important day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning and a Ganapuja in the evening.

8th MONTH, 19th DAY - SAT. 6th OCT.

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th MONTH, 25th DAY - FRI. 12th OCT.

This is a Dakini day, and also the anniversary of two great Dzogchen masters, Rigdzin Kurnaraja, who transmitted the Dzogchen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), a great Dzogchen master of the Nyingmapa school. It is therefore an excellent day to do the Guruyoga of the White A, the Guruyoga with the White A. If you can do it in the morning, that is best. Then, if you have the time, you can do a medium or long Thun later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamukha, or a Ganapuja, if you have the possibility.

8th MONTH, 27th DAY - SUN. 14th OCT.

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th MONTH, 30th DAY - TUE. 16th OCT.

DARK MOON. This day is excellent for practicing the "Purification of the Six Lokas". Otherwise you can do the medium or long Thun or a Ganapuja.

9th MONTH, 3rd DAY - FRI. 19th OCT.

This is the anniversary of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa (1729-1798), a great

ter of some of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Masters, including Changchub Dorje and Ayu Khandro. Therefore, when it is 7 pm in East Tibet on this day, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Adzam Drupa. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 1 pm.)

9th MONTH, 30th DAY - THU. 15th NOV.

DARK MOON. This is a good day to do "Namchos Shitroi Nalor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. The best time for this practice is around eight o'clock in the evening.

10th MONTH, 10th DAY - SUN. 25th NOV.

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the day on which he arrived in Central Tibet. It is considered that on this day, at the end of the 8th century, that King Songtsen Gampo dissolved himself into the statue of Avalokiteshvara. Therefore it is good to do a Ganapuja with the Guruyoga and the Long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava "Universal Wisdom Union" collectively. Otherwise you can do a medium Thun on your own.

10th MONTH, 11th DAY MON. 26th NOV.

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a long or medium Thun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

10th MONTH, 15th DAY - FRI. 30th NOV.

FULL MOON. This day is considered to be the day to honor the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the Long-life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava particularly. Therefore try to do the Long-life Practice, "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is at 7-8 o'clock in the morning. But if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free. It is also a good day to do a Ganapuja.

10th MONTH, 26th DAY - MON. 10th DEC.

There is no 25th day in this month so today is a Dakini day, and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. Try to perform a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters or the medium Thun personally. In either case recite the heart mantra of the Dakini Simhamukha as many times as possible.

10th MONTH, 30th DAY - FRI. 14th DEC.

DARK MOON. This is an excellent day to practice Purification of the Six Lokas and a Ganapuja in the evening.

11th MONTH, 8th DAY - SUN. 23rd DEC.

This is a particular day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a long or medium Thun with intensive practice of the

mantra of Ekajati.

11th MONTH, 10th DAY - TUE. 25th DEC.

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava manifesting in the form called Padma Gyalpo and is the day on which he arrived in the capital of Oddiyana and became the prince of King Indrabhuti. If you have the time and possibility it is good to do a Ganapuja collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice of "Union of Primordial Essences".

11th MONTH, 15th DAY - SUN. 30th DEC.

FULL MOON. Today it is important to try to do the long-life practice of Guru Amitayus "Union of Primordial Essences" in the usual way, and if you have the possibility, a Ganapuja.

2002

11th MONTH, 25th DAY - TUE. 8th JAN.

This is a day of the Dakinis in general, so if you have the opportunity practice a collective Ganapuja, with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamukha, and recite her heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do a medium Thun either collectively or personally.

11th MONTH, 30th DAY - SUN. 13th JAN.

DARK MOON. This is a special day for purification practices so try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas" and a Ganapuja if possible.

12th MONTH, 10th DAY-WED. 23rd JAN.

This day is the anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava's coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Idarbodhi. We can perform a Ganapuja collectively or do the Long-life practice, "Universal Wisdom Union" either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

12th MONTH, 11th DAY - THU. 24th JAN.

Today it is good to do a medium or long Thun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

12th MONTH, 15th DAY - MON. 28th JAN.

FULL MOON. This is in general a day for honoring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the Long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences". If possible try to do a Ganapuja in the evening.

12th MONTH, 18th DAY-THU. 31st JAN.

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam (1386-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga of Guru Padmasambhava, the Guruyoga with the White A, either collectively or personally.

12th MONTH, 25th DAY - THU. 7th FEB.

This is a Dakini day, so try to perform a Ganapuja with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamukha together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. Otherwise you can do a medium or short Thun in the usual way.

12th MONTH, 30th DAY - TUE. 12th FEB.

DARK MOON. This is a good day for purification practices. Therefore try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas". If possible try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

LOSAR WATER HORSE YEAR

Wednesday, February 13th 2002

GLOBAL TIMETABLE

World Time Table v2.0

1. ODDIYANA time set to equal Islamabad standard time (+5 UTC offset)
 2. All times are calculated according to UTC offsets. Daylight savings times (DLS) are considered in the calculation.
- For example: Sydney Australia has an offset of +10 in the summer (March 13) and an offset of +9 in the winter (July 4).
- The summer offset of +10 represents DLS. Locations that implement DLS have +1 hour added to their UTC offsets during the summer months.
- Northern hemisphere locations in red Italics use DLS. Southern hemisphere locations in green Italics use DLS.

ANNIVERSARY OF PADMASAMBHAVA

Mon. July 30th, 2001

16:00 (-11) Hawaii

17:00 (-10) Hawaii

18:00 (-9) Fairbanks

19:00 (-8) San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver



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NEW CD OF SONG OF THE VAJRA FINALLY AVAILABLE!

It took some time, but now you can order the newly released Audio CD of the **Song of the Vajra** used as well for the Dance of the Vajra. The CD contains the music of all three Dances beginning and ending with A. There is also a beautiful little booklet enclosed with some useful information and inspiring photos of Rinpoche and other images.

The music was composed by Matteo Silva on the basis of a previous composition by Yeshe Namkhai and the advice of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It has been quite a collaboration; many times a little group has met trying to sing the Song of the Vajra together, trying to inhale and exhale in unison. It was a challenge to us, since Rinpoche wanted practitioners to sing the Song of the Vajra and not professional singers. We were lucky to have some professional musicians and singers in our chorus. Still we were a challenge to the professional ears of Matteo, which probably partly also made him have a dream. We were close to print it all, when Matteo suddenly stopped it all because right before the final decision he had a dream which I cannot recall now very well, but it indicated to him that something important is missing and he discovered that it was Rinpoche singing the Song of the Vajra. So we happily started all over, because it was so true, and Rinpoche agreed to record his voice. This truly gave life to this project and also brought some new technical challenges, but in the end, I trust we have finally materialized this CD.

Please excuse some little mistakes you might find, mainly the Mandala has been modified slightly by the graphic's studio by some accident and both Mandala on the CD and cover should not be used in any reproduction therefore.

Here is a little game:

Check the Mandala on the CD and whoever can tell me exactly which three imperfections are to be found on the cover Mandala and as well the one imperfection of the Mandala on the CD itself, in total four imperfections, wins one CD. The deadline is May 21st and the Merigar Gekoes will choose the winner. No email!

Please write to:

Prima Mai/

CODE:

all is perfect / Merigar / 58031

Arci dosso/GR/ Italy

The next issue will publish the winner!
Enjoy!

To order the CD:

The CD is available
for 29.000 lire from

Shang-Shung Institute in Merigar

MERIGAR CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2001

April 12-16

Easter Retreat with Adriano Clemente

Some of the retreat sessions will be dedicated to the explanation and practice of Tantra of the Santi Maha Sangha First Level based on Samten Migdron's text. The retreat will also include sessions on other topics which will be open to all participants.

The retreat starts on April 12 at 4 pm.

The cost is Lit.200.000 with discounts for members.

May 19-20

Yantra Yoga Course for Advanced Students

with Laura Evangelisti

Starts on May 19 at 10 am.

Cost Lit.140.000 with 30% discount for members.

Please reserve a place before May 10 with a down payment of Lit.50.000.

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

July 6-10

Short Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The retreat starts on July 6 at 4 pm.

The cost of the retreat will be Lit.400.000 with discounts for paid-up members. Payment can be made by installments (see below). It is advisable to book early since many people are expected.

July 12-16

Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners

with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

Starts on July 12 at 4 pm and finishes at 1 pm on July 16.

Cost Lit.280.000 with 30% discount for members.

Please book a place before June 30 with a down payment of Lit.50.000.

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

July 18-22

Yantra Yoga Course for Advanced Students

with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

Starts on July 18 at 4 pm and finishes at 1 pm on July 22.

Cost Lit.280.000 with 30% discount for members.

Please book a place before July 10 with a down payment of Lit.50.000.

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

July 28-30

Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas Course

for Advanced Students - with a local teacher

Starts on July 28 at 5 pm with two sessions each day on July 29 and 30.

Cost Lit.210.000 with 30% discount for members.

Please book a place before July 18 with a down payment of Lit.50.000.

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

August 1-8

Dance of Song of the Vajra Course

Second Part for Beginners

with Adriana Dal Borgo

Starts on August 1 at 5 pm.

Cost Lit.490.000 with 30% discount for members.

August 1-8

Dance of Song of the Vajra Course

for those who know the steps

with Prima Mai

Starts on August 1 at 5 pm. Cost Lit.490.000

with 30% discount for members.

For both the Dance Courses participants should book before July 20 with a down payment of Lit.50.000.

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

Maximum 20 participants, 10 for the male part and 10 for the female.

August 10-19

Long Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The retreat starts on August 10 at 4 pm.

The cost of the retreat will be Lit.900.000 with discounts for paid-up members.

Payment can be made by installments (see below).

It is advisable to book early since many people are expected.

August 30-September 5

Training Course for instructors

of the Vajra Dance 1st level

Given by Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo

Cost 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 15, 2001.

SANTI MAHA SANGHA

August 21-23

Base Exam

Booking required at Merigar

August 24-28

First Level Training

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

starts August 24 at 4 pm.

Cost Lit.400.000 without discounts

September 23-25

Second Level Exam

Booking required at Merigar

September 26-30

Third Level Training

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

starts September 26 at 4 pm.

Cost Lit.400.000 without discounts

PAYING BY INSTALLMENTS

This summer Dzogchen Community members will have the possibility of paying for the retreats of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar in three installments. This offer is reserved for members who have renewed their membership for 2001.

The first installment which will be one third of the total amount should be paid by the end of April 2001.

The second part at the beginning of the retreat.

The third by the end of October.

More information can be had by contacting the office at Merigar.

BABY SITTING

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 careers not to bring children over this age to Merigar during the retreats.

MERIGAR, 58031 ARCIDOSSO (GR), ITALY

Tel. 39 0564 966837

Email: merigar@amiata.net

April 12th - 16th, 2001

MERIGAR EASTER RETREAT

with Adriano Clemente

SHITRO EXPLANATION AND PRACTICE

A few sessions
will be dedicated to the

Tantric Practices of the First Level of Santi Maha Sangha.

These sessions will be restricted to practitioners who already passed the Base Level examination.

Every evening:

COLLECTIVE CHÖD PRACTICE

The retreat
will start at 4.00 p.m.
on April 12th.

The cost is 200.000 lire with discounts for members who are up-to-date with their membership payment.

MERIGAR 2000

PRACTICE RETREAT

WITH

ADRIANO CLEMENTE

VAJRASATTVA AND SHINE PRACTICE

by Claudio Maccarini

The retreat with Adriano Clemente started punctually on December 28th with the practice of Vajrasattva and Shine, the latter according to the instructions from the text 'Direct Introduction to the State of Atiyoga' which was transmitted by the Master during last summer's retreat.

Adriano, with the help of his untiring translator Maurizio Mingotti, began by explaining with great clarity and enthusiasm the importance of the practice of Vajrasattva. Besides purifying obstacles and impediments that may be met on one's path toward clarity the practice is important for setting right our samaya that we may have broken. Adriano went on to explain in great detail the various phases of the practice so that all those present would be able to understand it easily.

In the following days we did the complete practice together several times along with fixation on the white A. On December 29th we were able to feel a little closer to our Master who was at Tashigar on the other side of the world - by means of Internet technology we listened directly for two hours to the explanation that Rinpoche was giving to our Vajra brothers and sisters in Argentina.

The second part of the retreat was dedicated to the explanation and practice of Shine. Adriano reminded us that in Dzogchen teaching the calm state is certainly not the point of arrival but is a simple yet important practice for each one of us, old or new, on the path to arrive at the state of contemplation.

At the end of each day participants could choose to follow sessions of the Dance of the Three Vajras with Rita Renzi or sessions of Yantra Yoga with Laura Evangelisti. The seven days of the retreat flew by quickly.

I hope that everyone who participated was able to reap the maximum benefits and will be ready, mature and aware at Rinpoche's next retreat.

Sincere thanks to Adriano.



SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, ITALY INTENSIVE KU NYE COURSE IN MERIGAR

APRIL 24TH TO MAY 1ST, 2001

In order to meet several requests, the Shang-Shung Institute Ku Nye School has decided to hold an intensive course of

first level KU NYE (Tibetan massage)
from APRIL 24th to May 1st, 2001 with Doctor NIDA CHENAGTSANG

The course will deal with the theory and practical aspects normally covered in four weekends.

Location: MERIGAR

Fees: 600.000Lire plus 30.000 lire of membership fee:
in fact only Institute members can join our courses by law

REGISTRATION: Please contact the Secretary of the Institute by April 10th.

As we expect quite a few people to come we suggest you should try to book as soon as possible,
because we can't accept more than 18/20 students.

The course will be held in English with Italian translation.

Tel: 00390564966941,

Email: ssinst@amiata.net,

Fax: 00390564968810

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE WEB PAGE:

<http://www.istitutoshangshung.org>

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, AUSTRIA

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE OF AUSTRIA
is happy to announce a new series of seminars on
KU NYE, TIBETAN MASSAGE,
with DR. NIDA CHENAGTSANG
June 16th -17th and June 23rd - 24th, 2001

Dr. Nida Chenagtsang will hold two weekend seminars in Graz, Austria. These weekend seminars are the first part of a study program offered by the International School for Tibetan Massage "Kailash" (Arcidosso, Italy) in order to achieve the title of a

KU NYE KHYEN, A PROFESSIONAL KU NYE MASSAGE THERAPIST.

The training is divided into three levels and each level is organized into four weekend seminars.

TIMES: The course will be held every day
from 10.00 to 13.00 and 15.30 to 18.00

PLACE: NaturErlebnisHaus, Statteggerstra 38 8045 Graz, Austria
Costs: F6S 2100 (DM 300) for each weekend.

Ordinary members of SSI Austria get a 10% discount.

REGISTRATION: until June 1st, 2001 by sending a deposit of F6S 1000.

As only 24 persons can participate we suggest to register very soon.

Dr. Chenagtsang will speak in English and there will be a German translation.

For more information about this course see our homepage:

www.dzogchen.at/ssi.at

or write to:

ssi.at@utanet.at

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, USA TIBETAN MEDICINE PROGRAM 2001

The Shang-Shung Institute will host two different programs this year. To accommodate the needs of Health Professionals seriously interested in becoming more acquainted with Tibetan Medicine, the Institute is hosting two six day seminars in New York City and in California. As a continuation of its Three Year Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine, the Institute will offer Year Three from May 30th - June 8th, 2001. It would be possible to attend the Year Three with study of the audio cassette course of years One and Two.

AN INTRODUCTION TO TIBETAN MEDICINE FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

May 7-12, 2001 in New York City
May 22-27, 2001 at Land of the
Medicine Buddha in Soquel, California

SIX DAY INTENSIVE ON KEY TOPICS IN TIBETAN MEDICINE

DAY 1: The Theory of the Four Elements, the Three Principles, the Seven Physical Constituents and the Three Eliminative Functions
DAY 2: Causes of Illness
DAY 3: Mental Illness: A Tibetan Medical Perspective
DAY 4: Therapeutic Principles: Diet, Medication and External Therapies
DAY 5: Morning lecture: Diagnostic Techniques: Pulse Diagnosis and Urine Analysis Afternoon Colloquium on Contemporary Issues in the study of Tibetan Medicine
DAY 6: Morning demonstration: Clinical Consultation with a patient
This six day program is designed to introduce key topics in the traditional study of Tibetan Medicine to health practitioners and seriously interested individuals. Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, a Tibetan physician and scholar from the University of Nationalities in Beijing and Eliot Tokar, Practitioner of Traditional Asian medicine who has studied Tibetan Medicine personally with Dr. Yeshe Donden and Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche and currently has a practice in New York City, will present the material in a concise and lively manner for individuals interested in pursuing further study in the evolving field of Tibetan Medicine for Westerners. Elio Guarisco, a noted Tibetan translator, will act as the translator from Tibetan to English during Dr. Phuntsog's presentations.

Tibetan medicine is a 3800 year old traditional medical system which draws its influences directly from Tibetan, Indian, Persian, Greek, and Chinese medical systems.

Each day's seminar with a designated topic will include morning and afternoon lectures, as well as discussion groups. Participants may choose to attend one or all seminars. The program is designed to balance a theoretical overview with presentations by Dr. Phuntsog with attention to practical applications in a clinical setting presented by Mr. Tokar.

The Program will be held at the following locations:

MAY 7-12, 2001
SHAMBHALA CENTER, NEW YORK CITY
118 WEST 22 ST 6TH FL.,
NY, NY
(non-residential) \$450,
catered lunch optional

MAY 22-27, 2001
Land of the Medicine Buddha,
Soquel, California
Residential: includes tuition, double
occupancy room and three meals daily
\$900 (single occupancy add \$25 per day)
or (non-residential) \$450,
catered lunch optional

Daily fee: \$108/per day
for both programs
Teaching materials fee: \$25
for all participants

For application or information:
Please contact

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE
PO BOX 277
CONWAY, MA 01341

Tel: 413-369-4928 stating the program
you wish to attend.
Or call Program Director,
Jacqueline Gens at 802-254-9114
Email: jgens@sover.net

Credit card payments accepted.

Three Year Foundation Course in
Tibetan Medical Theory
May 30-June 8, 2001
in Conway, Massachusetts

with Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, Eliot Tokar
and translator, Elio Guarisco

The Three Year Foundation Course is an extensive survey of the Four Tibetan Medical Tantras, the cornerstone of training for Tibetan Physicians and the theoretical basis for advanced clinical training. Now in its third year, Shang-Shung Institute is dedicated to presenting this Foundation Course in preparation for advanced training and clinical internships within a study curriculum designed to parallel traditional training in the field while accommodating the working and

familial needs of Westerners who can not study abroad for long periods of time nor learn Tibetan as a prerequisite for training at a overseas college of Tibetan Medicine. The Three Year Foundation Course is the first phase of a comprehensive training program.

Year Three Curriculum May 30-June 8,
2001 in Conway, Massachusetts

Diagnostic Techniques:
Urine Analysis and Pulse Diagnosis,
Diagnosis through the ears in children,
and a detailed explanation of illnesses as
classified in the Tibetan medical system
with their symptoms.

The prerequisite to enter the Year Three program is either previous attendance of the first two year's curriculum or study of the audio cassette course. A limited number of individuals with background in Tibetan Medicine or other Asian therapies may be accepted into the Year Three program upon application. This course is intellectually demanding with up to seven hours of teaching per day.

10:00 am-1:00 PM

Lecture with Dr. Thubten Phuntsog

1:00-2:00 PM Lunch

2:00-3:30 PM

Practicum with Dr. Phuntsog

3:30 PM Tea Break

4:00-5:30 PM

Lecture with Dr. Phuntsog
Fees: Tuition \$800 with catered lunch.
Dormitory facilities on site available for
\$15/night.

Teaching text \$25.

Housing options off-site at nearby motels
and B & B's. Write for list.

Location:

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE
18 SCHOOLHOUSE ROAD
CONWAY, MA 01341 USA

Conway is a small town located in proximity to Northampton, Greenfield, and Amherst, Massachusetts.

Directions: Take Interstate 91 to the Conway or South Deerfield exits, then 116 North to Conway. Take the 2nd left after the country store, "Baker's" onto Maple Ave, then an immediate left onto Schoolhouse Road.

Audio cassette Course of Years One & Two from the Three Year Foundation Course in Tibetan Medical Theory \$1200 both years. After July, 2001, the course will be available with Year Three curriculum included in CD or audio cassette format for \$1800. Included with the recorded course, there is a three volume teaching text of Dr. Phuntsog's commentary on the Three Medical Tantras. For further information, contact the

Program Director, Jacqueline Gens at
802-254-9114 or jgens@sover.net

Faculty Bios

DR. THUBTEN PHUNTSOG was personally selected by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the founder of Shang-Shung Institute to present the Three Year Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine. Dr. Phuntsog was born in 1955 in the area of Pelpung (Dege County) in East Tibet in a family linked to the second Kongtrul, Pelden Khyentse Özer. From the age of six until he was twenty, he privately studied various subjects such as medicine, poetry, astrology, history, Buddhist logic, and philosophy with some of the masters affiliated with Pelpung Monastery. He studied medicine with Yonten Phuntsog, who was the personal physician to the second Kongtrul and Tibetan grammar and different systems of astrology and astronomy with Kyabshe Pende. Currently, Dr. Phuntsog is Professor of Tibetan Studies at the central University of Nationalities where he teaches courses in literature, philosophy, medicine, poetry and astrology. He is also a Professor in the Tibetan medical department at the Institute of Tibetan Studies in Sichuan Province. He is the author of numerous scholarly publications including, the Grammar of Tibetan Language (Sichuan People's Press, Chengdu, 1987); Calculations for the System of the Tibetan Lunar Calendar (Minzu Press, Beijing, 1991) a two volume, History of Tibet (Sichuan People's Press) as well as numerous articles on Tibetan history, language, and medicine.

ELIOT TOKAR is a New York City based practitioner of traditional Asian medicine (Tibetan Japanese, Chinese). He has studied Tibetan medicine since 1983, and is one of the only people in North America to have received extensive textual and clinical training in this field. Mr. Tokar studied with and received private instruction primarily from Dr. Yeshe Dhonden, and the lama/physician Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche. Mr. Tokar has lectured extensively at institutions such as the Washington University School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and Princeton University, and he has served as an advisor to the American Medical Student Association. His writings have appeared in journals such as Alternative Therapies In Health And Medicine, Alternative And Complementary Therapies and Tricycle Magazine. Mr. Tokar has been featured in publications such as the New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, News India-Times, and the China Daily, and on National

Public Radio and America Online. The Buddhist Guide to New York (Pub: St. Martins) states that Mr. Tokar is "one of the most knowledgeable resources in America on Tibetan medicine."

ELIO GUARISCO is a prominent Tibetan translator who has participated in numerous translation projects including "Myriad Worlds", "Buddhist Ethics", and the monumental "Encyclopedia of Tibetan Buddhism" by Kongtrul. He is currently working on several Tibetan Medicine texts for the Shang-Shung Institutes in Italy and America among other projects.

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, USA

SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The Shang Shung Institute in America is seeking a volunteer(s) to set up a booth at the California, Portland, and Seattle teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the founder of the Institute.

The individual(s) will be responsible for receiving all shipments and returning items to the Institute as well as keeping a record of all funds raised as well as speaking on behalf of the Institute's projects.

The dates are:

May 1 Berkeley, California, Public Talk
May 2-6 Oakland, California Retreat
May 9 Seattle, Washington, Public Talk
May 18-20 Portland, Oregon Retreat

To apply please contact, Jacqueline Gens at jgens@sover.net or call 802-254-9114.

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE IN AMERICA ARCHIVAL PROJECT

Update from Jacqueline Gens

The Shang Shung Institute in America is currently involved in a program of remastering and digitizing all of its master tapes from the Three Year Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine. With already over fifty ninety minute tapes in the course for the first two years curriculum and another twenty-five after the upcoming Year Three program scheduled for May 30th through June 8th, this project involves a time consuming effort of manually listening and coding each tape individually in order to make Master CD's from the original audiocassette masters. The project was conceived and implemented by the Institute's three month intern, Dan Pederson, a graduate student in Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts, who is working at the Institute for credit during his spring semester. Dan was introduced to the Shang-Shung Institute in America through Dr. Mary Ryan, a Professor in Medical Anthropology who is also the English language editor for the Institute's translation project in Tibetan Medicine under the direction of Dr. Thubten Phuntsog and Elio Guarisco.

In recent months, the audio cassette course has become an important source of revenue in support of the development of the Shang-Shung Institute in America Tibetan Medical program with participants learning from a distance; studying from every continent and throughout the US. Funding for the project and equipment came from proceeds from the sale of the course. With the newly made CD Masters, the Institute will be able to make its own CD sets of the course, as well as preserve the material archivally in a more durable form than the original audiocassette masters. Digitizing of the tapes also allows for their further use in an on-line teaching format as a teaching aid in the future.

Many thanks to Dan Pederson and the University of Massachusetts!

DEAR GAKYILS, VAJRA SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

As the responsible of the
SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, AUSTRIA,

I am working on
completing our archive.
In order to finish the work
I need the dates of the different
Yantra Yoga courses
given between 1980 and 1992.

Here is an approximate list from memory:

- 1) Hawaii (maybe 1986 or 1984, after the retreat with Rinpoche)
- 2) 2 or 3 times in Poland (once was in 1989)
- 3) 1989 in Athens
- 4) Several times in Copenhagen
- 5) Once in Amsterdam

Please send me the dates of these seminars and
any copies of publicity made for those courses.

It could help very much if precise information was sent about these courses
to: oliver.leick@utanet.at

Thank you very much for your collaboration and best wishes,
Oliver F. Leick

IMPORTANT CHANGE REGARDING KALACHAKRA 2002 In Graz, Austria

To everyone interested to come to the
Kalachakra Initiation in Graz, Austria, in 2002:

Oliver Leick is no longer able to help in finding an accommodation during the Kalachakra Initiation in Graz in October, 2002. For everyone who has already written and asked for accommodation in a house for the Dzogchen Community, kindly please make new reservations in this way:

If you want to stay in a 3, 4 or 5 star hotel please write to:

Graz-Tourism: gr@graztourismus.at

For more modest accommodations please write directly to the
Kalachakra office:

Kalachakra for World Peace Graz 2002,
c/o She Drup Ling Graz
Buddhistisches Zentrum, Griesgasse 2
A - 8020 Graz, Austria
Tel: ++43 316 717 297
Fax: ++43 316 717 297 4,
Web site: <http://www.kalachakra-graz.at>

SWISS PROGRAM

WEEKEND VAJRA DANCE PRACTICE IN GENEVA

March 17th-18th
May 19th-20th

Change in the Swiss Gakyil:
Blue: Irina Bleuler (new)
Yellow: Sabine Attenhofer

RETREAT AT KUNSANGAR

RETREAT WITH
PALDEN SHERAB RINPOCHE
AND
TSEWANG DONGYAL RINPOCHE
AT KUNSANGAR

April 29th to May 6th, 2001

The subject is PHOWA PRACTICE
and the retreat is entitled:

"The State of Buddha without
Meditation".

There are expected
to be two wangs:

Vajrasattva and Amitabha.
Everyone is invited to participate.

The retreat fee is \$50US
Living costs are \$15US
per person

(a room for two persons)
and \$7US per person

(a room for six persons)
at Kunsangar.

There may be less expensive
rooms at the nearest tourist com-
plexes.

Please send messages for regis-
tration to Kunsangar:

kunsang@gar.dzogchen.art.ru
stating your name

and expected dates of stay.
Looking forward to see you at
Kunsangar. With best wishes,

Sergey Rounov
Kunsangar Red Gakyil

PASSAGES

Died: Maksimova Gilyan Ole-
govna, 23 years old, suddenly
died of pulmonary tuberculosis at
11pm, January 26th, 2001. The
Kalmuk Dzogchen Community
asks Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche
and all Vajra brothers and sisters
to pray for her.

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

New Web sites

Styria, Austria

The Gakyil of Styria, Austria wants to inform you of their new web site at:

www.dzogchen.at

It is in English and German and there are many nice photos.

Please change your web sites to link to our homepage.

Shang-Shung Institute, Austria has a new address:

www.dzogchen.at/ssi.at

This site is in English and German.

Please change your web sites to link to our homepage.

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE AUDIO AND VIDEO DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Dear Friends of
the International Dzogchen
Community,

As many among you probably know,
here in Merigar the Shang-Shung
Institute has started a project to build a
centralized audio and video digital
archive as part of the wider project for
creating the Merigar Digital Library,
with the aim of preserving Tibetan cul-
ture in general and the precious
Dzogchen teachings as transmitted by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in particular.
Why in Merigar? Because the Merigar
Library already contains the most sig-
nificant collection of books, images,
audio and video cassettes on these sub-
jects, starting from the '70s. The plan is
to make this collection as complete as
possible, maintain it, make digital
copies of all the material and finally
make everything available, through a
searchable database, to the whole inter-
national Dzogchen Community. In this
context we have repeatedly asked all
Gars and Gakyils to send all the audio
and video material recorded during
teachings and conferences by our
Master all over the world, to keep the
collection as complete as possible. The
response in general has been good, but
maybe it has not been clear enough IN
WHAT FORMAT the material should
be sent here. While we thank every-
body for sending copies of video and
audio footage, we have to clarify the
following:

FOR AUDIO:

PLEASE SEND UNCOMPRESSED
MATERIAL ONLY.

That is, please do NOT send Mp3 or
other highly compressed formats.
Either send the original cassettes or
regular 74 minutes Audio CD's or
uncompressed 16-bit .WAV files
recorded on CD's. This is because,
besides preserving the full quality,
uncompressed formats can be easily
used for future post-processing (inte-
grating in videos, compressing with
future and better codecs, etc.).

FOR VIDEO:

SEND THE BEST POSSIBLE COPY

Please do not send MPEG-1 files or
Video CD's or ordinary VHS copies.
The quality of these formats is too
LOW for any future use in preparing
compilations, for example. The useful
formats are:

- Mini-DV or Digital8 cassettes -
(if the original has been recorded in
DV)
- SuperVHS or Hi8 cassettes (if the
original is a good analog source)

The mention of VHS copy needs
maybe some clarification. If VHS is the
only option, of course it is OK, espe-
cially in the case of old recordings
where ONLY the VHS copy exists - in
such a case - and we know there are
many among us who have very unique
and old video material in VHS - then it
is very welcome!

One should also consider that such old-
er VHS analog tape recordings (as all
old tapes) are surely and slowly rotting
away with time, so IT IS EVEN MORE
URGENT to save them in a digital opti-
cal form.

Let me renew here the invitation to all
those among us who own this kind of
video tapes, to bring or send them in a
secure way to the SSI Archives in
Merigar, to my attention, to have a digi-
tal copy made.

WE WILL RETURN

THE ORIGINAL TAPE TO YOU ALONG
WITH A COMPLIMENTARY DIGITAL
COPY FOR YOUR PERSONAL ARCHIVE
as a thank for your collaboration.

Last but not least, do NOT worry about
PAL or NTSC (or even SECAM) for-
mats. You don't have to convert NTSC
to PAL to send your copies here. We
can read any format and digitally con-
vert from one to the other without
losing quality, so that is not a problem.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

1) If you do NOT have the equipment or
the time to make such copies, SEND
US THE ORIGINALS. We will make
the copies here in the best format and
WILL RETURN THE ORIGINALS
TO YOU. We will also include a com-
plimentary digital copy on CD's for
you, as a thank for your collaboration -
so you will have your original material
back PLUS a digital copy of it for your
archive!

2) If you DO have the equipment and
the know-how to make impeccable
digital copies of the material you have
(such as the ability to create DVD's or
high-quality MPEG-2 or MPEG-4 files
or equivalent) then you may send us
such copies, but PLEASE CONTACT
US before creating and sending such
copies so that we can check that the
quality parameters remain consistent
and compatible with the work we are
doing here (codec used, frame size,
bitrate, audio compression etc.). Please
contact me at

maurizio.mingotti@iol.it

for any clarification on the above.

Thank you for your attention,

Maurizio Mingotti,

Merigar Library - Digital Archives

NEW WEB SITE RUSSIAN THANKA PAINTER

Nick Dudka

http://www.baikal.eastsib.ru/aroundbaikal/dudko/postcards&posters_eng.html

CALIFORNIA NEWS AND SCHEDULE OF PRACTICES

The Dzogchen Community West has a slightly new schedule in an attempt to make practices more accessible. Sunday will start having an afternoon practice session (Vajra dance or another Dzogchen ritual practice), followed by an evening Santi Maha study/practice group in Oakland or Marin. We will send the schedule of practices out as early as possible to make planning ahead easier. As always for Ganapuja practices, please call the host to confirm the day before. The DZC Committee is busy planning for the big May Retreat. There are many areas needing volunteer help at this time. See description below for more information.

If you have some expertise to offer please contact
Patrick Tribble, Retreat Coordinator
at Patdel@aol.com
or phone: 415/492 1275.

March 11, Sunday,
Santi Maha Sangha
SMS Base Level Study Group
Steven Goodman's home
Oakland CA 6:30 - 8:45 p.m.
Contact: Ann Clarkson (707)745-6325

March 15, Thursday
Vajra Dances practice
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Glenview Studio, Oakland
1318 Glenfield Ave, Oakland, CA

March 16, Friday
Gakyil Meeting, 7 p.m.
Patrick's office # 510-525-4825
912 The Alameda, Berkeley
(dinner at Solano Thai restaurant, 6 pm)

March 18, Sunday
Dakini Day Ganapuja, 4 p.m.
Ayu Khandro anniversary
Laurie's house 415.458.2880

March 18, Sunday
Santi Maha Sangha
Base Level Practice
6:30 p.m. - 8:45 p.m.
Jey and Marcia's house
Fairfax, Ca

March 22, Thursday
Vajra Dances Practice
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Glenview Studio, Oakland
1318 Glenfield Ave, Oakland, CA

March 24, Saturday
New Moon Ganapuja, 2 p.m.
Gisella's house 510.530.1383
Oakland
Please call to confirm

March 25, Sunday
Vajra Dances practice 1 - 4 p.m.
Glenview Studio, Oakland
1318 Glenfield Ave, Oakland, CA

March 27, Tuesday
Retreat Committee Meeting
Patrick Tribble's office 510-525-4825
Berkeley

March 29, Thursday
Vajra Dances practice
7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Glenview Studio, Oakland
1318 Glenfield Ave, Oakland, CA

NEW CALIFORNIA WEB SITE

The new web site for the Dzogchen Community West is up. It has the latest information on the California Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, May 1-6, 2001.

NEW WEB SITE:

www.dzogchencommunity-west.org

NEW EMAIL:

aha@dzogchencommunity-west.org

The Community phone line is:
510.559.9753

YANTRA YOGA IN CALIFORNIA

THE EIGHT MOVEMENTS

APRIL 25 - 29, 2001
with Jey Clark
and Lynn Sutherland
Supervised by Fabio Andrico

San Francisco Bay Area
California (Location TBA)

For information and
registration contact:
Jey Clark 415/459-0359
jeyclark@mac.com

or check the California community's
web site:
www.dzogchencommunitywest.org

Retreat Committee News:

The Retreat Committee is looking for some responsible volunteers to be:

Raffle Coordinator,
Work Study coordinator,
T-Shirt/gifts coordinator,
Auction helpers,
Data Base entry,
also Registration crew,
Set Up, Drivers
and Errand Runners
needed!

If you have some time
and expertise to offer
please contact

Patdel@aol.com or
phone: 415/492.1275

Thanks!

LocalSpace News:

The Committee for finding local space for a Dzogchen Community Center has reformed and is actively looking again. We would like 1,200+sq ft minimum with a 30' x 30' minimum 'open' space for Vajra Dance/Yantra Yoga/Teachings/Practices, with bathroom/office/storage areas. We are looking from Berkeley, Albany to San Rafael North. A safe neighborhood with cheap rent of course! If you have contacts or know of a possible place, please contact LaurieCPB@aol.com. Thank you.

NOTES

Please confirm each practice by phone.

The Community phone line is:

510.559.9753

New Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

New Web Site:

www.dzogchencommunitywest.org
Contact Cariokey@slip.net

for information on dance practices-
Please mark
your calendars or print schedule for
reference.

YANTRA YOGA AT TSEGYALGAR

April 13th - 20th, 2001

YANTRA YOGA RETREAT FOR BEGINNERS

An introductory course

with Paula Barry and Ann Dankoff

Supervised by Fabio Andrico

There will be two two-hour sessions of practice per day for one week.

October 12th - 21st, 2001

ADVANCED YANTRA YOGA AT TSEGYALGAR

with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti

Please contact Tsegylgar to register for more information:

Phone: 413-369-4153

Email: 74404.1141@compuserve.com

We request that you make a reservation for the April retreat by April 1st.

TSEGYALGAR UPDATE



J. Foster

THE STUPA

At the end of this year's work on the Stupa we were excited to see the creation of the first series of steps above the throne and the phumba which will contain the many offerings. We now need to dedicate many hours to making tsa tsas enough to fill the Pampa, as well as accumulate the various other offerings (such as grain and scented woods) needed to fill the steps and vase. Piero Bonacina, from Italy, has come to help us carve the mantras on the Sogshing, or central pole, and was here working during the month of February.

The Stupa awaits the offerings necessary to continue. The central pole (Shro-shing), will be installed during a ceremony on Memorial Day Weekend, May 26th -28th, along with other offerings, including those given by Rinpoche, as well as texts of our Dzogchen lineage and items connected with the transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. During this time it would be wonderful if people from all corners of the Dzogchen Community can attend this event, either in person or by way of making an offering to this Stupa which is dedicated to the continued Long Life of our precious Master.

RED GAKYIL REPORT

As 2000 draws to a close, it's time to recall what the Red Gakyil has been up to. First of all, the Buckland land pond repair project is complete. The pond, over an acre in size, has been overflowing the retaining dike/road due to the failure of the 50-year-old plus drainage system. To correct this, problem a new drainage system has been engineered which includes two large culverts beneath the road, as well as a newly created stream. This will maintain the pond level, preventing future erosion damage from overflow. In addition, the

access road to the land and the road over the dike have been greatly improved with new grading and natural stone paving. Secondly, the leach field project has also been completed. (A leach field is an engineered system of special sand and aqueducts that allow for the natural dispersion of waste water and human waste. These systems are required by law in rural areas that don't have municipal sewage systems.) This infrastructure was required before sanitary facilities can be built for the retreat cabins that Rinpoche has designated to be built on the sacred Buckland land. Authorization for further construction is still in litigation, but we hope that this will be resolved soon. One of the planned cabins on which we have been allowed to proceed is about half completed. This cabin is devoted to the Guardians of the Teachings. Before one begins a retreat in one of the yet to be built special cabins, a visit to the Guardian Cabin is imperative.

Also we have nearly completed the long awaited gekoes and visiting scholar bathrooms in the school and this now means that the both current and future gekoes will have basic, complete amenities.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to the projects. Your current and continuing support allows us to fulfill this important aspect of Rinpoche's vision.

Another project related to the Sacred Buckland land was the cleaning and storing (they are now being stored in the school) of the original Vajra Dance Mandala which was drawn and painted by Rinpoche. Even though the Mandala, after years of weather, is no longer usable, it is still a manifestation of the dance from the terma of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. We await his decision of how to continue to preserve it.

DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
IN NORTH AMERICA

THE DZOGCHEN WEST COAST
GAKYIL

In Great Need of a
Good Secretary!

The secretary's main responsibility is communication via correspondence; with people in the local community and in other communities, as well as with Rinpoche. We have divided up the responsibilities of the Secretary so it is not too burdensome. Minutes for Gakyil meetings are taken by a different person each time and produced and distributed on email, but it is the Secretary's job to file them in the binder of meeting notes. The Secretary can help to locate sites for practices. When important communications are received, the Secretary distributes them via email to the people concerned. The Secretary is a central hub for communication and information distribution. If you are interested in this important and responsible position, please contact:

Carol Fields at
carolmfields@aol.com or Margaret Bradford at
vajrapamo@aol.com

DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA

Dear Sangha,

Volunteers are needed to help with the May Retreat Registration and the Audio/Visual Live Cast:

Registration Data Base Entering:

We are in need of two or three people who can enter the completed retreat registration forms on to a data base that can be accessed in their own computer.

As we get closer to the retreat, retreatants are sending in their completed forms and payment and we need extra help!

*Please contact Ann Clarkson at:
aclarkson@mindspring.com or
Tel: 707 745 6325

Audio/Video/Live Cast:
Jey Clark, the main coordinator or the audio/video/live cast, is in need

of five additional people beyond the five people who are running the equipment. These five people are needed to help 'set up' this complex communication network.

*Please contact Jey Clark at:
jeyclark@mac.com or
415.459.0359

Thank you! Thank you!
Dzogchen Community West

ABOUT THE GEKOEES

by Michel Bricaire, Gekoes of Tashigar

FIRST BI-ANNUAL/ BI-COASTAL MEETING OF TSEGYALGAR EAST AND WEST

January 2001



The first annual bi-annual, bi-coastal meeting of Tsegyalgar East and West was hosted by the California Community on January, 2001. The purpose of the meeting was to promote collaboration among the various Dzogchen Community sites in North America.



Vajra dance - Tashigar, Argentina 2001

N.ZEITZ



Yanttra Yoga - Tashigar, Argentina 2001

N.ZEITZ

DEAR VAJRA FAMILY:

Finally we have the Bank account where the monies to reserve the lots for TASHIGAR NORTH, MARGARITA ISLAND, should be deposited. The Bank account was opened in the name of Asociación Civil Lhundrub Gar. This is a non profit organization which is to be in charge of buying the land, developing it as stated in the last update, and selling the lots with the Agricultural Project included to the Communities and Practitioners interested. The President in Lhundrub Gar for the Margarita Summer Gar Project as a whole is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and nothing can be bought, sold, and no money can be disposed of by any member of the Margarita Committee without the written approval of Rinpoche. Also any check from this account has to be signed by any two members of the Committee in order to be collected.

These are the necessary data to deposit the money or to make bank transferences. Checks or bank transferences should be made in the name of:

ASOCIACIÓN CIVIL LHUNDRUB GAR
ACCOUNT NUMBER:

8300583106
COMMERCE BANK ABA:COM-
MERCEBANK
067-010-509
ADDRESS:
COMMERCEBANK CENTER, 220
ALHAMBRA CIRCLE, CORAL GABLES,
FLORIDA 33134, U.S.A.
PHONE:(305) 460-8750

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Chuo for the Margarita Committee.

The word Gekoes means "The Virtuous One". The Gekoes lives in the Gar and his function is to look after the daily activities and tasks of the Gar and to serve as a host to the newcomers and visitors; therefore people should trust and have confidence in his virtue by collaborating with respect and helping him to fulfill his duties. The Gekoes should take care of the proper application of the Gakyil's decisions as well as applying them on his own. The Gekoes is expected to represent the Gakyil. He should be the single authority regarding proper conduct and behavior; for example, he or she should be aware of behavior which could create serious problems for the transmission of the teachings, such as the use of drugs, stealing or misuse of the Community property, as well as disagreements and discord among practitioners. The Gekoes should also be a mediator - interpreting and translating between different or opposing positions. This should be done in a manner free of personal preferences or egoism, and

should come from one of general interest, and this task requires a positive and benevolent attitude as well as an acceptance by others of his position. The Gekoes should take care that the scheduled practices or courses are taking place regularly in an appropriate manner and time. He or she should be informed regularly about the planned activities and tasks for the Gar and whenever necessary share his abilities and experiences or give suggestions or advice.

The Gar and practitioners staying in the Gar are like a family; so the Gekoes is supposed to coordinate and oversee the functioning of the kitchen and the serving of meals. In order to realize all of this, people should collaborate by informing the Gekoes about their presence at the time of their arrival at the Gar. This should be done to insure a correct registration of new visitors and the effectuation of the payment.

Having an overview of the people present, as well as the current activities of the Gar, the Gekoes is better able to help individual practitioners accomplish their Karma

Yoga. Together with the secretary, the Gekoes is also the main person to contact in case of irregular eventualities and while the office is closed he answers the phone.

Regarding the daily expenses, he should be financially autonomous taking care of the incoming money like accommodation fees and the like. This budget should be used for occurring costs.

Of course, each Gar is different, and all the issues mentioned are subject to adaptation according to the circumstances of the place. For example, in Merigar, the Gekoes is very busy all during the year, while in places less active like Tashigar in winter, there are a lots of opportunities for collaboration with through Karma Yoga.

Practitioners should therefore feel free to use, but not abuse, the full time responsibility and attention of the Gekoes.

Above all, the most valuable quality of the "Virtuous One" is patience and kindness.

TASHIGAR SEEKS NEW GEKOS AND SECRETARY

April, 2001
Tashigar, in Argentina, South America, is looking for both a Gekos and Secretary. It would be ideal to have a Spanish/ English speaking couple to function as a team and perform both the duties of Secretary and Gekos. We would also prefer pensioners who do not need a salary, but if not, the Community can pay a minimal salary. The Community provides a charming two bedroom cottage with all facilities. The position begins in APRIL, 2001. Please send your questions and information by email to: tashigar@datacoopcordoba.com.ar

NEW BLUE IN NEW ZEALAND

Slavica Voglar is taking over as a new BLUE Gakyil member in New Zealand.

NEW GAKYIL OF NORTHERN GREECE

BLUE: Politis Stamatis and Harris Pantelidis
RED: Dina Svoronou and Maria Giakoumakou
YELLOW: Katerina Loukopoulou and Thanos Svoronos
Contact information:
Harris Pantelidis
Maria Giakoumakou
V. Olgas 84B
54643 Thessaloniki
xaris@spark.net.gr
Thanos and Dina Svoronou
Analipseos 32 54643
Thessaloniki

HAWAII GAKYIL "NA ALO NUI" GAKYIL

YELLOW: Jim Raschick (Treasurer)
RED: Jerene (Secretary)
BLUE: Barbara D'Franco (President)

NEW FRENCH GAKYIL

BLUE: Françoise Casabianca, (Secretary)-Ccasabia@aol.com
Claude Perriguet
Ccperriguet@aol.com
RED: Ermano Lagana
Jean-François Daireaux
jfdaireaux@wanadoo.fr
YELLOW: Anne Zucker, (Treasurer)
anne.max@free.fr
Richard Lejade
Hélène Lafage, (Président)
hmsmf@hotmail.com

MERIGAR GAKYIL - Change

Sicilia D'Arista moved over to BLUE and Rosamaria Lo Schiavo became a new RED member.

PASSAGES

Marriage

Paula Lugientes and Daniel Simonelli were married on December 9th, Cordoba City, Argentina.

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THE DZOGCHEN OF LIFE

by Mark Farrington

One of the most challenging aspects of being a Dzogchen practitioner, or a Buddhist in the Western world, is that you are eventually approached by others who want to ask that all important question - WHY! The infamous "WHY" can be from the stand point of, "why are you doing it," or "what is the difference," or "does it work," or "what is the final goal," etc. The motivation for the question can be positive (I'm interested too), negative (what's wrong with you) or just curiosity, but in all cases for me, when the question is asked I feel it is almost always an important moment to remember on my spiritual path. The reason is that if I can't answer that very fundamental question simply and easily then there is something wrong. I also usually feel a strong sense of responsibility that this could very well be this person's long awaited secondary cause manifesting and how I deliver the response may play some role in whether his or her karma ripens favorably.

This level of importance may not seem logical to many of you because your lives may entail a lot of interaction with others interested in the Dharma, or academics accustomed to inquiring about various branches of study and beliefs. However, in my world, it is rare for me to interact with people like that. My world is the world of global finance. Hyper motivated, extremely competitive, success-driven individuals who often have limited interests outside the office. Safe areas of non-work related conversation can flow as far as interests in family and hobbies but it rarely goes to the level of religious or philosophical beliefs. For conversation to go that far two basic premises must be in place, either the one initiating the subject is searching and the motivation is so strong that he or she can't help themselves, or the person initiating has learned through the grape vine that you are some kind of spiritual person who is open to these kinds of topics.

I have tried to live my life as the Dzogchen Tantras teach, and that is to wear my beliefs on the inside. I don't chant mantras in public or do Yantra Yoga in the office during lunch time. There is nothing openly obvious about my behavior. Nevertheless, after many years of going to retreats and public teachings, merely through

the many days of being away from work, most people around me have come to appreciate the strength of my commitment to this spiritual path. As a result, it has become the topic of conversation when I am not present and a bit of a reputation has consequently developed, both within my office and more broadly in the global financial markets in which I interact. You might be surprised to learn that it is a relatively small world in my area of specialty, with only around one hundred or so involved world wide. In any case, to make a long background introduction come to an end, when someone approaches me seemingly casually at a party or during a quiet moment in the office to ask to talk a bit about Buddhism it is not some random coincidence. They have heard that there is this guy who knows a bit about it and their motivation is obviously strong and the secondary cause is in play.

So, faced with this new and intriguing dilemma I have come to observe in myself that these moments tend to crystallize my own beliefs in many ways. In order to simply respond to the question "WHY," and attempting to adapt the message correctly to each one of these individual's base of understanding is very difficult. I never want to be evangelistic and I never want to imply to them that I am a teacher, but at the same time I would like to explain to them WHY it was obvious to me and that the benefits are real. Then, if they have respect for me or if they have seen evidence of these benefits in me, then that should be the motivation for them to begin their study of the path.

This type of interaction with others has been going on for about two years now and the individuals who have approached me have come from every religious and social economic background. The sum total of all of these experiences has led me to draw some conclusions, and as I mentioned earlier, to crystallize my own beliefs. I felt them to be interesting enough to share with everyone because I see so much struggle with some of these concepts in our Sangha, particularly when we try to work together in building our Community.

Because of the sample of people that I am naturally going to have interaction with, the types of questions and 'tests' they use to confirm the authenticity of

a religious philosophy tends to be similar. They are extremely analytical and intellectual in their questioning and want proof of benefit, physical proof. One could dismiss this approach from the beginning and try to get them to focus more on the metaphysical, preventing them from accessing the Dharma from any other way. But Rinpoche doesn't teach this way and Dzogchen in particular makes no preconditions of this kind. So if that is their starting point, I should be able to deal with that as a starting point. And frankly, many Westerners who turn to Buddhism do so for this very reason. They don't want faith to be the necessary starting point, they don't want to follow a path that postpones all benefits until the after life. Most humans are fairly cautious and pragmatic. They would much prefer a path that allowed them to reap some benefits in the short run while postponing the final commitment until later when they have had time to let their faith grow over the natural course of a spiritual life.

So what do I tell them and how do I answer the question of WHY? Well, it has been different in every case, but I always keep it personal and explain exactly what it has done for me. The rest I tend to trust to their powers of applicability - they will either see how it would affect their life or not. But what they always insist on is me giving them some kind of concrete example in my life and an example of a quality in Rinpoche that I consider to confirm that he is enlightened. This is where some learning has come through to me in these experiences. Because, through these experiences, I have confirmed in my own mind what I believe to be one of the amazing truths about Rinpoche and why he is a master worthy to follow. It has also become my blueprint for interaction with the Community and the organization of my life.

The Dzogchen of Life is founded on getting the right structure in place and then using the best methods available to you in order to rise to your capacity. One of the most amazing things about Rinpoche is that he does so many things well. It would be enough if he were a fantastic Buddhist scholar and a gifted orator. It would be enough if he showed tremendous compassion in the Gonpa as he taught for hours and

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DECEMBER 29, 2000

A REPORT ON THE FIRST WEB CAST

by Loek Jehee

The Web Cast on Friday, December 29th, has been a success. Many messages have arrived from people saying that they received the Web Cast very well.

It seems that with approximately one hundred thirty connections listened to the Web Cast from all over the world; this means that more people have listened, since at various places there were groups of people listening together. A few people experienced some short disruptions (which can always happen while using the internet) but it seems that many were able to enjoy listening to the beautiful and clear teachings of our Master and even receive direct introduction while practicing together.

With this Web Cast we didn't use any equipment at all, except for an ordinary telephone. The Web Cast service was provided by Reallmpact, a division of RealNetwork which gives special assistance to non-profit organizations for a lower price. We could also buy the RealServer program to run on a server and then we don't need (to pay) any external organization anymore. We could do as many Web Casts as we would like (of course always after consultation with Rinpoche) for nearly no cost at all (maybe only some telephone expenses).

Since most Dzogchen Community Gonpas are in remote areas (like Tashigat) from these places "audio only" Web Casting would be possible (using ordinary telephone lines). In some other places where Rinpoche teaches (like e.g. the coming Portland retreat) there are better internet access possibilities and we could even add video from these places, provided we have the necessary computer and video equipment.

The choice of RealAudio for the present Web Cast was made because their program is freely available also for the Mac and Unix platforms. Within our Community we have also our own computer experts, especially in Russia, who develop their own system of internet conference. Unfortunately, at present this system is not yet available for the Mac platform and it is a necessity to use a program that can be used on all platforms.

Personally, I would prefer to use Quicktime (developed by Apple also for the Windows and Unix platforms) above RealAudio. Then we are not forced to use RealPlayer if we want to buy our own equipment in future. If you are interested in concretely working together with me to organize future Web Casting - as a sponsor, as a technician, etc. - setting up e.g. a Quicktime server with Sorenson broadcasting, please contact me at <loekjehee@xs4all.nl>.

I want to thank very much all people who cooperated in making this event possible. Especially thank you to Tsegyalgar Gakyil for taking financial responsibility and to Tashigat Gakyil for setting up the telephone in such way that we had this excellent sound quality.

A happy 2001 to everybody!

THE 'SECOND ROUND' FOR THE KU NYE SCHOOL

BY ELISA COPELLO

In Milan twenty-three students successfully passed the exam for entrance into the second level of Ku Nye and, apart from a very few who were unable to attend, almost all of them participated in the first course of the second level. The group was highly motivated and deeply interested in continuing their studies to acquire sufficient knowledge of this ancient therapeutic art in order to obtain the necessary qualification which will enable them to practice it as a profession in the future. Dr. Nida Chenagtsang explained about the therapeutic use of two different massage sticks; one for drumming on the acu-points and bony places, the other for use on the muscles and fleshy parts of the body. This is a practice which has always been kept secret and dates back to a time of the eighth century which was rediscovered in the thirteenth century starting a

lineage of the oral tradition which passes from master to a single disciple. Dr. Nida received the transmission and then condensed the fruit of his research on the topic in a long article recently published in Lhasa. The students were, therefore, honored to be the first to receive and apply this therapeutic practice in the West. The doctor went on to talk about the La, the protective energy which assures physical vigor, mental stability and clarity, a radiant complexion, love of life and sense of satisfaction. This energy may be diminished due to traumatic causes or to provocations (Rinpoche on several occasions has spoken about this) but also due to surgery or overly violent pressure on the points where the La is found on that particular day. For this reason a good Ku Nye practitioner should know perfectly the path of the La which moves from day to day in dif-

ferent parts of the body according to the lunar calendar. The La can be reinforced through visualization techniques, the sound and special massages explained by Dr. Nida. The course will continue with other external therapies considered by Tibetan medicine such as moxabustion, applying hormay (hot compresses of spices and herbs), applying stones, using water, using cupping glasses and the golden needle technique.

In Rome a group of students will shortly be doing the exam in order to attend the second level at Merigar.

Due to the numerous requests, an intensive massage course of the first level will be organized from April 24th to May 1st. The Ku Nye school organized by the Department of Medicine of the Istituto Shang-Shung is starting to operate at the international level. Massage courses were organized last year in Russia and this

year Dr. Nida will be starting new courses in Austria and Australia.

The objectives of the school are, among others, the training of future instructors who, after completing all the necessary courses and deepening their studies, would be able to teach new students. In order to achieve these objectives, a lot of energy, collaboration, seriousness and enthusiasm is required but the foundation has been created and gradually working with circumstances, as Rinpoche always suggests, we feel confident that the project will become concrete.

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THE DZOGCHEN OF LIFE

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tried to help us understand. If he was patient to the very end of every long day, answering questions, greeting people and making everyone feel a part of him, this would be enough to be a great teacher. But what has been so inspiring to me and what has had an equally significant affect on my life is the way he lives his life as a human being. Rinpoche strives for perfection in all aspects of his life, not just his so called 'spiritual life.' There are no separations, as Rinpoche has taught so many times. Integration of the Teaching in our daily lives; how simple it sounds.

What I see with my own eyes when I see Rinpoche live his life is the EFFORT of trying to achieve perfection in daily life. I highlight the word effort, because I think this causes people a lot of trouble. The human condition makes it impossible to be perfect at all times throughout ones entire life. The whole premise of 'life is suffering' is about the reality that you are swimming against the tide the entire length of your life. Some degree of failure is implicit. The measurement of the Dzogchen of Life is how close you are coming to perfection on a daily basis, not whether or not you achieve it in absolute terms. So how do you get as close to the goal as you are capable of? Rinpoche has taught it many times in relation to our practice - first understand your capacity and then choose the appropriate methods to fit your capacity. What I believe, and what I believe Rinpoche is teaching all the time with his life as an example, is that the same solution exists in all aspects of our life.

First we must understand our capacities in all areas and then structure our lives to fit that. Then, through appropriate methods we strive to reach the height of our capacity in each of the structured areas. In absolute terms we can understand it more easily; devote 100% of your time to practice, live in a cave and you may achieve complete perfection in your spiritual state. Devote 100% of your time to your career and you will perhaps achieve ultimate success in your career path. Devote 100% of your time to caring for and sharing with your family and you will achieve a blissful life full of happy memories. Devote 100% of your time to the Dzogchen Community as Gakyil member or a Gekos and you will probably see positive affects all around. However, in reality, most of us are trying to get a mix of these absolutes correct and often end up discouraged because of mediocre results in all categories. What is the right mix; 50% spiritual, 25% family, 25% career? Is perfect integration to marry another practitioner, become a Yoga teacher and do Guru Yoga all day with your breath? What if you were already married before you discovered Dzogchen and your body is too inflexible to do Yoga?

I think it is very hard for people to see perfection in a life that is split 50-25-25 across anything. We tend to think of perfection in absolute terms. All or nothing. The perfect painter is someone who paints their whole life, the perfect musician is the one playing piano by age 3 and composing music up until their death. Perhaps it is a function of my world, a world of probabilities, that makes me see things differently. In my professional world if someone is perfect 60% of the time they are successful, 70-80% of the time extremely successful and 90% of the time unheard of. If one lives their life at a 70% success rate, over the course of time you will see yourself rise steadily to the top of distinction. A rising star can shoot to the top with a few 100% outcomes, but

eventually he or she will fall right back below the steady life time 70% performer. A spiritual path is an endurance race, not a sprint. Assessing your capacity and working within that capacity for a life time is a challenge worthy of adoration. We need not aspire to absolute greatness.

Rinpoche has been such an inspiration to me when I see how much he has achieved outside of just teaching the Dzogchen Community at retreats. All the books he has written, the organizations he has founded, the family he has raised, his career as a professor, as a historian, his constant assistance to the Tibetan people, the courtesy and respect that he pays to every country he visits and to the local people which surround him. The way he takes time to write things beautifully when he gives you a letter or an empowerment, the way he remembers to give gifts to little children and the way he shares his dinner table with so many different people, no matter how tired he is. His ability to relax and be comfortable in so many different accommodations and climates. The ease with which he switched from hand writing to writing on the computer, his ability to grasp the power and significance of technology and incorporate it into his methods and daily life. The way he switched from teaching in Italian to English because he knew he could reach a broader audience, and the years it took him to achieve that goal. His skills as an architect, as a designer, as a cook, as a musician, a poet. Also, I respect his ability to say no, or to not get involved when he sees no benefit. His judgment about when to do something, when to wait and when to press forward. There are so many mundane decisions and circumstance in which Rinpoche makes a decision where I can see so clearly the relative perfection. None of them represent an absolute perfect outcome in and of themselves, but the state of the individual and the wisdom of the decision and the kindness of the action hold an underlying relative perfection compared to the circumstances and limits in place. This to me is The Dzogchen of Life.

So how do we achieve something resembling this in our daily lives? I strongly believe that it starts with the self assessment, the understanding of your capacity. Not just your spiritual capacity, but your capacity in every aspect of life. If you determine this, then you will always know when to say no, when not to get involved, where to draw your limits on every activity in life. If you set the measurement of perfection at 100% of that defined limit of your capacity, and then you strive to perform at 70-80% of that capacity at all times with consistency, all those around you will begin to notice your level of perfection, your Dzogchen of Life.

If we were to all determine that our capacity to give to the Dzogchen Community in some form was only 10%, either as a Gakyil member, an artist, a construction worker or a Yoga teacher, but we were going to give that 10% at 80% of our full potential, then the outcome would be the sum of thousands of 10% perfect contributions from the Sangha. This would truly be a reflection of our Master. He tries his best at everything he does and aspires to perfection. We owe it to him, as ultimately the Dzogchen Community is a reflection of him, to give our best - our 10% perfection - whenever we give to the Community.

I live on an island and I drive my little boat instead of a car. The island has a front side and a back side. The front side faces the sea catches the trade winds. The back side has a lagoon that is generally quite calm. I live on the front side. I often travel waters on the back side. On Thursday morning, September 28th, I brought my boat into the lagoon waters. Something was wrong. I could feel it. The water felt angry and there were no waves, but there was an energy strong and sinister. I could feel power, current and force. All of it was manifesting in a different way than I had ever experienced.

On Friday morning I checked my computer for weather satellite pictures. A storm was building nearby. Taking this and the angry waters into account, I began to implement an emergency storm plan. The weather forecasters said it would be a small storm, and it would not hit us. Still, I wanted to be prepared.

On Saturday morning the waters on the front of the island were rough and wild. As the day progressed, it became apparent that perhaps the storm would come somewhere nearby. Still it was predicted to be very small and not very strong. The town announced that just to be safe, the electrical current would be turned off at 6pm in case winds knocked down lines in the night. It was a sensible plan to avoid fires. We all thought that we would be just fine. The fishermen brought some of their boats into safer harbors, and I tied mine with about 10 lines and three anchors. About 5 pm the news came that the storm had become a hurricane and it might hit us. Still it seemed a very minimal hurricane (80 MPH) and we were not particularly worried. We filled containers with fresh water, checked that our flashlights had good batteries, and went to bed early that night.

About midnight I awoke to howling winds. I could not sleep. I listened to the battery radio and learned that while we slept the hurricane had built to 130 MPH and was still strengthening. What was even worse was that it was headed directly at our island and our town. I woke my husband. In the dark, with driving wind and rain we managed to haul plywood up to some of our windows and nail it on for protection. The storm became too intense for us to finish the job, and we had to accept the limits of our protection. We did not sleep again for at least 48 hours.

Hurricane Keith was only 20 miles in diameter but it was blowing at 160 MPH when the wind-meter in our town broke. We assumed that wind gusts were about 180 MPH. The eye is the calm center around which all the energy revolves. The 'eye wall' is the strongest part of the storm. The eye wall sat on our house for 36 hours. Debris pelted our home like cannons, water blew through solid wood. The noise was almost deafening. We could see a little bit outside, but not much. I watched the waves tear my boat-house down, flip my boat over and then tear the pier apart. Our guest house collapsed and the sweet little cabin where I did Ganapuja it is now a pile of lumber in our back yard.

While the storm raged, we were unable to do anything about our situation except mop up the water that came into the house through the walls, roof and windows. We listened to the radio and every time the news came, the news seemed

worse, not better. I wanted more than anything to be distracted from my situation. I wanted to read a book or eat a meal, but all of my senses were focused on the storm. At one point my hands began to shake and my heart beat very fast. Did I shake with fear? Perhaps. Did I shake because some wild energy from the storm was moving through my body? Perhaps. I decided to lay down, to breathe and to rest. I went to the dry corner of a bedroom, lay down on the bed and closed my eyes. I breathed 'Om-Ah-Hum' and told myself to relax. After a while I felt better and in fact I thought perhaps I had even had a little sleep. I got up and returned to the room where my husband sat. "How long did I sleep", I asked him (I was sure I had been in bed for an hour or two). "You were in that room for about three minutes", he replied.

Eventually the storm weakened and moved on. When the wind had reduced to about 100 MPH we were able to go outside and with difficulty we could walk to other homes and see what had happened. The beach was littered with small dead birds, roofs were off houses, trees were tipped over and everywhere people were in shock. We learned that four of our friends had been killed. Two days later we managed to get to town, and saw piles of boats in streets, debris everywhere and again, small dead animals in the mess. Martial law was declared. Gasoline, flour and other basic foodstuffs were rationed. There was a ban on the sale of alcohol. We did not have phones or any other communication. Of course there was no electricity. Several-thousand people were homeless, and a huge task of clean up and restoration lay ahead. It has been four and a half months since the storm. The community pulled together and we are functioning pretty well now. Compared with the enormous tragedies of the earthquakes in India and El Salvador, we should perhaps not complain too much. We survived, continue to rebuild and are back at work.

What did I learn? More than anything, I have learned that by writing this long story I have not begun to explain what happened. This is all intellectual, and even exciting, but it is not the main point. What happened is beyond words. What happens beyond words is stronger and more 'real' than anything we can explain. That storm changed me. I cannot explain how. That storm taught me something. I cannot explain what. How did three minutes of 'Om-Ah-Hum' seem like two hours? How did it feel to sit in the dark for 36 hours knowing that we could die at any moment? How did it feel to wonder if anybody else was alive and to not know anything about what lay ahead? How does it feel to mourn a life that will never be the same? I cannot explain. I have tried. I have cried. I have felt stunned, angry, sad, grateful, tired, astonished. have felt all of those things very powerfully but they are not the main point. The main point, as with the teachings of our Master, is beyond words.

Om A Hum.

THE MIRROR

NEWSPAPER OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY

founded by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



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Dear friends,

At this web site: <http://members.ams.chello.nl/a.jehee/NNRevents.rtf>

there is a first provisional list of all the retreats, teachings and lectures held until now by our Master all over the world. We have sent it to all Gars of our Community for an official checking, but we are publishing it on Norbunet also in order that every single practitioner can read it and inform us about any mistakes they find regarding dates, places, etc. Please send your responses to: Felice Storgato: felicest@amiata.net
Thank you for your precious collaboration, Felice Storgato and Igor Legati

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