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IT'S ALMOST COMFORTABLE Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Returns to Australia, December 2002

By Kelly Tracey and Bob Daoud

As most of the world's governments are preparing to dive deeper into the sludge of our current dark age, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu appears as a beacon of sanity, and light. If ever there was a need to cultivate bodhicitta, now is the time!

Three years since his last visit to Australia, Rinpoche returned to Namgyalgar sporting good health, energy, laughter and the gift of his precious teachings. In the past three years, tremendous effort and energy has gone into developing the Gar into a lush oasis. "It's almost comfortable!", mused Rinpoche.

He went on to remind us that even in such salubrious surroundings, sacrifices are often required to bring about all the necessary conditions for receiving the teachings. We need not only the teacher, the students, the place and the teachings, but also the material means, the wealth, to enable all these elements to come together, he pointed out.

"We live in a dualistic, limited world dependent on our senses. The teaching is for our whole living life, until death, to be integrated into our samsaric life. Even if you are aware, sometimes you can't control yourself, or things. The main point is being in your real condition, to discover your real nature, the state your teacher introduces to you. Try to be forever in your real condition. You can practice, you can learn, we all have that potentiality." These comments, made in Rinpoche's opening talk, began a retreat rich in learning, practice and integration.

Whilst in Australia, Rinpoche continues to teach the Longsal Cycle, the collection of rediscovered treasure teachings that Rinpoche received over many years in dreams and only formally commenced teaching at Margarita Island in April 2002. This summer retreat began with the Longsal Ati Ngondro, the Preliminary Practices of Dzogchen, and Yeshe Zangthel, an Upadesha that clearly explains the way in which primordial wisdom manifests. Rinpoche will go on to teach the Longsal Tsalung in Caloundra later in January, and his special Longde teachings from the Longsal Cycle on his return to Namgyalgar in April.

Each day of this summer retreat began with an early morning Mandharava practice followed, apres breakfast, by Vajra Dance practice. It was a joy to watch newcomers learn the Vajra Dance with such ease and enjoyment. Rinpoche arrived at 10 am each morning to give us teachings and delight us with his endearing stories. Rinpoche was immeasurably generous with his time, remaining in the Gonpa after each session for as long as people wished to come and speak with him.

The days continued with an explanation and practice of the Longsal Ngondro led by Lisse each afternoon. If the heat was too much, a quick dive into the turquoise waters of Mystery Bay was the obvious solution! Fabio taught Yantra Yoga each afternoon bringing much humor and freshness to an age-old practice. Before dinner, the more experienced Vajra

dancers hit the floor with whirls so impressive that even Rumi would have jumped out of his Suf to get in on the action. Most evenings were capped by the cutting practice of Chöd. All this activity transformed the gar into a vibrant place of possibility.

To add to the occasion, the Gonpa at Namgyalgar is now complete with glass walls, a wooden floor and beautiful new dance Mandala. No more winds whistling through walls made of curtains and trying to find a flat place on a bumpy earthen floor to practice Yantra Yoga. A retreat cabin has been built at



Cows at the Serkhang at Namgyalgar

A. DAL, 10-08-02

the foot of the hill below Rinpoche's house, sites have been cleared for two more cabins, and thanks to the generosity of several members of the community, the second cabin can now be built. All efforts will be made to ensure that it's not too comfortable.

And now to the creature comforts: the open air, five star Catering Kitchen is still in its early stages, the plans having been approved by Council only just before the retreat. The incomplete and rough facilities were no obstacle for our team of gourmet masters. Headed by the grand chef Patrick Carmody 'the extraordinaire' with Lyn Geppart 'the magnifique' as the executive chef, a team of Sous chefs, Emily, Stu, Fijelka and many other hardworking friends, brought us as close as we will get to the Epicurean Deity Yummy-Tucker. (Australian for divine, delicious food.)

The opening of NamgyalBar was also a great success, once the secret chai recipe was finally established! "Was that twenty cardamom pods or plenty of car door rods?" Ask Paul and Adam for details. The bar was hipper than Café Flores. Evenings spent under a celestial blanket inspired conversations on life, the universe and the Narooma Golf Club as another year inched its way into the night. Before we knew it a new year was upon us.

The evening commenced with a Ganapuja and was followed by "the auction to end all mortgages!" With a wonderful array going under the hammer, our president Jan cracked a pace that would make the seasoned bidders at Christie's shudder. Cities were played against cities, countries against coun-

tries, mothers against daughters, dogs against cats. Jan's persuasive techniques were more like "offers you couldn't refuse". In less than two hours, she transformed the Community into a buying frenzy that can only be rivaled by our current governments defense budget. \$35000 was raised - the final payment on the land. You little Ripper!!! (Australian for "fantastic.")

Rinpoche also enjoyed the auction, to which he generously contributed many items and sometimes enlightening, sometimes highly amusing descriptions of the use and value of auction items. At one point he held up to his face like a mask, a large wooden wall hanging in the form of a peaceful face something like the head of Buddha, creating an amazing effect. He teased us about our possible use of this mask. "Maybe if you are not in a good state when your friends come over, at least you could put on this mask and appear to be kind." Later, when an old thanka of uncertain origins and identity was being auctioned (the image had been almost totally worn away) he commented, "Here is a thanka on which your mind can project anything". Even in jest, there are always teachings from Rinpoche.

Another precious moment, while waiting for the count down, "What are we waiting for exactly?!!": Rinpoche blew the conch three times and then passed it on to those nearby to have a go. He laughed, as we all did, at the various strange and interesting sounds that resulted! And then the countdown. Laughter, hugs, kisses and well wishes ensued and the opportunity to bring in the new year with Rinpoche was a three year stint worth waiting for.

In his final talk, on the final day of the retreat, Rinpoche continued the theme with which he started integrating the teachings into our daily lives. He encouraged us with practical examples. "Do Guru Yoga. Observe yourself. Try to be aware, then it's easy to guide 'being aware' into instant presence. Like when we drive a car, we talk, etc., but we are still always aware or we will have an accident. You can make a commitment to not being distracted for one hour. For example, going to meet someone, you can say, 'Oh I will stay present during this meeting'. Then notice, 'I am saying this,' 'he is saying that'. Being aware is very close to having that knowledge." He urged us, "Don't remain indifferent. With indifference we lose so much opportunity. If we forget, OK. Even if we forget ten times, but don't be indifferent. You try your best."

With much thanks to Rinpoche for his kindness and generosity. May all those who attend the coming two retreats have an equally glorious time.

Bob Daoud and Kelly Tracey are founding members of Ranters Theatre in Melbourne, a company that has performed in arts festivals world-wide. Both met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during his last visit to Australia in 2000. Bob and Kelly (recently known affectionately as 'Kelly the Belly') are about to become parents.

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In all traditions, the Dzogchen teaching has always been considered as the essence of Buddhist teachings. It is actually a very ancient teaching. In the history of the Dzogchen teaching, particularly in the Nyingmapa tradition, we say that there have been twelve ancient Dzogchen teachers which means that all these teachers existed before Buddha Shakyamuni. They lived on this earth many thousands of years ago and taught many Dzogchen Tantras. But we exist in time and time is related to circumstances. Circumstances can be positive or negative: when there are positive circumstances, all teachings can spread and many people are interested in teaching. When there are negative circumstances then teachings disappear so, for example, we can understand a little what happened during the Cultural Revolution in China. That is characteristic of the situation of samsara, not only the situation of China. We don't know very much about the history of thousands of years ago but ancient teachings have continued in this way, sometimes appearing, sometimes disappearing.

Even though most of the Tantric teachings have disappeared, many kinds of oral teaching called *nyengyüd* have remained. *Nyengyüd* means 'only a few words transmitted in the ear from teacher to student'.

We have, for example, one of the most famous *nyengyüd* expressions we use in the practice of Dzogchen *yangti* which says, "*Yeshe mig chig trima med (ye shes mig gcig dri ma med)*" "the unique eye of wisdom is pure". This is an example of a kind of *nyengyüd*. When you are going to do practice then you learn from the teacher just how to apply this, like *yangti* practice. If you are learning instructions in an intellectual way, then you can understand what 'wisdom' and 'unique eye' mean. All of us have two eyes. Not only our eyes but all our sense organs face outside. Why? For having contact with objects. But when we have this contact, we are distracted. If we are really good practitioners, we are not necessarily distracted but we can enjoy visions, sounds etc. In general we have dualistic vision, this is the function of our two eyes. But our eyes never turn inward, they always look outside, judging and analysing.

Point of view

You can observe a little all the different traditions [of Tibetan Buddhism]. People say, "Oh, I belong to the Gelugpa tradition" or "I belong to the Nyingmapa" or Kagyüpa etc. If you feel that you are a Gelugpa or Nyingmapa or Kagyüpa, what do you do? The first thing you try to learn is the pure view of the tradition. When, for example, some important Gelugpa, or Nyingmapa or Kagyüpa lama explains something, we consider this to be the point of view and negate anything that doesn't correspond with that. It is for this reason that all the schools discuss and argue about their different points of view. If I am a Gelugpa follower



Rinpoche in Nanjing, Australia

BOB DARRID

Dzogchen Teachings Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Kirchheim, Germany September 2002

then I must show somehow that I am a good follower. Perhaps I write a very nice book explaining Tsongkhapa's point of view and if someone has negated Tsongkhapa's point of view, then I try to negate this.

For example we have a very famous famous Sakyapa called Korampa who negated the point of view of Tsongkhapa point for point in volumes and volumes. When I studied Buddhist philosophy at college, which officially belonged to the Sakyapa tradition, we learnt the commentaries of Korampa and it really seemed that Tsongkhapa's point of view was entirely wrong. I almost believed it!

That is how we study in general. Depending on which school you belong to and what you are studying, you develop only that point of view. Point of view means that you are judging, thinking and doing analyses. It is, in the real sense, dualistic vision. It doesn't help very much for having realisation. If you really want to have realisation, instead of looking outside with your dualistic eyes, try to create a "unique eye of wisdom", which means that you turn inwards within yourself and do research about what your real nature is.

I met my Dzogchen teacher, Changchub Dorje, when I was eighteen years old. Before that I studied in a college from when I was nine until I was fifteen. I was convinced that the point of view of the schools was something like what I had learned there. Someone asked me some questions about the words of some Gelugpa teachers and I wrote a reply. In fact, I still have my written reply. When I wrote that, I was convinced that this point of view was perfect. But when I met my teacher, Changchub Dorje, I finally understood that this was not a point of view.

Then I started to receive Dzogchen teaching and learn about the Dzogchen point of view. My teacher said to me, "If you really want to have knowledge of Dzogchen teaching, you must observe the point of view within yourself." The principle is not that you are judging, thinking and doing

analyses of different schools or traditions. If you do analyses in that way you will never finish. But if you observe yourself, you can discover your real nature. In this case we can quote the famous Dzogchen expression, "*Chig she kun drol*", which means that when you discover one, you discover all.

My teacher gave me a very important example of this which I remember very well. You don't learn the point of view as though you were using a pair of glasses. Even though the glasses may be very strong, you are still looking outside yourself. Perhaps if there are very tiny things you may be able to see them better using the glasses but that is always dualistic vision. Instead of using glasses you have to use a mirror. If you look in a mirror you can see your face. That is an example. If you observe yourself, then you discover how your condition is. When we consider our condition we don't jump to some high level and start talking immediately about the nature of mind. In general people talk about the nature of mind saying, "Oh, this is fantastic, a very profound teaching!". But that is only our consideration because we don't know what nature of mind is. Before we can know what the nature of mind is, it is much better if we try to understand a little about the mind. When we have some knowledge or understanding of mind, then we can do something to discover nature of mind. That makes sense.

Observing our limitations

Mind is related to our normal condition in samsara. For example when we observe ourselves just a little, we can be aware of how many thoughts arise and how much we are distracted. This is mind, so we can understand what it is. But mind is not only thinking but judging, not only judging but also creating many problems. You can see how limited we are, how many kinds of limitations we have; that is a manifestation of mind. So it is very important that we understand how we are limited because if we do, it is much better for dealing with our

real condition in daily life.

We are very similar to a small bird in a cage. This condition doesn't correspond to our real nature but even if it doesn't correspond, this is samsara, this is our condition. But we don't observe ourselves and we don't understand that. If we understood that we are just like a small bird in a cage, then it would be easy to be liberated from that problem. If you believe that this is our nature, this is our condition, then there is nothing to do. So having knowledge of our condition is something very very important. But it doesn't mean that when we discover that we have infinite limitations that we can liberate ourselves. For example, a small bird in a cage has two wings; that is the condition of the bird. Why does this small bird have two wings? For flying, not for living in a cage. But that small bird isn't flying, it is only living in a cage. If you say, "Oh, it doesn't correspond" and you take this bird outside and free it, that bird may die the same day because a bird has no awareness of how to protect itself or to live in that circumstance.

We exist in the human condition in the same way. The human dimension has infinite limitations. When, for example, a small baby is born, observe that baby after a few days and you will see that when it is not hungry and everything is fine, then the baby remains in a calm state. The baby looks left and right, observes but does not judge. It has a very free mind. But as time passes, the baby has more experience of our samsara and slowly starts to speak. Then the first thing the baby learns is, "Why?". Children always ask their parents, "Why?". Some parents can't explain and have a problem with this. Sometimes they don't communicate to the children and also get a bit nervous.

Then the children grow a little bigger and the parents try to educate them - eat this way, behave that way, put your hand here and there while you are eating, etc. There are different traditions: the English don't put their elbows on the table, the Italians do! (laughter) I don't know what they do in Germany. (more laughter) That is an example. They learn one thing after another. In the real sense all of this is entering into limitations.

And things get bigger and the children start school and receive more and more education and more and more limitations. In the end they become an adult, fully educated ... and limited! Finally they can live in this society, they can do something because if we don't enter into this limitation, we can't do anything. So this is our real condition. In this case it is very important that parents and we, ourselves, know that everything is limited.

But I am not saying that everything is limited and negative. These type of limitations can be positive for living in society otherwise we wouldn't be able to deal with people. So when we know how the situation is and we apply [that knowledge] then we do not have any tensions. But most people don't know

that these are limitations and they believe that they are part of our real condition. They give them too much importance and then tension, fear and all sorts of problems develop. So it is very important that we know and are aware of our circumstances.

Being aware of circumstances

When, for example, we are learning a teaching like Dzogchen, which is considered very essential and high level, we may ask, "If I want to be a Dzogchen practitioner, what should I do, which attitude should I apply?". When we follow sutra teaching there are many rules that we can learn but in the Dzogchen teaching there are no rules. In the Dzogchen teaching what you should learn is to be aware of yourself. In the Dzogchen teaching you do not depend on a kind of rule or system, you become responsible for yourself. Why? Because we don't know how circumstances may be.

When we follow a rule, we consider that when a particular problem arises, in that moment we should do certain things. But when that precise time arrives, we may find that circumstances have changed because circumstances are related to time. For example, you may be expecting someone to visit you. There are different entrance doors to your house but in general people enter from one particular door and you wait there to see if that person is coming or not. But we don't know how circumstances are today. Maybe that person is coming from another direction. You wait there but this person may arrive at another door. This shows that not everything corresponds precisely with the circumstances.

The best way is trying to be aware, learning how to be responsible. Also I think that parents who are Dzogchen practitioners should educate children that way because small children don't have much idea about what they should and shouldn't do. Until they are old enough to judge and think for themselves, you must help your children. If they are doing something dangerous or negative, you should explain to them that they should not do it because it is dangerous. Some "modern" parents think that they should let children be free. This can be a good experience for children but if you don't care, there may be many negative problems. Other parents continue to recall the time when their children were small and how they held them in their arms and even when they've grown up, they still try to control their children. That is not good at all because when children know how to judge and think, they are able to become responsible for themselves. It doesn't mean that you let go and that you don't care. Of course, you can help and explain, but you pay respect to the children's dimension and make them understand that they should be responsible for themselves. That is important. And

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when they grow up that way, then they can go by themselves and you will also feel more free. So this is the principle of Dzogchen teaching for everybody.

The teacher

Dzogchen practitioners must not be dependent on anyone, not even the teacher. Some people think that they must follow what the teacher says, but if the teacher tells you something negative, why should you follow his advice? You can understand yourself whether it corresponds or not. You should try to do your best for having realization; this is a characteristic of how you should approach the Dzogchen Teaching.

Also in the Dzogchen teaching the main point is not that you follow with devotion, faith and belief only. Sometimes we consider that what the teacher says and does is perfect. If you have that kind of vision when you practice guruyoga, it is good for your realisation but in the real sense, the principle is not that you are dependent on the teacher.

A real teacher is one who transmits knowledge for waking up your real condition. When you get into that [awakened] state, it is the state of the teacher and you become inseparable from it. If you progress in that direction, then you can have faith, you can have devotion to the teacher, to the teaching, to the transmission because you have discovered the value of the teaching and transmission. It is not only your consideration of the teacher.

If you only think that the teacher is important and you follow him, that is an artificial faith. This kind of faith can seem very real today but when there are secondary causes, it can change. That is why some people follow teaching and feel that there is something to change: the teacher, the teaching, the path. If you have something to change, it means you have no knowledge. When you really have knowledge and discover your real nature, finally you find that there is nothing to change.

Direct introduction

I will give you an example of knowledge of Dzogchen. Dzogchen doesn't mean Dzogchen teaching, it means our real nature, our potentiality. We have to discover our potentiality and be in that state: this is called Dzogchen practice. The teacher introduces you to that state and you try to discover it by yourself with practice etc.

This is not something that only goes with oral transmission or explanation. You remember in the sutra teaching it says that the Prajnaparamita sutra is beyond explanation; it is beyond words. Mahamudra is explained in the same way and when we talk about Dzogchen it is the same. That is the reason why some traditions such as the Sakyapa and Gelugpa don't accept direct introduction. In the Dzogchen teaching, however, it is the main point. In the Kagyüpa tradition, too, there is always the introduction of mind for discovering the nature of mind. In the Gelugpa and the Sakyapa traditions

direct introduction is completely negated because it doesn't exist in their traditions. Why don't they accept it? Because of the principle of following Madhyamaka, and, in the sutra teaching, the Prajnaparamitahridaya. You remember at the beginning it says, "No eyes, no ears, no nose, etc." and at the end, "There is no wisdom, no path, no attainments, etc.". Everything is explained as emptiness. And in the Madhyamaka it also says we have no concepts for accepting. That is considered to be the principle of Nagarjuna's point of view.

When we say we introduce, *what* do we introduce? When we say introduce, there *is* something to introduce. There *is* a way of introducing it and that is why they don't accept it. It doesn't matter, however, whether they accept it or not. It isn't our problem. Our problem is that if you are following Dzogchen teaching or the Kagyüpa tradition, you should understand that [principle]. Some people go to the Sakyapa or Gelugpa centres and say, "Oh, I received direct introduction!" or, "I received the introduction of mind!" Then they discuss it and the Gelugpa teachers don't agree, they start to negate it and that person may have a lot of confusion.

So if you already know how the characteristics of the points of view differ, then you won't have this problem. If you are a practitioner of Dzogchen or the Kagyüpa tradition, you do that practice. That is all. It doesn't mean you can't go to a Gelugpa or Sakyapa centre and participate. If you have that kind of circumstance, that kind of possibility, why not. You can participate. But you shouldn't go there to discuss this kind of thing.

The non-gradual path

When some of our practitioners believe that something is really important, they try to convert other people, they try to explain and convince others. But there is no reason why you should try to convince people. Teaching does not mean trying to convince someone or convert them. Converting someone or being a type of missionary is very negative. Some people feel that it is very important to spread Buddhism everywhere, however, Buddhist teaching spreads when people have a karmic connection. If there is no karmic connection, it is not so easy, especially with high teachings like Vajrayana and Dzogchen. When a person is interested in the teaching, we never really consider them to be new.

People who are accustomed to following sutra teaching have the idea that when a person comes to the teaching for the first time, they have never followed Buddhist teaching before and are completely new. When people are new we consider that they are ignorant of Buddhist teaching and we ask them to start learning step by step from the bottom. This is the characteristic way of seeing of the gradual tradition.

But teaching does not always proceed in a gradual way. Teaching works taking into consideration the condition of beings, unlike our society in which everything is done

in a gradual way. In normal life, if we want to go to university to study, then we have to go there and apply for a place. The people at the university office ask to see our high school certificate which means we need to have a qualification. How can we have this? We have to start with primary school and, step by step, progress until we have the qualification for university. At the university they never say, "We'll check your capacity. If you have sufficient capacity, then we don't need the certificate and you can attend university". This would be a non-gradual system.

In the teaching both of these systems exist. That is why in the sutra teaching, too, we have the gradual and the non-gradual system, like Zen. In the tantric teaching, there are two methods of transformation taught first of all by Guru Padmasambhava. One is the *anuttaratantra*, or higher tantra transformation system, which is diffused in all traditions and schools, the other method is called Anuyoga and is diffused only in the Nyingmapa tradition. The difference between these two is that Anuyoga does not go step by step. Transformation is instant because the principle of Anuyoga is explained just like the Dzogchen teaching: everyone has primordial potentiality. Our primordial potentiality is like the infinite potentiality of the mirror - whatever is in front of the mirror can manifest instantly; it does not develop step by step. This is called non-gradual transformation.

The Dzogchen teaching taught by Garab Dorje since the beginning is the non-gradual way. Why do some teachers use the gradual system and go step by step? Because they combine the traditions of the schools.

If a teacher belongs to the Nyingmapa tradition, this means all the global teachings of the Buddha [are also contained in the teachings of that school], not only Dzogchen. There is the Hinayana system, the Mahayana, the Vajrayana. All of them are taught, applied and practiced in a more global way. Everything is presented step by step in a more gradual way. And the gradual way is also considered to be something very important.

Direct introduction

We know that the Dzogchen teaching was taught by Garab Dorje; the essence of the conclusion of his teachings are his Three Statements. The Three Statements of Garab Dorje are something like the conclusion of how we learn and apply Dzogchen teaching for everything. After receiving the Three Statements as well as all the Dzogchen teachings of Garab Dorje, his foremost student, Manjushrimita, divided them into three series. He did this because he discovered that the Three Statements of Garab Dorje represented all global Dzogchen teachings, hence we have the Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesa. The main point of each of these series is related to the Three Statements.

The First Statement of Garab Dorje is direct introduction, the way we can have real knowledge. If our real

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Margarita Island

Islands in Samsara

An Interview with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by the Board of Directors of the Margarita Project, December 20, 2002, during Rinpoche's vacation on the island of Koh Samet, Thailand.

Board of Directors of Proyecto Comunitario Tashigar del Norte (BoD): Rinpoche, we would like to ask you a few questions, to give some more information to the Dzogchen Community about the Margarita Project. To begin with, would you like to say something about Margarita Island, and why you find it so suitable for you?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: I personally like to stay in Margarita for the reason of my health, because the weather of Margarita Island is very good for me. It is warm, it is tropical weather, but at the same time it is very dry, and that is what I need. Also I like the island itself, the sea, everything, there is nothing unsuitable - that is why I am so interested. And when I live somewhere, then I think it is likely that people who are interested in the Teachings will also come there. So in this case I thought of the possibility of creating North Tashigar, in addition to South Tashigar in Argentina. Maybe many people are worried, thinking that it may become a complicated situation - but we are always in samsara. I don't know where we can really have any kind of guarantee that there are no problems of samsara - samsara is always samsara. So, I don't personally have much idea how long I still have to live, but for the rest of my life, wherever there is more likelihood of suitable weather and situation, that is where I would like to spend most of my time. That is the reason.

BoD: What about the idea of this Summer Gar that you mentioned, and the opportunity for your students to live together there, close to you?

ChNN: It doesn't mean that all my students will be able to go and live there, but any people who are interested can spend some time there. And then, not only am I getting old, but also my students, like anybody else, will become old one day. It's the same situation for all of us when we become older, anyone can have problems just as I do. So possibly it's not too difficult for them to arrange to spend some time there, for that reason.

BoD: We are making progress during the first year, overcoming obstacles, defining housing and commercial aspects. The fields are green with Aloe Vera, and the urbanism work should begin next month. Do you have any views on the way we are going ahead, how well we are doing?

ChNN: Yes, this is something where we should work with our circumstance, our possibility - according to the possibilities we do our best. Because, as I said already, everything that we have as our condition is related to samsara. So, there is never any guarantee, but if we try to do our best everything can go well. When we examine the situation and the possibilities, we can decide which way is the best, then try to do it that way.

BoD: What about the political and economic difficulties Venezuela is going through now?

ChNN: So, at the moment it seems very tragic, not only in Venezuela but also in Argentina, everywhere. Everything is impermanence, today there may be something like this, but tomorrow it can change - there does not exist anything permanent. So we know this and we remember it: we are in samsara, we are practitioners, and we should deal with it, that is all, without being worried about it. I do not have any problem with it, because I know very well that in samsara there have been so many problems in past times, and there will still be many in future. Not only in Venezuela and Argentina, but also even in countries where at present there are no problems, tomorrow there can also be a problem - that is our samsaric nature.

BoD: Many of us have invested everything, financially, in the opportunity to have a house at Tashigar North. Even though we, the Board of Directors, are doing our best to limit costs, the unstable currency and economic situation and unexpected expenses are tending to push us above our original budget. The shareholders are afraid that they will be asked for some more money; maybe some would be unable to raise anything extra. Do you have any advice?

ChNN: Yes - I cannot offer any money. (Laughter) But if anyone would like to participate financially somehow, they can do so. If they don't really have any serious problem, they can try to adapt and do it a different way. That is what I am saying; we should work with the circumstances, not only the local ones, but also circumstances of personal economy, etc.

BoD: We do not like to cut costs so that standards will be reduced.

ChNN: Yes, we can do our best. In the same way as anything else, at the time we create something, it is better to do it well, that way the benefit will be greater in the end.

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nature is beyond explanation, beyond words etc., how can we understand it? How can we get into this knowledge? There must be some method. If there is no method, there cannot be many realized beings and so there is no reason why we have teaching. Somehow, there is a possibility [to have this knowledge] but what is it? Garab Dorje says 'direct introduction'.

Direct introduction doesn't mean that the teacher explains and the students listen and receive a direct introduction; that is a type of transmission called 'oral transmission'. Oral transmission is, however, indispensable for direct introduction. The teacher explains the meaning of the base, the path, introduction, etc., and the students listen well and have some kind of idea.

The teacher may also give a symbolic transmission. This is just like using a mirror. It is not necessary to do this in a ritual way because when I speak about a mirror, you know very well what I mean. Probably many of you have six or seven different sized mirrors at home, all around the house, so you know what a mirror is. When you look in a mirror you see yourself. That is a real mirror. Sometimes we use a kind of ritual mirror [for symbolic transmission]. You know how our infinite potentiality is just like the potentiality of the mirror so when I use this symbol, you can have this knowledge, this understanding.

There are many symbols besides that of the mirror. We also use the white A in the thigle. This is another symbol. It is not really primordial potentiality, but when we do visualization, it represents sound, light and rays and so we can get into knowledge of that state.



Primordial potentiality

I remember when the H.H. the Dalai Lama gave Dzogchen teaching to us at Merigar - the transmission of the terma teaching of the 5th Dalai Lama. He used two symbols, which is a very traditional way of Dzogchen: a crystal rock and a peacock's feather. These are symbols of two principles of Dzogchen teaching: *kadag* and *lhundrub* (*lhund grub*). *Kadag* (*ka dag*) means pure from the beginning, that is emptiness. Just like a crystal rock, our real nature is emptiness, clear and pure and limpid. But even though it is emptiness, it has infinite potentiality and that infinite potentiality is mainly called primordial potentiality. To show the symbol of primordial potentiality, we use a peacock's feather in which there is a kind of circle, a *thigle* (*thig le*), of five colors. Why is primordial potentiality represented as a *thigle*? So we can have that experience in Dzogchen practice.

When we talk about Dzogchen teaching, we consider it to be something very special, important, different from sutra, tantra, etc., and the particular qualification of Dzogchen teaching is that we can have a real vision of the *dharmata*. In general *dharmata* is a kind of concept, an idea of everything as emptiness, but in the Dzogchen teaching, when we do practice we have that experience. Sometimes when you are gazing into the sky, although the sky is empty, there is nothing, you can see some kind of silver balls appearing in the sky. If you close your eyes and look into the sun's rays, particularly at sunrise and sunset, you can see something like the *thigle* that is in the peacock's feather. Many people think that this is only a manifestation of the sun's rays but this is not so; the sun is a secondary cause. The real cause is that we have infinite potentiality and with this cause, then it can appear visibly in our sight. We have that potentiality inside ourselves, not outside. Even though it seems that we are seeing something outside, how can you discover that it is inside? You can do a dark retreat and in the dark you do the position and the method of practice. Then these kind of *thigles* appear in the dark. In the dark there are no sun's rays so why do they appear? They appear because the secondary cause is that we are using that method. It still seems that they appear visibly outside ourselves, but when you have this precise experience, you close your eyes and you can still see them, so you can understand that they are not outside. If this vision is outside, how can you see it when you close your eyes? That is an example of how this symbol represents our infinite potentiality.

Understanding through experience

Sometimes it is much easier to understand with symbols rather than explanations. For example, in our mind and in a concrete way, big and small are opposites; you can't put something very big into something small. But if you look in a mirror, even though the mirror is small, you can see a huge mountain with all its colors, its form, everything. That is an example to help us understand and go beyond our limitations.

But once we have this knowledge of symbolic and oral transmission, then we progress with our experiences, not with explanations. Our experience is something very concrete. In our lives everything is experience. Everything that we have learned we learned with experience. Without experience we cannot understand anything.

Take, for example, (I'm always giving examples), a person who has never had an experience of 'sweet'. That person is curious to know what sweet is. We may get him many books explaining about 'sweet' and ask him to read them and to meet someone very expert in explaining 'sweet'. That person can follow for years and years, listening and learning from books, and can construct some ideas about what 'sweet' is. He can construct an idea just like a policeman putting together the profile of a wanted person from different information, but that idea will not be real. He can never get real experience of sweet [this way]. But if someone places a very small piece of sugar or chocolate on his tongue, he will taste it. That means he will experience it and finally discover, "Ah! Sweet is like this!" Now he cannot change his idea. Before he had this experience, he could always change. Now there is nothing to change, but even if you don't want to have that knowledge, you cannot cancel it. This is how we do direct introduction.

Garab Dorje says that with direct introduction, the individual can discover his real nature. This is the first statement of Garab Dorje. Some people say, "Oh you must not teach direct introduction! It is very secret, very essential and we must keep it secret!". There is no reason we keep it secret so that people do not know about it. We say it is secret because its nature is secret. This is not easy to understand and nobody can explain with words, only with experience. Even the teacher cannot do anything but explain that you should have this experience and have it with the teacher. This is a unique way.

Some people think direct introduction is something secret and that they must ask for it when they are alone with their teacher. They ask, "Oh, I want to appointment with the teacher alone. I have something very important to say to him." And when we meet, they say, "Teacher, please give me direct introduction!". Some people have this kind of idea, but this is very passive. If the teacher has the possibility to give [direct introduction] that way, why hasn't he already given it to everyone? If the Buddha and Bodhisattvas had had the possibility, they would have already given it and there wouldn't be a single being in Samsara.

But in a sutra teaching Buddha said, "I give you the path, but realization depends on you." Buddha never said your realization depends on me and you should only have faith in me. When your

teacher really works with you, with experience, and you discover your real nature, then you can really have confidence in your teacher, as well as faith and devotion. There is nothing artificial any more. So we need this kind of confidence, not just believing.

In the Dzogchen teaching what is important is that we discover, not just believe. We can believe anything but then we may also discover that it is not real. If we discover the 'sweet' taste with a piece of sugar, then there is nothing to change, and we can have real confidence in that. In the Dzogchen teaching, this principle is very important.

Base, path and fruit

To learn Dzogchen teaching we need to have very precise understanding of the characteristics of teachings. There are special explanations in the Dzogchen teaching which you cannot find in Sutra and most Vajrayana teaching.

In Anu yoga, the non-gradual system of transformation, and in Dzogchen teaching, Atiyoga, three paths of liberation are explained. Three paths of liberation doesn't mean three vehicles like we usually speak of in Buddhism. The three paths of liberation are related to the three gates: body, voice and mind. These three paths of liberation, these methods - the base, the path and fruit are all different. It doesn't mean that when we are totally realized that the realization is different. Realization must be the same. But we consider what is meant by realization.

For example, some people say they have read books by Westerners in which they state that they got enlightened at a precise moment in time.

Maybe you have read biographies of some enlightened beings, some Westerners, who explain [their enlightenment] in that way. They consider enlightenment to be a sudden explosion full of light. But in the Dzogchen teaching, realization is not considered to be something like that. The base, the path and the fruit are all three different paths of liberation, but different doesn't mean that when you apply one, you renounce the other two. You can apply and integrate everything. What is important is that you know the characteristics of the teaching. In that way, you won't have any confusion later. Otherwise, when we explain or do Guruyoga in a Dzogchen way, some people feel uncomfortable.

Guruyoga

In Dzogchen, when we do Guruyoga in a formal way, visualizing, for example, Guru Padmasambhava, then receiving empowerments and at the end unifying, when we visualize Guru Padmasambhava, we communicate with him, but we are working mainly with our teachers, with the lineage connected with Guru Padmasambhava. We do not have contact with Guru Padmasambhava. We cannot receive transmission and teaching directly from him. The same is true when we visualize, not only Guru Padmasambhava, but any kind of Yidam or Heruka. We receive all teaching from our teachers. So when we do visualization of Guru Padmasambhava with the three Vajras - white OM, red A and blue HUM representing the state of body, speech and mind - we are unifying the three Vajras of all our teachers in those three places of Guru Padmasambhava. We should not think that we are praying to Guru Padmasambhava. Of course, Guru Padmasambhava and Guru Garab Dorje - all lineages - are also unified!

So when they do this kind of practice, many people feel a little uncomfortable. They say, "Oh I have Gelugpa teacher... a Bönpo teacher, how I can put this all together? If I put it together, then there will be an accident!" We have these kinds of conflict within ourselves.

But when you do Guruyoga, you must consider that your teacher is an enlightened being. It doesn't matter whether or not your teacher is really the same as an enlightened being, but you should try to have that idea because Guru Padmasambhava said if you see your teacher as an enlightened being, you will have total realization of enlightenment; if you see him as an ordinary person, you have the realization of an ordinary person. But we have already realized that so we don't need it! Then if you consider your teacher is just like a cat or dog, you will have the realization of a cat or dog. That is what Guru Padmasambhava said.

That means it is very very important we have pure vision of our teacher. So, if we consider our teachers enlightened beings, they will be beyond these kinds of limitations. Then, when you put everything together and unify it in the three Vajras, there will not be an accident. If you still feel uncomfortable, then you know that it is your problem and you try to liberate that limitation because limitation is the root of *samsara*, not the root of liberation. The way we do Guruyoga, for example, is a characteristic of the Dzogchen teaching.

Path of Renunciation

All paths have different ways of seeing. Yesterday I spoke to you about Sutra teaching, Mahayana and Hinayana; all these traditions are called the path of renunciation. They renounce the cause of negative karma, controlling many kind of actions related to our body, speech and mind. That is the characteristic of the path of renunciation. And even though we are Dzogchen practitioners, sometimes we also need that if we do not have sufficient capacity to control and govern ourselves.

Say, for example, you want to stop smoking cigarettes because you already know the consequences and negative aspects of smoking. You've tried many times but never succeeded. That means that even though you are a Dzogchen practitioner, you don't have sufficient capacity. What do you then for overcoming that problem? Now it is better if you apply the path of renunciation. It isn't necessary to receive a vow and become a monk or a nun. But you know what your problem is and when you go to see an important teacher or visit some important place such as Bodhgaya, you might think "Oh, I'm in Bodhgaya now - this is the place where Buddha became enlightened. I want to do something important - I've never succeeded in stopping cigarettes, today I'm going to decide!" You take your packet of cigarettes out and throw them away, and you decide that from this moment on, you won't smoke any more. Then tomorrow, the day after, when you move around and some of your friends offer you a cigarette, you remember, "Oh, I can't because I took this commitment in Bodhgaya." So you go ahead for a year or two and overcome that problem. After, instead of smoking, when someone else is smoking around you, you become very sensitive and it disturbs you. This is an example.

There are many moments when we may really need the system of the path of renunciation; Dzogchen practitioners use everything when it is necessary. For example, when it rains, we need an umbrella, but we don't need an umbrella all the time. Even though we have a very nice umbrella, we don't always need to use it. That is an example: when the circumstances arise, then we use it.

That is why we learn many kinds of methods belonging to Kriyatantra, Yogatantra, lower Tantra, higher Tantra, etc., because nobody

Continued on next page

knows which kind of circumstances will appear. [Depending on the circumstances,] then we can use [a particular method]. If it is not necessary, we keep them aside. In Dzogchen, all these kinds of teaching are called secondary practices. The main practice is the method of Dzogchen mainly as in Guruyoga, etc.

Nirmanakaya dimension

So you can see then, this path of renunciation is related more to the physical body. If we take a vow, that vow is related to our physical body, because when we arrive at the cemetery, then we no longer have any vows [to keep]. If we have taken a vow we must keep it up to that moment, so the characteristic of this teaching is that it is more on the physical level.

Buddha called it Nirmanakaya. Nirmanakaya means samsaric vision, samsaric situation. Even though Buddha is an enlightened being, he took a samsaric physical body in order to communicate to human beings. In the biography of Buddha there are many stories in which the Buddha sometimes [took the form of] a monkey, or a bird or an elephant, etc., so that he could communicate with these kinds of beings. Of course, it is much better, much easier to communicate with other monkeys if we are monkeys, too, rather than humans. That means that even enlightened beings like Buddha can enter into a dimension of karmic vision.

This karmic vision is not the karmic vision of Buddha but that of sentient beings. That way Buddha can give teaching and communicate. Buddha took a human body, a human condition, and he explained all sutra teaching with his tongue, with his mouth. In order to listen to Buddha's teaching in that period, people had no need of particular realization or capacity, just like what we are doing now. At this moment, I'm explaining like a teacher, you are listening like a student and maybe you understand something. That is what Buddha did and this is called the Nirmanakaya dimension. It is a physical dimension. There is also Parinirvana where Buddha manifested death, Buddha manifested birth, then he manifested living in a human condition, and, at the end, also death.

Dimension of Energy

But when we talk about the energy level or voice level, Buddha also explained or transmitted teaching through manifestations, because he was working more on the energy level. For example, Buddha manifested like Kalachakra and transmitted that knowledge. That knowledge and method is called the path of transformation. Why is there the possibility to transform? Because now people who follow [the teaching], have more knowledge of the energy level. In sutra teaching like Hinayana and Mahayana, there do not exist any explanations of the energy level because the energy level is more difficult to understand than the physical level.

IMPORTANT PROGRAM CHANGE

The Merigar Gakyil would like to inform that the August 2003 retreat of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar will be held from August 10th - 16th, 2003, instead of August 13th - 19th, so that it does not overlap the retreat held by H. H. Sakya Trizin which will be planned for August 18 - 20, 2003.

Warmest greetings

Anna Pucci
Vice Director Merigar Gakyil

Santi Maha Sangha in Merigar, Summer 2003

July 15th - 17th, Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam
July 18th - 22nd, Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAIR NORBU

SCHEDULE

2003 - 2004



2003

AUSTRALIA

February 24th
February 28th - March 2nd
March 7th
March 28th

Leave for New Caledonia
Teaching Retreat
Leave for Brisbane
Leave for Namgyalgar

Santi Maha Sangha

April 8th - 10th
April 11th - 15th

Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam
Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training

April 18th - 22nd
Teaching: Longsal Longde

Easter Retreat at Namgyalgar

April 28th
May 2nd - 4th
May 7th
May 9th - 11th
May 14th
May 16th - 18th

Leave for Singapore
Singapore Teaching
Leave for Taiwan
Taipei Retreat
Leave for Japan
Tokyo Retreat

EUROPE

RUSSIA

May 21st

Leave for Moscow

Santi Maha Sangha

May 27th - 29th
May 30th - June 3rd
June 6th - 10th

Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam
Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training
Kunsangar Rereat Teaching: Longsal Tsalung

ITALY

June 13th
June 18th - 22nd
June 27th - July 14th

Leave for Rome
Dzogchen Padma Nyingthig Teaching Retreat
Personal Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

July 15th - 17th
July 18th - 22nd

Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam
Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training

August 10th - 16th
August 18th - 20th

A retreat about rigs-drug gnas-sbyong
Retreat with H.H. Sakya Trizin

USA

August 25th
August 29th - 31st
September 1st
September 5th - 9th
September 9th - 14th

Leave for New York City
New York City Teaching
Leave for Tsegylgar
Dzogchen Padma Nyingthig Teaching
Longsal Gongpa Ngotrod Teaching

Santi Maha Sangha

September 17th - 18th
September 19th - 23rd

Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Exam
Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Training

September 29th
October 3rd - 5th

Leave to visit new West Coast place
West Coast Retreat

October 7th
October 10th - 12th

Leave for Miami
Miami Retreat

MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

October 13th
October 31st - November 4th

Leave for Margarita
Longsal Tsalung Retreat

TASHIGAR, ARGENTINA

December 19th

Leave for Cordoba

2004

December 26th - January 2nd

Tashigar Retreat



Retreat with H. H. Sakya Trizin at Merigar

H. H. Sakya Trizin has accepted the invitation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and will be at Merigar next August 18th - 20th, 2003. As many of you will remember, H. H. visited Merigar a few years ago. On that occasion, besides giving teachings on the *Zhenpa Zhidral*, he also conferred a formal initiation of Vajrakilaya.

Since the age of seven, His Holiness has been spiritual head of the Sakyapa tradition and as well as being the holder of the three main lineages of this tradi-

tion (Sakya, Tsar and Ngor) holds the lineage of the complete Nyingma Teachings of the Iron Bridge and the Total Perfection, as well as the Lamdre Teachings which embrace the Hinayana, Mahayana and Mantrayana paths. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who will be present during teachings, has asked His Holiness to give an initiation of Guru Dragpo. The practice of this Yidam, the wrathful manifestation of Guru Padmasambhava, has been transmitted by our Master since the beginning and has a particular importance for us, and so it will be difficult to miss such an exceptional opportunity. We invite everyone to participate in this event which the clarity and inexhaustible generosity of the Master has made available.

Island of Samaria, interview with ChNN continued from page 3

BoD: During the Longsal Teachings last April, you recommended that each main Gar should buy one lot, so that the people coming from that region can stay there. Only Tsegylgar bought a lot but now they have sold it. The main reason seems to be that many people are needed to contribute to the purchase price, but only a few of them would be able to stay in that one house, so it is not so practical. How do you see this situation?



View from the land with aloe babies in foreground

G. PIRELLA

ChNN: I think they should work with their agreement, with the people who are interested.

BoD: But the problem is, on one lot there can be only one house, not a big hotel or apartment block, so not too many people can stay there.

ChNN: Oh yes, that is true. At the time of a big retreat, with many people coming from a country, just having a lot will obviously be insufficient. But at other times, when people are coming and going, a house belonging to their Gar would give them more possibility of having a place to stay. That was the original idea. So it can be done with awareness in whatever way is best, any appropriate kind of agreement between a Gar and its members. I don't want to make it obligatory for all Gars to buy a lot, but I think that it would be suitable for each one to have a place.

BoD: What do you think about the idea, if we become successful, of acquiring some more land, for more people, more aloe?

ChNN: Yes, I think that is a good way. Also, if many people would like to be there, perhaps they can buy land and houses nearby the Gar, developing in that way. For the Community Aloe Vera business, if we need more land we can always expand - why not? But first we must see what our circumstances and possibilities are.

BoD: Can you offer us some advice about dealing with those people who are not Community members, and the involvement of such people in our project, possible commercial partners, etc.?

Rinpoche: Yes, in general, as in any business of this kind, the main thing is that we can truly have more confidence in people who are part of the Community. Other people have their own interests and priorities; we can never be sure how they will act later on. For the same reason, when we are choosing a Gakyil in the Dzogchen Community, for example, we say that people who have spent some time, at least some years following the Teachings, should be chosen. Why? - because when we have land, houses, money etc., if unknown people are allowed to enter the Gakyil, nobody knows how they will vote and try to change everything. So it's the same thing here. Sometimes it can even be something positive or useful for those not belonging to the Community to be involved, but it is very difficult to really understand, isn't it? Because of being in samsara. Also, being a Community member is not always a guarantee: some people are not completely honest. Sometimes that sort of thing happens, although it is very rare, because at least they think a little, they are interested in the Teachings, and there is a principle, is there not? - they pay respect. A few people do not, but most of them do.

BoD: Rinpoche, thank you very much.

continued on page 10

Shang-Shung Institute

italy

austria

america

An Open Letter from Shang-Shung Institute at Merigar A Report on the Institute's Activities

August 2001- August 2002 and new projects The Shang-Shung Institute is happy to bring all practitioners up to date on the activities that have been undertaken and those programmed for the current year. At the same time we would like to remind everyone of the importance of renewing their annual membership or taking out new membership in order to support the Institute which, in the last years, has grown considerably with a consequent increase in ordinary and extraordinary running costs. The Audio-Video Archives Preservation of both the audio-cassettes and the videos of the precious teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu of which the masters are still in magnetic form continues in full swing. The archiving of all the digital masters which are recorded at the present time or sent to the Institute from all over the world is going ahead in order to complete and constantly bring up to date our documentation center so that it can be, according to the wishes of Rinpoche, the place where all material pertaining to retreats, web casts and conferences held by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu are collected and kept. About 900 hours of videos of teachings and films on Tibet have been transferred into digital form. Five new videos have been prepared for practitioners: The practice of the three Thuns, the Six Lokas (from the teaching of the August 2002 retreat), a Lama Around the World 2 (in both English and Italian versions), the Teachers' Training, an important documentation of the exams taken by the instructors of the Base Level of the SMS, the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga First Level, containing advice and teachings that Rinpoche gave to those who were present, pearls of wisdom for the entire Community, Margarita, the sweet life, a short enjoyable film on the experiences and impressions of various practitioners on the island. Several CDs have also been produced: one with the various melodies of the practices recorded by Rinpoche in person, a CD about Garab Dorje and another on the Shitro (teachings and practice). We would also like to mention that this year, too, the videos of the retreats will be edited and can be ordered by those practitioners who were present at the retreats or who have received the necessary transmission. The RED publishing house has distributed 2000 copies of the Yantra Yogavideo in Italian and numerous others in the English version have been distributed by Snow Lion. About 600 audio-cassettes have been saved and the following cassettes have been made available to practitioners: the new explanation of the Green Tara practice (from the retreat in Peru), the preliminary practices of the Base Level of the Santi Maha Sangha and the First Level practices. The Library About 850 pages of texts that are in a state of deterioration due to mold are planned to be digitally scanned. Inventory of the books has been completed and will be inserted into the database while a team of experts are controlling and putting in order the transliteration of the Tibetan texts. The Institute has almost completed the work of redesigning the ex-carpentry shop which will become the reading room of the library complete with made-to-measure shelves built by Migmar and Robin which will house the audio and video cassettes, numerous texts and the photographic archive which will finally have its own area and workspace. Work on archiving and transferring a part of this archive into digital form has already begun. Several tables and computers for video consultation of texts will be purchased for the reading room and a fireproof entrance door will be put into operation. The substantial costs that the Institute will sustain for the reading room have been allocated in anticipation of the Province's next on line service program involving our library as well, whose specificity has been recognized by the local authorities. The room which is currently crammed with the audio and video cassettes that have been saved or are still to be saved will become the office for Maurizio Mingotti who, due to lack of space, is having to work at home at the moment. The Department of Medicine This year, as last year, various types of courses have been organized both in Italy and abroad. Last spring, Prof. Wangdu of Lhasa University was invited to Merigar to hold the fourth year course on Tibetan Medicine in collaboration with Dr. Nida. Next February, the first students who have completed the entire cycle of Ku Nye studies will receive their diplomas in Rome and Milan. The textbook which covers the three levels of Ku Nye has been completed and Liz Granger is translating into English the second and third level texts since the first level was already translated in Australia. Elio Guarisco worked on the final editing of the book on the Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine based on the three year course held by Prof. Thubten Phuntsog which will soon be available in three volumes for those who are interested. The chülen was also prepared and can be ordered by all practitioners from the secretary of the Institute. The Regione Toscana



authorities have approved a project of research and experimentation on Ku Nye the correct procedures and criteria of which are being planned by the institute Management. A teaching trip to Tibet has been planned for next July in order to give students of medicine and Ku Nye the possibility to have lessons and participate in some of the external therapies at the Medical College and some hospitals of traditional Tibetan Medicine in Xining in Amdo. Exhibitions The exhibition entitled "Il Tesoro Celeste: l'arte tibetana della medicina" was held in Milan. In Siena we presented the "Visitando il Tibet: un paese in viaggio" exhibition. Six spaces were prepared: geographical Tibet, a nomadic tent, a tent for socializing, a classroom, the room of a house and a sacred space. Several guides accompanied the children through the exhibition telling stories and involving them in different activities.

Some Tibetan monks created a mandala and two workshops were organized, one on painting by Paola Minelli, the other on making Tibetan masks by Migmar. This exhibition was very successful and had about 9000 visitors, half of which were children. Thanks to the collaboration of Anna Prisco, the Institute is trying to present the same exhibition in other Italian cities and possibly even abroad. Department of Archeology In August 2001, Mauro Nascari and two experts carried out a first survey of the Dzamda region. The aim of the survey was to collect an initial documentation in order to carry out further studies, excavations and restoration. Projects A substantial donation given anonymously, will allow the Institute to carry forward several new programs. One of the projects is the creation of a unique data base for all of our archives, the publishing house and the community. A committee has already met to study the best approach and find a programmer. This person will be Grisha Mokhin who started to collaborate long-distance with the Institute in November. The documentation center needs a new computer, a digital video camera and other hardware in order to copy the video cassettes and cut and edit the new videos. Maurizio Mingotti and Carla Caponi have learned how to do this and Paolo Brunatto has confirmed that they can create excellent videos, a fact verified by all those who bought videos of the retreats. 2003 will see the start of the enormous and exacting project of the videobiography of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu which will require the work of a group of people for about five years. Details of the project has already been announced on different occasions. As mentioned previously, the library requires different equipment, part of which has already been bought and part of which has still to be paid for. The Institute also intends to allocate a certain amount of money to the purchase of new books in order to bring our catalogue up to date. In 2004 we plan to start a new course of Tibetan Medicine and in 2003 the steering committee will arrange the program and times with Dr. Nida. The course will probably be organized in Austria and France as well. The Institute will also look for another doctor to invite to Italy in order to assist Dr. Nida with the courses and to extend the teaching activities of the Institute. The department that organizes exhibitions has already ordered the medical thankas in order to complete the collection. It will also be necessary to buy objects and materials (carpets, thankas, clothes, bowls, cups, etc.) in Tibet for the "Visitando il Tibet: un paese in viaggio" exhibition so that they remain the patrimony of the Institute and, in the future, do not need to be borrowed or rented. Costs These are the estimated costs. Some are final, other to be verified. (All costs in Euro)

Restructuring the library 25,000

Resident doctor 8,000 Electronic equipment 7,200 Purchasing thankas 5,000 Purchasing objects (exhibitions) 2,000 Data base 2,500 Book on medicine 2,500 TOTAL 51,200 Euro In order to complete this information, the steering committee wishes to communicate that the people who receive a salary from the Institute for different jobs are: the secretary, Rita Renzi, Dan Zegunis who is in charge of saving the audio tapes and works on graphics and editing the CDs, Maurizio Mingotti who is in charge of saving the videos and editing the new ones, Dr. Nida whose situation in Italy the Institute is trying to legalize with a regular work visa, Jacobella Gaetani who works part-time cataloguing Tibetan texts and Grisha Mokhin, our informatics expert who is employed in writing programs for the data base. These salaries cost the Institute about 61,000 Euros annually. The Institute would like to thank all those who have collaborated with various activities in karma yoga: Felice Storgato, Virginia Policreti, Anna Prisco, Gianni Baggi, Carla Caponi, Soledad Suarez and all those practitioners who have helped on different occasions.

The Board of Directors

TIBET ANYONE?

Istituto Shang-Shung, Italy Up-to-date news on the Teaching Trip to Tibet

Departure: July 7 for Beijing, overnight stay July 8 departure for Xining

Return: August 1 Xining - Beijing with overnight stay August 2 Beijing - Milan - Rome

Participation fee for 10 people in double rooms: 2,300 Euro This includes: - return flights in economy class for Beijing with Air China - internal flights Beijing - Xining - Beijing - airport taxes - 2 overnight stays with breakfast in Beijing at the Marco Polo Hotel in double rooms - renting a small bus with a driver (includes 100km travel per day) for the entire period in Amdo - 14 nights in double rooms with breakfast at the Beifu Hoel (3 stars) in Xining - Elvia medical and luggage insurance for the entire period - visa to China Single room supplement in Beijing: 50 Euro Single room supplement in Xining: 280 Euro - organisational costs - a week of lessons at the Xining Medical College - the possibility of attending a week of applying external therapies with a Tibetan doctor at one or more of the hospitals in Xining. Not included in the costs are: - food for the entire period - overnight stays outside the 14 nights included in the participation fee. In fact we expect to make a series of excursions to meet the culture of the Tibetan nomads and to visit some sacred places in the area, so, according to circumstances, we will stay in small hotels or nomads' tents. Participants should calculate at least another 700 Euros of expenses for a total of about 3,000 Euros. IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION The quota has been calculated on the participation of at least 10 people in the trip. In the case that there are fewer or more participants, the quota will increase or decrease. In any case, we must have at least 5 or 6 people in order to organize the trip. We would like to remind you that participation in the trip is reserved for those students who have completed the Medicine Course or who have attended at least the Second Level of Ku Nye. Registration: Registration should be made to the secretary of the Institute before April 15 with a down-payment of 50% of the quota (1,150 Euro). The remaining part must definitely be paid before June 7. Departure will be from Rome and Milan. We would also like to mention that contact with the Medical College and the hospitals in Xining was made possible thanks to the collaboration of Dr. Nida and the Istituto Nagk Man.

Special Bank Account for Video Biography Project of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Institute is very pleased to announce that the Chögyal Namkhai Norbu video biography project is on the way. A special bank account has been opened by the institute so that donations and sponsorships can directly be paid into it in order to cover the expenses and to enable the video department to carry out this costly and important project. We wish to remind prospective donors that their names will be acknowledged on the back covers of the videos themselves. The bank references are as follows:

Account : Fondo Biografia C.N.N.
Current Account Number: 7571.09
Bank: Monte Dei Paschi Di Siena, Branch Of Arcidosso, Number 2760

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Shang-Shung Institute Italy

Program to the end of 2003

Important communication

After several years experience in the field of teaching, the Shang-Shung Institute plans to improve organization of courses and promote a deeper level of learning in the disciplines being taught so that their students will have access to fuller qualifications and a guarantee of a professional future. In particular the courses of Ku Nye, both those that have already started as well as those to be programmed in the future, will be organized in the following way:

First level: six weekends for the courses that are organized in town; an intensive eight-day course with a follow-up weekend for the courses at Merigar since during intensive courses the work is more concentrated.

Second level: as the first level except the first day of the course will be dedicated to the admission exam.

Third level: as the first level except the first day of the course will be dedicated to the admission exam.

Final diploma: at a suitable distance from the end of the third level, the students have to take a final exam and present a theoretical-experiential thesis to be decided with the Teacher and the Institute. At the discretion of the Teacher and the Institute, some of the students who have done their final diploma with merit will be offered a place on a Teachers Training Course in order to become future instructors of courses to be organized by the Institute. It is expected that these courses will not begin before the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004.

Fees: fees will be slightly higher for the courses in town than those organized at Merigar. In town the Institute has to rent a suitable place where the courses can be held while at Merigar the Institute already has its own structure. Students must cover costs of food and accommodation. Fees for the courses include all teaching material necessary for the course. Students are required to pay for the entire course even though they may not attend all the seminars. Students will not be admitted to the following level if they have missed two seminars (or more) and have not made them up at another course.

General Medicine Course

In 2004 a new five-year Tibetan Medicine course will begin. Information on the program, venue and fees will be released in the near future as soon as these details have been defined and confirmed by the teachers.

Trip to Tibet in July 2003

This trip is intended only and exclusively for students of the previous Tibetan Medicine course as well as those who have attended the first two levels of Ku Nye. If possible relatives and friends of the students may also participate in the trip.

The students will stay in Xining in Qinghai where, for the first fifteen days, they will follow theoretical lessons at the local Medical College. They will have the chance of observing therapies practiced at two hospitals of traditional Tibetan Medicine, with particular attention to the Lum (balneotherapy) therapies, practically unknown in the West.

Dr. Nida Chenagsang will be present with the students and act as interpreter. The trip will be organized in collaboration with the Ngak Mang Institute which will take care of the organization.

After the first two weeks, an excursion to the main places of interest in Amdo will be organized and students will be able to

discover the land and culture of the Tibetan nomads.

The cost of the trip is estimated to be Euro 3,300-3,500, however, further details will be given as soon as the program has been finalized. Places on the trip should be reserved before May 15, 2003.

ROME: January 25th-26th, 2003

Course of Sa Che Second Level

Registration fee: 115 Euro

ROME: February 1st-2nd, 2003

Final exam for students of Ku Nye Third Level

Registration fee: 100 Euro

MILAN: February 8th-9th, 2003

Final exam for students of Ku Nye Third Level

Registration fee: 100 Euro

CONEGLIANO VENETO: February 15th, 2003

Third International Conference on "Healing and Alternative Therapies"

Introductory Conference on Tibetan Massage

Information:

Ass. Oltre l'Infinito,

via Garibaldi 5, 31025 S. Lucia di P.

TV

Tel: 0438 701054; www.oltrelinfinito.it

KARMALING, FRANCE: February 22nd-23rd, 2003

Course on Diet and Behavior

Information to follow

ROME: March 8th-9th, 2003

Second course on Ku Nye Second Level

MERIGAR: March

14th - Exam to admit students to Ku Nye Third Level

15th-22nd - Intensive course of Ku Nye Third Level

23rd-30th - Intensive course of Ku Nye First Level

Registration fee for each course: 400 Euro

THIS PROGRAM HAS REPLACED THE ONE ANNOUNCED BEFORE.

ROME: April 5th-6th, 2003

Second course on Ku Nye Second Level

MILAN: April 12th-13th, 2003

Dreams and Tibetan Medicine: First Level

Registration fee: 115 Euro

Places must be booked before March 15th

AUSTRIA: April 25th-27th, 2003

May 2nd-3rd-4th, 2003

First two courses of Ku Nye Third Level

ROME: May 10th-11th, 2003

Fourth course of Ku Nye Second Level

MILAN: May 23rd-25th, 2003

Second course of Dreams and Medicine Second Level

Registration fee: 115 Euro.

Places must be booked before April 15th

AUSTRIA: May 23rd-25th, 2003

May 30th-June 1st, 2003

Third and fourth course of Ku Nye Third Level

ROME: June 7th-8th, 2003

Fifth course of Ku Nye Second Level

MERIGAR: June 14th-15th, 2003

Review of Ku Nye First Level

Registration fee: 100 Euro

KARMALING, FRANCE: June 20th-23rd, 2003

Complete course of Dreams and Tibetan Medicine

MERIGAR: June 28th-29th, 2003

Review of Ku Nye Third Level

Registration fee: 100 Euro

TIBET: July

Teaching trip

MERIGAR: September 6th-13th, 2003

Intensive course of Ku Nye Second Level

Registration fee: 450 which includes all teaching material

ROME: September 20th-21st, 2003

Sixth and final course of Ku Nye Second Level

MERIGAR: September 26th-29th, 2003

Complete course of Sa Che (Tibetan geomancy)

Registration fee: 200 Euro

AUSTRALIA: October and November, 2003

Courses on Ku Nye and Dreams and Medicine.

AUSTRIA: December 5th-7th, 2003

Final exam and presentation of theses for students completing Ku Nye

Third Level

ROME: December 13th-14th, 2003

Pregnancy, birth and infant massage

Registration fee: 115 Euro

Information and reservations:

Milan:

Elisa Copello

Tel: 0233607505

Email: ecop@ats.it

Cell tel: 3387027207

Rome:

Anna Marie Clos

Tel: 065885142

Email: aruna@libero.it

Austria:

Oliver Leick

Email: oliver.leick@utanet.at

Merigar:

Secretary of the Shang-Shung Institute

Tel: 0564966941.

Email: ssinst@tiscali.it

Karma Ling, France:

Tel: 00330479257800

Email: info@karmaling.org . lhundroup@rimay.net

Bagchen Championship

The Shang-Shung Institute Austria plans to organize a world-wide championship of Bagchen, one of the oldest Tibetan games.

We have already received some suggestions about how to organize the tournament. But at the moment there is nothing precise because everything depends on the number of people who wish to participate. I can only say that there will be some qualification-rounds and that the winner will get a wonderful prize: a flight to Margarita and the payment of the retreat-fee for a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

How to organize meetings in your area:

1. Please inform the members of the Dzogchen Community (and also other interested people) in your area about the Bagchen Championship.

2. If people want to learn Bagchen, you can invite Michel Bricaire (michelbricaire@yahoo.fr), who is ready to give weekend-seminars. One weekend is enough to learn the game quite well.

3. If some people already know how to play, please organize local meetings of 4 or 8 people, so that you can play in 1 or 2 tables.

4. Please inform everybody who wants to take part in this Bagchen championship, that they should contact the SSI-Austria as soon as possible, in order to set up the rules for it.

5. Please inform everybody, who is interested, that there will be a starting-fee.

6. In order to win the first prize, several qualification rounds will have to be played.

Thank you very much for your collaboration!

Best wishes and good playing.

Oliver Leick, Shang-Shung Institute Austria

Email: ssi.austria@utanet.at

Web site: www.dzogchen.at/ssi.at

The Shang-Shung Institute Austria

Upcoming seminars

Bagchen Weekend Seminar with Michel Bricaire

Bagchen (bag chen) is an ancient Tibetan game that is several thousands years old and traces back to the powerful non-human tribe called Masang which in ancient times inhabited Tibet. Tibetan legends say that Masangs possessed very highly developed culture, art, and science. Masangs invented dice that were originally used for divination and not for playing, and it was based on dice that Bagchen stones were created. Tibetans believe that even though Masangs are now invisible for humans they still continue to patronize games of hazard and bring good fortune to those they like. For having success in playing Bagchen one needs a special alloy of intellect, speed of thinking, intuition and good luck. That's why Bagchen is equally popular among aristocracy and higher clergymen, simple peasants and nomads. It takes several days to study all the rules under the guidance of a qualified player and this time turns out to be enough to fall in love with this magical game created by ancient wisdom. (text: Igor Berkhin)

The seminar will take place from February 7 - 9, 2003, in the our Institute in East-Styria in Austria.

Cost: 50 Euro per person.

Weekend Seminar on Cooking with Anna Eid

Anna Eid has lived in Merigar for many years and has cooked for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his family on many different occasions. She likes to cook very much and also knows how to cook in Tibetan style. For the first time now she wants to offer her knowledge and experience for interested people and everybody is welcome. She describes her seminar as: "Cooking with fantasy. We will cook many delicious dishes using good spices, herbs and fresh vegetables. We also will learn how to make Momos, Tibetan soups and Tsampa."

The seminar will be from May 16 - 18, 2003 in the kitchen of a nice school in East Styria in Austria.

Cost: 50 Euro per person, approximately 30 Euro will be the cost of the food.

More information about our Institute and our activities you find on our homepage: www.dzogchen.at/ssi.at (soon: www.ssi-austria.at)

Oliver F. Leick

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Fax: +43 3386-23371

Email: ssi.austria@utanet.at

ISTITUTO SHANG SHUNG AT MERIGAR

From the Video Biography Project team (and SSI Archives)

Dear All,

The Shang-Shung Institute in Merigar would like to thank Jim Raschick and John Shane for giving the Archives many original videotapes containing wonderful and precious footage of Rinpoche's teachings and travels.

Some of the tapes are very old, dating back to 1985, and although all of them had been preserved in the best possible way by their owners (keeping them perfectly sealed and in dry environment) we found a few which had become almost or completely illegible, probably because of manufacturing defects in the tape coating. This reminds us that recordings are not permanent at all.

So, once again, we urge people who have original recordings (audio/video) to consider the inevitable degradation of the tapes and please to get in touch with us in order to have them digitally copied and integrated in the SSI Archives: <carla_caponi@iol.it> or <maurizio.mingotti@iol.it>.

We can digitize practically any kind of tapes you may have, audio, VHS, VHS-C, SuperVHS, V8, Hi8, Betacam, both PAL and NTSC: then we will return the originals to you, along with a digital copy on CD for your listening/viewing. Needless to say, all legitimate copyright concerns will be met with the due attention.

As we all know, what really matters is to preserve this patrimony and make it available for future generations. The only way to ensure this is to collect all the material in a central archive, to index and digitize it and then make the database accessible to all interested practitioners and scholars worldwide. We are concretely working every day to make this possible.

We would also like to thank people from all different countries who have sent us pictures of Rinpoche. It is perfect to send pictures as scanned images on CD instead of sending the original prints or films - please scan as TIFF files with a resolution of at least 150 dpi or, in the case of very small originals, 300 dpi.

Thanks as well to the ones who have already made a donation towards the Video Biography project and/or the Digital Archives project.

We wish you all a wonderful New Year.
Looking forward to hearing from many of you.
Thanks again.

Carla Caponi
Maurizio Mingotti

Shang-Shung Institute in America Announces

Professional development Points for Participants in the Tibetan Medical Foundation Courses sponsored by SSIIA

Participants in the Foundation Courses which have been offered by SSIIA can now receive professional development activity points (PDA) for:

Provider #ACHB 156-001

Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine with Dr. Thubten Phuntsog: has been reviewed by NCCAOM (National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine), and based on the information we have received, a Diplomate seeking recertification by completing this program will be granted 80 PDA points.

Provider #ACHB 156-002

Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo: had been reviewed by the NCCAOM, and based on the information we have received, a Diplomate seeking recertification by completing this program will be granted 80 PDA points.

IMPORTANT: Diplomates will receive one (1) Professional Development Activity point for each clock hour completed, if applicable. If Diplomates do not complete the entire program, they will only receive points for the hours that are completed.

Please reference your ACHB number in any future correspondence with NCCAOM regarding PDA courses.

NCCAOM

11 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: 703 548 9004
Fax: 703 548 9079
www.nccaom.org



Shang-Shung Institute in America

Schedule of Tibetan Medical Courses with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo 2003

April 5-6, 12-13, 19-20
Women's Health
NYC, NY

May 9-15
Ku Nye Massage Level 1
Conway, Massachusetts

May 23-29
Moxibustion
Conway, Massachusetts

June 6-13
Ku Nye Massage Level 1
Lincoln, Vermont
(in association with the Drikung Dzogchen Community of Vermont)

June 20-24
Liver Disease
Conway, Massachusetts

July 11-17
Pulse Diagnosis
Conway, Massachusetts

July 25-31
Urine Diagnosis
Conway, Massachusetts

August 8-22
Third Year Tibetan Medical Program
Conway, Massachusetts

For more information:
Shang-Shung Institute in America
PO Box 277
Conway, MA 01341
USA
Tel: 413 369 4928
Email: mfe.smith@verizon.net



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Tsegyalgar Bookstore is On-line! <www.tsegyalgar.org>

As some of you may have already seen, we now have an ON-LINE BOOKSTORE which you can find as one of the main topics on our web site <www.tsegyalgar.org>.

Not only are all the Tsegyalgar bookstore items there, but it also looks really beautiful!!!! Everything with nice color photos and clear descriptions. The best thing is that you can get it all using our completely secure connection and pay directly on-line.

The Tsegyalgar On-line Bookstore has been up and running for a short time, so it's totally fresh.

For that reason, please excuse any imperfections while corrections are still in progress. Also please share your comments with us so we can make it easier and more interesting to use.

NEWCOMER'S PACKAGE

The bookstore would like to offer a package put together for those who wish to have the essential items for practices: a canvas bag with variety of art applied, a small package of incense, a candle, 3 photos: 1. Thangka painting of Rinpoche 2. Guru Dragpur 3. Sinhamukha, a Tibetan Letter A card, a Thun book, a Collective practice book for Special Days, Tundus: explanation of the Short Thun, Tundrin: explanation of the Medium Thun.

The whole package is retailed at \$50.00US. We gladly offer it at a saving price of \$32.98US. This is a 32% discount. Shipping is not included in this price.

Tsegyalgar Bookstore, Dzogchen Community in America



book & art reviews

The Quantum and the Lotus

by Matthieu Ricard and Trinh Xuan Thuan
New York: Crown Publishers, 2001

Matthieu Ricard was a research scientist before he became a Buddhist monk. He has been a translator for a number of eminent lamas from both the Nyingma and Gelugpa traditions, and was the translator of *The Life of Shabkar*. A few years ago Ricard published *The Monk and the Philosopher*, a philosophical dialogue on Buddhism between himself and his father, the well-known French philosopher Jean Francois Revel. Building upon the structure of that dialogue, Ricard has published *The Quantum and the Lotus*, a dialogue with astrophysicist Trinh Thuan. There is some irony in the fact that Thuan, who grew up in a Buddhist family in Asia, moved to the West to study science, while Ricard, who was a Western scientist, moved to Asia to study Buddhism.

Other authors have tried to explore the interface between science and meditative disciplines. But they have rarely been successful in giving both their due. Sometimes the authors try to equate spiritual science with material science in a vulgar way. For example, equating the subtle spiritual anatomy of nadis and chakras with gross anatomical structures. Conversely some authors, such as Fritjof Capra, arguably present distort recent scientific thinking in the service of their own metaphysical and religious ideas. Presenting the material as a dialogue between a monk and an astrophysicist is a clever method, because it ensures that both the contemplative and the scientific approaches to reality will be given their due. In each chapter there are a couple of paragraphs by Ricard, followed by a couple of paragraphs of response by Thuan, after which there is further elaboration by Ricard, and additional response by Thuan. In this way an ongoing conversation evolves over the course of fifteen chap-

ters. At the end there is a concluding chapter by Ricard and one by Thuan in which they each summarize what they learned from the dialogue, and what questions they feel remain unresolved.

Ricard presents Buddhist insights primarily from a Sutric point of view, stressing impermanence, interdependence and emptiness. Looking at how these concepts relate to scientific principles can lead the reader to a more refined understanding of some Sutric principles. However, if you do not enjoy intellectual discussions, this is not the book for you.

Here's a sample of some typical dialogue. Thuan: "Reductionistic physics was so successful that until the end of the nineteenth century it created the impression that all the world's systems were linear. . . [But] in some systems, when all the pieces are put together, 'emergent' properties appear, so that the whole is more than the sum of its parts." Ricard: "Buddhism illustrates this with a mundane yet eloquent image: you would try in vain to sweep up dust with a hundred separate twigs, but if you put them together into a broom, the job becomes easy" (p. 212).

Scientific concepts that are discussed include Foucault's pendulum, Godel's Theorem, Occam's razor, and Quantum theory. Philosophical issues that are discussed include the question of a first cause, or Creator principle in the universe, the inseparability of phenomena from each other and from our perceptions, whether there is an objective reality, the nature of time, of consciousness, and of causal principles.

This 300 page book provides a good mental workout. As Ricard says, "the most fascinating part of this confrontation between the natural sciences and Buddhism is in the analysis of the ultimate nature of things" (p. 269).

by Paul Bail

wishes and surprising images, there is a layer of meaning which seems to relate to a layer in ourselves which is resonating the kind of presence and awareness of which the Teachings are speaking. I like those poems best where this frame of reference remains completely hidden. Poetry has always been close to the mystics of all ages. Sufi, Buddhist or Christian mystical poetry does not explain by reasoning but give a display, a kind of taste of a particular free and open mental space. Not fleeing the world but digging deeper into it, overcoming the self-made borders between inside and outside, subject and object, sacred and mundane; this is the practice of integration. It is tempting to flood you with quotes from many poems, but I will give you just one poem as a sample.

Fifteen Layers of a Moment

It is the roof of a shed
and gravel on the roof: two layers.
Leaves and grass and dirt in the gravel
and water over that: four layers.
And in the water the reflection of buildings
that seem to go so deep down
like a city underwater: six layers,
an Atlantis: seven layers.

And the Japanese fairy tale of the fisherman who spent
four years under the sea with a princess,
but when he returned it had been
four hundred years.

It was the first time a story
had made me weep:
eight layers.

But even without memory, say, six layers.
And here is the wind, coming in from the west,
the West Wind rippling the water:
that makes seven.

And shaking up the reflection into a wobbling
white weave against the black of the gravel:
the wind and its reflection make eight.

Now all the aspects of the wind moving
can't be counted as just one.
There is its dance and the effect
of its dance on the water,
and those are different, those are two:
so the dance of the wind itself

continued on page 25

ALEX GREY ATTIBET HOUSE NYC 2002



Rinpoche with Alex in NYC, 2002

Alex Grey, well known painter of visionary, psychedelic and Buddhist inspired art, author of *The Mission of Art*, a compilation of his writings on art and aesthetic history and the large art books *Sacred Mirror* and *Transfiguration* containing plates, descriptions of and an introduction to the work itself. Alex is a well known 20th century painter, and one of the very few artists dedicated to cosmology and the representation of the sacred world.

Less well known details of his life include twenty years of dedication to Dharma and devotion to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, having regularly attended retreats in America, most recently in NYC, where he generously donated a signed, limited edition print of his portrait of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (Dalai Lama, 1995) to the Dzogchen Community auction.

This year Alex's painting appear at Tibet House in NYC, where he lectured on his work and the internal experience which created it.

The exhibit included five large panels from the series 21 Sacred Mirrors: *Psychic Energy System*, 1980, *Spiritualized Energy*, 1981, *Universal Mind Lattice*, 1981, *Void Clear Light*, 1982 and, finally, *Avalokitesvara*, 1982-83. Other pieces are *Theologues*, *The Union of Human and Divine Consciousness*, *Weaving the Fabric of Space and Time in which the Self and Its Surroundings are Embedded* (1986) and the altar piece *Nature of Mind*, 1986 with its inscription "May All Beings Awaken to Their True Nature." Also represented at the entrance to the show are the very fine black and white drawings, *Seer*, 1992, *The Gift*, 1996, and *Vajra Brush*, 1997, which illustrate the painter's book *The Mission of Art* and the series of twenty-two drawings *Buddha Embryo* (2001) which depicts the dynamics of human incarnation and are prefaced by the Bardo Prayer, "When I see my parents in Union/ may I see the peaceful and wrathful Buddhas and their consorts/ With power to choose my birthplace for the good of others/ May I receive a perfect body adorned with auspicious signs...."

Many of these paintings have been widely reproduced, but others are new, *Over-Soul* 1998-99, *Caring* 2001, *Boo-Boo*, 2002, the *Embryo Series* mentioned above and the large panel *Cosmic Christ*, 2001, which illustrates historical events and beings central to Western phi-

losophy and religion, as well as depicting in great detail elements derived from Modern Sci-Fi and an internally heard 'instruction' in large letters beneath the panel which the artist received while painting it. Also included are minute portraits of figures such as Gandhi, Julia Butterfly and Dr. Martin Luther King, whose words painted onto the panel seem to mirror the theme of Grey's dedication and exhibition: "All of life is interrelated. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

A painting which initially appealed to this reviewer was the altar piece, *Nature of Mind*, in which symbols from the Dzogchen teaching, in particular the great letters Om A Hum and the White A, were used to convey the progression of a practitioner on his or her path. The artist depicts an initial renunciation, followed by certain methods of practice and their fruit of total integration and clarity, which culminate for the artist in a return to the mundane dimension in order to serve all beings limited by it. All of the work radiated with an incredible depth, a depth which revealed itself upon successive visits to the gallery, and the artist's uncanny capacity to integrate anatomical detail with symbolic letters from Dzogchen teachings, especially in certain paintings such as *Copulation* 1984, *Pregnancy* 1988 and *Birth* 1990-91, where human activities of reproduction are merged with the internal luminosity of transmission and the letter of direct introduction, the white A within its thigle.

Alex Grey, with great modesty and humor, ushered us through his retrospective. Alex is currently collaborating with the rock group Tool and is also one of the few contemporary artists to bridge harmony, humor and clarity of intention between the worlds of the Himalayan Seer to the Rave and Concert Hall; to move from the solitude of his own studio in Brooklyn, NYC, to the world via the large number of magazines that have used his work for their covers, as well as his own publications and exhibitions in major cities throughout the world.

For those unfamiliar with Alex's work, it can be easily accessed on the internet at www.alexgrey.com and is characterized by an intense representation of the human microorganism and its ambient, the universal macroorganism. Grey depicts the individual awakening in life in the cosmos and the laws of compassion that manifest within this awakening. He reveals the energies governing internal and external phenomena, their dynamic interrelation and the paths beyond them. Practitioners will recognize stages of their own practice, as well as images which seem to suggest *terma* and its application; secret teaching which give access to the nature of mind in Ati Yoga.

In his lecture the artist demonstrates a touching kindness and a remarkable capacity to bring others into the expansive nature of his vision by explanation and example.

by Louise Lande's Levi

Sonnets to the Unseen

by Christina Svane

With French translations by Christine Renaudin
Talking to Tara Press, Sebastopol 2001



Christina Svane is a dancer and a poet. The combination is not just a juxtaposition, there is a deep connection between the movement of the body in dance and the movement of words moving tongue and mind. As she writes herself in the Preface: "the second section of the book includes poems inspired by dancing, which was the focus of my life for twenty years. The state of awareness dance puts me in let me see the world as a poem. The dancer's body becomes a voice, an oracle."

This pertains not only to the mentioned section. The rhythm, fluidity and ease in which this language is moving is sensuous, physical, artful and completely natural. It is obviously a poet's voice; natural, graceful and full of surprises. But in many poems we also hear the voice of a born story-teller. Stories, memories, spontaneous imagery and sensitive perceptions mingle spontaneously in these poems and find themselves a voice full of music.

Poetry is more than just a sophisticated kind of entertainment. For me it is not accidental that these poems come from a long-time student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Under the casual observations, ardent

Let's take an example. If someone is coming, you can see that person, and you say "Oh, George is coming." You recognize that that person is George. Why do you recognize him? Because you see the physical body of George with your eyes. But when you see his physical body, you do not see his energy level or mind level. So if George died, there would be no physical body. George comes to see you, he is in front of you, but maybe you can't see him. In order to see him, you need to have such capacity. So you can see, then, what the difference is between the energy level and the physical level. For that reason we can't see manifestations of enlightened beings in an ordinary way, but realized beings like Mahasiddhas can have contact with them and receive transmission. They know that this path, these methods are very very important for all sentient beings. They give introduction through oral teaching, and give examples of visions such as drawings of mandalas in order to make people understand how a pure dimension is, how deities manifest.

Then, they give an introduction with this figure or statue and this introduction is called initiation. They give this empowerment along with mantra, etc., to give you the possibility to do this practice and have realization. Now you can apply that method of transformation. That means you are transforming impure vision into pure vision.

The path of transformation

In Vajrayana, we have the symbol of the vajra. You can see at the center of the vajra, there is a ball which represents our real potentiality. This is a symbol of the vajra, not the real vajra. The real vajra is our real potentiality which is just like the center of this ball, but it has infinite potentiality.

There are two ways of manifesting this potentiality according to different secondary causes: the pure dimension or impure dimension. With the impure dimension we fall into dualistic vision and we have samsara: five aggregations, five elements, etc., that are symbolized by these five points [prongs]. With pure vision we have the five Dhyani Buddhas (Yab and Yum), the five wisdoms, etc. So there are two aspects of manifestation. Even though we are in this dimension, there is the possibility that we can transform into a pure dimension because both of these two dimensions are connected with this central ball which is our real nature.

Guru Padmasambhava gave an example of this. Transformation is just like gold: the nature of gold is always precious and valuable, but it can manifest in different ways. If we make a beautiful golden statue of Buddha, then we offer flowers, incense, prayers, we pay respect to the statue. But in a certain period of time like the Cultural Revolution, then there is no need of a statue of Buddha. Perhaps they make a very nice golden ashtray with the gold. The gold has not changed, its nature is the same, but its aspect has changed. Now, no one goes there offering flowers and paying respect. Even though it may be a very elegant ashtray, everybody throws dirty things inside it.

So you see the function is different. This is called transformation, something like the five elements transforming into the five wisdoms. This is an example of transformation. So in this case it is not necessary to renounce anything, but we should know and be able to use methods of transformation. For that reason we also need to learn about the tantric system of transformation which is called the path of transformation. The consideration of its base, path and fruit, are a little different.

Even in Vajrayana transformation there are also many different internal sections and in the real sense it is related to our energy level. You remember with the three gates we talk about 'voice' or 'speech', not energy. Why do we say voice? Because voice is sound, sound is produced with our breath, breath is life. It is also related to our vital energy. So for that reason, we say voice instead of energy.

The path of self-liberation

Then on the mental level we have the teaching or path of Dzogchen. In Dzogchen there are not many 'outside' things like renunciation and transformation. What is the situation like outside? Everything is relative for a practitioner. But the main point is direct introduction from our mind to our nature of mind. And we can have that self-liberation.

This path is not the path of renunciation, not the path of transformation; it is the path of self-liberation. What is the difference between transformation and self-liberation? If you transform, it means you transform something into something else. For that reason, since the beginning, you need to have a vision of two aspects: the pure dimension and the impure dimension. The impure dimension is transformed into the pure. In the Dzogchen teaching of self-liberation, we don't go into this point. It doesn't mean we don't have impure vision. Of course, in our condition, when we are in samsara, we have pure vision and impure vision. That is normal. But it is not considered to be something important for having realization.

I'll give you in a very simple example. When you open your eyes you can see something. This is similar with all your sense organs - your ears, your nose, etc. When you see something, sometimes it may be something very nice, other times something ugly that you don't like. If you see something very nice like a beautiful flower, then you think, "Oh, how lovely this flower is. I like it! I want it! I want to have it!" Then you try to get this flower or this nice thing. Attachment arises, then desire to have that object. In this way problems arise. The problem is not because you see a nice flower. That flower is your vision. You can enjoy it but you don't need to be conditioned by it.

If you are not conditioned and you enjoy all your visions, your sense contact with objects, that is self-liberation. You don't need any antidote. You don't need any concept of transforming into something different. This is very important and related to our knowledge, our understanding. So if you have really received direct transmission, you know what it means to be in instant presence. Being in a instant presence you can enjoy all the functions of your senses without having attachment. If you have no attachment, you also won't have many problems. That is the characteristic of the path of self-liberation.

Mahasiddhas such as Tilopa and Padampa who were practitioners of Mahamudra, gave their students some advice, "The problem is not vision. The problem is attachment". That is what we are learning in the Dzogchen teaching. So, you can understand self-liberation a little in that way. Of course we can go a little deeper into this point because it is something very important.

Transcription by Oliver Ohanecian and Liz Granger

Editing by Liz Granger



EXCERPT FROM A PRESS RELEASE TO THE BRAZILIAN MEDIA:

THE DEATH OF HIS EMINENCE CHAGDUD TULKU RINPOCHE



Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, 1985

KEVIN HAYES

NOVEMBER 23, 2002

Chagdud Rinpoche, a Lama in the Nyingmapa tradition, passed away following heart failure in the early morning hours of Sunday, November 17th, in the bedroom of his apartment at Khadro Ling, his main center in Brazil. He is survived by his son, his wife, Chagdud Khadro, 55, his daughter, Dawa Tromge, 32, and a half-sister, Trinley Wangmo, who lives in Eastern Tibet.

Jigme Rinpoche, his 38 year old son and successor living in the Dharma center in California, made the following statement:

"My father had a serious heart condition for a long time. In recent years he has been under the care of an excellent cardiologist in Sao Paulo. However, in recent months he had foresight that he had entered the end of life transition. He canceled a trip to the United States and instead entered a strict retreat at Khadro Ling. He insisted on scheduling a teaching event on transferring the consciousness at the moment of death, and those were the teachings he was giving until 9pm on the night before his passing away.

On Saturday afternoon, November 16th, I received a telephone call in California and was told that Rinpoche said, "I'm going to go." For a moment I was shocked and took the message to mean that he meant the journey of death. However, the caller interpreted Rinpoche's words to mean that he would go see his cardiologist. I relaxed a bit, but actually he did go on Sunday morning at about 4:15am, when his heart failed.

After his last breath, my father remained in a state of meditation for almost six full days that prevented the usual deterioration of his body. The ability to remain in a state of meditation after the breath stops is well-known among great Tibetan masters, but circumstances have rarely allowed it to occur in the West. Chagdud Rinpoche remained sitting in a natural, lifelike meditation posture, with little visible change of color or expression. During that time, no one touched his body.

Until the sixth day, Friday, November 22nd, Rinpoche showed no physical signs that his meditation had ended. In the interim we were in constant consultation with a lawyer and other officials about local customs and regulations. Friday midday, his meditation ended and his mind separated from his body. Within hours, his appearance changed. He took on the signs typical of those occurring within the first 24 hours of death. Officials from the sanitation department inspected the body and a professional funeral service transported it to where it was embalmed. As soon as arrangements were completed, it was flown to Nepal, where Chagdud Rinpoche has a center, and very extensive ceremonies were performed by many high lamas. These will continue for the seven weeks after Rinpoche's passing away, until January 5th, 2003. At a later time, more ceremonies, attended by people from all over the world, will be performed and Rinpoche will be cremated. The laws of Nepal allow this postponement of cremation.

Rinpoche has also left a legacy of well-trained students. He ordained three Brazilians as lamas, in recognition of their capability to teach and guide students. His chant master, a 17-year-old Brazilian, has a remarkable voice and has the sound and stamina of a Tibetan chant master. Rinpoche also trained his students in art and ritual. And, most of all, he established many Brazilians on the spiritual path. The inner peace and meditative insight that they find in their own lives increase the well-being of their families, friends, and acquaintances. The ultimate intention of our spiritual practice is to benefit all beings, close and distant, friend and enemy, without any distinction.

So, when we perform ceremonies for Rinpoche, we invoke his blessing and the blessings of all the wisdom beings in all realms of existence for the continuance of Rinpoche's accomplishments in this life. We pray that his blessing and our prayers will link together so that our own spiritual aspirations will be fulfilled.

The generosity of the Brazilian people has been obvious not only in the offerings toward butter lamps and ceremonies, but in the consideration shown to us by the officials working with us. We are extremely grateful for the religious tolerance in Brazil. As his son and his devoted student, I hope that a great multiplicity of blessings arise in this country, and I am committed to continuing his work here."

The Buddhist Book Project Poland

The idea of collecting books concerning Buddhism and the Far East cultures in the Pomeranian Library was born in spring 2000 year and was related to the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso to our Library. It was when the assumptions and strategy of development of an international project, "The Buddhist Book Project Poland", were created. The Project has three main purposes. They are as follows:

1. Collecting literary output of the whole world, which concerns Buddhism and the Orient culture, both source-books and critical analysis, treatises and popularized literature.
2. Creating an information center, which would present the world-wide output in the field of Buddhist and oriental studies. This concept is being realized through the operation of a web site, where there is information available on the project and the book collection, as well as information concerning world-wide studies of Buddhism, publishing activity and collections of other libraries.

3. Activity aiming at the promotion of the project and the book collection as well as the culture and philosophy of Buddhism and the Orient. This goal has been realized through organizing conferences, lectures, exhibitions and publishing activity.

On May 13, 2000, a solemn and official inauguration of the project took place. That occasion was honored by the participation of the very special guest - His Holiness the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso. During the visit, His Holiness the Dalai Lama presented the Library with two particularly precious sutras: the Diamond Cutter Sutra and the Sutra of Perfect Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses. In his inaugural speech the respectable guest said:

"Our situation in the contemporary world causes us to be very close to each other. Under those circumstances it is very desirable that we know each other and know other cultures. So the institution we are in can have its contribution to this task. I am very happy that I could arrive here."

Patronage

In August, 2001, His Holiness the Dalai Lama kindly accepted to be a patron of the Buddhist Book Project Poland. This particular distinction was an important moment in the development of our undertaking. It also showed the personal engagement of the patron with the further progress of the project.

Events

On May 13, 2000, a solemn inauguration of the project took place. On the same day there was organized a seminar called "Word of Buddha, Scriptures of various Buddhist traditions." Local and foreign scientists took part in the seminar specializing in this subject matter. The seminar was accompanied by an exhibition "Buddhism and Tibet in the Pomeranian Library collections". In the end of the year there appeared a post seminar publication bearing the same title and presented the delivered papers.

As a result of receiving numerous publications and dynamic development of the project, on August 1, 2000, "The Department of Buddhist Studies and the Far East Cultures" was brought into existence.

Since September, 2000, there has been initiated a series of lectures bearing a common title "Academia Buddhica". The intention of the series is the presentation of the culture and philosophy of Buddhism and the Orient. So far eighteen meetings have taken place and they have been attended in total number of over 2500 participants. The lecturers were well known scientists from the country and abroad.

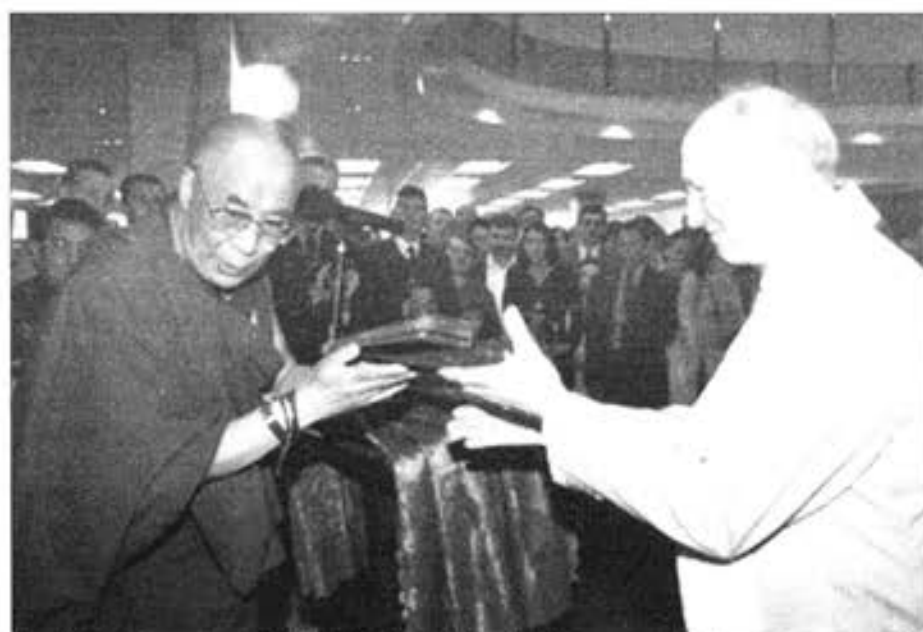
Furthermore, in the relation to our project and collection, the Pomeranian Library was visited by numerous guests including world-wide famous specialists in the domain of Buddhist studies (among them Prof. David Siot /England/, Dr. Andrey Terentiev /Russia/, Dr. Piotr Klafkowski /Poznań/, Prof. Marek Mejor /Warsaw/, Prof. Tomasz Pietrzykowski /France / Lama Rinchen /Grabnik/). The visits resulted in regular co-operation, valuable contacts and winning new precious collections.

The project has an Advisory Board, which fulfills the role of an advisor, especially in the area of content-related aspects concerning the type of books being collected. It also assists in cataloguing and elaborating the collection. The Board consists of:

Dr. Agata Bareja - Starzyńska (Warsaw University)
Dr. Aleksander Berzin (Harvard University)
Magorzata Gdolk - Klafkowska
Dr. Piotr Klafkowski (University of Poznań)

Dr. Krzysztof Kosior (University of Lublin)
Prof. Marek Mejor (Warsaw University)
Lama Rinchen (a chairman of Polish Buddhist Union)

In the middle of January, 2001, the ceremony of opening of the



"Sutra" this is Inauguration of the Buddhist Book Project Poland. His Holiness presents the Diamond Cutter Sutra to Mr. Krzywicki the Director of the Pomeranian Library.

reading room of the Department of Buddhist Studies and the Far East Cultures took place. The reading room, commonly called the "Buddhist" one, became a place where the project is seated and where books from the collection are made available. Numerous readers' visits confirm increasing interest in the Orient and Buddhism. Many times we have visitors from abroad and other Polish towns, which proves the unique character of the collection. We have regular contacts with students and research workers from all important academic centers in the country dealing with studies in the subject matter of the Orient and Buddhism. Our book collection forms a basis for their studies and very often it is the main or the only source of



"Cutrib" this is opening ceremony of Buddhist Studies Dept's readingroom.

materials needed for writing dissertations.

The reading room of the Department of Buddhist Studies and the Far East Cultures refers with its decor to the art of the Orient and was redecorated and furnished from financial resources of sponsors. It possesses nine working desks, including two computers with fast connections to the net. At the end of the summer we plan to finish reconditioning of the next room designed for the needs of the project. It is going to perform the function of a storeroom and a small lecture hall. We also want to have one working desk for study particularly precious materials.

Information concerning titles from the Buddhist and oriental collection are available in the main database of the Pomeranian Library. The base is operated by the professional Israeli program Aleph, possessing considerable searching possibilities. For the needs of the collection thematic language of topical entries is being created, because the previous one was recognized as not sufficient for so numerous a book collection. It is a pioneer work and is conducted by Mrs. Maria Bereciewicz, the consultant of the National Library of Poland in the field of the language of topical entries. In this work also members of Advisory Board of the project participate.

The Collections

Thanks to the fact the project was inaugurated by such an eminent person as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and that effective strategy of development was worked out (web site, international advisory board, informative advertising materials) as well as due to kindness of our foreign partners, during a relatively short period we managed to collect over 6500 volumes. The collection includes books written in western languages and original texts in oriental languages. For the pioneer character of the collection elaboration does not proceed so fast.

The most precious positions in the collection are:

a) Books presented by His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

Dorje Chodpa (Tibetan)

The Diamond Cutter Sutra. Manuscript illuminated with golden ink on the black paper, most probably coming from the turn of the 18th century. On the title page there are miniatures of Buddha Sakyamuni, Prajnaparamita Deity and Nagarjuna. Manuscripts of this kind were always rarities, because they were prepared as special copies, for instance as gifts or sacrificial texts. In the first folio there is the autograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama written with silver ink and Tibetan italics which is very different from printing font.

It is worth mentioning that "The Diamond Cutter Sutra" is one of the most important texts of Mahayana Buddhism and a piece of writing that played an essential role in the formation of the philosophy of the Orient. It is also the first piece of writing in the world, which was printed as a whole. In the year 868 in China the printed copy of this Sutra was created.

Gyelongba (Tibetan)

The Sutra of Perfect Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses is one of the most fundamental and comprehensive sutras dealing with Prajnaparamita philosophy. It is a contemporary

edition using traditional Tibetan matrixes. Sutra is richly illustrated and these illustrations form the basis for studies of iconography of Tibetan Buddhism. In the first folio there is also the autograph of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

b) Original texts presented by private donors:

Sutra of Golden Age, a contemporary edition using traditional wooden matrix. This richly illustrated sutra belongs to the most essential sutras of Mahayana Buddhism from tradition of Prajnaparamita philosophy. It is also serves as a basis for studies of iconography of Tibetan Buddhism.

Vinaya Sutra, edited in India in the year 1959 (?). One of the first Tibetan prints in exile, edited in New Delhi with assistance of International Academy of Indian Culture. This publication maintains traditional format of Tibetan books with simultaneous using the print of inverted font.

Gesar Chan. One of the volumes of a famous heroic epochs from Central Asia. Until now it has not been published as a whole (single volumes appeared in Tibet and Mongolia).

A collection of Dzogchen teachings in three volumes which major part was written by a Tibetan teacher Longchen Rabjampa. This codified and completed in 19th century collection is regarded as the most essential link of oral transmission of Dzogchen teachings into 20th century. The publication edited in India between 1974-75 is a photographic reprint of the unique Tibetan prints from 18th and 19th century.

century.

Meditation Texts of Tibetan Buddhism. The collection of 12 manuscripts was created in Buryatia and comes from the beginning of 19th century. Many of them are rarities done in fine calligraphy.

Kuntzang Lamai Shalone. A Tibetan print coming from the beginning of 20th century. It was edited in a typical form of sutras and stands for one of the most crucial writings in Dzogchen tradition.

The Constitution of Tibet, the bilingual Tibetan-English edition, 1963 (Dharamsalai). So far it has been the only edition of the project of the constitution of Tibet accepted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile. The project was prepared under the auspices of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and could not appear until 1959.

Additionally among collected books there are titles of renowned Publishing Houses and learned societies (ex.: Pali Text Society /U.K./, International Academy of Indian Culture /New Delhi/, Snow Lion/USA/, Dharma Publishing /USA/, Motilal Banarsidass /India/). They are often institutions with rich, over 50-year tradition of Buddhist and oriental studies and they assemble world-wide famous specialists in this field.

The value of the books presented to the Pomeranian Library in the framework of the realized project exceeds 250 000 \$ (excluding the most precious positions, the value of which is difficult to estimate for their unique character).

Publications

There were edited post seminar materials "Word of Buddha, Scriptures of various Buddhist traditions. Szczecin 2000". Apart from the papers

continued on page 14

Four Verses of Advice from Ugyen Tendzin

These four verses of advice were the topic of the Teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu which appeared in the last issue of The Mirror, #62.

Wylie transliteration
/grub rje rtogs ldan u rgyan bstan 'dzin gyi zhal snga nas btsal ba'i zhal
gdams bzugs/
kye ho/
/skyes bu blo gros ldan pa khyed/
/shul mthun chos spyod dge bar 'gyur/
/a ti rang rig skad cig ma/
/de bzhin nyid du lhun gyis grub
/kho bo chos rgyal nam mkha'i nor bu thon khar zhal gdams shig gnang rogs
gnang zhes par btsal ba'o//

Advice Given by Mahasiddha Togden Ugyen Tendzin
Hey intelligent person!
Practice the teachings correctly in accord with circumstances.
Ati instant presence is already perfected in its natural condition.

These are the words of advice that I, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, received after making a request.

Translation by Jim Valby

“The Ocean of Siddhi” The Stages of the Guru

Translation by Malcolm Smith

Ocean of Siddhi is a brief text from the Lama Yangtig [Bla ma Yang tig] on how one may best serve and please one's master. It was written by Longchen Rabjam at his hermitage at Kangri Thokar, after he had received the complete Nyintig [sNyint tig] teachings from his master, Kumararaja. It is a supplementary text to Lama Yangtig, and forms part of the preliminary teachings from that cycle. The fact that a text on the seven Dzogchen mind trainings directly follow this text in the first volume of Lama Yangtig would seem indicate that this text is part of the preliminary teachings Longchenpa would given when he bestowed this cycle. The original text also contains a very brief Guru Yoga of Vimalamitra, which is here excluded. This text was translated and abridged by Malcolm Smith. The Stages of the Guru of the Secret Essential Pith. “The Ocean of Siddhis” by Longchen Rabjam.

To the glorious Guru, divine among deities,
the supreme fulfillment of wishes, I prostrate;
I shall write on the stages of pleasing him,
“The Ocean of Siddhi”.

Here there are three topics, the nature of the Guru upon which to rely; the qualities of the disciple relying upon [the Guru]; and the manner in which one relies upon a Guru.

First, the Great Array states:
Scholarly, free from activities,
having reached the meaning of ultimate reality,
unconfused regarding the desired goal,
are the characteristics of a secret mantra Guru.

“Scholarly”- because in general he [or she] is schooled in philosophical schools, and can distinguish the different philosophical school's nature. Specifically, he understands the intent of the tantra division because he is schooled in the meaning of Vajrayana. Because he is schooled in experience and has reached “heat”, his realization proceeds higher.

“Free of activities”- because he is not distracted with the features of the eight worldly qualities, remaining alone a solitary place, in his aspects of body speech and mind he is easy and spacious with little obsession of grasping and grasped.

“Having reached the meaning of ultimate reality”- because he is schooled and experienced in the meaning of the direct perception of ultimate reality, the sign of perfecting heat exists, the measure of cultivation.

“Unconfused regarding the desired goal”-he has the capacity to teach whatever is requested by the disciple, perceiving the practical knowledge of the creation stages four activities, is the instructions of the lineage. Having practice the completion stages' nature of view, meditation and conduct, he has the capacity to increase experience and realization, he is unconfused regarding the practices of critical points of the trio of channels, drops and prana which depend on the structure of the vajra body. “Guru Maha' vajradharins” possess such qualities- it is appropriate to offer supplications to this person.

From the five teachings for the disciple who relies on such a Guru: first, the method of pleasing a Guru is having received the instructions of such a Guru, the best disciple completes the teaching of the lineage of accomplishment by service of practice; the intermediate disciple purifies obscurations of the three doors by serving with body and speech; and the common disciple does whatever is possible, fulfilling the two accumulations by [serving with] material goods and services.

Second, the beneficial qualities of pleasing a Guru are that

obscurations of three doors are purified; seen by all, one's joy, merit and wealth increase; praises are recited by dakinis; and the supreme and all common siddhis are obtained without difficulties.

In the Supreme Samaya Tantra:

Faithful who desire siddhi,
siddhis come from pleasing the Guru.

Third: the faults of displeasing the Guru - in the Mayajala-tantra:

Insulting the Guru,
and the fault of disturbing his mind,
is being able, with a hair, to scatter drops of water
from the outer great oceans;
but the consequence of that is falling into the hell
famed as vajra hell.

And in the Vajradakini:

Do not belittle the master,
he is the same as all the Buddhas;
whoever insults the master,
will suffer in this life,
and will be harmed by epidemics, poison, toxic minerals,
and dakinis.
Having been slain by demons, the mislead and savages,
such sentient beings fall into hell.

Fourth, the method of confessing is having done a fulfillment with a feast, having taken anything pleasing to heart, confess. If there is offense with the body, having bound one's body to the aims of the Guru, make an offering. If the offense is verbal, proclaim the qualities of the Guru in the ten directions. If mental, mainly have devotion and think on his qualities, if there are many more faults than the number of years of one's age, they cannot be repaired. The Array of Commitments states:

If a man offends a Guru
seven times, or ten times
one should confess with regret.
But if [the number] exceeds one's own age, the object of confession will not be permitted by Vajrasattva.

Fifth, the measure of purification is having intensely apologized, the sign of restoration is that the Guru is pleased as he was before. In reality, his mental anger is assuaged, and in dreams, predictions given without any faults, the sun and moon rising, etc., are the signs purification produces.

The third topic; how to rely on the Guru: just as a patient relies on a doctor, in order to become liberated from the illness of samsara, offer service and be respectful without deceit with body speech and mind; and just as one who wishes make an angle must rely on a pliable material, because one fears samsara, always listen to what the Guru says; and just as a merchant relies on a captain, one wishing liberation should pay him great honor.

As such, by meditating day and night in four sessions, in actuality, the trio of body, speech and mind rest in a state of bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality; and in dreams, one receives predictions by the Guru, deity and the dakinis, and the teachings are explained etc., such signs of accomplishment occur.

The result of such meditation is that all siddhis are accomplished and in the future, one obtains the sublime awakening of Buddhahood, the dharmakaya, the Guru of the three realms. In the Surpassing Sound:

The qualities from that support
resemble a wish fulfilling tree and a wish fulfilling jewel
and a wish fulfilling cow,
from which one obtains innumerable qualities;

that support is reliance upon a Guru,
because he averts the battle of samsara.

And in the Perfected Play Tantra:

Meditating the creation stage for three eons
does not compare with the amount
of merit from pleasing one's Guru.

In the Shri-samvarodayatantra:

Having given up completely all other offerings,
undertake making offering to the Guru;
through pleasing him one will obtain
the supreme omniscient primordial wisdom.

And the Mayajalatantra states:

If one makes offerings to the Guru,
the lord of all mandalas, with five sense objects,
one makes offerings to all mandalas,
no need to mention subsidiary mandalas,
all faults will be purified,
and supreme qualities will be attained.

[Dedicatory verse]:
Completely filled with all supreme glorious qualities,
relying on the sublime Guru, leader of the three realms
with faith in order to accomplish the meaningful goals of this
and future lives,
one will obtain the manifold treasury of qualities of liberation.
Recalling his kindness at all times,
one's root Guru surpasses all the Buddhas,
because qualities arise from pleasing him,
the fortunate should support him on their stainless crowns.
Living beings follow his deeds and four kinds activities,
tamed by various peaceful and wrathful methods,
unable to measure his intended activities,
rely with undistracted faith on a Guru like that.
In general, pure and impure appear of itself,
if one purifies one's own faults, it is not possible to perceive
the faults of others,
if one possesses mixed faults and qualities,
even when perceiving faults in others, just alternate with faith.
If one disciplines oneself, everywhere one will be renowned,
therefore, one should always have faith in pure vision,
the universe and inhabitants all arise as the Guru,
comprehended as impermanent, without reference points, and
without nature.
Because these are my supreme heart advice,
everything, any apparent enemies, friends or neutral people,
are said to be the amazing emanations of the victors,
tame the mind from the heart, examine only one's own faults.
Without being distracted for even a second day and night,
contemplate on qualities of the supreme Guru and his instructions
urged on with the recollection of death,
contemplating the faults of samsara and the qualities of liberation.
It is difficult to acquire leisure and wealth, and meeting with
the teachings is rare,
therefore, always integrate one's mind with the teachings,
and do not even think the slightest unethical thing;
practicing the teachings, accomplishing them, endeavoring in
them day and night,
is the source of all positive qualities.
By the virtue of composing those verses, may all living beings
integrate the teachings with their minds, travel the path to liberation,
and having tamed themselves, ripen others,
and may all accomplish perfect Buddhahood en masse.

The stages of the Guru of the secret essential pith. “The Ocean of Siddhis” . composed by the yogin of the supreme vehicle, Longchen Rabjam, on the slopes of Kangri Tökar, is complete.



"Detail" this is a detail of the Diamond Cutter Sutra.

North America and Japan. Many well-known scientists as Russian Nicholas Rerich, Hungarian Koros Csoma, or Italian Giuseppe Tucci devoted to them their whole lives. This knowledge, pioneer in those times, today is present at renowned universities of the whole world.

We believe that thanks to our book collection Buddhism and the Orient – this important part of human knowledge and cultural heritage of the world has a chance to be available and better known, in our country as well. Undoubtedly, time works against us. At least for this reason that at the moment some of ancient Buddhist civilizations are endangered more than ever before. The sad history of Tibetan culture being destroyed by the Chinese shows that without international engagement the part of cultural heritage of the world may be lost irretrievably. The civilization of the Tibetan nation is disappearing right in front of our eyes and, except some rare protests here and there, the rest of the world allows it to happen without regret or comment. Many civilizations have disappeared or declined in the past, however, it is a rare opportunity to knowingly witness such a process. If we manage to interest the reader in the tragedy, which touches us with its human implications, than the effort we put into realization of our project shall be greatly rewarded.

Please visit the web site of The Buddhist Book Project Poland at <www.bhpp.eu.org> where the full information on the project is available, and the Pomeranian Library's web site at <www.ksiarnica.szczecin.pl>.

Paweł Kamienowski
Project Manager
Email: manager@bhpp.eu.org

The Chinese Ox Calculation

Namah Manjurvajra

I [the astrologer] prostrate to Manjushri, the primordial wisdom kaya of all victors.

In dependence upon the result of the earth ox calculation, I shall write of happiness, fear of the harvest and cattle. In addition to that, the potential of spring is obtained on the third day of the twelfth Tibetan month, and the fourth day of the second Western month; we will discuss the result of the conception of this potential.

In general, the ox has a yellow body, horns, ears and tail. The harvest will peak and be large, grains increase and people experience happiness and joy. There will be slight illnesses in combination, virtuous signs arise in nations in general. The ox's stomach is green; in the summer and autumn, and in all four season's middle month, are windy storms. Since his four hoofs are white, late frost comes to the lower end of large valleys and small valleys.

Specifically, since the head of the ox is blue, the northern and upper directions are slightly negative. The silent ox's tale swishes to the right, beneficial for people, but difficult for cattle, negativities arise for youths and children.

Since the herdsman is old, it is good for the elderly, for youths there is conflict, and be very fearful for children. His hair is bound in a top knot, supreme virtue, the standard of living of nations increase. Since the clothes of the herdsman are red, the wealth of merchants and people is medium.

Since the rope whip is raised towards the sky, evil men and bandits create problems. Since both his boots are off, there is happiness and relaxation.

Since the herdsman runs in front of the ox, the cattle will be good, early summer comes early.

Since the number of the ox is three, the soil is not fertile in early summer.

Since the turquoise dragon of the sky's number is six, grain is nutritious, and rain and water is balanced.

Since the first day of [first Tibetan month] is the wood sow, in third month of spring it rains, there will be grubs in the fields, and for women signs of slight problems arise.

The grain that can only sustain two, eight people will be attached to it like jewels.

In the months from the beginning of the conception of spring, until the potential of autumn six days are missing.

Not too hot, and the harvest will be normal, and the outer elements are balanced.

May the body and minds of living beings be happy, and all be nurtured by the glorious ten virtues, and all benefit and excellent happiness increase.

Prepared by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, the astrologer, and translated with Malcolm Smith.



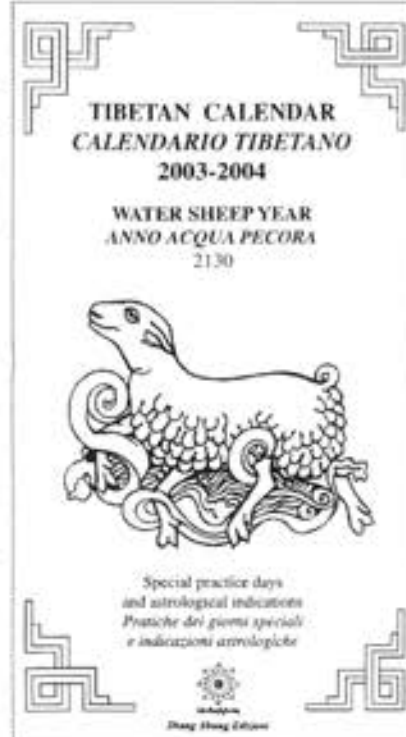
DRAWING BY BEPE GORA

Tibetan Calendar of Special Practice Days and Astrological Indications

This handy pocket size calendar produced by Shang Shung Edizioni each year is an extremely useful point of reference for practitioners of the Dzogchen Community. In one slim booklet, you can find all the practice days for the Community listed as well as the "Buddha" days and the anniversaries of important Masters. The calendar also contains the global timetable for the anniversaries of Garab Dorje and Guru Padmasambhava when all members of the Community around the world do the practice at exactly the same moment. This means that you can find your local time for starting the practice wherever you are.

At a glance, one consulting the calendar can note the symbols for the days that are particular to the Buddha, Padmasambhava, the Dakini and Ekajati. The full moons and new moons for each month are indicated as well as lunar and solar eclipses with their times. For those who wish to consult the astrological aspects of the day in order to decide whether a particular day may be auspicious for an activity, the calendar indicates both the Western and Tibetan date, the day of the week and its astrological element, the constellation of the day and its element, the mewa, the major combination of the day and other indications such as positive and negative days for Naga practice, particular combinations and negative days in general. This may sound a little complicated for one who is not well versed in Tibetan astrology however, with a little attention it is simple to check the most important combination of the two elements that represent the day of the week and the constellation of the day in order to obtain an astrological evaluation of the day. The interpretation of this "minor combination" or "Trod-chung" is given at the front of the calendar so that when it is possible, a fortuitous day may be chosen for a particular activity.

When the calendar is used together with Chögyal Namkhai



Norbu's "Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar" (Shang Shung Edizioni 1991) a full and detailed interpretation of each day can be made. The last pages of the calendar give the individual astrological aspects for the year referring to the life element, the body element (health), the capacity element, the fortune element and the element of protection. These aspects are indicated by combinations of one, two or three black and white dots together with some brief notes on interpreting the aspects.

This Tibetan Calendar is presented in both Italian and English with a clear explanation of the symbols and indications for each day. There is also ample space for each day so that it can be used as a diary at the same time. An essential reference work for every practitioner, the "Tibetan Calendar 2003-2004 Water Sheep" can be obtained from:

Shang Shung Edizioni, Merigar
58031 Arcidosso,
Italy

Email:
shangshunged@tiscalinet.it

review by Liz Granger

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SPECIAL PRAC 2003 WATERS

"... It is best to do these practices collectively with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters (at the recommended times), but if this is not possible you can do them personally whenever you have free time. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners linked with the same transmission. In this way you develop the potentiality of your transmission and your understanding and capacity to integrate your daily life into practice ...". Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

LOSAR - TIBETAN NEW YEAR WATER SHEEP YEAR

1st Month, 1st day
Mon. 3rd March 2003

It is good to do a Long life practice as early as possible in the morning and a Ganapuja during the day. Prayer flags can be authenticated during the Ganapuja. On the morning of the third day of the new year you can do the rite of the Sang and hang up the prayer flags.

1st Month, 4th day
Fri. 7th March 2003

The fourth day of the first month is a special day for doing the Long life practice of the Dakini Mandarava. It is also a very special day for doing the practice of Ekajati so today try to do the Long life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra" in the morning and the Long Tun in the evening. If you don't have this possibility, you can try to do the Long life practice included in the Medium or Long Tun, with the rite of Ekajati, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as much as possible.

1st Month, 8th day
Tue. 11th March 2003

This is an important day for doing the practice of Ekajati, so try to do the Long Thun either collectively or personally. If you don't have that possibility then try to do the Medium Thun and in either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

1st Month, 10th day
Thu. 13th March 2003

This is the day on which Padmasambhava was ordained by Ananta, or, according to Jigmed Lingpa ('Jigs med gLing pa), the day on which he left the kingdom of Oddiyana to go to the cemetery at Maghadha called Citavana. You can do a Ganapuja in the usual way or if you do not have the possibility you can try to do the Long life practice linked to the Guruyoga of Guru Rinpoche (Universal Wisdom Union) either collectively or alone. Otherwise you can do a Medium Thun (Tundrin) with an intense practice of the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava.

1st Month, 15th day
Tue. 18th March 2003
FULL MOON. The anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje as well as that of the founder of Bön, the great Master Shenrab Miwoche, falls on the day of the first full moon of the Tibetan year. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni when he manifested several miracles and the anniversary of the

Master Marpa. Thus it is an especially important day for both Buddhist and Bönpo practitioners, in particular those who practice the Dzogchen teachings.

On this day, therefore, when it is 8 AM in Oddiyana, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Garab Dorje. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 4AM.)
SEE GLOBAL TIMETABLE

1st Month, 25th day
Thu. 27th March 2003

This is the day of the Dakini and in particular the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Khandro, so it is good to do the Akar Lamai Naljor or a Ganapuja with transformation into the Dakini Simhamukha.

1st Month, 30th day
Tue. 1st April 2003

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

2nd Month, 6th day
Mon. 7th April 2003

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

2nd Month, 10th day
Sat. 12th April 2003

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

2nd Month, 12th day
Mon. 14th April 2003

This is the anniversary of Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the Akar Lamai Naljor, the Guruyoga of the White A.

2nd Month, 15th day
Wed. 16th April 2003

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

2nd Month, 20th day
Mon. 21st April 2003

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dodrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Dundul. It is therefore a good day

to do Akar Lamai Naljor, the Guruyoga with the White A.

2nd Month, 25th day
Sat. 26th April 2003

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

2nd Month, 30th day
Thu. 1st May 2003

DARK MOON. On this day, which is the anniversary of the great Terton Loter Wangpo, try to do the Akar Lamai Naljor, Guruyoga of the White A with the Master Garab Dorje either collectively or alone, with a Ganapuja if possible.

3rd Month, 4th day
Mon. 5th May 2003

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

3rd Month, 10th day
Sun. 11th May 2003

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Those who have received transmission should do a Guruyoga with Padmasambhava with the long life mantra and a Ganapuja as we usually do, otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Universal Wisdom Union". If it is possible, the best time to do the Guruyoga and Long life practice is in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the Ganapuja later in the afternoon.

Usually the best way to do the Ganapuja and the Guruyoga is collectively, with your Vajra brothers and sisters, but if this is not possible you can always do this practice alone when you have time. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners linked to the same transmission so that you can develop the potentiality of the transmission that you have received and through it your understanding and capacity to integrate your daily life in the state of contemplation.

Those who have not received the transmission of the Thun practice can learn it from other practitioners and then receive the transmission when there is the opportunity. Otherwise on this day those who have not received transmission of the Thun practice can do a purification practice with breathing and Yantra Yoga exercises and movements or practices linked to controlling the prana.

3rd month, 15th day
Fri. 16th May 2003

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for long life practices and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning between 7 and 8AM if you can but if this isn't possible you can do it in the afternoon or even in the evening when you are not busy.

Today is also the anniversary of the Kalachakra, the day when Buddha Shakyamuni first gave the teaching of Kalachakra so it is good to do a Ganapuja or Long Thun in the evening either collectively or

alone.

3rd Month, 25th day
Sun. 25th May 2003

This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a great tertön and practitioner of Dzogchen so it is a very beneficial day to reinforce the function of our energy and create a more vital contact with the energy of the universe. If you have the possibility, it is good to do a Guruyoga of the White A in the morning and in the evening a Ganapuja with an intensive practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do the Medium Thun with the practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as much as possible. The best time for this practice is around 8 in the evening.

3rd Month, 30th day
Sat. 31st May 2003

DARK MOON. This year, the 30th day of the 3rd month is double. Since the second day is an eclipse, it is better to do the practice on that day. Today is the anniversary of Sangyas Lingpa (1340-1396) a great tertön and Dzogchen master. You can do a Guruyoga of the White A from the cycle of teachings Universal Clarity with a Ganapuja. It is also a good day to do the Purification of the Six Lokas.

4th Month, 6th and 8th days
6th and 8th June, 2003

These are important days for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a Long or Medium Thun with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If that is not possible you can do the Medium Thun alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

4th month, 7th day
Sat. 7th June 2003

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

4th Month, 11th day
Tue. 10th June 2003

This month there is no 10th day so the 11th is the day of Guru Padmasambhava. In general you can do the practice of the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava on this day. If you have the possibility and enough time you can do a collective Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Union of Primordial Essences".

4th Month, 15th day
Sat. 14th June 2003

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Buddha Shakyamuni as well as an important day for the Long life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Therefore if you can, do the practice of the Dakini Mandarava in the morning (the best time is between 7 and 8AM) and a collective Ganapuja in the afternoon or evening according to your possibilities.

4th Month, 25th day
Tue. 24th June 2003

Dakini day. This is the anniversary

of Ngor Chen (a great master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga of the White A, Akar Lamai Naljor, collectively or alone.

4th Month, 30th day
Sun. 29th June 2003

DARK MOON. Today is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Dundul (1816-1872), one of the Masters of Changchub Dorje and the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "Tsedrub Gongdu" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khandro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche practiced this method as much as possible and started to transmit it to his students after visiting the sacred cave at Maratika. Therefore try to do the long life practice "Union of Primordial Essences" in the morning. In the afternoon or evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, Akar Lamai Naljor, collectively or alone, with a Ganapuja if possible.

5th

Month,
1st day

Mon. 30th
June 2003

This is the anniversary of Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the three most important Rimed masters of the 19th century. Try to do a practice of the Guruyoga of the White A, Akar Lamai Naljor.

5th Month, 10th day
Wed. 9th July 2003

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. In general you can do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava practice on this day. If you can, try to do a Ganapuja collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Union of Primordial Essences".

5th Month, 14th day
Sat. 12th July 2003

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Thun collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 15th day
Sun. 13th July 2003

FULL MOON. This is a special day for the Long life practice of Ami-



ICE CALENDAR

2004

EEPPYEAR

tayus, so you can do the Long life practice "Union of Primordial Essences". The best moment to do it is between 7 and 8 in the morning, if possible, either collectively or alone. If you can, try to a Ganapuja as well.

It is also the Dzamling Chisang (Lit. smoke puja of the world in general) so if you know how to do it, you can do the Sanqod (Sangchod) in the morning.

5th Month, 25th day
Wed. 23rd July 2003

This is a Dakini day as well as an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Ganapuja or a Long Thun collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or a Medium Thun alone. In either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 30th day
Tue. 29th July 2003

DARK MOON. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas either collectively or alone.



6th Month, 4th day
Sat. 2nd Aug. 2003

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

6th Month, 10th day
Thu. 7th Aug. 2003

Today is the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava. On this day when it is 8AM in Oddiyana Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Padmasambhava. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. (In Italy, this prac-

tice will be done at 5AM.)

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

SEE THE GLOBAL TIMETABLE

6th Month, 14th day
Mon. 11th Aug. 2003

This is the anniversary of the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), a disciple of Rigdzin Chenpo Kumaradza and a famous master of Dzogchen Upadesa. On this day it is good to do Akar Lamai Nalor, Guruyoga with the White A, collectively or alone.

6th Month, 15th day
Tue. 12th Aug. 2003

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Milarepa, founder of the Kagyu-pa school and author of "The Precious Ornament of Liberation". It is, therefore, an excellent day to do Akar Lamai Nalor, the Guruyoga with the White A. It is also good to do the Long life practice "Union of Primordial Essences" of Guru Amitayus and, if possible, a Ganapuja.

6th Month, 25th day
Fri. 22nd Aug. 2003

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

6th Month, 30th day
Wed. 27th Aug. 2003

DARK MOON. This is a very important day to do purification practices, especially the "Purification of the Six Lokas". If you have the chance, you can also do a Short or Medium Thun or a Ganapuja, collectively or alone.

7th Month, 10th day
Fri. 5th Sept. 2003

It is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava as well as the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248-1283), a famous yogini, tertön and reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal and consort of the tertön Gugu Chowang. Therefore it is an ideal day to do Akar Lamai Nalor, the Guruyoga of the White A, and a Ganapuja, if you have the possibility.

This month there is no 9th day so today is a special day to do the practice of Ekajati.

7th Month, 15th day
Wed. 10th Sept. 2003

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso and Padma Karpo, a famous 17th century Drugpa Kargyupa Master. Therefore it is an excellent day to do the long life practice of the Dakini Mandarava. "Cycle of

Life's Vajra", with a Ganapuja if possible as well as Akar Lamai Nalor, the Guruyoga of the White A collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters or alone.

7th Month, 19th day
Sun. 14th Sept. 2003

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

7th Month, 25th day
Sun. 21st Sept. 2003

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

7th Month, 30th day
Fri. 26th Sept. 2003

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

8th Month, 10th day
Sun. 5th Oct. 2003

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, therefore you can do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava. If you have time and the possibility you can do a Ganapuja with the Guruyoga and the Long life practice of Guru Padmasambhava together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. Otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

8th Month, 15th day
Fri. 10th Oct. 2003

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

8th Month, 19th day
Tue. 14th Oct. 2003

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long Thun with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or if that is not possible, you can do a Medium Thun alone reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 25th day
Mon. 20th Oct. 2003

This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of two great Dzogchen masters, Rigdzin Kumaraja, who transmitted the Dzogchen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), a great Dzogchen master of the Nyingmapa school. It is therefore an excellent day to do Akar Lamai Nalor, the Guruyoga with the White A. If you can do it in the morning, that is best. Then, if you have the time,

you can do a Medium or Long Thun later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamuka, or a Ganapuja, if you have the possibility.

8th Month, 27th day
Wed. 22nd Oct. 2003

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long Thun with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or if that is not possible, you can do a Medium Thun alone reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 30th day
Sat. 25th Oct. 2003

DARK MOON. This day is excellent for practicing the "Purification of the Six Lokas" if you know how to do it. Otherwise you can do the Medium or Long Thun or a Ganapuja.

9th Month, 3rd day
Tue. 28th Oct. 2003

This is the anniversary of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa (1729-1798), a great Dzogchen master who was the author of many books, among which is the Longchen Nyingthig, which he wrote after having contact with Longchenpa through visions. Therefore, on this important day, you should try to do Akar Lamai Nalor, the Guruyoga with the White A.

9th Month, 10th day
Mon. 3rd Nov. 2003

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. It is also the anniversary of the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa and of Tertön Tsogyal, a previous reincarnation of Sogyal Rinpoche and discoverer of many termas. It is therefore a good day to do the Long life practice of Guru Padmasambhava "Universal Wisdom Union", which is included in the Medium or Long Thun. You can do this in the usual way or, if you have the possibility, you can do it with a Ganapuja.

9th Month, 15th day
Sat. 8th Nov. 2003

FULL MOON. This is a day of the Buddha and a good day to do the Long life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences", either collectively or individually according to your possibilities, in the morning and in the evening a Ganapuja.

9th Month, 22nd day
Sun. 16th Nov. 2003

This day is the important celebration of Buddha Shakyamuni's descent to earth from the realm of the Divinities. It is called "Lhabab Tuchen", the Great Time of the Descent of the Divinities. It is an ideal day to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If there are none nearby, you can do a Short or Medium Thun on your own.

9th Month, 25th day
Wed. 19th Nov. 2003

The 25th is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Adzom Drugpa (1842-1924), a previous reincarnation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. He was a disci-

ple of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and a master of great masters such as Changchub Dorje and Ayu Khandro. Therefore, when it is 7PM in East Tibet on this day, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Adzom Drugpa. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 1PM.)

9th Month, 30th day
Sun. 23rd Nov. 2003

DARK MOON. This is a good day to do "Namcho Shitroi Nalor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Thun, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

10th Month, 10th day
Wed. 3rd Dec. 2003

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the day on which he arrived in central Tibet. It is considered that on this day, at the end of the 8th century, that King Songtsen Gampo, the ancient king of Dharma, vanished dissolving into a statue of Avalokiteshvara. Therefore it is good to do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava with the long life mantra and a Ganapuja. Otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Universal Wisdom Union". If it is possible, the best moment to do the Guruyoga is early in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the Ganapuja later in the afternoon.

10th Month, 11th day
Thu. 4th Dec. 2003

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati.

10th Month, 15th day
Mon. 8th Dec. 2003

FULL MOON. This day is considered to be the day to honor the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the Long life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava in particular. Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is between 7 and 8 in the morning but if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free. It is also a good day to do a Ganapuja.

10th Month, 25th day
Thu. 18th Dec. 2003

Today is a Dakini day and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. It is a very beneficial day for reinforcing the energy of the universe so try to perform a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers

continued on next page

and sisters. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do the Medium Thun on your own, transforming into the Dakini Simhamuka and reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.

10th Month, 30th day

Tue. 23rd Dec. 2003

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

11th Month, 8th day

Tue. 30th Dec. 2003

This is a special day for doing the practice of Ekajati so try to do a Long Thun, collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.

11th Month, 10th day

Thu. 1st Jan. 2004

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

11th Month, 15th day

Wed. 7th Jan. 2004

FULL MOON. Today it is important to try to do the Long life practice of Guru Amitayus, Union of Primordial Essences, in the usual way, and, if possible, a Ganapuja.

11th Month, 25th day

Sat. 17th Jan. 2004

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

11th Month, 30th day

Wed. 21st Jan. 2004

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

12th Month, 10th day

Sat. 31st Jan. 2004

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

12th Month, 11th day

Sun. 1st Feb. 2004

This is a good day to do a Medium or Long Thun with an intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

12th Month, 15th day

Fri. 6th Feb. 2004

FULL MOON. This is in general a day for honoring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the

Long life practice of Guru Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences". If possible try to do a collective Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters in the evening.

12th Month, 18th day

Mon. 9th Feb. 2004

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam (1308-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga Akar Lamai Nalor, Guruyoga with the White A, either collectively or personally.

12th Month, 25th day

Sun. 15th Feb. 2004

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

12th Month, 30th day

Fri. 20th Feb. 2004

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

TIBETAN NEW YEAR - WOOD MONKEY starts on Saturday, 21st February, 2004

Dorjeling in Lithuania

by Mantrimas Danielius



Founded in 1992, when our precious Master visited the post-Soviet area for the first time and gave Dzogchen teachings during a three day retreat in a nice place close to Vilnius. Last year we celebrated the ten year anniversary of our Community, but the beginning of the celebration started one year before when Fabio came to Vilnius in 1991 to give a course of Yantra Yoga.

Both of the events were arranged by a group of people led by Antanas Danielius, a student of a great Buryatian Buddhist master B. D. Dandaron since 1972. Unfortunately, Antanas passed away last October and it was a great loss for all of us.

About eighty people participated in this retreat in Vilnius. Some of them were so impressed by the teachings that they followed the Master all the way around Russia; St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Buryatia. Then, there were those heroic journeys by hitchhiking to Merigar (and sometimes back to Vilnius); to tell about them would require the whole issue of the Mirror.

Since 1992 until 2002 there have been two Vajra dance retreats with Adriana dal Borgo, a retreat of the Dance of the Song of Vajra in 1994 and the Purification of Six Lokas in 1998, and one retreat of Yantra Yoga for the beginners with Fabio Andrico in 1998.

There is a funny story about making Mandala for the first dance retreat. We sewed it by hand from linen cloth and then had to paint it. Since no normal space was big enough for that, we decided to paint outside in the street, and we couldn't find a place better than in front of St. Peter and Paul's Church in Vilnius. Of course, people were amazed at what they saw, but the funniest thing was that the priests of the church were sure that we were preparing for the visit of the Pope, which was to take place very soon! So nobody disturbed us in this holy work. Now this legendary Mandala has moved to Crimea, because we have made a new one. We try to practice the Vajra Dance every weekend, with about five people attending more or less regularly. Two years ago we had some nice Vajra Dance retreats in Riga together with Latvian practitioners.

Since the very beginning up to now there have always been about fifteen active members in our Community. Some left to go abroad, some to unknown directions, but their places are always taken by new members. It seems that this size of the Community has been programmed since the very beginning. The main group resides in Vilnius but also there are some

practitioners in two other towns, Kaunas and Aiauliai.

This year has become very important to us for some reasons. In February 2002, we were lucky to find a cheap and nice place for collective practices. This was the first time in these ten years that we had a fixed place for gathering together and doing practices. As a consequence, a group of people started to do Yantra Yoga collectively several times a week, and this turned out with positive results in all of us. In May and June, we had two very useful ten day retreats of Yantra Yoga and seventh Lojong with newly certified Santi Maha Sangha instructor Grisha Mokhin. About ten to twelve people took part in the retreats, and everybody felt very well.

Another important event for our Community was registration of the Community 'Dorjeling' in the Ministry of Justice. We had been trying to do that for some five years, but only now the attitude of the Ministry towards different Buddhist schools has really changed to positive. We have also developed our Community web page: <www.dzogchenas.lt>.

The year 2002 ended with a wonderful retreat led by Grisha Mokhin. For those six days we had our own house next to a nice lake covered with ice and snow; it was sometimes cold, yes, but we were doing practices at a fireplace, sometimes integrating the fire in our Thun practice. Our retreat was dedicated to such practices as long life practice of Mandarava, Rushen of voice, Shine, and Chöd. About ten to twelve people took part in the retreat, two of them from Latvia. Everything went very well, and at the end Grisha suggested that our Community should try to have its own house in the countryside, so that the positive energy accumulated through the practices was not wasted away. He himself made the first offering for this project and suggested us what we could do for developing it. One of his suggestions we applied immediately; we did the Odzer Chenma practice having this intention in mind. The first step is, of course, looking for an appropriate house and asking Rinpoche for confirmation. The second will be raising money. We ourselves have had this idea for ten years, but for us it looked impossible to raise such a sum of money (minimum 5,000US dollars) needed for purchasing such a house. Grisha filled us with optimism in this respect.

GLOBAL TIMETABLE

Anniversary of Garab Dorje

1st Tibetan month - 15th day

Celebration at 8AM Oddiyana time.

Monday 17th March 2003

17:00 Hawaii

19:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver (US Pacific Time)

20:00 Denver (US Mountain Time)

21:00 Chicago, Mexico City, Belize (US Central Time)

22:00 New York, Montreal, Detroit, Havana

23:00 Caracas

Tuesday 18th March 2003

00:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Santiago

03:00 GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon

04:00 Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Amsterdam, Stockholm

05:00 Helsinki, Athens, Jerusalem

06:00 Moscow

08:00 Oddiyana (Karachi-Pakistan)

08:30 Delhi, Bombay

08:45 Katmandu

09:00 Dacca

10:00 Bangkok, Jakarta

11:00 Singapore, Hong Kong

12:00 Tokyo

14:00 Melbourne, Sydney

Anniversary of Padmasambhava

6th Tibetan month - 10th day

Celebration at 8AM Oddiyana time.

Wednesday 6th August 2003

17:00 Hawaii

20:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver

21:00 Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton

22:00 Lima, Quito, Chicago, Mexico City

23:00 Caracas, San Juan, Santiago, New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa

00:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bermuda

Thursday 7th August 2003

00:00 Newfoundland

03:00 GMT, Reykjavic,

04:00 London, Dublin, Lisbon

05:00 Johannesburg, Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw

06:00 Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent, Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tallinn, Vilnius, Istanbul

06:30 Tehran

07:00 Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad

07:30 Kabul

08:00 ODDIYANA, Islamabad

08:30 New Delhi, Bombay

08:45 Katmandu

09:00 Dhaka

09:30 Rangoon

10:00 Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon

11:00 Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth

12:00 Tokyo, Seoul,

12:30 Darwin, Adelaide

13:00 Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney

14:00 Vladivostok

15:00 Fiji, Wellington, Auckland, Kamchatka

Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa

Wednesday, 19th November 2003

01:00 Wellington, Auckland

02:00 Hawaii

03:00 Fairbanks

04:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver

05:00 Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton

06:00 Chicago, Mexico City

07:00 New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa, Lima, Quito

08:00 Caracas

09:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago

12:00 GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon

13:00 Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw

14:00 Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Vilnius, Johannesburg

15:00 Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad, Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent

16:00 Kabul

17:00 ODDIYANA, Islamabad

17:30 Delhi, Bombay

17:45 Katmandu

18:00 Dacca

19:00 Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon

20:00 Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth

21:00 Tokyo, Seoul

22:00 Brisbane, Vladivostok

22:30 Adelaide

23:00 Kamchatka, Melbourne, Sydney



MERIGAR PROGRAM 2003

IMPORTANT PROGRAM CHANGE

We would like to inform you that the August 2003 retreat of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar will be held from August 10 - 16 instead of August 13 - 19 so that it does not overlap the retreat held by H. H. Sakya Trizin which is planned for August 18 - 20, 2003.

February 8 - 9

"The Role of the Mind during Illness" with Barrie Simmons
Cost: 72 Euro with discounts for members

February 15

Day of Dance of the Liberation of the Six Spaces

February 22 - 23

Purification of the Six Lokas practice retreat

March 1 - 3 LOSAR, TIBETAN NEW YEAR

March 1, Saturday Purification of the Six Lokas practice
9.30 - 10.30; 11 - 12; 15.30 - 16.30; 17 - 18

March 2, Sunday

9.30-10.30

Purification of the Six Lokas practice II

Video on Tibet 15.30-16.30

Purification of the Six Lokas practice 17-19

Short Ganapuja and intensive Nagong (with symbolic offerings)

March 3, Monday

First day of the new Water Sheep Year

6.30AM Long life practice of Guru Amitayus

12 Ganapuja

March 5, Wednesday

8AM Sang ritual and authentication of prayer flags

March 8

Day of Dance of the Three Vajras

March 15 - 16

Mandarava Long Life practice retreat

March 29 - 30

The course on the second series of yantras of Yantra Yogawith Laura Evangelisti has been postponed until May 17 - 18.

March 29 - 30

Twenty-five Thigle practice retreat

with four daily sessions: 9.30-10.30, 11-12, 15.30-16.30, 17-18

April 18 - 21 Easter Retreat

Explanation and practice of the Santi Maha Sangha Base (the point of view, the seven Semdzin) with Costantino Albini.

Explanations on Tibetan pronunciation and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's system of transliteration with Costantino Albini and Cristiana De Falco.

Dance of the Three Vajras course with Rita Renzi.

The retreat begins at 10AM on April 18.

Cost: 120 Euro with discounts for members.

April 22 - 24

Retreat of Karma Yoga practice.

The retreat begins at 9AM on April 22. Chöd practice at 6.30PM.

April 25 - 27

Retreat of explanation and practice of the Santi Maha Sangha Base (the Four Immeasurables) with Costantino Albini. The retreat starts at 10AM on April 25.

Cost: 90 Euro with discounts for members.

April 29 - May 4

Dance of the Song of the Vajra course, part one, with Prima Mai.

The course starts at 5PM on April 29.

Cost: 175 Euro with discounts for members.

May 1 - 4

Course of explanation and construction of Namkha with Cristiana De Falco. The course starts at 4PM on May 1.

Cost: 100 Euro with discounts for members.

May 17 - 18

Yantra Yoga for advanced students, Second Series, with Laura Evangelisti. The course starts at 10AM on May 17.

Cost: 70 Euro with discounts for members.

May 31 - June 2

Intensive retreat of Vajrasattva practice from the Longsal Cycle (Ati Longsal Ngöndro). The retreat starts at 9.30 on May 31 June 18 - 22 Retreat of Dzogchen Teachings on Padma

continued on the next page

merigar

Out of the Golden Cage

Chöd retreat with Costantino Albini

Merigar, December 27-January 1, 2003

by Ugo Leonzio

To tell you about the Chöd retreat led by Costantino Albini at the end of the year, I'd like to start at the end. For many of those who ventured to Merigar through the foggy woods and the treacherous hail in order to offer their body to the demons and the dakinis, it was probably their first close encounter with Machig Labdrön. It was also the first time Costantino met practitioners as a "retreat leader".

Going down to the Gonpa in the bare grayness, the usual demon of "thogche", who (for me) always officiates over pleasure and repulsion, discreetly appeared pretending to be a wisp of winding fog in order to make me notice the discolored lungta of last summer, the trees like skeletons, the steps of the Gonpa dirtied by the building work, the earth damp from the rain and the air lacking the perfume of the juniper. And then, whispered the demon, since it was Costantino's first retreat, wouldn't he be carried away by his feelings, or be too literal and neglect to transmit the emotions and love he certainly felt for the intense presence of the Master?

As we entered the Gonpa, it seemed bigger and more silent, and the light, springing to the attention of those who were seated, gathered around the empty seat of the Master, bringing a vague sensation of being orphans - one of the old tricks of the "thogche" to distract us. Other demons would arrive with the dark but, in the meantime, the retreat had begun. Costantino spoke in his neutral English and Sergio Quaranta translated in his neutral Italian, occasionally changing roles. We were a vacillating fifty people there and seemed to be not so much spiritual sharks, as Chögyam Trungpa would have said, ready to be cooked at the great Red Feast, but rather petals on a wet black bough, like an ancient haiku of Ezra Pound. But before continuing, dear, no, dearest Vajra brothers and sisters, I must make a confession.

I do not know which demon we had business with during the retreat who was kind enough to make my notes disappear on the way back home so I do not remember very well the particulars of the retreat, only scattered images - the way of sounding the drum and bell, the position of the wrist, the meaning of the visualizations, the origin of the practice, the relationship between form and emptiness in the Heart Sutra or the sound linked to the five syllables of the five Dhyani Buddhas. Or the analysis of the mantra which is the very essence of the Chöd. And then the multi-colored breaks between sessions, the mixing up of the seasons, the sudden silences of the birds (maybe there weren't any), the car headlights crossing in the dark when the lesson finished, etc. I could go on and on but I leave the rest to the imagination. Retreats are all the same and all different. The substance is that the practice entered us like an awaited and unexpected gift and fitted magnificently into the boiling cauldron of blood which contained our dismembered bodies.

When I said that it would be a good idea to begin at the end, it was because I wanted to arrive immediately at the last day which was so special, happy and, in a certain sense, so pure. During the Guruyoga which took us all into the new year, we were aware of the dazzling body of Machig Labdrön dancing in space giving unexpected grace to the keen and, at times, less keen pulse of the damaru and trilbu which escaped from the golden cage of samsara. Impossible to forget the "lujin" of that night, the last of the retreat, the last of the year in which all of us identified with the passion of the dakini of Wisdom, Simhamukha, Drölma, Mandarava, Vajrayogini, Tröma Nagmo. I felt terribly moved and attached to Dorje Phagmo in her dancing boar like vision because at dinner a few hours earlier at Serkhang, we were served boar meat and those who were vegetarian had done a quick Ganapuja. Trying to sound the damaru and sing the final words of the "lujin", I, too, placed an infinite number of animal bodies eaten in the night and day, together with all the others who then quietly set off behind Machig Labdrön to the holder of human heads of the three Kayas. For a moment, the illusion became less persistent. Pure beings dancing. Nothing is real. Nothing exists, nothing, as it says in a supreme passage on compassion in the Bardo Thosgol.

In the end there were festivities for Costantino Albini. I have to say it, and it isn't just flattery - this retreat was perfect. The patience, the skill, and humility were the surprise of a 'retreat leader' who has the gift of transmitting an essential teaching profoundly and simply. From his and our Master, Costantino has absorbed the 'blessing of the teaching'. Then, with bubbles, toasts and paper cups, in a relaxed climate, surrounded by an impassable river of fog that stuck to the windscreen along the pitch black street of Arcidosso, samsara came back, guiding some towards welcome beds, others to the more profane offerings officiated over by the untiring and seductive Thogche demon.

The day after, the first of the New Year, everything had changed. It was a spring day, warm and silent, the Chöd practice in the Gonpa almost festive. Cats and shamans dozed in the sun. The unexpected video of the Master practicing the Chöd was shown in the Zikhang, a fitting conclusion to a wonderful retreat. But something precious had gone with the night, the fog and the dark. What was it? It is difficult to say when everything is so harmonious. Perhaps there is a demon for this condition that feeds the ego with such fine points. The demon that snares you with a delightful sadness when things come to a close and makes the old attachments come back. I don't know the name of this demon but it is certainly the one who made my notes disappear. And I am sure that I will find them at the next Red or Black Feast, but then everything will have been forgotten. There will not be a first time or a first retreat any more, neither will there be an irreparable night of silence that slips across the years accompanied by the intrusive procession of damaru, trilbu and dance of the mists, dispersed by the Phat! of blissful impermanence.

Dance of the Vajra
World Practice Day

March 27th, 2003

Don't forget to mark the day dedicated to the Dance of the Vajra on your calendar! Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has chosen the 25th day of the first month of the Tibetan calendar to be the World Practice Day for the Dance. This day is the anniversary of the Lady Master Ayu Khandro and, next year, the year of the Water Sheep, falls on March 27th. Let's dedicate this day to the practice of the Dance of the Three Vajras in particular because this Dance represents the heart of the Teaching and renews and reinforces our transmission.

Just as on each mandala the energy of the dancers is reciprocally increased through the synchronization of their movements, in the same way we can create an effect of greater resonance when all the mandalas on this earth are activated at the same time. So according to our circumstances, let's organize thuns of practice at the Gars, the Lings and in each and every place where there is a mandala. Where possible, you can even prepare a few days of retreat.

Good practice to all!

Adriana Dal Borgo



Dance of the Song of the Vajra in Namergalgar, Part 1, January 3-9, 2003



Merigar Program continued from the previous page

Nyingthigwith Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The retreat starts at 4PM on June 18.
Cost: 200 Euro with discounts for members.

June 23 - 30
Training course of Yantra Yoga First Level with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico. The course starts at 5PM on June 23.
Cost: 245 Euro without discounts.

June 27 - July 6
Practice retreat of Karma Yoga.
The retreat starts at 9AM on June 27.

July 15 - 17
Santi Maha Sangha Second Level exams

July 18 - 22
Santi Maha Sangha Third Level training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
The retreat starts at 4PM on July 18.
Cost: 200 Euro without discounts.

July 27 - August 1
Yantra Yoga course for advanced students, Third and Fourth Series, with Laura Evangelisti e Fabio Andrico. The course starts at 10AM on July 27.
Cost: 210 Euro with discounts for members.

August 2 - 8
Training course of Dance of the Vajra First Level with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo. The course starts at 4PM on August 2.
Cost: 210 Euro without discounts.

August 10 - 16 Retreat of Dzogchen Teachings on Rigs drug gnas shyong with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The retreat starts at 4PM on August 10.
Cost: 300 Euro with discounts for members.

August 18 - 20
Retreat of Teachings and Initiation of Guru Dragpo with His Holiness Sakya Trizin.
Cost: 150 Euro with discounts for members.

August 23 - 24
Training course Kumar Kumari Yantra (yoga for children), for practitioners of Yantra Yoga with Laura Evangelisti.
The course starts at 10AM on August 23.
Cost: 70 Euro with discounts for members.

For further information, contact:
Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.
Tel.: ++39 0564 966837
Email: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it

Sangha Meeting at Merigar

Welcoming from Alison (Gakyil Director)

The usual annual Sangha Meeting took place last December 7th in the Zhikang hall (the Mandala hall). Many people came to the meeting besides the Merigar Gakyil representatives. Alison Duguid, the new Gakyil director, greeted everyone participating and then invited the two new Gekös, Ana and Alfredo, to talk about their very first months of activity.

The Gekös

Ana and Alfredo spoke first of all about the big work on the two furnaces, that of the Serkhang and the one of the Gonpa, one of which had to be substituted since it was definitely "beyond repair", and the other one, not working at the moment, has to be repaired, hopefully, in a short time. Alison, playing a joke on the two Gekös, defined the climate "Tibetan", referring to the temperature that people working in Merigar, and Ana and Alfredo in particular, living in Serkhang, had to put up with. About the furnace that was substituted (actually replaced by two external smaller ones), one of the architects of the Community, Patrizia Moscatelli, made a project to enlarge the old furnace location, harmoniously fitting into the "golden house" structure, and also perfectly matching the current regulations about security. At the same time the decision was taken to increase the number of the toilets from two to four, to serve more people. The works for building the new access ramp to the Gonpa have also started. The Merigar property is now outside the limits of the natural reserve; this means that all the new projects, like the ones already described in a previous number of the Merigar Letter, such as the "Health Center" in Merigar 2 and the "Place of Remembrance", can now be carried on.

From the kitchen with love

Paola Ciampetti informed everybody about a new initiative meant to increase the kitchen efficiency, a sort of "cooking team" made up of a fixed group of people who can help the Gekö with the shopping (try to make the buying more rational, choose products of high quality, etc.) including also cooks engaged with Karma Yoga, who should guarantee their presence during all the events scheduled by the Community for the entire year.

From the Red Gakyil

Bepi Goia then spoke. He reported on the work of the Red Gakyil, firstly about the small retreat houses that, as some people already know, have been colonized by different kinds of troublesome small animals. The structures have been cleared, and are now ready to host personal retreats. The road that

connects the Serkhang and the Zhikang has been partly paved, and we hope that in the future we can pave all of the Merigar roads, according to our finances.

From the Yellow Gakyil

The report from the Yellow Gakyil, presented by Gian Paolo Imola, touched on the "Fund for Rinpoche's Health" which needs to be revitalized, and also included a reminder on membership renewal for the coming year, which is, in fact, a very important source to sustain the Community and its related projects. Gian Paolo underlined the commitment on the part of the Yellow Gakyil, to raise money for the upcoming works in progress in the Community, and also to guarantee a certain financial stability. Soon a "Committee" will be organized to support the activity of the Yellow Gakyil, as the one that has been helping the Red Gakyil in the last two years, and the Blue Gakyil in the past few months. Within this future Committee there will be several professional figures, such as economists, marketing and fund raising experts and so forth.

From the Blue

Anna Pucci, the vice-director, spoke on behalf of the Blue Gakyil and presented the full summer program which consists of two retreats with our Master and the retreat with H.H. Sakya Trizin who will give the initiation of Guru Dragpo, as asked by Rinpoche. The summer program will also include the exams for the second level of S.M.S. and the subsequent training.

The Secretary

The new secretary for the coming year is Claudia Harkan, a specialist in informatics. Her skill will be of great help for the massive work needed with database, the Gakyil, and the new web site of Merigar which is practically ready to be launched on internet. Claudia said that she would be very happy if people volunteer with Karma Yoga for small, still very useful secretarial jobs.

Miscellaneous

These were the main points scheduled for the meeting; they were presented in Merigar's informal and relaxed environment. Alison invited those participating to make comments, proposals, and observations on whatever they felt was needed. Flavia Tomassini encouraged everybody to give their contribution to communal life, through a proposal or even with constructive criticism because everybody "should feel at ease" and "every idea is worth everyone else's consideration". So some comments were made, and one of the subjects touched was the need of general help in Karma Yoga.

From the Merigar Letter Staff

Merigar Letter is looking for new people who would like to write about the retreats held in Merigar and the main events happening in the Community. Liane Graf asked if it was possible to insert the practice calendar in the Letter more often since usually people keep it as a separate sheet and easily lose it. Tatiana Minghetti, responsible for the M.L., replied that they would try to publish it every other month instead of every three months.

Weekends of Practice

Otello Balducci suggested increasing the weekends of practice and the Blue Gakyil agreed with this intention, as long as it is compatible with the other dates of Merigar's calendar. Some of the people present, including Otello himself pointed out that between different editions of practice books there are some slight differences, if not proper mistakes, regarding the translation from Tibetan. Anna Pucci replied that the practice books are continuously revised and improved but, in any case, it would be very useful if people highlight the unclear points. On this aspect it was remarked that skilled people who would like to help the Shang Shung Institute with their Karma Yoga, would be greatly appreciated.

Wild Boars!

The following matter was a real peculiar one: the wild boars! Alix de Fermor described their incursions on Merigar's land as "devastating". With very little respect for the work done they dig all the meadows around the Master's house. Giuseppe Palermo of the Red Gakyil suggested a good fencing of the area as the only way to stop the voracious animals. The discussion went on to the problem of the hunters, since Merigar is no more within the boundaries of the natural reserve, they are now allowed to walk through the land. It would be very useful to keep our land clear from the bushes that are the natural hideout for the wild pigs, and also for this purpose Karma Yoga would be very welcome.

Watch your Weight!

The sweetest proposal came from Rita Bizzotto "Merigar's baker", who has been preparing in the last few months jams, cookies and cakes to support the fund for the new paintings in the Gonpa. She asked to sell those products also through the other Community centers in the different cities. Rita proposed also that a vegetable garden should be grown in Merigar, to supply vegetables for our kitchen. This would be a very good idea, considering how expensive zucchini and such can be up here!

Collaboration

David Ruiz suggested that people who are willing to help in Merigar's activities, but don't have means to support themselves, could be encouraged to stay offering them food and accommodation. Both Giorgio D'allorto and Alison noted that this could be quite a heavy task for the Community to deal with, and they also reminded him that Gars are mainly meant for practicing and receiving Teachings, and only the Gekö and certain people, for special occasions and limited time, can live in Merigar. The "Five Points of Merigar", written by the Master, explains quite clearly on this point.

Work exchange

Arianna asked if next year it would be possible again to give one's work in exchange for retreat fees. Stefano Battistella (assistant in the Red Gakyil), who took care of this aspect last year, said it would be offered again. He pointed out though that this opportunity is for people who really don't have any income, others who have little money can ask for installments, plus discounts for students and pensioners are currently applied. He added that those who pay with their work should be open to come also at different times than when Rinpoche holds a retreat. In fact there is usually a crowd in those occasions and very few people during the rest of the year. On the other hand for practitioners of the Eastern European countries, for example, it would be very difficult to come again at a different time because of the very high cost of retreats and airfares compared with their financial situation.

Italian Buddhist Union

Leopoldo Sentinelli was last to speak. He gave information on the long debated matter of the State contribution to Buddhists (a percentage of the taxation is now distributed by the Italian State to all religions officially recognized). Leopoldo said the law has been put aside for the moment and will be included in a more general project concerning religious freedom, which should be discussed later in January within the Italian Parliament. For this purpose an Assembly including all the various religions should be formed in order to supply their different presentations before the final voting. Leopoldo told us that the I.B.U. is organizing meetings in the Italian schools to present the basic Dharma Teachings. In Italy "religious teaching" is a subject in public schools, but most of the teachers follow the Catholic religion and have generally no knowledge of Buddhist Teaching.

See you soon!

Alison thanked everybody participating and expressed the wish that in the coming months we could share the pleasure of being together again.

*Tatiana Minghetti,
translated by Sergio Quaranta*

eu rope

Advanced course in the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, UK with Prima Mai March 7-10, 2003

The UK Dzogchen Community is pleased to announce that Prima Mai will be coming to England to teach an Advanced Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra.

The retreat will take place in the village hall of Ashdon in Essex, which is near Saffron Walden and about 10 miles from Cambridge. We will start on the evening of Friday March 7th, 2003 from 7.30 - 10.30PM, continue through the weekend of the 8th and 9th from 10AM - 6PM and also dance all day on Monday the 10th, finishing with a Ganapuja in the evening.

This course is to enable those who already know the dance to perfect the movements, deepen their understanding and acquaint themselves with the latest changes which were made by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu last year with Prima Mai and Adriana dal Borgo.

The cost will be £120 (\$190 / Euros) with 20% discount for members. Places are limited so to secure your place please send a deposit of £40 or \$65 Euros made out to Dzogchen Community UK to: Rowan Wylie, 29 Almoners Avenue, Cambridge CB1 8NZ, UK. Email: rowanwylie@hotmail.com, Tel: 0044 (0)1223 473 528

Vajra Dance in France with Stoffelina Verdonk

The Dzogchen Community in France is happy to announce that a course of the Dance of Liberation of the Six Lokas with Stoffelina Verdonk will be held from February 28th to March 2nd, 2003, in Paris.

Cost: 100 Euros

Schedule:
7PM - 10PM Friday
10AM - 6PM both Saturday and Sunday

Inscription:
Nadia Poureau
Tel: (00) 33-1-47-49-07-16
Mail: cadette@club-internet.fr

Vajra Dance in Southwest France with Stoffelina Verdonk April 11, 12 & 13, 2003

We are happy to announce the Vajra Dance Course of the Liberation of Six Lokas with Stoffelina Verdonk in Mont de Marsan, on April 11, 12 & 13, 2003.

TIME: Friday, April 11 - afternoon, Saturday, April 12 - 10.00 - 18.00, Sunday, April 13 - 10.00 - 18.00

PLACE: Salle George Brassens 285, Rue Pierre Benoit, 40000 Mont de Marsan, France

Course fee: 100 Euro - 30% for Dzogchen Community members

Contact: Zeljka Jovanovic, 4 Rue Thomas Diaz, app 19
40000 Mont de Marsan,
Tel: 33 (0) 5 58 06 82 76

Email: zeljka.j@wanadoo.fr

You can register by email or phone. Please mention if you want to learn the male or the female part (PAWO or PAMO) of the dance. Check if there is space for you before sending a check (to book your space) for 30 Euro for the ASSOCIATION DZOGCHEN to: Zeljka Jovanovic, 4 Rue Thomas Diaz, app 19, 40000 Mont de Marsan, France

If you need accommodation in the area, contact me and I will figure it out.

See you soon!
Zeljka Jovanovic

Santi Maha Sangha Base Rtreat with Jakob Winkler in Slovakia February 21 - 25, 2003

The Dzogchen community of Slovakia is happy to announce that Santi Maha Sangha base level explanation and practice retreat with Jakob Winkler from Germany will take place from February 21-25 (Fri evening to Tue) in a weekend house near Kovacova, Zvolen in Middle part of Slovakia.

The price including accomodation and food is cca 40 EUR.

To participate it is necessary to have received the Dzogchen transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

For further information and registration and reservation of sleeping places and food please contact Martin 00421 [0]905 265 386 or <mipham@pobox.sk>.

We would like to invite particular practitioners from nearby countries Czechia, Austria, Hungary and Poland.

All the best,
Lukas Chmelik
Email: chmelikl@centrum.cz or Mobile tel: 00421 [0]907 549 819

passages

Geoffrey Blundell - an Obituary 1923-2003

A very dear friend in the English Community passed away peacefully on January 15th. Geoffrey has been an integral part of the Community in this country and abroad since the very first days of our beloved master teaching here in London over Easter, 1979. A very kind and steady man, he had not a streak of malice in his bones and provided a solid sounding post for those of us in the Community to talk through various dilemmas. He also had a delightfully quirky sense of humor!

Geoffrey not only worked very hard for the Community, loyally putting in long hours over the formation of the Charity in the early days but also acted as Director. He was enormously generous with his time and his hospitality (we met at different times over the years in three of his homes, first in West Hampstead, then Highgate and latterly in his spacious livingroom in Primrose Hill). Not only liberal with his time and personal space, he was also extremely generous financially with the Community, particularly once we had acquired Kunselling, and was a major donor. At all times he kept a cautious eye on the Community's affairs and always, with a Virgoan sense of minutiae, wanted everything in shape and running properly.

He has been ill the last two years and in that time went from being a solidly built man to someone quite frail. While it was painful to watch, as his health deteriorated, so he became more radiant and full of light. His eyes had a particularly piercing quality and his mind and intellect was ever lively and inquiring to the end (Geoffrey was a brilliant inventor in the electronics field). His near death in August 2001 shocked us all but he then appeared to resurrect miraculously. Thomas (Beaver) came to live with him in the last six months and Geoffrey gained renewed strength from Thomas's loving support. His ex-wife Helen also showed Geoff incredible devotion and unswerving love and his many friends always valued time spent with him.

He was in the hospice for only 10 days and his deterioration at the end was very rapid. Refusing dialysis for a rapidly failing kidney and morphine for pain, Geoff was determined to die with his awareness intact. The pain grew so intense, however, that a trace of morphine was given to him on his last day. A few Community friends gathered round to sing the Garab Dorje practice the night before he died. He appeared responsive and peaceful and sounded an AH of acknowledgment. The following morning we practiced Garab Dorje again with him. By the late afternoon, he had died. His brother Anthony, Helen and her friend Liana were with him as well as Robert Beer, a very dear friend of Geoff's. During his last hour Robert was holding an image of Samantabhadra in front of his eyes, reminding him of the importance of the teachings. I arrived within 10 minutes. Shortly before his last breath, Geoffrey sounded a number of AH's and then died. We practiced Shitro quietly and then later that evening, with the Community there (18 in all) we sang Shitro again. The light radiating in and around Geoffrey's body was so brilliant as to be blinding. His face which earlier that day had been suffused with pain, now lay peaceful.

Helen once said to me that Geoffrey was her 'oak tree'. I like to think that Geoffrey was the oak tree amongst us - strong solid and dependable, and capable of producing many acorns. Such an innately good man, we will not see his like readily again and we salute you Geoffrey. Thank you for everything, dear friend.

Judy Allan, London, January 18th, 2003



Developing a Base for Understanding

Santi Maha Sangha Retreat with Jim Valby

Prague, Czech Republic

October 29th to November 7th, 2002

by Ed Hayes

A palace in the quiet Czech village of Hlubos seemed an ideal location for a Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat with Jim Valby. The 'Hlubos Castle', abandoned during the Communist era, was slowly being renovated into a local museum and performance space - it was perfect for our needs. At the request of the Czech community, Jim Valby was gracious enough to come from the United States to lead the ten day retreat. Over sixty people attended, from not only the Czech and Slovak Republics, but from across all Europe, the United States, and Australia to study and practice together the teachings of our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Our days were divided into four practice sessions. With skillful means, Jim drew from both his understanding of the teachings and his own personal experiences with Rinpoche to help us develop our devotion and elucidate the Dzogchen view. Not only did he improve our theoretical understanding, but he helped us to correct many practical points such as the innovative, yet imprecise melodies that pervade our group practices.

Jim also reminded us of the importance of the Marne Monlam (Invocation of the Lamp) - a practice we performed during each of our three Ganapujas. Rinpoche introduced this beautiful and powerful practice to the Community shortly after he was diagnosed with cancer. By purifying the Sangha with this invocation we each become strong and send tremendous benefit to our Master. He encouraged us to practice this invocation with each Ganapuja. Toward the end of the retreat, we took a day off for a field trip to Svata Hora Pribirmai, a sacred place where an apparition of the Virgin Mary appeared a few hundred years ago. On our last evening, we celebrated our time together with singing, dancing, and maybe a little drinking. After the ten days of practice (and the night of partying) we were exhausted. On the following morning Jim lead us in a group dream yoga practice because as he pointed out, "We have to work with our circumstances."

It is difficult to describe the intensity of the positive energy that developed through ten days of group practice. The experience was joyful. We are all indebted to Jim Valby for helping us to understand the wisdom of Rinpoche and for sharing with us his experience and humor. Thanks to the many people whose hard work made the retreat possible. In particular, we are grateful to Milan Polasek, principle organizer of the retreat, whose tireless efforts were an offering to the whole Community.



Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreats with Jim Valby Spain, May 1 - 10, 2003 France, May 16-25, 2003.

The four daily sessions are: 8:30-10AM, 10:30-12NOON, 4:30-6PM (Yantra Yoga), 6:30-8PM.

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

Contacts:

Spain SMS base contact: Alejandro Ignacio Lando
Email: lhundrup17@hotmail.com

France SMS base contact: François Calmes
Email: fcalmes@free.fr

Renewed Hungarian Gakyil

Blue: Zsolt somogy Vari

Yellow: Iren Gedeon

Red: Tibor Blaga

New Polish Gakyil

elected in October, 2002, and approved by Rinpoche:

Yellow

Jowita Poniewska (President)

Maciek Sowoko (Vice-president)

Red

Grzegorz Konieczka

Jacek Marciszyn

Blue

Marek Macko

Cezary Wozniak

New Gakyil Spain

Yellow: Juan Jose Castellano

(Huelva)

Email: kailas@telefonica.net

Red: Alejandro Ignacio Lando

(Valencia)

Email: lhundrup17@hotmail.com

Blue: Francesc Padro (Barcelona)

Email: fpadro@jazzfree.com

k u n s a n g a r

Schedule in Kunsangar Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Vajra Dance
Santi Maha Sangha
Spring 2003

May 20th - 26th
Vajra Dance 1 Level Training with Prima Mai and Adriana dal Borgo

May 21st
Rinpoche arrives in Moscow

May 27th - 29th
Santi Maha Sangha 2nd level exams

May 30th
June 3rd - Santi Maha Sangha 3rd level Training

June 6th - 10th
Dzogchen Retreat (Longsal Teaching) with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

June 13th
Rinpoche leaves for Rome

KUNSANGAR RETREAT & PRACTICE SCHEDULE February - April, 2003

FEBRUARY

1/25 - 2/8/02 - Preliminary practices for dark retreat:

1/25 - 2/1 - Shitro

2/1 - 2/8 - Guru Yoga of White A of Garab Dorje.

Everyday - Vajra Dance practice beginning January 25th at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

2/1 (30th day) - GANAPUJA

2/11 (10th day) - GANAPUJA

2/14 - 2/16 - Dance of Three Vajras retreat for beginners with certified Vajra Dance 1st level teacher Luda Kislichenko beginning February 14th with a Medium Thun.

2/16 (15th day) - GANAPUJA

2/18 - 2/22 - Simhamuka Practice retreat (everyday - Yantra Yoga) with certified Yantra Yoga local instructor and SMS teacher Grisha Mokhin. Beginning February 18th with a Medium Thun.

2/25 - 3/2 - Purification of 6 Lokas with Vajrasattva (Longsal Ngöndro) practice retreat with Grisha Mokhin. Beginning February 25th at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

2/26 (25th day) - GANAPUJA

MARCH

3/2 (30th day) - GANAPUJA: 22:00-10:00 - Nagong

3/3 (1st day - LOSAR) - GANAPUJA.

3/2 - 3/18 - Mandarava Long Life practice retreat with chüden.

Everyday - Guru Yoga of White A, Yantra Yoga with Grisha Mokhin, Vajra Dance with Luda Kislichenko. Beginning March 2nd at 20.30 with a Ganapuja.

3/13 (10th day) - GANAPUJA.

3/18 (15th day, Garab Dorje Anniversary) 06.00 Moscow time - INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE with transmission; evening - GANAPUJA.

3/18 - 4/1 - SMS 1st level Tantric practices retreat. Beginning March 18th (Ganapuja).

3/27 (25th day) - GANAPUJA

3/28 - 3/30 - Semdzin with letter RAM practice retreat. Beginning March 28th at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

APRIL

4/1 (30th day) - GANAPUJA

4/4 - 4/11 - "The Four Immeasurables" and "25 Spaces of Samantabhadra". Beginning April 4th at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

4/11 - 4/13 - Vajra Dance practice retreat with Luda Kislichenko and Yana Sokolova. Beginning April 11th at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

4/12 (10th day) - GANAPUJA

4/15 - 4/20 - Rushen of the voice retreat with Anna Rudneva. Everyday 2 thuns of Karma Yoga (preparing for the Summer retreats). Beginning April 15th at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

4/16 (15th day) - GANAPUJA

4/22 - 4/27 - Rushen of the mind retreat with Alena Antonova; everyday - 2 thuns of Karma Yoga (preparing for the Summer retreats). Beginning April 22nd at 20.30 with a Medium Thun.

4/26 (25th day) - GANAPUJA

MAY

5/1 (30th day) - GANAPUJA

5/1 - 5/19 May - intensive work to prepare Kunsangar for the Summer retreats. Welcome to Karma Yoga!

Besides this time-table, DC members can also stay in Kunsangar for personal retreats, first discussing dates and subject with the Gekös.

LODGING IN KUNSANGAR FOR JANUARY-APRIL, 2003:

A bed in a 6-placed room - 2 USD/night
For paid-up DC members - 1 USD/night.

Double room - 4 USD/night;
For paid-up DC members - 2 USD/night.
Bedding (sheets etc) - 1 USD/set

MEALS IN KUNSANGAR CANTEEN

3 times meals costs approximately 2-3 USD per day.

PLEASE INFORM US BEFOREHAND ABOUT YOUR VISIT!

Phone: +7 (901) 900-36-46

+7 (09643) 2-11-56

+7 (243) 2-11-56 (from Moscow only)

Postal address:

BF "Destoyanie"

RUPS, box 13, Pavlovskiy Posad,

Moscow region, 142500, RUSSIA

Email: kunsang@gar.legko.ru



passages

Died:
Sergey Zhigireyev

Sergey Zhigireyev, Kiev, Ukraine, passed away on Friday night Dec 13th, 2002. He was one of the older Rinpoche's students in Ukraine having met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1992. He also was a Santi Maha Sangha Level 2 practitioner.

Three years ago he was diagnosed kidney cancer and according to medical prognoses he had no more than six months to live. He quit his job and started Garuda practices together with taking Tibetan medicine. It gave him three more years of life and practice. This summer having no money, he was working hard in Kunsangar as a retreat fee because he didn't find appropriate to ask for a discount. He also assisted on Rinpoche's way to Crimea this September and gave a shelter to a group of foreign Vajra brothers and sisters on their way back from Crimea to Europe. He already was in a very bad state still he never complained.

He left a 12 year old daughter Vika who also attended several retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a wife Svetlana.

Igor Berklin

TANTRA CLUB AT TSEGIALGAR

WITH JIM VALBY

MONDAY NIGHTS

Yantra Yoga, 6:00 - 7:30 PM.

Tantra Club in the Library, 7:30 - 9:00 PM.

A group of practitioners work with the Dzogchen teachings and transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

February 24

March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

April 7, 14, 21, 28.

May 5, 12

Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat with Jim Valby

Boston, USA

Saturday, April 19th - Sunday, April 20th, 2003

Mon April 21, 2003

(Day of Boston Marathon and Patriots' Day)

Three daily sessions from 10AM to 6 PM.

(10 - 12 Noon, 1:30 - 3PM, 4 - 6PM)

Location:

Amethyst Chiropractic

259 Elm St., Suite 300

Somerville, MA 02144

Fees: \$20/day, discount for registering all three days.

Davis Square "T" stop in Somerville (red line)

Limited metered parking on street and in area lots (Day Street) available.

Lodging: Lodging is not provided. Please check the YMCA and YWCA in Boston and American Youth Hostel (617) 536-9455 in Boston for discounted lodging. Advanced reservations needed.

Meals: Meals are not provided. There are many local food shops in the immediate area.

For more information contact Tsegialgar at:

DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

SMS Retreat Information:

Anyone who has attended a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or participated in one of the three universal transmission practice days may participate. The focus will be on the essential theory & practice of Sutra, Tantra & Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his book titled, "The Precious Vase: Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha" 1999, 2001. Jim will explain and conduct essential practices of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu contained in the SMS base.

Register at retreat or pre-register with Tsegialgar at

Tel: 413 369 4153

Fax: 413 369 4473

Email: DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

Fax: 413 369 4473

Second Level Yantra Yoga Teachers Training at Tsegialgar

Taught by Laura Evangelisti & Fabio Andrico

The tentative dates for the 2nd Level Yantra Yoga Teachers Training Course at Tsegialgar are SEPTEMBER 15-25, 2003

Please contact the office of Tsegialgar to pre register if you are interested in participating in this course.

Thank you,

Andrea Nasca, Secretary

Tel: 413-369-4153

Fax: 413 369 4473

Email: DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

t s e g y a l g a r
& w e s t c o a s t**Buckland Mandala Fund-raiser**

A thanka of Gomadevi by Glenn Eddy has been donated to raffle in order to raise funds to rebuild the original Dance Mandala on the Buckland retreat land, Khandroling, the site where Rinpoche received the dances in dreams. The painting is a framed, beautiful water color of Gomadevi looking joyous and radiant. There will be 100 numbers in the raffle, 20 in each of the five elements, so your chances of winning it are excellent. Tickets cost \$20. When all 100 have been bought, the winner will be announced. You can mail a check made out to Dzogchen Community of America, and send to P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341-0277. Please write on it 'Mandala Donation', and send with it a note saying which element/number(s) you choose: i.e., Blue 19. If that number is already taken, we'll give you the one closest to that. (Or, if you prefer, tell us to email you for your second choice.) Make sure to include your email address (or phone) so we can contact you if you won! Good luck, everybody! And thanks for your donations to the new mandala!

BUY TICKET ON-LINE!!!

You can now buy a ticket on-line for the Gomadevi painting. Go to the web site at www.tsegialgar.org and go to BOOKSTORE. Then

choose IMAGES, and it will be the first item. Each number costs \$20US. Thank you for helping us make the new mandala!!! (Unfortunately, it isn't possible to choose your ticket number and color on-line, but I'll email you that we've received your order, and ask you what number you'd like. If it's taken, I'll let you know. Numbers are 1 - 20 in the five colors. When all 100 spots are filled, we'll pick the lucky winner.)

Christina Svane, Blue Gakyil

t s e g y a l g a r
u p d a t e g a k y i l**BLUE GAKYIL**

2002 went out with high spirits at Tsegialgar, as Jim Valby ended his highly illuminating SMS Base Level Retreat with jazz fiddle and guitar duets with Binney, and a bunch of us singing along to 'Mack the Knife' in definitely self-liberated keys and tempi. About 30 people attended, including many who traveled far to get there, such as Ron from Toronto and Kevin from California. Thank you to Naomi for leading the Yantra practice sessions.

We're so lucky to have the benefit of Jim's scholarly, practical, condensed, humble and humorous insights into how to enter into the teachings (and how our dharma egos prevent it). We're happy to announce he'll be leading a 2 week retreat here again in the summer. Also in the summer, Anastasia McGhee will be teaching the Dance of the Six Spaces, during the SMS retreat. Sunday mornings, Paula continues to lead Longsal Ngöndro practice at 9:30AM, followed by the Vajra Dance at 11:00 AM. We've started doing Tara practice evenings on the first Friday of the month in Northampton at Karuna Studio, at 7:30 PM. We'll be integrating SMS study and practice sessions into the Karma yoga weekends scheduled in the middle of every month. Since it'll be too cold to do anything on the land for the next few months, we can continue with the prayer-flag-making we began during the SMS retreat. Thanks to all of you for your great energy silk screening, cutting, hanging and stacking the lungta! Being new on the Blue Gakyil, (we were all new, and lost two members - one to Shang Shung, and one to love in California). I've been slow to see how the scheduling really functions, and have come to realize that we need lots more communication for these practice weekends to work. We need two things to happen: people to volunteer to lead a practice, and people to call and say if and when they're coming. If you're a new practitioner, let us know, and we'll try to hook you up with an experienced one to answer questions. We have the idea to get a mentoring situation going, and this is how it would start. Lastly, we need volunteers to listen to retreat tapes of Rinpoche's teaching, to make indexes of subject matter, so this can be on a database for all to reference. Please contact the office with a message for Marit, the Librarian, if you're interested. Have a great year, and see you soon!

by Christie Svane

RED GAKYIL

There are seemingly endless projects and plans for Tsegialgar! We finally completed the Stupa this year. Rinpoche's cabin at Khandroling has been remodeled and improved, and the inside of the Guardian Cabin is almost complete, although we still need to work on the surroundings. While Rinpoche was in Tsegialgar this summer doing his personal retreat at Khandroling, we had 30-50 people everyday doing Karma Yoga. We thank all of you who worked and dedicated your time and energy on different projects this year! Rinpoche is coming back to Tsegialgar in September, 2003. Our future vision for Khandroling has been discussed on an ongoing basis. Here are some plans which we would like to share with you. Your ideas, suggestions and participation are greatly appreciated and welcome. by Kyu Possible Future Plans for Khandroling The Temple of Universal Mandala: The plan is to enclose the Vajra Dance Mandala which is currently located on the top of the hill. This summer, Rinpoche indicated that the mandala needs a more permanent structure. The temple will be used as the summer Gonpa, holding courses, retreats and practice sessions from April-November. Bath House: Near the Stupa, a septic system exists for six toilets. Showers and possibly a Japanese style Bath house which uses wood to heat water are being considered. Retreat Cabins: According to the Rinpoche's specifications, eight cabins each for different practices, such as Long Life, Thödgäl and other practices are to be built.

by Kyu Khandro

YELLOW GAKYIL

We would like to thank all of our Sangha members who helped to support Tsegialgar this year. Although we had a successful year with significant retreat income, bookstore sales, and donations, the expenses of putting on retreats in Boston and New York were much more than we expected. At year end, we had \$95K in the bank, \$20K of which is for the "Pike's Land" project, & \$17K which is designated for capital improvements, leaving us with about \$58K for operating expenses, which have typically run about \$10K/month or \$120K annually. The on-line bookstore has been completed recently. We have also sent our catalog to everyone. Your order certainly will help our Sangha and there are lots of great new books and items, including newly completed translations. And don't forget to get a set of Song of the Vajra LUNGTA (prayer flags) for an auspicious new year, hand-made at Tsegialgar! We welcome your suggestions and ideas for fundraising & income ventures for this year. At Losar we will send out our Membership renewal letter. We are counting on your Membership to kick off a successful Year of the Water Sheep!! Thank you.

by Kyu Khandro

A Year-Ending SMS Training at Tsegvalgar Dec 27 - 31, 2002

by John LaFrance

What a wonderful way to end the year! Five days of Santi Maha Training with Jim Valby. As everyone knows who has experienced a training with Jim, his primary emphasis is on explaining the teachings and transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

For the SMS base, these are the teachings contained in Rinpoche's "Precious Vase". At the year-ending retreat at Tsegvalgar, December 27-31, 25-30 new and old practitioners, gathered to hear Jim's explanations and to practice together. First and foremost Jim spoke of the essential aspect of connecting with the wisdom of the primordial state as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. No matter what the method of practice, Sutra, Tantra or Dzogchen, always we are trying to familiarize ourselves with that primordial state and ultimately stabilize ourselves in this self-affirming wisdom.

One of the wonderful qualities of Jim's teaching is that he can access and articulate all the tricky ways the ego tries to maintain its control and subvert our practice. At times it's like hearing a simultaneous hilarious dialog with his unconscious and one's own, making it easier to recognize the stunts we pull to subvert our experiencing the clear transmission of primordial wisdom.

In addition to Jim's explanations of many of the practices, Naomi Zeitz, let a wonderfully open and accessible hour and a half session of Yantra Yoga each day.

By the end of the week, just in time for New Year's Eve, participants found themselves relaxed, lighter and open to the coming year.

1 POSITION OPEN ON TSEGYALGAR GAKYIL

There is one position available on the Tsegvalgar Gakyil as of January 1, 2003, on Yellow. This is a minimum one year commitment and requires that the person has been to at least three retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a student of his for at least three years. If you are interested, please contact one of the following Tsegvalgar Gakyil members:

Nicole Bini-Ezequille
Email: ezebi2@earthlink.net

Christina Svane (Gakyil Secretary)
Email: csvane@msn.com
Tel: 413-247-9454

Gerry Steinberg (Treasurer)
Email: gss47@aol.com
Tel: 413-584-5341

Mark Alston-Follansbee (President)
Email: maf@somervillehomelesscoalition.org
Tel: 978-287-0516 (H), 617-623-6111 (W)

TSEGYALGAR PRACTICES AND RETREAT

Feb. 14-15 Karma Yoga Weekend, Full Moon

March 3 LOSAR party!!!

March 15-16 Karma Yoga Weekend

April 12-13 Karma Yoga Weekend

April 19-21
SMS Base Practice Retreat with Jim Valby, BOSTON

June 28-July 13
SMS Base Practice Retreat with Jim Valby

Spring & Summer
Karma Yoga at Khandroling

More information:
Tsegvalgar, PO Box 277, Conway, MA, 01341 USA
Tel: 413 369 4153, Fax: 413 369 4473,
Email: DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

Khandroling Board of Directors

To everyone who participated in the Khandroling Properties, Inc. (KPI) annual elections, thank you. The following individuals were elected to the Board of Directors and approved by Rinpoche:

John Foster, President
Vern Harrington, Treasurer
Diane Sievers, Clerk
Paula Gould
Jeff Krouk
Paul Bail

new fax number at tsegvalgar

413 369 4473

4th Annual Community to Community (C2C) Meeting of the Dzogchen Community in America

May 23-26, 2003 at Tsegvalgar, Conway, MA

The next C2C meeting is scheduled to take place May 23-26, 2003, Memorial Day Weekend at Tsegvalgar in Conway, MA. At the C2C meetings, practitioners from all across the country come together to collaborate and support one another in the transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. These meetings serve to bring to light concerns that all the local Gakyils face and to work together for accomplishing the common goals of the members of the Dzogchen Community. There is no cost to attend and we welcome members from all around North America to participate. The Gar of North America is a wonderful place to be in the Spring with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

For more information contact Tsegvalgar at DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

New York City Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat

Three day retreat with Jim Valby

March 14-16, 2003

There will be a special emphasis on preparation for the 10PM Monday, March 17, Garab Dorje direct transmission video.

The four daily sessions are 9-10:30AM, 11-12:30, 4-5:30PM, 6-7:30PM.

Anybody who has attended a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, participated in one of the three universal transmission practice days, or will participate in the 10PM Monday, March 17, universal transmission day may participate in our retreat where we will focus on the essential theory and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his book named "The Precious Vase - Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha". Jim Valby, a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982, will lead this retreat.

The cost of the retreat will be \$75 for all 3 days. If you cannot afford this, please do not let that discourage you as something can always be worked out. Please pre-register with Richard Banks as soon as possible, the number of people will determine whether we rent a space or hold the retreat in someone's home. Richard's phone number is 718-645-0685 and you can email him at: <vze2w7g9@verizon.net>.

JUNE 28-JULY 13 at Tsegvalgar, Conway, MA

Two Week Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat

with Jim Valby

There will be 4 Thuns a day.

The first week will include Vajra Dance and the second week will include Yantra Yoga instruction.

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 & Dzogchen as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his book named "The Precious Vase - Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha". Jim Valby, a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982, will lead this retreat.

Contact:

Tsegvalgar, PO Box 277, Conway, MA 01341 USA

Tel: 413 369 4153, Fax: 413 369 4473

Email: DzogchenUSA@compuserve.com

California DZ Community Looks for a Teams Rep

We are looking for an organization-savvy person to be the representative of the Dzogchen Community West Coast to the North America Dzogchen Teams Committee. The Teams Committee consists of representatives of the major Gakyils in North America (they do not have to be a member of the Gakyil) who can:

- 1) help to plan the Community-to-Community meetings (twice yearly for North America) and attend those meetings;
- 2) attend their local Gakyil meetings where they report the progress of this work and explore opinions and needs of the Gakyil to take back to the Teams Committee;
- 3) take part in periodic conference calls with each other; and
- 4) mentor the Coordinators and Project Leaders of selected North America teams.

Current reps are Michael Hass, Southern California; Julia Deisler, New Mexico; Mark Allston-Follansbee, Tsegvalgar/Conway; and Ed Goldberg, New York.

This group helps multi-site teams meet the needs of the various Community sites in North America; encourages collaborative dialogue among sites; and assists the North America Community in developing its short-term and long-term vision. It is very exciting and creative work.

If you are interested, please reply ASAP to Carol Fields:

carolmfields@aol.com

WINTER GAR IN NORTH AMERICA MATCH THIS OFFER!!!

A kind anonymous donor has offered to match up to \$10,000 contributed toward the purchase of the Winter Gar. This means that if members and friends of the Community contribute toward the Winter Gar purchase, their donation will be matched by this wonderful sponsor up to a total of \$10,000! This is a great way to double our investment.

We expect to be making a purchase of the North America Winter Gar property by summer of 2003. Currently under consideration are sites in Southern California, Southern Arizona and New Mexico, Baja California, and Belize. The Winter Gar Search Team, formed at the Joshua Tree Community-to-Community meeting, has been enthusiastically researching the most suitable sites, guided by your questionnaire responses.

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING YOUR DONATION NOW !!!!

The Dzogchen Community West Coast is in the process of creating a special Winter Gar bank account. All donations are fully tax-deductible. Make your check out to the Dzogchen Community West Coast; specify that this is a contribution towards the purchase of the Winter Gar for North America; send it to the Dzogchen Community West Coast, 755 Euclid Avenue, Berkeley, CA 904708. You will receive a prompt acknowledgment of your donation which can be used to claim your tax deduction.

If we successfully purchase the Winter Gar this year, Rinpoche has promised to come there to give a retreat in late September/early October of 2003. We need everyone's help to make this possible. Thank you for any contribution toward this project!!

The Dzogchen Community West Coast Gakyil (Carol, Catherine, Dawa, Margaret, Paul, Rosanne, Heather, Susan, and Carisa)



passages

Died:

Wanda Marie Nassberg

Particularly for long-time members of the Dzogchen Community in California, I wish to announce that Wanda Marie Nassberg passed away peacefully in her sleep on November 21st, 2002, at the age of 86. Thank you to those who said prayers and good byes at her bedside in the hospital or at home. I had the privilege of being her friend since 1984, when we met at what was for each of us our first retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, at Harbin Hot Springs.

Wanda was a rare person in her generation, who became interested in Buddhism when she was 17 years old, and after retiring as a librarian from the New York City library, expressly relocated to the Bay Area in order to take teachings from Tarthang Tulku. She studied with many prominent teachers and had a strong interest in shamanism and American Indian culture. Her faculties remained sharp throughout her life, and she interacted with many of us in the Community. I will be missing my weekly breakfast in Berkeley and combination gossip, political commentary, and mutual interest sharing with her very much.

Carol Fields



BRAZIL

The Dzogchen Community of San Paolo, Brazil, is pleased to announce the opening of a new space available to practitioners from all over the world: the TRIPITAKA is a multi-ethnic restaurant, with live acoustic music, a large room dedicated to practice, workshops and Yantra Yoga. There's also a space for art/photo/video shows.

Anyone interested in collaborating with us in any way (for example with proposals or exhibitions) or simply wants to visit us to taste our cuisine can find us at the following address:

TRIPITAKA

Rua Prof. Pedro Pedreschi 71

02372-000 San Paolo, Brazil

Tel 011 62621819

Email dzogchenbrasil@uol.com.br

Muriella and Washington Malaga, The Blue Gakyil

New Secretary Needed at Tashigar South

Tashigar South is looking for a new Secretary for one year beginning in April, 2003. Please contact Tashigar South for more information:
Email: tashigar@dcc.com.ar

NEW GEKÖ FOR TASHIGAR SOUTH APRIL 2003

Our Gekö will be leaving April 1st, 2003. We would like to know who is interested in serving as Gekö of Tashigar Sur next year. The commitment is for a minimum of one year and requires that the person live at the Gar during that time and be able to work legally in the Argentina.

Those who are interested should: Send a letter/email application and qualifications to the Tashigar Sur

Gakyil: tashigar@dcc.com.ar
Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar
El Durazno s/n
Tanti 5155
Pcia De Cordoba
Argentina

NEW POSTAL ADDRESS IN TASHIGAR SOUTH

Comunidad Dzogchen
Tashigar
Calle pública S/N
El Durazno
Tanti 5155
Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina

p o e m

Beach

Sunglasses
a watch
a bottle of water
& i'm off
for a swim

The Master said "For old age, we need a quiet place to enjoy"

by Zeljka Jovanovic
(Isla Margarita, 17th april 2002)

Song of Margarita

This Song of Margarita was taught by Niko, a neighbor, to a few Community members who were living in the town of Pedro Gonzalez in 2002, near Tashigar Norte. Niko sang this song with a lovely and inspired voice.

Spanish version

Margarita, tus playas soñadoras
que invitan al amor y al placer
tú, dulce, llevas nombre de mujer
que viste de bellísimas auroras.

Tus mujeres son perlas y corales
hoy le dan al poeta inspiración
bendito sea por siempre tu terrón
mi valle de palomas y turpiales.

Ave María, Tierra Espartana
color de grana tus hembras son
cuál lindas rosas que se engalanan
bajo el delirio de una pasión.

Y aunque tus campos seque el estío
siempre conservas alguna flor
flor de esperanza donde el rocío
imprime tersos versos de amor.

English version

Margarita, your beaches are a dream
They invite you to love and pleasure
You sweetly take the name of a woman
Your vistas have beautiful sunsets.

Your women with pearls and corals
Invite the inspiration of the poets
Blessed always is the land
My valley of doves and troopies*.

Ave Maria, Spartan land
Your women are the color of grain
Like pretty roses which adorn
Under the delirium of passion.

Even though the summer dries your fields
You always keep some flower
Flower's hope where the dew
Imprints smooth verses of love.

* a yellow bird

translation was a joint effort by Marisa Alonso, Griselda Gálmez and Ingrid Bertet

passages

Died:

Rafael Guía,

The Mérida Community of Venezuela lost one of its founding members, Rafael Guía, who died at home of leukemia related complications. Rafael met Rinpoche on the occasion of Rinpoche's first trip to Venezuela, in 1986, and ever since was active in the Mérida Community. He was fascinated by the figure of Gesar of Ling, which inspired him to found PADMA (Proyecto Antropofísico para la Defensa del Medio Ambiente: Anthropophysical Project for the Defense of the Environment), which intended to foster awareness of the gravity of ecological crisis, of the way this crisis is rooted in avidya, and therefore of the importance of the Dharma in healing what he called "the mortal crisis hanging over our heads". May he recognize the basic Nature and be liberated!

Died:

Alfredo Noblot

Alfredo Noblot, who was a founding member of the Caracas Community, died few years after his wife, Carmen de Noblot, who was also a founding member of the Caracas Community. Alfredo worked as a security guard for the Central University of Venezuela, and Carmen was a nurse. Both were deeply committed to the practice.

Elias Capriles

tashigar, north & south & south america



Photos of Land in Margarita from September 2002
by Gilberto Parrella

Top: Workers on the land

Middle: Architect Carolina Hernandez and her daughter Michaela.

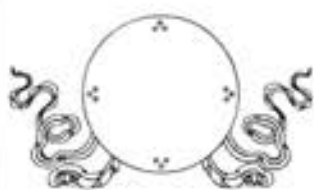
Below: Aloe vera Plantation and Irrigation System Update

See New Photos of the Aloe Vera Project in Margarita at:

http://ig.newz.ru/margarita/New_Margarita_Project_Pictures

Please note the new web site where donations can be made for the new Gonpa to be built on Margarita:s

<http://www.dzogchenvenezuela.org/gompa/index.html>



THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the
International
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Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu

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welcome

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The Dzogchen Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Australia April 18th to 22nd, 2003

Namgyalgar Easter Retreat Longsal Longde Teaching

The Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar is pleased to announce that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will teach from the Longsal Cycle of teachings in his 2002-3 tour in Australia.

The Longsal Cycle or The Innermost Essence of the Luminous Clarity of the Universe (*Klong chen 'od gsal mkha' 'gro* 'I saying thig) is the collection of rediscovered treasure teachings or terma (*gter ma*), which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has received over many years in dreams (*mnal chos*). These teachings are therefore part of the series of secret instructions, upadeshavarga (*Skt*) or "menngagde" (*man ngag sde, Tib.*) through which a realized master transmits and communicates to his fortunate disciples the essential understanding of Dzogchen.

During the 5 day Autumn Retreat in Namgyalgar from April 18th to 22nd, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will teach his special Longde (*Klong sde*) teachings from the Longsal Cycle, which provide fundamental guidance to the main points of practice contained in "Series of Space" of the Dzogchen teachings. These essential practices allow us to develop our practice and familiarity of the state of Dzogchen so that we no longer have any doubt about it.

Advanced Yantra Yoga & Teacher Training Course Namgyalgar March 23 - April 6, 2003 with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti

This will be two course combination in one with the YYTT 1st Level from March 23rd - 30th and the Advanced YY at March 31st - April 6th. People who are eligible can do both or one of the courses. To undertake the courses it is necessary to be a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and have completed and be familiar with the Eight Movements.

COURSE COST

The price of the courses has not yet been decided but will be approximately AUD\$500. per course.

URGENT

To decide if the YYTT course can go ahead it is necessary to know how many people are interested in attending this course. IF YOU DEFINATELY WANT TO ATTEND THE COURSE please inform the Namgyalgar Secretary as soon as possible. Those people who indicated their interest earlier please reconfirm this.

If there is not enough interest in the YYTT an extended Advanced Yantra course may be held instead (which includes the 3 and 4 groups of Yantra). If you would be interested in attending such a course please indicate this.

Viki Forscutt
The Secretary
PO Box 14
Central Tilba
NSW 2546
Australia
Tel / Fax: 02. 44737668
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au
Web site: <http://www.dzogchen.org.au>

GEKÖ FOR NAMGYALGAR

The position of Gekö of Namgyalgar will become vacant as at Easter 2003.

If you are interested in applying for this position please contact the Secretary for an application form and for information about the roles and responsibilities of the Gekö and the conditions of employment. Ideally the person appointed will be available to do a handover of the position with the current outgoing Gekö in the weeks prior to Easter.

Best Wishes,
Viki Forscutt
The Secretary
PO Box 14
Central Tilba
NSW 2546
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Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au
Web site: <http://www.dzogchen.org.au>

namgyalgar & the pacific rim

NAMGYALGAR SANTI MAHA SANGHA PROGRAM 2003

Please see the information below regarding accommodation for the time of the SMS Program at Namgyalgar. It is necessary to reserve cabin accommodation now.

Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam: April : 8 - 10, 2003
Level 1 Training: April 11-15, 2003

Registration Forms for the SMS Program (which will include the cost) will soon be available. If you require a form please let me know and you will be sent one in the near future. You will also receive information about how and where to send your Karma Yoga record.

ACCOMMODATION

SHARED CABINS

If you require shared cabin accommodation please let me know as soon as possible so that the cabin reservations can be confirmed. The cabins are situated within walking distance of 1.5 kms from Namgyalgar on a nearby farm. They sleep 4 singles or 6 people if there are couples.

The cost for a bed in a cabin is:

April 7th - 17th for SMS period ONLY = AUD \$ 17 per night per person (\$170 for 10 nights)
April 17th - 23rd for the Autumn Retreat = AUD \$25 per night per person (\$150 for 6 nights)

Please let me know what dates you require a bed in a cabin for :

From April 7th - 17th for the SMS period ONLY (\$170)

From April 7th - 23rd for SMS and Autumn Retreat (total cost \$320)

If you wish to arrive a day or so earlier than 7th April the cabin can be reserved for this so please let me know. A deposit of \$50 will be required to confirm your cabin booking and full payment before April. Note that there is no public transport in the vicinity of the Gar.

Meals will be available at the Gar during the time of the SMS program (and the Autumn Retreat). There are cooking facilities in the cabins and if you wish to prepare your own food you can ask the Gekö and others at the Gar to assist you to purchase food etc at shops in the nearby towns.

NAMGYALGAR TENTSITES

Tent sites in the camping ground at Namgyalgar are also available.

Camping fees are free for Sustaining members or \$ 3 per day / \$21 per week for Basic Members. Please indicate for what dates you require a tent site. If you need a large family tent site (big tents for families only) please indicate this.

Accommodation for the summer retreat is now quite limited. If you are intending to come and require a tent site on the Gar, please inform me as soon as possible (there are only a small number of sites still available).

If you would like to search for your own accommodation, the accommodation Information can be sent to you. As there is no public transport in the area, it is best that you consider hiring a car if you stay in private rental accommodation. A minibus will ferry people to and from the shared cabins only.

If you require information about accommodation, bus travel to the Gar or hire car info, please let me know.

Best Wishes,
Viki Forscutt
The Secretary
PO Box 14
Central Tilba
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Australia
Tel / Fax: 02. 44737668
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au
Web site: <http://www.dzogchen.org.au>

Missing Norbunet Messages?

Maybe you are all familiar, but for those who have forgotten, an archive exists on the web of all messages which have appeared on Norbunet in the past. You can find this archive on: <<http://ig.newz.ru/digest>>. You will be asked for a password that will be very familiar to practitioners, but not to those outside of the Community. If you are a new practitioner and you don't know this password, ask a fellow practitioner for help. I will not send the password to anybody. The archives are updated manually on a regular basis. Because of the recent problems with AOL, I have updated the archives to date so that everybody can read the messages that they might have missed. The Norbunet messages now are manually forwarded to all AOL subscribers by Judith, for which service I am very grateful to her.

Kind regards, Loek Jeece, Norbunet Administrator



NEW GAKYIL & EMAIL IN JAPAN

Elected October 7th, 2002 and approved by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Blue: Mr. Kazz Shiwaku, President
Red: Mr. Tokuji Kawashima, Vice President
Yellow: Mr. Isamu Kimura

We are also pleased to inform that the Dzogchen Community in Japan has a new email address:
dzogchen@ninus.ocn.ne.jp

Best regards,
Kazz Shiwaku

Where is Nouméa, New Caledonia?

Nouméa is the capital city of New Caledonia, named by James Cook on his way to plant the British flag on Australia. It is on the other side of the Great Barrier Reef in the South Pacific; a 2 hour flight off the coast of Brisbane. It is paradise in the neck of the ocean; white sand beaches, blue lagoon and easy island life style. It is a small French speaking island. Population is mostly Melanesian, Oceanian and French.

You can get there via Tokyo on AirFrance flights or via Sydney or Brisbane via Qantas or Airalin, the local international flight company.

There are plenty of freight carriers ships from Europe, Asia and Australia which is cheapest but not the easiest. New Caledonia is a favored destination for Japanese who come here to get married. It is also number two nickel producer in the world.

Retreat in Nouméa, New Caledonia with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu February 28 – March 2, 2003

The Dzogchen Community in Nouméa, New Caledonia, is happy to announce a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Gaïa Pacific on the Dumbéa river 20 minutes away from Nouméa on the other side of the mountain where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave a retreat in May, 2000, with the following session times:

Friday night February 28: 6 to 8PM
Saturday March: 10 to 12AM then 3 to 5PM
Sunday March 2: 10 to 12AM

Place of the retreat is situated 32 route de Koé or route du barrage in the Dumbéa district.

Price of the retreat for the 3 days is 15 000 XPF or \$210 Australian payable by money order at Gaïa Pacific or on the spot when you arrive.

Reservations can be made by:

Reservations:

From December 10, 2002 to February 16, 2003 through Marie Lascombes:

Tel: 41 57 03

Address: B.P. 12341 98802 Nouméa

Email: ssawayaa@canl.nc

From February 17, 2003 directly to:

Gaïa Pacific

32 route de Koé

B.P. 18 98836 Dumbéa GA

Tel: 77.61.12

Email: gaia.pacific@canl.nc

MEALS:

If you wish to have lunch on the spot on February 1 and 2 vegetarian or non-vegetarian meal including non alcoholic cocktails, appetizers, main course, desert and coffee for the price of 2500 XPF or \$35 Australian. Please make reservation as previously stated.

PLACES TO STAY:

1) the Youth Hostel in town; backpackers rates.

2) you can stay at Kuendu Beach resort in a bungalow by the beach accessible by bus from town for the price of 8721 XPF or \$121 Australian per night.

Contacts:

Tel: (687) 24 30 00

Fax: (687) 27 60 33

3) on the Pacific ocean in town, sort of French Riviera kind of place, with little snacks and music at night at Lantana Beach hotel:

group rate (15 people): single: 5400 XPF, double: 6600 XPF, triple: 7800 XPF individual rate: single: 6000 XPF or AS double: 7200 XPF or AS triple: 8400 XPF or AS

4) a wooden chalet on the spot of the retreat that can easily put up

4 people available from February 28 on for the price of 4500 XPF or \$63 Australian per night, possibility of a bed and breakfast formula.

Contact Gaïa Pacific at: gaia.pacific@canl.nc

For further information please contact Marie Lascombes at: ssawayaa@canl.nc

VAJRA DANCE COURSE IN NEW ZEALAND

with Adriana dal Borgo

A Vajra Dance Course will be held in Auckland – Aotearoa, New Zealand in 2003.

Dates: From February 25th and March 11th, 2003. Teaching will take place over a two week period. A total of approximately 60 hours.

Cost: Approximately \$400 to \$500 (NZ dollars)

Venue: To be confirmed (Auckland area)

Those who are interested in taking up this fortunate opportunity should contact Paora Joseph (on behalf of the NZ Gakyil) and the NZ Dzogchen Community.

Email: paora1@hotmail.com

Omission in issue 62

Omission, Photo credit, issue 62:
The photo on page 27 of His Holiness and Suzana was taken by Mirjana Ogrin.

p o e m

This verse, originally entitled The Sky Flier's Song, was written and inspired by my first encounter with the triple dimensions of Love. It is one of a collection of poems contained in 'Tsono's Songs'.

In gratitude for the gift of the great blessing of our Master's direct introduction to Vajrasattva's total space at Namgyalgar, Christmas 2002, I dedicate it to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, his masters and Vajrasattva, Lord of the three realms.

Homage to the Master! May he live long.
Lily Giblin

The Vajra Jewel

Look far away with eagle eyes
To find my diamonds in the skies.
Fly up above them in our air
And down below the dark to share.

For in the forest lies the key,
And men must seek me to be free
But only those whose wings have found
Fly o'er the trees to know the ground.

From up above the hawk can see
The way the path lies through the trees
And there beside a cave so dark
His eagle eye perceives a spark

That beckons him to fly below
To share the gifts the earth bestows;
The jewel that caught his sky blue eye
Now gives to him his destiny.

To seek your freedom you will find
That heart and body, soul and mind
Unite in Love to dance with me
The gift of Life, eternally.

Lily Giblin is a practitioner from Australia.

Sonnets to the Unseen, a book review continued from page 9

makes it nine layers.

The dance of the wind itself, seen in the water,
is sometimes two swirls meeting,
like two feet landing, spinning
toward each other like a James Brown move.
And the way the wind touches the water, covers
all eight movement qualities Laban described.
And as the Inuit have over fifty names
for each different kind of snow,
and the Japanese a particular name
for the emotion of seeing
a single leaf falls
there must be a language somewhere
with names for all the ways
wind can dance on water.
What a song they'd make!

And here is my seeing of it: that makes ten,
and finding words for it: eleven,
and writing it and saying it: thirteen,
and your hearing it
and picturing it: fifteen.
Let's lay down together
on fifteen layers
of a moment.

And then I have to mention one part of the book separately: the sonnets. A rare and beautiful experience. An extreme emotional intensity is accommodated in the ordered structure of the sonnet-form in such a fluent and melodious, classical yet unforced way that it seems truly timeless. These are poems of all times. What is said in this way found its expression not in spite of but just because of this demanding form. The moments of mystic experience which the poems evoke do normally not lend themselves to expression. The experience of profound oneness, of deep devotion and boundless love, once put into words, is always in danger of sounding embarrassing, leaning towards new-age kitsch or pretentious abstraction. But in the tight basket of the sonnet-form the vastness and depth gets contours and concreteness. Yet the form is not imposing, it is hardly noticeable since it accommodates the flow of words and images in the natural and effortless way which is the hallmark of the real poet. In the realm of poetry, this effortlessness within the strict poetic structure makes a promising hint to the famous effortlessness of which the Dzogchen teachings speak.

And finally it should be mentioned that the book is bilingual. Christine Renaudin translated and recreated the poems into a beautiful French, which proves the famous saying that poetry cannot be translated wrong. At least as far as the free rhymeless poems are concerned. The sonnets you have to read in the original.

How to write about poetry in prose? A paradoxical enterprise. Don't we speak in poetic language just because we want to say what prose cannot render? So it might be a sign of true poetry that it cannot be paraphrased. All I can do is to give a response. In short: I love this poetry and you will love it too.

by Dorothea Franck, Holland

Available through the Tsegalgar On-Line Bookstore for \$10 + shipping. A slightly different version as a CD with music is also available for \$10 + shipping. All proceeds go to benefit ASIA.

REFLECTIONS

Practice Makes Perfect: Common Grounds in the Practice Paths of Chuan Chen Tao and Dzogchen Dharma

by Daniel Reid

As modern Western civilization continues to deteriorate and its conventional cultural institutions, particularly organized religions, become less meaningful to serious seekers of truth and spiritual understanding, a bewildering plethora of ancient Eastern teachings have suddenly appeared to fill the growing theosophic void in the Western world. Contending for the attention of new Western adherents, some of these old Eastern sects promise the same short-cuts to salvation made by the monotheistic religions of the West: "follow our rules, observe our rituals, worship our deities, and everything will be fine forever."

In order to avoid stumbling into the same old religious rut of promised salvation later in exchange for blind faith now, Western seekers must learn how to cultivate awareness and discover the truth themselves through personal practice and direct experience, utilizing their own energies and their own minds as a basis. To do this, it seems to me, one must practice effective methods taught by self-perfected masters, rather than relying on scriptural dogma preached from the pulpit.

Among the many Eastern traditions currently vying for attention in the Western spiritual marketplace, the two that from my experience place the greatest emphasis on intuitive discovery through personal practice, are the non theistic spiritual sciences of Buddhism and Taoism. Within these grand traditions and all their myriad schools and sub-sects, there are two practice lineages that provide sincere and diligent seekers a concrete, viable path that leads practitioners to direct, intuitive understanding of "Complete Reality" and an effective method for cultivating the "Great Perfection" of enlightened awareness. These are paths of practice that transcend all doctrinaire debates, eliminate all factional doubts, and awaken the practitioner to his or her own original State of primordial awareness, the State "that is not born and does not die," the Way "that has no name." This path is known in Taoism as Chuan Chen ("Complete Reality") and in Buddhism as Dzogchen ("Great Perfection").

Two hundred years ago, the accomplished Taoist adept and writer, Liu I-ming, declared, "When you recognize that the principles of the sages are the same, you will realize that Taoism and Buddhism are alike. If you do not understand this and seek elsewhere, you will get involved in sidetracks, wasting your life in vain imagining." So let's elucidate this point by first defining the most basic principle in Buddhism and Taoism, the principle that links the two and constitutes the basis for practice in both. In Buddhism, the ultimate goal of practice is to attain "enlightenment" by experiencing bodhi-citta - the immutable, immortal State of primordial awareness - and thereby "becoming a Buddha," or "awakened one" (cheng fuo). In Taoism, the goal is precisely the same, but the term is to attain "immortality" - to return to that pure and perfect State of primordial ("pre-natal") awareness that "is not born and does not die" - and thereby "become an immortal" (cheng hsien), one who has awakened to the Way things really are, always have been, and forever shall be, i.e. the Tao. These goals, though couched in different cultural terms, seem to me to be one and the same and can only be reached by the path of diligent practice and continuous self-cultivation. The goal here is not to worship and obey a "supreme being," separate and superior to oneself, but rather to discover a supreme state of being, a state of pure and perfect awareness that resides within oneself and must be directly experienced, be known and utilized in life. This is the path of Complete Reality and Great Perfection, the path in which "practice makes perfect" and results depend entirely on the diligence and perseverance of the practitioner, and the time and energy he or she devotes to self-cultivation.

The essence of the Dzogchen teachings is summarized in the famous "Three Statements of Garab Dorje," the enlightened master who founded this ancient practice lineage in northern India two thousand years ago. The first principle is "direct introduction," whereby the master introduces the student directly to the real nature, or "State," of his or her own mind - the wide open, brilliantly luminous, infinitely potential energy of primordial awareness. The second principle is to "eliminate doubt" through actual experience of the State in the student's own personal practice, utilizing the methods taught by the master. The third and final stage of practice is "integration," which means extending the knowledge and experience of awareness - the "fruit" of the practice - into every activity of daily life.

The Three Statements of Garab Dorje accord well with the traditional guidelines of practice in the Chuan Chen lineage of Taoism, the "mountain men" (and women) who strove to embody the immortal Tao in every deed, word, and thought of their daily lives. In the Complete Reality path of Taoist self-cultivation, every adept begins the quest for truth through a fortuitous encounter with an enlightened sage, "a man of Tao" who transmits the essence of the Way and teaches its methods of realization. The aspiring adept then retires

from the world for a period of time and goes into seclusion in the mountains to practice the teachings to self-perfection, a process known as *hsiou tao* ("cultivating the Way"). Finally, when the "complete reality" of Tao has been realized, the adept "returns to the towns and markets" to apply the Way in all the myriad activities of daily life "among ordinary people" (*ren jian*).



Immortal Soul of the Tassix Adm

Using these three stages of cultivation as a guideline, let's take a closer look at some of the common grounds traversed by the practice paths of Chuan Chen Tao and Dzogchen Dharma. Direct Introduction: The Base In Dzogchen tradition, the ground of spiritual practice is known as the "base." That ground is bodhicitta, the pure and perfect nature of mind, the original State of primordial awareness that shines in the heart of each and every individual. In Chuan Chen terminology, the primordial State is variously referred to as the "precious pearl," the "pre-natal mind," the "triplex unity of essence, energy, and spirit," or simply the "Way." Direct experience of this pure and perfect State is the goal of practice in both traditions. The ground of primordial awareness has two fundamental features - stillness and movement - and both are as natural to the terrain of mind as mountains and water are to landscapes.

The more conventional schools of Buddhist and Taoist meditation place preferential emphasis on the stillness aspect of mind, discounting the movement of mind as a distraction to be avoided. The result of such partial practice is that the practitioner never learns how to recognize and regulate the manifold facets and functions of his or her own energy. Energy (movement) is as natural a quality of mind as emptiness (stillness), and the spontaneous movement of energy accounts for all the thoughts and feelings, emotions and desires, functions and processes we experience in life. Energy also fuels all the forms and functions of nature, from which the energy of mind is never separate. Learning how to recognize the energy of mind at work, and how to handle its natural movement in meditation and in life, is therefore as vital a step on the path of primordial awareness as is the discovery of the essential emptiness of mind. In Taoist tradition, the still and moving aspects of mind are known as Yin and Yang - the passive and creative, dark and light, empty and full. Both facets are ever-present and mutually co-emergent, like waves rising and falling on the sea, or wind stirring the air. "It's real description," writes the 18th century Taoist commentator Liu I-ming, "would be a stateless state. Tranquil and unstirring, yet sensitive and effective - call on it and it responds [movement], in quietude it is clear [still]."

In Tibetan Buddhist iconography, the essential emptiness and natural movement of mind are symbolized in yab yum - the male and female aspects of Buddhas locked in sexual union - and they are cultivated as the sources of wisdom and compassion respectively. "When we are in meditation," explains contemporary Dzogchen master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "we should not rest with the idea that the calm state is something to build up or to accept while movement is something to turn away. . . The ultimate aim of meditation in Dzogchen consists simply in maintaining presence of both the calm state and movement." Therefore, as thoughts arise, we simply recognize them as the natural movement of mind's energy, like wind rustling in the trees, and try not to get distracted by them, or treat them as something special.

Learning how to deal with our energy is a vital aspect of training in both Chuan Chen and Dzogchen tradition. That's why both lineages teach forms of "moving meditation" in addition to still sitting forms - to familiarize the practitioner with the movement of energy in body as well as mind, and show the adept how to control the external manifestations of energy while simultaneously remaining in a calm state of stillness inside. Thus in Taoist practice we have Tai Chi Chuan, the Eight Pieces of Brocade, and other moving chi-gung forms, while in Dzogchen there is Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance. All of these practices engage the three human vehicles

of body, breath, and mind in a unified and rhythmic manifestation of energy that allows the practitioner to experience the primordial unity of essence, energy, and spirit (jing, chi, shen) and grow familiar with both the still and moving nature of mind.

Another common foundation in Dzogchen and Chuan Chen is the primary importance of receiving direct transmission from an accomplished, self-perfected master. The central role of the guru is a well known feature in Tibetan Buddhism and in Dzogchen, Guru yoga is one of the most basic practices. This does not mean worshipping the master, but rather trying one's best to enter the State of awareness which the master has introduced and remain therein as much as possible in meditation as well as in daily life. The reason that the State can only be introduced by a realized master is that it is a living experience, an actual presence of mind, not a theoretical concept than can be gleaned from a book or video. As the master orally instructs the student, much more than just his words is being transmitted. The very presence of the master conveys the essence of the State on an intuitive level, imparting the radiant energy of enlightened awareness directly from master to student and implanting its potent seed in the energy field of the student. In this way, the luminous energy of the master's awareness flows into the student's mind stream along with the oral lesson, and together they form the basis of the student's subsequent practice. The energy of the master's presence transmits the essential seed of awareness, while his words introduce the methods whereby the student may cultivate the seed to fruition in practice.

The same principle applies in Chuan Chen Taoist tradition. A master appears and transmits the essence of the Way in a chance encounter, inspiring the student to embark upon the path by virtue of the master's enlightening presence of mind. Taoist lore is rich in stories of such fortuitous encounters. For example, in Shi Jing's vignette of Liu Hai-chan in the Summer 2001 issue of *The Dragon's Mouth*, we read how Liu Hai-chan, a worldly man of fame and fortune, receives his waking call from a wandering Taoist sage who visits his home and demonstrates his mastery of mind. Thereafter, "Liu realized his folly and resigned as prime minister so that he could travel to the mountains to study the Tao." In a passage entitled "Witnessing the Tao," Liu I-ming explains the importance of finding an enlightened guide: The Tao must be witnessed. . . Though you may awake to essence on your own, this is not to be relied on; the science of life, transmitted by teachers, must be ascertained through experience. Innate knowledge must be completed by learned knowledge; if you have real material,

you still look for a master craftsman to make sure. It is a pity that people who consider themselves intelligent get involved in twisted byways because they act impulsively on random guesswork. . . . This is something you cannot guess on your own—the instruction of an enlightened guide is necessary. What the master introduces to the student is nothing more or less than the student's own innate enlightened nature, the treasure trove of truth within, not a mysterious formula or magic elixir from external sources.

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu puts it, "What is of real value is in ourselves, in our own original state: this is our wealth. Until we discover it, we are like the beggar, always seeking something from others but remaining in

poverty. If we turn outwards, nothing has any value." Liu Ming agrees precisely on this point: "The Tao is a treasure. . . This has nothing to do with material alchemy. It is utterly simple, utterly easy. . . It is completely spiritual, true goodness. The ridiculous thing is that foolish people seek mysterious marvels, when they do not know enough to preserve the mysterious marvel that is actually present." In order to discover the marvel of this inner treasure and learn how to appreciate the value of its purity and perfection, we must dispense with wishful thinking, simplify our lives, and commit ourselves to concrete practice. *Eliminating Doubt: The Path of Practice* Unless you are willing to devote time and energy to practice, there is little point in embarking upon the quest for truth and self-perfection.

So many people today claim, "I don't have time to practice. I'm too busy." Or else they say, "Meditation is only for monks, not for ordinary people like me." The fact of the matter is this: anyone who sincerely wishes to cultivate awareness and self-perfection can certainly take the time and energy to do so within the context of his or her daily life, without becoming a monk or forsaking family and social responsibilities. What's required here is a re-arrangement of basic priorities and a simplification of lifestyle in order to make room for practice. "To attain the Tao requires resolution, cutting decisively through whatever holds you back," remarks Liu I-ming. "People who study Taoism and Buddhism yet cannot wrap up the complications in their lives completely and effectively are ridiculous." A popular approach to "spirituality" these days is to join an exotic new group, learn a few new chants, take on a new nickname, and consider oneself to be a newborn spiritual being. Of this sort, Liu I-ming says, "So many practitioners are merely skipping rope - with one or two



The Empty Tao Develops into the World

Zen phrases they pretend to be great hermits, having done a little meditating they call themselves advanced sages. Such people are insubstantial, shifty, and vacuous; they just talk to delude others, but it is themselves they delude." As Lao-tze notes in the Tao Teh Ching, "He who knows does not speak; he who speaks does not know."

The only way to realize the truth of "Complete Reality" and attain the "Great Perfection" of primordial awareness is to practice meditation, "sitting still and doing nothing" (ching jing wu wei) until awareness dawns. For those accustomed to the constant distraction of sensory entertainment, or who believe only in external short-cuts to salvation, meditation can be a very boring business. But for those who yearn to discover the "precious pearl" of luminous awareness hidden within the maze of mundane consciousness, meditation is the secret map that leads the mind slowly but surely to the mysterious marvel within." To meditate, "explains Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "only means to keep presence both of the state of calm and that of movement; there is nothing on which to meditate. . . The truth here is that the calm state is the essence of mind, and the movement is its energy; they are two inseparable aspects of the same reality, like a river and its waves or the sun and its rays." Meditation is a mirror of your own mind, and what you see is a reflection of how you use your energy. In the beginning, it can be quite disturbing, because the images that arise are not always as pretty as you imagine yourself to be. Herein lies the transformative power of meditation: it shows you "where you're really at," and it can prompt you to make positive changes in the way you manifest your energy in the world.

Meanwhile, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu advises, "one must simply acknowledge whatever thoughts arise - good or bad, relevant or insignificant - and just continue observing the state of 'movement'; this point is vitally important." This work takes time and patience and requires careful attention and presence of mind. "If you are insubstantial and lacking in will," asks Liu I-ming, "how can you ever transcend the ordinary crowd? . . . All over the world there are people who want to get rich on this earth and also leap into the clouds and climb the nine heavens, but I have never heard of a sage coming from among them." At first, it may be helpful to isolate yourself from "the ordinary crowd," or go into periodic retreat, in order to avoid distractions and concentrate on your practice in quietude. As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu suggests in *The Mirror: Advice on the Presence of Awareness*, "The most important thing when practicing meditation is not to look for anything, not to think that one is meditating or that anything particular ought to manifest. Without creating, without wishing to receive or obtain anything, remaining beyond desire and apprehension, one must continue in the presence of one's own state. . . That is why in both Dzogchen and Mahamudra it is explained that meditation must start freely, leaving thought free and observing it, not controlling it. In other words, just 'let it be, let it be,' and you will soon discover that it is nothing and everything, empty and full, still and moving - the original and sole source of one and all. Already perfect and complete, it

needs no re-defining from you. All you need to do is learn to recognize it. "Awake or asleep," writes Liu I-ming, "it is always there; looking, listening, talking, walking, it is very, very close. This is not the awareness of conditioned knowledge, it is the original sane energy, vitality, and spirit. If you seek this in terms of form or shape, you are mistaking the servant for the master." If you wish to master your original sane State, you must order your priorities according to the dictum of Chang Po-tuan, one of the great masters of the Chuan Chen lineage: "Practicing self-refinement is the first priority." Integration: The Fruit The fruit of the practice is to integrate the presence of awareness with all your daily activities by dissolving the distinction between meditation and life. This is the "Great Perfection" of Dzogchen practice and the way of the "Perfected Man" in Chuan Chen cultivation. It means that every activity of body, speech, and mind arises directly from the self-perfected State of pure awareness rather than the confusion and conflict of ego and emotion, and that daily life itself becomes the ground and the path of practice.

To complete their quest of self-cultivation as truly Perfected Men (jen ren), adepts of Chuan Chen Tao must return from seclusion in mountains and hermitages and once again live among ordinary people in towns and markets, where the give-and-take of daily life provides a perpetual stage for continuous practice. This is the final test of the adept's attainment and the gauge that separates the real practitioner from the impostor. In the Chuan Chen lineage, the integration of practice and daily life traditionally involved the conscious cultivation of poverty as path. "Poverty is the foundation of nurturing life," wrote the Perfected Man, Ma Tan-yang. "Such is truly the lifestyle of a person of the Tao." Liu Hai-chan, after resigning his powerful post as prime minister and forsaking the comforts of wealth in order to go to the mountains to study and practice the Tao, finally returned to the towns and spent the rest of his life hanging around public markets, where he became known as the beggar A Bao. Earning his way with odd jobs and menial tasks in wealthy households, he skillfully utilized the mundane situations of everyday life to further hone his practice and to help people in need, while constantly inspiring others to cultivate the Tao with dazzling displays of his own amazing attainments. The founding patriarch of the Chuan Chen lineage, Wang Chung-yang, taught his disciples to beg for a living as an effective means of fusing their spiritual practice with the practical requirements of daily survival in the world. Many of his followers were educated men and women from wealthy households, and begging in public taught them the virtues of humility and non-attachment far more efficiently than book learning or meditation. Begging also insured a simple, elementary lifestyle, free from the distractions of holding office and immune to the spiritually crippling complexities of fame and fortune. The deliberate cultivation of "pure poverty" helped to tame the ego and allowed the adept to devote sufficient time and energy to nurturing the precious pearl of awareness shining within his or her own mind.

In Dzogchen, integration is also regarded as the final and most

important stage of practice. After receiving direct introduction to the true nature of mind from a master, and eliminating all doubt about it through direct experience in practice, the Dzogchenpa must learn to integrate the State of awareness with ordinary activities and erase the boundary between meditation and life, thereby dissolving the contradiction between what one knows internally and what one does externally. "Practicing only means bringing knowledge into daily life," states Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "without getting distracted. . . This is the only way the teachings can become something concrete. . . For this reason, it is very important to try to maintain presence as much as possible, integrating it with all our activities." Sitting still in the tranquility of your shrine room and attending occasional meditation retreats are all well and good, but beyond that, you must extend your practice to all situations, at all times, "until there is no longer any distinction between meditation and life." To those who claim they have no time for practice, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu replies that apart from sitting sessions and periodic retreats, "practicing does not mean doing anything in particular; living is enough. Only if someone told me, 'I am sorry, Master, I haven't had time to live!' would I believe that they didn't have time to practice." The key to integration is to avoid getting distracted, to try your best to remain ever-present in the State of awareness and never lose your view of "Complete Reality." That's why so many Taoist masters choose to live in poverty - to avoid the distractions of fame and fortune and focus attention on the basics of practice and presence in daily life. "If we practice without distraction," explains Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "gradually the space of the meditation increases, becoming integrated with daily activities. . . In fact, in order to realize the inseparability of meditation and daily activities, we must apply the practice twenty four hours a day. And that can only be done by not getting distracted." Unless we are prepared to apply the teachings in a concrete way in our daily lives, and extend our internal awareness to our external activities, we run the risk of becoming what Liu I-ming describes as "vacuous dilettantes. . . merely skipping rope." Knowing what's true but doing what's false in daily life is sheer hypocrisy and belies the very essence of spiritual practice.

As the Dalai Lama notes, "The real practice is daily life." Herein lies the grandeur of the Dzogchen and Chuan Chen vision - the realization that self-perfection is possible in this very lifetime, and that awareness and energy may be fully integrated in every activity of body, speech, and mind. It's a vision of Great Perfection and Complete Reality that every individual on earth has the potential to realize in his or her own life, but that few have the patience and persistence to pursue. For those who do, the same signpost appears again and again at every milestone along the path: "Practice Makes Perfect: Proceed Onward!"

*** Note: Quotes from Liu I-ming were taken from *Awakening to the Tao*, by Liu I-ming, translated by Thomas Cleary (Shambhala, 1988). Quotes from Namkhai Norbu were taken from *The Mirror: Advice on the Presence of Awareness*, by Namkhai Norbu, translated by Adriano Clemente and Andrew Lukianowicz (Shang-Shang Edizioni & Barrytown Ltd, 1996).

A Call for New Material for The Mirror Two New Columns

The Mirror would like to reintroduce stories of how Community members met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Dzogchen Teachings. We are starting in this issue with Jim Valby's story; Jim is one of the two principal translators in the DZ Community and an authorized teacher of the Base Level Santi Maha Sangha. You will find his story on page 28. If you would like to share your story, at approximately 1200 words or less with a photo in JPEG format, please email it to: Mirrornk@cs.com or Lizmirror@tiscalinet.it

The next column we would like to introduce is one addressing a variety of topics and how they relate to experiences in daily life as practitioners and how the teachings impact these experiences or not. We will also include references and advice from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu regarding each topic. We have determined topics for the next six issues. See below. Please send 500 words or less to:

Mirrornk@cs.com or Lizmirror@tiscalinet.it

The six topics are:	
illness	deadline March 10
family & parenting	deadline May 10
love & relationships	deadline June 10
working life	deadline July 10
sexuality	deadline November 10
loss, death & grief	deadline September 10

We look forward to and thank you for your participation!
The Mirror

The Mirror reserves the right to edit all material.



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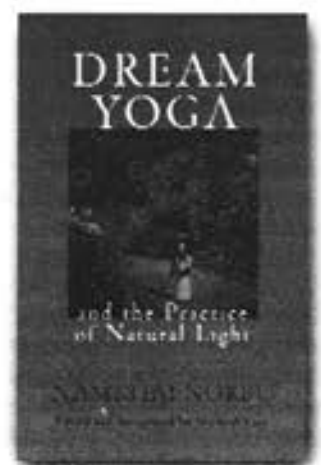
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How Jim Valby Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

by Jim Valby

The Sisters of Mercy taught at my Roman Catholic elementary school in Rochester, New York. As an altar boy, I served at the daily 6:30AM mass, held candlesticks for frequent funerals, and earned a few dollars at occasional weddings. The Jesuits in high school emphasized literature, religion, history and math. I earned a physics degree at Middlebury College in Vermont. After working as a research engineer for Eastman Kodak for about two years while enjoying various recreational drugs, I drove around the United States in my Chevy pickup truck with a Harley-Davidson motorcycle in the back. I looked everywhere unsuccessfully for a Gurdjieff teacher.

In the Spring of 1970 a motorcycle gang in Oregon severely beat me up because I made too many stupid mistakes in a row. After getting out of the hospital, I went on a month-long retreat in the mountains of British Columbia with my college friend Bob Flaws who had recently returned from India. I did not know how to practice, so I read books, ate well, smoked dope, and went for long walks while Bob practiced. After a mountain top conversation, Bob and I decided to travel together to India to get enlightened. I sold or gave away almost everything I owned. We met a month later in New York City. Bob purchased dharma books and encouraged me to buy a book for our long journey. I liked Vajrabhairava on the cover of a book named "Tibetan Buddhism Without Mystification" which was later republished as "Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way". The book contained translations into English

from Tibetan by Herbert V. Guenther.



Jim Valby

So I bought my first dharma book, read the first two pages, did not understand anything, and returned the book to my backpack. We traveled on Icelandic Airways to Amsterdam and then took the Orient Express train to Istanbul. On our overland bus trip toward India, I drank, smoked & swallowed all the bad stuff I could find along the way because I knew we would not be allowed to enjoy these vices once we began our enlightenment training in India. I became wickedly sick with amoebic dysentery in Tehran, and returned to the United States.

Some months earlier the United States Government had ordered me to join the army to kill Vietnamese people. I ignored the order, but while I was traveling, the FBI had come looking for me at my parents' home. My mother was disappointed that I refused to serve God & Country, but my father kindly gave me a car ride to the Canadian

border. I walked across the Niagara Falls bridge and took a bus to Toronto where I found that Buddhist book down in the bottom of my backpack. With nothing to do, I went to the public library to look up all the multi-syllabic philosophical words in various dictionaries. I understood something, so with almost the last of my money I bought a small bar of gold and a one-way airplane ticket to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where Dr.



This beautiful black & white photo was taken by Marilyn Valby about 1975 at the home of Herbert and Eve Guenther in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Clockwise from Dr. Guenther, who sits at the end of his dining room table under the Wheel of Life (thangka art): Joan Goodman, Michael Faber, Ken Lipman, Steven Goodman, Michael Azzaro & Jim Valby. We were all participating in our weekly non-university study of the *Trishna Dzid* written by the great Dzogchen Master Longchenpa in the 14th century.

Guenther was chairman of the Far Eastern Studies Department. Dr. Guenther did not accept the gold bar I offered but asked if I would be interested in taking some university classes. He said that he would teach me the intellectual side of things but I have to go somewhere else to learn practice. So I studied with him for about 15 years, earning Master's and PhD degrees in Tibetan studies. In particular, he encouraged me to study the

Dzogchen texts of Shringha, Vimalamitra and Longchenpa. Occasionally I went away for a few months to check out a Tibetan dharma scene here and there, mostly in the United States. I received my first Tibetan Buddhist initiation from HH Dudjom Rinpoche about 1971 or 72 in New York City. But I never noticed any Dzogchen teachings in any of the dharma scenes. All masters seemed to teach only Sutra & Tantra even if they some-

accepted his offer, and while we were drinking our beers Steven said: "In July Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will teach Dzogchen Upadesha in California." I arrogantly replied: "Tibetan masters do not teach Dzogchen even if they know something," Steven said: "Jim, Norbu really knows & teaches Dzogchen. You owe it to yourself to check him out." I replied: "Really, I do not believe it." In early July a disc in my lower back slipped out of place while I was digging in the vegetable garden, so I had to cancel my July Venice-to-Dubrovnik holiday on a chartered sailboat. The pain was so bad I considered committing suicide. After a few visits to the doctor & chiropractor, my lower back improved. I had some time & money for a holiday, and my wife Marilyn said: "Maybe you would like to go meet that master Steven recommended?" So I thought: "Why not? I will go to California for a holiday. I can also check out that Tibetan master." I arrived near Point Arena at Redwood's OZ retreat site a day after the retreat had begun. In the upstairs kitchen I asked beautiful See-Joy: "Where is the Tibetan master?" She replied: "He is sitting down there at the picnic table." I looked but could not see a master because everybody was wearing ordinary clothes. About an hour later, Rinpoche sat down under a large tree surrounded by interested students. I had no expectations. He smiled & spoke. My experience: Primordial Buddha transmits primordial Dzogchen to us fortunate practitioners in this particular time & place.

times used the word "Dzogchen".

By 1975 I had completed two personal ngöndros and one group ngöndro with the exception of all the prostrations. By 1979 I had given up the idea that it was possible to receive Dzogchen teachings from Tibetan masters. So I just read Dzogchen texts in Tibetan and created a bigger & better & bitter dharma ego. In June 1982 my friend Steven Goodman offered to buy me a beer at Place Riel in Saskatoon. I

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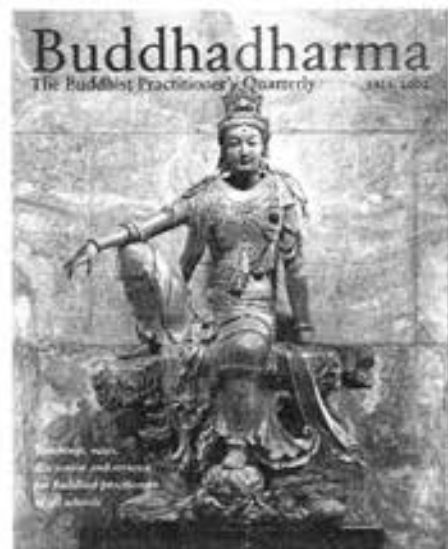
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