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Tashigar, Place of Omens

by Cristian Cabral



Rinpoche leaving the Tashigar Gonpa after the Longde Teachings

PALLA LUCENTES

The heat was starting to make stones shiver in the mountains of Cordoba and the sun was reflecting itself shyly on the brooks quietly breaking their way through the fields.

Tashigar, the place of omens. Lucky are we who have had some time to tread on this precious earth. Some have gone, others came for the first moment to stay, walking their way through the beloved mountains, then there are those whose lives were turned off by the passing of time to make us even more aware that everything is impermanent.

Those who know say that tears are the symbol of detachment from ignorance; and while I am writing I think on how much I have personally cried myself out and on how much still there is to be cried.

None of us had any idea that our Teacher was to come here for Christmas. Three months before December a request came from him, "Do whatever you can to organize the end of the year retreat." Days passed, one by one, until, at last, on the twenty-first of December, 2001, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu arrived and was able to see a different Tashigar; a Tashigar with strength and the will to go forward beyond all problems, beyond our own selves, our own egos.

Today, slowly, silence begins descending on us with every departing sibling. Rain falls on us. The few who still remain here are sleeping and probably dreaming of what they left behind or will find ahead. When they wake up they will not be the same because one day less is left in the calendar of their lives.

Nonetheless they will know that destiny is non-existent; it is part of the great illusion which the teacher helps us recognize by painting it with his simplicity and his eyes; this reality of what we are.

The sky is clearing and becomes ready to allow the sun to reign again with its splendor from heavenly heights. I listen to the first birds singing and I think that the tears are not only mine, but everyone's.

Tashigar, the place of omens. To you who are reading let me tell you something. If, by chance, you wander around Argentina, do not exclude a visit here. I can reassure that if you come you will not miss the feeling that the Buddha has tread on this place.

Translated by Marita Fayó

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU

Revised Schedule 2002-2003

2002

MARGARITA ISLAND

February 15th - 24th Margarita Island Teachers Training
March 28th - April 2nd Margarita Island Easter Retreat
April 9th - 23rd Margarita Island Longsal teaching
(For the Longsal teaching students must be serious. For that reason we need to receive their request before coming to the teaching.)

USA

(See page 4)

Boston, Massachusetts

May 1st-7th Dzogchen Retreat, Harvard University

Northampton

May 9th Public Talk, Northampton, Massachusetts

Santi Maha Sangha at Tsegylgar, Conway, Massachusetts

May 10th-14th SMS Base 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

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

June 8th Public Talk, Philadelphia
University of Pennsylvania

New York City

June 10th - 16th New York City Dzogchen Retreat

ITALY & EUROPE

Merigar

June 20th Leave for Merigar
July 5th - 9th Merigar shorter retreat

Santi Maha Sangha at Merigar, Italy

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

August 9th - 18th Merigar longer retreat

Europe

France August 28th Leave for Karmaling, France

Germany September 3rd Leave for Germany
September 6th - 8th German retreat

Hungary September 10th Leave for Hungary
September 13th - 15th Hungarian retreat

Crimea September 17th Leave for Crimea
September 25th - 29th Crimea - Kunsangar Retreat.

Czech Republic October 1st Leave for Czech Republic
October 4th - 6th Czech Retreat
October 5th There will be a public talk in the Prague Castle - the residence of the Czech monarchs

Austria October 9th Leave for Austria
(On the way to Austria a stop in Bratislava for a public talk to the Slovak Buddhists.)

October 11th His Holiness the Dalai Lama arrives
October 23rd His Holiness the Dalai Lama departs
October 25th - 27th Dzogchen Retreat (see page)
October 28th Return to Merigar

ASIA & AUSTRALIA

Thailand

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

Singapore November 22nd - 24th Singapore Teaching retreat

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

CONTENTS

PAGES 2 & 3 TEACHINGS BY CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU

PAGE 4 INTERVIEW WITH BARRIE SIMMONS

PAGE 5 INTERVIEW WITH ANDY LUKIANOWICZ

PAGE 6 BOOK REVIEWS

PAGE 7 INTERVIEW WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU & LIVES OF THE GREAT MASTERS, LONGCHENPA

PAGE 8 NEWS FROM SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE

PAGE 9 NEWS FROM ASIA

PAGES 10 & 11 ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN EAST TIBET

PAGE 12 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CONTACTS

PAGE 14 FEATURED LING, AZAMLING

PAGE 15 - 21 COMMUNITY NEWS

PAGE 22 & 23 REFLECTIONS

PAGE 24 INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL NEWS



Good morning and happy new year to everybody in different places around the world. We are here in Tashigar, in Argentina. It is summer and we have had many very nice days. We know that many of you are in cold, snowy countries, so we send our warm wishes to you.

Our retreat, in general, is based on the principle of knowledge and understanding of ourselves. That is something important, if we do a retreat or not, or if we follow the teachings or not. In any case, we are human beings, one kind of being among different kinds of beings. A human being has a little more knowledge and understanding. Also the teachings exist, so in this case it is very important that we have awareness of our condition. We know that no sentient being likes suffering, and of course human beings have more awareness of that. What we apply always produces suffering, even if we don't want to have suffering. Why do we produce suffering that way? Even if we are not interested in the teaching, we live our human life and know how many problems there are between human beings, nations and nations, groups and groups, etc. Why do we have all these problems? We have these problems because we are conditioned by dualistic vision; because we are egocentric and not thinking of the general condition but only ourselves.

There is a saying in a teaching of the Bodhisattva Shantideva in the Yogacharaya which says, "All the happiness in the world comes from one wish for others to be happy. All suffering comes from one who only wants to be happy oneself". That means that we educate ourselves; we try to be open and not egocentric. This is something very important in the world - for all nations and everyone. For example, when we speak about peace in the world, it is not unusual for us to say things like, "We need peace". But we can never have peace if we do not apply something related to its principle. Peace is not a word but a practice, and this is related to a kind of evolution. To evolve we must understand how our condition is; our way of seeing and being, etc. So if we observe ourselves just a little more, we see just how egocentric we are. When we discover that, then there is something we can do. It does not work to change the countryside or population or whatever. This is how we act when we have a revolution and people do this because they believe it is a solution. Of course, sometimes the fruit of this manifests something positive. If we balance in the contrary way, maybe the contrary way is heavier. Today, even if we succeed to have a revolution, after ten or twenty years it changes again and the price of that revolution kills hundreds and hundreds of beings. Revolution is very expensive and is no solution.

Why doesn't revolution correspond to the real condition? In ancient times Buddha Shakyamuni taught this. Many of the people interested in the teachings of the Buddha don't apply what Buddha taught. When Buddha started to teach the Four Noble Truths at Saranath, the number one truth of the Four Noble Truths is suffering. Why did Buddha teach about suf-

fering first? Suffering is universal for all sentient beings, not only more developed beings like a human beings - even cats, dogs and birds recognize suffering. For example, if you throw a stone at a dog it escapes. Why? Because the dog doesn't like that; it is a suffering.

So it is not so difficult to understand suffering, particularly for human beings. We have suffering related to our body, speech, mind; many kinds of sufferings. When Buddha explained suffering everyone understood. Also when Buddha said we don't need or like suffering, everyone understood and agreed. If Buddha explains nature of mind or condition of mind, many intellectual people don't agree with Buddha. There are many kinds of religions, philosophies, and different points of view which have different ways of seeing the nature of mind. That is why so many kinds of religions, philosophies, and different points of view exist, but suffering is the same; suffering of one kind of nation, one group of people, someone belongs to a different kind of school, but suffering is always suffering. There is no discussion of suffering and everyone agrees we don't want suffering. Everyone has had experiences of suffering and we know it well. Buddha points out that we don't like suffering and we agree; everyone says yes and follows Buddha. Then Buddha says if we don't like suffering then we must discover the cause of suffering. In general, people struggling with suffering always say that if there is a problem there is always a solution by making a revolution against suffering. This is the wrong direction. Buddha explained this very well. Even if you are struggling with suffering all your life, you will never win. Suffering is an effect of a cause and we already have that effect. There is nothing to do, only through this effect can we learn what the cause is. When we know what the cause is, then the second time we don't produce that suffering.

That is why Buddha presented the knowledge of cause through the effect of suffering. We must learn this well and apply it in the correct way. If we observe well in our ordinary condition, there are many things we can understand. For example, if we go to a doctor, we do not go to a doctor because we like the doctor. We go to the doctor

because we have a problem and that is the effect of a cause. The doctor is not cause of this effect, but the doctor can discover the cause. We cannot discover this, we are ignorant. Even if we understand and discover a little of the cause, we have no solution nor do we understand how to overcome it. When we arrive at the doctor, he asks us which kind of problem we have? For example, I say I have a very strong pain in my stomach. The doctor does not say immediately, "Take this medicine". There are many kinds of pain in the stomach. The doctor asks what you ate and drank the day before yesterday, studies your diet and attitude, asks if you traveled in the night, or asks if you didn't use sufficient clothes and the weather was wet, for example. There are many things related to our attitude. Also the doctor looks and checks the pulse, urine, eyes, tongue, etc. Why is the doctor doing that? To discover the cause. The doctor knows very well that you have that effect; the doctor works with the effect and can then discover the cause and then gives advice. The doctor advises on how your diet should be, your attitude, how you use medicine, etc. Then when you follow the advice of the doctor precisely, you have benefit and overcome the illness.

That is an example of how we should follow the teachings in a correct way. We need three intentions to follow the teachings in a correct way. Firstly, we must think the teacher is just like a doctor, a physician. We know we have some problems but cannot discover them precisely. So we go to the teacher to learn and the teacher gives advice of how we can overcome those problems. The teaching the teacher gives us is something like medicine; we have the medicine and advice of the teacher and when we apply it all we can overcome the illness. We know our condition is something like a person who has illness. Even if we have no physical illness we have so many emotions. We are totally conditioned by emotions which is why we have such strong emotions like anger, attachment, acceptance and rejection, etc. For that reason we need a teacher, not only for pleasure. We go to the teacher to discover our problems and overcome them; just like we go to a doctor. If we have these three principle ideas of following the teachings [seeing the teacher as the

doctor, understanding and applying the medicine] then we are following the teachings with the correct intention.

Incorrect intention also exists; intention like a hunter. That is when we see the teacher and teaching like a deer or a wild animal. Our interest to follow the teaching is like hunting. Why do we hunt? We hunt because we need meat and skins, etc., and we don't even care if that animal dies. If we follow the teaching in that way it is the wrong direction. So, if we know the value of the teaching, the teacher, and realization, then we follow the teaching in the correct way. For this understanding the first thing we need is awareness; awareness of knowledge and understanding of our condition. Many people think these things are only for people who follow the teachings and practice. Our condition, problems and confusions are not only for practitioners. Particularly people who are not practitioners, have the same and sometimes more problems. People who follow the teaching, even if they do not do much practice, they try to learn and discover slowly, slowly. But many people are very intellectual and feel they don't need any kind of teaching. That is an obstacle and still more difficult to overcome.

For example, when I was in China in 1953, in that period the revolution started. I was in school and teaching Tibetan language and grammar to many students. I remember very well that in that period there was a slogan which said: "We revolutionaries don't need any spiritual path because if we have an illness or some problem, we take medicine". That was the slogan. The only problem considered was illness and there was medicine to take. It doesn't correspond in the real sense, you also have illnesses related to mind, energy and the physical level. If you have an illness on the physical level, sometimes you can overcome it with some medicine. But if you have some illness related with energy, for example the energy is unbalanced and disturbed, it is not so easy to overcome with medicine. Still more difficult is if we have some mental problem, then the problem is not only on the physical level.

Also the spiritual level does not only mean some aspect of religion; but our real condition is related to

spiritual knowledge. We have our condition: body, speech and mind. Mind is more secret and more complicated. So, if we need and want to have peace, we must get mental peace. You can't get peace by eating or drinking something. How can you have peace? First of all, by balancing your energy. But also that is not the whole solution. Even if you overcome some problems working with your energy level, that is relative and good for only one or two days. To definitely overcome all these problems you must get in your real nature, you must live in your real nature, and until you have this knowledge or understanding you can't have mental peace. So you see, to have mental peace you must explore spiritual knowledge.

Some people don't like the aspect of religion. All religions and spiritual figures are not spiritual paths. Religion is applied by human beings and human beings have their limitations. There is no one who has no limitations. So who is the enlightened being, Buddha Shakyamuni? Buddha never taught any teaching to limit human beings. Buddha always explained, "You try and understand the state of the *prajna paramita* and that is the understanding of the state of your real nature". That is not just the nature of Indian or Tibetan people; it is of all sentient beings. So there is no limitation, but when Buddha manifested parinirvana eighteen different schools of Buddhism manifested. They argued between themselves and said, "My way of seeing is perfect because Buddha taught these words", and the other school is said, "No, you are wrong". That is why there are so many schools and traditions of Buddhism and later more and more developed. This is always the root; the root is limitation and these are human limitations, not limitations created by Buddha Shakyamuni. Today when we follow the teachings we have these same limitations. If you meet a teacher belonging to a specific school then you say, "My teacher belongs to this school, his teaching belongs to this school, his tradition is that, now I am his student and I belong to that tradition", and you limit yourself by being in this tradition. If there is someone following another tradition and even if he or she is your friend, you feel a little uncomfortable because you think, "He is in this school and I am in another". Do you think this is really a path? This is not a path. This is called limitation. But unfortunately, all human beings live in this kind of limitation.

If you follow a path in this way it seems more comfortable, even if it doesn't correspond in the real sense. All figures of religions and different schools function in that way. Of course, if someone wants to follow in a more concrete way, they may feel a little uncomfortable. That is why many people don't like religion. If you don't like religion you must distinguish what is valuable from religion, and if that religion or spiritual path is good for you. But also it doesn't matter, if you don't like religion you don't have to follow. It is not necessary really we follow. If there is some circumstance and you are living somewhere and are a practitioner and in your place there is only one kind of religion or center or group

continued on next page



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the Gonpa at Tashigar

PAOLA LUCENTE

New Year's Greeting & Teaching from Tashigar, Argentina

Live Web Cast, December 30, 2001

in a limited way, of course it is some kind of spiritual path and even if you don't like the structure, you can follow and apply. You don't need to make a revolution and you don't even need to have this idea. You don't need to think, "This group is going in the wrong way and I want to do some kind of revolution". This is the wrong idea. It doesn't work if you discuss and try and convince others that you have good ideas. If there is this school and the people are convinced, that is how it is. If you have that knowledge, you do your best. Of course, if someone asks you, "I want to have the correct path to apply, what do you think, what can I do?" If someone asks your advice, then in this case you can explain.

In general people don't ask in this way. Human beings always believe they know everything because when they received education, day after day, year after year, they learned many things and now they think they know everything. From what they understood they produced their own kinds of ideas and knowledge and live in this kind of knowledge. We say we are constructing a big castle with all our limitations. We learn a little from here and there and put it altogether and say this is the real condition. In the real sense, we are not being in the real knowledge. It is only our intellectual idea which we put together and we construct a big castle which becomes the protector of our ego. Then our ego is living in a gigantic way in this castle, and even if there is a spiritual teaching and path it is not so easy for us to accept. When some people go to listen to a teacher, even if that teacher has no castle and only makes understood how the situation is, it is not so easy for this kind of person to understand what is being communicated. They have the idea, "I want to check how the idea of this teacher is and then list and compare my position and the teacher's". If that teacher says something which corresponds a little to their position they say, "That teacher is interesting". But if it doesn't correspond, they don't care.

This is characteristic of our ego, how we live and how we protect it. To have knowledge of a spiritual path means, in the real sense, to have knowledge of ourselves and our condition. We must open and not remain in this castle. Most important is that we discover that castle. We discover our ego and how we limit everything by thinking that the way we see is the correct way and it must be that way. Then what we look for is always to justify our view. It doesn't correspond in the real sense and means we are not open. If we are open, we don't look at other people but observe ourselves. When Buddha taught the Sutra teaching saying don't create problems for others, Buddha is not saying don't do this or that. Firstly Buddha says, "If you have this kind of problem how do you feel?", and the person says, "I don't feel well and I don't like it." OK, so if you don't like it, it means that when you do that to others also they don't like it. For that reason Buddha says to take the example of your own experience and then you don't create problems for others with your body, speech and mind. Also you make others happy. This is something very concrete and practical. For example, if someone insults me, I don't like it, and then I know if I insult others they don't

like it, therefore I don't insult others. I pay respect and know another dimension exists, not only my dimension. All these dimensions and beings have their own way of seeing and feeling. So it is very important that we pay respect.

Why do we have many problems between people and people, group and group, and nations and nations? We are not respecting each other. Why? Because we don't understand that other kinds of beings have another kind of dimension. Our recognition is only of our own dimension and we don't care for others. This is the wrong point of view. So it's very important we realize that even if we are only two people there are two different dimensions; two people have two different ways of seeing and being, etc., even if the way of seeing is correct or not. Even if it is not, we must respect it. If that person asks you, then you can correct, but if that person is convinced it is better that

knowledge. If we have no knowledge in the correct way, even if we think we are doing something in a good way it does not always correspond. It is not so easy to think this is "good" or "bad". Many things, for example, that they consider good in the East, we consider bad in the West. That is an example. Nothing universal exists, but depends very much on the circumstance and how the situation is. To know the circumstance and situation we need awareness, and then we can't apply good and bad.

There is a very interesting example of this in a story told by a very important scholar called Sakaypandita of the Sakya lineage. In South India, near Assam, there is a forest where there is a kind of bird. In this forest there is a kind of bird whose baby birds like their mother very much. The mother bird is very kind to the children; every day she collects and gives food and does service for the babies. The baby birds grow up day after day.

We must cultivate the root of compassion. Application is important, but more important is our intention.

you respect their way of seeing. For example, in friendships between people, husband and wife or engaged people, when they start to fall in love, they feel they are in one dimension. Even if they don't say it they feel it. They agree about everything. That is because they are conditioned by emotions and in that moment they have very strong attachment and are blind. They can't see the other dimension. It seems everything is perfect. Then slowly, slowly, after being together for one year, how they see is a little different. After two years there is really a different point of view. Then it is not so very comfortable even sitting or sleeping together. But in the beginning even if it is very warm weather, they feel very comfortable being together. Then, after many years, it is not so comfortable. So it is better from the beginning that you know that there are two dimensions and then when you have feelings of love, you can love each other very well by respecting each other. Then you can continue for a long time and have no problems. It is the same way with group and group and nation and nation. We know we have different dimensions. Different dimensions have different conditions, different ways of seeing and doing. They are not the same. We are not becoming the same; that is not so easy. But we must pay respect. If we respect each other then there is a possibility of peace.

This is all related to our awareness. Our awareness is the root of all. Even if we are not practitioners it is indispensable. If we want to live a comfortable life, have less problems, tensions and confusions, then we need to have awareness. Particularly practitioners need awareness. It is very, very important. The root of practice and the spiritual path is how we apply that knowledge. In Mahayana Buddhism we speak very much about compassion and we are always saying that we must increase compassion and apply it. Everyone understands that is something wonderful. To apply compassion does not mean we apply something in a concrete way, but the principle is that

Then the time almost arrives to fly away, but they think, "Our mother has been so very kind, so before we leave we should do something to repay her". They don't think to do something bad, but something good to repay the kindness of the mother. But their way of thinking of "good" doesn't correspond, and they slowly pick all feathers off of the mother bird, one by one, with strong feelings of love. The mother cannot feel the big love of the children. In the end, when they have finished picking off all the feathers, the baby birds are happy and go away. Then the mother can't fly and dies. This is an example.

Sometimes we don't know which is good or which is bad. Most things we can understand, but when we have this kind of problem what should we do? We should develop our clarity. It is not sufficient only to think and judge to develop clarity, but to do practice. When we have more and more clarity we can understand which is the good way and which is bad. In this case, we increase good and try to eliminate bad.

It is very important to have this knowledge, not only for spiritual practitioners, but also for politicians. If they would work in this way, a country would really benefit. Then, like a Bodhisattva, this compassion, this *real* compassion would manifest. We must cultivate the *root* of compassion. Application is important, but more important is our intention. If we really have correct intention, somehow application always manifests. If we don't sufficiently have this knowledge, it doesn't always correspond and sometimes also changes. For that reason, in the teaching, we always explain cultivating bodhicitta and refuge because it is very important. Cultivating bodhicitta does not always mean to learn some kind of vow, prayers or verses. Some people learn that and consider that the main point. Prayers, for example, are words. These words are only to remember the sense. That is not the main point, because in an invocation or prayer, particularly with bodhicitta, we say, "I want to have total realization, not

for only my interest, but to help all sentient beings who are suffering". These are the words and that is what we are always reciting. And why are we reciting that? Because while we recite, we think and cultivate that knowledge. So you can understand why it is important to cultivate our idea and not only to chant. Many people are accustomed to only chanting mantras and prayers. Maybe in the beginning they think of the real sense, but then it becomes a kind of habit or custom and they don't think about the meaning very much because there is no time to think. So they only chant very quickly. You see, many people, like Tibetans, live with a mala and chant "Om Mani Padme Hum". If you really chant a mantra in the correct way to cultivate bodhicitta, it is not necessary that you count. If it is necessary that one day you know how many mantras you have chanted, maybe there will be someone who knows very well. If you are in the *barido*, for example,

and someone says, "How many times did you chant the mantra of Avalokiteshvara?" At that moment somehow the number manifests. So it is not necessary you use always mala. This is a kind of custom and many people who use a mala and chant "Om Mani Padme Hum", are in reality thinking, "How I can do business, how can I take money from other people". "Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani Padme Hum". So that doesn't correspond and the principle is really the sense; it is very important that we apply in that way.

So it is very important on the Bodhisattva Path that the principle is our intention. There is a verse of the great Dzogchen practitioner and teacher, Jigmed Lingpa, which makes us understand how important our intention according to the Mahayana tradition is. If we have good intention, then our realization, path and everything is perfect. If we have bad intention, then our path, realization and everything goes badly. For that reason, it is most important to have correct intention. So cultivate good intention; that is the cultivation of bodhicitta. How can you be a good practitioner of the Mahayana system? Many practitioners in places where Mahayana is very diffused say, "We are applying Mahayana. Every morning, every day, we go in the temple and pray and offer to Buddha and Bodhisattvas", and they consider this the principle of Mahayana practice. That can be a kind of a secondary Mahayana practice, but it never becomes the principle practice. For example, if you are going to a temple and you are paying respect to Buddha and Bodhisattvas, they are not waiting for you to pay your respect. They don't have any ego. Also if you offer flowers and incense, they don't want your nice looking flowers with a good smell. *You* are doing these things because *you* have this attachment and feeling of emotion, *you* like that and *you* think they do also, so *you* think *you* are doing well. In this way *you* can accumulate a little merit, but that is not the main point. For example, many of *you* have visited the big

Bodanath Stupa in Nepal, and *you* see how many people are going around this Stupa in a big hurry, some are chanting mantras and some go around not chanting, but very quickly. What if *you* ask them what they are doing? That is not business or work to earn money. They say they are "doing dharma" and *you* say, "How can *you* do dharma going around a stupa?" They don't know, they believe in what they are doing and say, "This is our way of applying dharma", so even if they don't know what they are really doing, with this good intention they accumulate some merits. Of course, it is not a big merit. So *you* see how related that is with good intention.

In the real sense, how is this system of going around the *chorten* or the temple or monastery considered a practice? What is its source? In the ancient times, when Buddha was in India giving teachings, and all the students received teachings and were satisfied, they said, "Thank you very much Buddha. We have received fantastic teachings and are very happy." They paid respect to Buddha and the teachings. Then they would do prostrations and go around Buddha seven times, for example, and then go away. This is a system of paying respect. It seems a little strange, but we can understand doing prostrations. Since ancient times prostrations have been a sign of respect. In all different countries and cultures they have a kind of prostration. In Tibet and India they did this kind of prostration; in China it is a little different. I have seen in the West that they don't have *this* kind of prostration, but there is some kind. If *you* go to the theater or see old films, *you* can see some kind of prostration, men are taking off their hats; men bow and women curtsy. These are kinds of prostrations. Because the principle is to pay respect, it is easy to understand this system. Originally this was not a spiritual system, but the spiritual systems used this method for paying respect. In ancient times when there were very important kings, etc., one would always have to do prostrations. Still, for example, in Bhutan, they do prostrations. They are not prostrating to the king thinking he is an emanation of Buddha, but to show that they are subjects. So that is the origin of prostrations; then later in the teachings many perfections were added. When we do prostrations, the body, speech and mind concentrate altogether. These are all concentrated movements and when *you* learn all these movements, *you* want to learn them in a perfect way and do them with attention. When done in this way *we* accumulate more merit.

Prostrations are easier to understand, but going around stupas, for example, is more difficult. In ancient India, guests and important people are put on the right side. For that reason, in the Tantric teaching when we speak of *samaya* and how we should pay respect to teachers, they say that when *you* walk with the teacher *you* don't walk on their right side. If *you* are on the teacher's right side, the teacher is paying respect to *you* and it automatically becomes disrespectful. It is not important, but that is the system. For example, in China when *you* pay respect, *you* put guests and important people on the left side. In India, *you* put them on the right side, and for that reason putting the object of respect on the right side and walking around seven times is a sign of respect. So this is the origin

continued on page 5

ART REVIEW

Visionary Paintings

Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche
Tibet House, NYC
2001

Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche is well known to many of us at Merigar. We are deeply grateful to him for the panels in the Gonpa depicting the Twelve Primordial Buddhas done in a style which is unique to his creative expression. We are also deeply grateful to him for the teachings he has given to us, the first in the place now called Serkhang in 1998, when he refused to teach while our Master was in his presence, and the second in the summer of 2000 when he shared with us the essence of his mastery of the three Schools, Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. He also gave a unique but authoritative presentation of Ati Yoga, Dzogchen, the Primordial Great Perfection, through a series of illustrations uniquely conceived and painted on rice paper illustrating the nature of mind. I was deeply touched this year returning to New York City, in its time of loss and pain, to see some of these illustrations in his show, "Visionary Paintings" at Tibet House in New York City.

There were many works -fifty-two paintings and a carpet design - Unique Tiger Carpet.

The devastation at what is now known as 'Ground Zero' was, in some unconscious way, healed for this writer by Dugu Choegyal Rin-

poche's own deep sensibility to his own loss of a country and homeland. In his paintings from his memory of Tibet: My Dream-like Tibet, The Girl Pema Tso from



Painting by Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche

Tashod and Holy Couple from Nagchu. Rinpoche also demonstrated his ability to present intact a visual argument beyond conceptual form, and even beyond tradition, the state of mind of Ati, the Primordial State. In paintings such as Primordial Spontaneous Perfection, Bliss, More than the Sky Can Not Contain, Total Harmony, Dancing Flower of the Mind, this Master and painter vividly presents to us his understanding of the state. I felt my mind irradiated with warmth and sun, my consciousness still shaken by what I had witnessed of September 11th.

Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche also paints the tradition yidams; Devas and Dakinis. The paintings of the Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal, Guru Rinpoche, Rainbow Body Padmasambhava in Light, Rainbow, Flowers and Mandarava are drawn in the Master's singular style rendering both the human and divine aspects of these figures without compromising their iconographic

source. Green Tara, though, was rendered according to the traditional thigtsed or iconographic outline. Rinpoche writes of Mandarava, the "Indian consort of Padmasambhava as manifesting as a Dakini in space. She holds a *drigu* (a ritual knife) in her right hand cutting through duality, in her left hand she holds a vase of longevity with the nectar of immortality. Her nakedness symbolizes the true nature of everything."

Other paintings arise uniquely from Rinpoche's inner experience. Luminous Flowers, Dream Flowers, Apple of Love. He says, "From early, early on in my life I felt connected with my own life energy which manifests in visions and experiences. During the daytime, especially in the early afternoon around nap time when the weather is warm and I feel healthy, I often feel like a world of flowers, one after another, and one after another. When real flowers appear on the earth they are like light patterns that manifest in the material world. I have never taken any drugs, so these flower visions aren't the result of intoxication. When I tried to paint these visions it was impossible at first. I procrastinated for a long time. Then finally I painted the experience."

Other paintings such as Harmony, Heart Songs and Music in Color while entirely 'modern' in theme and presentation, manifest states, which at the same that they belong to and emerge from transmission and lineage, cannot be limited to any precise conception of form or to any particular culture.

by Louise Landes Levi

Lama Wangdor Visits Conway

by Barbara Paparazzo

Lama Wangdor visited Tsegylgar in November and gave teachings on the Three Statements of Garab Dorje to a large gathering of students.



He spoke particularly of the importance of not becoming attached to any experiences that may arise through meditation - non-thought, bliss, clarity - but to break through these so that our primordial awareness can shine through. He intermingled his teachings with practice in such a way that we could gain experience of this teaching.

Lama Wangdor was a student of Chang Chub Dorje as well as many other masters. He left Tibet in 1959 and eventually found his way to the Holy Caves of Padmasambhava at Tso Pema in India. He practiced there alone for many years and later, as people began to gather about him, built a monastery. He is responsible for and supports many refugees from Tibet, monks from the monastery in Tso Pema, and yogis who live in the Holy Caves. For many years he has encouraged sponsorship of these people by students in the West and many new relationships have developed.

Lama Wangdor & Hoover

by Woody Paparazzo

The last time Lama Wangdor stayed with my wife Barbara and I, he discovered we had a dog and asked where he was. We explained that Hoover got so excited when visitors came that we thought it best to keep him in a

nearby kennel for a few days to make things easier for everyone. Rinpoche asked whether Hoover liked it there and we admitted, no, not really. "Oh, then you must not send him away," he said. "Next time I visit you, please keep him here."

So, for this visit, we braved it and Hoover joined us as co-host. When Rinpoche arrived with Lena, his translator, we kept Hoover on a leash. Although

Hoover was nearly twelve and showed signs of changing in some ways, he could still transform into a 6 month old pup when things got exciting. He vibrated, panted, and strained to be free of the leash. After the initial greetings and general excitement, he did settle down. Within half an hour, he was off the leash and making his incessant rounds to each person for some attention.

From across the room, I looked at Hoover's face and saw an image frozen in time - so alive, his face glowed and seemed to send arcs of electrons beaming out like a living Andy Warhol portrait. An hour later, Hoover was hit by a car in front of our house and lay dead by the side of the road.

I carried his still warm body into our house. Barbara went to get Rinpoche. He shook his head sadly. "Impermanence," Rinpoche said as he sat down on the floor with us around Hoover's body and began softly to mutter prayers. Many minutes passed. The shock of the moment settled and gradually I recognized the familiar sounds of Phowa. A *thigle* launched into Dharmakaya and the five of us dissolved together.

The next day, with his head and fur sprinkled with precious herbs, relics and paper mantras covering his body, Hoover was buried in the back garden. A noble and worthy dog who will be greatly missed.

Life, Aging and Death

An interview with Barrie Simmons
by Tatiana Minghetti for the
MerigarLetter.

Barrie Simmons is a long time student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Vice-President of the Istituto Shang-Shung. He introduced Gestalt psychotherapy in Italy in the 1960's and has been active as a therapist for thirty-five years. He will be leading a course, "Life, Aging and Death" at Merigar on February 16th - 17th, which will be open to the public.

Merigar Letter: Barrie, you've chosen two topics for your course on aging and death, which are important for both practitioners of a spiritual discipline and for those who are not practitioners or believers. When my grandfather, a free-thinker, atheist and socialist, was on his death-bed, a nun asked him if he wanted to make his confession. He replied, "Sister, do you really think that a few moments of penitence can mend the ways of a lifetime?" There are few people who manage to be so consistent, so coherent in their point of view at the moment of death. Do you consider this to be fruitful?

Barrie: It seems to me that most people do not have their own view of life to which they can or should cohere. In its place is a formless mass of inculcated thoughts, of prejudices, family slogans, the



imprints of traumatic experiences, blind, merely emotional, agreement or disagreement, repetitions of the prevalent social lie, half-crazy fantasies, all mixed with occasional flashes of clarity. Given this situation, I can't see what sense "coherence" could have. Even among people who think, or believe they do, or who have an admirable character (like your grandfather) many are unwitting supporters of the mistaken views described in the first chapter of the Base Level text of Santi Maha Sangha. What possible value could there be in remaining in such confusion? In short, a Dharma practitioner following a path that leads to illumination does well to remain coherent, while in other cases, a supposed "virtue" like this - if it has any effect at all, which I doubt - probably only aggravates bewilderment.

Two aspects, at any rate, emerge for me: first, that we must continue to evolve right up to the moment of death and therefore we need to be flexible and open to learning; and second that the "shock" of dying, or

of finding oneself on the threshold of death, may sometimes serve to awaken the person from the distraction and avoidance which have lasted a lifetime, the near-hypnotic trance in which most of us exist.

M.L.: To judge from the vast range of literature today on this topic, a great number of readers seem particularly interested in the answer to the precise question: What is there beyond this life?

Barrie: I don't see why a desire to have a belief (a false certainty) regarding what comes after death should become pressing or be considered important. Nor do I understand why it would be really useful to calm the fear of what awaits us beyond life. Of course, a person who has lived attached to inflexible "truths" and superstitions, blindly believing in them, has an addiction which continues to demand gratification. A life dominated by fear will certainly lead to a death in the same style. In a very relative sense, it is an act of compassion to calm a person who is terrorized, much like giving first-aid. However, this has nothing to do with deeper issues. It is true that the Teaching does provide answers to the question: What comes after? I cannot verify these answers or judge them through direct knowledge, but I tend to accept them because they have been transmitted to me by teachers whom I know by experience to be wise and possessed of profound

vision. Given, however, the vastness of karma, the prospect of reincarnation is not particularly comforting.

I have been asked, if I understood correctly, to conduct a seminar not on Dharma, not aimed at those who follow the Teaching, but at most a brief, pre-Dharmic, introduction. So I will pursue these themes very personally, suggesting that one can learn to accept his or her own life, to acknowledge the responsibility for his or her own choices and hence for how one's existence has gone. When this awareness arises, we may be able to forgive many of our mistakes, even the biggest and most disastrous, and even thank ourselves for having sometimes made right decisions and taken valid actions. At this point, we might even find that the life which we are leaving has been, in some way and degree, worthwhile. From here we can begin to suspect that death and what will follow it can also be acceptable. That is, we can develop a trace of confidence that the sequence of living and dying, the process in which we are involved, may be a little benevolent. In other words, I am speaking about the possibility of a certain trust in life and death, an attitude rather than a "belief," which permits us to go on without dogmatic certainties. Thus we can die, whenever it happens, with sufficient tranquillity to carry out our

ever present task: to be aware of what is happening, of what we are experiencing, of what we are.

M.L.: From your experience as a psychotherapist and practitioner, could you give some advice to those who are unable to find harmony even as age advances, and who feel threatened by the passage of time.

Barrie: It can be useful for the frightened person to contact that part of him or herself which is weak and tired, and in "normal" life is considered ill because it wants to die. Where there is so much dread there is likely great attraction, too, though without awareness. Perhaps that part is only discouraged or overwhelmed by transmigration, or perhaps it thirsts for transcendence; this is the moment to embrace it. What the conscious mind considers "pathological" can have value in the appropriate circumstances because, seen in the right light, the entire person is perfect.

Another possibly interesting insight is the notion that facing death we are facing our greatest unrealized potential, that is, the moment of being ourselves, without the presence of others or the possibility of their help, finally in contact with the reality which we have always tried to avoid: who and how we are.

Tuning Into the Teacher

An Interview with
Andy Lukianowicz

by Liz Granger
for The Mirror



Andy Lukianowicz is one of the main translators for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a familiar figure to those participating in retreats at Merigar. Born and raised in London, Andy first received teachings from His

Holiness the Dalai Lama in India, then Chögyal Trungpa at Naropa Institute in Boulder, USA, and Kalu Rinpoche. He met Sogyal Rinpoche in London in 1974 and followed his heart opening teachings for many years. Through him Andy received teachings and empowerments from Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, Jamgon Kongtrul and Sakya Trizin, and empowerments and teachings, especially on Dzogchen, from the consummate master, Dudjom Rinpoche, especially on Tsig-Sum NeDag of Garab Dorje. In 1980 he moved to Italy after meeting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and has since translated for him at most of his teaching retreats in Italy. Andy is currently Professor of English at the Sociology Faculty of the University of Rome.

The Mirror: How did you first meet Rinpoche?

Andy: I first met Rinpoche in London in 1979. He came [to the UK] twice that year, first at Easter, and taught one day at Sogyal Rinpoche's center, Orgyen Cho Ling, where I was living at the time, and then at the ex-Cambodian Embassy. Actually, one of the reasons I went was I had never heard a Lama teach in Italian! I was only able to go a couple of days.

Then he returned at Christmas, and my old friend Judy Allan, one of the organizers, asked me if I wanted to cook Italian food for him, so I said yes. But then it transpired that his main translators, Barrie Simmons and Mario Maglietti, couldn't attend the retreat, and as I speak Italian, Judy asked me if I wanted to translate. I said I would try, but I wasn't so sure I could do it properly. Judy brought me to speak to Rinpoche, and we were kind of formal - he called me "Lei" and so on. Anyway, after introducing myself as his translator, (he didn't seem too worried, which I found reassuring), I asked if he had any advice to give me, and he just said, "Just translate what I say, do not interpret." And that is what I try to do.

The Mirror: What happened then?

Andy: The following year I went to a retreat in Italy, in Volpago near Venice, and then in September I moved to Naples. Actually I got a job at the same university where Rinpoche taught. In those years retreats were held in several sites, in Italy and abroad, and I translated Rinpoche, from Italian into English, at many of them. A couple of years later Merigar was founded, and then as we also invited other Lamas to teach there, I started to translate from English into Italian as well. I have also translated several of Rinpoche's books from Adriano Clemente's Italian translation, including the Santi Maha Sangha books as well as 'Drung Deu Bon' and 'Supreme Source', some practice booklets and other teachings.

The Mirror: Which other Lamas have you translated?

Andy: Mostly I have translated for lamas at Merigar and elsewhere in Italy. Over the years I have translated for H.H. Dalai Lama, Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Khandro Rinpoche (but not at Merigar), Sey Rinpoche, Sakya Trizin, Drubwang Tsok Nyi Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, Tai Situpa Rinpoche, Alak Zenkar Rinpoche, Norbu Rinpoche's son Yeshe Namkhai, Dugu Chogyal Rinpoche, Dzogchen Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Khenpo Namdrol, Dorzong Rinpoche, and maybe others I don't remember right now.

The Mirror: What is it like translating for Rinpoche?

Andy: Well, it is wonderful because for a while I leave my own thoughts behind and tune directly in to his thought processes. Usually I feel really connected, and know exactly what he means (which is not always clear from his choice of words and sentence structure) and can almost intuit what he is about to say. That is great, because it is like getting into a completely different mind-set, and also it shows how relative and unique (in the sense of idiosyncratic) our individual thought patterns are. I think something is one way, but here I am in the mind of somebody who sees it completely differently. Not only because he comes from a different culture, childhood, and upbringing, but by training he has developed a mind and view that is more spacious and less limited, and free to roam throughout the universe of mind.

What is funny is that usually afterwards I don't remember what I said, because when you translate you use your short-term memory. You can't stop to think about what you're translating, "Oh, how interesting!". You translate a chunk, then let it go as the next chunk comes in, and translate that, and so on. So sometimes people ask me, "What did he say about ...?" or "What did he mean by...?", and I answer, "I don't know, I don't remember," and people think I'm joking. "But you just translated it!" So I have to explain why I don't remember what I have just translated.

One of the best features is the training in attention. You have to be concentrated all the time. You can't be distracted even for a second, you could lose the thread of the whole thought that Rinpoche is elaborating. I've noticed sometimes when I'm not translating I may stop to ponder something he says, or even just let my mind wander off into daydreams.

The Mirror: What happens when you do get distracted and lose the thread?

Andy: I'd like to say it's never happened, but ... Well, once I had been drinking at lunch and translating in the afternoon I got distracted, and tried to make up what I thought Rinpoche was saying, but he caught me out right away! What I was saying was OK, but I was simplifying his thoughts. Usually I just ask him to repeat what he said, even though I know he doesn't like to have his flow interrupted. Otherwise, if he catches any hesitation in my voice, he looks at me and then resumes his train of thought. Most Lamas are patient, although some, once they see they can talk faster and faster, hardly give me time to get the words out. Lopon Tenzin Namdak is very painstaking about being sure that what he is saying is understood, so I have the chance to retranslate parts that sometimes are not so clear first time around. And I love translating for Khandro Rinpoche, because as her mind soars higher and deeper she takes me with her.

The main thing when you're translating is you have to be right there all the time. That, and the mind and heart connection, are the best parts.

* Formal use of second person in Italian



of why we go around a stupa.

In Tibet there is both Buddhism and Bönpo. In Tibet we say that Bönpos do everything in the contrary way to Buddhists. It is a little true. For example, if we go around the stupa in one direction, the Bönpos go in a contrary way. But there is also a reason. The origin of Bönpo is not India. Buddhism is very related to the attitudes of India, but Bönpo originally comes from Shang Shung, in West Tibet, and that tradition of Shang Shung is more related to China. In China, they put the object of respect on the left side, therefore the Bönpos go around the contrary way. Also, when you see the prayer wheels that the Tibetans are always turning, and the Buddhists turn them to the right side and sometimes put the mantras flat so they are in the center so when you are turning them. This way, it is like chanting mantras. The Bönpos do it the contrary way and put mantras the contrary way; like how we do the visualization of the Simhamukha mantra. It does not face outside but inside and then you turn it in the contrary way. If you put the mantra flat, then the beginning of the mantra is outside, it is not the same. If you see Bönpo prayer wheels and you think, "I am Buddhist so I must turn them like this", and you turn them in the Buddhist way then you are wrong. You are wrong because the mantra position is the other way. So if you go around the Stupa like the Bönpos, then you must have a Bönpo attitude or you wouldn't feel it in the correct way. Westerners don't know much about these kinds of customs or ideas. The ones who do have been to India and Tibet, and can understand a little and can apply if they like.

Of course, this is not the main point, so you must understand the attitude of people and the real sense of the teaching. What you need to learn is the real sense of teaching, not only attitudes. When you apply the attitudes and the conditionings of your country, you can do so with a good practice of the Mahayana system. Even if you don't pray every day, the most important thing is that you check your intention very often. You live with your body, speech and mind. Mind is related to time, in the passing time your mind has so many thoughts and confusions. In general, we have ideas or thoughts arising immediately and we are totally conditioned by these thoughts. When we are so conditioned, we do not notice which kind of intention we have. With awareness, we observe which kind of intention we have in that moment. For example, at the beginning of each practice there is always refuge and bodhicitta. Why? Because we are working with our awareness. We don't do practice without awareness; with our awareness we try to understand the practice and that what we are doing is the path for having realization. This recognition is really the sense of refuge, but many people don't know this. They think the sense of refuge is, "I should take refuge from some teacher", and then think, "I took refuge from this and that teacher and received a Dharma name". Someone receives refuge and then feels they have become a Buddhist. This is our attitude.

Buddha never taught that and never said that when you follow his teachings you must feel Buddhist.

CANN's teaching continued from page 3

What you feel is that you are a human being and are better than cats and dogs and have a certain capacity. You feel that you want to be in your real knowledge. It doesn't matter if you say if you are Buddhist or not, if you receive a refuge vow or not. This is the Hinayana style because Hinayana is a path of renunciation. The Hinayanists think they must refuse their worldly condition and in that way become more spiritual. So they take refuge and feel different. The idea of changing is that first of all the name is changed, then the dress and then they think, "Now I am a Buddhist monk or nun and have a shaved head and different dress, and I feel different from the others". This is characteristic of renunciation, but in the real sense nothing has changed. So we don't need that. If you have received some refuge vow that is fine, but you must understand if you have received the Dzogchen teaching you have already received refuge. You are not becoming a Buddhist or a Dzogchenpa or someone. You are you. But you are on the path. With this path you can have realization and that doesn't mean you are becoming someone else. It means that you are really being in your real condition, not ignorant of your real nature, and through knowledge of your real nature you govern your dimension in that way and for that purpose we need refuge. The teaching, teacher, and transmission are indispensable for having realization. That recognition is the sense of refuge. Bodhicitta means you know what you are going to do. For example, you go to do a practice with the intention that you are going to do a practice and why? You do the practice for having realization and for the benefit of all sentient beings. So, you in this presence and knowledge and that is the real sense of bodhicitta. For that reason, it is very important that you observe your thoughts and notice when you are not having good intention and you turn it into good intention.

For example, you think of karma and know you have the possibility to create good or bad karma. For creating both good and bad karma, you must first go with your intention. For any action, really, not only karma. For example, I am opening my tea cup, then I am taking my cup in my hand, and then I drink a little tea. What did I do? An action. But it is not karma. Therefore any kind of action is not karma. Karma means an action produced with potentiality which later becomes a cause which can then cause an effect when there are secondary causes. So, for this kind of karma we first need only intention. After the intention we enter into the action directly or indirectly. For example, if I want to accumulate good action and I see a very poor man on the road with an illness and I feel some compassion. I want to help that person and this is my good intention. I am not thinking that I want that help that person because if he overcomes his illness he can work in my house. I am not thinking this, I only want to help; this is all and that is my good intention. But then I have no time and have so many things to do. So I ask my friend to help him and bring him some food, drink and help him. I give some money. Then my friend goes to the shop and buys the food and drink and brings them to the man and it helps. I am not applying

continued on page 24

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Dalai Lama, Answers and Discussions with Western Buddhists

Edited by Jose Ignacio Cabezon
New York: Snow Lion, 2001

For several years, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has made it his custom to spend several days each year at Bodhgaya. This slender book is a record of question and answer sessions between His Holiness and groups of Western students in Bodhgaya from 1981 to 1985. The questions range over a variety of topics, including such diverse subjects as ecumenism, nuclear disarmament, guru devotion, the use of violence, precepts, retreats, Dharma protectors, physics and Native Americans.

His Holiness has a remarkable ability to answer spontaneously, demonstrating both a sense of humor and a keen analytical mind. His answers have the flavor of sincerity, as if he is taking the listener into his personal confidence. It is particularly interesting to see His Holiness's flexibility of mind in dealing with persistent questioners, who ask several follow up questions. For example, after explaining that a multiplicity of religions is good because they fit the different predispositions of a variety of people, a questioner suggests that these religions are not all of equal value, because non-Buddhists cannot "attain liberation". His Holiness replies that the majority of Buddhists also will not achieve liberation in this lifetime, so there is no problem. "It is enough that they are trying to become better human beings", he says.

When the questioner persists, asking again whether "ultimate liberation" is not unique to Buddhism. His Holiness adopts a different approach, saying, "It is necessary to examine what is meant by liberation or salvation (p. 28). If one seeks the type of liberation that is described in the Buddhist scriptures then, he explains, it

would be best to engage in Buddhist practice". However, the scriptures of other religions also describe notions of liberation from their own viewpoint.

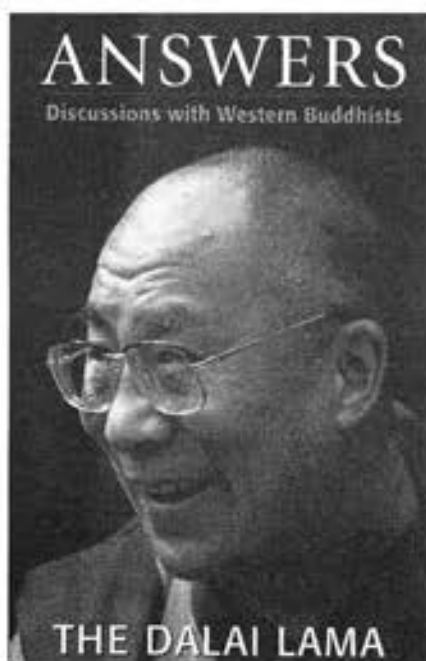
A similar flexibility of mind is demonstrated in his discussions of physics (pp. 18-25) and guru devotion (pp. 73-74 and 87-89). He states there is a great benefit to seeing whatever the guru does as good, provided the guru is in fact highly qualified. On the other hand, "it may be possible to separate, or make distinct, the source of one's faith in the guru, and yet recognize the fact that he or she may still have certain faults" (p. 74).

Please be aware that *Answers* is a revised edition of an earlier book, *The Bodhgaya Interviews*, published in 1988. At first I thought it was a new set of interviews, because of the different title and the copyright date of 2001. But if you look at the bottom of the copyright page it says: "Rev. Ed. of: *The Bodhgaya Interviews*, 1988."

Comparing *Answers* with my copy of *The Bodhgaya Interviews*, I didn't see any significant differences except for an omission of two "political" questions discussed in the earlier edition: one concerning controversy over succession within the Kagyus, and another concerning the situation of Tibet.

I am not criticizing the reissuing of the book under a new title. Thorson's and Wisdom Books have also repackaged earlier editions of the Dalai Lama's under new titles. Since most bookstores no longer carry back list titles, reissuing a classic work with a new title may be the only way to get it into the hands of a new generation of readers. But those of us who already have a number of His Holiness's books need to be aware that we may already own some of the "new" books.

by Paul Bail



Tulku Urgyen *Vajra Speech: Pith Instructions for the Dzogchen Yogi* Ranjung Yeshe Publications, 2001



A number of post-humous book of Tulku Urgyen's have been produced lately, based on edited versions of his talks. Tulku Urgyen was a great Dzogchen teacher and has four sons who continue to uphold his lineage, including Chokyi Nyima and Tsoknyi Rinpoche, both of whom have taught at Dzogchen Community gars.

Vajra Speech differs from Tulku Urgyen's previous books in

the way the material is organized. Instead of being organized into chapters in which a theme is developed, the book is a series of brief quotations, one to ten sentences long, arranged alphabetically by topic from A-Z (well, not really to Z, just to Y). The first topic is 'Accomplishment' and the last is 'Yogi'.

A sample entry for 'Yogi: A swan can separate water and milk when drinking. The yogi should be like the swan in separating the milk of original wakefulness from the water of ignorance' (p. 186).

The entry for 'Meaningful: In this life only the pursuance of Buddhahood, the state of complete enlightenment, is meaningful.' (p.89).

If you are not acquainted with the teachings of Tulku Urgyen, it would be best to start with the two volumes of 'As It Is'. But for those already familiar with his works, this small book might be useful for its pithy quotations to meditate upon.

by Paul Bail



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The Longsal Cycle is the collection of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's rediscovered teachings. This Volume 1 contains three Upadeshas received through dreams, including the histories of their discovery over a period of time ranging from 1959 to 1983. These terms are entitled: The Yoga of Prana for Clarity and Emptiness, The Upadesha of the Oral Transmission of Thangtong Gyalpo, The Root Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde.

The Dzogchen Community

L. 25.000 US\$17

Principles and Guidelines for Practitioners and Gakyil Members

In a meeting of the International Gakyil a decision was made to put together a basic guide on the Dzogchen Community and its activities using Rinpoche's own comments as the main source of information, together with some other individual observations and helpful suggestions. The guidelines which are outlined in this book are therefore intended to be a useful general aid, particularly to new Gakyil members.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Commentary to Narag Tongtrug Practice

L. 15.000 US\$10

"This practice pertains to the Anuyoga tradition and its related method to achieve the final goal that is the state of contemplation tied to the Dzogchen teaching. It is considered very important, above all, in order to purify negative karma and obstacles connected with breaking samaya with the teaching."

These oral instructions, given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar in July 1996, are based on a short text of the master Lochan Dharmashri.

continued on the next page

Lives of the Great Masters

Longchenpa (1308-1363)

by Judith Allan
November 22nd, 2001



Longchenpa was one of the greatest scholars and most highly realized masters in Tibet and was known as the second conqueror. When he was conceived his mother dreamed of a huge lion whose forehead completely lit up by the rays of the sun, illuminating the three worlds of existence. He was considered an incarnation of a daughter of King Trisong Detsen and at an early age, showed all the qualities of a bodhisattva: rich in learning and wisdom, he was full of compassion and faith. By the time he was nineteen, he was known as a brilliant scholar and became known as Longchen Rabjampa ("The Extensively Learned One who is Like Vast Space").

Devoted to meditation practice, he had pure visions of a number of deities including Manjusri, Sarasvati, Vajravahni and Tara. It is said that Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning and Music, carried him in the palm of her hand for seven days and prophesied his enlightenment. Disillusioned with worldly suffering and the behavior of fellow Khampa scholars, Longchenpa chose the life of a wandering practitioner. At 28, as predicted by Tara, he met his root teacher, the Rigdzin Kumaradza. Kumaradza had dreamed of his arrival, "Last night I dreamt that a wonderful bird, which announced itself to be a divine bird, came with a large flock in attendance, and carried away my books in all directions. Therefore, someone will come to hold my lineage." Longchenpa stayed with Kumaradza for two years, wandering constantly amidst great hardship and discomfort, sometimes in freezing conditions and for periods living only on the tiniest amount of flour and some long life pills. Such were his austere conditions that Longchenpa lived in a sack which he used both as

a robe and to sleep in! During this period, however, he received teachings on all three categories of Dzogchen, including Vimalamitra's Nyingthig transmission and was declared to be Kumaradza's successor.

For about seven years Longchenpa was in retreat in mountainous caves, mainly at Chimphu and had visions of Padmasambhava, Vajrasattva, Guru Dragpo and countless other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Vimalamitra appeared in a vision, empowering him to teach from his own transmission, the Vima Nyingthig. Longchenpa also wrote commentaries on the Khandro Nyingthig and Bima Nyingthig. He restored the temple at Samye, finding a chest of gold under the shrine to fund the work. The Dzogchen protector, Dorje Legpa, appearing as a boy with a turquoise earring, helped with the reconstruction, working every day with the builders.

Longchenpa always lived in the utmost simplicity. Never taking money for himself, he was always generous and kind to the poor and gave away any offerings to further the teachings. He left behind more than two hundred-fifty bodies of work including the Seven Great Treasures. Most of his works on Dzogchen and Tantra are considered to be mind treasures. At the end of his life, his body was left undisturbed for twenty-five days, protected by a tent of rainbow light. Although it was the middle of winter, ice melted and flowers bloomed. At his cremation, the earth trembled and in the sky loud thunder was heard seven times. Five large relics (dungsels) were left showing his realization of the five bodies of Buddhahood, and numerous small relics (ringsels).

Interview with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (Part II)

Vladivostok, Russia
1999

by Anna Rudneva and Luda Kislichenko

Divorce

Anna and Luda: We heard that Tibetan people usually do not divorce and Western people separate quite often. Why do you think it happens like this?

Rinpoche: It is not that Tibetans do not divorce. It depends. Many people have their way of thinking about life. They know what life is. They already have an idea when they marry that they won't need to separate; otherwise they wouldn't marry. We have a short life, we don't know how we will live it, and if we marry we want to respect each other and really collaborate in this short life. People decide this and try to go ahead. Even if there are problems, they remember how the real condition is and can overcome.

For Westerners today the situation is much more confused. There are so many different kinds of illusions. They think, "Oh, I want to do this, I want to enjoy this or that". They easily renege on what they promised and thought before. That is, I think, a main point.

When I told Professor Tucci that I want to get married he said, "Oh, if you want to get married you better go to an embassy". Some foreign embassy, not in Italy, because in Italy there is no divorce. He said that it is better, because otherwise later you can't divorce. I said, "Really, I have no idea of divorce. I want to get married. I am not thinking about divorce". That is my point of view since the beginning. Of course, life can manifest different kinds of situations. As for me, the principle is respect and love for each other; collaborating. All the rest is relative. Tibetans are more like this. Some Westerners can also be that way, but in the West there is more confusion and fighting.

Pilgrimage

A & L: Will you please explain to us a little about your pilgrimages to holy places? Also which places are better to go to and which practices to do there?

Rinpoche: Oh, this is not yet matured! Because ordinarily, when I go in Tibet for example, people like to join in and come along. Sometimes I go to India and people like to come. That is not really so very interesting.

What is interesting may happen later on. For example, now I'm working with the Mandala of the Dance; the South and North of this globe. When I am more precise I would like to go to such places, these very important places, while doing a kind of visit, retreat and travel. This can be interesting. In this case, people who want to join can join, travel a limited time and do practice. In this case it can also be special practices, not always the same ones. This has not yet started. It will begin one day.

Activities at the Gar

A & L: From the very beginning of Kunsangar we started to arrange birthday parties, dancing parties, etc., to celebrate holidays together because it brings joy, relaxes people and gives a more informal communication and we can become friends. Some people feel that the Gar is not a proper place to dance,

sing, or have parties and to arrange birthdays. What do you think?

Rinpoche: A Gar does not need to organize someone's birthday party but if someone belonging to the Gar wants to have a party, to offer wine, tea, Ganapuja, food and wants to dance and enjoy - that is part of "Io godo". There is not any problem. In general, it is very important that we enjoy together. It can also be at a Gar, or in private houses of people of the Community. But performing and doing these things is very positive, not negative at all.

Singing and dancing is not a problem. What is negative is if after singing and dancing people use drugs. Drinking a little wine is not a problem. But if someone drinks more, then we must remember what is said in Tantra and how it corresponds to this: the Teaching or not. We know we must be aware at all times and can perform everything. That is part of "We enjoy".

Organizing Retreats

A & L: Different groups of Buddhists often ask if it is possible to organize retreats with their lamas in Kunsangar. Can you tell us in general about organizing the retreats with other masters?

Rinpoche: If someone asks to invite some lama and organize a retreat in a Gar, we do not have to accept this because maybe we don't know who the lama is, etc.

If we are interested and know these people, then we say that we can organize. If they would like to organize the teaching together, we can do that and then invite. We can work in this way, not that we are renting out our space. This is not good. This is not the way of the Dzogchen Community.

Working in the Gar

A & L: Many people, good and devoted, but with no stable life situation, come to Kunsangar to work.

Rinpoche: That means that they also want to get some money?

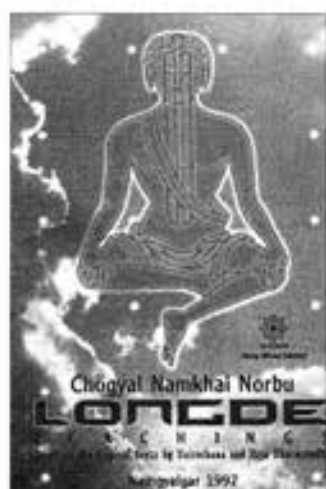
A & L: Yes.

Rinpoche: If people think that the Dzogchen Community is like a company which pays money, spends a lot of money, etc., they have wrong vision. If someone is really interested to offer their work to the Community, but at the same time they do not have base of livelihood and some difficulties, of course when there is some possibility, the Community gives money or as much as possible. It is not correct to think that the Community must pay when we work for the Community.

We have this problem in Merigar, for example. Many people come and want to work in Merigar. They discuss money. I always say that if someone is discussing money it is better they go to work somewhere else. But if they work in a modest way and at the same time they offer to the Community, of course, they need something. Maybe they have a wife, children, or have no job at all. In this case, if the Community has a little money, we try to give something. This is normal. That is what I have said from the beginning: we must work just like a family, with a feeling like that. Then everything becomes very easy.

* "I enjoy" in the Italian language.

Shang Shung Edizioni continued from previous page



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Longde Teachings Based on the Original Texts by Vairocana and Dzin Dharmabodhi

L. 20.000 US\$13

These teachings, given at Namgyalgar in 1997, contain the instructions for the Longde practice of the Four Dās according to the original texts written by Vairocana and Dzin Dharmabodhi. Several drawings illustrate precisely the positions for the practice.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Yoga of Arya Tara

L. 10.000 US\$6.50

This booklet contains a new short text on the Green Tara Practice, recently written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, which includes the 21 action mantras of Tara. The original text is followed by an explanation on the meaning of the text and the way of doing the practice.

These books can be ordered only by practitioners who have already received the transmission directly from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

All the prices are in Italian Lire and US Dollars. Postage and packaging: in Europe add Lire 4.000 per order; outside Europe US\$3 every three books. To order please send the list of books you require by letter or email (specifying where and when you have received the transmission directly from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu).

Send an International Postal Money Order, Eurocheque in Italian Lire (from Europe) or a check (not less than US\$30 or equivalent) to Comunità Dzogchen (Shang Shung Edizioni)

58031 Arcidosso, GR, Italy.

Tel: 0564 966039

Email: shangshunged@niscalinet.it

ITALY

Courses held by
Doctor Nida Chenagtsang:

ROME: February 8th - 10th, 2002
Second level examination and first seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 142 Euro
Registration and information:
Annamarie Clos, Tel: 065885142
Email: anamar@katamail.com

MILAN: February 23rd-24th, 2002
Second seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 114 Euro
Registration and information:
Elisa Copello, Tel: 02-33607505
Email: ecop@ats.it

ROME: March 2nd-3rd, 2002
Second seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 114 Euro
Registration and information:
Annamarie Clos, Tel: 065885142
Email: anamar@katamail.com

MERIGAR: March 8th-16th, 2002
Intensive course of second level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 372 Euro, all didactic materials included (sticks, hand-book, stones and shells, moxarolls)
Registration and information:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary
Rita Renzi
Tel: 30 0564 966941
Fax: 39 0564 968110
Email: ssinst@amiata.net

MILAN: March 23rd-24th, 2002
Third seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 114 Euro
Registration and information:
Elisa Copello, Tel: 02-33607505
Email: ecop@ats.it

ROME: April 6th-7th 2002
Third seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 114 Euro
Registration and information:
Annamarie Clos, Tel: 065885142
Email: anamar@katamail.com

MERIGAR: April 20th-21st, 2002
Seminar of second level of Sa Che (geomancy)
Registration fee: 83 Euro
Registration and information:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary
(see above)

MILAN: April 27th-28th, 2002
Fourth seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 114 Euro
Registration and information:
Elisa Copello, Tel: 02-33607505
Email: ecop@ats.it

ROME: May 4th-5th, 2002
Fourth seminar of third level of Ku Nye
Registration fee: 114 Euro
Registration and information:
Annamarie Clos, Tel: 065885142
Email: anamar@katamail.com

COMO: May 25th-26th, 2002
Second level of Sa Che. The course will be residential and will be organized in a beautiful spot suitable to the observation and analysis of natural environment. The fees will include food and lodging as well. Information will be provided as soon as all the details are worked out.

Information:
Elisa Copello,
Tel: 02-33607505
Email:
ecop@ats.it



COURSES WITH THE AMERICAN SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE IN JUNE ARE CANCELED

ROME, MILAN & PERUGIA:
June, 2002 There will probably be two courses of third level Ku nye in Milan and Rome and a course of Mantra Healing in Perugia. Dates and venues to be confirmed.

MERIGAR: July 6th-9th, 2002
Mantra Healing (First and Second levels)
Registration fee: 166 Euro
Information and registration:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary

MERIGAR: July 20th-23rd, 2002
Dreams and medicine (First and Second Levels)
Registration fee for both courses: 166 Euro
Registration and information:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary

MERIGAR: September 1st-8th, 2002
Dreams and medicine first and second levels
Information and registration:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary

VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED:
September 21st-22nd, 2002
Pregnancy, birth and infant massage

FOURTH YEAR OF THE TIBETAN MEDICINE COURSE
with Prof. Wangdu, professor at the University of Lhasa

Dates:
May 10th-15th 2002
May 31st-June 5th 2002

Subjects dealt with during the course: Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of solid and hollow organs, main pathologies, study of herbal medicines: posology and simple preparations.
Registration fee: 672 Euro for both seminars
The two seminars are directed to all the students of the previous three year course and to all Ku Nye students who have at least attended and passed the first two levels. Doctors, therapists and nurses interested in joining the course, can attend it, provided they buy and study the cassettes of the three year foundation course.
Information and registration:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary
Rita Renzi

USA

The Shang-Shung Institute in America gratefully thanks all its donors and volunteers who have supported the Institute during 2001. Without your participation, the Institute would not be able to manifest the projects and programs established by its founder, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Best wishes for the New Year.

Tibetan Medicine Schedule for Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

April 6th and 7th, 2002
West Coast Community
Advanced Seminar in Neurological and Nervous Disorders
Open to the Public
Venue TBA

May 24th - 26th
New England School of Acupuncture
Boston, Massachusetts
A weekend seminar on the Five Elements and the relationship between Astrology and Tibetan Medicine.

Special Event with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu May 11th Tseggyalgar
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give a live broadcast over the internet and talk on Tibetan culture. More details available soon.

Fundraising
There will also be a fundraising dinner with Rinpoche and our local Tibetan Community at Tseggyalgar. If anyone would like to help organize this event during Rinpoche's visit, please contact the Institute.

New CD Recordings
The Shang Shung Institute has been developing a number of new CD's drawn from its archive.

Tibetan Medicine talk by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Bangkok, September 29th, 2000
2 CD set/\$30 plus \$5 shipping
Webcast restricted to Dzogchen Community members ONLY
Merigar August 15th, 2001
2 CD set/\$30 plus \$5 shipping

Forthcoming
Web cast restricted to Dzogchen Community members ONLY
Tashigar, December 30th, 2001
2 CD set/\$30 plus \$5 shipping

Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine with Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, on MP3 format. 80 hours of instruction. \$500 per set/shipping included.
(payment with credit card, check or money order)

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo has kindly offered to give astrological readings for donors to the Shang-Shung Institute. She has designated the following categories.
\$100 General Reading on one's animal and elements at the time of birth.
\$200 Forecast for the upcoming year for an individual
\$500 Reading for one's entire life (this takes several days)
\$500-\$1000 Family Reading
For further information, please contact the Institute
Shang-Shung Institute in America
PO Box 277
Conway, MA 01341
Tel: 413 369 4928
Email: shangshungus@csi.com
Web site: www.shangshung-usa.org
or
Jacqueline Gens,
Program Director
Tel: 802 254 9114
Email: jgens@sover.net

Funerary Procedures Allowed by the Current Laws in Italy

From an article by Leopoldo Sentinelli published in the Merigar Letter in January, 2002

During a series of discussions connected to the "document of mutual agreement (intesa)" between the Italian Buddhist Union and the Italian government, I met the representative for the Ministry of Health on the subject of the treatment the corpse after death (article 8). In March, 2001, the Italian government passed legislation regarding cremation. For practitioners of the Vajrayana tradition, however, the period immediately after death is important. At the time of the meeting I asked Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other Tibetan masters about the dictates and customs linked to this time period with respect to the body of the deceased, while at the same time I studied in detail the current Italian laws on the subject. It is important to point out that Italian law always requires clarification and interpretation and this flexibility leads to a consideration that there is a "middle way" between the views of the Vajrayana tradition and the laws concerning the subject.

Fundamentally, the Tibetans consider death to be one of the most important moments in life and for this reason prepare for that passage with specific practices. They have no concept of the modern situation of prolonging life therapeutically but use "skillful means" to keep people alive in the best possible conditions by means of rituals, medicine and astrological consultations. Then when the moment of death arrives, they have the greatest respect for the event and its consequences. After the heart has stopped beating, the body is not manipulated or moved from its position at the moment of death. This is because the spirit does not leave the body all of a sudden; the process takes place slowly like a thread which slowly frays until it finally breaks. Usually it is considered that this process takes three days, but Tibetan masters emphasize that the length of time depends on the spiritual level reached by that being during their lifetime. If three days is the right period of time for a Master, this period could be a day for a highly active practitioner. Once this time has passed the body is moved and prepared for the funeral rituals which, in Tibet, involve dismembering the body and then exposing it to the elements and birds of prey. This type of funeral practice cannot be undertaken here in Italy and the practice of cremation is becoming more common, even though it is difficult to find the appropriate structures to get approval by local government, carry out the formalities, etc.

How can this period of respect be fitted into the mosaic of the Italian law? First of all, the declaration of death must be made within twenty-four hours of death to the registry office in the area by either the husband, wife, partner or a person delegated by them (this includes funeral directors). The doctor who performs the post-mortem examination for the local health service must declare the cause of death within twenty-four hours of verifying death. The law states that the doctor's visit must be made not before fifteen hours after death and not after thirty hours. The law regarding observation of the body states that the body cannot be closed in a coffin before twenty-four hours after death. A circular from the Ministry of Health says that bodies cannot be preserved in refrigerated chambers during the period of observation except in three specific cases: establishing death through electrocardiogram, death by decapitation or crushing for special reasons of hygiene. The local authorities should have a special place for this observation of the body during which time it must be assured that there are no signs of life. The circular states that since there is no maximum time fixed up to the burial or closing of the coffin, there may be hygienic reasons related to the local environment and weather conditions for which the local health service may decide autonomously. Any type of embalming can be done only after the period of observation has concluded.

There are other articles related to burial, interment and transport but they are other questions beyond this analysis. Obviously these conditions are valid in case of natural death, not accidental death or death by transmitted disease, epidemic or violent death.

These, then, are the principle articles relative to "respecting the body of the deceased" and, as you can see, the question hinges on the times according to the law. In order to have a day to respect the body, one can inform the registry office within twenty-four hours. One can go up to thirty hours for the examination to ascertain death which, in case of natural death, can be very simple and not too violent. The doctor doing the post-mortem exam has another twenty-four hours after the exam to declare the death and this period can be further used by the family. In this way one can prolong the time to fifty hours (more than two days) within the confines of the law. These are indications and may change if one is in a cold area in winter or a very hot one in summer for obvious health reasons. What is important is that there are rules and temporal spaces to use in the best one of us.

The Shang-Shung Institute of Italy New Audio and Video Cassettes Available

- * Set of 2 audio cassettes The Practice of the Six Lokas 13 Euro
- * Video of the Six Lokas Teachings given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during the August retreat in Merigar last year 16 Euro
- * Set of 4 cassettes of SMS First Level practice (to be booked only by practitioners who are doing the training) 15 Euro
- * Set of 2 CD's including most of the practices transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in all these years and recorded personally by him. 22 Euro

Contact:
Shang-Shung Institute Secretary, Rita Renzi
Tel: 30 0564 966941
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Light Rain, Good Harvest. What's This?

by Des Barry

The village of Dangche in Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province, PRC, is the site of the Khrika Tibetan Language School that was built by ASIA and opened in July, 1997 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. In summer, its imposing traditional architecture stands out over the lush green wheat fields and the backdrop of highly eroded sand mountains, an oasis in the desert terrain of Gui De's high mountains.

From July to September, 2001, ASIA ran its fourth English and Computer Teacher Training Program. This year, funds had to be raised privately for this venture since we had completed our original agreement with IFAD, a branch of the United Nations, which had even extended our two-year venture into a third year. The Dzogchen Community of Southern California provided over \$6000US for this year's project. The rest of the money needed to send the mission was provided from ASIA Italy's general funds.

This year, our counterparts in the Hainan Prefecture Department of Education were unsure as to how many students to expect. ASIA had offered to provide teachers and all teaching materials but required the students themselves to pay for board and lodging at Dangche School. The Department of Education thought that because the students had to pay for their food and lodging, this would seriously impact attendance. ASIA sent two teachers, Des Barry to teach English and Helen Williams to do Computer Training, both of whom expected classes of no more than twenty-five students each. Upon arriving at Dangche, they encountered a far higher number of students than any previous year, about 90% of whom were Tibetans.

The students were split up according to levels and the two teachers ran an intermediate English class, a pre-intermediate English class, two children's classes and a computer class during the first three weeks of the courses. Farouq and Giorgio Minuzzo, working on an emergency project down in Yushul Prefecture, managed to find a third English teacher, Joan Barton, for the last three weeks. This meant that Helen was freed up to run an advanced computer course for computer teachers. In all, ASIA taught classes to over two hundred-fifty students.

In addition to this, ASIA staff began negotiating with the editors of Drang Shar (Light Rain) a very prestigious Tibetan Literary Magazine, to organize a Creative Writing Course for young Tibetan writers at Dangche in the summer of 2002. Modern literary forms in poetry and short-story writing are developing quickly in the PRC and it is hoped that established writers can pass on their experience to young writers who have

published at least one poem or story in a Tibetan literary magazine.

The mission also visited Qiabuqia, the capital city of Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and the representatives of the Department of Education took Des Barry and Helen Williams around to the Tibetan Teachers Training College and the new retraining center for teachers. The new center will serve six prefectures, including a Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture. ASIA has become a major participant in the retraining of Tibetan teachers in Hainan Prefecture and has also been asked this summer to develop a role in education at the Provincial level. Naturally, such an expansion depends on the availability of resources, but ASIA is committed to retraining teachers and improving the standards of their English and Computer teaching skills so that they can in turn pass these on to children in Tibetan primary and middle schools. Such a request from the Provincial Department of Education is a sure sign of appreciation of ASIA's contribution to minorities' education in Qinghai Province.

Finally, on the day before the mission ended, Dangche Tibetan Language School welcomed its first middle school boarding students. In a ceremony at the school, the Middle School was officially authorized by the County's Department of Education and the children turned out in Tibetan national costume and gave a display of traditional music and dance to the official guests, teachers and people of the village. This is a



major development for middle school Tibetan education in Khrika County. Dangche School will continue to expand over the next three years until the number of middle school students reach a maximum of one hundred-eighty. This will bring the school's student numbers up to its maximum of five hundred. In Khrika County, and throughout Qinghai Province, thanks to the generous donations of IFAD and private donors, Tibetan education has a chance to improve. The effort, of course, needs to be sustained. There is still a great deal of work to do, and resources to build if Tibetan children are to compete on a level of parity with other more well-off provinces.

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Email: info@asia.onlus.org
Email: adozioni@asia.onlus.org

2002

MARGARITA ISLAND

Venezuela

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

February 15th - 24th Margarita Island Teachers Training

March 28th - April 2nd Margarita Island Easter Retreat

April 9th - 23rd Margarita Island Longsal teaching

For the Longsal teaching students must be serious. For that reason we need to receive their request before coming to the teaching. Please contact your regional Gar for details.

See the Margarita Web site at: www.dzogchenvenezuela.org

Teachings with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in North America

2002

Massachusetts

May 1st - 7th
Cambridge Dzogchen Retreat
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts
The Gutman Center at Harvard Graduate School of Education
6 Appian Way
Cambridge

May 9th
Northampton
Public Talk
(contact Tsegylgar for details)

May 11th
Public Talk for Shang Shung Institute
Tsegylgar
Conway
(contact Tsegylgar for details)

Santi Maha Sangha

May 10th - 14th Base Level Exam
May 15th - 19th First Level Training

May 21st - 23rd First Level Exam
May 24th - 28th Second Level Training

May 30th - 31st Second Level Exam
June 1st - 5th Third Level Training

Philadelphia

June 8th
The International House of Philadelphia
37th & Chestnut St.
University City
Philadelphia

New York City

June 10th - 16th
New York City Dzogchen Retreat
Synod Hall
On the grounds of the The Cathedral of St. John the Divine
110th St. & Amsterdam Ave.
New York City

For more information:
Dzogchen Community of North America at Tsegylgar
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Conway, MA 01341
USA
Email: DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com
Tel: 413 369 4153
Fax: 413 369 4165
Web site: www.tsegylgar.org

Archeological Survey in Ngari, East Tibet - 2001

by Mauro Nascari



During August and September of 2001, the Archeology Department of the Istituto Shang-Shung in collaboration with the Cooperativa Archeologia of Florence, organized the first archeological mission to Ngari Prefecture in East Tibet. The aim of the survey was to begin a series of study and research activities to exploit the archeological patrimony of the area through organizing excavations and taking appropriate action to consolidate and restore local archeological monuments. By virtue of the useful connection between Ngari Prefecture and the Istituto Shang-Shung which has hosted several cultural delegations from the People's Republic of China in recent years, a series of cultural exchanges was begun. As a result, this first archeological research was made possible. The project that was presented to the Chinese government this year was carried out thanks to the work on the origins of Bon in Tibet undertaken in the past by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and also to the subsequent documentation work of the Istituto's Department of Archeology, in particular on the part of Angelo Andrea di Castro, archeologist, and John Vincent Bellezza, Tibetologist.

The historical importance of the area to be surveyed - made evident for the first time by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu after thirty years of study on the subject - has been widely documented by Tibetan sources as well as by surveys and research done more recently by other scholars. Research activities carried out so far testify to the existence of an ancient civilization known as the "Kingdom of Shang Shung" whose origins most probably can be attributed to the second millennium B.C. The existence of this civilization, which precedes by far the beginning of Tibetan history traditionally dating back to the 7th century A.D., is a very important testimony for the study of the origins of Tibetan culture and is therefore of fundamental importance for understanding the most ancient phases in the history of the Land of the Snow and of the early history of central Asia in general.

Until the present there has been no significant archeological evidence to confirm the chronological indications suggested by ancient sources since, for various reasons, there have never been any excavations or stratigraphic surveys in the area. Some reconnaissance missions undertaken in the past, however, attest to the existence of numerous sites of remarkable historical and archeological interest belonging to successive periods with a structural superimposition which has been used up to our time. One of these is the ancient site of Khyung Lung which was identified as the last capital of Shang Shung by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and some members of his team during a field trip in 1988 (see the video "Kailash"). Thus the object of this first mission was to gather documentary evidence about Khyung Lung.



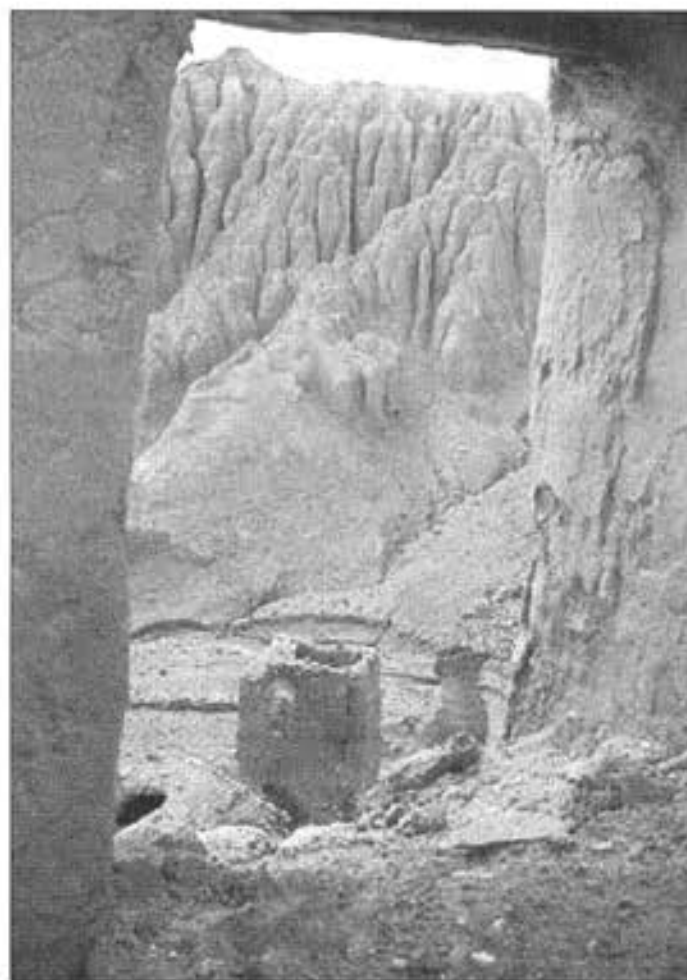
The first delegation of the Istituto Shang-Shung in the Ngari region included John Bellezza, Tibetologist, Gigi Campolmi, cartographer, Roberta Bianchini, architect and an expert in restoring monuments, and myself, archeologist and director of the delegation. After three days of frenetic preparations in Kathmandu where John

helped us buying supplies and tents for our stay in Khyung Lung, and after a visit to the Great Stupa of Swayambhunath, the delegation finally started off for the Tibetan border on August 12th. It took almost seven hours to reach Kodari (120 km from Kathmandu) - the last Nepalese village at the foot of the Himalayas before the Autonomous Region of Tibet - because the last section of the road was blocked by three landslides. This is quite usual at this time of the year during the final pelting rain of the monsoon with the result that groups of young Sherpas were already there ready to carry the baggage for tourists and travelers who had to cross the border. Because of the enormous amount of baggage (including four wooden crates with food and equipment) we had to hire seven or eight porters to help us cover a good section of the road on foot. Once we got past the landslides we had to find transportation to continue the trip - often trucks and eventually other Sherpas when there were other landslides.

After crossing the Nepalese border we came to the "Friendship Bridge" which delineates the boundary between the two countries. Here as in Khodari, we were deafened by the continual noise of the waterfalls and torrents rushing down towards the bottom of the valleys. The Sherpas were not allowed to continue beyond this point and left the baggage at a sort of truck stop just a few meters away. On the Chinese side of the border a young soldier controlled our passports. Even though we were already in Tibet, the real border is higher up at Drangmu, at 2200 meters. The road there was very steep and full of hairpin curves and although frequently blocked by landslides, this time we were fortunate to find it open. We went up to Drangmu with a Chinese truck. It was midday. We had an appointment there with Kalsang, the driver for Ngari Prefecture. He was wait-

ing in a small Chinese restaurant. By this time we were all very tired. After lunch we took the road leading to the interior of the region. On the way we admired the breath-taking scenery with its luxurious vegetation, overhanging rocks and high waterfalls with their pure white waters like in some Japanese paintings. As we gradually gained in

altitude the scenery slowly changed, with the trees disappearing and the vegetation becoming more and more sparse until it was just simple shrubs revealing the naked rocks.



We got to Nyalam (3600 m) in the late afternoon and spent the first night there to acclimatize. Here we experienced the first symptoms of altitude: headaches, breathlessness

and dizziness. Because of this we decided to stay there an extra day in order to avoid useless risks, although our driver was disappointed because he wanted to get to Ngari as soon as possible. To get to Shiquanhe (capital of Ngari Prefecture) from Nyalam there are two possibilities: take the fastest road south in the direction of Kailash

lecture to reach Ngari where we had to meet the local authorities and spend another three days before leaving for Khyung Lung. But at least we were in Tibet and that was enough to give us the necessary strength to confront a long and tiring journey towards the mythical capital of Shang Shung. The villages we visited during our voyage from Nyalam to Ngari - in particular Lhatse, Sangsang, Tsochen and Gyegye - all gave us the same impression. The streets were neglected and lined with barren buildings almost like the sets of some films set in the far west. Islands of 'civilization' lost in the vastness of the Tibetan plateau reminding us of the rich and ancient culture of the 'people of the snow'. The disturbing sadness of this scene, however, was compensated for in the extraordinary beauty of the countryside we crossed at an altitude of 4000 to 4500 meters, with mountain passes at 5500 meters. The panorama was fantastic with immense never-ending valleys, mountains of the most bizarre forms and colors, and turquoise lakes. The condition of the roads, however, was terrible (there are no asphalt roads).

We arrived in Shiquanhe, the Chinese name for the recently built town which lies in the Indus Valley and is the capital of Ngari Prefecture. There we were warmly received by the local authorities who put us up in a brand new luxury hotel. In fact it seemed that we may have been the first guests in this new hotel, built on the occasion of the fifty year 'peaceful liberation of West Tibet', which took place around that time.

ing for us very punctually just after the border with his Toyota Land Cruiser 4500, the best vehicles for these types of road. After taking care of all the bureaucratic duties at the Chinese customs, we had to chase after our truck which in the meantime had gone to take care of some other business. Once we got hold of our baggage, we all went to

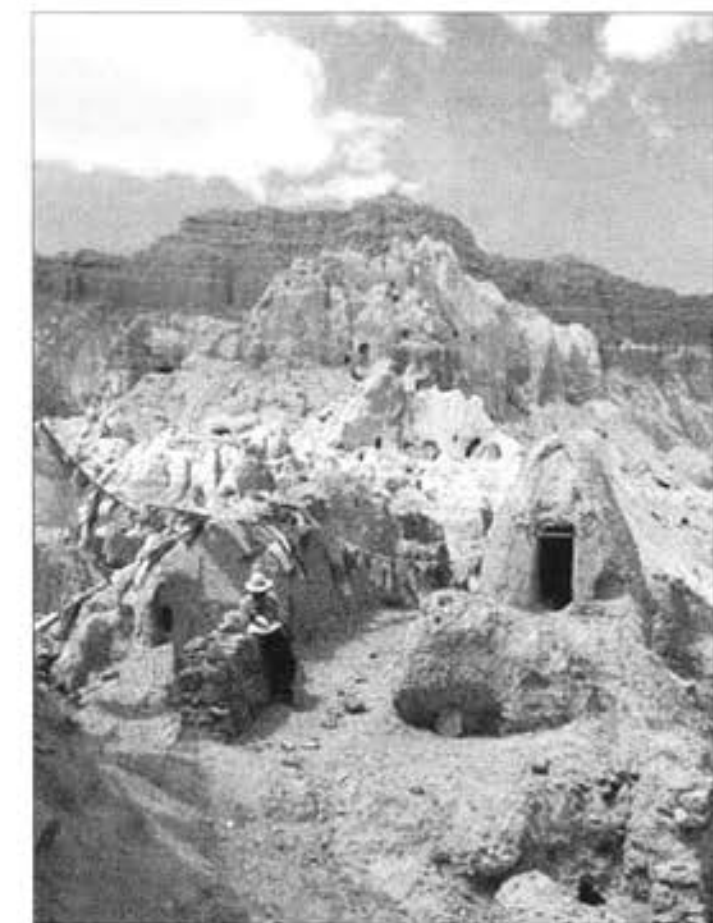
and dizziness. Because of this we decided to stay there an extra day in order to avoid useless risks, although our driver was disappointed because he wanted to get to Ngari as soon as possible. To get to Shiquanhe (capital of Ngari Prefecture) from Nyalam there are two possibilities: take the fastest road south in the direction of Kailash

As soon as we arrived we were asked to meet the authorities at the Prefecture offices. At the meeting, besides the Vice-Governor of Ngari, there were the directors of

(mounds, ruins, etc.) which have been detected and located, in order to create new thematic features through digital elevation models (DEM).



the Department of Culture for Ngari, the head of Zanda County where Khyung Lung is situated, and the local TV. As the director of our delegation, I explained the aim and objectives of the project of the Shang-Shung Institute's Department of Archeology, pointing out that it was the outcome of years of research by Prof. Namkhai Norbu and the fruitful relationship that the Institute has continued to maintain with the authorities of Ngari. The objectives of this first mission to Khyung Lung were the following:



1. Locate and pick out archaeological sites in the region to be explored with the aim to identify future areas of archaeological excavations and verify the consistency of the archaeological deposits.
2. Identify archeological sites and monuments that could become more valuable in the future through activities of preservation and restoration.
3. Make a preliminary collection of findings on the surface of the sites selected.
4. Document selected sites graphically and with photos.
5. Archive the data according to a geographical information system (GIS).
6. Elaborate thematic maps corresponding to environmental aspects and archaeological elevations

7. Publish the results of the expedition with all the necessary graphic and photographic documentation. On the request of the local authorities, the publication will be put together in English, Chinese and Tibetan.
- The Vice-Governor and those present at the meeting expressed a sincere and lively interest in the Institute's project and a desire to collaborate as much as possible in the Institute's future activities in the region. Finally the Vice-Governor emphasized that this was the first official Western delegation in Ngari involved in particular with archaeological research on the Shang-Shung civilization and, obviously, he made us feel a little proud. We spent three days in Ngari to buy

the rest of our food supplies, provisions and the generator; and to rent a Tibetan tent for cooking and working in as well as a truck to transport the provisions. After we had been guests of honor at the inauguration of the new Shiquanhe Hotel, we left for Zanda (originally Tholing) where we had to spend the night in order to reach Khyung Lung the next day. At Tholing we were handed over to the County authorities who supplied us with a new car, a driver and a guide. Once we got to Zanda, however, the driver said that the truck wouldn't be

able to follow because it had been seriously damaged.

We stayed in a miserable hotel for three days waiting to find another vehicle which was practically impossible since almost all the vehicles were involved in the festivities in Ngari. During these three days we were able to visit what remained of the famous monastery of Tholing and its stupas, situated very close to a small garbage dump. When I saw this I felt terrible and very sad. During the wait at Tholing I also had time to sample 'chang' - Tibetan beer - which, unfortunately gave me a serious though temporary stomach upset.

The village was no different from the others we had already visited - the central avenue was made of packed earth with 'modern' shops and offices on both sides, rubbish all over the place and, most of all, poverty. On August 24th, somewhat discouraged, we finally left for Khyung Lung with a new truck which, however, also broke down after a few kilometers.

We were stuck for a day in a small village called Mangnan on the road to Khyung Lung. Here we found the ruins of a great Stupa and the sacred area around it within a garden with grass and trees. The houses of the simple hospitable country folk were dotted all around. This was different from the town because everything had remained almost like it was originally. For the first time I felt that I was in Tibet, or what my imagination felt must have been Tibet a long time ago.

We found a third truck and left the day after for Khyung Lung although we had to spend a night on the road camping with the Tibetan tent. In the meantime several other 'guests' had joined us and traveled with us on the truck. They did their best to put up the tents in a hurry for the night. Too much of a hurry. During the night one of the wooden poles supporting the tent was moved by a strong wind and fell on the driver's head wounding him. Our first aid supplies turned out to be providential in such a difficult situation, and in spite of everything, in the morning the driver was able to drive, although in pain. Along the road we stopped at the ruins of an ancient Buddhist settlement. We could see the reliquaries inside some of the clay stupas, mostly tsa-tsa and ancient sacred texts. Piles of stones showed the remains of secular religious buildings which at one time towered majestically over the valley.

In the early afternoon of August 26th we arrive at Khyung Lung. The sacredness of the site is shown by the many strings of 'lungta' (prayer flags) adorning the valley in various places and by the numerous 'mani walls' covered by hundreds of stones sculpted with mantra - almost always 'Om mani padme hum'. In two or three places hot thermal waters gush out and form small pools white as snow with their residue. Beyond the river (the Sutlej which rises from the Indus) the enormous rocky walls of Khyung Lung appear in all their majesty, jagged and colorful. The rocks open into hundreds of caves,

in some of which the walls have been washed away or collapsed. The remains of ancient structures covered in scarlet plaster rise from the earth to mark the presence of areas connected to the caves which by now have fallen. Everywhere the earth is covered in a myriad of stones, pebbles and pieces of earthenware in a thousand colors. High up, on an isolated rocky spur lie the remains of what Rinpoche identified as the 'royal palace'. On another promontory the remains of an old Gelugpa monastery can be seen, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The ruins of stupas mark the stopping places for thousands of devoted pilgrims who have visited this place in the past. In these caves followers of both Bon and Buddhism lived and celebrated their rituals for centuries, perhaps millennia.

It had taken us fifteen days to get here from the Nepalese border and

that will be presented to the Chinese authorities in order to obtain permission for the Institute to carry out research in the area in the coming years.

The return trip to the Nepalese border was a series of obstacles. First of all, the steering of the car broke near Paryang, a village on the road that leads to Mount Kailash. John and the driver walked thirty kilometers to get to the village while we waited with the car in the beautiful surroundings of the Steppes, without knowing if we would be able to get back to Kathmandu on time to get our flight. It was at this point that we really got discouraged. On top of everything else we didn't know whether we would be able to cross the Brahmaputra at Saga. Fortunately, the next day we managed to phone, and the car part arrived in Ngari two days later. We were there when we heard the news about the terrible terrorist



only twelve working days out of the planned twenty remained so that we had to re-dimension our objectives. It was no longer possible to try to identify other sites so we concentrated our energy mainly on the documentation of Khyung Lung.

The first days there were hard, camping in tents at 4222 m, with a sun hot enough to crack rocks in the daytime while at night the temperature fell below zero. We had no modern conveniences and no way to communicate with the world. The minimum movement required an incredible effort and at the beginning we had difficulty in getting into a normal working rhythm. In spite of all this we managed to draw up a plan and some sketches of the prominent main structures and take photographs and video shots of the caves and various structures present in the area. We collected samples of pieces of pottery on the surface, fragments of bone and charcoal taken from a natural cross-section, fragments of wood from the 'Royal Palace' and from the Gonpa so that we could carry out examinations with radio-carbon to get a precise dating. Finally our cartographer, Gigi, plotted several points with a GPS antenna in order to link the site with a satellite map and work out thematic maps according to the GIS (Geographical Information System). All of this documentation will be used to draft a general project

attack in the USA. Before we reached Kathmandu we had three flat tires and almost got blocked at the Chinese border crossing at Zhangmu. At Kodari two landslides forced us to use Sherpas, but all this is normal when you go to Tibet. In spite of all of this we managed to catch our flight at the last moment.

Despite the many difficulties and lack of means, I think that the Institute's first mission to Tibet was very positive. It was definitely an important step for all of us in that it has opened up concrete possibilities to carry out more in-depth research on the ancient civilization of Shang Shung. But most of all it gives credit to the work that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has carried out for many years, making a concrete contribution to the study of the origins of Tibetan culture. For these reasons it is important to organize and find the necessary resources to carry out the next mission to survey the area more fully and, if it is possible, begin excavations at the ancient site of Khyung Lung.

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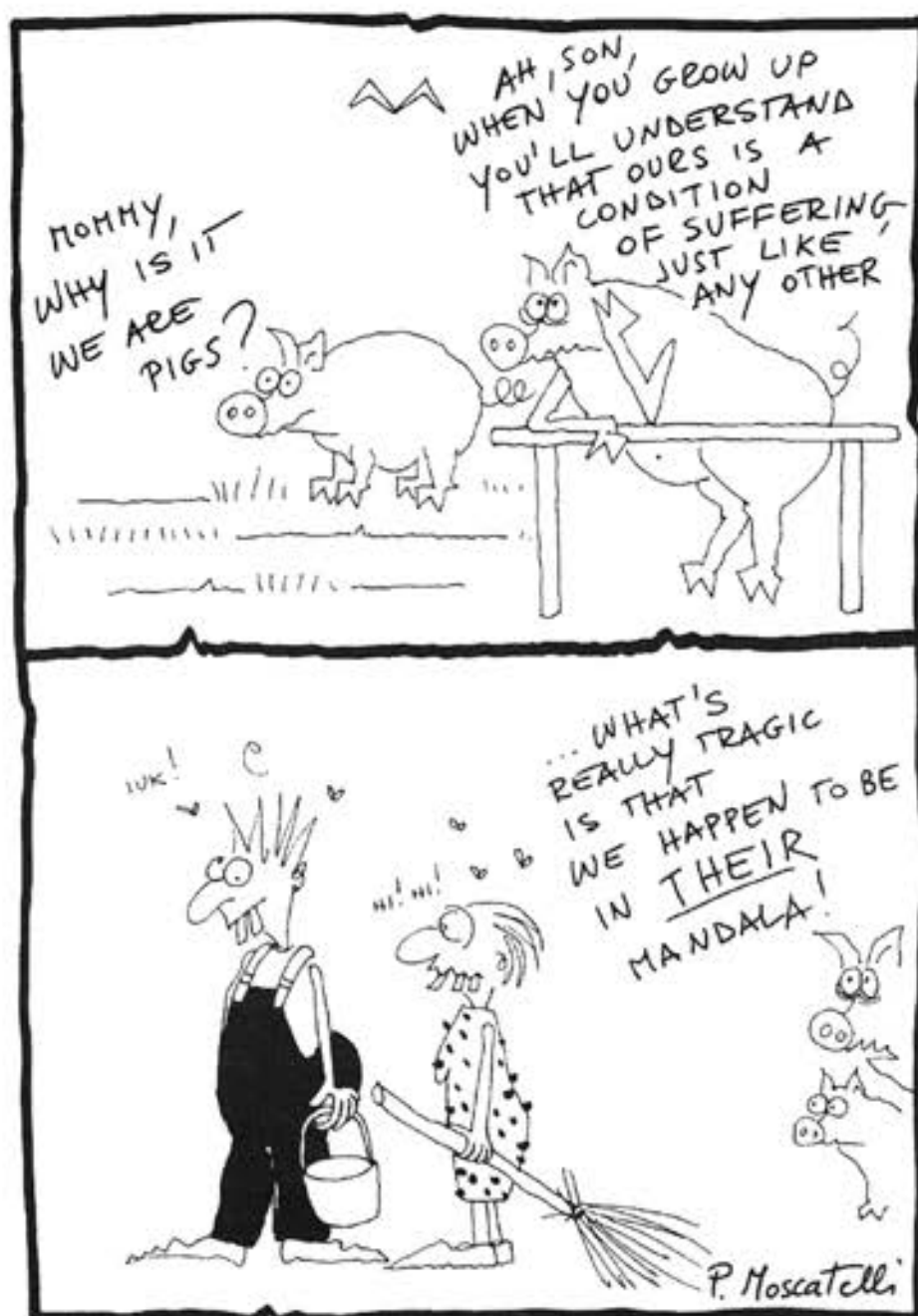
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Azamling Mountain Retreat Place

by Liz Granger

It's a crisp but misty autumn morning as we wait outside the railway station at Cuneo for Aldo Oneto and Paolo Simona to pick us up. We are at the foot of the Alps in the extreme Northwest corner of Italy, close to the French border on our way to Azamling, the first retreat 'ling' ('place') of the Dzogchen Community in Italy.

During the car ride there Aldo tells us how one of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's early retreats was held in the nearby Alpine village of Campomolino in the Val Grana in August, 1978. After the retreat, the group wanted to find a place to practice in the valley and following Rinpoche's advice, started to look for a place that would fulfill the necessary requirements. Eventually they discovered the cluster of abandoned stone and slate roofed peasant houses that was to become

Azamling, perched on the rocky slopes high above the valley. They gradually collected enough money from people in the Community throughout Italy to buy the first main building in 1983, and the same year Rinpoche and his family spent a month there during which he named the place 'Azamling' because of the similarities between this rugged spot in the Alps with Adzam Druppa's Gar in East Tibet where he and his disciples had founded a community of practitioners. Later on, with the development of the five international Gars, it was renamed 'Azamling', and has remained a place for retreat.

From Cuneo, we head west into the Val Grana, a lush green valley thick with chestnut, beech and pine trees. Caraglio, Valgrana, Monterosso, Pradleva. We start to climb the valley through the small villages of stone and wood dotted along the road so typical of the Alps. The still sharp mountain air is cut by the sound of rushing streams plunging down to the valley floor. The scenery becomes more austere, the road twists and turns between the steep mountain slopes and a mist veils parts of the scene in an almost oriental landscape. Pradleva village. The road ascends steeply through a sea of trees finally arriving in Campomolino, a handful of severe stone houses, last call for supplies. End of the line. Beginning of the pilgrimage.

In the past, Aldo recounts, visitors to the 'ling' had at least an hour's steep climb on winding footpaths, carrying all their own supplies in order to reach Azamling. Everything except water had to be carried there, even building supplies. Last year, however, the situation was revolutionized when a dirt road was bulldozed out of the side of the mountain and it is now possible, with a robust car and the 'right' weather conditions (no snow or heavy rain) to reach the 'ling' by car. The road is still 'settling' this year and so we opt to leave the supplies in the car, two of us walk and two drive in order not to overload the car on the new country road.

Giorgio and I choose to walk the steep climb, stopping to catch our breath from time to time, keeping to the black earth road then taking a winding footpath as a shortcut on the final few hundred yards. From the

thick forest of trees, we emerge into a clearing on the fast climbing slope. Our first glimpse of Azamling. A close knit huddle of tall rustic stone houses with slabs of overlapping black slate for roofs; Alpine houses typical of the Val Grana area. Weathered wooden balconies hang and lean the width of the buildings. Still silence of the mountain. Patter of fine rain on the leaves.

In the main building Paolo is already at work in the kitchen stoking up the wood stove while Aldo brings a tank of crystal clear water from the fountain in front of the house. Fire and water - the pure abundant gifts of the mountain. We tour the main building - ground floor kitchen with its large square metal stove for heating and cooking; first floor with a simple

stone pavement, small library, big double bed and its own stove; second floor with two single beds and ancient wooden balcony with breathtaking view when the gentle mists shift. Solar panels on the balcony provide a steady source of light for all the rooms.

Pronto! The polenta is ready; Paolo offers us glasses of fragrant red wine and slabs of local Castelmagno cheese (a staple at Charlemagne's table centuries ago!). Our short stay enriched not only by the abundance of natural beauty of the

area but also by the local gastronomic delights! Enjoy! We light the stoves in all the rooms - wood is plentiful - and settle ourselves upstairs on the first floor to do an evening run

time, more people can stay here since the weather is warm and the rooms don't need to be heated. We are continually working towards creating more space for people to do retreats here." In another of the rustic stone houses we see the spaces that could become a library, a meditation hall, an office, even a space for yangtig retreat. "We have the space," Aldo points out, "but we still need to create the circumstances to develop it."

Back in the kitchen Paolo feeds the fire and serves up a tasty soup for lunch. As we eat, he joins Aldo is recounting the unwritten history of Azamling. "When we first arrived here in 1983 we were surprised to find two caves. The Master stayed in the smaller one, 'the cave of the triangle of light'; he would sleep there and even wrote a 'gonter', a spontaneous teaching, while he was staying there. The place is closely linked not only to Adzam Druppa but also Nyala Pema Dundul, because during his first visit here the Master gave us copies of the teachings of Nyala Pema Dundul in poetic form. While he was in the cave, the Master also wrote invocations to two mundane female protectors, one linked to Monte Bianco, the other to Mount Monviso on which Azamling is situated. When we do the Tun we include the invocation to this local guardian. In the bigger cave we do collective practices and Yantra Yoga in the warmer weather."

"What is it like in the winter", I ask. "Since the place is high at 1600 m., Aldo tells me, "pre-Alpine it's called, there are 3 or 4 months of snow. The rest of the year it is quite easy to get here and live here but people even like to come up in winter, trekking through the snow to get here. There is snow here up to Easter and the most difficult months are December to March. People do come here in the winter but they should be prepared and have a strong motivation because they could be many weeks, even months, on their own. A lot of non-

Italians like this place, particularly people from the Northern European countries. It is an excellent place for *chöden* practice due to the purity of the air and water and the solitude. It is also excellent for *shine* practice because of the clear views. Occasionally we organize weekends of practice and karma yoga in Azamling - we have quite a lot of new people who come."

The four of us go outside to take turns taking photographs in front of the house, pausing for the sun to break through the fine mist of fresh autumn rain. "There is still a lot of work to do", continues Aldo, "and we need people to help as well as financial assistance. We are already a group of practitioners who regularly

contribute to Azamling and the other year we put in solar panels for the lighting. Our immediate projects are to change the beds and mattresses, put in a greatly needed bathroom and plumbing and make improvements so that more people can stay here. We are preparing for a visit by the Master and want to finish his house and are also considering looking for a person who would live here all year round as a kind of gekö or guardian. In the future we would like to be able to receive groups of Santi Maha Sangha practitioners and be able to offer accommodation."

It's already time to leave. We pack up our backpacks and load the car. I glimpse a shiny black and yellow salamander slipping and sliding up a wet slope. More photos. Giorgio and I head back down the path trying to beat the car back to Colletto, back to the asphalt, back to the world.

As Aldo drives us back to Cuneo for our train, I silently salute the little Alpine villages with not a little reluctance. Our visit to Azamling has been a short but powerful experience. "Let people in the Community know about us," says Aldo. "Come and enjoy all the qualities of this remote and rugged spot which is a perfect place for practice."

For solitary/group retreats, and periods of work and practice contact:

Moreno Marcato at 39-0141-831002 or Aldo Oneto at 39-0338-9593865.

Email: aldo.one@tiscalinet.it.

Azamling is:
150 km from Nice, France
110 km from Turin and Ventimiglia, Italy



Map to Azamling



Rinpoche visits Azamling

together. Night falls. Each of us to his bed, blankets piled high, at more than 1600 meters altitude the nights are chilly even in September.

A new day dawns. The damp mist curls itself around and through the forests of the valley while high peaks thrust themselves boldly and clearly out of this white sea. Morning ablutions. Squat over a hole in a stone with a view over the entire valley then chill mountain spring water wash. We carry more water to the kitchen for breakfast.

Aldo takes us to visit the entire complex of buildings. In the adjoining house a cozy single room has been prepared for

people who wish to do longer retreats with its own simple kitchen facilities, a wood stove and wooden balcony. Below is the store of wood stacked neatly long the walls. Next door a small cold room against the rock which serves as a refrigerator.

Searching through his bundle of keys Aldo opens up another building to show us two more

rooms with separate kitchens - simple, basic accommodation for those who wish to experience a place ideal for solitary retreat or for the karma yogis and yoginis who come to the Ling to work and practice together.

"In 1988", Aldo says, "we bought more houses next to the main house and have managed to create space for 13 or 14 people to do retreats even in the winter. During the summer-



Azamling in the snow



INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY NEWS

merigar

Merigar Calendar of Events & Courses

Winter 2002

February 8-10

Course of the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas with a local instructor
The course starts at 4pm on Friday
Final session at 4pm on Sunday
Cost: 109 Euro with 30% discount for members
Registration (26 Euro) before January 28th



February 13

Losar Celebrations
Water Horse Year

February 16-17

Life, Aging and Death with Barrie Simmons
Cost: 73 Euro with 30% discount for members
Registration (26 Euro) before February 16th

February 23-24

Practice retreat of Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas coordinated by a local teacher

March 2-3

Course on the First Level of Santi Maha Sangha with Igor Legati [only for those who have passed the Base Level exam]
The course starts at 10am on Saturday
Final session at 10am on Sunday
Contributions requested for the costs

March 9-10

Yantra Yoga Intermediate Course (preliminary and first series of Yantra) with Laura Evangelisti
The course starts at 10am on Saturday
Final session at 4pm on Sunday
Cost: 73 Euro with a 30% discount for members
Registration (26 Euro) before February 28th
March 15-17
Course of the Dance of the Three Vajras (with particular focus on the irregular method) with a local instructor
The course starts at 4pm on Friday

Final session at 4pm on Sunday

Cost: 109 Euro with 30% discount for members
Registration (26 Euro) before March 5th

March 23-24

Karma Yoga Festa
From Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon
Saturday evening dinner and party

March 28-April 1

Easter Retreat
Explanation and Practice of the Long Life of the Dakini Mandarava with Nina Robinson

Date not yet confirmed
Course - Lucid Dreams with Michael Katz

Registration

To register for courses of Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra it is necessary to telephone the office and send a deposit before the registration date, specifying the course you are registering for and giving your name clearly.
To participate in the activities of Merigar, you must be a member of the Cultural Association of the Dzogchen Community.

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A Heartfelt Thanks

by Flavia Tomassini

From November 2nd - 4th, 2001, Jim Valby held a course of the First Level of Santi Maha Sangha at Merigar. I will not enter into the details of the course (because it is First Level), however, I would like to mention Jim himself, trying to relate, at least in part, the experience of being with him for those few unforgettable days.

Just the sight of this man makes you feel joyful and optimistic; when you listen to him, then you feel amazement, admiration and finally affection. A great affection for someone who "knows", someone who has lived and communicates what he knows: his experience of life and his practice of the teaching.

He communicates his vast and profound learning with simplicity and intensity, he offers his courage for living and interpreting the teaching and the practice as he has understood it. In a few words and with a light-hearted expression, Jim is a "bomb" full of vital energy, enthusiasm, seriousness, with a capacity to lead a retreat so that at the end you feel as if part of you has been regenerated.

And so first all I thank our Master who has given us his precious teaching and then a heartfelt thanks to Jim for the fantastic retreat and the final Ganapuja, open to all, during which he made us feel united in the Gonpa illuminated by so many small candles lit for the *Marme Monlam* invocation.

by Elisa Copello

About forty people met in the Mandala room to follow Adriano Clemente's explanation of the practice of the Purification of the Six Lokas, a purification retreat that was punctual and opportune at the end of a particularly difficult year, full of obstacles in which the effects of a heavy karma have manifested throughout the whole world. The practice was based on the teaching given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during the August, 2001 retreat. Day after day we went deeply into the details as, loka after loka, the characteristic sufferings of the beings who live in each dimension were explained. We dwelt at length on each loka analyzing the relationships between the Dhyana

Latest News from Merigar

The day of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's birthday, December 8th, the meeting of the Sangha took place at Merigar. Since the Gonpa is closed at this time for work to enlarge it, the meeting was held in the Mandala Room. Around seventy people participated. Merigar's director, Cicci D'Arista, presented the nine members of the Gakyil who each spoke about the responsibilities and tasks they are dealing with this year.

Administrative reorganization

Cicci outlined the work being done in the main office to create a data base for members of the Dzogchen Community. This year, there are about 900 members, according to Davide Gregorini of the Yellow Gakyil. The office will also be restructured on different levels this year: Patrizia Moscatelli's project will redesign the actual office itself, the general organization will be improved by Marinella Atzeni while the administration and reordering of the archives will be done by Pia Bramezza and the current secretary, Monika Sailer.

Red Gakyil projects

The Red Gakyil members made some interesting proposals for Karma Yoga for single participants and for groups coming from the towns. Luc Clarebots has prepared a form to collect necessary information from all those wishing to be involved. Some of the most urgent works include the sauna, the restructuring of one of the retreat cabins, a large Mandala for the Vajra Dance to be built outside and work on all the "green" areas that have already been created throughout Merigar under the supervision of Merigar's "gardener", Alix de Fernor.
Work on the water system at Merigar 2 has already been completed so that there should be no more water shortages during the summer. A water purifier has been installed to guarantee potable water. G. Paolo Imola who is charge of this work said that the two small lakes (just below the Yellow House) would be waterproofed in order to store the water that fills them in the springtime.

Blue Gakyil

Flavia Tomassini from the Blue Gakyil suggested reviving the Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga for children which need new stimulus and parents who are willing to take on the responsibility of becoming instructors. The proposal was supported by the Yantra Yoga instructor, Laura Evangelisti, who offered to teach Kumar Kumari (Yantra Yoga for children).
Anna Pucci also for the Blue expressed her wishes that more people participate in preparations for the Ganapuja and that this knowledge be transmitted to the city centers.
A data base is being prepared with all the information on the duties of the Gakyil members so that this information will not be lost but can be passed on to new Gakyil members when they are elected.
The importance of the city centers as a liaison between local groups and Merigar was mentioned, an example being the new center recently inaugurated in Rome. Paola Ciampetti talked about the efforts of about fifty practitioners in Foligno who have finally created a situation in which they can meet and practice.

Gekö

Merigar's Gekö, Luciano Limonta asked for some of the Italian city groups to be involved in preparing *lungta* (prayer flags) for Losar. Plans are to string them along all the roads within Merigar for a total of about one kilometer.

The meeting closed with a Ganapuja and the Invocation of the Lamps (*Marme Monlam*).

From an article by Tatiana Minghetti in the Merigar Letter, January issue.

Merigar Office Reorganization

Dear Vajra brothers and sisters,

We want to send you the new office hours of Merigar and inform you that Clara, whom we warmly thank, has finished her mandate as the secretary of Merigar, and that Monika Sailer is the new secretary.

We also are in the process of reorganizing the whole office and therefore we are very busy and ask to apologize for any possible delays in our communication.

Warm greetings,

The Gakyil of Merigar

The Merigar Office is open:

Everyday from 9.30 to 13.00

Thursday and Saturday also from 14.30 to 17.00

Closed on Tuesday

The Gekö takes calls at 0564-966322, duties permitting, from 8.00 to 9.00 every day except Tuesday

Web page:

<http://web.tiscalinet.it/merigar>



A WONDERFUL WEEKEND WITH COSTANTINO ALBINI

by Flavia Tomassini

On October 20th at 10am, the course on the preliminaries for contemplation practice with Costantino Albin began. It was the first of three courses open to the public. In February, 2002, Barrie Simmons will present a course on "Living with aging and death" while in August, Michael Katz, will present "Lucid dreams". After Merigar the courses will be repeated in different cities so that a greater number of people will be able to attend this series of meetings dedicated to reflections on some of the most important questions of human existence.

At this first talk, the audience was made up of young and old, Community members and others, who all appeared to be very interested. Introducing himself as a simple student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Costantino outlined the weekend course in a calm and gentle voice. He referred to the "Four Noble Truths" and "Illuminate your Mind" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Shantideva's "Bodhisattvacharyavatara", "Introduction to the Practice of Contemplation by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "Breathe! You're Alive" and "The Miracle of Mental Presence" by Thich Nhat Hahn and finally various practices from the Theravada tradition.

He began with a breathing practice of purification in the position of the lotus or at least with the back straight in order to be aware of one's body. This was followed by meditation exercises on the first two 'seals', "All compounded things are impermanent" and "All phenomena are unsatisfying" (according to the terminology used in the previously mentioned texts), and reading the Sutra on awareness and observation of the breathing. Both this and all the successive sessions concluded with a reading from a selection from the splendid verses of the dedication of merits for all sentient beings from the Bodhisattvacharyavatara.

The afternoon was dedicated to a talk on interdependence with reference both to the philosophical idea of "twelve rings" and to the more general idea of His Holiness in which he emphasizes that all phenomena, all beings and people without exception are dependent on each other. The third 'seal' from the Text of His Holiness was read, "All phenomena are devoid of independent existence".

Sunday morning was dedicated to meditation on the fourth 'seal', "Nirvana is true peace" and on a phrase of His Holiness, "The essential nature of the mind is pure and luminous". The warm reassuring voice of Costantino spoke clearly about the meditation practiced according to Sutrayana methods with sessions of walking meditation. In the afternoon there was practice and readings from the texts including one of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's in which he speaks of the four defects of meditation: foginess, agitation, being scattered and drowsiness.

At the end of this wonderful weekend all of us, old and new practitioners, were content and satisfied, starting with Costantino himself who told us that he was still learning. "When you have to explain", he said, "you have to get into it more deeply". People's questions help you to learn and interact and give answers that can be really useful to resolve or at least to alleviate the pressure of internal problems. Costantino went on to say that the course had been a lesson in humility and collaboration with others for him. For us, students of a student, a stimulus to be grateful to him.

We hope that this type of experience will be repeated more frequently and involve an every increasing group of people interested in overcoming suffering.

ITALY

NEWS FROM THE CITIES

ROME

by Massimo Facchini

On the day of the full moon, November 1st, the Dzogchen Community in Rome opened their own center at Via Miani 5, near the Piramide Cestia. Choegyal Namkhai Norbu gave the name 'Zhenphenling' to the new center which in Tibetan means 'benefit to others'. The coincidence of the opening with the phase of the moon showed that after years of searching the situation had finally ripened. And, as always happens in cases like this, there was a manifestation of a sort of ... yes, a coincidence that brought the news to the ears of Massimo Pelliccioni of the possibility of renting this large recently renovated space (220 sq.m) in a central area of the city. Straight away the secondary causes appeared to be favorable and in a short time we had signed the contract and started working to create a small space for an office, a audio video and book library, an area for small meetings, courses, etc. In a joyful and collaborative atmos-

phere, our karma yoga made the space ready for the inauguration of November 10th on the occasion of the Transmission of Adzom Drugpa.

The creation of Community city centers, strongly supported by our Master, marks an important point in the history of the Dzogchen Community for different reasons. First and foremost is the metropolitan social fabric with which the 'city' Community has to interact, so different from the tranquil scene of Mount Amiata, far away from the noise, the stress and routine of everyday life. The challenge of integrating practice into daily life is now brought to the 'heart of the problem', to the 'center' in a metropolis of five million people where now there is a Mandala for the Dance and a place where our Master will give teaching (possibly next July). A place where it will be possible for everyone (practitioners and non-practitioners) to meet the Dzogchen teaching and the Community.

The other really innovative aspect is in the economic implications of this project which operates in a

EASTER RETREAT, MERIGAR

LONG LIFE PRACTICE AND CHÜDLEN OF THE IMMORTAL DAKINI MANDARAVA

The Long Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava is a *terma* teaching received by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1984 during his pilgrimage to Maratika in Nepal. Rinpoche went there with a group of disciples to do the Long Life Practice of Amitayus according to the *terma* of Nyagla Padma Dündul (*Nyag bla pad ma düdul 'dul*, one of the main masters of Changchub Dorje, Rinpoche's root Master).

In 1985 while teaching in Tsegylgar, USA, Rinpoche received the *terma* of the *chülden* related to the Long Life practice of Mandarava.

The marvelous story of the revelation of these teachings and the teachings themselves have been translated by Jacobella Gaetani who was one of the fortunate disciples on the pilgrimage to Maratika. (*Published by Shang Shung Edizioni -1999*)

During the Easter retreat we will try to learn a bit about all of the aspects of this practice: the symbolism of the mandala, the mudras and the use of the ritual objects and instruments and the *chülden* medicine. Those who do not feel like doing *chülden* can eat and drink normally and practice contemplation while the others do the breathing practice. There will be Yantra Yoga sessions for those who wish to be more sure of how to do kumbhaka. If possible, we shall combine the Long Life Practice with the Dance of the Vajra for those who know how to do it.

The retreat begins at 16.00 on Thursday March 28th, with explanations according to requirements followed by a short Mandarava practice, the one in the Collective Practices book. As it is a full moon day, we will do the Ganapuja of Mandarava at 19.00. The Mind Treasure of this Long Life Practice was opened and revealed to Rinpoche by Ekajati, so during the Ganapuja we'll recite the invocation to Ekajati (the one in the Long Tun) which arose in Rinpoche's mind on the first morning after his arrival at Maratika.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday we will concentrate mainly on practice, combined with *chülden*, with a special diet provided by Merigar. On Monday morning there will be further clarification about the Ganapuja and at midday the final Ganapuja.

Extract from Teachings given by

Chogyal Namkhai Norbu in Merigar 26th - 27th July 1991

"Our mind, practically speaking, has been ill since the beginning of *samsara*.

If we were only a physical body we could, of course, reinforce ourselves with just medicine, but as we are always saying, our existence consists of body, voice and mind. So to reinforce our existence three elements are needed. That's why the teaching is necessary. The teaching is a great medicine. In the Sutras Buddha is called the Great Doctor. That doesn't mean that Buddha practices therapy or prepares medicine for people. The most important of our three existences is the mind.

Our mind, practically speaking, has been ill since the beginning of *samsara*. If we do not know how to cure the sickness of our mind, it's useless just to cure physical illnesses. Physical illnesses can be cured temporarily. If you take an aspirin you can get rid of a headache today but there is no guarantee that you will not get another headache tomorrow. If you take aspirin habitually it only makes things worse, it can even cause an ulcer.

Chülden is for reinforcing and coordinating all three fundamental aspects of our existence. If people who want to prepare *chülden* only want to know what all the ingredients are, that means that they consider it only as a physical medicine and completely forget that it's a teaching which has its transmission. If you do it in that way it won't even have thirty per cent of its function.

If we do something, we do it to have some advantage. The advantage we are seeking is to lengthen and improve our existence. So it is much better to do it in the right way. To do anything in the right way the first thing necessary is to understand what you are doing and what is your aim and how to realize it and how to reach the goal. If you do it this way you can obtain anything. Maybe some secondary cause can be lacking temporarily, but in the end, if one has a bit of patience, through one's effort and will, one can succeed. If you lack will and effort you will not attain anything.

In the Dzogchen teachings it is considered important to at least do the most simple form of *chülden* because it is a great help in the development of clarity."

context where the demand for these types of initiatives and activities linked to them, such as Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, courses on Tibetan medicine, ku nye etc.) are very immediate and pressing.

For these reasons a new type of approach is required in managing these spaces which, because of their 'metropolitan' location, are obviously destined to become in a short time important reference points for those who are interested in Buddhism and Tibetan culture in general.

In perspective, the Community city centers should not only make themselves economically independent from Merigar but gradually become the principle source of economic funds for Merigar itself. The Dzogchen Community must of necessity find a phase of economic maturity in which the survival of the Gars no longer depends on the retreats given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. It is time to grow and

accept in full the challenge undertaken by our Master to bring the Dzogchen teaching to the West. This challenge brings with it a wide range of implications which we cannot start to imagine since there is no historical precedent to refer to. In this phase it is crucial to have the presence of a realized Master and the Dzogchen Community has the great fortune to have Choegyal Namkhai Norbu firmly at the helm of the boat: we have the unique opportunity to start off this "new course" under his precious guidance. "Being aware and knowing how to work with circumstances," are words that we have heard many times. They are directed to each one of us, here and now. There is no other better place or time.

For information on activities at Zhenphenling please contact:

Giovanna Natalini

Tel: 0639737503.

Email: giona@mcilink.it

MILAN

Bakchen

The Istituto Shang-Shung is organizing a series of meetings in different cities so that all those who are interested can learn to play Bakchen, a Tibetan game which Rinpoche enjoys very much. In fact Rinpoche promoted a Bakchen tournament at Merigar last summer for all those who had learned to play during a two day course.

The courses will be given by Michel Bricaire.

Information:

Elise Copello,

Tel: 02-33607505 or 3387027207

Email: ecop@ats.it



Beautiful Mandala Cards Painted by Ans Swart
and available through
Shang Shung Edizioni at Merigar

Shang Shung Edizioni
58031 Arcidosso, GR, Italy.
Tel: 0564 966039

Email: shangshunged@tiscalinet.it



PURIFICATION MEDICINE AND OINTMENT
AVAILABLE AT THE MERIGAR SHOP

The prescription is based on the instructions of Guru Padmasambhava and has been adapted for contemporary use with the addition of ingredients in accordance with the practical knowledge of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It has proven to be of great benefit.

Dugsel Man Sang (Purification Medicine)

Ingredients: consists of 11 herbs including calendula (*gurgum*), saffron (*cugang*), bamboo (*sergod*), nutmeg (*dza-ti*).

Benefits: it is famous for purifying the body and removing toxins such as alcohol, tobacco and other forms of drugs. It is especially beneficial for breaking habits associated with these substances. It also improves the functions of the organs and the circulation of the body by purifying and harmonizing the elements.

Use: take one teaspoonful of medicine with a glass of warm water one hour before breakfast and one hour before dinner (excellent with practices like Chüden).

Counter indications: avoid garlic, onions, meat, heavy and raw food, strong tea and coffee.

Dug Selde Gu (Purification ointment)

SMS Base Level Retreat
with Jim Valby
Clyro Court UK,
October 24-31, 2001

by Alex Studholme

So, now we say A and we just try and totally relax in what's going on. Jim Valby returned again and again to an explanation of the A in the course of his teachings on the Santi Maha Sangha base level retreat. This auspicious event, attended by about twenty five students, took place during the last week in October in the elegant setting of the music room of the Clyro Court Hotel, just outside Hay on Wye, the site of the retreat led by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu almost exactly three years ago. Very many thanks to Jim for leaving his native New England to be with us.

So, now we say A and that is how we inform everything we do with the Dzogchen transmission. Santi Maha Sangha is not necessary for realization, Jim said, but it can be useful. It can, too, produce a phenomenon still quite new to the Community: Santi Maha Sangha ego. There are plenty of people, Jim remarked, who are not doing Santi Maha Sangha, but who nonetheless know a great deal more about the state of Rigpa than do many so-called advanced Santi Maha Sangha practitioners.

So, now we say A, the sound is the Dharmakaya dimension, the white A the Sambhogakaya and rays the Nirmanakaya. Jim began by talking about the familiar practices of the Short Tun and gradually introduced other practices from the base level. He was also kind enough to share with us a little of his own prodigious scholarship of the Dzogchen tradition. He presented an overview of the twenty-one principal Semde texts as set out by Longchenpa and, over the course of several sessions, commented in

detail on his own translation of the seventh of these texts, the Namkhai Gyalpo.

So, now we say A and we try to be in that knowledge. In addition, Jim read us translations of a number of Rinpoche's dreams, stories which seemed particularly powerful and arresting within the retreat environment. Rinpoche, we discovered, first heard the Song of the Vajra in a dream he had as an eight-year-old boy. Then, whilst living in Italy, Rinpoche dreamed of visiting the relics of his tutor Khyenrab Odser, who had died at precisely that time in far off Tibet. All these dreams are to appear in full in a new and much expanded edition of Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light, edited by Michael Katz, soon to be published by Snow Lion.

So, now we do our practice. One evening, we were given a preview of part of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's autobiography, still some years away from publication, which is also deeply informed by Rinpoche's dreaming. Jim sang us a beautiful two line melody in praise of Rinpoche that had come into his mind as he was translating the first section of this work. In 1955, whilst still in Tibet, Rinpoche had, apparently, anticipated his career in the West. He dreamed that a foreign-looking soldier threw him a book written in Roman letters, which he could not understand. The title of the book, however, was written in Tibetan letters. It read: The Story of a Tibetan Lama that Wandered the World.

Very many thanks, once again, to Jim for his superb teaching. Many thanks, too, to Des Barry for his excellent Yantra Yoga classes. Many thanks, also, to Amely, Anne, Felix, Diana and all those who worked behind the scenes, for their various organizational efforts.

NEW GAKYILS

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Peter Sochor (yellow)
Alexander Sochor (blue)
Walter Camerlöhner (red)

SPAIN

Blue: Carlos Oses (Barcelona)
carlos-masha@menta.net
Yellow: Nuria Moro (Sevilla)
nmoroh@nexo.es
Red: Yolanda Ferrandiz (Madrid)
yolandafg@wanadoo.es

FRANCE

Yellow:
Loïc Leretaille (President)
Bernard Bodineau (Treasurer)
Blue:
Laurent Stemmler (Secretary)
François Calmes
Red:
Laurent Poureau
Vincent Mardelet

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Retreat in Austria
October, 2002

The Dzogchen Community of Styria, Austria, is happy to announce that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will hold a Dzogchen retreat in Austria in October, 2002.

The retreat will be from Friday, October 25th, until Sunday, October 27th, 2002, in Sinabelkirchen, Austria. Sinabelkirchen is a small village about 40 km to the east of Graz which can be very easily reached from all directions.

The cost of the retreat is \$160US with the usual discounts for members.

Rinpoche will not only stay for three days in Sinabelkirchen, but he and his family will be in Austria for about two weeks participating in the Kalachakra Initiation from the 11th until the 23rd of October, 2002, in Graz with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Rinpoche will also give a public talk in Gleisdorf before the retreat starts.

Regarding accommodation, the Dzogchen Community of Styria offers help to find places to stay. Everyone who would like to stay outside of Graz but near the retreat place, should contact us as soon as possible and we will try and help find accommodations.

Please send us your detailed information (family name, first name, address, country, telephone number, arrival day, departure day, if you come with your own car or not, which kind of accommodation you would like to have, like single room, etc.) and we will make some suggestions.

There is also a list of possible accommodations on our web site.

Please see: www.dzogchen.at

Contact address:

Oliver F. Leick
Dzogchen Community of Styria, Austria
Gschmaier 139,
A-8265 Gr.Steinbach
Tel: 03386-8571 or 0676-3221365
Fax: 03386-23371
Email: dzogchen@utanet.at
Homepage: www.dzogchen.at

KALACHAKRA
GRAZ, AUSTRIA
2002

Dear Dharma Friends!

The preparations for Kalachakra for World Peace Graz 2002 (Europe / Austria) are well under way, up to now more than 4000 participants from over 35 countries have registered. We are very happy about the worldwide interest in this event for peace and tolerance with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

It is only 10 more months to go until the event starts on October 11th, 2002. Due to our extensive public relation activities the worldwide interest is rising from week to week.

In order to make our participants' stay, the location logistics and security as well as the infrastructure as efficient as possible, we need an estimate of the number of expected guests. This is why we would like to ask for your support: Please inform us approximately how many people from your sangha or your circle will participate in the Kalachakra Graz 2002, according to the following structure:

1. Sangha
2. Regular participants
3. Participants who are in need of financial support

It would be great if you could send us this information until the end of January/beginning of February. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, please also check our new website at www.kalachakra-graz.at.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and support!
Best wishes and tashi delek!

Christian Bauer

Booking and costs of the retreat:

We kindly ask everyone to register in advance since many things in our organization-work depend on the number of people who want to participate (ie.: shuttle bus service to the restaurants, how many restaurants do we have to book, how much parking space is needed, etc.) and therefore we need to know the number of people who will come.

There are three different ways of booking a place for the retreat with three different fees, depending on the time when one books and pays the money in advance:

Booking and pre paying in the period from 1/1/2002 until 4/30/2002: 155 euro.*

Booking and pre paying in the period from 5/1/2002 until 9/30/2002: 170 euro.*

Booking in the period from 10/1/2002 until 10/25/2002: 185 euro.*

Dayticket: 72,50 euro*

* with the usual discount for members of the Dzogchen-community (20% discount for ordinary members, 40% for sustaining members).

For your registration, we need your name and address, for that reason we ask you to send us an email or a fax number.

The money should be sent to the account of the Dzogchen Community Styria:

Name of the bank: RAIFFEISENBANK ILZ,
Bank code: 38151, account-number: 37051

We welcome Master card and Visa.

e u r o p e



Jim and practitioners at SMS 1st Level Practice Retreat, Kunseling

CHRISTINE VON GRIEF

Four Days with Jim Valby at Kunseling

Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Practice Retreat
Wales, UK, October 19-23, 2001
by Richard Dixey

Six of us sat and studied four Tuns a day for four days. It was wonderful. Sitting with Jim Valby, we had all taken the first level exam, and were moving as one in our Guru's blessing. Jim was direct, persistent, encyclopedic. We started at the beginning, with the meaning of what we were invoking, and worked our way through carefully.

There was the root text, and then the sharing of many materials he had gathered and collated in his generous way. Always humorous, but always focused, precise in timing, precise in the intention of why we were there. Jim lead us by example and broadened our appreciation of what is possible. Wonderful!

Every evening we sat down at dinner, with mouthwatering food cooked by Judy, and talked and laughed together. Then we sat by the fire with the wind and rain roaring outside. When morning came, we sat, and studied in four Tuns, carefully. Again direct, humorous, and clear.

The last day came, and we shared together in a final Ganapuja; it felt proper, and complete. Potential had been realized, and we all came away with renewed focus for our practice, with our lineage moving ever more powerfully, transmitted on in us.

Thank you Vajra brother.

Tsegyalgar Year End Summary

Blue Gakyil

We will all remember the year 2001. In times like these, when samsara forces itself into our consciousness, we can more clearly see just how precious our Master and the teachings he transmits are. Despite the situation in the world, we continue our work at Tsegyalgar. Our new web site is up and running. Teams have been organized to facilitate Karma Yoga. We've conducted Yantra Yoga Classes in Northampton as part of our outreach to the local community. We've run regular advertisements in various national and local magazines.

Tsegyalgar has been serving as a tool for communications within North America. Participation in the events and practices at the Gar has increased greatly.

One of the highlights of the year was the Santi Maha Sangha Practice Retreat with Jim Valby in July, an event which also included the second North American Dzogchen Community-to-Community Meeting. The First Level Yantra Yoga Teachers Training Course, with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, was also very successful. Teachings by Chökyi Nyima and Lama Wangdor Rinpoche were well attended, and both Lamas expressed their interest in returning to teach again next year. Our local dance teacher, Anastasia McGhee, taught the Dance of the Three Vajras during the SMS Practice retreats as well as the Dance of the Liberation of Six Lokas in October. The Dream Yoga Workshop led by Michael Katz was received very positively. We've scheduled another workshop following the May, 2002 release of the revised edition of Dream Yoga.

Ongoing projects include completion of the Tsegyalgar web bookstore, production of the new Tsegyalgar brochures and a Newcomers Package, as well as a Newcomers liaison project. There are plans to make professional recordings of Rinpoche doing some practices next year and these recordings will be released on CD and cassette. We would like to extend a special thanks to our Gekö, Damien Schwartz, for his participation and support!

Red Gakyil

The following are some highlights of the activities of the Red Gakyil in 2001:

Work on the Guardian cabin: After clarification from Rinpoche as to the actual layout of the cabin, we were able to finish the siding, add a door and window, insulate the walls and begin the interior wall surfaces in preparation for painting and the building of the altar. We cleared a lot of the area around the cabin of dead brush and branches.

Rinpoche's cabin: Due to manpower and resource shortages, we had to stop work on the Guardian cabin and concentrate on finishing and refurbishing Rinpoche's cabin in preparation for his personal retreat there in 2002. Although his plans have since changed, we were glad to get a lot done on the cabin. We finished siding and almost finished

painting the exterior. We finished the interior walls and got most of the interior painted. A set of stairs were installed to the loft and a wood stove was installed. The floor was insulated and a good amount of brush and branches got cleared from the surrounding area. In the spring, we'll install a small kitchen area that will include a gas stove and refrigerator and we'll put in a working bathroom. We will also finish the interior and exterior painting and hook up the wood stove. There remains a good deal of work yet to be done.

The Buckland retreat land: There was a good amount of dead brush clearing done and preparation was made for landscaping the area around the Stupa. Some bulbs were already planted, so that we'll have blossoms in the early spring and more flowering plants are to be put in next year.

At the Gar: Two new bathrooms were added on the 2nd floor, one for the Gekö's apartment and one for visiting scholars. A good deal of maintenance was done with a lot accomplished in the basement area. Many people commented on the improved condition of the schoolhouse, upon their return visits. Some very nice landscaping was done around the front of the building and more is planned for next year. Work will begin this winter to refurbish the kitchen area to make it more user friendly and useful as a dining area.

Yellow Gakyil

The Year of the Metal Snake has been relatively successful from the point of view of Tsegyalgar's finances. Donations of \$25,000 each from the West Coast Dzogchen Community and Savannah Haske (via her fundraising performance on 'The Weakest Link' television game show), as well as other generous contributions, have certainly been a tremendous boon to the community. In addition, memberships, bookstore sales, and retreat income are all significantly up, as the Gar has taken on a more active program.

After a rough financial year in 2000, during which DCA incurred \$15,000 of legal expenses related to the Buckland land court case, which contributed to an overall operating loss of approximately \$26,000, the 2001 statement of operations through mid December showed a gain of over \$30,000. The balance sheet posted a cash balance of \$82,000, and total equity of \$510,000. In addition to funding the normal operations of the Gar, we have been able to provide support to projects of the international Dzogchen Community. \$10,000 of Savannah's donation was forwarded to A.S.I.A. and the Shang-Shung Institute. We also contributed another \$5,000 to A.S.I.A.'s Khamdogar project, and \$2,000 to the translation fund in Merigar. Locally, we have been able to fund renovations to Rinpoche's retreat cabin in Buckland and to the schoolhouse.

Nevertheless, Tsegyalgar's financial stability remains quite tentative. Without the support of members and donors, the maintenance of normal operations, as well as improvement and expansion of retreat facilities, would be extremely difficult. In particular, our desire

to fulfill Rinpoche's vision of building more retreat cabins on the Buckland land requires us to expand our perspective.

Financial Support for Tsegyalgar

The primary forms of supporting Tsegyalgar financially are membership and the recently mailed Annual Campaign. We strongly encourage all of those who have received the gift of Rinpoche's teachings to participate in both of these forms of support. Membership forms for the Year of the Water Horse will be mailed at around the time of Losar (February 13). In addition to providing support to Tsegyalgar and your local Gakyil affiliation, membership will entitle one to discounts (20% for basic members, 40% for sustaining members) for the 2002 retreats with Rinpoche in Boston and New York.

Although the Community occasionally conducts fund-raisers for specific projects, we rely primarily on the year end Annual Campaign for contributions. Your donations are tremendously appreciated. If you have not mailed in your contribution yet, please do so today!

Thank you!

Tsegyalgar Winter Schedule

Dear Sangha Members,

Tsegyalgar would like to thank everyone who participated and supported our events and activities this past year, 2001.

The Gar is becoming more alive: activities, visitors and membership have been increasing. We will continue to expand throughout the winter to prepare for Rinpoche's visit in May, 2002.

There are many tasks and projects that need to be done at the Gar.

Your help during your visits will be great.

We welcome you!

Tsegyalgar Gakyil

2002

February 2-3 (Sat-Sun)
Vajra Dance Practice Weekend
February 13 (Wed)
Losar Long Life Practice /
Ganapuja
Losar Party!

February 16-18 (Sat-Mon)
SMS Contemplation Practice
Weekend

February 26 (Tue)
The Day of Garab Dorje Transmission at 10pm

March 2 (Sat)
Newcomers Day

March 9-10 (Sat-Sun)
The Course for the Dance of The
Three Vajras
by Anastasia McGhee
(Tentative)

March 22-24 (Fri-Sun)
Lama Thubten Phuntsog
Chöd Teaching

April 6-7 (Sat-Sun)
SMS Study Weekend

April 27-28 (Sat-Sun)
Preparation for CNN Retreats
Karma Yoga Weekend

Weekly practices, Ganapuja and
other special day practices are
scheduled.

If you would like to be on our email
list please contact us at:
tsegyalgar@hotmail.com

For more information:
Dzogchen Community in America
at Tsegyalgar
Tel: 413-369-4153
Fax: 413-369-4165
Email: DzogchenUSA@
compuserve.com
Web site:
<http://www.tsegyalgar.org/>

tsegyalgar & west coast

Tsegyalgar welcomes Anastasia McGhee as the new manager of the
Tsegyalgar bookstore.



Liberation of Six Lokas Dance Course in Chicago

MALCOLM FRASER

An Introduction to Yantra Yoga Oakland, California, USA

Sundays 10:30am in the East Bay

Yantra Yoga teaches Methods for:
Developing more flexibility of our Body and Mind
Clearing our system of blockages
Coordinating and developing our Breathing and Presence
Harmonizing and strengthening our vital energies

In Yantra Yoga there are 108 movements and positions arranged in 5 groups. It is best to begin a session of Yantra Yoga on an empty stomach so we encourage people to not eat at least an hour before each session. This workshop will be taught by Jey Clark a certified Yantra Yoga instructor.

For information contact:
jeyclark@mac.com or call 415-377-7297
Web Site: www.dzogchencommunitywest.org



MUSIC FOR THE DANCE OF THE VAJRA

From AMIATARECORDS

Written in the language of the Dakinis, this deeply contemplative music, inspired by the dreams and visions of the Dzogchen Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, was transmitted specifically for the accompaniment of the sacred Vajra Dance.

The CD starts with A, the Song of Vajra, the Song of the Six Pure Dimensions of Samantabhadra, the Song of the Three Vajra and ends with A.

\$17 plus shipping

To Order:

Tsegvalgar Bookstore

413-369-4473 Phone

413-369-4165 Fax

Email: tsegvalgarbookstore@yahoo.com

Vajra Dance Course in California Liberation of Six Lokas
February 7th - 10th, 2002
with Anastasia McGhee

At the new
Dzogchen Community Center
2748 Adeline Street #D
Berkeley, California

Course fee is \$121
Enrollment limited to 20
To register please contact:
Carisa O'Kelly:
cariokey@hotmail.com
Please check our web site at www.dzogchencommunitywest.org

Advanced Course Yantra Yoga at Tsegvalgar June 18th - 24th, 2002 with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti

Please contact:

Tsegvalgar

PO Box 277

Conway, MA 01341

USA

Tel: 413 369 4153

Fax: 413 369 4165

Email: DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

3rd N. American Community - Community Meeting/Retreat
January 18th - 20th, 2002 Santa Fe, New Mexico

by Carisa O'Kelly, Julia M. Deisler
& Naomi Zeitz

After many months of planning and logistical calessthenics, the Dzogchen Community of New Mexico hosted the third North American Dzogchen Community to Community Meeting/Retreat at the Upaya Center in Santa Fe. The New Mexico Community did a very fine job of hosting thirty practitioners. There were representatives from all corners of North America including Alaska, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Northern and Southern California, Colorado, Seattle, Whidbey Island and New York, for the weekend of January 18th - 21st, 2002; the Martin Luther King, Jr., weekend.

The main purpose of the meeting/retreat was to practice and work together to develop and actualize our collaboration in the transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

On Friday evening people met at Susan Harris's home in Santa Fe for plenty of good food, momos, catching up, and general milling around. After the evening gathering, people moved on to the Upaya Center, a Zen center in Santa Fe founded in 1990 by Roshi Joan Halifax, where they settled in for the weekend. (The Upaya Center is on the same grounds as the Ngagpa Yeshe Dorje Stupa which is under the care of the Maha Bodhi Society. The construction of this Stupa began in the early 1970s under the guidance of Dudjom Rinpoche and was consecrated in 1973 by Drodruk Chen Rinpoche.)

The format of the weekend was set around the already initiated concept of teams which was developed further at this meeting. (A future article in The Mirror will go into more depth regarding the structure and content of the teams.) What came out of earlier meetings was, that if people work well together in smaller groups with focus in particular areas, they will be more productive. The basic structure of the team concept is as follows:

1. Steering Committee - 5 members: one from Tsegvalgar, one from the Dzogchen Community West Coast, and all must have Gakyil experience.
2. Team Coordinator
3. Project Leader
4. Team Members

ASIA and Shang-Shung Institute were also discussed in terms of their unique status and relationship to the Community. We had two and half days of meetings, sessions of Vajra Dance, a sprinkling of Yantra Yoga, and a fine Ganapuja where local members of the Community joined with the C to C participants. Given the amount of work accomplished, people also found time to enjoy the local attractions of the region like hot tubs, Southwestern food, a little snow, crisp air and Indian dancing. Those who stayed on later had the opportunity to attend talks given by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo on Tibetan Medicine and Astrology.

We decided to hold the next meeting on the weekend of September 13th - 15th, 2002, with the location TBA. Watch Norbunet, Tsegvalgar-net, and The Mirror for details.



Yantra Yoga in Los Angeles

DANI COLAJACOMO

Yantra Yoga in Topanga Canyon October, 2001

by John Bidleman

Fabio Andrico led a small but tenacious group of Dzogchenpa's through a grueling eight day Yantra retreat that ended with a dinner in Pasadena at a Tibetan restaurant. Dani and Chiara Colajacomo donated their ample office space for the event and hosted Fabio at their home in Topanga Canyon. Los Angeles community members showed their "Southern" California hospitality by providing for the out of towners generously during the extended Yantra course. The course covered the Nine Breathings, Tsijong, the Eight Movements and the first and second group of Yantras. Fabio ended with the Vajra Wave and rhythmic breathing. The personalized attention by Fabio and the comfort of the space made for a very pleasant experience.

Fabio extended himself punctuating the rigorous course with his humor and insights on Yantra and existence in general. Naomi Zeitz offered herself in mind, speech but mostly body for Fabio to instruct the group. The entire retreat was filmed for the purpose of providing a study aid.

The Northern California attendees would like to thank Stephanie Denyer for her gracious hospitality and the entire group thank Dani and Chiara Colajacomo for the opportunity to access a Yantra Master such as Fabio. Without their cooperation and planning the event would have been impossible. Many thanks to Fabio for making himself available in such a direct and amiable manner.

Dzogchen Community West Coast - Good News

After looking about the San Francisco Bay Area for the past few years, the Dzogchen Community West has leased a centrally located city space! It is in a 1900's renovated building with character, pleasant feeling and nice architectural details. The downstairs, a European style bakery sends the most heavenly scents wafting through the air up to second floor! Upstairs we have a large room for teachings, practice, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. There are sloping high ceilings with sky lights reflecting soft light and aged brick on the side walls to help ground and a kitchen lounge area to prepare Ganapujas. It's only about 1,000 square feet, but it is big enough for the Mandala and we think a good place to start.



New Dzogchen Community Center in the SF Bay Area

LAURE BALTER

With this space we're now able to sponsor more gatherings, practice explanation sessions, Santi Maha Sangha groups, and Weekend Workshops. Already we were able to host Lama Wangdor for a weekend of potent Dzogchen Mind Perception Teachings, December 15 and 16th. Over eighty people attended each session! By hanging banners and thankas over the unfinished sheet rock and laying odd carpets on the plywood floor, so it became quite cozy.

There is still a great need for people who can lend skills now to help paint and do finish work this month. We already demolished the old partition walls to make the larger multi-use area and constructed a back office area for equipment, library and archives, etc. Other areas of need are cabinetry, book shelf building, and painting the Mandala. Sincere gratitude is felt for all the great people in the community who have given valuable time, skill and financial support to make the new Dharma Center come into being. We are hoping to have a Losar celebration in mid February with practices, honoring of our construction Bodhisattvas, and having some fun!

The new center seems like such a timely project right now and will help expand opportunities for spiritual growth. This is good not only for Buddhism's future in general, but for the continued blossoming of precious Dzogchen teachings in the Bay Area's fertile ground. May it be of great benefit, for all sentient beings.

Best Wishes for the coming New Year,
May blessings float down like snowflakes on all Vajra kin!

The West Coast Dzogchen Community Gakyil

Dzogchen Community West Center

2748 Adeline, Berkeley, CA

Phone: 510.644.2260

Web site: www.dzogchencommunitywest.org

Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.com



New Southern California Gakyil

DAVE COLAJACOMO

tashigar & south america

The Dzogchen Community of Tashigar South invites you to visit the web site: <http://www.tashigarsur.com.ar>



New Tashigar Gakyil with Rinpoche in the Tashigar Gongpa

PAOLA LUCENTE

New Gakyil of Tashigar
January, 2002

The last day of the Christmas Retreat at Tashigar, with the auspicious presence of Rinpoche, the new Gakyil of Tashigar was selected. All the people of the new Gakyil of Tashigar will work together with the old Gakyil until March, 2002. At the yearly general meeting, the candidates will be voted on by the membership of Tashigar.

Red: Maria del Carmen Garcia Ruvira, Horacio Toledo, Adolfo Portillo
Yellow: Griselda Olivera, Noe Riner, Susanna Sobre
Blue: Claudia Harkan, Daniel Simoneli, Ramiro Fernandez, Raul Barattini
Our congratulations and best wishes to them!

Sara Hanono
Secretary

SCHEDULE OF PRACTICES AND RETREATS IN KUNSANGAR February - April, 2002

FEBRUARY

1/31 - 2/7
SMS 1st Level Retreat with Olga Solovjova
Starts at 20.30

2/12 - 2/5
Purification of Six Lokas Retreat
Starts 2/5 at 20.30

2/7 (25th day)
Ganapuja 20.30

2/8 - 3/1
Guru-Yoga of Padmasambhava Retreat (reciting of
Guru Rinpoche mantra) with Olga Solovjova
Starts at 20.30

2/12 (30th day)
Ganapuja with Naggon

2/13 LOSAR
Sang, Mandarava, Guruyoga of White A, Ganapuja;
Evening celebration of Tibetan New Year

2/14 - 2/26
RETREAT:
7.30 Mandarava practice
11.00 16.00 Guru-Yoga of White A
20.30 Vajrasattva practice

2/27 (15th day, Anniversary of Garab Dorje)
6.00 INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE, Guruyoga of
White A
14.00 Ganapuja

From the Gekö of Tashigar

I want to say thanks.

In the first place to our beloved Teacher for all he has given me, for awak-
ening me and for filling my life.

Secondly, my appreciation goes to all who trusted me in the 2001 Commu-
nity meeting with their support.

In the third place to the now resigning Gakyil, without whose uncon-
ditional support I would not have been able to grow and work.

Lastly, to all the Vajra brothers and sisters who have worked through these
three months giving their time, capacity and money. A great effort soaked
with love.

Once more you are trusting me and I will live with my children in this
wonderful place for one more year.

I am already waiting for you all with the same joy and love in this
Tashigar, which will go on growing every day.

Thanks to you all.

The Gekö Delia

Tashigar, January, 2002

b r a z i l



Thanka Course in Brazil

From the Dzogchen Community of Brazil

The Dzogchen Community of
Brazil has just held their first
course of Tibetan painting during a
meditation retreat organized by the
Sangha of Lama Padma Samten, a
disciple of Chagdud Rinpoche and
a great admirer of our precious
Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The fourteen hour course pre-
sented the fundamentals of the tra-
ditional technique used in thanka
painting, as well as covering an
overall picture of Tibetan art by

means of slide projection and an
explanation. The course was so
successful that our Community has
been invited to present it in other
cities in Brazil.

This workshop was organized
by Muriella Colajacomo, a student
of Glen Eddy and a long-standing
disciple of Chögyal Namkhai Nor-
bu, along with the help of our small
but steadfast Brazilian Dzogchen
Community. We would like to
thank all those who participated in
the course here in Brazil.

Muriella Colajacomo

k u n s a n g a r

MARCH

3/1 - 3/3
Retreat on making Namkha with
Svetlana Rounova
Starts at 20.30

3/8 (25th day) Ganapuja

3/8 - 3/10
Complete Vajra Dance Retreat
(Mornings - with Mandarava prac-
tice, Evenings - with Medium or
Long Tun)

3/13 (30th day)
Ganapuja at 20.30

3/15 - 3/24
Retreat on Semdzins
Starts at 20.30

3/24 (10th day)
Ganapuja at 16.00

3/28 (15th day)
Ganapuja at 20.30

3/29 - 4/7
Retreat on Four Immeasurable and
Chöd Practice
with Larisa Rozhnova

APRIL

4/5 - 4/26
Guru Dragpur Retreat with Olga
Solovjova
Starts at 20.30

4/7 (25th day)
Ganapuja

4/12 (30th day)
Ganapuja at 20.30

4/13 - 4/14
SMS Base Retreat

4/19 - 4/26
Vajrasattva Retreat

4/26 - 4/28
Retreat: Amitayus, Guru-Yoga of
White A, Vajra Dance, Medium
Tun

Best regards on behalf of the Blue
Gakyil of Kunsangar.

Lena Herz, Secretary
Email: kunsang@garjeko.ru



Santi Maha Sangha Practice Retreats with Jim Valby

Kunsangar, Russia
August, 2002

The following practice retreats will be led by Jim Valby who has been a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982.

July 27 - Aug. 3, 2002

Kunsangar SMS Base Level Practice Retreat

The four daily sessions are: 8:30-10am, 10:30-12, 4:30-6 (Yantra Yoga), 6:30-8pm. Anybody who has attended a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or participated in one of the three universal transmission practice days may participate in our SMS Base Level Practice Retreat where we will focus on the essential theory and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his book named "The Precious Vase - Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha".

Aug. 5-11, 2002

Kunsangar SMS First Level Practice Retreat

The four daily sessions are: 8:30-10am, 10:30-12, 4:30-6 (Yantra Yoga), 6:30-8pm. Anybody who has taken the SMS First Level training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu may participate in the 8:30am, 10:30am and 4:30pm thurs of our SMS First Level Practice Retreat where we will focus on the essential theory and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the SMS First Level training.

Aug. 13-18, 2002

Kunsangar SMS Second Level Practice Retreat

The four daily sessions are: 8:30-10am, 10:30-12, 4:30-6, 6:30-8pm. Anybody who has taken SMS Second Level training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu may participate in the 8:30am, 10:30am, and 4:30pm sessions where we will focus on the essential theory and practice of Dzogchen Semde as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the SMS Second Level training.

Ku Nye At Namgyalgar

by Lyn Ogilvy Geppert

Tibetan Massage Course

For an intense eight days from September 29th to October 6th, the Gar was busy - awash with bodies, towels and oils, meditation, laughter, food, camaraderie and study.

It was a Ku Nye Chi Tibetan massage class, run by Dr. Nida Chenagtsang from the Shang-Shung Institute of Tibetan Cultural Studies in Italy. Dr. Nida has only recently set up the first International School of Tibetan Massage in the Medical Department of the Institute, under the direction of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and this was his first visit to Australia.

It was a pretty hard eight days. In the mornings we had lectures and demonstrations, and in the afternoon, practice. I don't think any of us realized how thorough a Tibetan massage is. Done properly, it takes at least three hours. Done by the students, it took a good deal longer, and without us even completing a full massage.

The Gar was looking pretty good since Malcolm Smith stepped into a gap caused by the illness of our previous Gekö, and arrived seven weeks before the rest of us to do some hard manual labor. He moved earth (if not heaven): digging steps to the car parks, building an entire cooking and dining area, shoveling sand, constructing hot and cold running water systems for that and the showers, building a dressing room, fitting glass, rebuilding and fixing myriad things without which it wouldn't have been the absolute joy that it was for the rest of us. Thanks a million, Malcolm!

As I type this I'm listening to "The Cuckoo's Presence", music by Tenzing Tsewang. We had the pleasure of his company during our eight days as he had come with Dr. Nida to help out with his English translations and led us in the Medicine Buddha mantra chanting. Tsewang seemed to enjoy his massage classes as much as the rest of us and has determined to write some Ku Nye music with different themes for the stages of massage and the three humors.

This was the first thing we had to learn - the three humors. They are derived from the five elements - space, wind, fire, water and earth. Space and wind make wind, or in Tibetan *lung*; fire stays fire or *tripa*; and water and earth turn into mud, or phlegm or *bedken*. These are discovered using pulse, questions, observation, touch, etc. I was pretty lucky having studied Traditional Chinese Medicine, because although they are not the same they do start from the same model and energy channels, the five elements, etc.; so I had a bit of a head start, which was a good thing!

After we had decided what humor we all were, or were put right by Dr. Nida, we were paired off, given towels and sheets and mats and oils that matched the humors, and set to work practicing on each other. It was hard work and we were all regularly in need of huge amounts of sustenance provided superbly by Danuta. There was always a huge choice of delectable goodies and the candlelight dinners were a triumph. There were flowers on the tables and hot towels and table service and good conversation amid, for me at least, total exhaustion. It gave me just enough energy to drive back home to Narooma every night where I fell into bed and only awoke with the alarm.

We had the excitement of visits by goannas called by Dr. Nida 'land dragons'. Lucky for him he didn't manage to catch one of the little ones by the tail!

Now that we're all back home, I hear that the Melbourne group has been getting together to study and practice, and here in Narooma we are gearing up for a small study and practice group of our own. We'll need it because in one year's time we'll be sitting our exams, after which (if we pass) we'll get our First Year Certificates, and start on a Year Two of the three stage course. To help us on our way, Lisa Stutchbury has organized a four day retreat during the Christmas retreat at the Gar where we can surprise retreatants with our brilliant expertise by offering them massages and ourselves practice.

Thanks to Vito and everyone else who organized the Course and to all the helpful Dzogchenpas at Namgyalgar.



Ku Nye Massage Course with Dr. Nida Chenagtsang at Namgyalgar, Australia

E. STUTCHBURY

namgyalgar

DR. NIDA CHENAGTSANG IN THE LAND OF OZ

by Jan Cornall & Joy Dahl

It all started when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said, "I'll send someone to you". That was back in April, 2000. Rinpoche and the Gakyil were exploring objectives for the next three years before Rinpoche's return to Namgyalgar.

To raise the profile of the Dzogchen Community, to collaborate with the Shang-Shung Institute in preserving and spreading Tibetan Culture, to increase our mailing lists and attendance at Dzogchen Community sponsored events, to create a source of income independent from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teaching retreats, to improve our organization skills and capacities - these were some of the objectives Rinpoche discussed with the new Namgyalgar Gakyil.

When Rinpoche offered to ask Dr. Nida Chenagtsang if he would come to Australia, the new Gakyil, with its committee structure involving the wider Namgyalgar Dzogchen Community, grabbed the opportunity and began organizing almost immediately. Tony Mugg laid the initial groundwork, then a Tour Committee coordinated by Jan, the President and Ely the Treasurer of the Gakyil, began liaising with Elisa Coppello of Shang-Shung Institute in Italy, in the setting up of planning and publicity and involving the regions across Australia.

It's a little embarrassing to confess that in spite of Rinpoche's enthusiastic recommendation, "He's fantastic", a few of us secretly wondered how a Doctor of Tibetan Medicine would go down "down under". But when the first publicity photos arrived in Melbourne and were shown by the Publicity Coordinator, Joanna, to explore ideas for brochures, exclamations of, "What a spunk! That photo will make a great poster, everyone will want one! The programs will be sold out!", made us suspect we were on to a winner.

Within the first ten minutes of the first Introductory Lecture, any remaining doubts about this unknown quantity, the unassuming scholar and practitioner of Tibetan Medicine, were blown away. All over Australia, from the Southern cold winter in Melbourne to the tropical north in Cairns, Dr. Nida Chenagtsang astounded Australians with his level of intelligence, teaching skills, depth of knowledge, humility, accessibility, compassion, commitment to his profession, and most important to Aussies, his delightful sense of humor and ability to get down and party!

No, it wasn't all work. In spite of a daunting, jam packed tour of six regional centers, covering thousands of kilometers in six weeks, with five different programs plus private consultations, there was still a little space, time and energy for the necessary partying. Snorkeling in the Great Barrier Reef after Brisbane, crocodile sightings near Cairns, disco dancing in Sydney, koalas and hundreds of kangaroos at Tidbinbilla, a Canberra nature park, feasting at the "Hungry Yak" Tibetan Restaurant in Melbourne, and exploring the magnificent beaches around Tilba with the "Tibetans", allowed Dr. Nida to relax a little and gave the locals a chance to share the wonders of Oz with their new found friend and teacher.

Yes, firm friendships were formed, not only with Dzogchen Community members, but also local Tibetans in every region and other newcomers drawn by their interest in the broad range of subjects Dr. Nida taught, including "Sa Che" - Tibetan Geomancy, Mantra Healing, Dream Diagnosis, Introduction to Tibetan Medicine, and the very popular Ku Nye Massage Course Retreat which was sold out almost as soon as it was advertised.

Did we accomplish our objectives? It seems we have gotten off to a great start. But even though the tour is finished, the farewell dinner

is over and Dr. Nida has gone, there is much work to be done. The tour coordinators, as part of the Gakyil's commitment to improving our level of organizational skills and capacities, making our fundraising and other functions more efficient and professional and passing on that knowledge to future Gakyils, has adopted a learning process.

It's a method of soliciting feedback from all involved in the organization of the tour, as well as participants and non-members, to discover what worked positively and what improvements we want to make for the next event. In all departments, from Staffing to Teacher Care, from Finance and Attendance to Coordination and Communication, from Publicity and Venues to Bookshop Sales and Catering, this feedback will be analyzed and reflected upon before creative solutions are developed for the problems encountered and successful methods are recorded for future reference.

Although much feedback from non-Dzogchen Community participants indicated that people appreciated the level of organization and the atmosphere of collaboration permeating the tour and its events, we have much to learn and develop before we can feel we have truly improved our capacity.

One encouraging note was received from Dr. Nida himself, who relishing the feedback process, gave us some invaluable hints, saying he could see the potential here. Even more encouraging was the fact he began telling everyone, "I will return", almost as soon as he arrived!

So it is with immense gratitude to our insightful master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, for starting us off on this amazing journey of evolving greater knowledge, awareness and skill that we look forward to the return visits of Dr. Nida Chenagtsang and other inspiring teachers of Tibetan Culture to our land of Oz.

Attention Deficit Disorder and Enlightenment

by Paul Bail

Recently one of my children was diagnosed as possibly having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). ADD is the inattention syndrome that contributes to children being easily distracted in school and not getting good grades. The pediatrician said most children



with ADD have a parent with ADD. That got me wondering. Could I have ADD? The books said disorganization, lots of unfinished projects, and constantly losing things were possible signs of ADD. That describes me! I had always thought of myself as a packrat, a nonconformist, or as someone with a creative temperament. But maybe I was deceiving myself. Maybe my eccentric behavior could be reduced to a mundane "medical condition". But if ADD is genetic, and if I had ADD, then which one of my parents had it? Maybe my mother? She used to save paper and string. I had thought it was because she lived through the Great Depression that she never wanted to throw anything away. But, maybe it was ADD? And if she didn't have time to read the newspaper, my mother would save it to read later; sometimes several days later. Most of the time she would read last week's news (which was no longer "news")! My father thought that was very funny. But, was it ADD? And if it was, and if I had it too, what were the implications? Would enlightenment be harder to reach, with ADD?

SPEAKING CLEARLY

Written by Griselda Gálmez, President of the Tashigar Gakyil, translated by María Inés Fayó. This meeting took place before the last election of the Tashigar Gakyil in 2001.

An alternative space for communication

In spite of the number of times that a Gakyil has been chosen in Tashigar, or maybe due to this fact, this year the necessity of calling an assembly previous to the final selection for the year surged as a need. We wanted to have the chance of interchanging ideas on what are the appropriate attitudes and the responsibilities of a Gakyil, as well as to specify what corresponds to the Director, Gekö and Secretary. Even if we know that the International Gakyil is working on that topic, a sort of urgency determined this call for a meeting. It took place Friday, April 13th, with a significant attendance.

Dynamics of the reunion

The meeting started with the coordinators' statement on the points to be analyzed, answering a question that had fueled the motor of reflection at the I.G. meeting in Merigar.

What is it that hampers the Gakyil's turning?

Once the question had been posed, we all felt a dark anxiety proper of any enigma. One of the kind that would ask for more and more clarifying words, but one that at the same time, with the shimmering light that comes from lighthouses in the middle of the fog, marks the way.

I remember one of the first occasions when I went to a Tibetan Buddhist retreat. I had been simply doing shamatha-vipassana for awhile - a very "bare bones" practice devoid of complex ritual, recitations, or visualizations. The retreat setting was very rustic. Everyone was sleeping at a campsite, and the lama's teachings took place in a large tent. It had been quite an ordeal just hauling in all the necessities one needs in these primitive living situations. When I

went to the main tent for the teaching, the organizers had set up rows of cardboard boxes in front of the cushions, to serve as makeshift puja tables. The woman seated at the cardboard box next to mine had a duffel bag with her. Out of it she pulled a foam ground cloth to put her cushion on, a colorful piece of fabric which she draped over her cardboard box, a framed photo of her teacher, a bell and dorje, a mala, a bottle of spring water, and a ring binder in which she had neatly filed her practice texts, images and other materials.

Wow! I was dumbfounded by this woman's world-class level of efficiency! Not only had she brought all her camping gear, but she had been mindful of every little detail related to her practice needs. Obviously Tantric Buddhism was light years beyond the capacity of a disorganized person like myself. That was my initial reaction. Of course, the essence of Vajrayana has nothing to do with this. There are highly complex and detailed practices that are attractive to people who have highly complex and detailed minds, and there are sim-

plified and essential practices that appeal to people like myself.

Years later, when I encountered the Dzogchen Community, I knew I could feel at home thanks to a comment a Community member made about my vehicle. As I brushed aside books, papers, magazines, empty soda bottles, and children's toys, in order to clear the back seat, this Community member said, "The inside of your car looks just like 'S's'. (S. was a long time Community member.)

But, in the Dzogchen Community too, there are challenges. Santi Maha Sangha training could be particularly hard for those with ADD, because you have to keep a precise record of how many times you have done various practices and not lose these records - and you also have to not lose the instructions for each of the practices. Fortunately, I found a solution. I have a spare room that I keep ONLY as my meditation room. I cannot lose the texts and records if I stick unswervingly to the rule of NEVER taking my practice materials out of that room. Of course, I can still misplace them in the meditation room. But at least this is a more delimited space in which to search, so that I usually can find my lost materials without spending more than an hour or two screaming and swearing in frustration.

I have discovered that computers are much harder to lose than ordinary scraps of paper. The computer is bigger and heavier than little slips of paper, and it is attached to the wall by an electric cord, so it is very hard to misplace. By entering all my important information into the computer, it keeps me from losing it. Of course, one time the hard drive of my computer crashed, and I lost several years worth of information. It was a bit like having my house burn down, or waking up with my memory gone. So, even the computer is not an infallible cure. Everything is impermanent. And every solution eventually breeds a new problem. My friends call me a pessimist for saying this, but I call myself a realist.

In this mood, we settled and calmed down in order to watch a video which reacquainted us with the meeting that the former Gakyil had held with our Master during the 2000-2001 Christmas Retreat. For around an hour and a half we listened to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu answering questions about different situations we have lived in Tashigar. He oriented us, making us remember what he so many times told us, clearing up every visible confusion and perplexity on the questioning faces. Then we went on to the second stage of the meeting: a group work. We already knew the questions and the core quest. The proposals arose on the spot, everybody sought a proper space, and they got it, but had to fight the tyrant of time that had been set for "in-group" discussion. The Latin self implies a sort of vocation for speech, but in this case a previous maturation on the topic was manifest in every participant. Once the first conclusions were achieved, a second round of the groups' representatives was asked to share them. Then we entered the final stage: a common proposal of the second elaboration of conclusions. This was the moment for us to encounter coincidences.

The Conclusions

About the Director

A. Before, his/her function used to be mainly legal and administrative, but now it had to be more executive, avoiding the confusion with a parental figure on which the others deposit the function of complaints, a listener and justice maker, avoiding also authoritarianism and bossy attitudes.

B. He/she is the Community representative for third

parties; the same as the Gakyil. It is desirable that he/she is aware of this representation.

C. His/her main function is to coordinate, harmonize and communicate. Therefore, he/she has to be informed of everything and keep a relation with every member of the Community. He/she is the one who knows what every Gakyil member does, and holds a positive control (neither bossy nor hampering) on every task.

D. As for a specific task, the coordination of Gakyil meetings is his/her responsibility.

About the Secretary

A. His/her essential function is communication, both internal and external. Therefore, he/she should be acquainted with the Community in general and its functioning.

B. He/she also has an administrative and accounting function.

C. His/her relation with the Gakyil:

1. The Gakyil should control his/her function and make a list of the tasks according to the Gar's needs, as well as what he/she should be offered as compensation.

2. He/she attends to Gakyil meetings and keeps the minutes.

3. He/she needs a margin of creativity and initiative to solve certain situations on his/her own.

About the Gekö

A. He/she is responsible for the Gar and represents it in the surrounding community.

B. He/she controls and coordinates works performed towards its maintenance.

C. He/she coordinates and distributes the tasks to be performed as Karma Yoga.

D. He/she welcomes and assists people coming to the Gar. Besides, he/she has to do a follow up of people's attitudes to prevent any damage in the facilities or harm of any kind to the Community. In a certain way, he/she has the role of an educator for coexistence.

E. His/her relation to the Gakyil.

1. He/she is a collaborator for the Gakyil. He/she executes what the Gakyil approves and he/she needs to have a decision capacity and fast communication in front of unforeseen events.

2. It would be advisable that the Gakyil evaluate and determine:

a) the working time implied by the Gar maintenance.

b) A spare time to be assigned as resting time or to personal matters.

About the attitude and responsibilities of the Gakyil and what hinders its movement?

Not overcoming the ego:

* The game between power and jealousy, which always create problems.

* When things are done just to make Rinpoche know and thus become the "spoiled child".

* When we do things only for ourselves, practitioners aspiring to liberation, but not for others. When we act to be looked upon by others; for the fame we get from this which leads to incompetence and hampers participation.

* When we believe we do things in the best way and insist on things to be done our way.

* A desire to dominate situations and the inability to accept we were wrong.

A lack of:

* An appropriate election of the Gakyil members in the Assembly.

Proposals are accepted without questioning, or given the case, rejected through a negative vote.

* Discipline and authority that reflects itself in insufficient dedication.

* A real awareness of the compromise that being a Gakyil implies (time availability, capacity, economic possibilities, etc.) as well as being a member (not to care, leaving all the work to the Gakyil and expecting everything from it.)

Self-criticism:

* A fluid communication among Gakyil members and between the Gakyil and the members.

* Openness to the proposals coming from the others. Sometimes they cannot see eye to eye and there is difficulty in working as a team.

Planning for the future.

The tendency

* Towards a regional functioning, instead of realizing that the Gar is for all of South America and for the world. This way of functioning is manifested, for example, in autocratic leadership.

* There are people who think they are the owners of the Gar, and go outside the Gakyil.

* The projection of our own deficiencies onto others.

* Excessive criticism. Instead of helping those who have the Gakyil function, there is mortification and exhaustion. This is lack of compassion.

It would be better if the Gakyil:

* motivated others to participate.

* reflected outside how its members respect each other.

* was aware that its function consists in GIVING SERVICE, going beyond positions and personal interests.

* the person who lacks interest or time to collaborate would abandon the Gakyil.

* that open reflection and evaluation meetings were periodically held.

It would be better if those who vote in the Assembly:

* Would choose according to their conscience and not to their interests.

* Would liberate themselves from the idea that nine people have to make the Gakyil. Sometimes six can work better and this would avoid the tension of working with people who do not want to.

It would be better if everyone:

* Instead of competing would know to hold back

* Would set into motion, once and for all, the model Rinpoche has created, going from words to action.

* Would be able to emerge from our own personal problems, and enter into this action. If there is no participation, there are no achievements, and if nobody takes responsibility, only a few have to take everything over, demanding too much from themselves.

* Desisted from creating problems that, in turn, create more and more suffering, and would increase the happiness of being together and working together in Tashigar.

Wine and Pizza

Something nobody dared to criticize or reject. The night was pleasant and we were satisfied on having been able to communicate with an open attitude and good disposition.

Marisa and Adriana, the cooks, got a good applause.

Change

by Birgit Gewehr

I just spent one week with Felicitas in her house. Felicitas, a member of the Sangha, has lung cancer. I am doing a retreat at her house, combining my sessions with helping her and being with her. Felicitas is very exhausted, she cannot go out any more, she can only move very slowly in the flat with a wheel chair. The pain is more or less removed by morphine; she is sleeping a lot. In the moments when she is present we drink tea, talk or are silent, do the necessary things and the bureaucratic formalities.

In the evenings we listen to tapes of Jim Valby's explanations from the recent SMS Base Retreat in Germany and enjoy this inspiration. We do practice together; I sing and perform and she is just present. Doing practice is very intense in her presence!

I began to visit Felicitas and became more close to her when she was already ill with cancer. At first I was a bit afraid and obsessed by the idea, "Somebody is dying and that is heavy". But I chose the experience. She is weak and suffering, but she is still alive! Alive with a clear perception, many ideas and in a rich process full of intense experiences. Maybe I die before she dies, you never know.

Anyhow, death is always present and that is a big difference in my normal busy daily life. This simple truth creates a fresh mind and an intense atmosphere. I am less sleepy and distracted. My depressions are gone. I enjoy helping. Life is precious. We cannot wait. What is important has to be done and expressed now. We both enjoy peace and calmness and mindfulness together.

Visiting Felicitas in the hospital for the first time two months ago was a challenge. On my way in the metro it seemed to me that I had to overcome a huge distance between "my normal life" and "suffering in a hospital". That I had to change somehow... getting more serious or deep... But finally I was getting more normal and simple. I learned a bit more just being there and let things happen without too many words - especially without the words I planned already to say in the metro on the way. Slowly my concepts dissolved a bit and I relaxed.

Felicitas's room in the hospital was like a Gonpa. There was a special energy of peace and holiness, which reminds me constantly of being present, of being in the practice. Felicitas was very open and when she was too tired for talking I sang the Song of the Vajra. Dying is not the opposite of life. I found that out. There is not such an unsurpassable borderline any more. Of course I am not ill and definitely don't know how I would feel and whether I could be so relaxed and keep the soft openness and strength at the same time in the process as Felicitas is doing. But the idea of passing the line causes a bit less panic in me as it did some time before. And that means a lot.

There is trust in the transmission of the Master beyond death and in the primordial state beyond change. There is also hope concerning the passage, hope for wisdom liberating in the moment when the habits stop and the ego collapses. In a short moment I experienced for the first time a bewildering new feeling; a sudden curiosity for this wild passage in a completely unknown country which needs pure courage. Like giving birth. OK, let's wait till it is my turn...

And Sangha is beyond death. I feel that Felicitas and I know each other already for very, very long time and we will continue. So in the moment we help each other. I give her my company. She gives me hers. She inspires me - her state is like a mirror permanent reflecting what is important and what is not. All little sorrows cool down. Silence and space develop around me. I even gave up looking at TV in her flat at night so as not to waste time. On the other hand, making jokes and laughing is always very important.

I wish that Felicitas has all the lifetime she still needs, and that her passage will be peaceful and she can relax in A. May the clear light she will open herself to and integrate in also shine on me and the Sangha.

Felicitas Reitzug: "A big change is taking place. I know exactly how is the condition of my body. I don't have illusions about that. But I am moving out of all my former connections and contexts and the new context is concentrated on the Sangha and the path of Dzogchen. Commitment is the word for that. Sometimes "the new" just appears in the form of a square out of four crystal balls. I don't know why."

First I thought there must be a new beginning. Now I know, we are in the middle of it. Also because Birgit is there. Everything else seems to be completely solved. Except the connection with my parents. But priorities are changing. It is important to watch oneself, so that one does not think something new is beginning, there is survival. Yes, if the body would be more strong, it could happen. But what we actually live in the Sangha is very intense. That is my life. There is not much longing for life anymore. It is too much effort. Also I cannot go deep into this, it is too tiring. Everything is getting more intense."

To be reborn now would mean to enter in the Dzogchen Community in a new way with more intensity. But it does not have to mean rebirth. It would be possible to live it now. But the body is too weak. But in fact I am living it! The change is actually happening. A feeling: Everything is still possible and open. Although it seems to be obvious, concerning the body there are not many possibilities any more, at the same time I am arriving more in my body. I am integrating my body for the first time really into this life. Because of that reason body, voice and mind become a unity and are the cause for the great openness. And that's why life takes place now more in the very moment."

DIAMOND

Sipping coffee
at a small table by
a window, we are
idle in the way of the
long married when our
waitress walks by
and smiles like
sunrise on the dark
waters of my heart and
Woody says
she reminds me of
Nina and all
the possible meanings
of immortality
flash through my mind and
I want to call out
to the sky
Nina, you left an
ornament
behind and it's still
shining.

by Barbara Paparazzo
Published in the "Wisconsin
Review"

WHILE READING CHINESE POETRY

Laying on the sofa,
my book still open,
I watch frost thickening
on the windows and think
of the red dust of Han Shan,
how it clouds my eyes and
stains the vision of this dream
I call my life. After
you died the whole
world drained of color,
red fell into green and
blue into orange, and I
fell into white and
landed like Alice in an
upside down world where
mothers outlive their
daughters and time collapses
like flimsy scaffolding to
reveal all of eternity
in this moment as
the frost shines back the gold
dust light of the setting sun
and I turn the page of
my book.

by Barbara Paparazzo
Published in the "Atlanta
Review"

What is of Value

Leaping from rock to rock I get to the one with the inscription: "All conditioned actions result in torment and exhaustion."
It's true that I am tired of looking for rocks in this wide stream. What is a conditioned action? The teacher holds up a small blank piece of paper. "We make this into a solid object, and then," he says, after which he crumples it in his palm, "we grasp it." I look for the next rock. I want it to be a good one. Talk about torment, talk about queasy.

All praise to earth, to rocks that dwell in mountain streams.

by Joan Marie Wood

Passages

Died:

We want to say good-bye to our Vajra sister Inge Bauer who died on November 8th, 2001, after long suffering.
We thank everybody who includes her in their practice, especially our dear Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.
Dzogchen Community of Vienna

Died:

Dear Vajra brothers and Sister of the Dzogchen Community,
David Sharp, our Vajra Brother from New Zealand, passed away at 11:15 am on Sunday, January 20th, 2002 (New Zealand time; 23:15pm Greenwich mean time on the 19th January; DST summer time Australia, 9:15 am on 20th) while doing practice.

Several people of the NZ community have been regularly at his house over the past few months to do practice and are now gathering there to practice. Please join them with Shitro practice.
Thank you on behalf of David and his family.
Elise Stutchbury

Passages

Married:

Andrea De Castro and Barbara Dombrowski were married in Melbourne, Australia on December 29th, 2001.

Marit Cranmer and Efram Marder were married on December 21st, 2001, in Northampton, Massachusetts, USA.

Born to Anna Garcia and David Pedrera, a beautiful baby girl, Luz, on September 27, 2001, in Cordoba, Argentina.

Margarita Island House Share

Looking for people to share a house on Margarita Island for 5 or 6 people for the Easter Retreat.
Approximately \$40 per day/ cost to be confirmed.

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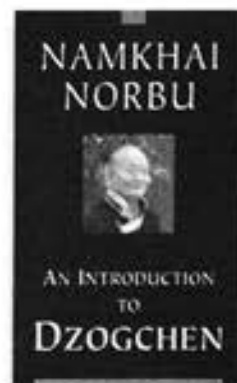
INTRODUCTION TO DZOGCHEN

by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu

In this two-hour video, Namkhai Norbu answers the question: What is Dzogchen?

Dzogchen is a path of self-liberation. It is not a path of renunciation or transformation, but rather one of seeing directly the nature of mind—as pointed to by a teacher who has realized this freedom for him or herself. This video gives the student the opportunity to receive these teachings directly from an accomplished guide.

Chogyal Namkhai Norbu is one of the primary living masters of Dzogchen. He is author of *The Supreme Source, Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State*, and *The Crystal and the Way of Light*.



120 min. video, \$29.95



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Regarding Personal Web Sites

All practitioners who have created their own personal web sites and want to put some images, texts or photos of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or the Dzogchen Community in it, please note:

Before publishing any image or text concerning our Master, his Teaching or the International Dzogchen Community in the Web, please present your web site to your local Blue Gakyil, if there is any, or to the International Gakyil (IG), which will check it together with a representative of the IPC (International Publishing Committee) of your language.

Only after the approval of the Blue Gakyil and a member of the IPC are you allowed to publish the above mentioned images or texts. If you have the approval of the Gakyil or IPC for your personal web site, you will be requested to put also a link to an official web site of the Dzogchen Community, for example to the site of your own Gar.

All members of the Gakyils in the world are asked to forward this message to everybody in their community and publish it also in their web sites or newsletters.

Many greetings
Maurizio Mingotti (IPC - Internet)
Karin Eisenegger (Blue IG)

The ASIA site is available at:

<http://www.melong.com/asia>

Errata

In the last issue of The Mirror the date of the interview with Chokyi Nyima's was incorrect. It was September 10th, 2001.

In the last issue of The Mirror the article entitled "The First Tsegylgar Open" referred to several photos which were not there.

Apologies, The Mirror

Here is a handy web page that tells the time around the world:

<http://swissinfo.net/cgi/worldtime/>

NEW BOOK AVAILABLE FROM SHANG-SHUNG EDITIONS, ITALY

The Dzogchen Community, Principles and Guidelines for Practitioners

The idea for this booklet arose during an International Gakyil Meeting at Merigar in the Summer of 2000. In a group concerning Gakyil relations it became clear that there were problems common to all Gakyil members due to the lack of knowledge of the fundamental principles of the Dzogchen Community, uncertainty about the basic requirements of being a Gakyil member, and other problems related to misunderstandings in communication and group dynamics.

In order to help overcome this problem we decided to publish a Gakyil Manual. The guidelines outlined in this manual are intended to be useful as a general aid, but the particular way each Dzogchen Community functions in their own country is unique and they will have to adapt the manual accordingly.

This manual will require periodic updates. Please send all information to: Saadet.A@gmx.de

Hopefully this manual will function as a helpful resource for all Dzogchen Community members.

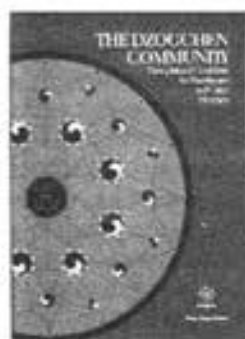
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ChNN teaching continued
from page 5

the action directly; by asking my friend indirectly I am. Then later my friend returns and says he gave the man the food and drink and the man is very happy and feels less pain, so I am happy and satisfied. When I feel happy and satisfied, then I produce this potentiality of karma. That potentiality of karma remains always with my potentiality. In Buddhist philosophy there are many different explanations of how potentiality of karma remains and where it remains; not losing it, etc. But it is not necessary that we have a place where that potentiality remains. We all already have infinite potentiality forever and not necessarily in a place, but always in our condition. It only manifests when there are secondary causes.

For example, in the Madayamika Sutra teaching, our potentiality of accumulation of merits remains something like a shadow. We can't see that we have this shadow, but we have a physical body and when there are secondary causes like light, etc., then the shadow manifests. So if there are no secondary causes, karma never manifests. This, in general, is how all karma manifests. For example, everyone has infinite karma; good and bad. Particularly, we have so much potentiality of bad karma. Even if we have that potentiality, it has not manifested. Everything manifests with the circumstances related to secondary causes. When there are secondary causes then karma can manifest, also purifying and modifying karma. There are many possibilities. Some people believe that if we have some karma we must pay; that good and bad karma is registered somewhere and we should pay. This is the wrong understanding and it is not that way. We have infinite karma related to circumstance and for that reason in the teaching there exist so many practices for purifying karma; even modifying and changing it, because if we are aware and know how the secondary causes are, there are always possibilities. Karma that matures and manifests is dependent on secondary causes. Secondary causes are present with our awareness. For that reason there is the possibility to purify. If, for example, we have the seed of a flower, this seed has the potentiality to produce a flower. If you keep that seed in a box for many years and you keep it well, that potentiality does not disappear. It does not manifest at all because the seed is in a box

and does not have contact with secondary causes. When you take that seed outside and put in the earth and give it a little water and the weather is warm and there is light, that means that now that potentiality of the seed has contact with secondary causes. Now this flower is growing.

So, you see, it depends very much on secondary causes. If you are a practitioner and are aware; you know that the potentiality of negative karma is manifesting, then you know it is because there are secondary causes and if you are aware you can eliminate some of these secondary causes. When this plant is growing you take away water, for example, then the plant cannot grow. Also you can lose and eliminate the potentiality of the seed. That is an example of how we do purification practice; modifying, changing and eliminating the potentiality entirely. You must understand karma in that way.

So it's very important in relationship to karma that we are aware and that the root of all action is related to our intention. For that purpose, in Dzogchen teaching, practitioners can learn so many kinds of methods. There are many kinds of practices, but when we go more into the essence and conclusion of the practice of Dzogchen, then we should do practice of Guru yoga. Guru means teacher, in Sanskrit; teacher in the real sense. There can be many kinds of teachers, if someone teaches you how to read and write this is also teacher. But in the teaching the Guru is not that kind of teacher. In Dzogchen we say Vajra Guru; Vajra means our real nature and a teacher teaches you how to discover your real nature. This is called the Vajra Guru and after you discovered your real nature, after you have discovered that that is the state of your Guru, then there is no difference between your real nature and the teacher's real nature. Also there is no difference between the condition of all human beings and enlightened beings. But the same condition doesn't mean you and the Guru become one, that is not the case. If you understand in this way your understanding is different. The same condition means like water. You see water falls and moves, but water is made up of many atoms and if you observe the different atoms in the water there is no difference. It is the same way with individuals; we are not saying when we are realized or illuminated that our individuality disappears. But we have no ego. We have no idea I am Namkhai Norbu and you are another person. We have the idea that you and I, all our condition, is the same, the same condition. But when our wisdoms manifest, they manifest in different ways. When we do the practice of Long Life, we don't do the practice with Buddha Shakaymuni, but use Buddha Amitayus. If we want to increase our compassion we don't use Vajrasattva, we use Avalokiteshvara. If we want to increase our intelligence we use Manjushri, not Buddha Shakyamuni. In the real sense, there is no difference between Buddha Shakaymuni, Avalokiteshvara or Buddha Amitayus. They have the same wisdom and qualities, they are all totally realized, but their way of functioning and wisdoms are different. When I have total realization, I always have a good relationship with you. You can receive all my wisdoms. But if someone has no relationship with me, either good or

bad, then it is very difficult that they can receive my wisdoms. For me, when I am realized totally, there will be no difference between those who are or are not my students, I will have infinite compassion for all beings in the universe, but they cannot receive it. That is an example. Then we can understand that even if beings totally realize, their wisdoms work in a different way and does not mean that the condition of the individual disappears.

There is a very famous saying of Guru Padmasambhava: "In the wisdom of all Tathagatas and all enlightened beings, there is no difference". Guru Padmasambhava says there is no difference and he does not say they become one; it is very important to distinguish that. For that reason in the Dzogchen teaching, it is very important to be aware and continually in the state of presence. The presence referred to in the Dzogchen teaching is not ordinary presence; it is a little different because ordinary presence is related to time, our mind, our judgment, etc. It is related, and is very important, because when we have the capacity to be present in daily life then it is very easy to integrate into instant presence. Then we become Dzogchen practitioners and integrate into our real condition.

How can you learn to increase your capacity of presence in general? You can learn in daily life. Sometimes if you have nothing to do, you have one free hour, then you have an idea to learn how to be more present. In that moment you think, "I want to go in my office and see a program in my computer". When you have this idea immediately you try not to be distracted with this idea. In general we are distracted. We think we should always be on the go and thinking what we should do next and many other things. When you are learning about being more present, before you move to go into your office you make a kind of commitment. You commit to keep presence until you arrive at your computer and then until you return. Then you get up. When you get up you notice you are getting up, now you are walking, you notice you are walking. You arrive and open your computer. You are not distracted. Then you see the program. Now you see the program and are aware you are seeing the program. Now you finish and return, and also you know you are returning. This is a very, very important practice and if you do it one time today, again tomorrow one time, and after a few days of doing it, it becomes more easy. Everything we are not familiar with in life is a little difficult. But if you are learning and reeducate yourself day after day, then it becomes very easy. Afterwards you don't really need any effort and can continue in that presence. So this is a very, very important practice. Many people who are interested in the teachings say they are very interested to do practice; they are too busy and have no time. In this case, you remember that even if you are busy you can be in the state of presence and that is better for you. When you are present and not distracted you notice immediately when you have tensions and you know that tensions are the root of problems. You relax, have less problems and your life becomes easier.

Transcribed & edited by
Naomi Zeitz